

A Modern Fairytale

Footprints in the sand are not made sitting down!



Complexity



7-13 years



60 minutes



4-30 children



Discrimination



Education and
Leisure



Violence

Type of activity

Storytelling, discussion

Overview

Children take it in turns to tell a story based on a series of pictures and then find out the real story behind them which focuses on modern-day slavery.

Objectives

- To introduce the issue of child labour and modern-day slavery
- To promote active listening
- To introduce the European Court of Human Rights (for older children)

Preparation

Make copies of the drawings on the handouts - enough for one between two children.

Make copies of the child-friendly Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC): one for each child.

Materials

- A wooden stick
- Copies of the drawing sequence provided as a handout
- Copies of the child-friendly CRC

Instructions

1. Ask the children to gather in a circle to hear a story in a special way. Try to create a mysterious atmosphere. Show them the wooden stick and explain that this is a 'talking stick': only the person holding it may speak. When one person has spoken using the stick, they should pass it on to someone else.
2. Lay the pictures out so that the children can see all of them and explain that together they will create a story about a girl named Siwa, based on these pictures. Then distribute the pictures, giving one picture to each child or pair of children. Explain that each child or pair should tell the part of the story represented by the picture they have been given. Give the children time to think about what their picture represents, and to discuss it with their partner if they are working in pairs.
3. Be the first person to hold the stick, and say a little to demonstrate how the story will be told. Then pass the stick to the child who wants to start the story. Explain that the person who wants to speak next should hold up their picture. If there are several who want to speak, the current speaker decides who should receive the talking stick.
4. When the story has come to an end, ask the children if they would like to hear the real story behind these pictures. Tell them or read out the story of Siwa.

Debriefing and Evaluation

1. Discuss the activity by asking questions such as these:
 - Was it difficult to tell the story of Siwa from the pictures? Why?
 - Was your story similar to the real one?
 - What did you think about Siwa's story? How did it make you feel?
 - Do you have any questions about Siwa's story?
2. Discuss child labour and forms of modern-day slavery by asking questions such as these:
 - What is a slave?
 - How was Siwa's situation like slavery?
 - Do you think that Siwa's story could happen in your country? Do you know of any similar examples?
 - Are there still slaves in the world today?
3. Give children copies of the child-friendly CRC, UDHR or ECHR. Relate Siwa's story to human rights:
 - What are the consequences for children who are forced to work, for example on their physical and mental health?
 - How does being forced to work affect a child's human rights? Can you name any of Siwa's rights in the CRC that were violated?
 - What can we do to make sure children do not end up in forced labour?

Suggestions for follow-up

An activity dealing with such potentially upsetting issues should not stand alone. You should follow this with an affirming and positive activity, however brief: for example 'Putting Rights on the Map' or 'From Bystander to Helper'.

With older children, use the Council of Europe's comic strip, which deals with a similar case: www.coe.int/t/dg2/trafficking/comics/. Make sure to check beforehand that the content is appropriate for your group.

Ideas for action

The children can investigate the laws in their country which protect against child labour. Ask them to look into issues such as how much work children are allowed to do legally, from what age they are allowed to work, and what types of work are permitted. Do children need the permission of parents/guardians to work?

The children could design and conduct a survey to find out how much and what kinds of work children do at home. Does working in your family constitute child labour (e.g. child care, housework, helping parents with their work)? Do girls and boys contribute equally to work around the home?

Plan a campaign with the children to combat child labour and human trafficking.

Tips for the facilitator

You can use a hat or any other object, instead of the stick.

The children may need help telling the story from pictures, or putting the pictures into a sequence. You could guide the story so it is closer to the **True** version by taking part yourself, as one of the storytellers. .

You may need to explain the concept of trafficking: human trafficking is ‘the movement of people by means such as force, fraud, coercion or deception, with the aim of exploiting them’ (Unseen UK).

Siwa’s story is likely to be upsetting for some of your children: be ready to answer any questions they may have. You should also be able to point them towards people or organisations who could help if they or others find themselves in a similar situation.

Siwa’s story is based on a real-life case settled in the European Court of Human Rights (Siliadin v. France, No. 73316/01). There is a short summary of the case at <http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/>. The story presented in *Compasito* deliberately does not name a specific homeland for Siwa (who was actually from Togo). This is in order that children do not assume that trafficked children always come from Africa, or from non-European regions. You may wish to change the story to reflect the situation in your country, but you should be careful not to suggest that trafficking only occurs in countries outside Europe. Sadly, there are many cases involving children being trafficked from one European country to another, or within a country of Europe.

Make sure that you are able to explain other instruments which offer protection against child labour, apart from the CRC. See the Chapter V background texts on education and leisure time and migration.

Help children to differentiate between work they may do to help their families, for example at home, and inappropriate child labour.

Worldwide, girls are given less leisure and are expected to do more unpaid work than boys. You may wish to explore the difference in expectations placed on boys and girls, and discuss this in relation to gender equality.

Adaptations

For older children: use Siwa’s story to discuss the European Court of Human Rights, using the questions below as a guide:

- Siwa and her lawyer took her case to the European Court of Human Rights. Have you ever heard of this court? Who or what did Siwa’s case try to change?
- What did the ECHR decide in Siwa’s case? What happened as a result?
- Has your country signed the European Convention of Human Rights?
- Can you, as a child, apply to the ECHR? What can the ECHR do for you?

For younger children: Number the pictures and lay them out in order so that children can see the sequence of events. Be particularly careful about the questions you ask, and use the picture cards for the CRC, or simply ask generic questions about children’s rights or human rights.

Further information

- On the European Court of Human Rights: www.echr.coe.int
- For a video on the ECHR: www.youtube.com/watch?v=M0cmUQTgjCw
- On the Council of Europe’s campaign to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings: www.coe.int/en/web/anti-human-trafficking/home



Handout

Siwa's story

Once upon a time, not so long ago, there was a girl called Siwa. Her family was very poor. She lived with her uncle because her parents had died when she was a child.

When she grew older, Siwa realised that the world was much bigger than just her country and that there were other interesting places to visit. But like many people in her country, Siwa was poor and didn't have the money to travel.

One day, however, her uncle came up with a plan. He suggested sending Siwa to France to live with someone he knew, called Mrs X. Siwa was excited by the idea of travelling and was eager to go. The uncle agreed with Mrs X that she would buy Siwa a plane ticket to her country and that Siwa would live at her house and help the family with the housework until she had earned the price of her plane ticket. So Siwa boarded a plane and flew to France. She was looking forward to all the new things she would be experiencing there. Mrs. X had promised to send her to school and to take care of her legal papers so that she could travel freely and explore her new country.

However, once Siwa arrived at Mrs. X's house, things started to go wrong. Mrs. X was not as friendly as the girl had imagined. She expected Siwa to take care of her children and do all the housework by herself. When Siwa asked about school, Mrs. X said that it could wait.

After a while Mrs. X told Siwa that she was going to live with Mrs. Y for a while. Siwa hoped that now she could finally start going to school and enjoying her stay in this new country. Sadly, however, Mrs. Y was worse than Mrs. X. Life became even harder for Siwa. Now she had to start work early in the morning and could not go to bed until late at night. And even then she couldn't get a good night's sleep as she was sleeping on the floor in the children's room and had to take care of the baby, who woke up crying several times during the night. She was not even allowed to leave the house to walk around in the city. Life was miserable. Siwa regretted ever leaving her country.

One morning Siwa managed to get permission to go to a religious service. But instead of going, she gathered her courage and knocked on the door of a neighbour's house. She asked the young couple living there for help and told them her story. The couple was shocked. They could not imagine someone being treated like a slave in modern times. Siwa's story was like a bad dream, but she didn't seem to be able to wake up. She had to find a way to help herself.

The couple took Siwa into their house and reported her case to the police. The police began to investigate, and charged Mrs. X and Mrs. Y. However, Siwa was not satisfied with having these two women punished. She wanted to make sure that no other child like her would ever have to go through what she had. With her lawyer's help, she filed a case at the European Court of Human Rights, demanding that France should change its laws to protect children from this kind of servitude. The Court agreed with Siwa, and demanded that France make sure that there would be no further incidents of forced work in the future. At last Siwa was contented. She had not only managed to escape from imprisonment in Mrs. Y's house, she had also made sure that no other child in that country would have to experience what she did.

Source: Adapted from the European Court of Human Rights case *Siliadin v. France*, No. 73316/01.

