

Putting Rights on the Map

Where do human rights begin? In small places close to home!



Complexity



8-13 years



60 minutes
several days



4-30



Human Rights



Democratic
Citizenship



Environment

Type of activity

Drawing, analysis, discussion

Overview

Children work co-operatively to create a map of their community and identify the children's rights associated with major institutions.

Objectives

- To develop familiarity with children's rights
- To build associations of children's rights with places in children's daily life
- To assess the children's rights climate in the community such as health and environment

Preparation

For younger children: prepare map outlines beforehand.

Make copies of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) cards: enough for one set per small group.

Materials

- Art supplies, flipchart paper
- Copies of CRC cards

Instructions

1. Divide the children into small groups and give them some flipchart paper and art supplies. Ask them to draw a map of their own neighbourhood (or town, in the case of smaller communities).
They should include:
 - their homes
 - major public buildings (e.g. post office, town hall, schools, places of worship)
 - public services (e.g. fire department, police station).
 - places that are important to their health, such as the hospital, pharmacy, doctor's surgery or public health clinic, or other places they can go to if they are sick or need help
 - places of environmental importance, such as rivers, beaches, the woods or parks
 - places that are important to them, their friends, families and community (e.g. grocery stores, cemetery, cinemas, etc.)
2. When the maps are complete, ask the children to analyse their maps from a children's rights point of view. Give each group a copy of the CRC cards with articles and ask them to try to link as many articles as they can to places on the map. Which human rights do they associate with places on their maps? For example, a place of worship can be associated with freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; the school with the right to education; the post office with the right to privacy, and to self-expression, the library or Internet café with the right to information or the hospital with the right to health. Tell the children to place the relevant CRC card next to the place on the map which it corresponds to. They can draw in their own duplicates if they need to repeat cards.

3. Ask each group to present their map to the whole group with a brief summary of children's rights in their community.

Debriefing and Evaluation

1. Discuss the activity using questions such as these:
 - Was it hard to draw a map of your neighbourhood?
 - Did you learn anything new about the neighbourhood?
 - Were you surprised to discover children's rights in your neighbourhood?
 - How did your map differ from the maps of other groups? Were there any similarities?
2. Relate the activity to children's rights by asking questions such as these:
 - Did any parts of your map have a high concentration of rights? How do you explain this?
 - Did any parts have very few or no rights associations? How do you explain this?
 - Are there any articles of the CRC that are used more often than others on your map? How can this be explained?
 - Are there any articles of the CRC that no group included on their map? How can this be explained?
 - Are there any places in this community where children's rights are often violated?
 - Are there any particular children in this community whose rights are frequently violated?
 - Did you include in your map aspects related to the diversity of your community, such as religious sites, associations or cultural institutions of minority communities? If not, do you think there are no such places? Or there might be, but you are not aware of them?
 - The CRC also guarantees the right to health, including access to clean water and environment. What are the situations in your community where this right is violated? Which children are affected most?
 - What can you do improve access to a clean environment in your community?

Suggestions for follow-up

Use your maps to take a walk around the neighbourhood, to observe rights in action. The activity 'Compasito Reporter' also asks children to evaluate their community through a human rights lens.

Ideas for action

Invite a neighbourhood social worker, long-time resident or local activist to talk to the group about how they see the neighbourhood, how it is changing and what needs to be done to make it a better place to live. Help the children explore how they can contribute to this change.

Make pictures of the maps and post them online with the children's explanations. These maps are a kind of human rights "diagnosis" made by children of the territory where they are living. Ensure you have the proper permission before posting children's work online.

Ask the children to create an "ideal" map of their city or neighbourhood, keeping the parts they like, changing or adapting the parts they do not like and drawing in anything they would like to see there, for example, to make the natural environment better and protect the right to health. Discuss with the children about the indivisibility of rights, to ensure that they do not propose to remove certain parts of the neighbourhood just because they think certain rights are more important than others. For example, the children might propose to remove an old synagogue from an area where very few Jews live and replace it with a new playground; or moving social housing buildings from the city centre to the outskirts and replace the buildings with a school.

Tips for the facilitator

This activity assumes that the children are already familiar with children's rights, and helps them to put that conceptual learning into a well-known context. However, the children may still need some assistance in connecting everyday places with their rights, for example, a grocery store with the right to health or an adequate standard of living.

Remind them that they are looking at how the places on their maps protect the rights of *children*. Of course, their rights are also likely to be affected by those of adults. Use questions to prompt them, if children cannot see connections themselves.

This activity has a very positive message: we enjoy rights every day in our own neighbourhood. You may want to discuss the presence of violations on a different day, to allow for this positive impact to be appreciated.

Younger children may have little experience of reading a map and may need time to assimilate the concept. You might begin by mapping the room, playground or building where you meet the children.

Variations

Carry out each part of the activity on a different day, allowing the children time to become accustomed to reading the map and to consider the make-up of the neighbourhood.

Assign each group a particular rights theme to consider when drawing the map.

Focus on a single rights theme, such as freedom from violence or an adequate standard of living, and see how that theme finds expression in the neighbourhood.

After drawing a map, ask the children to identify "good places for children" and "bad places for children", or the places they like or they do not like – and then to explain their choices. The link with human rights can be made through the debriefing, by looking at their reasons.

Adaptations

With younger children

Work with an area that is familiar to the children, such as the immediate neighbourhood, school or home. The younger the children, the smaller the area you should select.

Create a three-dimensional map using cardboard, boxes and art materials.

To save time and reinforce the map-making process, provide children with a prepared map or aerial photograph of the area that they can fill in and label. Close-up aerial views of most parts of Europe are available on Google Earth: <http://earth.google.com/download-earth.html>

Omit Step 2, where the CRC articles are matched with the right. Just ask about the places the children like and do not like, ask for their reasons, and discuss what they can do to improve things.

With older children

Draw the maps to scale.

Divide the children into groups and give each group a part of a common map to work on.

In the debriefing, ask questions about whether the rights the children have noted are civil and political rights, or economic, social and cultural rights. Did one type of right predominate on the map? Did one kind of right predominate in certain areas (e.g. more civil and political rights associated with the court house, city hall, or police)?