UNDERSTANDING CHILDREN

Training manual for a one-day workshop that helps professionals understand and internalise children’s emotions, needs and rights in order to improve their work with children.
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The different exercises are inspired by “Called to Care” manual no. 6, The Child Within, by Judy Rankin from the Strategies for Hope Trust (www.stratshope.org).

The framatizing exercise was developed by Danish social educators Mette Mørk Christen and Jane Jenny Sehested (www.changing.dk/framatizing.htm).

The café exercise is taken from World Café: Awakening collective intelligence and committed action by Juanita Brown, David Isaacs and the World Café Community (www.theworldcafe.com).

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UNDERSTANDING CHILDREN

PROGRAMME:

9.00 – 9.30: INTRODUCTION

9.15 – 10.15: ICEBREAKER

10.15 – 11.45: CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PROVERBS

11.45 – 12.00: TEA BREAK

12.00 – 13.00: THE CHILD WITHIN

13.00 – 14.00: LUNCH

14.00 – 15.30: THE CHANGING WORLD

15.30 – 15.45: TEA BREAK

15.45 – 18.15: FRAMATIZING

18.15 – 19.30: CAFÉ
INFORMATION FOR WORKSHOP FACILITATORS

THE AIM AND CONTENTS OF THE TRAINING:
The overall aim of this training course is to help project staff, field facilitators, teachers and others working with children to get a feeling for, understand and internalise children's emotions, needs and rights in order to improve their work with children.

Based on an array of exercises, the training has a pyramid structure where the participants start by narrowly exploring their own culture's perception of children's emotions, need and rights and their own personal experiences.

Gradually, the training widens into analysing children's future needs, and in the light of this, the participants' own projects and programmes.

At the end of the day, and at the bottom of the pyramid, the participants learn about tools to help them further improve how they work with children.

TIMEFRAME:
As you may gather from the programme, this is a one-day workshop, but you might want to choose to split the programme up into one and a half days, for example:

Day one:
9.00 – 9.30: Introduction
9.15 – 10.15: Icebreaker
10.15 – 11.45: Cultural beliefs and proverbs
11.45 – 12.00: Tea break
12.00 – 13.00: The child within
13.00 – 14.00: Lunch
14.00 – 15.30: The changing world
15.30 – 16.00: Sum-up the day

Day two:
9.00 – 9.15: Welcome and sum-up day one
9.15 – 11.45: Framatizing
11.45 – 12.00: Tea break
12.00 – 13.15: Café

Splitting up the programme may ease your job as facilitator, but it will also require overnight accommodations for participants from other areas.

PARTICIPANTS:
Project staff, field facilitators, teachers and other people who work with children

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: 10-20

REQUIREMENTS:
- A room that easily allows participants to sit in a U-shape
- An extra room with 2-5 tables for the café exercise. Or, depending on the number of participants, space in the training room for 2-5 extra tables
- Flip-chart paper and stand
- Markers
- Tape or masking tape
- Two to five identical bags full of small items, for example, sweets, toys, bottle caps, stones, paper clips, coins etc. – depending on the number of participants
- Notebooks and pens for each participant

HOW TO USE THE MANUAL:
This manual is designed so that even less experienced facilitators can use it. Read it carefully before you initiate the training, and keep the manual with you during the facilitation process.

Everything is organised in the order it has to appear during the training, so move step by step from page to page.

It is important to prepare everything in advance, as explained in the sections called "Prior to training". Otherwise, the participants will be kept waiting while you prepare in the training room. Completing preparations in advance will also help you internalise the manual.

Most of the manual is based on exercises, which means you will have time to check the manual and your progress while the participants are involved in the exercises.

HOW TO USE THE MANUSCRIPT
The manuscript is designed as guidelines for what you have to cover in your introduction and when you sum up. You should read it carefully prior to the training, internalise the meaning and try to put what it says into your own words rather than just reading aloud.

If you are an experienced trainer and facilitator, you can develop your own way of guiding your participants.

REMEMBER PARTICIPATION
The workshop is participatory, and all the exercises are designed to put the participants in focus.

The more comfortable the participants feel, the more they will open up and provide personal input, which ultimately will benefit everyone. This is why it is very important for you to respect and acknowledge all contributions throughout the training.

Also remember that personal statements always are to be kept confidential.
PRIOR TO TRAINING
Copy the programme onto flip-chart paper in the language spoken by the participants – exactly as illustrated in the manual. Remember the pyramid. One item that you may have to change is the name of the last café exercise. If there are no cafés in your area, choose a more appropriate name, e.g. tea stall or restaurant.

Post the programme on the wall in the training room in a spot where it can hang the entire day.

Step 1:
When giving the introduction, do not read the entire programme out loud; instead, point from the top down to present your introduction in the manner described below in the facilitator manuscript:

Facilitator manuscript
I would like to welcome you to our one-day training course.

The overall aim of the training course is to help project staff, field facilitators, teachers and other people who work with children to get a feeling for, understand and internalise children's emotions, needs and rights in order to improve their work with children.

Based on an array of exercises, the training has a pyramid structure where you start by narrowly exploring your own culture's perception of children's emotions, needs and rights and your own personal experiences.

Gradually, the training widens into analysing children's future needs, and, in the light of this, your own projects and programmes.

At the end of the day, and at the bottom of the pyramid, you learn about tools to help you further improve how you work with children.

As different people with different backgrounds respond differently to the exercises, the programme is meant to be flexible. You may end up using less time for one exercise and more on another. The lunch and break schedule can also be changed as appropriate.

The training is highly participatory as every exercise is based on your own input and experiences. This is why it is very important for you to respect and acknowledge each other's opinions and input.

I would also like to encourage you to treat anything told during the training as confidential. This will make it easier for all of us to volunteer honest examples that we can greatly learn from.

Step 2:
Ask if you have any questions or suggestions. If you do and you find that they are feasible and relevant, include them in the programme.

Step 3:
Let everybody say their names. If they are from different organisations, also have them say the name of their organisation and their role in the organisation.

NB: If the participants already know each other, just have them say their names and something about a topic chosen by the facilitator, for example, what they do in their spare time, what they had for breakfast this morning, what their favourite subject in school was or something else. It is important that every participant in the room speaks right from the beginning as it promotes bonding and the participants develop a sense of belonging that makes them feel safe and at ease.

Step 4:
Tell your own name and a few words about your own background for carrying out this training.

NB: If the participants already know you, you may skip step 4.
PRIOR TO TRAINING
Before the training starts, write the following on three separate pieces of paper.

On the first piece of paper write a true statement about yourself.

On the second piece of paper write another true statement about yourself.

On the third piece of paper write an untrue statement about yourself.

NB: All three statements have to be probable, but not something that the other participants already know.

Example:
- Every night I sleep under a mosquito net.
- I never watch TV.
- When I was a child I was beaten by my parents.

Keep the three pieces of paper hidden.

Step 1:
Facilitator manuscript
If you do not know each other, this fun ice breaker will help you to do just that. If you already know each other, you will get to know each other even better.

Step 2:
Divide the participants into groups of 3-4 people.

Step 3:
Facilitator manuscript
Everyone needs to have three pieces of paper.

On the first piece of paper secretly write a true statement about yourself.

On the second piece of paper secretly write another true statement about yourself.

On the third piece of paper secretly write an untrue statement about yourself.

All three statements have to be probable, but not something that your colleagues already know.

Afterwards, you have to guess which statements are right and which one is wrong.

Provide participants with an example shown in step 4:

Step 4:
Show the three statements you already prepared in advance and let the participants guess which one is untrue.

Ask the participants why they guessed the way they did.

Briefly explain a bit about the background for your statements.

Tell the participants that they have thirty minutes to do their group work.

Step 5:
Let the groups work while you visit each group.

Listen to see if they understand what to do and if they work well.

Explain what they are supposed to do again in the individual groups if there is any doubt.

Encourage the group members to discuss why they guessed the way they did.

Encourage the group members to explain briefly the background for their statements.

Step 6:
Facilitator manuscript:
Now you know each other a bit better. This will help you during the day when we discuss many other issues that also relate to your personal experiences.
CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PROVERBS

PRIOR TO TRAINING

Write the following questions on flip-chart paper in the language of the participants:

1. Which proverbs, sayings and statements still have value in your culture? Why?
2. Which proverbs, sayings and statements are no longer valid in your culture? Why?
3. Which ones see children as people who need love, affection and care?
4. Which ones see children as people who only have duties and no rights?

Keep the flip-chart hidden until step 6.

Prepare a list of proverbs from your own culture and, if possible, from the participants’ culture. Use step 3 as inspiration.

Step 1: Facilitator manuscript

Perceptions of children and childhood and opinions about child rearing are mirrored in our language and culture. Even if we are not aware of it, old sayings, proverbs and generally accepted statements still guide us when we deal with children. Or do they? This is something we will look into in the first exercise.

Can anyone give me an example of a proverb, saying or statement about children in your country?

Step 2:

Let the participants come up with examples.

Step 3: Facilitator manuscript

Old proverbs exist in almost all cultures. Here are some examples. (Provide your own examples or use the ones given here.)

1. “Children are to be seen, not heard.” What does that mean?
   Or
   2. “You always hurt the one you love”? How would you interpret that?

Step 4:

Let the participants discuss the interpretation of the two examples.

Step 5:

Divide the participants into groups of 2-5 people.

Step 6: Facilitator manuscript

Now it is your turn to find proverbs, sayings and statements about children from your culture.

Each group should find five proverbs, sayings or statements about children. List them on a piece of paper and use these questions to guide your discussion.

Step 7:

Put the flip-chart paper with the questions on the flip-chart stand or on a wall where each of the groups can see it.

Tell the participants that they have thirty minutes to do the group work.

Help the participants read and understand the questions.

Let the groups work, but visit each group.

Listen to see if they understand what to do and if they are working well.

Explain what they are supposed to do again in the individual groups if there is any doubt.

Be ready to answer questions throughout the group work.

Step 8:

When the groups are finished, let them share their results in plenary.

Step 9:

Ask the participants:

What would life for children in your country be like if the negative proverbs did not exist?
PRIOR TO TRAINING

Write the following questions on flip-chart paper in the language of the participants:

1. Do you remember a special place from when you were growing up? A place with special memories? A place where you felt safe and happy?
2. Was there an adult when you were growing up who was very important to you? Take your time and think carefully. This person might be a school teacher, a family member, a neighbour, a parent or another person.
3. Why was this person so special to you? Do you remember any specific situation or event in which the person played a role?
4. What would that person say about you today if he or she saw you in your daily life?

Then consider an example from your own life and analyse the person and the situation using these four questions.

For example:

1. My grandparents had an old house in the village. All the children played there together. We could climb trees and swim in the pond, and my grandmother would serve my favourite dishes every night.
2. My grandmother.
3. My grandmother, who was a patient person, would always hug me and tell me I was beautiful and clever. If I made a mistake, she would never scold me, but always explain to me why it was a mistake. We would talk together about how I could avoid making the same mistake in the future. One time, I strayed too far away from my grandparents’ village and I couldn’t find my way home. Feeling very scared, I was too shy to ask someone to help me. When I finally found my way home, it was already dark and my grandparents were dreadfully worried. My grandmother just hugged me and asked me what had happened. After telling her the whole story, we agreed that in the future I would not leave the village alone.
4. She would be so proud of me because I have chosen to work with children and child rights and because she loved children more than anyone I know.

Keep your example in mind and the flip-chart paper hidden until step 2.

NB: Prepare yourself mentally – this exercise sometimes provokes powerful emotions and reactions. This can seem threatening so leave enough time to be able to listen to the participants at the end of the exercise if they wish to tell their stories or share their memories.

It is also important to have a tea break after this exercise.

Step 1:
Facilitator manuscript

As the previous exercise shows, old proverbs, sayings and statements do, to some extent, still guide us in our ways of being with children.

This is also true regarding our individual childhood experiences.

By bringing up your own memories from childhood and the resulting emotions that arise, you may be able to better understand your own behaviour as an adult. You will also be able to understand how important what adults say and do to children are.

Step 2:

Put the flip-chart paper you prepared in advance on the wall or on the flip-chart stand.

Go through the questions with the participants and answer each question using the example you prepared.

Step 3:

Tell the participants that they are to work in pairs and that everyone should find a partner that he or she would like to talk to.

If your participants come from a culture where you assume that mixing the two genders will make some participants feel uncomfortable when they have to tell their personal stories, you may want to recommend that people pair up with someone of their own gender.

If some of the participants prefer to sit somewhere outside the training room, they can do this too.

Tell the participants that they have 30 minutes for this exercise.

Step 4:

Let the groups get to work while you visit each group once in the very beginning.
Listen to see if they understand what to do and if they are working well.

Explain what they are supposed to do again in the individual groups if there is any doubt, and then leave the groups alone until they finish talking.

In the meantime, prepare a flip-chart paper with two columns. Write the word POSITIVE in the first column and NEGATIVE in the second column.

Hang the flip-chart paper on the wall or the stand.

When the groups are finished talking, tell the participants to return to the training room.

**Step 5:**
Ask the participants how they are doing.

If one or more participants is sad, ask if they would like to share their stories. If they do not want to share their stories, respect this and inform them that they are welcome to tell their stories to you after the session.

**Step 6:**
Ask the participants which adjectives they used when they told their stories to each other. Adjectives are words used to describe things, for example, another person or emotions, for instance: sweet, angry, bad, happy, caring, careless, mean, good etc.

List all the adjectives under POSITIVE or NEGATIVE on your flip chart.

**Summing up:**

**Facilitator manuscript**
This exercise sometimes makes people recall some memories they thought they had forgotten, which can be very emotional. These emotions are very real and may feel threatening because you are not used to them. But they are not necessarily a problem; they demonstrate how important it is that adults treat children in a way that will mean that they will primarily have positive memories.

If we always keep in mind the situations and the behaviour of the people who made us sad or happy in our own childhoods, then we know exactly how to treat children to give them a negative or positive experience.

**AFTER THE EXERCISE**
After the exercise you should have either a lunch or a tea break, so the participants have time to recover if the exercise has made them feel out of sorts.

If someone appears very sad or quiet, gently offer to hear their story. If they do not wish to tell their story, tell them that you can see that they feel sad and that you understand and respect that they do not feel like talking about it.

If they volunteer their story, find a quiet place, just listen, tell them that you understand and explain that it is normal to react strongly to these kinds of memories. Do not share their story with others.
5.0 THE CHANGING WORLD

AHEAD OF THE TRAINING

Draw the stairs and write the five questions on a flip chart paper in the participants’ language:

1. Discuss how your parents learned the things that they could not learn from their parents. Who taught them? Where did they learn them?

2. Discuss how you learned the things that you could not learn from your parents. Who taught you? Where did you learn them?

3. Discuss how children in your project are going to learn the future skills they need that you can’t teach them. Who will teach them? Where will they learn these skills?

4. Discuss what you can teach children in your project so that they are prepared in the best possible way to meet future obligations, duties, responsibilities, relations, competences and skills.

5. List five competences you believe children will need in order to meet future demands.

Keep the flip-chart paper hidden. Prepare an example like the one in step 2.

Step 1:
Facilitator manuscript

Your grandparents lived a different life than your parents. And you live differently than your parents. The world and what it takes to have a good life change all the time, which is why it is important that we prepare the children of today for the future of tomorrow.

Step 2:

Ask the participants:

Picture what your parents were like when they were the same age as you are now. In what ways does your life differ from theirs?

If the participants have difficulties understanding what you mean, give an example from your own life.

Example:

My grandmother, who was a housewife, only went to school for a few years. She had five children and rarely left the house. She never worked outside the home. My mother stopped going to school in tenth grade. As a girl she was supposed to marry and was not allowed to study further. Although her parents didn’t like it, she applied for an internship and worked full time until she retired. She married and had two children.

I have an advanced degree and I’m financially independent. I can choose to marry, or I can choose not to.

Children who grow up today need even better education. If they want to have well-paid, exciting jobs, they will have to study even more, and maybe even opt for a PhD. Even if they marry, they may decide to have just one child.

Step 3:

Hang the poster that you prepared in advance on the wall or on the flip-chart stand.

Divide the participants into groups of 2-5. If possible, each group should consist of participants working with the same projects or programme.

Tell the participants to start at the bottom of the steps, which symbolise generational succession, and walk up step by step. On each step they should discuss the questions. The participants do not have to write anything down.
Tell the participants that they have 30 minutes to do their group work. Make it clear that they only have to discuss questions 1 to 4.

**Step 4:**
When the participants have finished discussing questions 1 to 4, provide each group with a piece of flip-chart paper and ask them to list five competences they believe children will need to meet the demands of the future.

Tell the participants that they have twenty minutes for this activity.

**Step 5:**
Post the groups’ flip-chart papers on the wall and go through each competence while you ask the group members what the possibilities are for the children involved in their project or teaching programme to develop these competences.

If a group's project very strongly emphasises one or more competences, put a big tick next to those competences.

If a group's project has an average level of focus on one or more of the competences mentioned, put a small tick next to those competences.

If a group's project does not specifically focus on one or more of the competences mentioned, do not add any ticks next to these competences.

**Step 6:**
Acknowledge that the participants are making important contributions for children regardless of whether their competences are marked with numerous big ticks or not.

Also tell them that in the coming exercises they will have the opportunity to analyse and develop their projects even further as well as discuss how they can help the children boost the competences they need.
PRIOR TO TRAINING
Collect or buy numerous small items such as rubber bands, bottle caps, toys, coins, stones, pens, sweets, paper clips etc., all depending on what is available in your area. Put the items into 2-5 bags.

Write the following questions on flip-chart paper in the language of the participants:

1. Using the small items collected, verbally describe the background of your project:
   a. Who developed the project and what is their role in the project?
   b. What is the project about?
   c. What is your project’s objective?
   d. What is your role in the project?

2. Using the small items collected, verbally describe the parts of the project where you feel you play the most important role.

3. Using the small items collected, verbally describe your biggest challenges in the project.

4. Using the small items collected, verbally describe what the project would be like if it was the ideal project.

Keep the flip-chart paper hidden.

**Step 1:**
**Facilitator manuscript**
In the last exercise you discussed which competences children need and how your projects and programmes help them achieve these competences. Even if your project and programme are doing exceedingly well, a project can always become even better, especially if we have good analytical tools.

If you want to pinpoint the strengths and weakness of a project, “framatizing” is one way to proceed.

Framatizing is a combination of the words “to frame” and “dramatizing.” To frame means to formulate or to shape a project, while dramatizing is to act out the project in a visual manner.

**Step 2:**
Put all the small items on a table or on the floor, depending on how the participants are sitting, and hang the flip-chart paper with the questions that you prepared in advance on the wall.

**Step 3:**
**Facilitator manuscript**
Here is an example of framatizing in which I will framatize our training course. The first questions are:

1. Using the small items collected, verbally describe the background of your project:
   a. Who developed the project and what is their role in the project?
   b. What is the project about?
   c. What is your project’s objective?
   d. What is your role in the project?

2. Using the small items collected, verbally describe the parts of the project where you feel you play the most important role.

3. Using the small items collected, verbally describe your biggest challenges in the project.

4. Using the small items collected, verbally describe what the project would be like if it was the ideal project.

Take the item that symbolises you and put it in front of all the items representing the participants and tell them that your role is to help them understand the training – and this is also your most important role.

One by one, move the items that represent the participants up and down a few times and explain that the biggest challenge is to make the training fun and worthwhile for the participants.

Take seven items and say that they represent the seven days of the week and move the items that represent the participants from day to day. Tell the participants that, ideally, analytical and sensitization discussions and exercises should be part of everyday life.

**Step 5:**
Tell the participants to form groups.

If some participants work in the same organisations on the same project or programme or in the same area, let them work together.

If the participants are from different projects or programmes, even different organisations and areas, they can form groups according to other similarities, i.e. whether they work with child labourers, child sexual exploitation, abuse and trafficking, in rural areas, in...
urban areas, provide education or work with empowerment. The more aspects the participants have in common, the easier it is to relate to the other participants’ projects in this exercise.

When the groups are formed, tell them to take time to discuss and visualise the replies to each of the questions. Underline that no talking is allowed unless accompanied by showing which persons and processes the items represent.

If all of the groups consist of participants from the same project, then give them an hour for this activity. Afterwards, the participants can illustrate their project together and present it to the other groups.

If the participants are from different projects, give them two hours for this activity. Afterwards, the participants will have to illustrate their own project while the rest of the groups listen and ask exploratory questions.

When the groups start working, visit each group and listen to see if they understand what to do and if they are working well.

Explain what they are supposed to do again in the individual groups if there is any doubt.

If you notice that some participants only talk and do not use any items, stop them and ask them to start all over again and include the items.

Step 6:
If all of the participants in each group are from the same project and therefore have framatized together, let one group at a time demonstrate their project verbally with the items.

If all of the participants are from different projects, ask two or three of them to framatize their project in plenary.

Encourage all the participants to ask exploratory questions.

You can also take an item and change the setup a bit by asking what effect framatizing would have on the project.

Example:
What effect would it have had if the children had been involved in working out the project document?
How could you have handled this problem differently?
How can you prevent the same problem from happening again?
How did the parents react to the project?
Understanding children

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Café

Prior to training

Depending on what the culture in your country does regarding meals and snacks, decide if the participants are going to have snacks or dinner during this final exercise. Then, coordinate with the people who are helping you arrange the training.

Also decide what to call this exercise. In Europe people think of cafés as cozy places to have a quick meal and a cup of coffee or tea. In some countries cafés do not exist, but they have tea stalls, small restaurants or other places where people usually meet and sit around to talk informally. Select a suitable name for the exercise and use this name throughout the exercise.

Depending on how many framing groups you have, make sure that an extra room is available with 2-5 tables. If you do not have an extra room, make sure that your training room also can accommodate 2-5 tables for the café group work.

While the participants are doing their framing group work, cover the tables completely with flip-chart paper, like a tablecloth.

Make sure that there are markers on all the tables.

Optional:

Decorate with flowers and play some quiet music on a laptop.

Design posters with the name of the café and a price list – just like in a real café.

If you decide to play the role of waiter or waitress for your café guests, fold a piece of paper to make a chef’s hat.

Step 1:

When you are still in the training room, ask the participants if there are issues they would like to discuss further. Most likely, there are questions concerning, for example framing or the changing world, that the participants were very interested in discussing during the training, which means you may also want to remind the participants about them.

List all suggested issues on flip-chart paper and select the issue(s) that most participants would like to discuss.

Step 2:

Invite all the participants to visit the “local café” to relax a bit after a hard day.

Ask them to sit in their framing groups.

Facilitator manuscript

Welcome to our café. We will of course make sure that you are served well. But this is also your chance to discuss the remaining issues in an informal manner.

Have each group select one person to act as the table host.

Now discuss the issue(s) you selected a few minutes ago in the training room. Write all of your ideas, questions and solutions to problems on the paper tablecloths.

You have 45 minutes to finish your discussions.

Step 3:

Serve tea, snacks or a meal while the groups work.

Step 4:

When the groups have finished eating and discussing, tell the table hosts to remain at their tables.

Everybody else have to move to a new table, where the table host welcomes the new guests and briefly shares the main ideas, questions and solutions to the problems his or her group has discussed.

Encourage the guests to link and connect their own ideas, questions and solutions to their new host’s input.

Tell the participants that they have 15 minutes for this activity.

Step 5:

Tell the guests to return to their own tables and share their new ideas, questions and solutions with their own table host.

Tell the participants that they have 15 minutes for this activity.

Step 6:

When the groups have finished talking, wind up the discussion:

Facilitator manuscript

Thanks to a visit to our café, you all have developed new ideas and ways forward that can help make your project even better. All the things you have discussed and written on the tablecloths can help you develop new plans of action or update them – maybe even new projects.

So – take your paper tablecloth with you and use it to make your project even better.

Step 7:

Ask the participants if they have any questions or comments.
Step 1:
Tell the participants that the training course will end in 20 minutes, but before they leave you would be grateful if they would give you their honest feedback so that you can improve the training for next time.

- Ask the participants what the best parts of the training were.
- Ask the participants what they found to be the most surprising.
- Ask the participants what in particular made them feel excited.

When the participants have shared their viewpoints, ask them:
- Is there anything that you would change if you were to carry out the training?

Encourage the participants to provide ideas on how to improve the training.

Step 2:
Thank the participants for their contributions and tell them that the training is over.
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