

Training Manual



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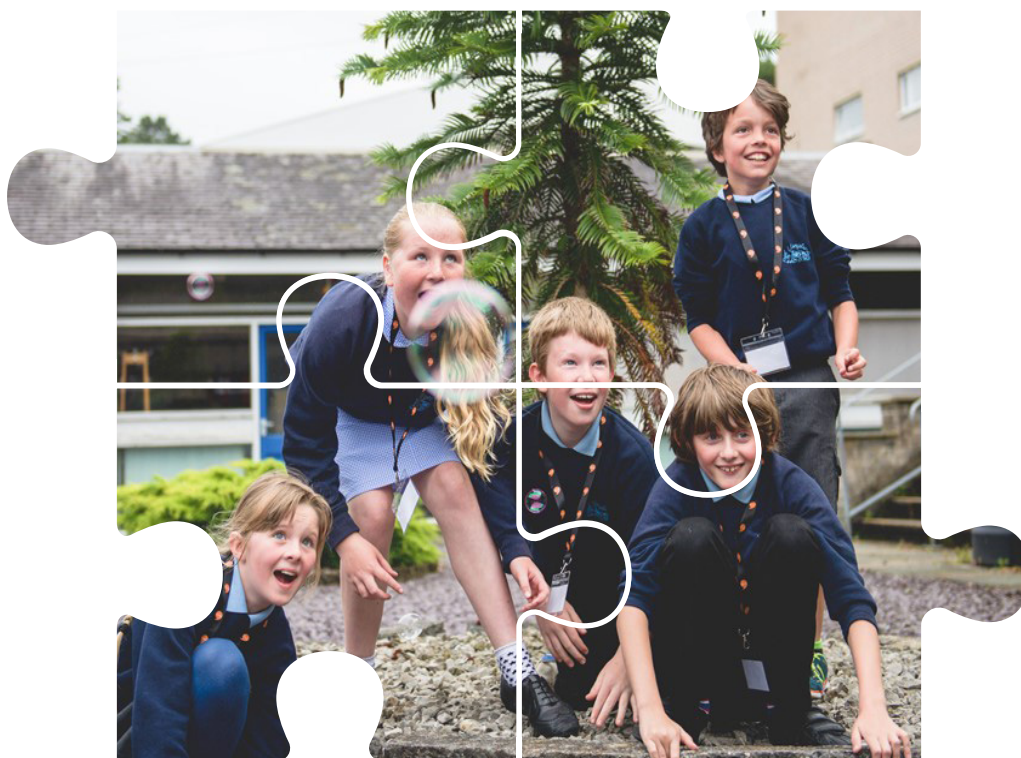


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‘Working with children to build a world fit for everyone’

Lleisiau Bach Little Voices is the approach used by the Wales Observatory on Human Rights of Children and Young People to empower children as researchers and as advocates, to help embed human rights in children’s everyday places and to enable age-inclusive co-production of change.

[The Wales Observatory](#) is an initiative based at Swansea and Bangor Universities, working with a wide range of partners and disciplines to help ensure that the human rights of children and young people are respected, protected and fulfilled.



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Introduction and Background

The concept of Little Voices developed from research with children under 11 for non-governmental reporting to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. (*Why Do Children's Ages Go Up Not Down?* 2007, Funky Dragon). Since then, Little Voices has grown through several stages:

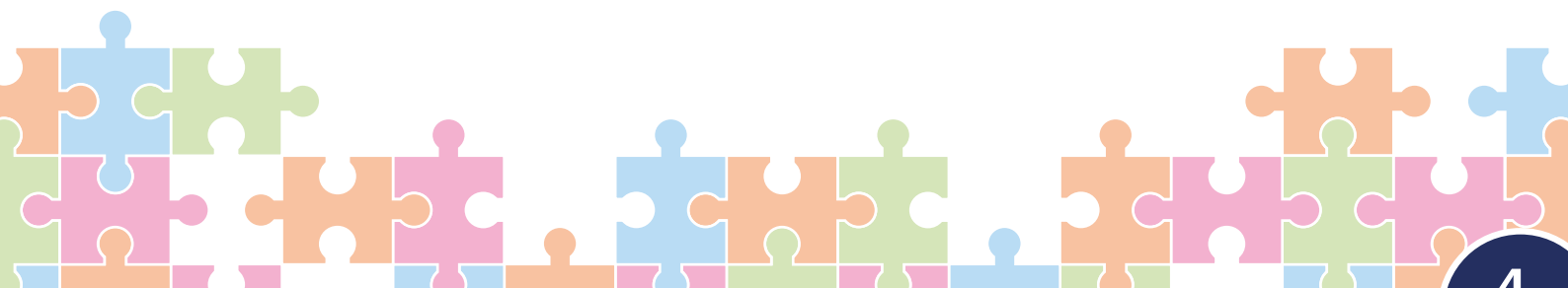
- 1. 2010 – 11: Children as Researchers.** Funky Dragon and Welsh Local Government Association. Development of a methods and resources pack.
- 2. 2012 – 14: Little Voices Big Choices.** Funky Dragon, with grant funding from Big Lottery People and Places, delivering and testing the method with groups of children from 12 local authorities in schools and community groups across Wales. (*Little Voices, Big Choices*, 2014, Funky Dragon)
- 3. 2014 – 2017: Little Voices Shouting Out.** Begun by Funky Dragon with further grant funding from Big Lottery People and Places, this project transferred in October 2014, to the Observatory at Swansea University. In this phase, the method was used to produce a 'global-first': a child-led report by under-11s to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (*Little Voices Shouting Out*, 2015, Wales Observatory) as well as to deliver local research projects throughout Wales, producing local impact and enabling the further testing and evaluation of the method.
- 4. 2017-2020: Little Voices Being Heard.** Aimed at producing sustainable application of the approach in diverse spheres of activity relevant to community action and community development, Little Voices Being Heard moves beyond the original concept of empowering children as researchers and reporters. It aims to develop capacity for age-inclusive co-production of change informed by children's research. This requires developing capacity of adults as well as children, training of professionals in the method and its application to their work and support for follow-up projects to secure impact.

In November 2016 the project was a finalist at the Engage Awards sponsored by the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement, against high quality competition from universities throughout the UK. The judges' appraisal of the project included the following:

'The panel felt this project took an exemplary approach to involving young people – as young as 7 – as active researchers, using research to reflect critically on issues that really mattered to them, and to communicate their findings to key decision makers.'

The Observatory at Swansea and Bangor Universities is working to embed the methodology in research and teaching as well as continuing to support human rights monitoring and community action. The approach can be used in many different settings and disciplines. It is widely adaptable to support organisations wishing to engage more effectively with children and young people.

This Manual provides information about the approach and resources that can be used in putting it into practice. We welcome inquiries and feedback: see the contact details at the end of the Manual.



Children as Researchers

The involvement of children in research needs to be placed within the context of an international rights-based framework within which children (0 – 18) as well as adults have rights. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) emphasises the evolving capacities of children (for example Article 5), and the responsibility of parents, families, communities, government, public bodies and professionals to guide and support them to exercise their rights. The Convention requires the recognition and fulfilment of children's participative rights as well as their right to be kept safe and for provision of help according to their particular needs.

The UNCRC informs our methodology and the way in which we put it into practice. It also provides the framework for the conduct of each project. The Convention's provisions are indivisible and interdependent but it is particularly important in doing research with children to note the following requirements:

- ★ The child who is capable of forming his or her own views to be assured the right to express views freely on all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child (Article 12);
- ★ Children to have the right to freedom of expression, to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media of the child's choice (Article 13);
- ★ Respect for the child's right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion (Article 14);
- ★ Recognition of the child's right to freedom of association and peaceful assembly (Article 15);
- ★ Protection from unlawful interference with the child's privacy, family, home and correspondence (Article 16);
- ★ Children to have access to information and material aimed at promoting their well-being and to be protected from information and material injurious to their well-being (Article 17);
- ★ Children must be protected from exploitation prejudicial to their welfare (Article 36);
- ★ The highest professional, health and safety standards must be ensured at all times (Article 3.3).



Research has been described as ‘formalised curiosity’; ‘poking and prying with a purpose’ (Zora Neale Hurston). Children have long been objects of research undertaken by professional researchers in diverse fields, using a variety of methods, but since the UNCRC was adopted in 1989 interest has grown in involving children in research using participative methods which enable the children to play an active part in the investigation.

Whatever the methods used, all research must be based on clear ethical guidelines and robust measures must be in place to protect any children who are involved. A useful reference point for child protection and research is the [NSPCC’s guide](#).

The Lleisiau Bach Little Voices Process

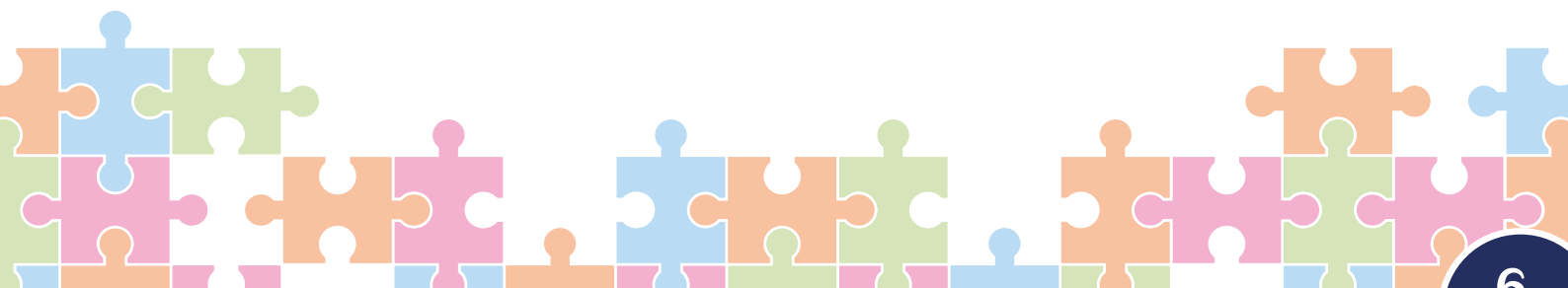
The process works through a series of stages. These stages can be delivered:

- ★ Over several weeks or
- ★ Over 2-3 days, or
- ★ Otherwise adapted to suit the needs of the particular group.

The method deploys 6 thematic stages.

Stage	Theme	Indicative Length
1.	The rights approach Selecting the research question	2-4 hours
2.	Choosing research methods Planning research	2 hours
3.	Data collection and analysis	2 hours
4.	Planning for age-inclusive co-production	2 hours
5.	Follow up with children	2 hours
6.	Age-inclusive co-production and future planning	2 hours

Before stage 1 it is essential to undertake the pre visit tasks as set out in the [Ethical Protocol-Checklist](#) for project delivery.



Choosing a research group

The research group may be:

- ★ Self-selected
- ★ Nominated by others
- ★ Identified for a specific reason (belonging to a specific project or category)

If you are running a project in school, the head teacher/ teacher may assign the children

- ★ School Council/eco-committee/school management representative
- ★ Children's Commissioner Super Ambassador
- ★ Rights Respecting champions

However you may wish to suggest offering the opportunity to all members of a class/project to put themselves forward, perhaps by children nominating themselves and holding a fair process that they could devise themselves. Or you might suggest deliberate targeting of children who are not involved in other projects or committees and might especially benefit from taking part. Each project is different, and in the end the choice of selection method is for agreement between you and the 'gatekeeper'.

How many children?

- ★ 6-8 children provides a good group size enabling all group members to take part effectively in delegated tasks. However, larger and smaller group sizes can be successful.

The first visit with children

During the first visit, it is important for the children to find out about the research project in as much detail as possible. Things to consider:

About you:

- ★ Who are you?
- ★ What is your role?
- ★ What organisation/group do you work for?
- ★ Where can they find out more information about you and your work? (Website, leaflet)
- ★ How to contact you
- ★ Ensure the children are given child friendly information on how to follow the right steps to make a complaint if they wish to do so.



About the research:

- ★ Why are you working with the children?
- ★ What will you/they be doing?
- ★ What do you hope the project will achieve?
- ★ Explain the research/project. Consider using a time-line, map out the amount of sessions
- ★ Explain the commitment needed from the children to be involved in the whole process (if possible).
- ★ How often will you be seeing them and for how long.
- ★ Who else will be working with you during sessions?
- ★ Keeping track: provide the children with a '**Research Diary**'; this will help them to understand what they will do in each session. It is also a way to record decisions made during sessions. The children and you can spend time at the end of each session to complete; reminding the children of the decisions they have made, what needs to be done by the next session and by whom.
- ★ Question and answer time: this will allow the children to think of any areas that you have not covered and time to talk about the project-hopes, fears, wishes, first thoughts.

About the children:

- ★ It is a good idea to play some getting to know you/icebreaker games
- ★ You may need to consider data collection:
 - Age
 - Gender
 - Background
 - Language
 - Specific needs

**About me activity sheet: this is a good way of exploring the children's identity that can also be used to collect the information above.*

- ★ You can also collect things like:
 - What the children are good at
 - What the children like doing in their spare time
 - Favourite things

This activity either can be on a template or added onto the research diaries.

**Remember to take a picture of the about me sheets or collect in diaries on this occasion for data collection.*

- ★ Pre-evaluation- this is the best time to find out information from the children that will help you track your outcomes/milestones/objectives but also gauge initial understanding of topic areas that you may wish to cover e.g. knowledge of research, children's rights, decision making, participation.



Stage 1: The rights approach

Time	Method	Resources
	Aim: To increase children's knowledge of the UNCRC, children's rights, participation and decision-making.	
	UNCRC and Children's rights	
10-15 mins	Presentation: Children's Rights Wales website Children Rights Wales training materials	Internet, Computer/Laptop
15 mins	What do children need? Activity: In groups ask the children to think about what a child needs: In groups, children to complete 1 sheet each. Group feedback. Sheet	What a child needs sheets: - At home - At school - Environment - Individual
10 mins	Exploring rights Facilitator to have pre prepared cut out rights cards (Children's Commissioners symbols cards) before session has started facilitator to hide the rights around the room. Activity: In pairs children to find the rights around the room and put them in the right setting (A4 sheets: individual, home, school, environment). Once all rights have been found, facilitator/children to read out some of the rights at each setting. Take a look at the Children's Commissioner rights poster and explore the rights in more detail.	Cut out rights cards (Children's Commissioner symbols cards) Use previous activity sheets (Individual, home, school, environment) Children's commissioner rights poster
5 mins	Why are Children's rights important? Activity: on a hand template write why it is important that children have rights.	Hand template



	Participation	
5 mins	<p>Shout out</p> <p>Question: What does participation mean?</p> <p>Participation is a right;</p> <p>Article 12 (respect for the views of the child)</p> <p><i>Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously.</i> UNICEF</p> <p>Show/read the ladder of participation and explain there are different ways children can participate.</p>	Unicef UNCRC summary
25 mins	<p>Ladder activity</p> <p>Pre-prepare 8 scenarios. Insert 1 scenario per balloon (8 balloons).</p> <p>Release 1 balloon at a time and play the music, get everyone to tap the balloon in to the air, explain that it should not touch the floor. When the music stops 1 person should be holding the balloon.</p> <p>Read out their scenario and the group has to decide what level of participation it is. Stick scenario to the right place on the A3 ladder.</p> <p>Ask pupils to think of a time when children may have been involved at this level in school.</p> <p>Repeat for each scenario.</p> <p>* * * Keep level 1 for last. Link to project lead to topic exploration.</p> <p>Repeat until all levels discussed.</p>	<p>Ladder of participation (Print A3) and Scenarios</p> <p>Balloons</p>
	Decision Making	
20 mins	<p>Ways to be involved in decision-making and who can help?</p> <p>Using the 'what decisions do/can you make sheet' Ask pupils to brainstorm ways they can and do make decisions in different settings.</p> <p>Using a different colour pen now brainstorm people who can/do help you make those decisions.</p>	What decisions do/can you make sheet
	<p>Additional resources</p> <p>Rights Fortune activity – instruct pupils to cut out template, fold into shape and work in pairs.</p>	Rights Fortune activity
	<p>Additional Information</p> <p>Children's rights</p> <p>Welsh Gov-UNCRC</p> <p>Childrens Commissioner for Wales</p> <p>UN Committee</p>	

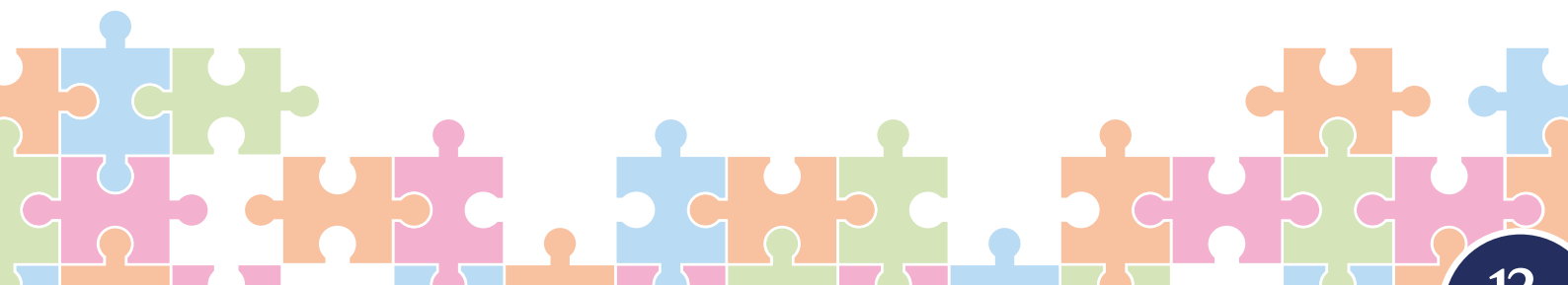


Selecting the research question

Time	Task	Resources
	Aim: To share methods of gathering data on research topics.	Instruction Sheet
20-30 mins	<p>See instruction sheet for how to run these activities:</p> <p>It is important to spend time on this activity. The more ideas you gather, the better it will help the children when choosing their research topics to explore in more detail.</p> <p>* If the children are finding this difficult, you may wish to visit www.lleisiaubach.org to show some of the topics chosen in previous projects.</p> <p>Ask the children to think about what they would like to change, make better, worry about, what they would like to raise awareness of and or what should children/adults be shouting out about for children?</p> <p>Choose 1 or more of the following methods:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Shouting out sheets - sheet The children can either write a list or draw their ideas on one or more than one sheet. * If the children draw you may wish to make a note of the topic as drawings can be interpreted differently. 2. School, community, world - sheet Cut out the pictures and attach them to separate flip chart. 3. Make a wish - sheet The children can write their wishes on cut outs and attach to flip chart. <p>The facilitator/teacher should make a list on flip chart during feedback to help the children when they vote on their top 3 topics to explore next.</p>	Pre prepared activities: Shouting out sheets Flip chart School community world pictures Wish cut outs Pens
5 mins	Pick top 3 by voting for their favourites	Flip chart, pens Voting dots cut into 3
20-30 mins	<p>Looking at the topic in depth:</p> <p>Choose one of the following methods:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tree activity You may wish to use the template or draw on flip chart. 2. Circles activity 3. Flowerpot activity 	Instruction Sheet Pre prepared activities on flip chart with materials
5 mins	Vote - Participants given 1 dot to vote on one topic to choose for their research	Sticky dot sheets

Stage 2: Choosing research methods

Time	Method	Resources
	<p>AIM: To share methods of research and decide on which methods would suit the research question.</p> <p>* Not all methods will be relevant to the research topic the children have chosen.</p>	
* 5-10 mins at each station	<p>You may want to refer to the research methods sheet, which has a brief explanation of all the methods below.</p> <p>In small groups or pairs each participate in the pre prepared station activities</p> <p>* You may wish to create your own resources for the participative stations</p> <p>Participative - stations</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Suggestion box 2. Questionnaire 3. Online Survey 4. Flip chart/graffiti walls <p>Digital - Facilitator to run</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Plickers (pre-set up your own test questions). Download a step by step guide on the link above. 2. Online survey (pre-set up your own test online survey). 3. Video (Children to video each other answering pre prepared questions). 4. Taking photographs (you may wish to instruct children to capture an emotion –happy/sad through a still image while they are this station). <p>Ideally after taking part at each station you would have a discussion on each about strengths and weaknesses before making final vote.</p> <p>Pupils given 1 sticky dot to make their choice of research method.</p>	<p>Pre prepared activities:</p> <p>Suggestion Box and /question cards</p> <p>Questionnaire</p> <p>Flip chart/Graffiti wall</p> <p>Drawing activity</p> <p>One device iPad/phone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Online survey - Plickers cards - Survey Monkey <p>How To</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plickers How To <p>Research method choice sheet</p> <p>Sticky dots</p>



Planning research

Time	Task	Resources
	Aim: To explore how to plan research with children.	
10 mins on points 1, 3, 4, and 5 15-20 mins on point 2.	Whole group discussion Facilitator to work through each numbered section on flip chart <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Who do you want to take part in your research? What do you want to ask? *You may wish to refer back to the issues/problems from the previous topic exploration activities. Facilitator to bring questions together When will the research be carried out? How will it be carried out? What else needs to be done? How Why	5WH question sheet Pens Flip chart Post Its for developing questions
	If working in a school setting it is best practice to speak with link teacher/head teacher before leaving to make sure they are on board with the research plan and that all details are ok to go ahead.	



Stage 3: Data collection and analysis

Prior to data collection, the children must be made aware of research ethics and think about how they will demonstrate these during their data collection activities.

[Research ethics Activity - sentences agree/disagree](#)

[Participation standards-checklist activity](#)

Data Collection:

The children should be involved as much as possible as to where and how the research methods chosen will be implemented and should undertake as much of the prepared work as possible.

Support may be needed whilst conducting the research-this should have been taken into consideration and planned during the planning stages.

Remember safety issues with your group and make sure **AGAIN** that all children are aware of them, if any.

The amount of time spent on data analysis will depend on how much information has been gathered and how many methods have been used.

Use these [data analysis tips](#) to help you and the children with the analysis process.



Stage 4: Planning for age-inclusive co-production

Co-production meetings: adults and children working to achieve change together

Developing the necessary capacity of children and adults for effective, age-inclusive participation in community development and community action.

- ★ We use **‘Effective participation’** to mean a process in which all participants choose to engage and which results in influence on decisions or actions as well as producing positive effects on the individuals taking part.
- ★ By **‘community development’** we mean making changes to improve the life of communities – such changes may need to be driven at organisational, local community Wales, UK or international, or a combination of these.
- ★ By **‘community action’**, we mean collaborative or joint actions aimed at driving such changes.

There are several different definitions of co-production, usually linking it to public service delivery. As a starting point we like the following quotations from the web-page of the Scottish Co-production Network¹:

‘It is about involving people not only in the rowing and the steering of the boat, but also in actually building it. (Mr Sandy Watson OBE DL, Chairman NHS Tayside)

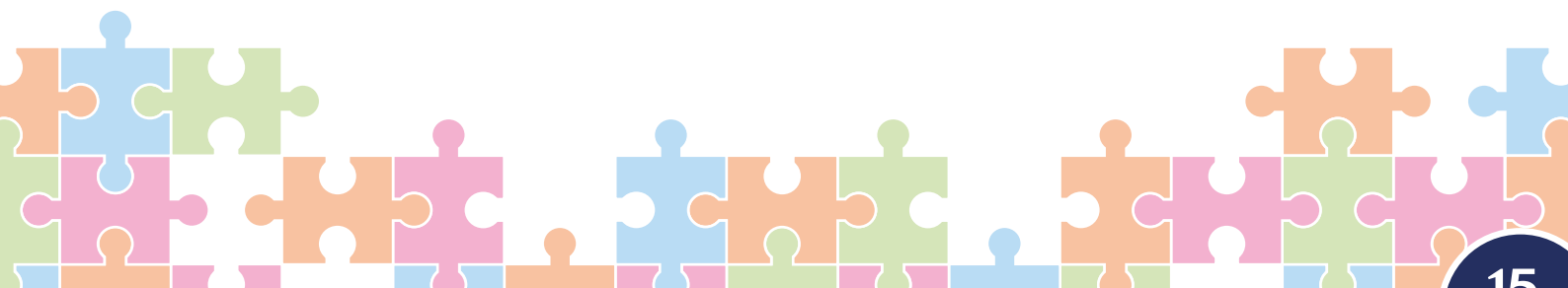
... It’s about combining our mutual strengths and capacities so that we can work with one another on an equal basis to achieve positive change’. (Fiona Garven, Director, Scottish Community Development Centre)

Co-production meetings should be held during all research projects. They will bring children, professionals and decision-makers together to act, informed by the children’s research, in order to make changes that will improve the lives of people in their communities.

The project manager/project lead worker should utilise all relevant contacts and networks to connect with relevant professionals, researchers, decision-makers or other helpers to ensure a mix of participants suitable for the chosen topic and best able to connect with the appropriate level of decision-making.

¹‘What is co-production?’ Scottish Co-production Network

<http://www.coproductionsotland.org.uk/about/what-is-co-production/>



Co-production Meetings

In the co-production meetings the children and the selected adults will share power and work together in equal partnership, to identify what changes should be made and how the changes can be brought about. Actions and plans will be agreed.

Organising a co-production meeting:

- ★ **With children** research, target and invite the co-producers: (based on work done during the first three stages, especially Stage 3: Analysis and 'What Next?' link to professionals, practitioners, decision makers)
- ★ Children to create an invitation (Publisher, Canva, Piktochart) informing co-producers a time, location and brief of meeting.
- ★ The project lead should then invite the co-producers to become involved tracking co-producers confirmation of attendance.
- ★ Informing and preparing the co-producers: The project lead provides each invited co-producer with a written brief which includes an outline of the *Little Voices* methodology and the aims of your research project, a summary of the work that has been done in the local project and any specific input sought from the particular invitee. If the children have produced a report, this could be sent on before the co-production meeting.



Debrief with children

- ★ Ensure the children are well informed about the process and structure of the co-production meeting (date, time, attendees, what the children will be doing).
- ★ Review activities, tasks, presentation method, time line, AOB, questions.
- ★ Hopes and fears activity-you may wish to offer the children the opportunity to write their hopes and fears/worries on post its and attach to flip chart. This will give the opportunity for the facilitator/teacher to iron out anything else the children may need clarity on. It is also an opportunity for the children to get excited about the activities they have planned.



Co-production meeting with children and adults:

Invited co-producers meet the local project group. An exchange of information about the research, findings and recommendations are presented and a plan of action is made with children and adults working together. Clear actions are noted about the roles of the co-producers in supporting the children to help bring about the changes they want. Actions are agreed tasks are allocated.

Time	Task	Resources
	Aim: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To connect children and co-producers-working together to bring about change based on research and recommendations. 2. To share research and recommendations of research. 3. To co-produce actions and tasks to take forward implementing change. 	
5 mins	Getting to know you: children and co-producers Name. Role. Organisation/school, favourite... Pair up, find out the answers and during feedback-introduce the other person.	Ice breaker game
5-15 mins	Presentation: Children to present research, findings and recommendations. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PowerPoint, iMovie, Speech, 2. Hand out reports and recommendations 	Presentation iMovie Reports Recommendations
30 mins	Producing actions and tasks: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Piece of flip chart per recommendation -children and adults to work together in pairs/small groups to write ideas on post its. Post it's to be placed on relevant recommendation flip chart. 2. How? How? How? Per recommendation (Whole Group) 3. Exploration wheel per recommendation in small groups-carousel <p>*Each activity should cover ideas for action, task list and lead person (co-producers, children, Project lead) to take forward.</p>	Flip chart Pens Recommendations
15 mins	Debrief –Facilitator to explain to the children their role in helping to take forward actions and tasks and to ensure the commitments is recorded on a commitment pledge from co-producers. Make sure the co-producer pledges are collected in and co-producers are informed that they will be sent the information by the facilitator/teacher.	Co-producer pledge-signed

Stage 5: Follow up with children

(Children alone)

- ★ After a pause during which agreed actions are carried out, the project lead meets again with the local project group (children) to review progress and prepare for the next meeting with the co-producers.

Time	Task	Resources
	Aim: Co-production activity: review progress and agree further actions. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Map activity since co-production meeting 2. Review actions 3. Review tasks 	
45 mins	Time Line activity <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Whole project useful to remind the children of the research process 2. Review list of recommendations 3. Review list of tasks and actions made at co-production meeting -checklist of implementation activity using the road map templates. 	Time line (drawn on flip chart) from start of project to now with space to input future actions Actions and tasks list from co-production meeting (each individual recommendation or task on a cut out card) Road map templates
15 mins	What now? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What has not been achieved/what still needs to be developed? 2. What do the children want to happen? 	Post Its
45 mins	Holding to account <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Plan and prepare impact meeting 2: How do they want to present their review to co-producers? (Presentation, report/display). What resources will be needed? 	
15 mins	Debrief Explain to the children that this information will be shared with the co-producers before their next meeting. This will enable the co-producers to check up with relevant people what has happened/not happened, what is still being worked on/potential things still being planned. Facilitator/teacher to finalise the children's review of implementation (presentation, report, display). This visual will be presented at the final age inclusive co-productive planning meeting.	Facilitator to organise Stage 6 meeting. Inform children and school/organisation of arrangements for Stage 6 (venue, time, attendees)

Stage 6: Age-inclusive co-production and future planning

Coproduction: adults and children working together

- ★ Invited co-producers and the local project group meet to review progress and agree further actions.

During this meeting, children and or facilitator/teacher to present the review of implementation visual to co-producers (presentation, report, display).

Using the **'Producing actions and tasks'** activity from the first Co-production meeting, children and co-producers to work together, agree an action plan to further develop/support/act on measures to implement the changes the children have presented.

- ★ Piece of flip chart per recommendation/task
 - children and adults to work together in pairs/small groups to write ideas on post its.
 - Post it's to be placed on relevant recommendation flip chart.
- ★ How? How? How? Per recommendation (Whole Group)
- ★ [Exploration wheel](#) per recommendation in small groups-carousel

*Each activity should cover ideas for action, task list and lead person (co-producers, children, Project lead) to take forward.

It would be a good idea for the co-producers to sign the ['Co-producer pledge'](#) to track and monitor further actions and tasks.





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