



## ACTIVITIES AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

# HANDS AND FEET

*This activity provides background information about the participants, their family situations and the things that are most important to them.*

**MATERIALS: PAPER, PENCIL AND ART SUPPLIES  
(PAINT OR COLOURED PENCILS)**

### **DIRECTIONS:**

1. Participants are given pencil and a medium sized piece of paper and asked to trace their hand or foot.
2. Around this outline they are asked to provide information about their lives. For younger children, this is best done through questions. Examples: number of people in family, favourite colour, activity, fruit, or time of day. Youth generally prefer to choose the information they will provide.
3. If art supplies are available, participants can decorate these prints, using patterns and designs.

*Note:* This activity works best on the first day of a workshop. It is a pleasant, non-threatening project that gives participants the opportunity to explore colour and use their creativity. It demonstrates that the workshop is focussed on all aspects of their lives, not just the difficulties.



**ACTIVITIES AT THE  
INDIVIDUAL LEVEL**

## GUIDED WRITING EXERCISES

*These writing exercises provide personal information about how young people's lives have been affected by war. While they lack the scientific accuracy of a formal survey, the participants' responses are very informative.*

**MATERIALS: PAPER AND PENCIL**

**DIRECTIONS:**

**Method A: Questions**

Participants are asked to answer a series of questions. These are presented as unfinished sentences that they complete. Suggested questions are listed below. In the CAP workshops we normally use 8 - 10 questions.

**QUESTIONS:**

- My favourite animal is \_\_\_\_\_.
- My favourite drink is \_\_\_\_\_.
- I like to \_\_\_\_\_.
- One thing that really scares me \_\_\_\_\_.
- My favourite time of day is \_\_\_\_\_.
- The thing I like to do most with my friends is \_\_\_\_\_.
- One thing that makes me really angry is \_\_\_\_\_.
- The most important thing in my life is \_\_\_\_\_.
- When I am nervous I do this to make me feel better  
\_\_\_\_\_.
- The best thing happening in my life right now is \_\_\_\_\_.
- The worst thing happening in my life right now is \_\_\_\_\_.
- My biggest wish for myself is \_\_\_\_\_.
- My biggest wish for my family is \_\_\_\_\_.
- My biggest wish for my community is \_\_\_\_\_.
- If I could do anything it would be \_\_\_\_\_.
- One day I hope to \_\_\_\_\_.
- If I could be any animal it would be \_\_\_\_\_.
- For me the most beautiful thing is \_\_\_\_\_.



## ACTIVITIES AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

# MORE WRITING EXERCISES

### **Method B:**

*In this activity participants are asked to write five or more responses to a particular phrase. Participants are asked to create magical and funny responses as well as serious ones.*

## **PHRASES & WARM-UPS:**

### **1. I remember, I remember...**

*Warm-up:* Ask them to think back to when they were little. Who was their first friend? Do they remember the first day they went to school? What was one of the funniest things that ever happened to them? Do they remember any times when they were very nervous/scared/embarrassed?

### **2. I wish, I wish...**

*Warm-up:* Ask them to make some magical, crazy wishes. If they could be any animal, what would it be? Give some examples of unusual wishes. Ask them to remember what they wished for when they were young.

### **3. I worry, I fear...**

*Warm-up:* Begin by acknowledging that everyone is scared or worries about something. Some people are especially frightened of snakes; others fear spiders or rats. When we are young most of us have special fears. At this discussion moves along, the facilitator should look for an opportunity to ask them what special or new fears they have as a result of the conflict.

### **4. I hope, I dream...**

*Warm-up:* Begin by stressing that everyone has hopes and dreams. Some dreams we keep to ourselves, others we share with our friends and family. For people living inside conflicts these dreams are important, they keep us going in difficult times. Dreams don't always come true – this doesn't matter. What matters is that we have hopes for our families, our communities and ourselves. Ask the group to think back to their dreams when they were little. How have they changed?

*Notes:* This can also be done as a group exercise.



## STORY DRAWINGS

### ACTIVITIES AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

*Story drawings provide factual information on specific events that a young person experienced or witnessed.*

### **MATERIALS: PAPER AND DRAWING MATERIALS**

### **DIRECTIONS:**

1. Begin with a discussion on “first times”. Some ideas include: the first day of school, first friends, the first time you saw a soldier, first time you helped with cooking etc. The leader notes that these first times are big moments in everyone’s life. She then leads the group in a discussion of other important times: a funny /embarrassing / or happy time.
2. The participants are asked to make a drawing or story about one or more of these moments.
3. As each person completes his memory/story drawing he visits with the leader to describe it in detail.

*Notes:* It is nice to be able to create a frame around the picture. This makes it more official, which young people like.

Story drawings should be used cautiously. They can evoke painful memories and be inappropriate in certain situations. In the western world there is a strong belief that people will feel better if they share their sorrows and shame with others. Because this idea is widely accepted, it probably does have a beneficial effect. However, not all cultures share this belief. In fact some cultures believe that this spreads the misery rather than reduces it.



## ACTIVITIES AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

# THE COLOURS OF ME & MY WORLD

*In this activity young people explore their self-identity and feelings about themselves and their world. Examples of colour self portraits are provided in Section One.*

**MATERIALS:** LARGE PAPER (BIG ENOUGH TO MAKE AN OUTLINE OF A PERSON'S HEAD), PENCILS, PAINTBRUSHES, ACRYLIC PAINT AND WATER.

### DIRECTIONS:

#### **Step One: Creating the Colour Self-Portraits**

1. The leader explains that this is a project to create self-portraits. It doesn't require drawing skill. Instead they will use colour as codes to describe how they feel inside themselves as well as how the world feels to them.
2. Group Discussion on the meaning of colour: This can begin with a discussion of the participants' favourite colours and the reason for these choices. From this move on to a general discussion on the meaning of colour: Which colours signify happiness // sadness // peace // anger // hope?
3. The group is now ready for the next stage – creating the self-portraits. Either in pairs or with the help of the workshop leader, an outline is created of the head of each participant. (This can be done as a side profile or of the back of the person's head).
4. Each participant is given a small amount of each colour. They are asked to use this paint to create a colour self-portrait. On the inside of the outline they should use colour to represent their feelings inside themselves. On the outside of the outline the colours should reflect their feelings about the world around them.

In creating these colour portraits they should think about how to represent their feelings. For example, if they feel the same way all the time there should be just one colour. However, if they have different feelings, this should be indicated by many colours. If a feeling is receding, the colour representing this feeling should be positioned to indicate this.

5. Each participant should have as much privacy as possible. Just before the group begins their work the leader should explain that she will interview each person about their portraits and use of colour.

*Notes:* In the CAP workshops we normally use acrylic paints as it is possible to create any colour by mixing the primary colours (red, yellow, blue) and using black or white to darken or lighten.



## THE COLOURS OF ME (CONTINUED)

### ACTIVITIES AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

#### Step Two: The Interview Process:

Guidelines for the Interview:

1. The interview should simulate a discussion with an artist where the interviewer is trying to identify the main messages of a painting.
2. Begin the interview with a comment about the young person's work. This should be more than the typical "this is very good" remark. Instead it should focus on a particular aspect of the self-portrait. (e.g. use of colour, types of colours etc.)

3. Some questions to guide the interview:

*Can you tell me about the colours you have used?*

*I notice that you have put just one colour here. Can you explain why you did this?*

*I see that you have a real mixture of colours here OR*

*I see that you have mostly one colour. Can you explain why?*

4. Don't be afraid to ask for more details. For instance, if the artist says something like, "Oh, that is about when I was unhappy" ask him what caused these feelings.
5. After the picture has been explained once, it is a good idea to review the first points as children are always more forthcoming once they relax.





## TREASURE BOXES

### ACTIVITIES AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

*This method provides information about what participants treasure or hold most dear. This can be tangible things or dreams, memories and hopes for the future.*



**MATERIALS:** **SMALL CARDBOARD BOXES  
DECORATING MATERIALS,  
PAINT AND PAINTBRUSHES**

### **DIRECTIONS:**

1. Each participant is given a small cardboard box. The leader explains that this is a treasure box to keep things important to them. Paint and decorating materials are provided.
2. As each person completes her box, the leader has a short interview with her to ask what precious things she will keep in her box. This can include abstract ideas as well as concrete objects.



*Notes:* Young people seem to really love these boxes and take great care over them. If small boxes are unavailable, large storage boxes can be broken down to make these treasure boxes. If this is impossible, then consider making boxes from paper mache – (flour paste and newspaper strips).



## ACTIVITIES AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

# WISH STONES

*This activity provides information on young people's immediate needs and hopes. While it can be done with all ages, it is most effective with younger children.*

## **MATERIALS: STONES AND PAINT**

### **DIRECTIONS:**

1. The leader begins by asking the group if they know about the Aladdin's Lamp Legend. (It helps to have a lamp as a prop). If not she explains it to them, as dramatically as possible.
2. The leader asks the group if they know of any stories or legends about objects that can grant wishes.
3. The leader explains that in this activity the group is going to create their own pretend wish giving stones.
4. Participants are asked to choose a stone or other natural object whose size and shape appeals to them.
5. The group puts their stones/objects in a pile and then takes turns trying to find them by touch (eyes closed or blindfolded)
6. *Painting:* Where possible it is good to paint or decorate the stones.
7. *Sculpture Making:* The group can create a large sculpture incorporating everyone's stones, sticks or whatever they have used. If this option is chosen it is a good idea to create a "work in progress" so that other children/youth can add their objects later.
8. The "wishing" ceremony. While the participants may not want to reveal their wishes to others, it is still a good idea to end this activity with a formal ceremony of some sort. In our experience young people really enjoy these rituals.



**ACTIVITIES AT THE  
INDIVIDUAL LEVEL**

## **EXPLORING OUR LIVES**

### **LIFE JOURNEYS // DOORS OF MY LIFE // MOBILES**

*These three art activities provide information on young people's perception of their lives: their strengths and interests and the difficulties and limitations created by war. Because all three have similar objectives they are grouped together with an introductory activity.*

**MATERIALS:      NOTED WITH EACH ACTIVITY**

#### **WARM-UPS**

All artists need activities to spark their imagination. Ideas for doing this:

**1. This reminds me of...**

The group sits in a circle. The workshop leader has a bag filled with common objects. This bag is passed around the group. Participants are asked to choose an object that sparks a memory of an important event or experience. They are asked to share this story with the group.

**2. Word Association Game**

This exercise begins with some stretches and simple relaxation exercises. Participants are asked to close their eyes, relax and let their thoughts wander. As the workshop leader says different words, they should quickly think of the first thought or word that comes into their mind.

*Suggested Words:*

**HOME, MOTHER, HAPPINESS, SADNESS, VIOLENCE, SCHOOL,  
FIGHTING, BIRTHDAY PARTY, WAR, ACCIDENT, FRIENDS, GUNS,  
FEAR, GARDEN, HOUSE, PEACE, FIELDS, GUNFIRE, HURT, FATHER  
ETC.**

*Note:* This activity can also be done as a group activity. To begin, the group does rhythmic clapping, tapping or clicking of their hands. Once this gets going, the leader starts the exercise by saying a word. The person next to her responds with the first word that comes into her head. This continues around the circle. It can be lots of fun.



## ACTIVITIES AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

# LIFE JOURNEYS

*In this activity participants create the path of their life and identify the ways war has affected it. It also asks participants to think of the road ahead and their hopes for the future.*

**MATERIALS:**      **LARGE PAPER**  
**COLOURED DRAWING PENCILS**

### **DIRECTIONS:**

#### **Step #1: Guided Thinking Exercise**

In this exercise the leader asks questions and “guides” the participants thinking.

*A sample text: (Based on the idea of a path)*

“Think of some of the paths near your home. Sometimes they are rough, other times smooth and easy. In some parts a path is windy; in others it is straight. At some points it goes uphill; other times down. There are always surprises on a walking path. There can be sudden dangers but you can also see funny and beautiful things.

The path of our life is much like that.

*Let's start with the early days of your life:* What are some of your first memories? What was going on in your family? What do you remember most from that time? Do you have any memories of war? If so, how did it affect your life or the life of your family?

*As you move along this path of your life, think about other moments:* Think about your friends, what you did together ...if there were times when you were so happy, what happened? If there were times when you were sad or scared, what happened? What do you remember about your first day at school?

*Now you are a little older.* What are the most important things going on in your life at this time? What gives you support, what makes your life difficult? Think of the important times with your family and friends. Think of special boys or girls in your life. How is your life shaping – what is the path your life is taking?

*Now you are getting closer to the present.* What is going on in your life at this moment? What are the good things, what is difficult for you? What would you change if you could?

*Finally, think about your life five years from now.* What do you think you will be doing? Are you happy about this or would you like it to be different? How do you want your life to be? What resources do you have inside yourself to accomplish this? What help do you need from others?”



## LIFE JOURNEYS ( CONT'D)

### ACTIVITIES AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

#### **Step # 2: Drawing the Life Journey Maps**

Participants can use drawing, writing and painting to represent the path or journey of their life to date. Encourage them to think about all aspects of their lives, not just those associated with the war. If possible, provide art supplies (coloured drawing pencils).

*Note:* If art materials are not available, just use natural resources. The ground can be the canvas; a stick the paintbrush and various objects from the environment can represent different ideas. For example, large stones can be used to indicate obstacles; leaves in a pathway can symbolize a smooth and easy time.

The life journey can be done in whatever way is most appropriate. For instance in Rwanda the participants did them as graphs while in Angola they drew roads to simulate the “path of life”.



## DOORS OF MY LIFE

### ACTIVITIES AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

*In this activity participants are asked to analyse and represent their feelings of the past, the present and the future.*

**MATERIALS:** PAPER, TAPE, SCISSORS  
PAINT AND PAINTBRUSHES

#### **DIRECTIONS:**

1. Each participant is given three squares of paper: the doors of their life. These are attached to a larger sheet.
2. Participants are asked to colour code these doors to represent the feelings that lie behind them. The doors are labelled past, present and future.
3. Inside the doors they should write an explanation of the reason for those colours.
4. In addition to the written explanations, the leader should do a short interview, particularly about the meaning of the colours.

*Notes:* If art supplies/paper are unavailable, different coloured cloth can be used. If this method is chosen, it is best to do it as a one-to-one interview with the researcher.

An example of a “Doors of My Life” picture is included in the Section One in the part on child soldiers.



## MOBILES

### ACTIVITIES AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

*In this art activity participants create mobiles to represent the positive and negative forces in their lives. This activity can be done on an individual or group basis.*

**MATERIALS:** **SMALL STICKS, GLUE, STRING OR WOOL, CARDS AND COLOURED PAPER**

### DIRECTIONS:

1. The leader introduces this activity by using a volunteer. She talks about the principles of a mobile – that it is a balance of different forces. (It is a good idea to exaggerate this description by showing what happens if the forces on one side are too strong – the mobile becomes lopsided and falls over.)
2. Participants are asked to create mobiles to represent the positive and negative forces in their lives. The leader emphasizes that everyone in the group is a “balanced” mobile – they are not falling over, they are contending with the difficulties in their lives. How do they do it?
3. The leader demonstrates how to make a simple mobile.
4. The group is encouraged to use their imagination in representing their ideas. In addition to the materials provided in the workshop they should go outside and find sticks, flowers, stones, leaves and other objects that can be incorporated into their mobiles.
5. When everyone is finished each group or individual gives a presentation.





## ACTIVITIES AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

# CHARTS

*This activity provides factual information about participants' lives. Because they are asked to categorize this information it includes their analysis of this part of their lives.*

**MATERIALS:**      **LARGE PAPER, PENCILS**  
                                 **DRAWING MATERIALS**

### **DIRECTIONS:**

#### **A. Time Charts**

1. Participants are asked to chart every activity in their day. To help them remember all their activities, not just the ones that interest them, it is a good idea to do a sample chart with the group. One example would be a chart of a boy's activities from the time he got up until he arrived at the workshop.

*Note:* It can be interesting to do comparison time charts where participants compare their daily activities in different living situations. This can provide useful information about the changes in the lives of displaced or refugee children. These charts will not be completely accurate but they do give researchers an idea of which activities have been added or eliminated from a child's life as a result of the move.

#### **B. Gender Roles Charts**

Participants make charts to identify their responsibilities and to compare their chores with those of other siblings. One way of doing this is to have each person make a tree where each branch represents a family member. The responsibilities are written on that person's branch.

*Note:* These charts can be drawn on the ground using a stick.