

36. What if ...

...the world were flat???

Themes	General human rights, Education and leisure, Poverty and social security
Level of complexity	Level 3
Age	8 – 13 years
Duration	60 minutes
Group size	8 – 20 children
Type of activity	Analysis, dramatization, discussion
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To consider the impact and interdependence of rights • To consider rights in our daily life.
Overview	Children imagine the consequences that could arise from a particular situation, and then dramatize these results.
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose, adapt or create situations to suit the children's experience and issues. • Copy and cut out the situation cards. • Copy Effects Cascade.
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Situation cards • Paper and pens for presentations • Copies of Effects Cascade



Instructions

1. Introduce the activity, explaining that everybody tries to imagine “What if...” . Sometimes we imagine good situations (e.g. “What if there were no more wars?”) and sometimes bad situations (e.g. “What if a war occurred in my country?”). In this activity they will be given a situation and asked to consider what effects it might have on people's lives.
2. Introduce the Effects Cascade and illustrate how one situation can lead to a chain of events; use a simple, familiar situation (e.g. What if you were not allowed to go to school? > Not learning to read > Not being able to follow written instructions, understand a map, write a letter, use the computer).
3. Divide the children into small groups and give each group a situation and a copy of the Effects Cascade, and pens. Ask them to work together to complete it.
4. When the children have completed the Effects Cascade, explain that they should now prepare a stage presentation that shows what effects that they have imagined could arise from the situation. Give the children time to prepare their presentations.
5. Ask each group in turn to read out their situations and act out their presentation.
6. After each presentation ask for questions and comments, asking questions such as these:
 - a. Can you think of other effects that this situation might have?
 - b. What human rights are involved in this situation? Does the situation violate a right? Protect and promote a right?
 - c. Are other rights involved in the effects on the situation?

Debriefing and Evaluation

1. Debrief the activity by asking questions such as these:
 - a. How do you feel about this activity?
 - b. Was it difficult to imagine the situation given?



- c. Was it difficult to think of the effects that could result from this situation?
 - d. Do you think these situations are realistic? Why or why not?
 - e. Do you believe that these situations exist in the world?
 - f. How would you react in this situation?
 - g. What could we do to change this situation?
2. Relate the activity to human rights, asking questions such as these:
- a. When one right is violated, how does that affect other rights? Can you think of any examples from the presentations?
 - b. When one right is protected and promoted, how does that affect other rights? Can you think of any examples from the presentations?
 - c. Why do we need all our human rights?

Suggestions for follow-up

- The activities 'SAILING TO A NEW LAND', P. 152, and 'MOST IMPORTANT FOR WHOM?', P. 118 also deal with the interdependence of rights.
- 'ABODY OF KNOWLEDGE', P. 53, asks children to consider the consequences of not having access sources of learning.

Ideas for action

The activity 'A CONSTITUTION FOR OUR GROUP', P. 56, engages children in improving the rights environment in which they live. Having a group constitution illustrates the multiple effects of a rights environment in real life.

Tips for the facilitator

- The effectiveness of this activity depends greatly on the kind of situations you offer the children. Adapt or develop new situations that relate to the children's experience and concerns. Situations could address general human rights or any particular rights theme. For example, you could develop situations that all address social and economic rights or specific themes such as gender equality or the environment. Try to include both positive situations (e.g. What if men and women earned the same amount of money? What if everyone in our town cut their garbage in half by recycling?) and negative situations (e.g. What if only men could own property? What if every adult in our town had a personal car?).
- Be prepared to give some real-life examples of these situations that may actually exist or have existed in the past (e.g. women unable to own property or attend schools; boys and girls forced into military service).

Variations

- Give the same situation to several or all groups of children. Compare their different ideas about effects.
- Divide children into same-sex groups and compare their different responses to the same gender-related situations.
- To save time, omit the dramatic presentations or present them in mime or as 'tableau' or 'frozen poses'.

Adaptations

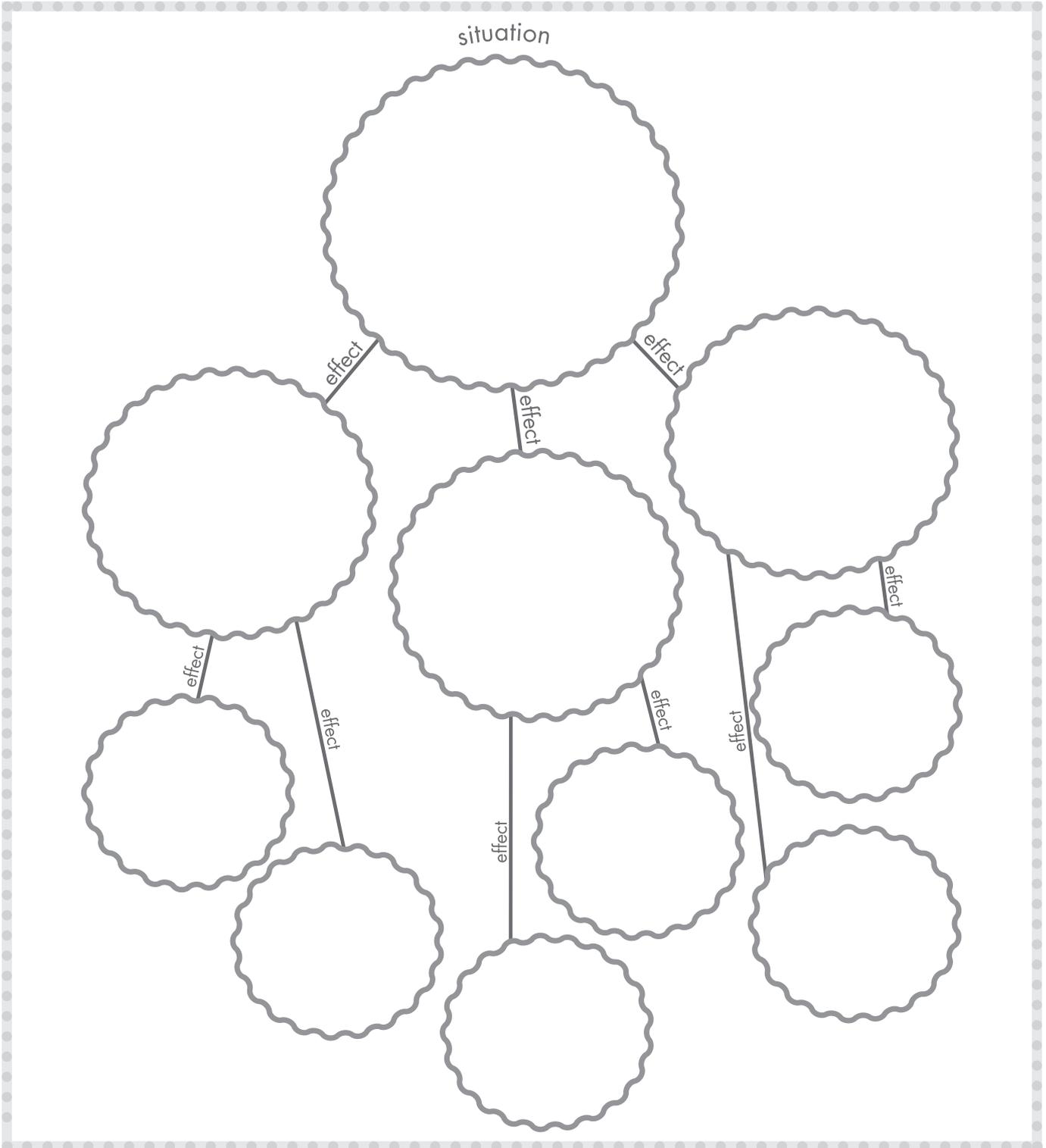
- For younger children: omit the Effects Cascade and go immediately to the presentations.



Younger children may also have difficulty grasping the interdependence of rights; put emphasis instead on the importance of enjoying all our rights.

- For older children: ask them to relate their presentation to specific articles of the UDHR and/or CRC.

HANDOUT: EFFECTS CASCADE



HANDOUT: SITUATIONS

Below are some situations you can use. Choose the ones most relevant to your group or create new ones. Include both positive and negative situations.

SITUATION 1

The government has decided to close all the schools and universities. From tomorrow onwards, all the children can do what they want instead of going to school.

What immediate effects would this situation have? And in future years?

SITUATION 2

The government has decided to close down all the hospitals in order to save money. There will be no more doctors or pharmacies. Instead, books on herbal remedies will be offered at a low price.

What immediate effects would this situation have? And in future years?

SITUATION 3

The government has decided that it is forbidden to play on the street, in the parks, in schools or anywhere else where people can see this. Besides this, all toyshops will also be closed and nobody will be able to sell toys anymore. Anyone who gets caught playing at home will go to court and eventually to jail.

What immediate effects would this situation have? And in future years?

SITUATION 4

The government has decided that from tomorrow onwards, only girls can go to school and can play in their free time. All the boys have to start working in the factory.

What immediate effects would this situation have? And in future years?

SITUATION 5

The government has decided that from tomorrow onwards, nobody can be seen in the presence of more than two people. All gatherings of groups of more than two people are forbidden. Violations will be punished by imprisonment.

What immediate effects would this situation have? And in future years?

SITUATION 6

The government has decided that every school should have a computer room with enough computers so that every child can use the computer at least three hours a week.

What immediate effects would this situation have? And in future years?

SITUATION 7

The government has decided to establish a Youth Council to advise the County Council on matters that concern children. Every school in our community may elect two representatives to serve on this council.

What immediate effects would this situation have? And in future years?



HANDOUT: SITUATIONS

SITUATION 8

The government has decided that in order to increase international understanding, every child should have the opportunity to visit another country in Europe before they are thirteen.

What immediate effects would this situation have? And in future years?

SITUATION 9

The government has decided that children with disabilities should be encouraged to participate in the community as much as possible. Barriers to participation should be removed, and the children provided with whatever assistance they may need, such as wheelchairs, hearing aids, books in Braille and computers. As far as possible, children with disabilities should be in school with all other children.

What immediate effects would this situation have? And in future years?

SITUATION 10

The government has decided that from tomorrow onwards, every child that fails one test will be removed from the school. Only children who never fail a test are allowed to continue studying.

What immediate effects would this situation have? And in future years?

