

Participation Pyramid

Aim

that young people explore the value of participation

Age

6 years and older

Time

20 – 30 minutes depending on depth of process

Materials

a large room or outdoor space, chalk, masking tape or rope to mark areas on floor or ground

Note to Leader

Before starting the game remind everyone that this is a physical participatory exercise and they need to be respectful of one another, as there may be a certain amount of jostling.

What to do

Mark out a large triangle on the floor or ground. Divide it into four sections, with the base section barely large enough to hold all the participants. The smallest section should hold only one person.

On the count of 3, participants are asked to see how many can fit into the largest section. If anyone is touching the lines, pull them out of the game. Explore with 2 or 3 of those inside what is like to have succeeded in getting in, and with anyone left outside how it is for them to be left out.

Now repeat for the remaining sections until there is only one person left. Ask how they feel about being the 'winner'. Ask if anyone chose to drop out during the game. Why?

Take Action!

Join the Millennium Development Goals campaign www.millenniumcampaign.org/youth and raise awareness among the young people in Ireland about the MDGs. Write to the Irish government to ask them to keep their promise of achieving these goals by 2015. In the Republic of Ireland, write to: An Taoiseach Bertie Ahern, Government Buildings, Upper Merrion Street, Dublin 2. In Northern Ireland, write to: Rt. Hon. Hilary Benn MP, Department for International Development, 1 Palace Street, London SW1E 5HE.

Visit the website www.takingitglobal.org/themes/mdg to find out about ways that young people can participate in making the Millennium Development Goals a reality.

The game is now played in reverse. The 'winner' is asked to move to the next section and to carefully choose enough companions with which to fill the segment, and to speak about why he or she is choosing each one. Each person in that section is then asked to move to the next section and to choose a companion each, saying briefly why they are choosing that person. The participants move to the final section and choose companions, but this may be a dilemma as not everyone may fit, so they are challenged to think of creative ways that everyone can be included. Cheating is permitted, so long as everyone ends up in one big group.

End the game and form the large group again. Ask:

- What did it feel like to participate?
- What helped you participate?
- What hindered you from participating?

Adapted by Greta Jensen from a game used in a Women's Empowerment Programme in India.

