

IRELAND'S LEADING
YOUTH ORGANISATION



Foróige Charter of Rights in Practice

Bringing the Charter of Rights to Life in your Group

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WHY A CHARTER OF RIGHTS?

"Where, after all do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home and so small that they cannot be seen on any map of the world.

Yet they are the world of the person: the community in which he lives, the places where she learns, works and socialises. Such are the places where every person seeks equal opportunity and equal dignity without discrimination.

Unless these rights have meaning here, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerted action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world."

Eleanor Roosevelt

These inspiring words were spoken by Eleanor Roosevelt, one of the authors of the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights (1948). They express the spirit in which the Foróige Charter of Rights is written.

This Charter promotes human rights "close to home" in our Foróige groups. It has been developed by young people in Foróige. It is also based on the Philosophy of Foróige and the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child

The Charter outlines seven rights that each young person should have when participating in Foróige clubs/groups. For this to happen, everyone needs to take responsibility for respecting these rights with each other.

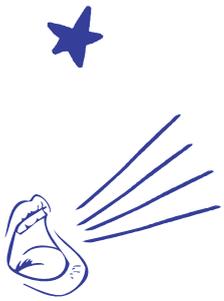
Foróige clubs/groups should discuss the Charter and decide how they will best put these rights into practice for the benefit of all.

In this way they create the environment where each person can flourish, express their true self and achieve their full potential.

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FORÓIGE CHARTER OF RIGHTS

IN FORÓIGE, ALL YOUNG PEOPLE WILL HAVE THE FOLLOWING RIGHTS



THE RIGHT TO SELF EXPRESSION & FREEDOM OF SPEECH

The right to express your opinions, ideas and feelings - to be yourself - to think and act as an individual - to be different - to express unique strengths and talents.



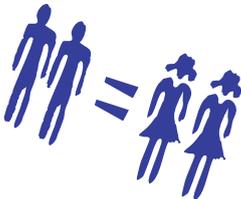
THE RIGHT TO KINDNESS & RESPECT

The right to be treated with dignity - to be accepted and valued - to positive relationships where you are affirmed and encouraged - to guidance and support.



THE RIGHT TO BE LISTENED TO & HAVE YOUR VIEWS CONSIDERED

The right to be listened to with empathy and without prejudgement - to have your voice heard and your views taken seriously.



THE RIGHT TO BE SAFE FROM ANY TYPE OF BULLYING & THREATS TO WELLBEING

The right to be safe from threats such as: bullying, abuse, humiliation and physical danger. The right to privacy and to choose what you want to reveal about yourself.



THE RIGHT TO EQUAL PARTICIPATION

The right to be treated equally in a group and to be free of discrimination of any kind.



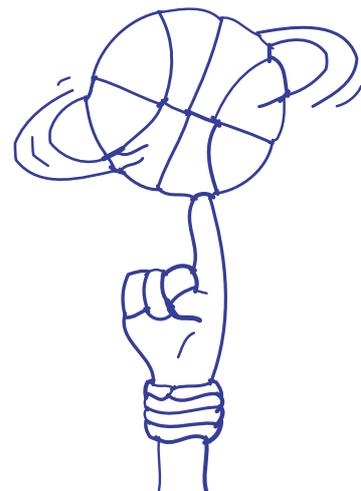
THE RIGHT TO DEVELOP YOUR PERSONALITY, INTERESTS & ABILITIES

The right to cultivate your strengths and what you love - to learn new things - to develop skills for a good life - to direct your own development - to become the best you can be.



THE RIGHT TO CONTRIBUTE & TO IMPROVE THE WORLD IN SOME WAY

The right to help others and to be helped - to make your unique contribution - to have an influence - to improve the community - to participate with others in creating a better world.





THESE RIGHTS ARE OBLIGATIONS TO EACH OTHER AS WELL AS ENTITLEMENTS

The Young People who Developed the Charter of Rights

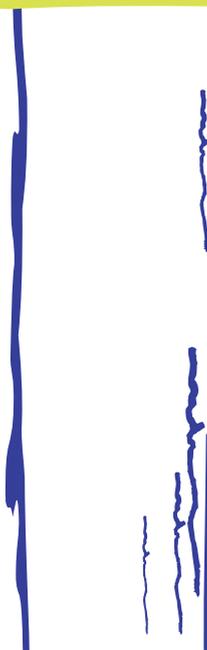
This Charter of Rights has been developed by young people in Foróige which includes two National Reference Panels and a number of local Youth Participation Structures representing different interest groups.

The following Foróige youth participatory structures and groups were involved in developing the Charter:

- * National Reference Panel of Foróige 2009 *
- * National Reference Panel of Foróige 2012 *
- * Brookefield Youth Forum, Blanchardstown *
- * Tallaght Youth Forum *
- * Multicultural Group/Forum (Zimbabwe; Congo; Somalia; Nigeria; Belgium; Irish; English; American),
Blanchardstown *
- * Traveller Youth Forum, Tallaght *
- * LGBT group, Blanchardstown *
- * "Out Kilkenny" LGBT group *
- * Killybegs and Carrick Youth Advisory Group *
- * Drop In 2012 Group - Young People with Asperger's Syndrome *
- * MidWay Project - First year students, Kilkenny *

The Charter is also influenced by:

- * The UN Declaration on Human Rights (Appendix 2) *
- * The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child *
- * Foróige's Philosophy of Human Development *



HUMAN RIGHTS & OUR PHILOSOPHY

Human rights come from spiritual beliefs in the fundamental value and dignity of each human being and in our obligations to each other as part of a common humanity. These beliefs are central to many religions and philosophies. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) opens with the statement that:

"all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights... and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood".

Human rights are obligations to each other as well as entitlements. They are a way of sharing a common humanity.

Foróige's philosophy believes that each person

**is unique
is interdependent with others
is responsible for their behaviour
has the right and ability to develop their personality to the full
has a right and duty to improve the world in some way**

The Charter is a framework by which young people can put these beliefs into practice and create positive environments that promote uniqueness and solidarity with others.

For this to happen each of us needs to take responsibility for upholding these rights. We need to stand up for the rights of others as well as our own. Edmund Burke, a famous Irish statesman, once said "all that is needed for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing".

Foróige's philosophy is also about young people taking responsibility and working together to create the common good. The Charter is also a framework by which young people can create better social relationships and a better society.



BRINGING THE CHARTER TO LIFE IN YOUR GROUP

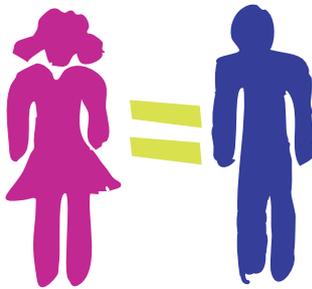
The Charter is a living thing and not just a document. Foróige groups can get actively involved in discussing these rights and deciding how best they will promote them.

There is no doubt that many of these rights are being practiced already. However it is important to think about them, discuss them and create new possibilities. There are great opportunities to explore these rights through discussion, art, dance, drama etc.

You can make the Charter of Rights central to how your group operates and how you relate to each other. You can organise exciting activities that make it easier for young people to express these rights so as to grow more fully as human beings. You may also promote them in the community.

By doing this you can best create the environment where everyone supports each other - are free to express themselves and are encouraged to achieve their potential. This can have such a positive effect on each individual in the group.

There is a special session plan on page 15 which is designed to involve young people in this process. We recommend you try this out (or something similar) with your group.





THE RIGHT TO SELF EXPRESSION & FREEDOM OF SPEECH

What this right means in Foróige?

This is the right to express your feelings, opinions and ideas without fear - to be yourself - to think and act as an individual - to express unique attributes and talents - to be different

Responsibilities: what we all can do



- * Be true to yourself and express what you truly believe
- * Allow others space to express themselves without interruption
- * Contribute your own ideas/talents to the group
- * Volunteer for tasks that suit your interests and abilities
- * Encourage others who may be shy to express themselves and their talents
- * Challenge those who interfere with others expressing themselves
- * Generate your own fun and enjoyment so that everyone can relax and express themselves

Activities that promote this right



- * Fun activities/games that help everyone becomes more comfortable at expressing themselves.
- * A good variety of activities that allow different talents to emerge and be expressed
- * Events and activities that celebrate difference and unique traits of each person
- * Structure meetings so that it is easy for each person to express themselves
- * Time set aside to get to know each other - especially shyer young people
- * Workshops on assertiveness and building confidence





THE RIGHT TO KINDNESS & RESPECT



What this right means in Foróige?

This is the right to be treated with dignity - to be valued - to be accepted as you are and encouraged to become the best you can be - to positive relationships where you are affirmed and encouraged - to guidance and support

Responsibilities: what we all can do

- * Respect yourself and be kind to yourself
- * Treat others with respect and kindness
- * Develop empathy and understanding for others
- * Reach out the hand of friendship to others particularly those who may feel isolated or left out
- * Make a special effort to get to know others who are new, shy or of a different culture, ability, sexual orientation so they do not feel alone
- * Challenge others if they are being disrespectful
- * Value yourself - do not compare yourself too much with others and be over concerned with what others think of you

Activities that promote this right



- * Exercises/games where everyone gets to know each other and builds trust
- * Tea and biscuits time (TAB for short) where everyone can chat about everyday things and have their thoughts and feelings accepted
- * Special games where everyone finds out more about each other
- * Special activities to welcome newcomers that support shyer young people
- * Introduce a "buddy system" for younger and shyer members of the group
- * Events/ activities that promote understanding and interaction with different cultures
- * Interclub/group gatherings that are structured to help young people to get to know each other better and create good networks of friends





THE RIGHT TO BE LISTENED TO & HAVE YOUR VIEWS CONSIDERED

What this right means in Foróige?

This is the right to be listened to with empathy and without prejudice - to have your voice heard and your views considered. It also means listening to others and trying to understand their point of view.

Responsibilities: what we all can do

- * Make an effort to listen to the feelings and views of others
- * Be open minded to the views of others and do not prejudice them
- * Try and see a situation from another's point of view
- * Take on board and consider what is being said
- * Do not interrupt when others are speaking
- * Conduct meetings in a way that everyone has a voice and is listened to
- * In a conflict, listen to everybody's point of view



Activities that promote this right

- * After a meeting discuss how well everyone listened to each other. Mark the group out of ten for listening. Look at ways of improving listening in the group
- * Organise a meeting where everyone has to repeat what the previous speaker has said before they can make their point
- * Adults and young people meet for chats but practice listening to each other without interruption
- * Simple exercises to practice listening, e.g. example; listening in pairs
- * Visit other groups in the community (such as senior citizens) and listen to their views and wishes (may get ideas for the Foróige Citizenship Programme)





THE RIGHT TO DEVELOP YOUR PERSONALITY, INTERESTS & ABILITIES

What this right means in Foróige?

This is the right to cultivate your interests and what you love doing - to learn new things - to develop skills for a good life - to direct your own development - to become the best you can be. It is also the right to learn from experience.

Responsibilities: what we can all do

- * Think about what you most love and would like to develop in yourself
- * Look for opportunities to develop interests, skills, talents
- * Work together to create a wide variety of activities where everyone can develop their different interests and strengths
- * Use particular activities to develop skills and strengths
- * Reflect on activities or situations to identify what you learned from them
- * Listen to feedback from others in order to learn
- * Give feedback and encouragement to others

Activities to promote this right

- * Activities/exercises that help everyone find out what they love doing
- * Sessions where everyone lists what they have learned and what more they want to learn
- * A wide variety of activities to help individuals discover and develop different talents and personality traits
- * A special activity where each person gives and receives positive and constructive feedback





THE RIGHT TO EQUAL PARTICIPATION



What this right means in Foróige?

This is the right to participate equally in a group and to be free of discrimination of any kind. It means that everyone is treated the same regardless of background, race, gender, sexuality, ability etc.

Responsibilities: what we all can do

- * Exercise your own right to participate by taking part and contributing
- * Respect the right of others to speak and participate in a discussion
- * Make sure everyone has an equal chance to express opinions
- * Observe proper democratic procedures that allows everyone their say
- * Speak out against any discrimination that occurs
- * Make a real effort to help those who find it harder to participate
- * Avoid setting up 'cliques' that isolate others

Activities that promote this right



- * Simple procedures where everyone speaks in turn and has an equal say in the affairs of the club/group
- * Develop ways to encourage those who find it difficult to participate such as those who are shy, with disabilities or from different cultures
- * Discuss barriers to equal participation that can arise and develop ways to eliminate these
- * Structure groups in a way that prevents 'cliques' from forming
- * Workshops that raise their awareness of issues regarding social justice in the world (guest speakers)





THE RIGHT TO BE SAFE FROM ANY TYPE OF BULLYING OR THREATS TO WELLBEING

What this right means in Foróige?



This is the right to be safe from threats such as: bullying, abuse, humiliation, mockery and physical danger. This also includes the right to privacy and to choose what you want to reveal about yourself. It also includes the right to confidentiality when appropriate

Responsibilities: what we all can do

- * Understand and respect the feelings of others and do not say or do anything that has a destructive effect on them
- * Look out for and support others who are being bullied
- * Speak out against bullying when you see it happening
- * Create ground rules that protect everyone from abuse, bullying and mockery
- * Learn how to protect yourself from cyber bullying
- * Choose what you want to reveal about yourself and do not reveal what you don't want to
- * Discuss the different types of bullying and what can be done about them

Activities that promote this right

- * Workshops on cyber bullying and keeping safe online
- * Discussions/workshops on the different types of bullying and how to counteract them
- * Structure activities so that no 'cliques' are formed and no one is isolated
- * Activities/games that build trust and social contact and enable young people to feel more comfortable in the group
- * A sub-committee (young people and adults) for dealing with bullying and conflicts that arise





THE RIGHT TO CONTRIBUTE AND TO IMPROVE THE WORLD IN SOME WAY

What this right means in Foróige?

This is the right to help others and to be helped - to make your unique contribution - to have an influence - to improve the community - to participate with others in creating a better world. It is the right to be given a chance to make a difference to the world around you.

Responsibilities: what we can all do

- * Give help to others when needed
- * Ask for and receive help when needed
- * Take an active part in organising group activities
- * Contribute ideas and talents to the group
- * Organise a project that contributes to the local community
- * Identify specific needs of others in the community/society and organise action to meet them
- * Promote the rights of others in society

Activities that promote this right

- * Get involved in the Foróige Citizenship Programme
- * Discuss important rights of others in the community/society such as senior citizens, homeless, poor, hungry, unemployed
- * Select one important right of a particular group in the community/society for discussion and action
- * Organise action or a campaign to promote these rights
- * Hold a discussion on needs in the community and what the group can do to improve it
- * Listen to others in the community for their views on how it can be improved



SESSION PLAN TO PUT THE CHARTER INTO PRACTICE IN YOUR GROUP

Purpose of Session

The group will be able to put the Charter of Rights into practice so as to create the best group environment that promotes individuality and encourages everyone to achieve their potential.

Resources

- * A printed Charter of Rights (to be displayed where Foróige club/group meets)
- * Flipchart paper, felt pens, pens, notebooks
- * Playing cards (if game is played)

Understanding the Charter of Rights

Objective:

Young people will understand the seven rights of the Charter.

Method:

- * Facilitator explains:
 - * Foróige has a new Charter of Rights for all young people in the organisation.
 - * This Charter was developed by young people in Foróige: - representative groups such as The Foróige Reference panel and a number of local Youth Participation Structures.
 - * These groups came up with seven key rights that they thought were the most important for young people in Foróige.
 - * These rights are aspirations and are based on the belief in the value and importance of each young person.
 - * The aim of the Charter is that all young people will have these rights when in Foróige.



- * Each Foróige group can promote these rights in their own way for the benefit of everyone in their group.
- * The aim is that all groups in Foróige will discuss this Charter and come up with their own ways of putting it into practice.

Note: *The Reference Panel is a democratically elected National Youth Representative Body of Foróige. Youth Participatory Structures are local representative groups of young people.*

PreSentation on Charter of Rights

- * Facilitator introduces the Charter and the seven key rights. It is placed up on the wall.
- * Facilitator explains each right simply - making sure everyone understands each right. (These rights are explained simply in the Charter.) Young people discuss the Charter and give their overall response to the Charter. Any suggested changes/additions are reported and noted.
- * Facilitator explains
 - * These rights are based on the belief that each of us is important and worthy of dignity and respect.
 - * These rights are our entitlements but also our obligations to each other
 - * These rights won't happen unless each of us takes responsibility for expressing them and for respecting them with each other.
 - * If we do this we create a great atmosphere/ethos where everybody can express their best selves and achieve their best potential.
 - * As a result everyone experiences positive relationships and a positive group atmosphere. Each person can develop in their own way. We grow as a group.
 - * We owe these rights to ourselves but we also owe them to each other.
 - * Today we will work to see how we can best put them into practice.

Note: *A great idea is for groups to represent these rights through art, dance or drama. This could develop into a good project where works are displayed and performed.*



OPTION A: GAME TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS

Purpose of Session

Young people understand what it feels like to have rights and to have them denied.

Resources

- * A pack of cards
- * Chairs in a circle

Method:

- * Facilitator explains that we will play a game that explores having rights and not having them.
- * Facilitator asks everyone to put their chairs in a circle and for all participants to sit on a chair.
- * Explain that the aim of the game is to get back to your own chair by moving one chair to the right each time.
- * Give each person one playing card- ask participations to note the suit on their card - clubs/spades/hearts/diamonds.
- * When the facilitator calls out a suit, the person with that suit can move one chair to the right. If someone is already sitting on the chair they must sit on top of them (as the game progresses, this may result in a number of people sitting on top of each other!) If your suit is called and someone is sitting on you, you cannot move until you have nobody sitting on you.
- * Begin to call out suits one by one. Game ends when the first person returns to their own chair.

Processing Questions:

- * How did it feel to have someone tell you when you can and cannot move?
- * How did it feel to be the one that got to move?
- * What happened when others were denying your right to move by sitting on top of you? How did it feel to have the right to move but have someone deny it?
- * How did it feel seeing others having more rights than you?
- * Close your eyes, are there people in your own community, country, around the world who are having their rights denied?



OPTION B; DECIDING A GROUP CONTRACT BASED ON THE CHARTER OF RIGHTS

Purpose of Session

Young people will be able to develop their group contract so that it promotes the seven rights in the Charter.

Method:

Facilitator refers back to seven rights in the Charter of Rights. State that we will discuss each right individually. For each right, young people discuss the following questions.

* How would you like to express and experience this right?

Do's (Examples: Do - express what you truly believe; volunteer for jobs; develop your interests/talents; challenge yourself; learn as much as you can)

* What would hinder you expressing this right in a group?

* What will each of us do to help everybody have this right?

Do's (Examples: Do - listen without interruption; encourage shy young people; praise others; speak out if their rights are being infringed; show kindness)

* What will we not do to hinder this?

Don'ts (Examples: Don't interrupt others, mock others)

They can divide into small groups where each group focuses on a few specific rights (2-3).

Having discussed these following questions each group identifies their **Do's** and **Don'ts**.
Remind group that they need to do things for themselves as well as for others.

Note: If the group is small, they can work on each right together. If there is not enough time at a meeting, you can select three rights to work on first and do the other four at a later date.



It is important that all rights are discussed and processed

Each group feedback their **Do's** and **Don'ts** to the main group. Adults and facilitators also suggest **Do's** and **Don'ts** (from the booklet).

Note: The booklet contains many ideas for these discussions. It should be read by the facilitator (and young people) so that they can suggest suitable ideas.

All the **Do's** and **Don'ts** are written on a flipchart. If one is mentioned a few times a tick is put beside it the number of times it is mentioned.

These **Do's** and **Don'ts** should be summarised and clarified. Each is discussed to make sure they are agreed by everybody. If a conflict arises a vote may need to be taken.

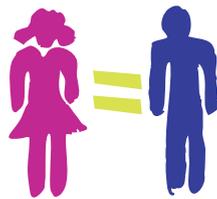
When the **Do's** and **Don'ts** are agreed they are compiled to form part of the group contract. This should reflect all seven Rights in the Charter.

If there is an existing group contract it should be compared to this and the necessary additions made.

The **Do's** and **Don'ts** are then written on a chart with the title "**How We Will Promote These Rights in this Group**".

There is a designed template on page 21 for this purpose. This could be enlarged and copied and put up on the wall.

Note: It is probably desirable to narrow the **Do's** and **Don'ts** down to 7-10 and to write them properly in a way that is agreed before putting them on the template: "**How we will promote these Rights in our Group**".



OPTION C; CREATING GROUP ACTIVITIES THAT PROMOTE RIGHTS IN THE CHARTER

Purpose of Session

Young people are able to create positive group activities that help everyone to best express particular rights in the Charter.

Method:

- * Young people read through the Charter again and select rights that are most important to them
- * They discuss possible group activities that would promote this right and help everyone express it (they can divide into small groups to do this).

Here are some examples of group activities that promote rights in the Charter :

- * Fun games that help everyone become more comfortable at expressing themselves
- * Workshops in assertiveness and listening
- * Events that celebrate difference and the unique traits of everyone
- * Spending time chatting and really getting to know others better
- * Activities that welcome and involve newcomers and shyer people
- * Listening and getting to know other groups in the community to hear their views and wishes
- * Activities to promote the rights of others in the community or society

Note: There are many practical ideas for each right in this booklet. Adults and young people should read this booklet and suggest ones they like.

- * These ideas are written up and discussed. Young people select a number of activities that they would most like to carry out as part of their club/group programme. They plan and carry out each activity accordingly.
- * The selected activities can be written onto the chart "How We Will Promote These Rights in Our Group" under the section "Group Activities".

Note: Groups should regularly review how they are putting the Charter into practice. They should discuss questions such as: What are we doing well? How can we improve?



HOW WE WILL PROMOTE THESE RIGHTS IN OUR GROUP

DO'S

DON'TS

OUR GROUP ACTIVITIES

APPENDIX: UNITED NATIONS DECLARATIONS & CONVENTIONS

The barbarity and atrocities of the Second World War created the deep conviction that such events should never happen again. Many felt that there was a need for all nations and people to adopt universal principles and values that led to peace, development and the wellbeing of each person. In the spirit of these ideals the United Nations produced their UN Declaration of Human Rights (1948). The declaration defines a human right as *"something that all people everywhere are entitled to because they were human"*. Central to this declaration was the dignity and worth of each person, their right to freedom of speech and freedom from fear.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) opens with the statement that:

"all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights... and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood".

In 1989 the United Nations published the The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This states that:

" all young people should grow in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding - for the full development of their personality - in a spirit of tolerance and solidarity with others".

Both these principles are central to **Foróige's Charter of Rights**.

Articles (summarised) in the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child** most relevant to Foróige clubs/groups include:

Article 12:

The rights to express views freely and have these listened to and taken seriously

Article 13:

The right to freedom of expression while respecting the rights of others

Article 29:

The right to the full development of your personality, talents and abilities as well as participation in society

Article 31:

The right to participate freely in recreational and cultural activities

Articles 32-36:

The right to protection from any sort of abuse or exploitation that interferes with your welfare



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