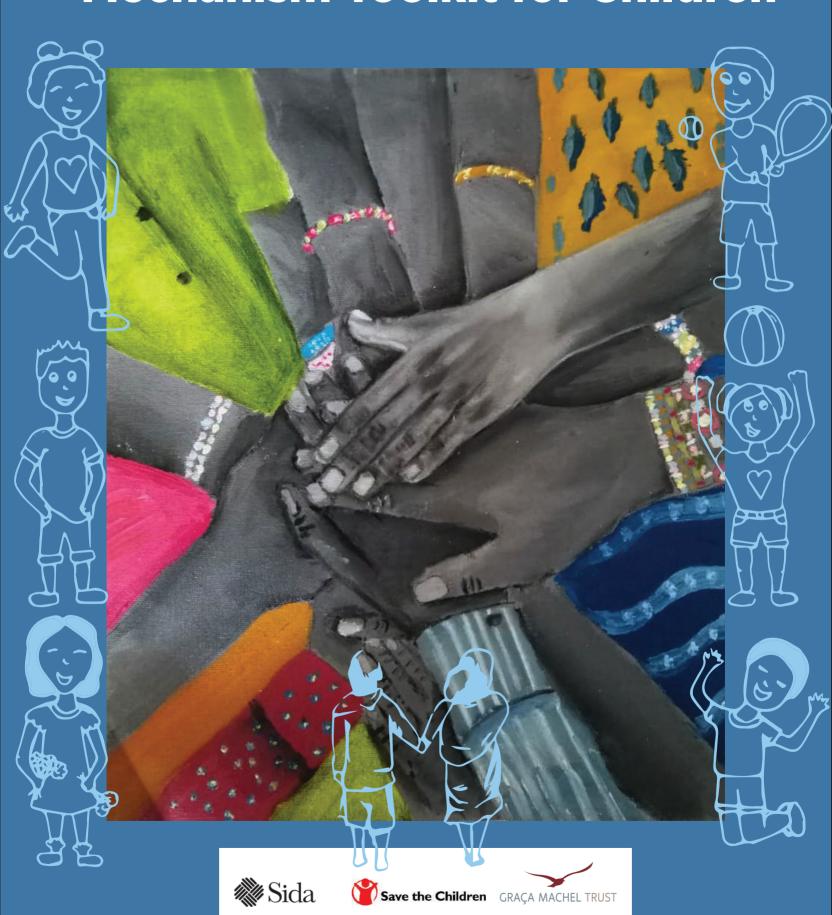
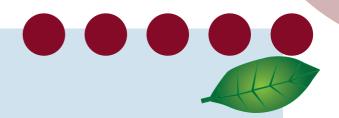
# The Child Rights Complaints Mechanism Toolkit for Children





## Acknowledgements

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- \* Please note Cut-Out pages in the middle of the book can be removed.







### **Meet our feathered friends:**





an Golden Oriole;
my parents protect our
nest with all their
strength just like human
parents take care of
their children.

I am
a Firefinch. We
live throughout Africa
in large families. We are
like Africa's children.



and play together.



I am
a Malachite Kingfisher. I usually sit on the
same spot looking down at
the water. I am like a judge
looking at people in a
court.

am a Starling
and I am a symbol
of freedom. You can
see me everywhere in
the trees or grass. The
elders tell tales about
me to teach people to
be free and
strong.

I am a
Loerie. I am a very
private bird. I sit high in the
treetop or take baths in the dust.
You will hear me say Go-away
Go-away.



am a Crane. I love dancing with my friends. We can have very large parties of up to 150 friends.



The Child Rights Complaints Mechanism Toolkit for children, is an interactive guide specially designed for African children. It contains fun activities and stories for children of all ages. The guide will help children learn about their rights and the processes/steps to follow when these rights have been broken or taken away from them. The guide will also help **ALL** children in Africa to live a healthy and happy life.

### **Summary of Children's Rights**

Children are the most defenceless members of our society. But, do you know that every child is special and has rights which must be protected at all times? Rights protect children's lives. They also make sure that a child is happy and healthy all the time.

It does not matter who the child is, where they come from, what colour they are or how much money their families have. It is the duty of every country to make sure that all children are not treated bad.

### Do you know your rights?

Examples of Children's Rights include the right to life; the right to a name and nationality; the right to an education and many more which you will learn about in this Toolkit. (See more about Children's rights on the Glossary and Explanations section on page 23).

### The African Children's Charter

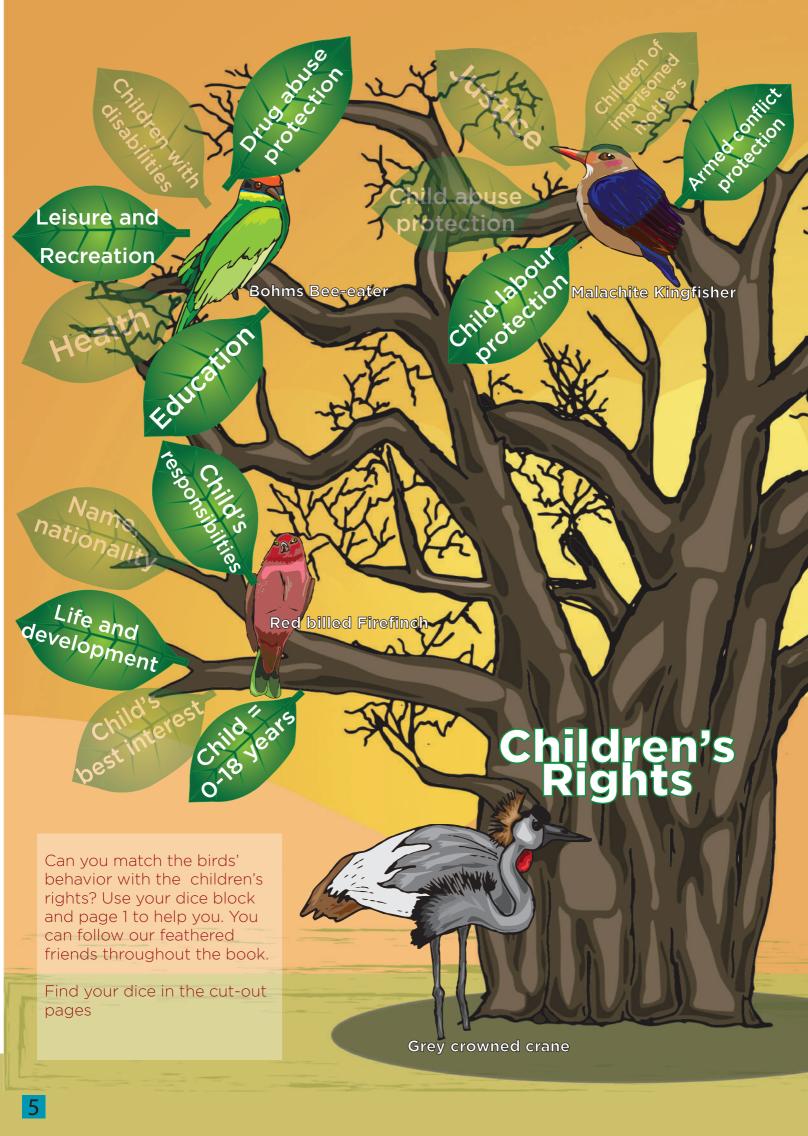
In 1990, the African Union (AU), which is made of up of 55 countries in Africa, developed the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (African Children's Charter). The African Children's Charter is a very important tool which teaches everyone about the rights of children in Africa. Because the African Union cares very much about children, they established the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (which is a Children's Committee) in 2001. Their duty is, to make sure that every country in Africa promotes and protects the rights of children. This is why the Children's Committee has set up processes to help children when someone breaks or takes away their rights and the country where they live, fails to help them.

### Now let's have some fun!

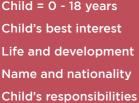
On the next page you will see a wise tree of the community, with many beautiful birds on it. The tree has some leaves. Can you identify the words written on the leaves? These words all have to do with Children's rights. It is very important that all children and adults understand these rights.

There are two types of leaves on the tree, the first is a dark green colour which has Children's rights clearly written out. The second leaves are a faint green colour with Children's rights missing. Your task is to go to the cut-out pages in the middle of the book to see if you can find the missing leaves. Cut the leaves out and glue them onto the tree branches where you see similar rights in the faint green colour. How is your tree looking now?

You can now go back to the cut-out page, in the middle of your book, and see if you can find the block with the same words written on the sides. Cut out this block and glue the sides to form a big dice. See if you can match the leaves on a specific branch to each side of the block.









Health
Leisure and recreation
Children with disabilities
Drug abuse protection



Child labour protection
Child abuse protection
Justice protection
Children of imprisoned mothers
Armed conflicts protection

Family protection

Parent care and protection

Parental responsibilities to the child

Protection when separated from parents

Adoption protection

Privacy protection

Non-discrimination

Protection against harmful practices

Protection against discrimination

Refugee children protection

Freedom of association
Freedom of thought
Freedom of expression
Protection from sexual exploitation
Protection from abduction and child trafficking

## Storytelling

Instructions for facilitators

The following three stories are told without words and only through the pictures.

### They are great because they

- are not limited to a single language,
- train children to comprehend the story from multiple perspectives,
- develop storytelling skills,
- encourage creative thinking,
- are likely to engage in complex discussions about thoughts and feelings,
- and improve vocabulary while learning story structure.

These stories can be enjoyed by little "readers" as young as 2 years old. The stories can be used in different ways. It can be introduced by an adult to a child who develop the story. It can also be used with a group of children. There is no need for either adult or child to be able to read.

Each "reader" listens and speaks, and creates their own story in their own words. The fun and learning lie in the story as it unfolds. It is not simply 'reading' to a child who listens passively instead, it is an active exchange, led by the child, and supported by an adult or older child who is attentive to their discussions.

In this booklet the stories can be used to incorporate elements of child rights as discussed using the tree in the previous page. The complaints procedure that children can follow when their rights have been violated can be brought into the same story or as the main theme for a specific story.

The adults can easily be trained to engage meaningfully on child rights and the complaints procedure (this book can be used for the training).

### The following process is suggested

- Introducing adults to Child Rights (using the tree in the previous pages)
- Introducing adults to the complaints' procedure (discussed here and in more) detail in the glossary)
- Introduce the idea of the wordless stories and the process of using ("reading") the stories

### The process adults can follow includes

- Introduce the child/children to the wordless story
- Show the story to the child/children
- Ask questions and engage children in the story
- Talk about feelings or emotions in the story
- Talk about main characters' intentions and perspectives.
- Talk about other characters in the story's perspectives

Who can use it



Parents/caregivers (including child headed households)

NGO staff Teachers

Our heroes are waiting for you to name them and to colour them in some nice traditional clothes.

They are now ready to be cut out so that they can form part of our three stories. You can place them in the different stories on the next pages.

Enjoy reading and sharing the adventures of our heroes in the following spaces.



The story is up to you, but it should include something about Children's Rights and/or something about what happens when you are not treated right and the steps to take. As you learn more about children's rights and the complaints process you can make more stories and share these with your friends. The following are just some suggestions:

### Going to the market

Go to page 7

The market is a busy place with different people. There are many things that children enjoy. How many different animals do you see? Are there baby animals that you can identify? Do you think the mommy goat cares for her children like a human mommy?

#### The fabric shop

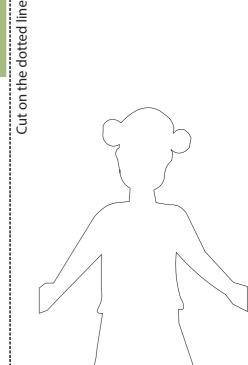
Go to page 9

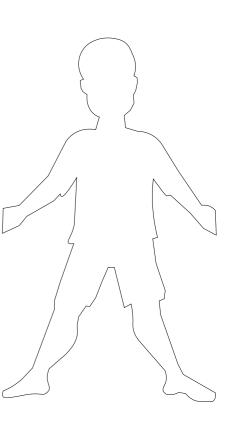
The fabric shop has lots of colourful fabrics that each tells a story of the people who can wear clothes made of the beautiful patterns. Can you find some of the colours? The fabric is different just like we are all different. Did you notice the hats? Who is the shopkeeper and the customers? What are they all doing in the shop?

### Our community, country and continent

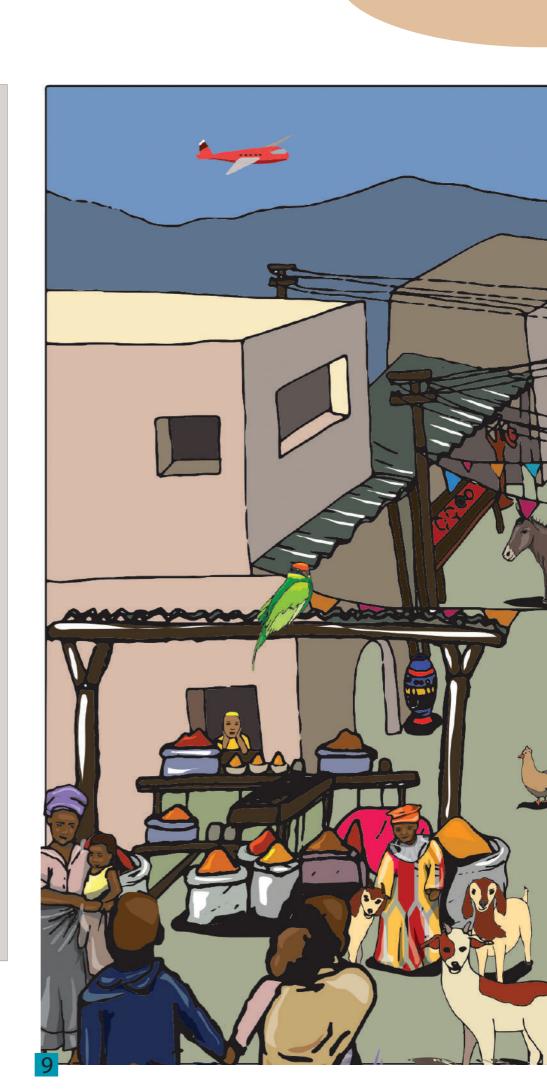
Go to page 17

Do you have adults in your community who listen to the people's problems? Do these people listen to children and their problems? Who would you tell if something is not good for children? Some people will listen and even talk to people in bigger cities and if that does not help, they can even go to a group of people who listen to all children in Africa. African children are very important to them. Can you see how the people will travel from our wise old tree to the whole continent of Africa? What stories can the tree or the buildings tell about children?





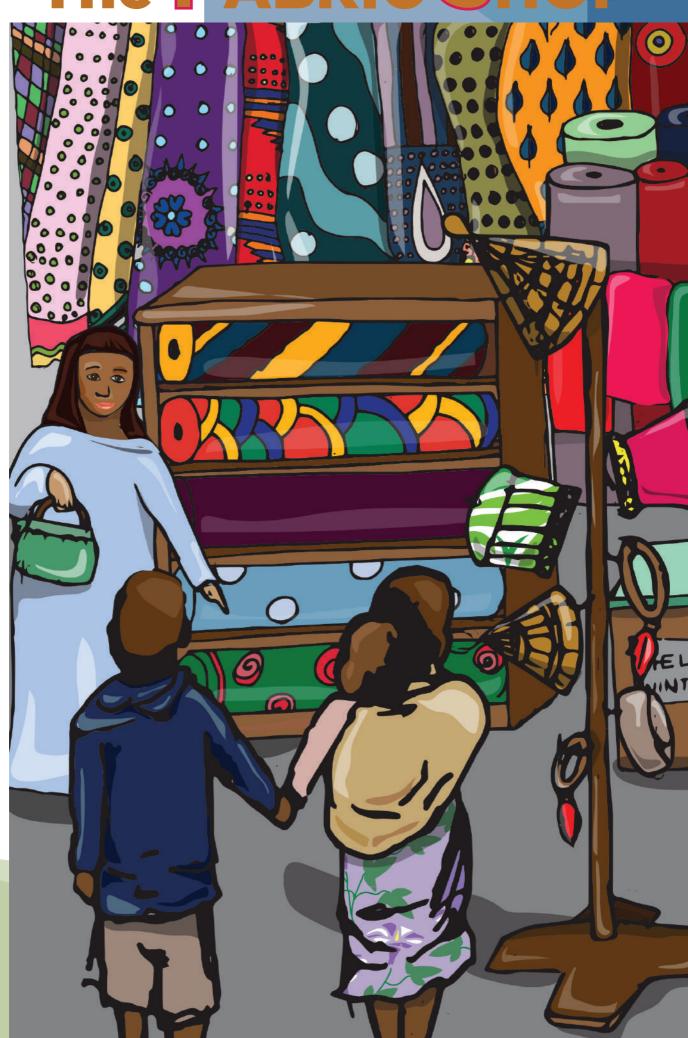
Cut on the dotted line



# GOING to the MARKET

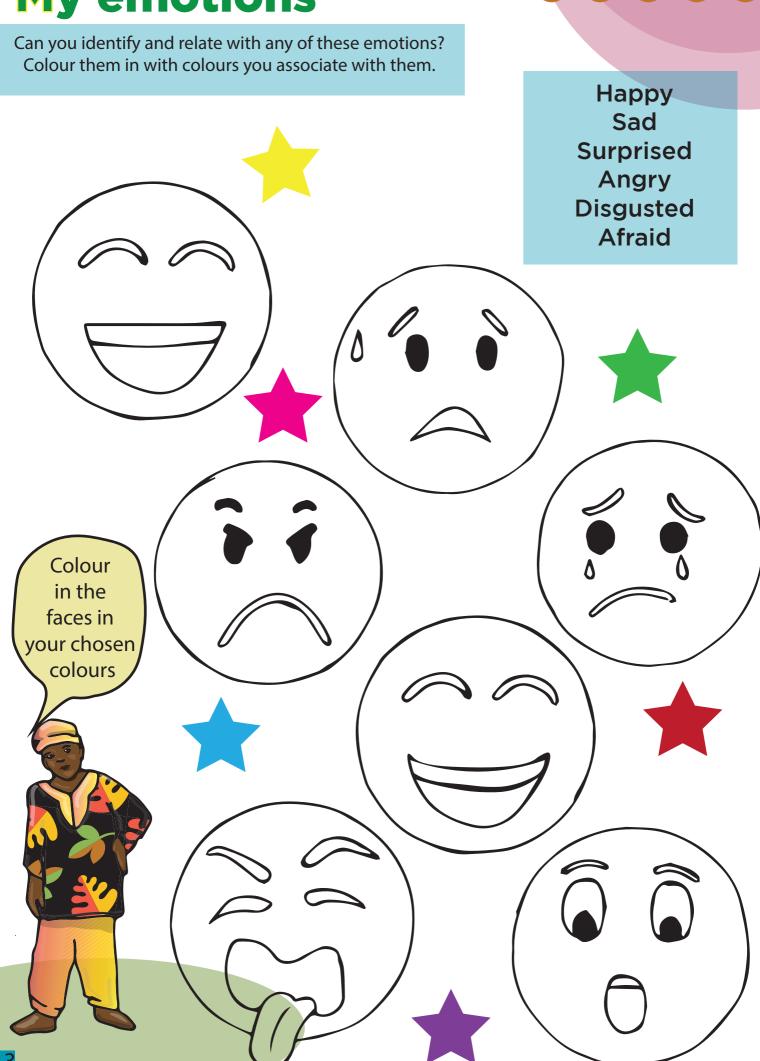


## The FABRIC SHOP





## My emotions



# Rights Board Game Instructions

The Rights Board Game can be played by any number of players. It works well if you play on your own, or two-two players together, or a group against another group.

Choose a hat from the cut-out pages in the middle of the book.

Choose a topic that is relevant to children in your community. For example, maybe children are forced to work, or children migrate from other countries to the community, or children are not allowed to speak. You can look at the tree on page 5 to help you.

Before you start take a little time to discuss why you think this is important for children in your community.

### **START** at the starting line.

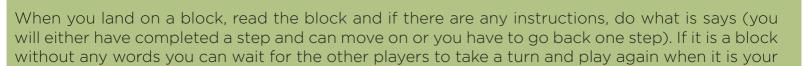


Cut your dice from the cut-out page and fold and glue it to make a block. The dice has six sides. On each side is a number of dots (from 1 to 6). You use the number of dots to determine the number of moves you are allowed to make.

Each of the sides also has a list of five words. These words are Articles of child rights. When you play the Rights Board game you will use these words. These words are the same as those that you placed on the tree.

Have a look to see if they are really the same?

Roll the dice to determine which block you land on next.

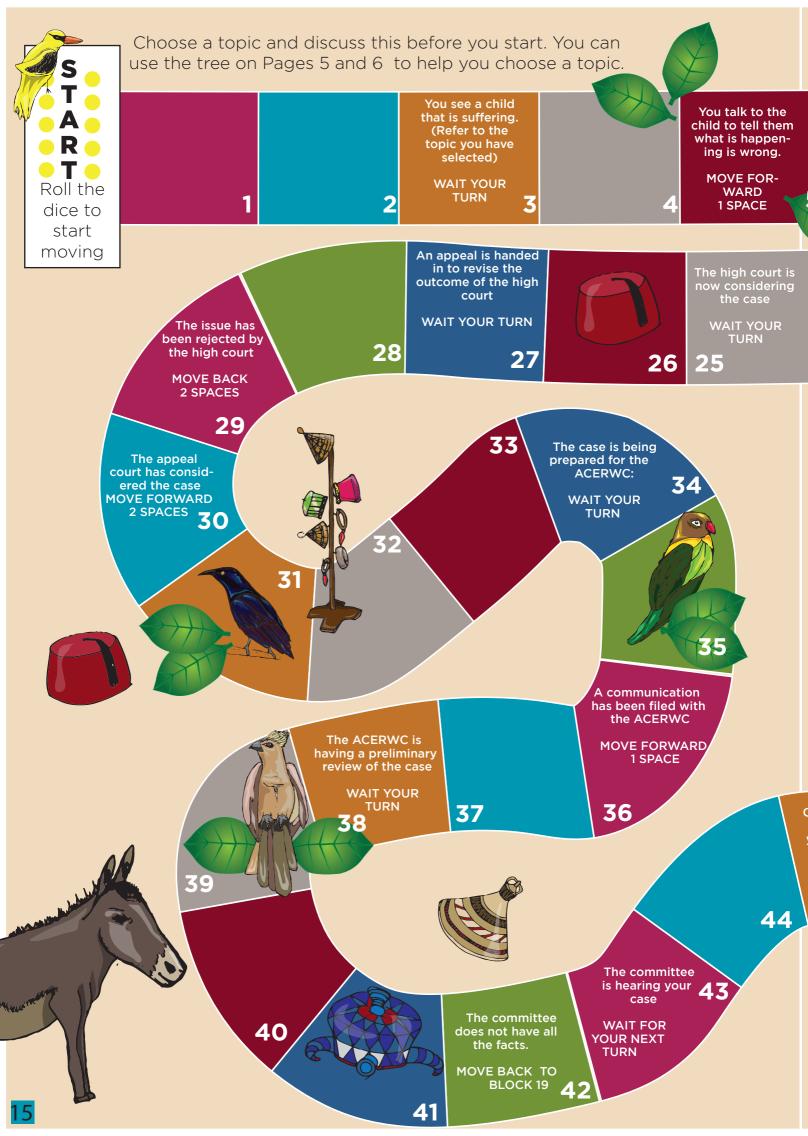


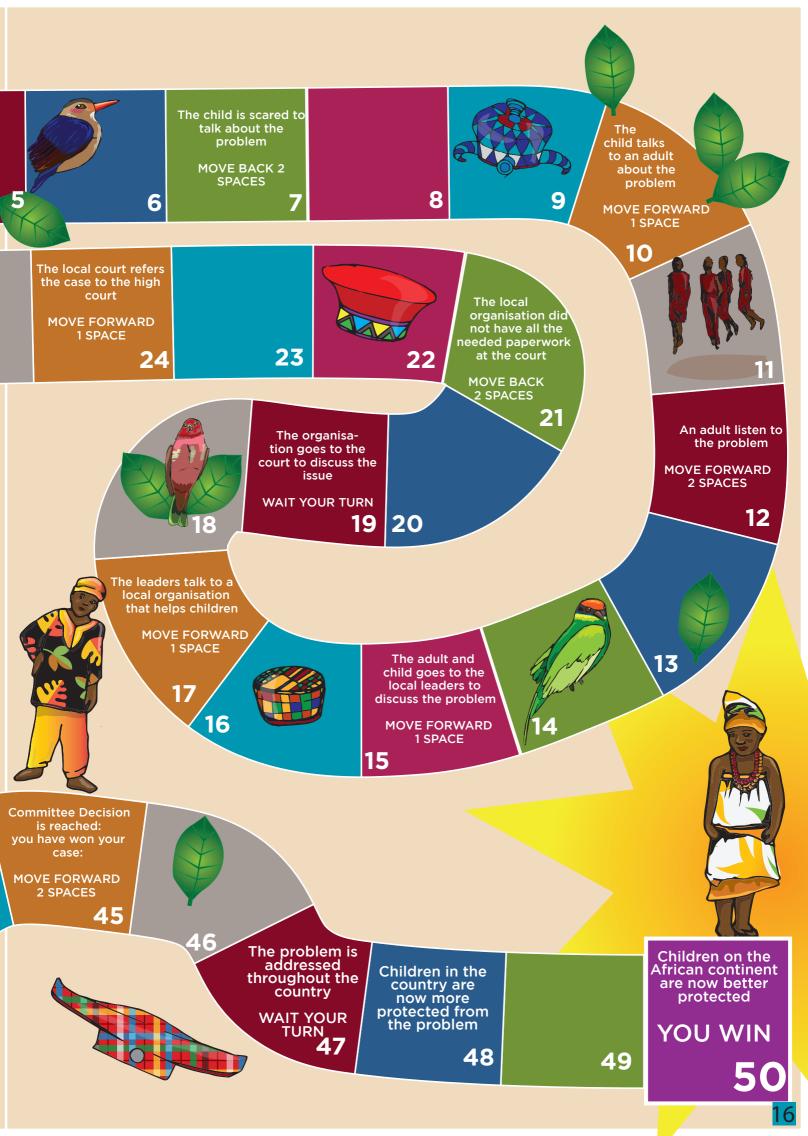
The first one to get to the finish line is the winner.

turn.

Remember to follow the process as described in this book to ensure complaints and communications of child rights abuses are reported to the African Committee of Experts on the Right and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC).

We hope you have fun while learning about the process. Remember to also include other children and youth to learn about the process





## **Code Breaker**

Use the following code system to unlock the words. Every letter of the alphabet has a number. See if you can decode the words. You can also use it to make your own codes to send messages to your friends.



N												
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

For example A F R I C A 1- 6-18-9-11-1

20-08-05-25 01-18-05 09-13-16-15-18-20-01-14-20

09 01-13 19-16-05-03-09-01-12

Connect the dots to help the children find their hats

# HOPSCOTCH

diagonal.



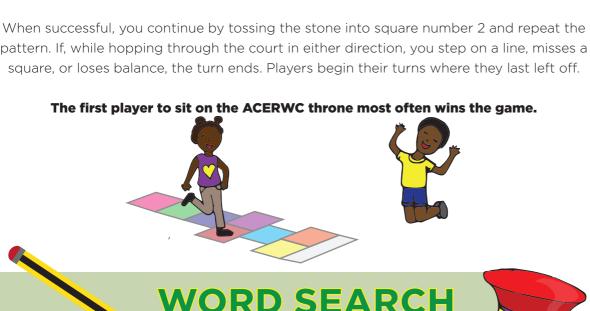
Draw the design on the ground using some chalk or draw it in the sand with a stick.

The first player tosses a stone into block 1, without bouncing, sliding, touching the line or rolling out. The player then hops through the course (1 foot in a block), skipping the block with the stone.

When you land on the "ACERWC" throne you stop, turn around and officially announce one of the childrens rights that needs attention. Then hop back through the course.

When reaching the block with the stone stop in the block before the stone, reach down, pick up the stone and read the step out load to everyone. Continue to hop back to start.

square, or loses balance, the turn ends. Players begin their turns where they last left off.





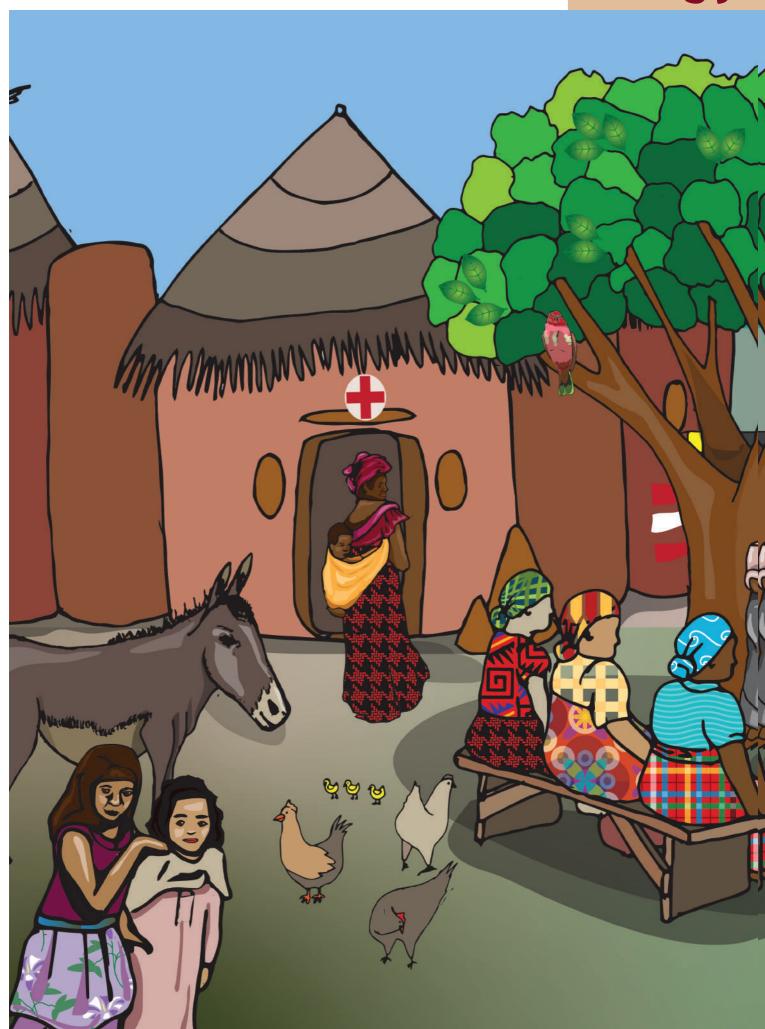
organisation children Talk to an adult Identify treatment

African children are very important. There are 55 countries on the African continent. See how many of the African countries' names you can find. The words can be left to right, right to left, up/down, down/up or

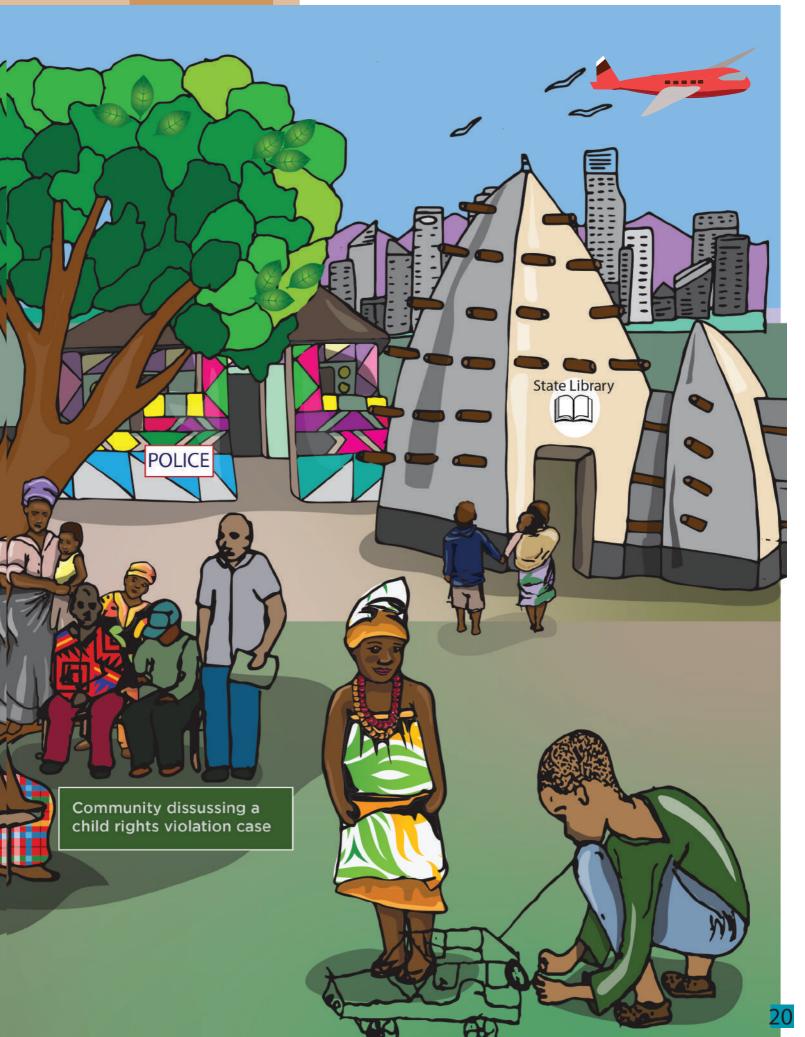
M	Α	D	Α	G	Α	S	C	Α	R	W	Α
O	Н	Τ	0	S	Ε	L	Н	Ε	C	S	1
Z	Q	O	K	Ε	Ν	Y	Α	N	Α	Ш	R
Α	L	G	Е	R		Α	D	I	M	Z	Ε
M	V	O	F	R	L	٧	Ν	U	Ε	ш	G
В	0	Т	S	W	Α	Z	Α	G	R	G	
	S	Н	Z	Α	M	В	_	Α	0	Α	Ν
Q	J	G	Α	Z	D	Α	Ш	M	0	Ш	G
U	D	W	Т	D	K	G	Р	В	Ν	S	Α
E	Α	J	D	A	Υ	C	N		N	Е	В
T	N	C	S	P	M	Α	L	Α	W		0
	Ν		T	Α	W	S	Ε	L	M	Q	Ν

Algeria Angola Benin Botswana Cameroon Chad Egypt Eswatini Gabon Gambia Guinea Kenya Lesotho Madagascar Malawi Mali Mozambique Nigeria Rwanda Senegal Sudan Togo Uganda Zambia

# Our Community,



# **Country** and **Continent**



## Thandi in Cu Vin

In the long holiday, 7 years ago, Thandi's aunt came to visit them in Nogino, the small rural village where Thandi and her family live. Her aunt lives in Cu Vin, the capital of QinQin, which is about 400km from Nogino. Thandi always wondered how life in the big city was. Her aunt always told stories about the big city and the fancy clothes and hairstyles like her own. This year her aunt talked to her parents and asked that Thandi go to live with her in the city to attend a better and well-equipped school than her current one. Thandi was so excited when her parents agreed to let her go live with her aunt. Thandi was now 10 years old and felt ready for the big city life.





Thandi really enjoyed school. It took her some time to make new friends, but she and Alexi became best friends. During the first short school holidays her aunt asked her to help with the household chores. Thandi liked helping her aunt. However, when Thandi prepared to go back to school after the holidays, her aunt told her to stop going to school and instead continue helping out with the household chores. This made Thandi very sad as she loved school very much. Not wanting to disappoint her aunt, Thandi agreed to stay at home. The day of the holiday came when she and her aunt went home to Nogino. Thandi was so happy to see her family and they sat together for hours, catching up on the marvellous stories of the big city. Thandi wanted to tell her mother about her aunt stopping her from attending school, but every time her mother asked about school, her aunt would jump in and talk about other things and send Thandi to fetch something.

One night Thandi decided to stay up late to talk to her father. She told him about how happy she was of working in her aunt's house, but that she also misses school. At first her father told her that this is alright and that her aunt will surely take her back to school when the time is right. Thandi went back to Cu Vin after the holiday feeling very sad that her father could not help her go back to school. She continued to work in her aunt's house and never went back to school.





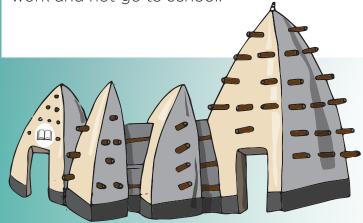
One day, while Thandi was hanging the washing outside, a woman came to the house. She said she was from an organisation called "Let the kids play". She asked Thandi all kinds of questions about working at home and why she was not attending school. A few days later Thandi and her aunt left for the holidays to Nogino. Thandi told her mother of the visit of the woman and her own worries about not going to school. Thandi's mother and father refused to let her aunt take her to Cu Vin at the end of the holidays. Her aunt left feeling hurt and angry that the family failed to see how she was helping Thandi. They went to the chief and asked to speak to the leaders of the village. Thandi told her story to the elders. To her surprise, the elders of the village told Thandi and her parents of many more young children from Nogino and the neighbouring villages, who are tricked into going to the city and end up working instead of going to school.





In the meantime, the lady from "Let the kids play" and lots of her co-workers continued to talk to children in Cu Vin and other cities in QinQin. They were able to gather lots of stories from children who were taken from their homes to work in the city as domestic workers. A lawyer working for the organisation went to the local court to find out what the court would say about this problem. The court ruled that this is a case that should be handled by the Higher Court of the country, as the children were staying in different areas. The High Court requested the children to explain exactly what had happened to them. The court ruled for the children to return back to their homes.

But some of the families were very angry with the High Court. They began talking together and found a lawyer to help them win the case. The lawyer made an appeal to have the court ruling cancelled. The entire process with the lawyers took five years and eventually the appeal court ruled that the traditions in the country made it very difficult to rule in favour of the children. Therefore, the children were sent back to live with the families who demanded them to work and not go to school.



The people at "Let the kids play" were very sad about the court's decision. They decided to take the matter to the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC). They carefully put together, all the evidence they had gathered over the years. They also made sure that the complaint was very clear and signed by the head of the organisation. They listed the names of all the children and wrote exactly what each one of them had been forced to do.

The Committee (ACERWC) reviewed the complaint submitted by "Let the kids play" and saw that everything submitted to them was in order. The Committee made a request to the government of QinQin to give a response to the case within 60 days.

The Committee then arranged for a hearing where "Let the kids play" and some of the children presented their problems. It took the Committee two months to make a decision on the case. They requested the government of QinQin to make sure the children are returned to their parents and go back to school. "Let the kids play" were asked to develop a programme and go to all the small cities to teach both the adults and children about some of the traditions which are harmful to children.

This decision made by the Committee enabled children like Thandi to be returned back to their families and to complete school.



## Things to think about

After reading the story of Thandi please use some time to think about the following questions.

### You can do it on your own or in a group with some friends.

- Which children's rights do you think was violated in Thandi's story?
  - Do you know any other child rights?

### You can read about the different child right's violations in the glossary

- Do you think the right procedures were followed to send the Complaint to the ACERWC?
  - What do you think would have made the process easier?
- How would the same story play out in a different country?
  - How would it play out in the country that you stay in?
- How did the culture influence the violation of the child right?
  - What role would the culture that you are living in play in similar child rights violations?
- Which other child rights violations are commonly seen in your context?
- What did the context in the story influence how the child right's violation was handled? How would your own context influence how these child rights violation are handled?
- Where would cases of child right's violations be reported in the community where you stay?
- Do you know which organisation in the country would be able to assist children?
- Do you understand the process that is followed by children or other organisations to report child rights abuses?
  - You can read about the process in the glossary
- Perhaps you can make up a small drama (role-play) or a song to tell younger children about:
- o Child rights
- o The way to follow to report child rights abuses

## **Glossary and Explanations**

### **Children's rights**

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) was developed by the African Union. It states that all children in Africa have rights and freedoms.

	Article Name No	rticle mber	Description  All African Union Members States have a duty to make sure the rights freedoms and duties described in
	Obligation of State Parties	1	All African Union Member States have a duty to make sure the rights, freedoms and duties described in the African Children's Charter are applied in their different countries.
	Definition of a child	2	A child is every person below the age of 18 years.
	Best interests of the child	4	In anything that anyone does they should first think of what is best for the child. A child who can talk can also say how they feel.
	Survival and development	5	Every child has the right to life, to survive, to be protected and to grow.
	Name and nationality	6	Every child born has a right to have their births registered. They also have a right to a name and nationality.
	Responsibility of the child	31	Children should be respectful to their parents and older people. They should be proud of their country and being an African child. Children should use their talents to help their country.
	Education	11	Every child has the right to an education, to help them develop to their full potential
	Health and health services	14	Every child has the right to be healthy in their bodies, mind and soul.
	Leisure, recreation and cultural activities	12	Children can have a right to rest, play and take part in recreation, cultural life and arts that are age appropriate.
	Children living with a disability	13	Children living with a disability have the right to be protected and to access resources that will help them feel confident and take part in their community.
	Drug abuse	28	Children should be protected from using drugs and being used to sell drugs.
	Child labour	15	Children must not do work that is harmful to them.
	Protection against child abuse ar	d 16	Children must be protected from all forms of abuse.
	torture	17	When a child has broken the law, they should be treated well and be taught to respect other people.
	Administration of juvenile justice	30	Babies and small children should not be in jail with their mothers.
(	Children of imprisoned mothers	22	Children must be protected when they live in places where there is fighting or wars. They must also be protected from being made child soldiers.
4	Armed conflicts		also be protected from being made child soldiers.
	Protection of the family	18	The family is the basis of any community.
	Parental care and protection	19	Every child has the right to stay with their parents. No child shall be separated from his/her parents against his/her will, except if separation is for the best interest of the child.
	Parental responsibilities	20	Parents are supposed to take care of their children and to help them develop.
	Separation from parents	25	Children who are separated from their parents for a short or long time must be protected.
ı	Adoption	24	A child can be adopted by another family if it is in the best interest of the child.
	Protection of privacy	10	
	Non-discrimination	3	Every child must enjoy his/her rights and freedom, regardless of the country they come from, the colour of their skin, whether they are a boy or a girl, the language they speak, the religion they belong to and whether or not they come from a rich or poor family.
	Protection against harmful soci and cultural practices	21	Traditional and cultural practices must not cause any harm to a child. Children must also not be forced to get married before they are 18 years old.
	Protection against discrimination	26	Children must all be treated the same regardless of how they look or what they believe in.
	Refugee children	23	Children who have been forced to leave their countries must be protected, even when they are not with their parents.
	Freedom of association	8	Children are allowed to meet and get together without breaking the law.
	Freedom of thought, consciend and religion	e 9	Children have the right to think the way they want and they have a right to choose their religion, without breaking the law.
	Freedom of expression	7	Every child has the right to his/her own opinions without breaking the law.
		27	Children must be protected from all forms of covial explaination and covial abuse

Children must be protected from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.

Children shall not be stolen from their families and sold as slaves or for money. They are also not to beg for money for anyone.

Sexual exploitation

Sale, trafficking and abduction

## Steps for submission of complaints

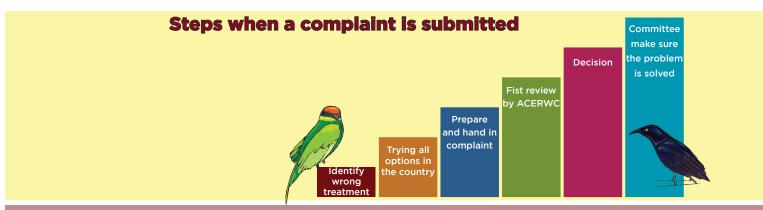
When children are not treated according to the rights, there are specific ways to deal with the problems.

This will make sure that children are protected and treated in the right way.

#### Who can raise a complaint?

- Any child
- Any parent or caregiver or legal guardian of a child
- Any other person or groups of persons
- Any organisation working in the community (community-based organisation or CBO)
- The organisations that work in the country (National Human Rights Institutions or NHRI)
- Organisations that work in many countries

Complaints by children are always taken very seriously. It is important to understand the process so that the problems can be solved in the right and fastest way. Let us look at each of the steps to be taken.



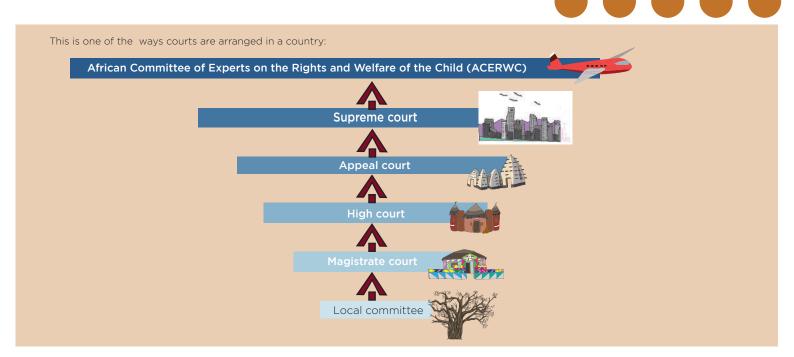
### 1. Identifying the wrong treatment of children

Any child or adult or group or organisation that is in the community or higher in the country or even outside the country can see when there is something wrong with how children is treated and complain about this. There are a few important things to remember to make sure that the problem that can be submitted to the ACERWC.

- The problem should be one of those that we described in the previous pages and in the leaves of the tree. This is what the ACRWC document tells us.
- It should not be something that is just written in the newspaper or said on TV.
- Other organisations or courts should not already be busy with the case.
- It should have gone through all the country ways to deal with it. We discuss this more in point 2 because it is very important.
- It should not wait for a long time.
- The complaint should not be insulting, but respectful, clear and containing real facts.

#### 2. Try all the options in the country

It is very important that all the ways to deal with the problem is followed. In each community there are ways to talk to other adults, this include talking to a parent or caregiver, a teacher or a person working with children. If that does not help, we can talk to the police and go to the local community leaders (they might be a chief or a traditional leader). The next step would be to go to the court. Each country has different courts that can help. We should always try to do this first starting at the bottom and if it does not help moving on to the court above. If the local court cannot help, then the next court in the same country should be tried first. If nothing in the country helps (or in the case of some exceptions such as if it takes very long), then we can complain at the large committee that take care of children in Africa (African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child or ACERWC).



### 3. Prepare and submit complaint

The person or organisation who are submitting the complaint should then prepare a complaint. This written complaint should be clear in a language used by the Committee (this is Arabic, English, French, Portuguese, and Swahili). It should state names and be signed by the person who is handing the complaint to the Committee. There is more information that will be required and the person responsible for submitting the complaint must make sure all of this is in the complaint before it is submitted. The detailed information required is described in a separate Child Rights' Complaints Toolkit designed for adults.

There are then steps that happen at the ACERWC to make sure that the problem is understood and that it is corrected so that children can be protected.

#### 4. First review by ACERWC

When the committee receives that complaint, it will first review it to see if the requirements are right. If it is not right, they might send it back.

### 5. Hearing and determination of case

If the complaint has all the right information, the committee will look at the complaint and ask the country government to also respond to the complaint.

#### 6. Committee decide and implement

The committee will then decide on the best way to solve the problem. The country must then take steps to correct the problem. The Committee will then make a follow-up to see if this has been done. This will help ensure children are protected.





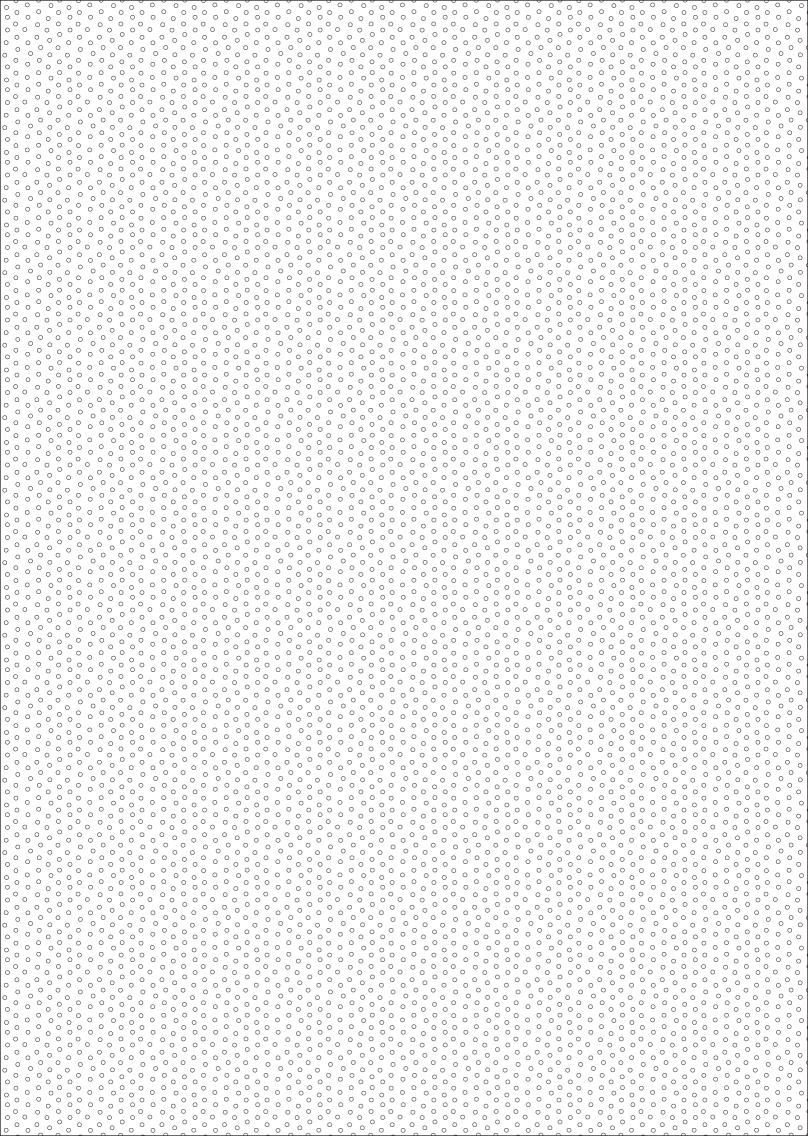






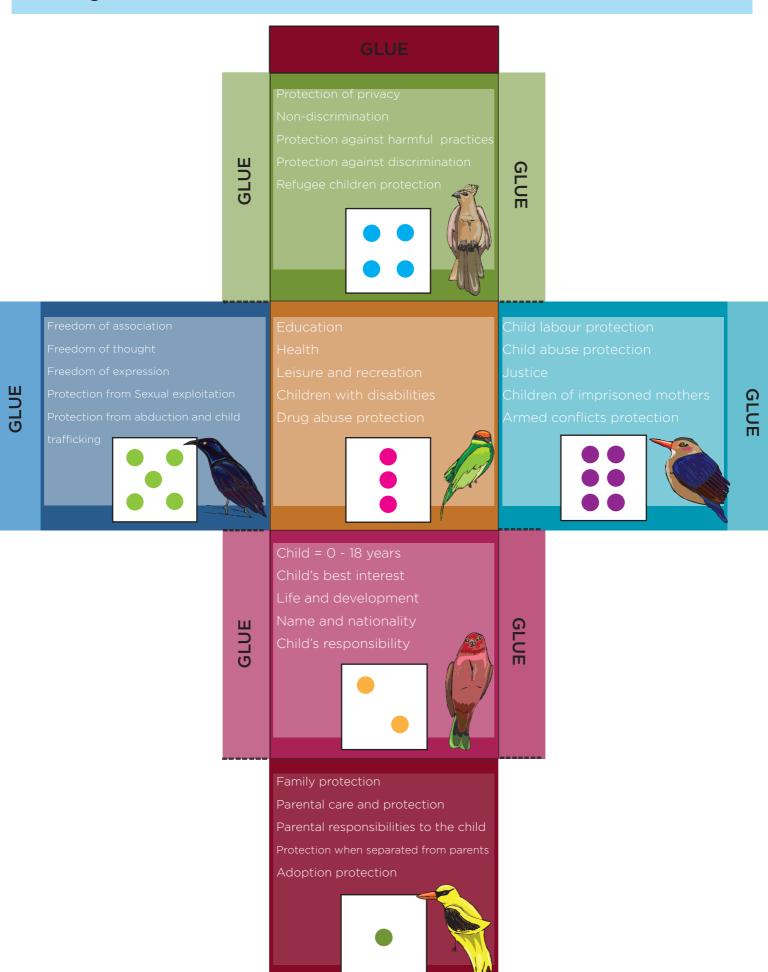






### Dice

Cut the dice out. Cut on the dotted line. Fold on the solid line. Glue the sides together.





### **Boardgame Tokens**

Cut the Hat-Tokens out on the dotted line. Fold on the solid line. Glue the two sides together, if you don't have glue, the fold will still work.

