



**Tapori international**  
Movement ATD Fourth World  
Chemin Galiffe 5  
1201 Geneva – Switzerland

[www.tapori.org](http://www.tapori.org)  
[tapori@tapori.org](mailto:tapori@tapori.org)

**"Tapori: the friends of those who have no friends!"**

## **Tapori Facilitator's Guide**

### **What is Tapori?**

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**Tapori is a worldwide network of friendship** which connects children from all backgrounds. It was created by Joseph Wresinski, founder of ATD Fourth World Movement and its secretariat is run by this same Movement.

Children everywhere dream of a world where poverty will disappear, where everyone can live in peace and friendship. They don't want to wait until they're adults to take action. Tapori stands with them in this dream and supports their desire to fight against poverty and exclusion.

Today more than 10,000 children between 7 and 15 years old from many different countries are connected through the **Tapori newsletter**. Once every two months, it brings them news of other boys and girls who have found ways to include other children all around Europe, Africa, the Americas, and Asia. It suggests activities for them to be able to share their friendship with all.

The Tapori Movement is **multicultural and open to all**. It is not and cannot be affiliated with any political movement or religion. Tapori is not an organized structure; it can't have a legal or institutional status. It's not a donor, nor can it finance other projects. Tapori is a way to promote inclusion among children and recognize their ideas of how to build a more just world.

## **What's the role of a Tapori secretariat?**

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The international secretariat is based in Geneva, Switzerland. It's run by four members of ATD Fourth World Movement. This secretariat writes and publishes the Tapori newsletter based on the messages children send us. The Tapori website ([www.tapori.org](http://www.tapori.org)) is updated regularly and gives children an opportunity to get to know each other.

The secretariat receives messages from children who react to the Tapori newsletter, to other children's messages, or who explain their own lives. The secretariat guarantees a reply to each child through individual or groups replies, allowing them to discover the ideas and opinions of children from other backgrounds.

The secretariat is also regularly in contact with adults who run Tapori groups and suggests tools, activities, or training documents to them.

## **Who can create a Tapori group?**

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A teenager, a parent, a teacher, or a community organizer; anyone who wants to can create a Tapori group to help support children's desire to say no to poverty and to find peace and friendship. This person helps children get together to think about, speak about, and take action against injustices. It's a voluntary commitment; Tapori facilitators aren't paid. The facilitator is not there to educate children, but to listen to them and support their own actions in the fight against exclusion. Each child should be respected for who he or she is, based on his or her personality, personal history, and culture.

A child's participation in a Tapori group must always be in agreement with her or his parents or the person responsible for the child (a social worker, in some cases).

The group can work with just a few children or with many. It is good for the facilitator to start slowly, with a small group before inviting many children or gain public recognition for Tapori.

Tapori meetings can be held in family homes, classrooms, a room given by a local association, a religious group, or even outside on the sidewalk.

It's not necessary to rent a room or buy office material because the most important part of Tapori is having meetings where the children live and preparing events with them.

The rhythm of meetings should be one that is the most convenient for the children and adults and can be changed if the group's needs change. Meetings might be held more often during school vacations or just before a special event, or less often when the children have their end of year tests or during times when the parents need their children at home. In order to judge this, the facilitator should know enough about the children's lives to be able to adapt the meetings to their needs.

## **What is the status of a Taponi group?**

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A Taponi group is not all of Taponi and cannot speak for or represent Taponi. It cannot ask for donations in the name of Taponi. To avoid confusion, most groups choose their own name, for example, the "Brave Hearts," "Friendship and Peace," "the Star Kids," etc. and say that they're connected to Taponi.

Taponi is above all a network of friendship that starts from the children themselves and their projects. So Taponi groups should not declare themselves to be an official association or local NGO because that would refocus the facilitators' energy on running the association to the detriment of their availability to the children. Such a status would also discourage spontaneity and the children's creativity.

Taponi activities can be used by other associations or groups, who communicate regularly with Taponi, but keep their own separate identity, such as community centers, libraries, church groups.

## **What is the rôle of the Taponi facilitator?**

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*"I want you to understand that what I'm asking of you is very serious. You can't help poor people one day and abandon them the next. You need to persevere and put in time. We need to be able to count on you." Joseph Wresinski*

### With the children

The facilitator has the responsibility of encouraging children's ideas about how to help and learn from others.

The facilitator helps children be connected to others through regular correspondence with the Taponi secretariat in Geneva, Switzerland or Landover, Maryland (USA). He or she helps children think together about a subject brought up in the Taponi newsletter or other Taponi publications (mini-books, the website, etc.). He or she should write down what's said in the meetings or pick one of the older children to be the secretary.

The main concern should be that each child can express herself, especially those who can't read or write or who don't speak English. You should pay particular attention to the children who have the hardest time. All children can take action and have ideas to contribute.

### With the Taponi secretariat

The facilitator should also communicate regularly with the international secretariat to let them know how the group is going and to share any questions or ideas that come up. This process helps the facilitator to better understand the children and help them learn about Taponi and helps the secretariat to get to know and better communicate with the children.

This back and forth helps the facilitator and the secretariat work together to better understand the children's dreams and give them the support they need without imposing our adult ideas on them.

### **What tools can be used in a Taponi group?**

The Taponi newsletter offers an activity page (thinking about a specific subject based on a story or message, an art activity, or ideas for cooperative games).

Taponi mini-books tell the true stories of children who live in poverty. They don't always have easy lives, but they share the same dreams as children around the world.

ATD Fourth World Movement and its friends have published a number of children's books that can be used (*Joseph*, about the childhood of Taponi's founder, *My Heart is in this Stone*, *Torina's World*, and others).

Of course, activities developed by other groups or individuals can also be integrated into Taponi groups.

A Taponi campaign is launched each year for October 17, the World Day to Overcome Poverty. Based on a story, it asks children to think about those who experience exclusion and to send an object or an idea that shows how to reject such exclusion. This object or idea is collected others from around the world. Examples from the past include braids (2002), water drops made from fabric (2004), cooperative games (2005), and life-sized silhouettes (2006-7). In 2009, we invite children to create vehicles and collective posters. To find out more, please consult our website, at [www.taponi.org](http://www.taponi.org).

Written in Geneva, Switzerland 2008

Julieta Pino-Amachi, Agnès Romazzotti,  
and Ben Fehsenfeld  
Taponi International

