A Toolkit for Reflective Practice in Supporting Community-led Child Protection Processes

Child Resilience Alliance

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Mike Wessells for the CRA

Preface

Vibrant community action that supports vulnerable children and also supports formal aspects of child protection systems is essential for the achievement of our collective goal of strengthening child protection systems.

Together with its companion Guide, *A Guide for Supporting Community-Led Child Protection Processes*, the Toolkit aims to enable effective, sustainable community-led action that prevents and responds to child protection risks. This community-led approach is promising because it generates high levels of community ownership, enables children's leadership, and helps communities to mobilize themselves for internally guided, positive change.

Enabling community-led action requires a different skillset than is required for top-down approaches. The tools in this Toolkit begin the process of acquiring the skills needed to enable a community-led approach. It is suggested that users of the Guide and Toolkit go back and forth between the two, acting as optimal foragers in learning about how to interweave the principles and practicalities of community-led approaches.

The Toolkit consists of four sections, each of which includes notes to users:

> ***Facilitation Tools:*** These reflective tools offer facilitators a means of deepening and enriching their support for community-led work. For facilitators, program officers, and managers alike, these tools can help to strengthen the "soft skills" of child protection work such as humility, deep listening and empathy, and advance their journey of reflective practice.
>
> ***Training Tools:*** The participatory tools in this section may be used to prepare facilitators for enabling community-led work on child protection. Also, they are useful in training program officers and senior managers in one's own agency on the value of community-led approaches. They have proven useful in workshops for NGOs, government agencies, and UN stakeholders that help to increase understanding of and support for community-led approaches.
>
> ***Learning Tools:*** The learning tools help practitioners to learn about communities or collectives of people in a way that is deeper, richer, and more contextualized than is usually achieved in pre-packaged assessments and situation analyses.
>
> ***Management Tools:*** These tools are not prescriptions, yet they give NGO managers and program officers as well as facilitators concrete examples of how to enable planning, action, and monitoring of community-led processes of child protection.

By design, these tools are not checklists or universal recipes. Each community is unique and operates in its own socio-cultural, historic, and political and economic context. Communities develop their own means of solving problems, and our aim should be to support them in this effort, not to straitjacket them by imposing one way of enabling community-led work.

The tools in this kit can enable NGOs, community-based organizations, community members, and others to help many different kinds of communities to develop their own, contextualized solutions, work in an inclusive manner, and unlock their own and children's creative potential in addressing child protection issues.

The biggest challenge, however, in using these tools is that practitioners and agencies cannot simply take them "off the shelf" and use them with success. To use them effectively, we first have to reflect and change ourselves.

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FACILITATION (FAC) TOOLS

Section 1: Note to Users

These tools aim to help you to develop foundational skills such as listening, asking probing questions, managing conflict, and so on.

It is useful to engage with these tools before, during, and after the training workshop to prepare you for facilitation in a community-led approach. Extensive practice with reflection is needed in order to master the skills that these tools seek to develop.

The tools may be used individually or in small groups. This section enables individual reflection by providing space for reflective writing, using a workbook format. Each tool in this section requires 60–90 minutes to complete.

On an ongoing basis, it is useful to think about which skills you need additional practice on, which challenges (internal or external) make it difficult for you to use a particular skill, and how you will take steps to improve. In small groups, you may want to reflect with three to five colleagues, with group discussion of the questions posed in these tools and of what can be done to deepen particular skills within your agency.

FAC 1. Humility

Humility is the foundation for effective work by outsiders who wish to enable a community-led process. Without humility, we will not listen deeply because we think we know all the answers. Lacking in humility, we impose outsider approaches that are "better" than local practices. By placing ourselves above the community, we are not in a good position to build trust or an authentic relationship with the community. "We" (the NGO workers) are the experts, while "they" (the community members) are people who need to be educated, corrected, and guided by us and our agencies.

This tool invites you to reflect on why we should be humble, on the nature and importance of humility, and how a lack of humility by facilitators or outsiders can impede a community-led approach.

Grounds for Humility

A fair question for child protection workers is: "Why should we be humble?" After all, aren't we (the outsiders) the experts on children's protection?

To address this question, it can be useful to think about the limits of our knowledge and expertise. To begin with, child protection issues are so complex that they defy simple answers. Also, the field of child protection has a weak evidence base, and we have much to learn about which interventions are most effective, which elements of interventions do the "heavy lifting," how to achieve sustainable positive outcomes for children, and so on. Adding to these concerns is the fact that NGO or other externally-enabled interventions on child protection sometimes cause unintended harm. In light of this complexity and these concerns, it would be unwise, even arrogant, to pump oneself up as an "expert."

Next consider the knowledge that local communities may have. Think what things local people know that we do not know and jot down a few ideas.

Write below:

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Did you notice that there are a dizzying number of things that local people know that we, as outsiders, do not know?

Local people understand local views of childhood and children, how children relate with extended family members, what community members expect of children and how expectations vary for girls and boys, how families and communities (and individual people) support children, what harms occur to children and who helps when these harms arise, among many others. Rural people have extensive knowledge about modes of livelihood such as farming, buying and selling goods, animal husbandry, etc. People in urban settings know about where to obtain basic supplies, what to buy or sell and where, and places their children should avoid, among others.

In both rural and urban settings, people have in-depth knowledge of cultural beliefs, values, and practices, and they know their oral histories and traditions. They know how to marshal local resources and develop local solutions to complex problems. This list, which could be extended for pages, indicates that local people have in-depth understanding of their context, their families and communities, and their children that outsiders do not have.

Humility should follow from this recognition that there is much that local people know that we do not. If we want an in-depth understanding of the context, we should set aside our mantle of being experts and instead see ourselves as students of local people. Now let's extend this spirit of humility by thinking further about different aspects of humility.

What is Humility?

Please circle each of the items below that you think best relate to humility or a humble approach in interacting with community people:

loud honest arrogance

listening angry I'm an expert

funny modest narcissistic

sad I'm the center of attention curious

liar respectful I'm here to serve

Line by line, the accurate responses are:

- ***Honest***: A humble person has the ability to honestly and accurately assess his/her own knowledge/abilities and their limits.
- ***Listening****:* Humility leads one to listen rather than try to be the "expert."
- ***Modest***: Modesty is at the core of humility. A humble person is aware of what they do not know and cannot do and does not brag about or exaggerate their knowledge or ability.
- ***Curious***: Being humble in relationships often goes with a sense of curiosity, which leads us to want to listen to and learn from others rather than promote ourselves.
- ***Respectful***: Humility entails respecting others by, for example, not putting oneself above other people.
- ***I'm here to serve***: A service orientation is central to humility. In community-led work, the orientation of the facilitator and the NGO should be: "It's not about us but about the community—we are here to learn with and support them."

This constellation of qualities is not seen in people who are arrogant, self-absorbed, and overconfident. Such people spend little time listening and a lot of time blowing their own horn, are unable to assess honestly their own abilities, and disrespect others by presenting themselves as better than everyone else. Usually, they have little orientation toward service per se.

Why a Humble Approach is Important

Thinking about your work as a facilitator or an NGO worker, please take a few minutes to write down several ideas about the value of a humble approach in enabling community-led work on child protection. In other words, why is humility important with regard to community-led work?

Write below:

Did you consider how humility is important for enabling learning? People are less likely to speak openly if they feel that they are being judged or that the outsiders somehow consider themselves to be more knowledgeable.

A humble approach helps to manage the power asymmetry between the community and the NGO and invites the community to be in the driver's seat. If we adopt a humble approach of listening and being there to serve the community, we build deeper relationships with the people. Also, when local people see that the focus is on them and what they themselves can do, there will likely be greater agency on the part of the community and less dependency on outsiders.

Now reflect for a moment on the problems associated with an approach that lacks humility. Imagine that you are a parent, and an international NGO has come to your own community and wants to promote effective parenting. They announce that they are "experts" and have learned from many countries what makes the most effective parenting. Yet you notice that they are from a different place or ethnic group and do not speak your native language. You also notice that they have apparently not bothered to talk with people in your community. They want to teach people a new approach to parenting and invite you to come to their educational session.

How would you likely feel in this situation? Does this approach help the community to mobilize itself around strengthening parenting practices? Why or why not?

Write below:

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Developing a More Humble Approach

To develop a more humble approach, it can be useful for you to reflect on the following questions and to write on each for a couple of minutes. Be honest, taking care to avoid the tendency that most of us have to present ourselves in a positive light. At the same time, avoid being so unswervingly critical that it becomes impossible to see the positives in your approach.

- What are my motives for doing child protection work? Aside from wanting to help children, are there personal benefits that I derive from this work and being an "expert"?

  Write below:

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- In what ways are my personal approach and work with communities respectful and humble? In what ways are they less than respectful and humble?

Write below:

- Do local people see me as an equal, or do they see me as placing myself above them?

Write below:

- When I'm in the community, does my mode of dress, introduction, speaking, and even travel put me in an elevated position relative to community people?

Write below:

- How trustful am I of community processes with regard to supporting vulnerable children?

Write below:

- How willing am I to share power with communities? Do I or my agency make the key decisions, or do communities make the key decisions?

Write below:

- When I talk with communities, is the focus on me and my agency, or on the community? Are there ways in which I may be putting myself too much at the center?

Write below:

Developing a humble approach is not a one-step process but is part of a longer journey of self-awareness and transformation. On an ongoing basis, it pays to reflect on the humility of your current approach, taking time to write anew on the questions in this section.

FAC 2. What Do I Bring to the Community?

Note: Users of this tool may want to adapt the Afghanistan example (which pertains to a Muslim country) to their own context or geographic region. For example, participants in the Middle East might use Iraq as the example, or participants in Africa might use the example of Somalia.

To engage deeply with communities and develop a reflective practice, we first need to become aware of what we each bring psychologically to the community. Each humanitarian worker enters the community with a host of assumptions, beliefs, knowledge, values, expectations, attitudes, and behaviors, and these shape the ways in which we engage with community people and in turn are seen by local people. Depending on our orientation, what we bring can build trust and relationships, or it can put people off or marginalize them.

This tool aims to help you think through what you bring and to reflect on the implications of this and how you present yourself in interactions with community people. We start with an example of a hypothetical child protection worker from another country who is entering a community on behalf of an NGO.

Example:
What an International Child Protection Worker is Likely to Bring to Afghanistan

John is a 35-year-old child protection worker who holds a master's degree in Social Work from the prestigious Johns-Hopkins University. Born and raised in Iowa (in the mid-US) and living now in New York City, John is a fervent Christian yet respects other people's faiths. As a child protection specialist for an international NGO named "Well Child," he is passionate about child rights. He has worked in several countries outside the US but has never visited Asia.

John has been assigned by Well Child to visit Northern Afghanistan in 2004 to support national Afghan teams who have been working in rural villages and who are well respected. John has learned from the national staff that girl suicide has sharply increased in the area since more girls are being forced to get married at young ages (mostly 15–16 years of age) to much older men whom they do not like.

The international office of Well Child appreciates John's expertise in mental health and psychosocial issues and has asked him to visit some villages in order to help learn about the situation and help develop an intervention that could improve the mental health and psychosocial well-being of girls in the area.

Using the space below, take five minutes to list out some of the main things that John likely brings to this task. These can be positive or negative. You may want to think about things like his background and likely beliefs, assumptions, knowledge, values, etc. Since you do not know John, you will need to speculate a bit in doing this and list at least two things for each category.

Write below:

POSITIVE:____

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NEGATIVE:____

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Now take a couple of minutes to think how these might mesh or not mesh with beliefs, values, attitudes, etc. in rural villages in northern Afghanistan. Please write down below a couple of key points. (Or, if you are in a group, this could be a topic for group discussion.)

Write below:

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Next, reflect for a moment on the likely power dynamics associated with John's entry into the villages. How is John positioned in regard to power relative to the villagers? How are the villagers positioned relative to John?

Write below:

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Here are some important points related to the preceding example:

What John brings. John brings his American background and identity, which can have significant implications in Afghanistan, particularly since in 2004, US troops were fighting the Taliban in Afghanistan and were also occupying Iraq. He also brings his Christian background and orientation with him, which potentially clashes with Afghans' fervent Muslim faith, identity, and practice. With respect to beliefs and assumptions, John likely believes that men and women are equal or ought to be equal, and he may believe that forced early marriage is a violation of children's rights. He probably assumes that 15- and 16-year-old girls are children and therefore ought to be protected and that girls should be able to make their own decisions, without coercion.

From his studies, he knows that forced early marriage can harm girls' mental health and psychosocial well-being as well as their physical health. He likely assumes that to some extent, his understanding of mental health and human relationships applies in Afghanistan. He also knows that since forced marriage violates girls' rights, it has to be stopped. Understanding the importance of case management, he likely thinks about how to identify girls at risk and how to support them and prevent suicide. Also, his child protection knowledge may lead him to see forced marriage as both a child protection issue and a mental health issue.

John's attitudes, values, and expectations about the issue of forced early marriages are very likely not neutral. Like most child protection workers, he probably sees forced early marriage as repugnant, highly harmful to girls, and as something that needs urgently to be stopped or prevented. Although he may have a positive attitude toward individual Afghan people or families, he probably views Afghan gender norms with disdain, seeing them as supporting the mistreatment of and discrimination against girls and women. Being a Christian, he values helping, compassion, and individual dignity, and he sees suicide as wrong.

John's expectations are that with some analysis, explanation, and appropriate intervention, local people will see the girls' suicides as a serious problem and will work with Well Child to prevent it. He may also expect that he, being the expert, should design the indicated intervention for addressing the problem in a manner that fits with international standards on child protection and mental health and psychosocial support. Being an experienced child protection worker, though, he expects long term change in social norms will occur slowly. Guided by his role within Well Child, he acts in a professional manner and asks questions that aim to clarify the scale and causes of the problem, and he analyzes with the Afghan staff what could be done to address the problem.

Power. Relative to poor Afghan villagers, John is quite wealthy. Also, he works for an international NGO that people likely see as wealthy and powerful, and he probably entered villages in an expensive vehicle that local people could not possibly afford. Having been educated in a Western university, holding a graduate degree, and designated as a child protection specialist, John holds power related to knowledge and technical expertise. Most likely, he would be seen by Afghan villagers as bringing Western science to their communities. Further, he is male, and Afghan social norms privilege men over women. For all these reasons, John holds and will likely be seen by Afghan people as powerful, and they may allow him to impose outside ideas that may fit poorly within the Afghan context. Even if he is humble in his approach, local people see his power and may keep silent about any doubts they have about his approach.

Congruence. There is likely at least some partial agreement or congruence between John's views and the communities' views. For example, both likely view the girls' suicides as horrible and want to prevent them. However, the points of divergence may be much greater than are the points of convergence. Rural villagers in Afghanistan do not view 15- and 16-year-old girls as children but as adults who are marriageable, and the villagers will probably not be supporters of universal child rights. Also, community people will likely not see the girls' marriages to older men as problematic but as an acceptable practice that fits Afghan norms and the economic realities of their families' situation. They may also believe that a girl's primary responsibility is to obey her parents and set aside her own wishes in favor of the greater good for the family.

Although they might be reluctant to say so directly, the villagers may not like the idea of Well Child trying to stop and prevent the families from marrying their daughters off before 18 years of age. Indeed, they may fear that it will bring too many Western approaches and Christian ideas that could weaken children's Muslim values, identity, and practices. These and related concerns could make it difficult for community members to form a deep, trustful relationship with Well Child staff. In turn, Well Child staff such as John may be reluctant to enable community-driven action out of concern that the villages would pursue practices that are harmful to the girls.

Personal Analysis and Reflection

Having done this kind of analysis and reflection with John, our hypothetical child protection worker, it is time now to repeat the process with yourself in mind. Please picture yourself in your role as a child protection worker—or, if you are not a child protection worker, imagine yourself as being one for the moment. Assume that your organization or agency has asked you to work in a country or area that is new to you and to help to address violence against children. Using the space below, write in a couple of points for each item, outlining your background/origin, beliefs, assumptions, knowledge, etc.

Write below:

Background/origin: ______________________________

Beliefs: ______________________________

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Assumptions: ______________________________

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Knowledge: ______________________________

Please take a couple of minutes to think how these might mesh or not mesh with beliefs, values, attitudes, etc. in the area you have envisioned. Please write down below a couple of key points. (Or, if you are in a group, this could be a topic for group discussion.)

Write below:

Now reflect for a moment on the likely power dynamics associated with your entry into the area. How are you positioned in regard to power relative to the local people? How are the local people positioned relative to you?

Write below:

Please reflect for a few minutes on how well or poorly what you bring to the community meshes with the views of local people. Jot down some key areas of possible overlap and also of possible disconnects.

Write below:

Perhaps most important, now take about 10 minutes to write out some key ideas about how what you bring to the community may affect (positively or negatively) efforts to build trust and a strong relationship with the community. Please write out some key reflections or discuss them with colleagues in a small group. Be sure to think about issues of power and imposition of outsider definitions, knowledge, values, and approaches.

Write below:

Last, take 10 minutes to reflect on and write down some of the things you could do to reduce the negative effects of what you bring to communities.

Write below:

Did you think of things such as the items below?

- Backgrounding your knowledge, values, and expectations: You cannot literally step out of your beliefs, values, assumptions, etc., but you can move them into the background of your mind and action. Rather than leading with your expertise, pretend that you are a student of a new people and place, about which you know very little. Be focused on the local people and learning from them, without judging them.

- Manage the power differential: Dress down and in ways that do not put you above local people. Avoid using technical language or introducing yourself in formal ways (e.g., by using your title). Can you think of other ways?

- Be aware of and reflect regularly on your nonverbal behavior. For example, do you wince or become too quiet when you observe a situation that is customary for local people but that you regard as discrimination against women?

- Use the language and terms of local people rather than using the technical vocabulary of outsiders.
- Work carefully with the translator in advance to help them aim for verbatim translation, without inserting their own words or views?
- Consider the possibility of sending someone else who can speak the local language, build trust quickly, and obtain accurate information?

The tools that follow outline additional strategies that can help you reduce the negative effects and also maximize the positive effects of what you bring to the community.

FAC 3. Deep Listening

Listening is key for communicating and developing relationships with other people. Yet in everyday life, good listening can be quite rare. For one thing, we have many distractions and time pressures that make it difficult to listen. We may be so immersed in our smart phones or electronic devices, for example, that we may miss what other people say or not even hear when someone speaks to us. Or, feeling rushed, we may hear the words someone says and give a superficial response yet fail to understand their feelings or the meanings behind their words.

Fortunately, we also have the capacity to learn to listen in a deeper, more engaged manner, although this requires both effort and practice. The purpose of this tool is to stimulate reflection on what is good listening, its importance in the community facilitation process, and the obstacles to it. Also, the tool will help to identify steps or practices that will enable you to listen more deeply and to use these skills in your work as a facilitator.

What is Deep Listening?

Let's begin with everyday life. Thinking about yourself, your friends and family, and your daily activities, please take five full minutes to jot down what you think good listening is and why it is important.

Write below:

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When you have finished, please flip to the next page.

In regard to good listening, did you identify or consider the following qualities?

- **Active**: Is not casual or passive but is energetic and probes for full understanding.
- **Attentive**: Pays full attention to what the other person is saying and communicates this nonverbally (e.g., through friendly eye contact where that is regarded as respectful, recognizing that avoiding direct eye contact is respectful in some contexts) as well as verbally by saying things such as “um-hm,” or “okay,” to signal one is following what is being said.
- **Open**: Eager to hear the other person’s ideas.
- **Respectful**: Avoids judging, arguing, or cutting the other person off.
- **Empathic**: Tries to put oneself in the position of the speaker, “walking a mile in the other person’s shoes.”
- **Caring**: Shows concern and care for the speaker’s feelings and well-being.
- **Adjusting to the speaker**: Adapts to the individual speaker, without forcing them to talk or to change their tempo, content, manner of expression, etc. This also involves being comfortable with silences.
- **Thankful**: Communicates appreciation and gratitude for the other person sharing their thoughts and feelings and taking time to talk.

Why Deep Listening Is Important

Deep listening has both practical and relational benefits. On the practical side, listening enables us to learn from what other people say, to work together to solve a problem, or to address situations such as being lost by asking directions and listening to and following them. Thus, good listening is part of human development, problem-solving, and even meeting our survival and protection needs.

Deep listening also plays a key role in developing and maintaining quality relationships. Deep listening enables the communication that is essential to our lives as social beings. Through listening, we learn about others’ thoughts, feelings, and subjective worlds, and we demonstrate the receptivity, respect, and caring that help to build positive relationships. Our attentive, respectful listening to others typically makes them feel affirmed and validated as people. Because they experience our attention as supportive and positive, they are likely to reciprocate by being respectful and attentive to us.

Nothing is more disrespectful or damaging to a relationship than speaking to someone only to have them pay no attention to you or your feelings. Also, if conflicts or divergences arise, listening to each other’s feelings is a valuable means of learning and handling the conflict in a constructive manner.

Applications to the Facilitation Process

Now think how deep listening contributes to the community facilitation process. Please take a couple of minutes to jot down below your initial ideas on this.

Write below:

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Did you consider the importance of listening in regard to some of the main functions of facilitators in a community-led process? Some key points are outlined below.

- **Building trust and relationship**: A good facilitator establishes a sense of trust and relationship with many different people in the community. To do this, the facilitator listens well to different people, thereby demonstrating respect, care, and empathy, without judging or arguing with people.

- **Learning deeply about communities**: The facilitator needs to learn about diverse views within a community and about power relations and how people are situated. The facilitator does this in no small part by deep listening, which enables learning not only about what people think but also about their underlying values, feelings, and culture.

- **Enabling inclusive dialogue**: To help communities decide which harm to children they want to address, how to address it, etc., the facilitator must help to bring in the views of many different people and to ensure that no one is excluded due to gender, age, class, caste, ability, status, religion, or other source of difference. To help different people contribute their views, the facilitator must learn about the different views by listening and trying to make each person feel comfortable sharing her or his ideas, without tacitly or explicitly taking sides. The latter requires not only showing appreciation for different ideas but listening to people's concerns and feelings, their ideas about how it might be possible to speak openly, and being attentive to social norms and power relations.

- **Supporting collaborative problem-solving**: The facilitator works with community members to help them solve problems such as, "Which harm to children should be addressed?" and, "How could the community address that particular harm to children?" The process of collective problem-solving is organically connected to the process of inclusive dialogue. This entails intensive listening by the facilitator not only to which harms to children or approaches to addressing them are discussed but also to who is discussing them and how they are discussed, with attention as well to who is not participating in the dialogues.

- **Enabling community ownership**: The facilitator works tirelessly to keep power concentrated in the hands of the community and to have all aspects of the process led and owned by the community. This requires careful listening for signs of community ownership or lack thereof. For example, if the facilitator heard people say, “This is really just another NGO project” or, “The discussions are dominated by the Chief and his family,” that would be a sign of low levels of community ownership and participation. Conversely, if people spoke consistently of the process as “our” way of supporting children, that would indicate a sense of ownership and responsibility.

Enabling Deep Listening

Deep listening is not just something that happens—it is a product of intentional steps and processes of self-awareness and self-management. Please think for a couple of minutes and then write down three key steps that you could take to listen more deeply.

Write below:

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There are many steps that one can take to become a better listener—even simple things such as turning off one’s phones and tablets while talking to someone can help to enable deep listening. Three broader steps are creating space, being fully present, and being curious.

Creating Space

A monk on the Thai-Burma border stated:

> *There is a responsibility for foreigners to quiet their voice. Calm down and visit and get to know the people. Don't run in with your own agenda.*[1]

The same wisdom applies not only to foreigners but to anyone who works on child protection at community level.

Not much listening can happen if we are talking constantly, excitedly discussing our ideas and approaches. In communities, we need to create space for listening by being quieter than most people usually are and deliberately focusing on listening. In turn, this requires slowing down and breaking from the fast tempo to which we may have become accustomed.

Not talking so much also communicates that it is not about us but about the community—we are there to listen to and work with community members. At heart, what community members say and do is more important than what we say or do. This inversion of the typical focus on NGO voice and action is at the heart of keeping communities at the center.

Creating space for listening is also important in enabling constructive dialogues in the community. Imagine a group discussion in which the facilitator is designated by F, and the participants by P1, P2, and so on.

> F: What do you see as the main harms to children here?
>
> P1: Well, there are children who don't go to school and who gamble and steal.
>
> F: Ok, so there are children engaged in bad behavior and are in conflict with the law. What are some other ideas?
>
> P2: The biggest harm here is heavy work. You see boys even 9 years old carrying heavy rocks and working in the mines.
>
> F: Thanks for that—this problem is one of child labor, right? And in this case, it's dangerous labor since the mines are unsafe.

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[1] From p. 7 of Anderson, M., Brown, D., & Jean, I. (2012). *Time to listen: Hearing people on the receiving end of international aid*. Cambridge, MA: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects.

What do you see the facilitator doing wrong here?

Write below:

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In this discussion, the facilitator is doing little listening. Without thinking much about what people are saying, he inserts formal child protection vocabulary for the harms the participants suggest. Also, he makes inferences about children being in conflict with the law and about the mines being unsafe. By inserting his own categories and inferences, he has tacitly asserted his expertise and the priority of his vocabulary, thereby marginalizing what community members think. Deeper listening could have been achieved by creating space for community members to say more and explain their ideas fully. For example, the facilitator could have asked what the gambling and stealing consist of, why they may do such things, etc. These probing questions open up space for the community members to explore their ideas more fully. This manner of active, engaged listening sets a good model and can help community members to use a similar process with each other.

Being Fully Present

Having space for listening does not by itself guarantee deep listening—we have to be motivated, ready, and able to listen. If our minds are racing with thoughts about how a report is overdue, what we will do after work, or how we fear not doing well as facilitators, we will not be in a good position to listen since our minds are somewhere else and are filled with other things. If our minds are like nonstop radios that present a steady stream of inner voices and ideas, it will be challenging to listen deeply to other people.

Numerous strategies exist for clearing your mind and enabling yourself to listen deeply. One is to move all the things you had been thinking of into the background so you are not consciously thinking about them. Or you could quiet your mind by meditating for a time, which often entails sitting quietly and observing thoughts and images as they occur but without picking up or focusing on them. After a few minutes, your mind achieves a relaxed state in which it does not attach itself to particular ideas. Staying in this state for fifteen or twenty minutes can help one to feel quiet, rested, and attentive.

Perhaps the most essential strategy, though, is to prioritize listening. To be a good listener, you have to make it a very high priority to listen fully and empathically to someone. Being highly motivated, you change your orientation away from being an "expert" to that of a learner who is keenly interested in learning as much as possible from this person's words, experiences, views, etc.

It is a bit like being a student, with the community people being the teachers. If you really want to learn about other people's views, it becomes possible to listen deeply with gratitude and without judgment.

Being fully present and listening deeply requires ongoing self-monitoring and adjustment. For example, I may really want to listen to a particular grandmother and learn as much as possible about her views. Yet I may be so tired that I lack the patience and mental capacity required for deep listening, or thoughts about needing to get home may intrude. Catching myself not listening fully can help me to make needed adjustments.

For example, even though I am tired, I might remind myself of my goal to be a really good listener and that this grandmother has amazing life experience and wisdom to draw upon. Having boosted my motivation, I sharpen my focus on her, breathe more deeply to keep my mind alert, and bring myself fully into the present and the task of listening. In this way, self-monitoring and self-management go hand in hand.

Curiosity, too, plays a significant role in deep listening. In a community-led process, the facilitator seeks to learn as much as possible about other people's views and why they hold them. When a community member agrees to talk with us, we have a remarkable opportunity to learn deeply. We do this by listening, asking additional questions that invite the person to go deeper and explain more fully, or asking new questions that help us to learn about other aspects of the person's thinking about children. We follow the participant yet we are guided by our curiosity, which keeps us fresh and eager to learn. From this standpoint, listening becomes a pleasure, and we communicate this tacitly to the people we talk with.

This spirit of appreciative learning is at the heart of being a good facilitator, and it in turn motivates community people to form a relationship with us, trust us, and open up about their views, values, and practices. Appreciative learning is a reciprocal process as, over time, relationships deepen, more rich ideas are shared, and community members become appreciative of how we feed back what we have learned. When we listen deeply, the door opens.

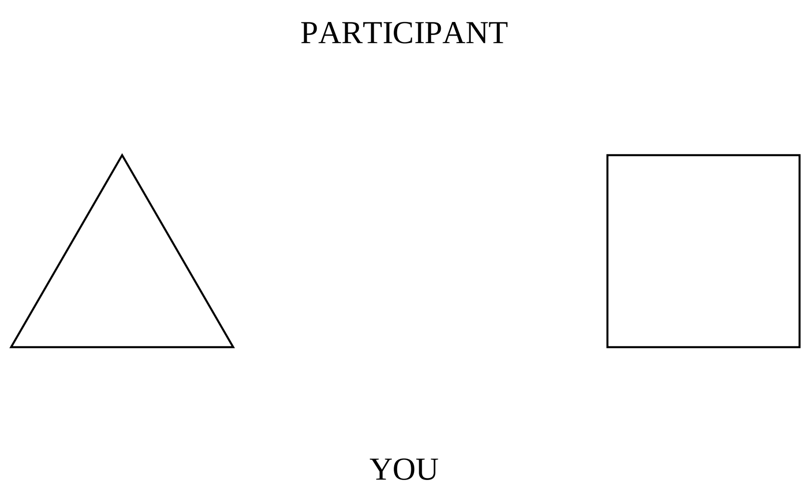
FAC 4. Empathy

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. defined empathy as the ability "to walk a mile in another person's shoes." Empathy differs from sympathy, in which we accept or support another person's feelings as our own. In empathizing, we do not agree or disagree with the other person's feelings, ideas, or views. Instead, we try to put ourselves in the other person's position and understand fully how they see things.

Being able to empathize with someone requires that we be curious about another person's perspective and seek to learn as much as we can about it, without judging. This requires being open to new perspectives so that we do not see things through our own lenses. In a significant way, we have to background our own ways of understanding, adopting instead the viewpoint of the other person as closely as we can.

A Visual Example

A visual task can illustrate what it means to empathize with the view of another person. Imagine you are seated at a table looking across at another person (participant), as below. On the table are two figures. Which one is on the participant's left?

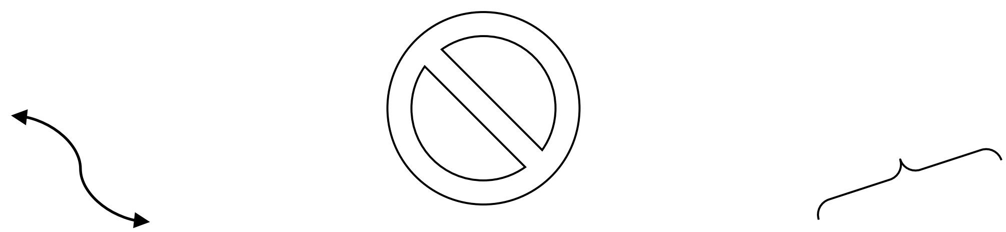


Most people figure out that the square is on the participant's left. How does one come up with the correct answer? Often, people do this through a process of position-taking (empathy) that involves visual imagery. They imagine themselves sitting in the position of the participant, and then they look to see the imagined objects in front of them. Seeing both in their mind's eye, they then name the object that is on the left.

An interesting feature of this task is that it requires getting out of one's own perspective. Indeed, if you fixate on how you see things (with the triangle on your left), it becomes very challenging to see things from the standpoint of the participant. We have to background or let go of our own position and views in order to see things from the participant's point of view. This is always true of empathy—it is a process of not privileging our own position and views but of moving into a different space where we go as far as possible in seeing things from the participant's perspective.

Yet the task above is artificial and highly unusual in that we can see the same objects that the participant sees. This ability to see exactly what the participant sees is seldom the case in real life, where the participant has life experiences that we cannot immediately see or apprehend. As a visual metaphor, the situation below is perhaps more accurate.

PARTICIPANT



B A R R I E R

B A R R I E R

YOU

Here, the participant sees three particular things—a wavy line with arrows on both ends, a circle with a diagonal line, and a single, tilted braces symbol. However, a barrier between you prevents you from seeing what the participant sees. You can learn about what the participant sees only through a verbal exchange. The objects happen to be difficult to describe precisely, in the same way that one's personal experiences and beliefs can be difficult to put into words.

In this context, if you want to know what the participant sees, you have only one way of finding out—you have to ask and rely on what the participant says. As the participant speaks, you will find yourself making inferences based on what she says and then asking probing questions to obtain clarification and sharpen your idea of what she likely sees.

A Verbal Example

Read the following statement, trying to empathize as fully as possible with the mother who is speaking.

> *For me, the worst part of the war was not the shelling, attacks, and losses but the constant hunger and threat of starvation. Hunger never left me alone, and even at night, I dreamt of food only to wake up feeling so hungry! But the hunger was not mine alone—my family was starving. Can you imagine my suffering on thinking that my two daughters might starve to death?*

Now imagine you are this mother. Empathizing with her, think how she suffered during the war and jot down your understanding of her suffering.

Write below:

____

____

____

Did you capture the relational nature of her suffering? Outsiders from relatively individualistic societies tend to focus on individual suffering, whereas people from more collectivist societies frequently emphasize the relational aspects of suffering. This relational perspective was evident in her concern over the possibility that her daughters might starve to death.

Challenges to Empathy

Among the diverse challenges to empathy, one of the most prevalent is our tendency to cling to our own preconceptions and to impose our own values. For example, a child protection specialist who encounters a young teenage boy living on the streets in the former Soviet Republic of Georgia might begin asking a string of questions, resulting in the following exchange:

> CP worker: “Where do you sleep at night?”
>
> Boy: “I sleep in next to that building (pointing) where it’s warm at night.”
>
> CP worker: “Are any family members here with you?”
>
> Boy: “No, I’m here by myself and have friends.”
>
> CP worker: “Are you in contact with your parents?”

Please reflect on this mode of questioning and whether you think it is a useful means of empathizing with the boy's perspective.

Write below:

___

___

___

Did you notice that the questions reflected the child protection worker's agenda and assumptions more than a desire to empathize with the boy's views and situation? The assumption behind these questions is that living in the care of one's parents and family is preferable to living on the streets.

But what if the teenager had been abused by his family and wanted nothing to do with them? Perhaps he likes being on his own and living on the streets where there is excitement and freedom from adult-imposed activities such as going to school.

So we can see that, when we start with our own agenda, we do not get very far in empathizing. Also, the questions asked could lead the other person to perceive the questions as being disrespectful. Or he might see the questions as reflecting the views of authorities, whom he wants to avoid. This perception could cause him to cut off the discussion or to be so guarded in his answers as to make empathic learning impossible.

Empathy also becomes challenging when we encounter beliefs very different from our own. For example, if a former girl soldier in Sierra Leone says, "I carry bad spirits from the bush," it might be hard to empathize fully since we may not understand what it means to carry bad spirits from the bush. In rural Sierra Leone, this can mean that as a soldier who had been around dead people in the bush, one has been contaminated by the spirits of the dead, who not only haunt but can cause significant problems such as bad health.

Without understanding the context and the local belief system, empathy does not come at once but occurs slowly through a process of respectful listening and asking probing questions.

Empathy becomes even more difficult when the views you are empathizing with threaten your own values and ways of being in the world. For example, assume you are a well-intentioned humanitarian worker who devotes their life to encouraging child rights. Yet you encounter a father who explains that he disciplines his children by beating them, following the local customs.

This can be very difficult to learn about since it clearly upsets you. Even if you listen, it may be difficult to probe on and learn more about it without flinching or even challenging what you see as a harmful practice. It takes practice to be able to background your own views and to keep the emphasis on learning about local views.

The best way of managing these challenges is to reflect regularly on questions such as these:

- How am I taking an empathic approach in my interactions?
- Am I asking questions or saying things that reflect my agenda and values that may create obstacles to empathy?
- When I hear things that are troubling or that anger me, am I able to move those feelings into the background so that I am not focusing on them and focus instead on the tasks of empathizing and learning?
- What are my personal obstacles to empathizing, and what steps am I taking to improve my ability to empathize more fully with other people?

Please continue this tool by turning to the following page.

Practical Exercise (to be done with a partner)

Goal: The goal of this exercise is to empathize with another person's views on how to improve education in his or her country.

Participants: You and a colleague or friend who alternate as interviewer and participant

Materials: Watch or other means of keeping time

Time: 45 minutes

Process:

- For the first 15 minutes, you are the interviewer who will try to learn as deeply as possible about the participant's views on how to improve education in the country (or some other topic of choice), preferably one that you have not previously discussed together. Your task is to listen fully and respectfully, avoid judging or arguing, and ask probing questions that help you understand as fully as possible the other person's views. Stop briefly for one minute after 5, 10, and 15 minutes to summarize back to the participant what you understand to be their view.

- For 5 minutes, have the participant reflect out loud on how they felt during the process. In particular, did he or she feel judged? Did they feel their views were understood or not understood? Were there other areas that could have been probed? Were the probing questions the right ones or were there others that might have been asked? Since this is a joint reflection, also note how you felt—did you find yourself disagreeing or wanting to argue or inject your own views? What did you do when that happened?

- Now reverse the roles, this time with you as the participant and your colleague as the person who seeks to learn about your views on the same topic. Ask them to avoid judging or arguing and to focus on drawing you out and learning about your views. As before, stop briefly for one minute after 5, 10, and 15 minutes to enable the interviewer to summarize back to you what they understand to be your view.

- For 5 minutes, reflect together on these questions: How did you experience this process—was it supportive, or was it hostile and threatening? Was this an enjoyable process for you? How does it make you feel when another person has listened carefully to you?

- Thank your colleague or friend for his or her time.

- By yourself, sit, relax, and compose your mind, taking a few deep breaths and focusing on them as a means of quieting your thoughts and becoming ready to think clearly and reflect in an honest, open manner. Based on this experience, what do you think you need to do more or less of as a means of empathizing with other people?

FAC 5. Developing a Reflective Practice

Being a good facilitator requires many skills—empathy, listening, building trust, promoting useful dialogue, analyzing the ethical course of action, and so on. Being a good facilitator, though, does not mean that one has mastered all these skills and has somehow "arrived" as a master facilitator. Over time, the context, the issues, the actors, and relationships change, introducing new complexities that may require ongoing learning and adjustment.

As the context changes, for example, one might find that something that had worked well previously no longer works very well. Or, doing things in the old way is suddenly seen by local people as not helpful. In this respect, the facilitator is on an ongoing journey of learning and can never sit back and rest assured that everything is going fine.

In fact, one of the most important skills of facilitation is that of critical thinking, which aims to help strengthen practice. This consists of two important processes: critical reflection and using what is learned through reflection to strengthen one's practice.

Critical reflection means stepping back from a task and taking stock of how it is going and of what might need adjustment. It is related to self-awareness, yet self-awareness is only part of it.

The second process is using what is learned to guide improvements in one's work and practice, including improvements in one's own behavior, demeanor, and relationships with local people. In this regard, the aim of reflection is not to tear things down and criticize harshly but to learn from our mistakes and take steps to facilitate in a more effective manner. Done over time in an authentic, learning-oriented manner, the reflective approach to practice can move one from being an average facilitator to being a consistently excellent facilitator.

Creating Space for Reflection

Because facilitating community-led action entails so many activities, it is easy to slip into a mode of work best described as "doing-doing-doing." We slip into this mode readily because our work is dynamic and complex, seldom asking questions such as: "Is this the most effective or appropriate way?" We may even joke with ourselves or friends by saying, "There's no time to think!" When this happens, we risk doing things in ways that are less than effective or even making the same mistakes repeatedly.

An important step toward developing a reflective practice is to create space for reflection each day in a context that is relatively quiet and conducive to looking back and thinking how to improve.

A simple way of doing this is to sit in a particular chair for 10 minutes a day specifically for purposes of reflection (some people prefer a quiet walk without distractions or interruptions).

Creating the space, though, refers also to having psychological space. If we sit for ten minutes with our minds racing, our thoughts will crowd out reflection. A useful way to begin, then is by asking a very simple question:

- How am I right now? Are my thoughts racing, or am I ready to reflect on how I did today?

If your thoughts are racing, it is useful to pay full attention to your breathing until your mind is quiet and you are ready to reflect.

Thinking Back, Asking Questions, and Reflecting

Now think back on today. For a moment, think of two things that went well in working with the community. These could be as simple as conversations you observed or helped to facilitate. Ask yourself, "How were they good?" and, "How did I support them or not interrupt them?"

Next, think of one or two things that did not go so well. Maybe two or three people dominated a discussion when twelve people were present. Maybe girls and women participated well, but men did not get involved. Or an argument erupted and you felt uncertain what to do.

In reflecting on one of the things that did not go well, ask yourself, "Why did this likely happen?", recognizing that you may not have the complete answer. Pay particular attention to whether something you did or did not do may have contributed to the situation. Then ask, "What could I do differently to help address this challenge or to avoid it from happening again in the future?" Jot down a couple of notes in response to each question.

Why did this happen?____

____

What could I do differently?____

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Often when you reflect on why things happened, you may see that there are things that relate to what you did or did not do. If men were not getting involved, maybe it was because the idea for the discussions came from girls and women, who were highly excited and did not take time to ask whether it would be useful to bring men into the discussions. Or, thinking back, you might realize that it was okay for girls and women to talk among themselves first and that it is the next logical step to invite them to reflect on whether, when, and how men could be engaged as well.

The point is, now you are no longer doing things robotically—you are stepping back daily, reflecting on what happened, and identifying possible ways for improving your facilitation and the community process.

In reflecting, it is useful to think about important questions, looking back over a time period of several days or weeks. Some useful questions that relate to you, your role, and your relationships with community people:

- How do community people see me? Do females see me differently than do males, and why?
- Is my behavior, dress, and demeanor appropriate for different people in the community—elders, girls, women, men, boys?
- How do children see me? Am I enabling enough participation by girls and by boys? Is that upsetting the power balance in the community?
- Who is doing the organizing at community level and the center of action—is it community people or me?
- How am I as a facilitator? What are my strengths and weaknesses as a facilitator? Am I more like a guide and is that appropriate?
- Thinking back to the ethical issues discussed in the training workshop, how am I doing? What are the challenges and what do I need to do differently?
- Is the community process inclusive enough? What could I do to enable people to take an even more inclusive approach?

Take a few moments and write a reflection for today, with one or more of the above questions in mind.

Write below:

____

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In reflecting on these and other questions you can think of, it is natural not to find definite answers in any one reflection session. Today, you may think that the community process is highly inclusive and you don’t need to adjust much in regard to how you facilitate inclusivity. Yet, having reflected on that, you may be more likely to look carefully tomorrow at how inclusive the community process actually is. One of the greatest benefits of reflection is its ability to raise questions that then invite you to see things in a new light or to probe further in your thinking. In this sense, honest reflection is an excellent stimulus for learning and for making improvements.

Reflecting Together with a Mentor

Some of the most valuable reflection is done jointly with a trusted other. Reflecting together with a mentor, for example, enables you to check your ideas and views and to benefit from the perspective of an experienced, supportive other person who has greater life experience and deep powers of observation and reflection.

Not infrequently, a mentor can help to increase the accuracy of your own self-assessments. A facilitator, for example, might think that the community has a highly inclusive process, whereas the mentor might be able to point out the various people who are not included. This observation by the mentor is not intended to tear down the facilitator but to remind them that there is still a lot of work to do to enable a fully participatory, inclusive process. Also, mentors can sometimes help to moderate our views of our own shortcomings or things we think we need to work on.

For example, a facilitator might say that they are really bad at managing heated arguments because they get very tense and doesn't know what to say. Yet a mentor who has seen them in action in such a situation may be able to comment that their nervousness doesn't show and the things they said were helpful in the following respects, which are then explained. Thus a mentor can provide a check on accuracy and also avoid the tendency to dwell on one's mistakes. The adage that "we learn as much from our mistakes as from our successes" is useful in regard to facilitation.

Reflecting together with a mentor is also useful in thinking through options for handling challenging situations. Having greater life experience, a mentor can often help to identify options that a younger facilitator may not have considered, or may offer suggestions about implementing options in a way that most people are likely to see as respectful and appropriate.

Last but not least, a more experienced mentor can offer support for you as a human being working under challenging circumstances. An experienced mentor can help you take stock of whether you are working too hard, taking enough time for yourself, and achieving the balance that enables the equanimity and openness of a skilled facilitator.

Becoming a Reflexive Practitioner

The essential first step is to accept your responsibility for becoming a reflexive practitioner. Next is to set aside ten minutes for this every day, engaging in the activities suggested above and being authentic with yourself rather than praising or denigrating everything you do as a facilitator. Perhaps most important is to use the reflective process as a means of doing a better job as facilitator. Finding enjoyment and insight in this process will make reflection something to look forward to—it is, after all, your time. And it will help you to intermix doing and thinking in a powerful, enriching way that helps to achieve your goal of being an effective facilitator.

FAC 6. Asking Probing Questions

Probing questions are open-ended questions that invite the participant to provide additional information about what they have said or implied. Probing questions may vary by context but often include items such as, “Could you please say more about that?”, or “Could you please give an example to help me understand what you mean?” Asking such questions sounds simple enough, but in fact the systematic use of probing questions entails a different way of working and requires new skills.

Probing questions are among the most important tools for any facilitator (or learner) since they enable empathic learning about the participant’s views, values, and feelings in regard to a particular topic. Probing questions are key in learning about participants’ views about harms to children, possible actions for addressing those harms, how to implement an action in a community-led manner, and how to evaluate the community action. Thus, probing questions are relevant to facilitators’ work in all phases of a community-led process.

Orientation of the Listener

In interviews or group discussions, facilitators, and also data collectors, frequently feel that they have to follow a pre-defined script. This tendency is particularly visible in data collectors who have been trained to adhere to a research protocol and standardize the administration of questionnaires. Although this approach has value, it is limited by the fact that our pre-defined questions may not ask about the things that the participant sees as most important and that we might not have thought of. Also, a participant may attach different meaning to a term such as “child” than do facilitators and data collectors.

A useful approach, then, is to ask open-ended questions that create a space within which the participant can move in whatever directions they see fit. The participant can raise the topics to be discussed and chooses how to use various terms such as “child,” “harms to children,” etc. The job of the listener is not to impose structure but to follow the participant’s lead, asking questions that will help to clarify exactly what the participant means.

To use this approach, the listener must adopt an open, empathic, inquisitive, and nonjudgmental stance. If a participant said, “The big harm to children here is witchcraft,” the listener should not question or challenge that idea (or, feeling uncomfortable, move to the next question) but should seek to learn more about it. What does the participant mean by witchcraft? What forms does it take? Are children themselves seen as witches? Why is that seen as such a big harm? How does witchcraft affect children and families?

Taking this orientation requires pushing one’s own beliefs, preferences, and understandings into the background. For example, you might think that witchcraft is not one of the main harms to children but is a backward, harmful practice that is quite rare.

However, the point of the interview or discussion is not to impose your views but to learn about the views of the participant or participants. To do this, it is best to adopt the role of a student who is there to learn as much as possible about the views of this participant. The point is not to judge, correct, or counsel the participants but to come as close as one can to entering their subjective world.

In essence, this orientation assumes that “we don’t know what we don’t know.” That is, we don’t know what a participant means by the term “witchcraft” since they might think of it in very different ways from how we might understand the term. Also, there may be dimensions of the term that we cannot imagine since it is beyond our world view and experience. In this respect, we don’t even know that we don’t know about these things. By following one’s curiosity and asking respectful questions, we begin to learn many things that we might not have thought of otherwise.

In short, we can learn by asking respectful, open-ended questions that aim to zero in on the meanings that the participant assigns to a term such as witchcraft and on their views of how it affects children.

The Power of Probing Questions

At the most basic level, probing questions invite the participant to provide additional information that clarifies their views. Here is an example of what can happen when probing questions are not asked or are poorly focused. In the following dialogue, the statements by the participant are marked “P” while the statements from the facilitator are marked “F.”

> F: What are the main harms to children here?
>
> P: A big problem here is children coming back from the bush after they have killed people with armed groups.
>
> F: What happens to such children?
>
> P: People avoid them and fear them.
>
> F: What other problems or harms to children occur here?

In this exchange, the facilitator did not ask why it is a big problem to have children coming back from the bush after they have killed people with armed groups. Perhaps it seemed obvious to the facilitator that such people would be seen as killers and as dangerous. Yet it is possible that that was not what the participant had meant. In some countries in sub-Saharan Africa, children who have killed or been around dead people in the bush are viewed as spiritually contaminated, that is, as carrying bad or harmful spirits. The local beliefs are that if such a child returned to his family and village, the bad spirits could cause deaths, illnesses, famine, and other problems.

Unfortunately, the facilitator in this example did not probe into what the participant saw as the problem of such children. Thus, he lost the opportunity to learn about the local cosmology (or world view) and what the actual problem was seen as. The follow-up question about what happens to such children is of limited usefulness without having an understanding of the nature of the problem. For example, people might avoid and fear the child because they see the child as a killer. Or, they may avoid the child because they fear the angry spirits carried by the child.

Below is an example of how the same dialogue might have gone if the facilitator had asked an appropriate probing question.

> F: What are the main harms to children here?
>
> P: A big problem here is children coming back from the bush after they have killed people with armed groups.
>
> F: How do you see such children?
>
> P: They are feared because they carry bad spirits.
>
> F: In what way do they carry bad spirits? Could you please tell me more about that?
>
> P: You see, in my culture, when people are around the dead, they pick up bad spirits that follow them. The bad spirits can cause many problems—illness and even death—for anyone the children come into contact with.
>
> F: How do people react to such children?
>
> P: They fear them and stay away from them. Bad spirits are so powerful.

By asking an appropriate probing question early on in the discussion, the facilitator learned very rich information and probably came much closer to understanding what the participant had actually meant.

If this dialogue continued, the facilitator might learn that the local cosmology or world view is highly spiritualistic. Local people see the spirits as real and as determining whether one is healthy or not, and they may see people as being well when there is harmony between the living and the spirits of the ancestors.

Asking Useful Probing Questions

It is important for you to learn about and reflect on what are appropriate probing questions. Imagine that you are talking with an adult man about what he sees as some of the main harms to children in his neighborhood. The initial exchange is as follows:

> F: What do you see as some of the main harms to children?
>
> P: One big harm to children here is early marriage.

Is there a need to ask a probing question here? Why or why not?

Write below:

Consistent with the preceding example, we cannot assume that we know what the man means by "early marriage." Nor can we assume that we know what the man understands by the term "children." If we thank him and move forward by asking what are some other harms to children, we miss an important opportunity to learn what he means and what exactly he sees as the problem.

After all, one could define early marriage in many different ways, and one could see it as a problem for diverse reasons related to considerations of child health, law, family responsibilities, education, etc. The only way we will know what the participant really means is by asking good probing questions.

Next consider what could be appropriate probing questions after the participant says, "One big harm to children here is early marriage." Please write two possible probing questions below.

Write below:

Did you ask what the man meant by "early marriage" or to give an example of early marriage?

Now let's see how probing questions can help the facilitator to zero in on what exactly the participant means. Consider the following dialogue:

P: One big harm to children is early marriage.

F: Thank you for that. Could you please tell me more about what is early marriage?

P: Here many girls are married off by their parents when they are 14 years of age, or even younger.

F: How much younger?

P: Well, I've seen 12-year-old girls getting married and heard of even younger girls getting married.

F: How do you see early marriage as harming children?

P: One thing is the girl drops out of school.

> F: Why is that important?
>
> P: You see, being in school keeps the girl on a good track. If she is serious, she has hope for the future and brings honor to her family. If she drops out of school, she may not be able to support her children and has to get involved in sex work.

In this exchange, the facilitator asks multiple probing questions. Please take a moment and circle all the probing questions that the facilitator asked.

If you noted that each of the facilitator's questions asked above are probing questions, you are correct. By asking multiple probing questions, the facilitator succeeded in learning something about what the participant sees as "early marriage" and about how early marriage harms children. But this is hardly the end of the exchange, as the participant has presented multiple ideas that the skilled facilitator would want to learn more about. Think for a moment about and list what else does the facilitator need to ask about in order to learn more fully about the participant's views.

Write below:

____

____

____

Hopefully, this list includes items related to the age of girls involved in "early marriage." We know that the participant sees the marriage of 14-year-olds or 12-year-olds as harmful, but does that mean that he sees it as fine if, say, a 16-year-old girl got married? In other words, we don't know what the boundaries of the category "early marriage" are.

Asking appropriate probing questions could help to define these boundaries. For example, one could ask:

> F: You said that 14-year-olds getting married counts as "early marriage." How old can a girl be and still have it count as early marriage?

Alternately, you might pose the question as:

> F: What makes a marriage a regular marriage rather than an "early marriage"?

The latter question helps to probe how the participant defines "early marriage," allowing for age-based or other kinds of answers.

Hopefully, your list also included something related to how early marriage harms children. It is useful to know that the participant saw the main harm as being the disruption of education. But early marriage may have a host of unwanted effects. Thus, it could be useful to ask follow-up, probing questions such as:

> F: Earlier, you mentioned that early marriage harms children because the girl has to drop out of school. Does early marriage harm children in other ways as well?

Furthermore, it is not clear whether the harms to children are, in the eyes of the participant, harms to girls only, or whether early marriage harms boys, too.

To summarize, probing questions enable one to learn more deeply about the views of a participant or participants. As we listen to someone, we should naturally be curious about what the participant means and ask questions that respectfully invite them to explain their views more fully.

Good probing questions are open-ended and yet are topically focused. They are open-ended in that they give the participant room to move in many directions. For example, the question "How is early marriage harmful to children?" enables many different responses and leaves the participant in control since the participant chooses which direction to go. Such a question is focused since it delves more deeply into why or in what respects is early marriage harmful to children. In addition, good probing questions are respectful—they do not challenge or imply disagreement with the participant. After all, the aim is to empathize deeply with them.

A key point is that good probing questions are nonjudgmental. To judge the participant by asking potentially threatening questions such as: "How can you say that?" or "How can you be so sure?" signals that we are judging or taking a position against what the participant is saying. Taking such an oppositional stance undermines our ability to empathize and likely makes the participant feel that their views are not respected.

Over time, people who do not feel respected are unlikely to speak freely around us or even to talk with us. In asking probing questions, then, we need to have an appreciative tone and control any unintended body language that could signal our discomfort or disapproval of what is being said.

Before continuing, please write briefly, in your own words, why we ask probing questions.

Write below:

Then read the questions below and circle which ones could be useful probing questions. For the items that you do not circle, think about why that question is not a good probing question.

1. Could you please give me an example of that?
2. How could that possibly be accurate?
3. Doesn’t this harm children and violate children’s rights?
4. Could you please explain what you mean by that?
5. Are there other ways in which this harm to children affects children negatively?
6. Have you checked your views against the data published by the government?

Did you notice that the second and third questions are not good probing questions because they have an accusatory tone and are not intended to explore fully the participant’s views? Item 6 is also not useful as a probing question since it tacitly questions the accuracy of the participant’s views.

Timing

Exercising good timing is a key part of asking effective probing questions. If we ask probing questions prematurely or ask too many in a row, we may disrupt the participant’s train of thought or even make the conversation feel like an interrogation. Rather than coming into an interview with a great readiness to pose many probing questions, we first need to “read” the participant by observing them and asking ourselves, “Are they really passionate about what they are saying?” or reflecting that “Instead of me asking a lot of questions, it seems this person really wants to speak and ‘pour it out.’ Maybe it's best to listen carefully as the participant speaks for a few minutes, and to ask probing questions later.” This is part of respectful learning, as it can be seen as disrespectful to interrupt an impassioned speaker to ask questions that might seem distracting to them.

This point applies even more strongly to dialogues. If two community members were discussing with great energy the question: “What are the main harms to children?”, it is probably better to listen and take good notes, saving probing questions for later. With experience, one learns to ask probing questions in a manner that fits the rhythm of the speaker and helps them to explain their views fully.

Ethical Considerations

Imagine a hypothetical exchange in which the facilitator seeks to learn about a particular harm to children mentioned by a teenage girl.

> P: A big problem for girls here is rape. Rape is horrible and really hurts people. [She begins sobbing]
>
> F: Could you please tell me more about that?

Please reflect for a moment on this scenario. Did the facilitator do the right thing in asking a probing question?

Write below:

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In this scenario, asking a probing question could easily cause unintended harm to the girl. Since the girl is upset, the asking of a probing question could "pick her open" and leave her feeling highly vulnerable. There are some key things we do not know. For example, could the girl be crying because she herself has been raped? Also, we don't know anything about the girl's history of mental health. Although she may have presented herself as feeling good and being stable, she may in fact have a history of depression. To ask a probing question could add significantly to her emotional burden, possibly leaving her feeling overwhelmed or even thinking about killing herself. Thus the asking of a probing question in this context is ethically unacceptable because it potentially causes harm.

Before asking probing questions, then, it is important to take stock of the participant or participants and the potential emotional burdens associated with what they have been discussing. If a participant starts to cry or seems upset or is withdrawing a bit, the interview or discussion should be gently suspended or ended, with patient accompaniment and psychological first aid[2] or even referral to more specialized treatment used to support the participant.

[2] World Health Organization, War Trauma Foundation and World Vision International (2011). *Psychological first aid: Guide for field workers*. Geneva, Switzerland: WHO.

Also, it can be inappropriate to ask probing questions when the participant or participants are "on a roll" and saying something that seems very important to them and needs to be expressed fully. In such situations, it is valuable to give the participants space to speak and express themselves without interruption. The facilitator can come back later to ask follow-up questions and learn more fully about exactly what is needed. To use probing questions in an appropriate manner, then, requires sensitivity, presence, patience, and "using one's antennae" to take stock of the situation.

FAC 7. Enabling Inclusive Dialogue

Enabling inclusive dialogue is a complex process, and it may not come naturally to everyone. Yet with reflection and practice, one can learn this fundamental skill. In this tool, we will first reflect on what is “dialogue” and why inclusive dialogue is essential in a community-led approach. Then we will consider how to enable inclusive dialogue and to periodically reflect on questions that help us take stock of and strengthen the inclusivity of the dialogue and the wider community-led process.

What is Dialogue?

A dialogue is a space for open discussion and exchange of different points of view. Unlike debate, it is not a win–lose process of seeking to dominate. People in a debate often speak and act in hostile ways toward each other, and this can damage the relationship.

In contrast, a dialogue has an appreciative quality and is oriented toward mutual learning and sharing. This learning simultaneously strengthens relationships and helps the participants to achieve new insight into a problem or issue. Dialogues may occur between two people, in small groups, or even in larger groups such as community meetings.

To help you identify what is a dialogue, please read the three examples below and write brief comments on each, explaining how it is or is not an example of dialogue.

Example 1. This is a discussion involving three people, designated P1, P2, and P3.

> P1: A big problem here is that parents do not listen to their children.
>
> P2 (interrupting P1): How can you say that—the problem is that children do not listen to their parents! Look at all the children who go to the videos and dances, smoke bhang, drink, and act like wild animals. They disobey their own parents and have no respect!
>
> P1: But the reason they don’t respect their parents is that their parents act like tyrants—they dictate one rule after another, but they don’t take time to listen to their children.
>
> P3: Children here are a lost cause! They listen to no adults, and they pay no respect to elders.

Now comment briefly on how this is or is not an example of dialogue.

Write below:

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Example 2. This is a discussion between two young adults (P1 and P2).

P1: For me, it may be fine to have a small family—only two or three children.

P2: I tend to want a larger family—you know, six or eight kids.

P1: Why do you want so many? How will you feed them all?

P2: I come from a large family. I have eight brothers and sisters! And it's the way of our people.

P1: I'd like my children to have a full belly and be able to go to university.

Now comment briefly on how this is or is not an example of dialogue, noting how it differs from the first example.

Write below:

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Example 3. This is a discussion between four adults (P1–P4).

P1: The big harm to children here is being out of school.

P2: That's interesting—please tell me how you see that as a big harm.

P1: Well, children who are out of school get into all manner of trouble. They smoke, drink, gamble, and do nothing to help their families. Sometimes they steal and get in trouble with authorities. The girls—they get pregnant when their families cannot afford to feed another person.

P3: What you say about out-of-school children is really true. A few days ago, I saw a group of boys hanging around gambling and drinking. They were doing no good.

> P4: I agree that out-of-school children is a harm. Yet I think maybe teenage pregnancy is also a big harm to children. Sometimes children drop out of school because of teenage pregnancy. Once girls are pregnant, their families cannot feed them, and they may end up doing sex work just to get by.
>
> P1: Thanks for calling attention to that. You're right—teenage pregnancy is a big problem and sometimes leads children to drop out of school.

Now comment briefly on how this is or is not an example of dialogue, noting how it differs from the first two examples.

Write below:

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Did you notice how the first example was mostly a debate and that the participants showed little interest in listening and learning about the other person's view? They seemed more oriented toward winning the argument by asserting their views and having their position dominate.

The second example is closer to a dialogue as there is no debate and some interest in why the other person holds the views that they do. However, there is not a full exploration of ideas that brings the participants to a new level of understanding.

Example 3 is the best illustration of a dialogue. It has an appreciative tone, and the participants invite each other to say more about their views, thereby encouraging a spirit of openness and co-learning. As the discussion continues, P1 expresses a new realization about teenage pregnancy, and this is valued learning rather than a matter of feeling humiliated at being defeated in a debate. Overall, dialogues such as that in example 3 are constructive and contribute the most to a community-led process.

Inclusive Dialogue and its Advantages

It is entirely possible for a group to have a dialogue that is constructive but not inclusive. Consider the following example of a four-person group.

> P1: The biggest harm to children here is heavy work. Children are out of school, and they work until they are not healthy.
>
> P2: What kinds of work are the big problem?

> P1: Here it's mostly farming. Even young children go out to clear the land—they carry heavy loads, help dig—it's so tiring they cannot study at night. And they fall asleep in school. Before long they drop out.
>
> P2: Do the families here encourage children to do the heavy work?
>
> P1: Oh yes. You see, people here are very poor, and some people get only one meal a day. Can you imagine?! Farming is what families have to do to survive. So the parents are happy when their children help them farm.

Clearly, this is not an inclusive dialogue—what do persons three and four think? Why are they not participating? Now consider that P1 and P2 are men, whereas P3 and P4 are women. Please reflect on this situation and your feelings about it, jotting down your initial reactions.

Write below:

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As a likely example of gender discrimination, this type of non-inclusive dialogue can be upsetting. In a rural area, it may be seen as normal, yet this example may continue a pattern of male domination that is part of a societal privileging of men over women. This pattern inflicts heavy psychological harm in the form of discrimination, which in turn could set the stage for a wider array of rights violations against women, including intimate partner violence. Thus it is important for dialogue to be inclusive and for facilitators to be attentive to the issues of power and gender (and also religion, caste, class, and related issues) that can lead to non-inclusive dialogue processes. Otherwise, dialogue processes may become harmful.

However, there are also positive reasons why dialogue processes should be inclusive. Can you think of a couple of ways in which inclusive dialogue is beneficial? Please jot them down.

Write below:

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Did you consider that an inclusive process is equitable and enables everyone to fulfill their rights to participation and dignity? In addition, an inclusive process boosts diversity, and the exploration of diverse views is likely to lead to the development of better problem-solving options. Further, an inclusive process helps to build ownership and responsibility-taking by many different people. With many people pouring their energy and creativity into the work, the process is more likely to achieve positive outcomes for children and to be sustainable.

Strengthening the Inclusivity of Community Dialogues

Over time, communities can develop their own means of enabling inclusive dialogue on issues such as which harm to children should the community address through community-led action. However, communities frequently need a helping hand at the beginning of the process to enable high levels of inclusivity. Here are some suggestions on steps that you can take to facilitate an inclusive process.

- ***Frame the discussions:*** Remind the participants that this discussion is not a debate. There are no right or wrong answers, and it is important to hear the ideas of each person. Our goal is to learn from each other in our effort to support vulnerable children. A way to frame the discussion using a non-didactic approach is to ask people whether debate and a win–lose approach is always the best way of reaching a good decision for the community.

- ***Model inclusive dialogue:*** A valuable first step is to model the process for the community, doing small things such as setting an appreciative tone, thanking people for coming, reminding people that there are no right or wrong answers and that we have much to learn from each other, showing appreciation for each person's inputs, asking probing questions such as: "Could you please say more about that and why it is important?", showing that you are not threatened when someone disagrees, and inviting each person to speak.

- ***Show gratitude:*** Take an appreciative stance, and thank each person for her/his ideas, even when you personally disagree with them.

- ***Observe who is not participating:*** Keep track of who has and has not spoken, keeping an eye open for opportunities to engage them in a friendly way.

- ***Invite people in:*** In most group discussions, some people speak more than others, whereas some people say nothing. Help those who dominate discussions make space for other people by asking everyone periodically, "Is it important to hear the views of everyone here?" This can be followed by kindly and gently inviting people who have not spoken to share their thoughts. It is important, though, not to impose on people, or to try to force people who do not want to talk in a group setting to speak.

- ***Reach out to people who are not participating:*** If you observe that particular people or subgroups do not participate in the dialogues, it can be useful to quietly and kindly reach out to them, without pressuring them to participate. If you learn that the timing of discussions is an obstacle to very poor families who have to work longer hours than most people, you could try to schedule some discussions at a more workable time and respectfully invite poor families to participate.

- ***Be sensitive to local norms:*** In working to boost the inclusivity of dialogues, it is crucial to understand local norms, the violation of which could make life difficult for particular subgroups or individuals. For example, in a Muslim society, it might not be acceptable for men and women to meet together or for women to speak as if they were on an equal footing with men. In such circumstances, it is often best to seek the advice of women on how to boost inclusive participation without upsetting too quickly or severely the power balance between men and women and increasing the risks of harms to women.

Ongoing Observation, Reflection, and Adjustment

Community-led work is an ongoing, evolving process, and local people may engage with it or step back for different reasons at different moments in time. For this reason, enabling an inclusive process is an ongoing priority and requires continuing attention and effort. Although it is up to communities to create an inclusive process, the facilitator can support this effort.

On an ongoing basis, facilitators should observe community discussions and activities first-hand, keeping an eye on how inclusive the process is. Important questions for the facilitators to ask themselves include the following:

- Who is participating in this phase? Do they seem to be enjoying it and finding meaning in it?
- Are girls as well as boys, and women as well as men, participating?
- How could men become more engaged in the community action?
- Are people from different religious groups or ethnic groups participating?
- Are people from very poor households or from marginalized groups participating?
- Are people with disabilities participating?
- Who is not participating in this phase? Why are they not participating?

Each phase of the community-led work is different and can usher in shifting patterns. For example, in the action phase, more young women than young men frequently get involved in implementing the intervention if it addresses a harm to children such as teenage pregnancy or early marriage.

Yet it is difficult to limit such harms without the full participation of men. In such circumstances, it is not the job of the facilitator to "fix the problem" by organizing meetings or taking steps to get more men involved in the intervention. Instead, the facilitator should help community groups to become aware of the need for greater involvement by men and to themselves take steps (such as organizing "men-only" meetings) to bring more men into the intervention process.

Please reflect for a moment how you could do this without your effort becoming a top-down approach. Jot down your thoughts below.

Write below:

There is no set script or recipe for helping community members to get more men engaged in the process. A useful approach could be one of dialogue and problem-solving by different subgroups. For example, the facilitator could ask groups such as an inter-village task force, the Peer Educators, male youth groups, and female youth groups whether men and women are equally involved in the action process and why. The facilitator could also invite reflection on the potential value of increased participation by men by asking follow-on questions such as: “Could the community action be strengthened if men were more actively involved in it?”

In keeping with a community-led approach, the community itself would take the decision whether and how to adjust its action process. A key skill of an effective facilitator is knowing when to step back, creating adequate space for communities to develop their own solutions on issues such as inclusivity. In a sense, a good facilitator should facilitate from behind.

FAC 8. Understanding Power Dynamics in the Community

The term "community" can suggest a homogeneous collective—a group of equal community members. Yet within each community lie significant differences of power and privilege.

Recognized leaders may have much greater influence, prestige, and power than do ordinary community people. Some people hold considerable power by virtue of their wealth, while very poor people may have little power and struggle to feed their families. Gender is often a major fault line regarding power, as most societies are steeped in patriarchy and assign most of the decision-making power to men rather than women.

Similarly, most societies privilege the views of adults over those of children when it comes to making important community decisions. Further, children from well-off families go to school and may have greater status and influence than do very poor children who are out of school and have to work to help support their families. Children with disabilities may be hidden away and have little voice or opportunity to interact with others in the community.

The Importance of Understanding Power Dynamics

It is appropriate to think through the importance of the fact that a community is typically a site of significant power differentials. In the space below, please jot down a few ideas about why understanding these power dynamics are important for community-led work that supports vulnerable children.

Write below:

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Did you consider that the power dynamics in the community affect children's vulnerability? Quite often, it is children from very poor, marginalized families who are at greatest risk and who end up engaging in child labor, sexual exploitation, association with armed forces and groups, etc. These children frequently lack access to supports and services that children from well-connected and relatively wealthy families enjoy. Understanding the local power dynamics can help one to better understand the patterns of risk and protective factors that determine children's vulnerability. In turn, this puts one in a better position to take steps to reduce the vulnerabilities of children.

Also, understanding the local power dynamics enables one to engage with the community in a way that helps to create an inclusive process, without reproducing the existing power inequities.

For example, the community leader and the male elders might be the first people in a community whom you met. If you asked them whether they would help lead a process of community dialogue and decision-making regarding which harm to children to address and how, and they accepted, you might end up with a process in which decisions are taken by only a few, powerful adults who may not represent well the views of all the people in the community.

Without intending to exclude particular people, you may have boosted the power of the community elite and have done little to engage with or support more vulnerable people. It is of questionable value to speak of "community dialogue" and "community decision-making" if the dialogues and decisions include only—or are controlled by—a handful of relatively powerful people in the community.

Understanding local power dynamics can also help you to enable useful community dialogues about which harm to children to address and how to address that harm to children. For example, it may help you to understand who are the main influence agents in discussions, who may feel confident speaking up and who may feel reluctant to participate, and how participants might shy away from disagreeing with people who are more powerful. With these points in mind, we can now turn to learning about power dynamics.

Learning About Local Power Dynamics

Ideally, the community dialogues you will help to facilitate will be preceded by deep learning about the community that illuminates the local power dynamics. However, power dynamics often shift over time, so it is important to view learning about power dynamics as an ongoing process. Also, it is important that you gain a firsthand understanding of them.

Questions. As an adjunct to the initial learning process, you as facilitator can ask questions such as the following to different people and subgroups:

- Which people in the community hold greater power or influence?
- Are there people who have less power or are marginalized, even by virtue of food insecurity and having to work more than others to feed their families? Who are they?
- Do women and men hold equal power in making decisions? Whose views carry the greatest weight, and who makes most of the decisions?
- Do teenagers and adults hold equal power in making decisions? Whose views carry the greatest weight, and who makes most of the decisions?

In asking questions such as these, it is important to ask probing questions that help to bring out fully the views of the person you are talking with.

Participants. A valuable strategy in learning about power dynamics is to talk with a variety of people who are positioned in different ways according to gender, class or socio-economic status, religion, etc. It might be useful to talk with prestigious, influential people such as community leaders, school teachers, elder men and women, imams or pastors, youth group leaders, etc. It is also important to talk with women as well as men, with teenagers as well as adults, and with people who are the poorest of the poor or who are part of relatively marginalized subgroups such as refugees, as they may have quite different views. It is less your job to sort through whose views are "correct" than to learn how views of power depend very much on where one sits in the community.

In approaching very poor or marginalized people, care should be taken to respect their schedules, meet at times and places that are convenient for them, and avoid unintentionally stigmatizing them by singling them out or labeling them.

One way to do this is by taking a transect walk through the community. This entails walking on a straight line all the way through a community, from end to center and back out to the other end. Along the way, you can stop and talk with people and visit homes you see so long as this is done in a respectful manner and you do not impose on people. It is best if the imaginary line you follow leads into areas you are not familiar with. By picking the orientation of the line at random, you increase your chances of coming into contact with people and areas that have considerable diversity.

***Participant Observation*[3].** Direct observation is also very useful in learning about power dynamics. Deeds speak louder than words, and often there is a gap between what people say and what they actually do. Because you will be spending significant amounts of time in the community, you will be in a position to observe interactions, meetings, and discussions as part of your everyday activities.

For example, in having tea with some men in the community, you might notice that women and men take tea separately and that key community issues and priorities are often discussed by the men when they take tea. Similarly, at community meetings, you might observe that what men, particularly community leaders, say carries greater weight than what women say. You might also notice that families typically send their sons for higher levels of education than they provide for their daughters.

These and other observations could fit a pattern of gender discrimination and male privileging that vests greater power in the hands of men. Being aware of this pattern can be quite valuable when it comes to enabling open discussion since people who hold relatively little power are frequently reluctant to speak openly in front of people who hold greater power, particularly if the latter engage in abusive behavior such as sexual exploitation and abuse or interpersonal violence.

[3] See Tool LNG 4 for in depth discussion of participant observation.

Similarly, you might observe that people from very poor families seldom attend community meetings. This is highly useful information in helping to create an inclusive process since it means that community dialogues at regular community meetings are not fully inclusive. Other means may be needed in order to reach out to and engage with people who do not participate in community meetings.

In the process of learning about power dynamics, it is also important to think critically about your own power and position relative to community members. You may want to re-visit tool FAC 2 to help you reflect on how you are likely perceived by community members, whether you are tacitly favoring particular people or subgroups, whether you are observing or also judging, and whether you are garnering too much power by making yourself too central in the dialogue process. Considering these questions is every bit as much of an ongoing process as is learning about local power dynamics.

FAC 9. Nonviolent Conflict Management

A key task of the facilitator is to enable constructive dialogue among many different community members for the purposes of collective planning and action in regard to supporting vulnerable children.

Constructive dialogue is a process in which different people express a range of views and the reasoning and values behind them. In this approach, the dialogue participants see divergent views as positive since they enable everyone to deepen their understanding of the issues. As the dialogues proceed and ideas are explored fully, particular ideas may come to be seen as having greater merit than others, leading to a general agreement among the participants. In this way, conflict may be constructive.

However, divergent views are not always expressed in a constructive manner, and conflict can become quite destructive. It is normal for some people to want to consider different views in a quiet, reflective manner, whereas other people want to have a debate that has a winner and a loser. This competitive turn can spark strong emotions and can unleash anger, frustration, and other negative emotions. Also, in discussions about harms to children and how to address them, some participants may express their views in a passionate manner and engage in heated disagreements with others who have expressed opposing views.

As conflict escalates during the discussion, people may say or do hurtful things, berate the other person or views, or become so angry that they attack the other person verbally or physically. The person or people who feel attacked may experience anger, frustration, or humiliation, leading them to strike back. In this way, conflict may be destructive and can spiral out of control.

A key question, then, is how to manage conflict so as to prevent destructive conflict from occurring and limiting it when it does occur. This tool offers some general suggestions for doing these things. Recognizing that every context is unique and that there may be a number of local ways of managing conflict in a nonviolent manner, a useful approach is to begin by eliciting local ideas about how to keep discussions constructive.

Eliciting Local Views

Before initiating a community-wide dialogue process, it is important to have a basic understanding of power dynamics, behavior and social norms around discussions, and local mechanisms for handling conflict. The emphasis here is on the latter two since the preceding tool focuses on understanding power dynamics in communities.

Behavior and Social Norms Around Discussions

It is useful to ask various key informants (e.g., women, men, teenage girls, teenage boys) questions that help one to learn how discussions usually go, what is viewed as acceptable or unacceptable behavior in discussions, and what are the social rules regarding discussions, and what forms disruptive behavior typically takes. Here are some potentially useful questions to ask key informants:

- In discussions, who usually speaks more—women or men? Children or adults?
- In discussions among ordinary people, what do people do when they disagree? What is the socially appropriate way to express disagreement?
- Are there some issues that tend to provoke strong feelings and difficult behavior (e.g., displays of anger, shouting, accusations) during discussions? What are they?
- When strong feelings and difficult behavior occur during discussions, what are some things that typically help to calm things down and get discussions back on a constructive track?
- Are discussions here sometimes interrupted by disruptive behavior of bystanders (non-participants in the discussions)? What can be done to manage or prevent such disruptions?

Local Mechanisms for Handling Conflict Constructively

Because destructive conflict threatens social harmony and well-being, most societies have developed mechanisms for managing and preventing destructive conflict. These may include laws, social norms, processes for settling conflicts, and means of reducing conflict such as cooperation and relationship-building, prayer, proverbs, humor, song, dance, story, etc. For example, in rural Sierra Leone, as former child soldiers were about to return home, many people feared the children, seeing them as killers or as people who behaved like animals. A significant turning point—one that used a combination of empathy and reframing—came when religious leaders reminded people that, "These are our children, they have suffered, too, and they are our responsibility." To learn about local mechanisms, it can be useful to ask key informants questions such as the following:

- If two people here get into a heated argument and cannot agree, what things are done to help them come to an agreement?
- Are there particular people here who help to settle disputes when they arise?
- What role do religious leaders and faith communities play in handling disagreements?
- Do elements such as proverbs, songs, humor, etc. play a role here in managing or resolving conflict? Please give an example.

Preventing Destructive Conflict

In most circumstances, it is important to prevent destructive conflict rather than allowing it to occur and then trying to pick up the pieces and restore relationships afterwards. For facilitators, important means of prevention are engaging with local mechanisms for constructive conflict management, effective framing, finding common ground, and structuring discussions.

Engaging with Local Resources and Mechanisms

In a community-led process, it is natural for community resources and mechanisms for handling conflicts in a constructive manner to find their way into the community dialogues and problem-solving discussions. However, this may not happen all at once, or particular elders and religious leaders may not engage initially since they want to wait to see which direction the discussions will take. It can be valuable, then, for facilitators to reach out and deliberately engage early on with key people and mechanisms that can help to manage conflict in a constructive manner.

Having learned about the local people and community processes for handling conflict, the facilitator should engage with the ones that seem best positioned to support the community-led dialogue and decision-making process.

For example, there may be religious leaders or lay leaders who are recognized as having a "cool head" and the ability to keep discussions from becoming too heated. The facilitator should engage with these leaders, explaining the importance of having constructive dialogues and asking whether they might be willing to participate and help manage conflicts as the need arises.

Their early engagement and buy-in could help to keep the dialogues moving in a positive direction and reduce the chances that destructive discussions might occur, thereby discouraging some people from participating. Also, it sets the stage for their ongoing participation and spirit of ownership, which can contribute to the sustainability of the process.

In many societies, it is customary to open meetings and discussions with prayer. A way of building on this local resource is to say the prayer in a way that invites listening, open sharing and dialogue. If multiple religions are present in the community, it would be valuable to open with multiple prayers, not privileging any one faith. This approach is not only contextually appropriate but may help to bring the deeper values of people's faith—which may include tolerance, respect, listening, humility, etc.—to the fore, thereby supporting constructive dialogue.

Similarly, the facilitator should engage with community mechanisms for handling conflicts, taking care to discern ones that are congruent with human rights. If, for example, the community had established By-Laws against behaviors such as fighting or name-calling, the facilitator should engage with the chief and/or elders who are responsible for implementing the By-Laws. Although it is extremely rare for such mechanisms to have to be brought into play in community-led processes of child protection, it is important to respect such mechanisms and to recognize that they could serve as valuable referral mechanisms in the unlikely situation that fights erupted. This approach is consistent with the idea of building on local resources and processes rather than imposing mechanisms from the outside.

Framing

The manner in which one frames or introduces a dialogue process or a particular discussion can have a significant impact on how it unfolds and whether it leans toward being a constructive or destructive process. To see the importance of framing, consider the following introduction of a community discussion about which harm to children to address:

1. "Over the past weeks, the community has been in a process of discussing which harm or harms to children to address through community-led action. Already you have identified eight different harms to children that need to be addressed. Now we need to discuss which harm(s) to address. Let's please bring out many different ideas and make sure that we decide which one has the greatest merit. Who would like to begin—which harm(s) to children do you think the community should address and why?"

Take a couple of minutes and jot down a few notes on what you see as the likely strengths and weaknesses of this framing message.

Write below:

Strengths: ____

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Weaknesses: ____

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Did you notice how framing this as a debate could encourage people to assert their own views and defeat those of other people? Although debates are useful for a variety of purposes, they often do not promote positive relationships, and often they reduce people's willingness to listen deeply since the priority is on "winning" by defeating one's opponents. The framing above has the strength of inviting many different ideas. Yet some people may not feel comfortable sharing their ideas in a debate forum.

Now consider a second way of framing the same discussion:

2. "We are in a process of listening and learning together about the various harms to children in the community, and already in previous discussions you have identified eight different harms to children that ought to be addressed. Now we need to think through together which one harm to children the community should address through its collective action. It's important to recognize that

> there are no “right” and “wrong” answers—please feel free to suggest your own opinion. We are not here to debate, so if someone presents a view that differs a lot from your own, there is no need to argue or to talk down the other person. Our aim is to hear each other’s views, which will give each of us much food for thought. We are not trying to take a decision today as there will be many discussions on this topic over the next few months. What is important today is that we share our own views openly and seek to learn from each view that is expressed. Let us go around the circle and have each person who wants to say something speak for a minute or so. As we do this, let us adhere to the ground rules we had established earlier that call for listening, respect, no shouting or name calling, and mobile phones off.”

Please take a couple of minutes to jot down what you see as likely strengths and weaknesses of this framing.

Write below:

Strengths: ____

____

____

Weaknesses: ____

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The second framing has significant advantages over the first. It explicitly states that this is not a debate but an effort to think through which harm to children to address through community action.

By emphasizing there are no right or wrong answers, it puts people more at ease in presenting their own views. In an effort to promote listening and learning, this framing states that the goal is to hear each other’s views and learn from the views that are shared.

By noting that there will be multiple discussions over some time, it helps to reduce any felt pressure to assert one’s views or achieve a final choice today. This approach helps to create space for dialogue, without pressure for immediate decision-making. The reminder of previously established ground rules regarding listening and respect helps to set the stage for constructive dialogue. Since this manner of framing encourages and creates space for listening, sharing, and discussion, it is more likely to set the stage for constructive dialogue and to get things off on the right foot.

Finding Common Ground

A second strategy for enabling constructive conflict and also managing difficult situations is for the facilitator and the participants in the dialogue to identify common ground. Typically, this entails finding cross-cutting or similar issues or identifying common underlying values. When people who hold different views see there is common ground, they often feel less inclined to cling to their own view and become receptive to endorsing a view that has collective support, even if the support is not unanimous. In addition, finding common ground helps to build positive relationships among participants. After all, other people do not seem so very different from me if they hold some views that are similar to my own.

Quite often, people are more willing to listen to and affiliate with people who hold views that bear some similarity to their own. And they are less likely to radically oppose, put down, or fight with people who are seen as holding similar views. In these regards, finding common ground helps to prevent destructive conflict and enable constructive handling of the differences that exist between people or groups.

In finding common ground, there are several steps, the first of which is usually to look for common or overlapping elements in the different views that have been expressed. For example, assume that the facilitating group is bringing together representatives of the three communities to try to help them select a single harm to children to address by all three communities. Also, assume that three different communities identified the top three harms to children as follows:

Community 1	***Community 2***	***Community 3***
1. heavy work	1. teenage pregnancy	1. sexual exploitation
2. out-of-school children	2. out-of-school children	2. teenage pregnancy
3. teenage pregnancy	3. early marriage	3. early marriage

Of the issues identified, which ones are cross-cutting, that is, identified in more than one community? Is there an issue identified in all three communities? Please write in your answers below.

More than one community____

All three communities____

By helping participants see these cross-cutting issues and also commonalities in associated issues, one can help people to find common ground in deciding on a single harm to children to address. This can be done by asking questions such as those above to the participants. The fact that all three communities identify teenage pregnancy as one of the top harms to children qualifies it as a source of some agreement and common ground. The ways in which teenage pregnancy represents common ground may also be apparent in listening carefully to people's explanations about why particular issues are important.

For example, people who indicate that teenage pregnancy is a key harm to children may also rate being out of school as an important harm to children. Important connections exist between these issues, as in most low- and middle-income countries, a teenage girl who is pregnant cannot attend school.

Similarly, there may be links or connections between teenage pregnancy and issues such as early marriage, as girls who marry at age 15 may be very likely to become pregnant during the teenage years.

Another way to help people find common ground is to appeal to their sense of working for the collective good. This can sometimes be done by including in the framing a statement such as: "Although it is important for each person to share her or his views openly, it is also important for us to listen and find points of general agreement and to not put our own views in the way of finding general agreement."

We have now reviewed three different ways of preventing destructive conflict—engaging with local resources, framing discussions, and finding common ground. However, destructive conflict may still occur, and we need to be ready to handle it.

Defusing or Containing Destructive Conflict

In some situations, destructive conflict occurs in the form of shouting or expressing outrage at another person's ideas. Sometimes, in discussions of which harm to children to address, people can get so impassioned that they lapse into a debate style, try to refute the other person's ideas, and even get upset and shout at the other person when their own views are not supported. This may occur even if one had framed the discussion in an appropriate manner that was aimed to prevent destructive conflict.

Think for several minutes how you might handle such a situation, picturing it in your mind as clearly as possible. Please jot down a couple of ideas for handling it.

Write below:

Numerous strategies can be useful in defusing this type of destructive conflict:

- ***Stay calm and focused on the problem.*** It helps to attend to one's breathing, making sure to take long, slow breaths that keep one relaxed. Seeing someone be calm amidst heated arguments can sometimes help other people to remain calm and focused.

- ***Intervene early, avoiding having the conflict escalate further.*** Your intervention should be kind but firm and could include elements such as those below.

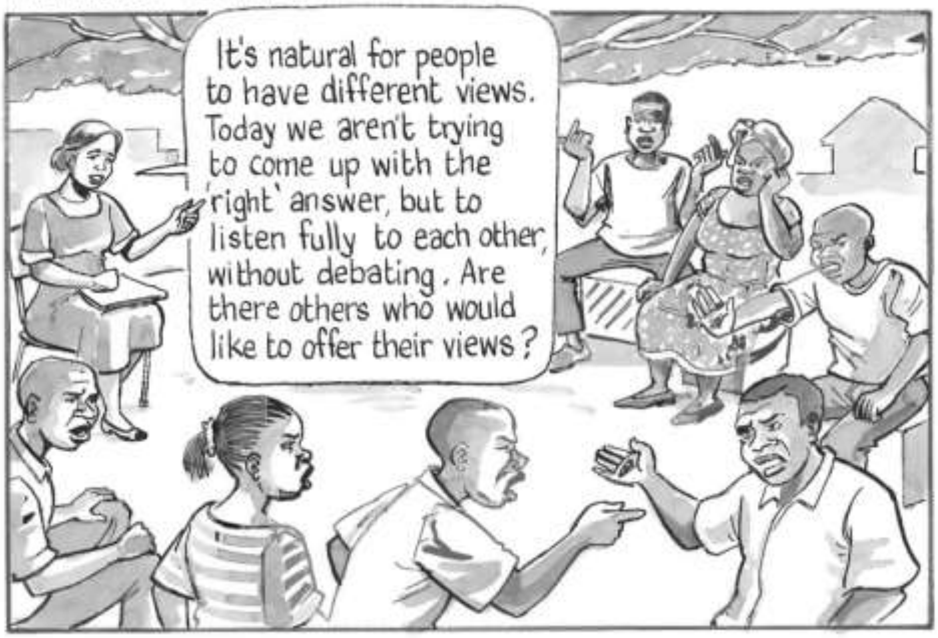
- ***Remind the participants of the aims and ground rules of the dialogue.*** The aim is to explore different ideas, without claiming that one is right and the others are wrong. A ground rule is that each person should be free to express their ideas. People will not feel free to express their ideas if participants raise their voices or criticize each other harshly. Also remind everyone that this is not the only venue for the discussions—there will be many more, and there is no reason to press to reach agreement today.

- ***Call attention to our common purpose and the importance of good process.*** Remind participants that we are all working to help prevent and address harms to children. These harms are so complex that there are no easy answers. It is important to be humble in the face of complexity and to work toward our common goal together by listening and learning from each other.

- ***Use appropriate humor*** to lighten the mood and help get the discussion moving in a constructive vein. It is crucial, though, that the humor should not take sides or make one or both people in the argument appear foolish.

- ***Gently invite a shift to hearing other people's ideas.*** This is in the spirit of full participation and the importance of each person's ideas. Enacting the shift, though, needs to be done with care and respect for the people who were arguing and with effort to avoid humiliation.

MANAGING CONFLICT



On a rare occasion, destructive conflicts that are ongoing in the community find their way into the discussions that are part of the community-led process of action on behalf of vulnerable children. In such cases, it is important to seek the advice of wise, equable people in the community on how to manage the situation. Also, it can be useful in advance of the group dialogues to have one-on-one meetings with the people who will likely clash at the group meetings. Conducted in a respectful manner, such meetings can help to bleed off steam, keep the conflict limited, and also remind the individual of the collective purpose and aim of the dialogues as well as the ground rules.

SECTION 2:
TRAINING (TRN) TOOLS

Section 2: Note to Users

Effective training of facilitators is best done by or with people who have first-hand experience in using community-led approaches.

This section makes extensive use of participatory role-plays, with group reflection on the process and how to improve the facilitator's skills.

A useful approach, however, is to intermix these activities with the reflective activities promoted in Section 1. For example, if a person who is learning how to facilitate a community-led process shows during a role-play a need for additional practice regarding empathy or asking probing questions, one could have the participant complete that evening the relevant tools on empathy (FAC 4) and asking probing questions (FAC 6).

TRN 1. Role-play: Limits of a Top-Down, Expert-Driven Approach to Child Protection

Note: This role-play works best with 10–25 people. If the role-play were done as part of a small training workshop, it could be useful to bring in other people (including local social workers, child protection workers, etc.) to play the roles of community members.

A. Background

Purpose: Top-down approaches have their value and place in humanitarian and development work on child protection. Yet they also have limits, which may not be readily apparent. The best way to understand and appreciate the impact of the limits is to experience them through the perspective of community people. The purpose of this role-play is to enable practitioners and others to understand and explore the limits or problems associated with a top-down, expert-driven approach to child protection.

Time: 60–90 mins.

No. of participants: 10–25 people, ideally.

Materials needed:

- 2 copies of the role sheets for “the NGO” (attached)
- 2 copies of the role sheets for the “community members”
- 2 scissors
- ideally, 2 separate spaces

B. Workshop Facilitator’s Notes

In this workshop, you will organize a role-play that simulates an interaction between a national, child-focused NGO and a local community. The NGO uses an expert-driven approach in which it seeks to partner with the community to address child-beating (corporal punishment). The role-play is designed to bring out the limits of this approach, enable empathy with local community views, and increase openness to a different way of working with community people.

Your activities will include five steps (time frames are approximate):

1. Describe the setting and divide the participants into two groups: NGO child protection workers and community people (10 mins).

2. Role-play preparation: Ask each group to divide people up according to the different roles for each group (see instructions and handouts on the following pages). Allow the groups time to understand and prepare for their roles in the role-play (10–15 mins).

3. Enable the two groups to conduct the role-play in which the NGO workers visit the community, asking them to partner on a project to reduce child-beating (20 mins).

4. Facilitate a discussion with both groups present and in the same roles they had played during the role-play (20 mins).

5. Facilitate reflection and discussion with participants back in their regular seats, no longer playing the roles that had been assigned (30 mins).

Step 1: Read the setting and divide the participants into two groups afterwards

Setting: In a small town [or, alternately, an urban neighborhood or a rural village] a team of three child protection workers from a hypothetical, national children's agency, The Healthy Children's Foundation (HCF), had previously visited with a team of data collectors to conduct a rapid assessment regarding child protection issues. They are now returning to share with the community their main findings—the primary child protection issues are corporal punishment (a form of violence against children) by parents and teachers; early marriage (families marry their daughters at 12–13 years of age to older men who can offer economic support); and child labor (girls are often out of school to do domestic work, and boys are out of school to do heavy mining). The Healthy Children's Foundation has a one-year external grant to support the development of a community-based child protection program. During the visit, the HCF team will have an open discussion with the community members to ask them to partner with HCF in addressing the problem of violence against children (corporal punishment).

Divide into two teams: The Healthy Children's Foundation team (3 people who have some child protection expertise) and the community (12 or more people). The roles are outlined for each below:

A. NGO team: have 3 members be hypothetical child protection workers for the Healthy Children's Foundation (HCF).

B. Community members: this group consists of members from the same town who include a chief, elders, imam, pastor, ordinary parents (women and men), and teenage girls and boys.

Step 2: Role-play preparation

Have each group go to different spaces where they can talk without being overheard by the other group. The facilitator gives each group the appropriate role and activity sheets (see following pages, which include cut-outs to hand to each participant), and reminds them that each person is to act not as themselves but according to the role that has been handed out. Each team will organize itself according to the instructions. Do not allow the teams to see, hear, or read about the roles of the other team. The teams have 10–15 mins to prepare themselves for the role-play before the facilitator calls them to return and begin the role-play. As they prepare, visit each group to make sure they are on track and answer any questions.

Step 3: Conduct the role-play

Announce to each group that in the role-play, the community people will be seated in their town, and the HCF team is coming to visit them again. The chief and the townspeople know HCF is coming. Give the community people time to arrange themselves, and then the HCF team enters, beginning the role-play. Let the role-play run for at least 15–20 minutes and more likely longer, giving everyone a chance to act out their roles. Announce that you may be saying "Time out" or "Cut" to pause the role-play.

[Note: If there is a problem or when the time is up, you can act as a film director might by saying "Cut!" or "Time out," announcing then that we will end the role-play there and now reflect on what has happened.]

Step 4: Facilitate discussion, with participants staying in their assigned roles

Having interrupted or ended the role-play, tell participants that you would like them to remain seated where they are and to now have a discussion, with them continuing in their assigned roles. Thus, they are not to interject their own personal views but to stay as close to their roles as possible.

Enable discussion by asking the questions below (it is not necessary to ask each question, and improvisation can be very helpful). It is natural that in discussion, some questions will have been answered by previous discussion. Hence, it is essential for you, the facilitator, to be flexible. For each question that you do ask, ask first the community members and then the HCF team, reminding them to stay in role. Notes following each question indicate key points that hopefully will come out of the discussion. If they do not, you could suggest them, possibly by reframing them into questions. As in work with actual communities, it is important to have the key ideas coming not from you but from the group.

Questions for discussion:

1. Did you feel free to say how you really felt during this scenario? What thoughts or feelings did not get expressed? Why were they not expressed?

Sometimes feelings do not get expressed in such settings because of norms of diplomacy or hospitality, which caution against giving offense. However, it's also possible that the community members were "playing the game" of trying to get the HCF involved because they needed money and help, not because they thought that child-beating needed to change. Or, low levels of trust may have led community people not to speak very openly about their views. Also, community people may not have spoken very openly about their feelings about child rights for fear of offending and chasing off the NGO workers. Overall, a key point is that the exchange during the role-play did not allow people to express themselves in an authentic manner. Nor did it stimulate deep empathy with the situation of community people.

Similarly, the HCF workers may not have felt free to say how they really felt about the community. They may, for example, have seen child-beating as being more deplorable than they had expressed, and they may see local social norms of child-beating as "harmful traditional practices."

2. What was it that you really wanted out of the discussions with the other group? Did you get it? Why or why not?

The role-play is structured in a way that ensures that the HCF gets what it wants—community agreement to partner on a program to address child-beating. It is less clear that the community got what it wanted. The community did succeed in engaging the NGO, which they wanted since they were very poor and wanted help addressing issues such as poverty. At the same time, though, most community members wanted to continue child-beating, and they did not get any support on that, nor did they get support in addressing poverty or child labor, the issues they seemed most concerned about.

3. Are there other things that need to be discussed here?

Perceptive participants may note that the full community was not present, recommending caution in describing this as a "community discussion" or "community agreement."

Step 5: Reflection and discussion outside of assigned roles

Now ask participants to return to their normal seats and to be themselves again. Note how important it is for busy NGO workers to take time out from their complex work, step back, and reflect more deeply on typical practices. Note that this time, the discussion will focus on broader questions, which for the most part do not admit simple answers. Emphasize the importance of each person sharing her or his views and that there are no right or wrong answers.

Questions for discussion:

- Did this role-play reflect things that happen in reality?
- In this role-play, was there good agreement between the values and views of the HCF team and the community?
- In this role-play, who holds the power and makes the main decisions about which harm to children to address and how to intervene?
- Was this an empowering exchange and situation for the community members? Why or why not? Could that be a problem and why? [Note: "Community empowerment" entails a sense of collective agency and activation by the community members. If community

members are not making key decisions or are being led in a particular direction, they will not be likely to experience a sense of empowerment.]

- Is this NGO approach likely to be highly sustainable? Why or why not?

- Will this approach likely create dependency of the community on the NGO? Why or why not?

- Reflecting on what occurred in the role-play, how do you feel about your experience in the role-play? How do you feel now that the role-play is over? [Note: These questions are for purposes of debriefing and dealing with any emotional after-effects of the role-play experience. Debriefing questions are contextual, so please feel free to adapt debriefing questions to your context.]

End by thanking participants for their insights and inputs. Wrap up by summarizing key points made that bring home the limits of the expert-driven approach.

Instructions for The Healthy Children's Foundation Team

You are experienced national NGO workers and passionate supporters of child protection and child rights. Your aim in the meeting with the community members is twofold:

(1) to briefly summarize the assessment findings for the community members, and

(2) to encourage and ask the community members to partner with you on a program that is designed to reduce violence against children, particularly corporal punishment.

You have a one-year grant to reduce corporal punishment, and you know you will have to get a quick start and produce immediate results if you are to keep your donor happy. Also, you are genuinely concerned that corporal punishment is harming children.

Your job is to "sell" the community on the value of partnering on the program, which will address corporal punishment. The details of the partnership do not have to be worked out or explained in great depth today—today, your goal is to get them to say, "Yes, we will partner with you." Broadly, your team will bring the child protection experts who know how to address the problem, and the community will be the beneficiaries (children and parents) and volunteers who implement the program.

Below are your specific roles which you can assign to members of your team (these can be cut out and handed to each of the three team members).

For each set of roles, you will need to improvise and plan what you will say to the community members. Please take a few moments now to think through what you will say. At the start of the role-play, you might want to have the Team Leader greet the community, explain the purpose of your visit, and say that Team member 2 (name) will present the findings of the assessment, and Team member 3 (name) will outline some brief ideas about a program for addressing violence against children.

- -

Team member 1 (Team leader): You are a seasoned child protection expert who speaks with great passion about child rights and their importance for children's healthy development and well-being. You are quick to point out that violence against children (including child-beating) violates child rights and causes psychological harm such as trauma and fear. You see it as your duty to inspire and convince the community to join together to address the problem of child-beating and other forms of violence against children. Your urgent goal is to ask the community to partner with your agency, which has the expertise to address violence against children, and to get the community to agree to partner with you. You will begin and end the dialogue with the community on behalf of The Healthy Children's Foundation.

- -

Team member 2 (Assessment specialist): You, too, are an experienced child protection expert. Your job is to (1) summarize the overall findings (below), and (2) focus on the specific findings (below) related to violence against children.

(1) Overall findings: The primary child protection issues are corporal punishment (a form of violence against children) by parents and teachers; early marriage (families marry their daughters at 12–13 years of age to older men who can offer economic support); and child labor (girls are often out of school to do domestic work, and boys are out of school to do heaving mining).

(2) Here are the main findings related to violence against children:

- 92% of children (6–18 years) reported that in the previous year they had been hit, kicked, punched, or beaten by an adult;
- 37% of children reported that they were beaten at least once a week;
- parents saw child-beating as normal;
- boys were beaten more frequently and more severely than were girls, but girls reported greater fear of being beaten;
- boys reported being bullied at school, where older boys hit them and took their food and books;
- parents, teachers, and, to a lesser extent, elders were the main people who beat children;
- children did not like being beaten, and 7% of children said they stayed home from school sometimes to avoid being beaten.

- -

Team member 3 (Program specialist): Having worked on violence against children in multiple countries, you want to outline how violence could be addressed. Pointing out that science has learned a lot about how violence affects children and how it can be prevented, you suggest that it would be useful to have a community-based program with these elements:

- child rights education;
- training on nonviolent forms of disciplining children (time-outs or withdrawing privileges);
- school adoption and enforcement of “no child-beating” policies;
- workshop on improved parent-child communications and relationships.

- -

Instructions for the Community Members

The community members who are present for this meeting with the Healthy Children's Foundation include the chief, two elders, multiple parents, a teacher, an imam, a pastor, and teenage girls and boys. Not all the community members are present because this meeting is taking place in the middle of the day, when many people are out working, selling things, tending farms, etc. Still, the community members are happy to see and talk with members of the Healthy Children's Foundation and want to partner with them. They should say this specifically during the role-play.

Below and on the following page are the individual roles to be assigned to different people who will be "community members." You may cut these out at the dotted lines so that each participant has one. The roles may be decided by the group (preferred), or by the facilitator (if little time is available). Each participant should take five or so minutes to think through what he or she will do and/or say in accordance with their role during the meeting with the representatives from the Healthy Children's Foundation.

When the workshop facilitator calls you, you should make sure you are all gathered and sitting, awaiting the arrival of the HCF team.

Here are your specific roles which you can assign to members of your team (these can be cut out and handed to each of the three team members):

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Chief (male): As the community leader, you and the elders will welcome the team from the Healthy Children's Foundation. To do this, you will need to ask before the role-play begins who in the group are the elders and organize yourselves. As Chief, you know that your town has many needs, so you are very happy HCF is back, and you want to partner with them. You are not so sure that the focus should be on child-beating, and you personally prefer traditional practices over child rights, but you are willing to "play along" in hopes that much needed money will come from the NGO into the town.

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Elder man: You are happy that HCF is here but tired of how in the past, NGOs have come, made promises, and done little. You are a bit challenging and ask with some frustration what will the NGO do for us, the community.

\- -

Elder man: You are a kind, gentle person and welcome HCF and want to partner with them. However, you believe that a well child is one who is obedient and respects the elders. You believe that punishing the child by beating is appropriate when the child has been disobedient, as it teaches good behavior.

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Elder woman: You are outspoken and view poverty as the greatest problem facing the community. What HCF found about child labor is an example—children are out of school because they have to work to earn money to support their families. You are a great supporter of education and think children should be in school, but you think poverty has to be addressed to make that happen.

- -

Teacher: Articulate and outspoken, you are regarded as a key authority on children in the community. You believe strongly that children learn good behavior and become good people by being punished (beaten) when they misbehave. You recognize the difference between "moderate beating" and "cruelty" (e.g., beating until a child bleeds, or beating that breaks bones).

- -

Imam (male): As a revered religious leader, you support the use of corporal punishment when children misbehave. Yet you also see the value of talking more with children and making sure they understand their responsibilities.

- -

Christian pastor: You are a highly respected leader but are also a strong supporter of corporal punishment for purposes of teaching children to be obedient and have good values. You like the saying: "Spare the rod, spoil the child."

- -

Parent: You are an outspoken advocate for children and oppose child-beating (and say so). However, you see poverty as the primary issue that undermines children's health and well-being.

- -

Parent: You are a traditionalist who believes that disciplining the child for bad behavior is one of the most important parental responsibilities. To be a good parent is to discipline the child, helping him or her become a good member of the family and community. You are suspicious of "child rights."

- -

Parent: You are a child rights skeptic and are very outspoken on this point. You heard from relatives in other communities in which NGOs worked that "child rights education" had taught children to be unruly and disobedient since parents could not beat them any more for misbehavior. You see this situation as having undermined parental authority.

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Teenage boy: You have been beaten repeatedly and harshly by the teacher at school. This has caused you to sometimes stay home from school to avoid beating. You think beating children is bad. Yet you do not state it very forcefully because you know that parents, elders, and teachers favor child-beating, and you don't want to appear disrespectful.

- -

Teenage girl: You are more concerned about children being out of school than about child-beating, yet you are opposed to child-beating. For you, being in school means having hope and a positive future.

- -

(Other, additional roles may be improvised—make the process FUN!)

TRN 2. Facilitation as "Facipulation"

A. Background

Purpose: Most NGOs and child protection workers use and recognize the value of facilitation processes. However, the term "facilitation" can have different meanings, and there are different approaches to facilitation.

In addressing urgent issues of child protection, child protection workers frequently try to facilitate work on an issue such as violence against children by raising awareness of the problem and then encouraging local people to join in addressing the problem. In this approach, facilitation is quite directive as it aims to manipulate or move people in a particular direction.

While this approach has its value, it has significant limits, particularly in regard to community-led work. The purpose of this role-play is to stimulate awareness and discussion of the limits of manipulative, directive approaches to facilitation (i.e., "facipulation").

Time: 60 mins.

No. of participants: Over 25 people, ideally.

Materials needed:

- 1 role sheet for the facilitator
- 2 copies of the role sheets for the community members (attached)
- relatively large space, with room for 15 people to sit in a circle, with the rest of the people arranged in a wider circle so that everyone can observe what is happening in the inner circle (the "fish bowl")

B. Workshop Facilitator's Notes

This is part of an ongoing process in which the community will decide which harm(s) to children it wants to address. In this session, you will organize a role-play that simulates an interaction between a facilitator from the Healthy Children's Foundation (HCF, a national NGO) and members of an urban neighborhood/community who have low rates of literacy.

The setting is a community meeting convened to discuss how to enable community planning in which each person has a voice in regard to which harm(s) to children the community will select for purposes of subsequent community-led action. The role-play is designed to bring out the limits of facilitation in which the facilitator acts like he is inviting the community to take a decision when in fact he is leading or guiding the community to a particular course of action.

Your activities will include five steps (time frames are approximate):

1. Rearrange the space (5 mins).
2. Select people to play the role of HCF facilitator (1) and community members (14) (5 mins).
3. Role-play preparation: Ask the group of 14 people to divide people up according to the different roles (see instructions and handouts on the following pages). Allow the group time to understand and prepare for the role-play (5 mins).
4. Enable the facilitator and the group to conduct the role-play in which the facilitator works with community members to decide how to create an inclusive planning process in which girls, boys, women, and men each have a voice and participate freely (15 mins).
5. Facilitate reflection and discussion with participants, no longer playing the roles that had been assigned (30 mins).

Step 1: Rearrange the space

Organize the space into two concentric circles. In the inner circle, 15 people sit or gather for "community discussion." The other participants gather (standing or sitting) outside this inner circle (the "fish bowl"), enabling them to observe what is happening.

Step 2: Role assignment

Select participants to play the role of HCF facilitator (1), and community members (14). The rest of the participants are observers/reflectors.

Step 3: Preparation

A. Read the Setting aloud, so everyone will know what the role-play is about.

Setting: A facilitator from a national children's agency (the HCF) is working over a period of months to help a community decide which harm to children it wants to address. Previously, the HCF had conducted grounded ethnographic research in this community, and community members had indicated the following top three harms to children. Listed in order of "greatest concern" to local people, they are: early marriage (for girls—the traditional marriage age had been 15 years but it has dropped to 11 years of age), heavy work (boys working in nearby mines), and drug use (marijuana and glue sniffing, mostly by boys).

The facilitator had also had a discussion with the community about how to enable all community members to have a voice in the planning discussions, which will likely extend over several months. At that discussion, community members concluded that large community meetings are not necessarily an effective way of enabling everyone to have a voice since children are very reluctant to speak in community meetings, and women typically stay relatively quiet.

Today the HCF facilitator is visiting the community again, this time to discuss how to enable different subgroups in a community to have a voice in the community decision about which harm to children to address. Twenty-four community members understand that a facilitator from HCF will come and help them to develop a good way of enabling the voices and views of everyone in the community. The Chief is not present, but an Elder is and will welcome the facilitator.

B. Then ask the Elder and community members to stay in the room by themselves to prepare for their roles, without being overheard by others. Meanwhile, the facilitator goes to a separate area to prepare himself or herself, while the other workshop participants stretch their legs outside for several minutes.

C. Distribute the role sheets (see following pages), not letting the community members or the HCF facilitator see each each others' role sheets.

D. Give several minutes so the participants can decide how to best play their respective roles. The HCF facilitator can do this on his or her own (and ask questions of you).

Step 4: Enable the role-play

A. Before bringing the facilitator in, have the Elder and community members take their seats in the inner circle. Invite others (observers) to sit in the seats around or to stand around the inner circle and to pay attention to the group process.

B. Invite the facilitator in—they are just arriving in the village and will be greeted by the Elder, thus beginning the role-play.

C. Let the role-play continue for about 15 mins before you step in to say "Cut!" and begin the discussion.

Step 5: Facilitate a reflection and discussion

A. Open with a few questions for observers:

- Did some community members speak but not others? Why do you think this might have occurred?
- What positive things did the facilitator do to enable participation?
- Thinking about what happened in the inner circle, how would you describe the group process during this discussion? Did the facilitator seem to favor some people or views over others? (Please give an example).

B. Then ask questions for everyone:

- This hypothetical discussion was conducted as part of the preparation for community-led action. Was the facilitation approach well suited for community-led decision-making and action?

- Who seemed to make the decisions—was it the community, the facilitator, or both?

- In terms of building community ownership, do you think this is a useful facilitation process or a problematic process? Why?

- What could the facilitator have done to enable a more community-led approach?

- Was it really an either–or decision to make decisions by large community meetings or small group discussion? Aside from small group discussions, are there other ways of enabling the voices of children and marginalized people to be heard?

- Why is it so important that everyone have a voice in the decision-making?

Facilitator's Role

You are working as part of a longer-term process of community decision-making about which harm(s) to children it wants to address through community action. The harms to children in this community were previously identified through ethnographic study. You now aim to help the community members move toward a planning process that includes a mix of full community discussions and small group discussions.

In the previous community meeting, community members agreed on two things:

(1) in a good community decision-making process, different people have a voice, and

(2) in full community discussions, not everyone can speak up.

You believe that full community meetings are not the best venues for communities making decisions.

Following custom, the Elder will open the meeting and then hand off to you. To begin the discussion, you should thank the Elder for having called the meeting and thank the community members for coming. You should thank the community for having helped to identify three main harms to children: early marriage, heavy work, and drug use. Then, you should state that your main task today is to work with the community members who are present to decide how to create a planning process in which everyone in the village has a voice.

You will invite the views of the people who are present about how to include the views of different members in the community. Yet you feel strongly (based on your prior experience) that the best way forward is to have a mixture of large group meetings and small group meetings. In small groups, women are more likely to speak openly about the harms to children. Girls, too, will speak more openly than they would if they were in a group discussion with boys and men present. Thus you favor a mix of large community discussions and smaller, subgroup discussions among groups of 10–12 teenage girls, teenage boys, women, or men, respectively.

Initially, you ask people how they would help different people have a voice in deciding which harm(s) to children to address. However, if there is some disagreement, it could take months to resolve.

If this happens (it very likely will), you should decide quietly to move the group toward a mixture of full village meetings and small group discussions by subgroup (teenage girls, teenage boys, women, men). For example, in one week, there could be an open village meeting to discuss which harm to children to address. Then in the following two weeks, there could be small group discussions among each of the subgroups.

The key ideas from each subgroup could be fed back by having each subgroup elect a reporter who will give a summary of the key points discussed in the subgroup but without revealing who said what. You need to make the case for the use of subgroups, inspiring people when you need to.

With these points in mind, you should remind the community that the last time you visited, several community members said that some people in the community could not take part in community meetings, and others were present but did not usually speak up. However, the community also said that the view of every person is important. Our task today is to decide how to make it possible for people to speak openly and for different subgroups to have a voice in the discussions about which harm to children the community should address.

You should wrap up the discussion by leaning strongly toward the mixed model of all community discussions coupled with small, subgroup discussions.

Community Members' Roles

You will be playing the role of community member. Please feel free to improvise your role a bit yet follow the outlines of the role instructions for each person.

Elder: You open the meeting by speaking first, welcoming back the HCF facilitator, who has visited before, and inviting them to speak. After they speak for a bit, **y**ou are the first community member to respond to what the facilitator says. You like the traditional means of community decision-making in which the community meets, discusses the issue, and takes a decision. You think people can participate if they are encouraged to speak. You do not think subgroup discussions are necessary, and you do not waiver from this view, and argue back a bit with people who think there should be a combination of small group discussions and open community discussions.

Teacher: You are highly respected by the community. You speak just after the Elder, who favors full community meetings. You state early on and repeatedly that you have learned as a teacher that children frequently have different views than adults and that children—particularly girls—need their own space and small groups to feel safe and talk among themselves.

Outspoken woman: You have strong feelings about this and speak with passion for the value of having small group discussions. You know that girls will not confront men directly or say what their experiences are unless they are in a safe environment talking among themselves. You speak repeatedly and try to move other community members to your side.

Teenage girl: You are respectful and so do not speak up.

Teenage boy: You are respectful and are shy to speak. But you feel strongly that children and young people are in the best position to understand harms to children as they really are. Adults are sometimes too removed from children to know what difficulties children actually face, or adults have their own ideas which differ from those of children. You see having small group discussion among teenage boys as crucial for learning their views and hearing their voices.

Community man: You speak a lot. You like the traditional approach of having the community meet as a whole and take a decision. Yet you also understand that children may not speak very openly in community meetings, and they may have the best information about harms to children that the community needs to address. Ultimately, you favor the small group discussions.

Community woman: You favor having small group discussions among teenage girls for two reasons—they face problems and harms such as sexual exploitation and violence that others do not face, and they will not feel comfortable discussing the problems in open meetings with men and boys present. You speak repeatedly and try to move other community members to your side.

Community man: You agree with the Elder and say that children's role is to be obedient to and respectful of adults. It is not their position to have so much voice in community decisions since they are young and inexperienced. You favor traditional community meetings and think everyone can learn to speak up in them.

Community woman: You point out that when a community takes a decision, it is important for people to speak in front of the whole community, or as many people who can be present as possible. You do not like subgroup discussions since they could imply that the community has secrets and cannot have trustful, open discussion.

Imam: You think that children are wonderful resources but that, at the end of the day, adults should make the key community decisions. You favor the traditional approach of having the full community meet and take a decision. You do not waiver from this position.

Others: Count yourselves up. Assign half of yourselves to adult roles that hold that community meetings are the way of your village, and you should not deviate from that. The other half assign yourself to be supporters of the idea of having some full community meetings coupled with smaller subgroup discussions.

TRN 3. Differences Between Top-Down and Community-Led Approaches to Child Protection

Aspect or element	Top-down approach	Community-led approach
Views of community	Communities are seen typically as implementers or beneficiaries. Often communities are seen as needing education about child rights and child protection and as having harmful norms and traditional practices.	Communities are seen as collectives that have agency, social and cultural strengths, grounded experience caring for and bringing up children, and significant numbers of people who care about children's well-being.
Power	NGOs hold the power since it is they and their child protection experts who guide, manage, and provide the resources for the work on child protection. This power asymmetry is evident in language, since NGOs typically impose on communities a universalized language around child rights, child protection, and associated terms.	Communities hold the main power since they guide, manage, and control the work to support vulnerable children. Without skilled facilitation, it is primarily men in most communities that hold the power. Typically, communities do not use the vocabulary of child protection to speak of things that harm or are good for children.

Aspect or element	Top-down approach	Community-led approach
Role of NGOs and other outside actors	Typically, NGOs act as the experts who analyze the situation, choose the intervention, build capacities for implementation, and then manage the implementation of the intervention, and provide or organize monitoring and evaluation of the intervention's effectiveness. In most cases, the intervention is manualized or follows a protocol, and the NGO manages and directs the intervention, following well-articulated time schedules, logframes, results frameworks, etc.	Communities frequently plan and act on their own. Yet NGOs may have roles as facilitators who help communities engage in constructive, inclusive dialogue and problem-solving but who do not "lead" the community to a predefined endpoint such as child rights. NGOs may also help to build the capacities needed for designing and implementing the intervention, though they usually do so only if invited by the communities. The action is directed and managed by the community and follows "community time" and understanding of the results they want to see, without reference to logframes and manuals.
Actions/Interventions	Selected and designed by child protection specialists according to the issue to be addressed and child protection standards. The implementers are typically the NGO itself or a local CBO partner. Most ordinary people are not seen as having guided the selection of the issue, the selection of the intervention strategy, or its design and implementation.	The community itself defines the issue to be addressed, identifies the action strategy, and, possibly working with CBOs, NGOs, and/or Government actors, designs and implements the action. Usually, the work of selecting the issue and designing and implementing the action is not done by a small committee but by the full community, with ordinary people playing a prominent role.

Aspect or element	Top-down approach	Community-led approach
Strengths focus	The focus on existing community strengths is moderate yet may rely relatively little on existing community processes such as endogenous processes or traditional structures. The latter are viewed with skepticism since they may be sources of child protection risks.	Strong and at the forefront since the emphasis is on sustainable change and excessive focus on harms or risks can be seen by community people as one-sided or even disrespectful. Local community structures and practices are built on whenever possible, with child rights standards quietly used as a guide and social change strategies used to avoid harming children.
Inclusivity	Set as a goal but seldom approached rigorously. Under pressure for quick results, NGOs frequently do not take the time required to reach or engage with the most vulnerable children. Also, community decisions to partner with the NGO on children's protection may be taken following a handful of meetings that are dominated by people who are better off.	Works systematically to achieve high levels of inclusivity. Slow processes of dialogue and observation are used to analyze community dynamics, understand how community decisions are usually taken, and who is left out and why. Using strategies of slow dialogue, outreach to diverse people, and conscientization, communities themselves decide how to include people who do not usually participate in full community decision-making.
Child participation	Low to moderate levels of child participation are typically achieved since in most societies, adults are the decision-makers and holders of power. If children exert too much influence, adults may lash back with criticism or punishment. Where children are members of CWCs, they often wield relatively little power.	Children achieve high levels of participation. Through extended dialogue, adults become more aware of the value of children's views and recognize that particular community problems can only be addressed effectively with leadership by children. Through a social change process, adults willingly "make room at the table" for children.

Aspect or element	Top-down approach	Community-led approach
Initial engagement with community	Usually brief, consisting of several meetings and group discussions and organized around the questions and programming approach of the NGO. It typically does not entail extensive listening, and the discussion frequently centers around universalized categories of child protection concerns such as sexual exploitation and abuse, early marriage, violence against children, etc.	Usually a slow, extended process that involves extensive listening to and learning about the community. Efforts are made early on to not privilege the NGO or its terminology and concerns. The emphasis is on building trust and mutual respect, setting the stage for open learning about the community.
Assessment	Conducted by child protection specialists, assessments focus on child protection risks as defined by international standards. Some focus on protective factors is often included. The approach is judgmental in that it assumes that outside experts know what the key issues are and that local practices such as corporal punishment are harmful. Often the findings of the assessment are not fed back to the community.	Focuses on flexible, open-ended learning rather than on pre-defined questions. The learning approach, which could include methods such as ethnography and participatory ranking, invites local people to "teach us" and is non-judgmental in tone and approach. International terms are avoided, and emphasis is placed on community strengths and also community power dynamics. Local people are viewed as co-learners and, with training, may help to collect data. The findings are shared with the community in a respectful, appropriate manner.

Aspect or element	Top-down approach	Community-led approach
Monitoring & evaluation	Monitoring is conducted by the NGO. Evaluations are organized by the NGO, and conducted by specialists, who may include commissioned research groups. When participatory methods are used, the focus is often on questions formulated by child protection specialists.	Monitoring is done by the community via agreed-upon processes and space for reflection and making adjustments in the action. Communities also evaluate the action using various methods that they decide upon. External evaluations may also be conducted and frequently include locally derived outcome indicators. Evaluation data are shared in a simple, appropriate manner with community people, who discuss the implications of the findings.

TRN 4. Gallery Walk and Discussion on "Community"

A. Background

Purpose: Use of the term "community-led" assumes that one knows what a community is. The term "community" can suggest that communities are relatively homogeneous and have more similarities than differences. However, communities exhibit enormous variety and differences that can have significant implications for how to engage with them and for the development of community-driven action. The purpose of this gallery walk and discussion, then, is to help participants to think in nuanced, critical ways about what is a community and how communities vary.

Time: 60 mins.

No. of participants: Over 25 people, ideally.

Materials needed:

- 3 decks of 30 or so index cards per deck, pens, sticking material
- relatively large space, with ways of displaying the cards (e.g., they can be spread on the ground or be attached to the walls)

B. Facilitator's Notes

It is important to problematize the term "community" and to enrich our understanding of the diversity and complexity of processes that may be hidden within this term. This session is intended to stimulate reflection that help participants unpack what is meant by "community" in different contexts. It seeks to stimulate critical thinking that enables participants to move beyond romanticized ideas of community and to develop a more contextualized view that recognizes the limits of the term.

The activity involves five steps, with approximate time frames as indicated below:

1) Assign participants to three groups of approximately equal size, giving index cards to each group (5 mins).
2) Give each group its assignment and location in the room (5 mins).
3) Through discussion, each group generates key terms that describe "community" in that setting and places them on the wall (15 mins).

4) Each group has one person stay with its cards and be a "discussant" while everyone else moves around the room, viewing and commenting on the work of the other groups (15 mins).

5) Plenary discussion while standing (20 mins).

Step 1: Formation of three groups

To divide participants into three groups of approximately equal size on a random basis, ask people to count off as "one," "two," or "three." Then ask all the "ones" to stand together, all the "twos" to stand together, and all the "threes" to stand together. Give each group about 25 index cards, several markers, and sticking material if they will be attaching the cards to a wall.

Step 2: Group assignments

Invite each group to move to a particular area, where there is open space for displaying the index cards once they have been written on. Speaking so everyone can hear, tell group 1 that it will be thinking about community in the context of a cohesive, rural village. Tell group 2 that it will be thinking about community in the context of a peri-urban neighborhood that is stable but has significant ethnic and religious differences and some tensions surrounding them. Tell group 3 that it will be thinking about an urban neighborhood with low social cohesion and extensive population movement.

When the three groups are listening, ask each group to write the word "COMMUNITY" on a card and place it at the center of the space so that other cards can also be placed around it. Next, ask each group to discuss for a few minutes how they would describe "community" in that setting. Then, they should as a group generate about 15 words that describe "community" in that setting, discussing among themselves which are most appropriate. One person should take notes during this time. When the 15 (or so) words have been agreed on, write each on a separate index card. Then place the 15 cards in the space around the "community" card, with the most important descriptors placed closest to the "community" card. (Alternately, the group could generate words and place them in the space or on a wall, with discussion and revision [taking down one card and replacing it with another] as they go).

When the cards have been displayed, ask the groups to identify one or two critical questions or observations that should be kept in mind when discussing communities. Each of these questions should be written one per card, with the question cards at the very bottom of the set of cards on display. Tell the groups that they will have 15 minutes to complete their work. Remind them that it is natural for different people to have different ideas and there is no "correct" answer—only the items with the greatest agreement need be displayed. Also remind them that they have extra cards that they can use to revise as they continue their discussions.

Step 3: Groups complete their assignments

During this time (15 minutes), walk around to each group, make sure they have understood the instructions, and answer any questions. It is important to be flexible—if a group can only come up with 9 or 10 words to display, that can be fine. Also, it is natural for the group working on the urban context to experience more challenges, and they may even decide to reject the task since there may be no "community." If this happens, ask them to write on cards several key points from their group discussion.

Ask the group to indicate to the facilitator when they have completed their assignment. When they have, ask each group to designate one person as a "discussant" who will stay by the group's cards to share (not defend) the thinking of the group when others come to read their cards.

Step 4: Gallery walk

Invite everyone except the three discussants to leave their own group and visit the other group sites to read their work. Ask them to pay attention to the differences in the descriptors used by the three groups and differences in how the cards were placed as well. Remind people to read the critical questions, too, and to feel free to talk and discuss as they move around with others. Invite people to "mix it up" and talk with lots of people, breaking out of their own group.

Step 5: Plenary reflective discussion

In the plenary reflection, it can be useful to invite discussion about how communities differ, and how they are similar, writing notes on a flipchart as one proceeds. The differences serve as a poignant reminder of how important it is to avoid a cookie-cutter approach to working with communities and to work in a contextually appropriate manner.

Next, it is important to ask participants about the implication these differences have for community-led approaches to children's protection. You might want to consider that higher levels of social cohesion generally make it easier to do community-led work.

Yet even in peri-urban settings with only moderate social cohesion, community-led approaches have proven to be feasible and useful. By its nature, the community-led process described in this Toolkit helps to build social cohesion, which increases as people focus on a common goal—the well-being of their children—and identify common harm(s) to children to be addressed and a common intervention to address it.

Enabling a community-led approach in urban neighborhoods with high levels of turnover and also competition for scarce resources is likely more complex and may not seem possible except for activists who live there and really understand its nuances. At the very least, using a community-led approach in such a context would require more time devoted to building an inclusive process, managing conflict, and giving time for the planning process to build a sufficient base of social cohesion. Also, the neighborhood collective would need to construct a means of managing the turnover of people and think in new ways about how to achieve sustainability.

If time permits, it can be useful first to invite discussion of 1–3 of the critical questions that had been raised, making linkage with the question about the implications for community-led approaches.

TRN 5. Dos and Don’ts of a Community-led Approach

In helping to prepare facilitators for their work, it can be useful to think in practical terms about things that facilitators should do (Dos), and things facilitators should not do (Don’ts). By collectively discussing these, the facilitators and others can sharpen their understanding of community-led approaches.

A fun way of developing Dos and Don’ts is to divide into small groups during the training workshop and invite participants to generate a list of “Dos and Don’ts.” This could be followed by a plenary sharing of what each group produced, noting similarities and differences in their lists and discussing further the differences.

It can also be useful to display the lists and ask participants to “vote” for their five top Dos and their five top Don’ts. This could be done by displaying the lists on the floor or on the wall and giving each participant five green stars and five red stars, which they would place beside their preferred Dos and Don’ts, respectively. This approach, coupled with group discussion and correction of any misunderstandings, makes it possible for the workshop to produce its own list of Dos and Don’ts.

Below is an integrated list that reflects group work and learning in countries such as Sierra Leone, Kenya, and Uganda.

Dos	**Don’ts**
• Listen with empathy and respect, backgrounding one’s own views.	• Take a judgmental approach that makes people feel blamed and disrespected.
• Put the power and decision-making responsibility in the hands of the community.	• Tell communities what to do or share only limited power with the community.
• Enable high levels of community ownership and responsibility-taking.	• Focus mainly on NGO projects, activities and accountability, which generates low levels of community ownership and sustainability.
• Analyze and manage the power relations within communities.	• Romanticize communities as places where all community members are equal.

Dos	Don’ts
• Enable an inclusive process of community dialogue and action.	• Work mainly through the chief or the local power elite.
• Reach out to and talk with marginalized people, including people with disabilities.	• Talk and work mainly with the people who are easiest to reach or to interact with.
• Learn about the communities through an open, non-judgmental process using local language and terms.	• Assess as a child protection expert who uses international terms such as “child protection,” “child rights,” “child labor,” “sexual exploitation,” or “female genital mutilation.”
• Understand the values that underlie local practices, including harmful practices that contradict the CRC.	• Condemn harmful practices without helping to develop alternatives that respect positive local values.
• Learn about local ideas about “who is a child” without judging or correcting those views.	• Assume or teach that a child is a person under 18 years of age.
• Help communities reflect on what are the main harms to children aside from poverty and health issues.	• Tell communities as an “expert” what the main child protection issues are in the community.
• Enable communities to decide which harm(s) to children they want to address and how to address it.	• Take an expert-driven approach that tells communities which harms to children are most severe and how to address those harms.
• Ask questions that make people think.	• Tell people answers (“sensitizing” them) or impose solutions.
• Help communities to build supportive connections with formal stakeholders such as district-level social welfare or child protection workers.	• Regard communities as islands or set them apart from formal aspects of the wider child protection system.

Dos	**Don’ts**
• Enable slow processes of dialogue, reflection, and group decision-making.	• Follow a fixed time-table that reflects the demands of the NGO and the donor.
• Use a facilitation process that helps communities to make their own decisions.	• Use didactic approaches or “facipulation” processes that lead communities to do what the NGO wants them to do or impose outsider approaches.
• Identify and build upon local strengths and resources such as women’s groups, community groups, natural helpers, local practices, etc.	• Create parallel systems that are not sustainable.
• Help communities to develop their own processes of monitoring and responding to harms to children.	• Impose outside structures such as Child Welfare Committees.
• Approach social change by working with insiders who guide the process.	• Impose change through the use of didactic approaches.
• Help to create spaces for community reflection and taking stock of their process and action.	• Emphasize external monitoring of the community-led intervention.
• Enable community evaluation of their process and action.	• Rely on external evaluation alone.
• Work with sustainability and long-term change in mind.	• Assume that sustainable outcomes or processes will grow out of a successful project.

TRN 6. Role-play for Asking Probing Questions

The best way to learn to ask appropriate, well-timed probing questions is to practice with an observer looking on who can provide useful feedback for improvement. During a training workshop for facilitators, it is useful to have the observer be a mentor or someone who is well experienced in asking probing questions.

Below is a scenario and role-play that affords useful practice.

Scenario: Using a community-led process, the community is discussing which harm to children to address. The main harms that have surfaced in discussions thus far are child marriage, teenage pregnancy, children out of school, and children engaged in heavy work. However, you see that the views of teenage girls have not been explored fully, so you, the facilitator, seek to talk with a teenage girl about what she sees as the main harms to children. She has agreed to talk with you.

Tasks: Divide into sets of three people. One person plays the role of a teenage girl (participant); another person plays the role of a facilitator; and the third person plays the role of the observer. The girl should be a healthy young girl who is eager to talk and not burdened with heavy emotions. The facilitator is eager to learn the girl's views and should use a nonjudgmental manner and one or more probing questions to learn more deeply about the girl's views. The observer should watch quietly, without fidgeting or giving nonverbal cues about being happy, impatient, etc. The observer should notice the probing questions, how they were received by the girl, and whether they were well-timed and useful.

Role-play (10 mins): Eager to learn about the girl's views regarding the main harms to children, the facilitator will ask a variety of questions, including probing questions. The third person—the observer—sits and watches but does not intrude. The observer may be introduced to the participant as a co-learner. After 10 mins of discussion, the observer gently interrupts the interview as if they were a film producer by saying "Cut!" This begins the discussion.

Discussion: The discussion can be facilitated by the observer, though it can also be a general discussion by all three people in the triad. Key questions to reflect on include:

- What probing questions were asked?
- Why did the facilitator ask probing questions?
- Did the probing questions help to gather useful information? How?
- How were the probing questions seen by the participant (teenage girl)?
- Were the probing questions appropriate and well-timed?
- Could anything be done to improve the quality of the discussion and learning?

- What questions do we have about how and when to ask good probing questions? These could be shared with the wider group for discussion.

Repeat: Now redo the discussion, this time with the former facilitator playing the role of a teenage boy and the former teenage girl playing the role of facilitator. Repeat the procedure above, only this time asking about views of the boy rather than about views of the girl. At the end of the role-play, the observer can again facilitate the discussion of the questions above.

Variations: Useful variations of this practice process include:

- Repeat the roles above but have one of the hypothetical participants (the girl or the boy) be very excitable and talk nearly nonstop.

- To capture discussion at a different phase, adjust the scenario by assuming that the community has already selected child marriage as the harm to children to be addressed. The discussion that is about to occur is aimed at learning from the participant her (or his) views about how child marriage could be reduced or prevented. This could entail asking probing questions about what families could do and about what communities could do.

- Ask the participants whether in a community-led approach probing questions can be asked for different purposes. [Hint: In the learning phase, probing question help to illuminate the participant's views, the meanings of the words they use, etc. Later on, probing questions can be used for this purpose or for identifying complexities that warrant additional community discussion. For example, in a discussion of which harm(s) to children to address, a community member might blurt out "I just think it's wrong to teach children about contraceptives." By giving a probing response such as, "Thank you for sharing this view. How do you see it as being wrong?", it is possible for community members to understand the divergent views of different community members. Thus, probing questions are important for more than research purposes and can be used to enable deeper dialogues and problem-solving within the collective.]

Enjoy the practice and make it fun as well as illuminating!

TRN 7. Role-play (Fish Bowl) and Discussion: Building an Inclusive Community Process 1

A. Background

Purpose: The purpose of this role-play is to stimulate awareness of the problems of non-inclusive approaches to community decision-making and enable constructive thinking about how to build a more inclusive process. It shows how enthusiastic participation by community leaders or members of the community elite can make it difficult to have an authentic discussion or to include diverse views. An important takeaway point is that in taking a community-led approach, directive action by the community leader may not be helpful, and steps may be needed to engage and respect community leaders without having them control the process.

Time: 60–90 mins.

No. of participants: Over 20 people, ideally.

Materials needed:

- 1 role sheet for the facilitator
- 2 copies of the role sheets for the community members (attached)
- a relatively large space, with room for 12 people seated in an inner circle (the "fish bowl"), with the rest of the people arranged in a wider circle so that everyone can observe what is happening in the inner circle

B. Workshop Facilitator's Notes

In this session, you will organize a role-play that simulates an interaction between a facilitator from the Healthy Children's Foundation (HCF, a national NGO) and members of a rural village. The setting is a community meeting convened to discuss which harm to children the community will select for purposes of subsequent community-driven action. The role-play is designed to bring out the limits of "convenience group" meetings and "chief- and elite-driven approaches" as a means of partnering with the community, enable empathy with local community views, and increase openness to a more inclusive way of working with community people.

Your activities will include five steps (time frames are approximate):

1. Rearrange the seating (5 mins).

2. Select people to play the role of HCF facilitator (1), Chief (1), and community members (10).

3. Role-play preparation: Ask each group to divide people up according to the different roles for each group (see instructions and handouts on the following pages). Allow the groups time to understand and prepare for their roles in the role-play (15 mins).

4. Enable the two groups to conduct the role-play in which the facilitator works with community members to decide which harm to children they want to address through community action (15 mins).

5. Facilitate reflection and discussion with participants, no longer playing the roles that had been assigned (30 mins).

Step 1: Rearrange the space

Organize the space into two concentric circles. In the inner circle will be 12 seated participants who take part in a "community discussion." The other participants will surround this first circle (the "fish bowl"), enabling them to observe what is happening there.

Step 2: Role assignment

Select participants to play the role of HCF facilitator (1), Chief (1), and community members (10). The rest of the participants are observers/reflectors.

Step 3: Preparation

A. Read the setting aloud, so everyone will know what the role-play is about.

> ***Setting:*** A facilitator from a national children's agency (The Healthy Children's Foundation, HCF) wants to enable a highly participatory process in which a community decides which harm(s) to children it wants to address. Previously, the HCF had conducted ethnographic research in which community members had indicated the top three harms to children. Listed in order of "greatest concern" to local people, they are: early marriage (for girls—the traditional marriage age was 15 years but it has dropped to 11 years of age); heavy work (boys working in nearby mines); and drug use (marijuana and glue sniffing, mostly by boys).
>
> Those findings have already been fed back to the community, which is a small, relatively traditional, rural village. The community members understand that a facilitator from HCF will come to help them to decide which harm(s) to children that they can subsequently address through community action.

> The facilitator is visiting the community mid-day during the week and has respectfully asked the Chief of the village to convene a community discussion about which harm(s) they want to address. The Chief and the community people understand they will need to select one or several harms to children, and they are eager to partner with HCF. The Chief and the Town Crier went house-to-house to ask everyone to attend the meeting, which will be held in the traditional meeting space outside the Chief's hut. The Chief will welcome the facilitator, who will then begin their work with the community.

B. Then ask the Chief and community members to stay in the room by themselves to prepare for their roles, without being overheard by others. Meanwhile, the facilitator goes to a separate area, while the other workshop participants stretch their legs outside for several minutes.

C. Distribute the role sheets (see following pages), not letting the HCF facilitator see the roles of the Chief and community members.

D. Give several minutes so the participants can decide how to best play their respective roles. The HCF facilitator can do this on his or her own (and ask questions of you). For the Chief and community members, the important thing is that the Chief leads and dominates the discussion.

Step 4: Enable the role-play

A. Before bringing the facilitator in, have the Chief and community members take their seats in the inner circle. Invite others (observers) to sit around but outside of the inner circle and to pay attention to the group process.

B. Invite the facilitator in—he or she is just arriving in the village and will be greeted by the Chief, thus beginning the role-play.

C. Let the role-play continue for about 15 mins before you step in to say "Cut!" and begin the discussion.

Step 5: Facilitate reflection and discussion

A. Open with a few questions for observers:

- What positive things did the facilitator do to enable participation?
- Thinking about what happened in the inner circle, how would you describe the group process during this discussion?

B. Then ask questions for everyone about inclusion, adjusting the order to what had been said in response to the questions above:

- Do you think this is a strong process or a weak process in terms of enabling the community to decide which harm to children to address? Why?

- [If participants are slow to point out issues, you could ask: Did the community members who were present participate equally in this discussion? What role did the Chief play? What are the problems of having an open discussion when the Chief is controlling things or speaking first? Was this really a community decision-making process, when many community members were not present?]

- Who was missing from this discussion or not participating in it?

- Why is it important for a process of community decision-making to be inclusive?

- What could be done to reduce the problem of the Chief controlling the discussion and decision-making?

NOTE: This discussion may continue straight into the following discussion (see next tool), which may also be done as a follow-on session to this one but after taking a break.

Facilitator's Role

As the facilitator, you aim to help the community take a decision about which harm(s) to children the community will address through its own action. During this meeting, you want to respect the Chief, who had organized this meeting at your request. You feel strongly that having the Chief on board with this process will enable it to win community support, to be “legitimate” in the eyes of the community, and to be sustainable. Wanting to make the Chief happy, you sometimes let him speak more than you really think he should be speaking.

Following custom, the Chief will open the meeting and then hand off to you. To begin the discussion, you should thank the Chief for having called the meeting, and thank the community members for coming. There is no pressure for the community to take a decision today, as you recognize that there may need to be many discussions before the community agrees which issue to address.

Early on in the discussion, you should remind the participants that during the learning phase (ethnography), they had identified three main harms to children: early marriage (for girls—the traditional marriage age was 15 years but it has dropped to 11 years of age); heavy work (boys working in nearby mines); and drug use (marijuana and glue sniffing, mostly by boys). You should mention that people may consider other issues as well, though you remind them that this process cannot by itself address poverty. Remind participants, too, that there are no right or wrong answers and that each person’s opinion matters.

With these points in mind, you ask the community “Which harm(s) to children do you think the community should address?” Following up, you ask various participants, including children, what they think.

Chief's Role

As the respected leader of your people, you are a take-charge person and see yourself as speaking for the community. You like when community members speak, but you like it even more when they show respect to you and even defer to your judgment.

You open this role-play by welcoming the facilitator to the village again. Before handing over to him or her, you state that to help the community decide which harm to children to address, you have brought together most of the key people in the village—the opinion leaders and people who are most able to make good decisions. You invite each person to introduce themselves. Then you turn to the facilitator and say, “Now it is your meeting—please go ahead.”

Your role is to lead and control this discussion. After the facilitator invites views of the community, step forward immediately and present your view that drug use is the biggest harm because the drugs are dangerous and they lead children, particularly boys, to drop out of school. Once out of school, the boys do more drugs, gamble, and stop respecting their families and the community elders. In essence, they become a burden on everyone, and they invite other children to misbehave and stop being good future citizens of the community. You let others speak to some extent, yet you are so excited that you keep interrupting or jumping in to assert your own views.

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Community Members' Roles

At the beginning of the role-play, the Chief will ask each of you to introduce yourself briefly to the facilitator by saying your name and who you are (as in: “I am John, the Chief's nephew. I’m a farmer.”). You are all highly respectful of your Chief and always let him speak first and interrupt whenever he wants to. You want to express your views yet are eager to agree with the Chief.

Most of you are parents and adults. Please choose among yourselves which of the following roles you wish to play:

- two of you are relatives of the Chief;
- two of you are teenagers, and you remain silent during the meeting, deferring to the Chief if you are asked anything directly;
- three of you think the most important harm to children to address is early marriage;
- four of you think the most important harm to children to address is heavy work;
- three of you think the most important harm to children to address is drug use.

TRN 8. Role-play: Building an Inclusive Community Process 2

This role-play can be done as a stand-alone or as a sequel to the preceding role-play.

A. Background

Purpose

The purpose of this role-play is to give the facilitator in a community-led approach experience in helping community members take stock of how large community meetings are not a fully inclusive means of the community taking a decision. For training purposes, it offers pointers on how to ask questions that stimulate reflection on the limits of large meetings and to invite collective problem-solving about how to overcome those limits.

Background

The facilitator knows the community members well and is working with them to help them select which harm or harms to children to be addressed through community-led action. Because a high level of inclusivity is fundamental in a community-led process, the facilitator wants to help the community think through how it can create a more inclusive process for deciding which harm(s) to children to address.

Participants

The participants consist of 10–20 people who play the role of community members (self-assigned) and a participant who is learning to facilitate a community-led process who plays the facilitator.

B. Workshop Facilitator's Notes

1. The facilitator leaves the meeting space and takes 10 mins to read the facilitator's sheet (see below).

2. With the facilitator away from the meeting space, the other participants assign themselves roles as community members. It is useful to have a mix of elder men, elder women, young mothers, young fathers, teenage girls, and teenage boys. Some people tend to speak more than others or even to dominate the discussion. All the community members agree that every member of the community should have a voice in its decision-making.

3. Some of the community members (self-designated) think initially that large community meetings are the best (and the traditional) way of enabling the community to take a decision on an issue such as which harm to children should they address through community-led action. Yet they loosen up and are willing to consider other options as the facilitator raises questions and invites them to think them through.

4. The community participants like the facilitator and the way he or she asks questions and invites discussion. They offer supportive alternatives such as better announcement of meetings, Town Crier encouragement for everyone to attend the meeting, small group discussions, and home visits as a way of enabling all members of the community to have a voice in discussions of which harm to children to address.

5. Role-play. The role-play begins with the facilitator entering the meeting space, greeting the community, and explaining the purpose of the meeting. The role-play should continue for about 30 mins, with the workshop coordinator playing the role of "movie producer" and intervening with a "Time out" if some adjustment is needed.

Discussion and Reflection

Following the role-play, it is useful to invite everyone to step outside their assigned roles and now share their own opinion on questions such as:

- In the discussions, how well did the facilitator do in enabling or encouraging different people to speak? What could have been done better?

- In reality, what are the limits of community meetings as vehicles for making decisions?

- In a large group meeting with both men and women present, will women likely feel free to discuss openly issues such as gender-based violence? Why or why not?

- How could small group discussions among, for example, a group of 10 women and a group of 10 men, help to address the preceding concern? What challenges could arise in having small group discussions, and how could they be managed?

- How could home visits help to address the preceding concern? Who would make the home visits, and how would the process be? What challenges could arise in having home visits, and how could the challenges be managed?

Facilitator's Sheet

Your goal in this community meeting is to help the community think through its process for taking a decision about which harm to children to address. You know that the community typically takes decisions by having a "full community meeting" in which people discuss the issue and take a decision. However, it is clear that not everyone participates in such meetings—people with disabilities and the poorest of the poor, for example, typically do not participate. Also, children have little voice as they are "expected to be seen but not heard." Further, women and girls are unlikely to discuss openly issues such as rape and gender-based violence in a setting where men are present.

Your aim in this session is twofold. First, you want to help community members understand that taking decisions at large meetings is not a fully inclusive process. Also, you want to help community members construct a more inclusive process of decision-making. Your strategy is to help people reflect on the importance of each person having a voice and then work to raise awareness of the limits of making decisions at full meetings.

A useful first step in this session is for you to ask questions such as, "What does it mean to say that the community has taken a decision?" or, "Should everyone have input into community decisions?" and "Why is it important that each person participate in decision-making?"

With this as a foundation, you can help people to reflect on how participatory current processes of community decision-making are. Ask questions such as: "How does a community here take a decision?" Typically, people reply along the lines of: "We discuss the issue as a whole community in our community meetings, and everyone participates." If this happens, you should ask follow-on questions designed to trigger awareness that some people may be left out of those community discussions and that even if people attend the community meetings, it may be challenging for them to speak up. Among such questions are the following:

- "Does everyone attend the community meetings?"
- "Are some people here very poor compared to others? Do they usually attend the community meetings? Why or why not?"
- "Are there people here who have disabilities (maybe they are blind, or cannot hear, or are unable to walk)? Do they attend and take part in the meetings? Why or why not?"
- "Do children, even teenagers, attend the community meetings? Do they regularly speak up and share their perspectives? Why or why not?"

In asking these questions, your role is not to force agreement or suggest solutions but to help the community discuss issues fully before taking a decision. After discussion, people in most communities agree that although community meetings are open to everyone, there are people who seldom, if ever, attend such meetings. These may include people with disabilities, people who are very poor or whose families are most vulnerable, or people who are stigmatized for any reason. People also typically realize that children do not usually speak up at full community meetings. They may also note that women do not speak as much as men or that only the women who are power brokers speak up.

From here, the next step is to ask questions that invite problem-solving, noting that this may take some time. It may also require a number of discussions, and the discussion today is only the beginning. Try asking open-ended questions that do not blame anyone for having excluded particular subgroups or for not participating themselves. Such questions may include the following:

- "What could enable women to participate more fully or contribute to community discussions and decision-making?"

- "What could enable children to participate more fully or contribute to community discussions and decision-making?"

You could ask similar questions in regard to the poorest people, people with disabilities, or any subgroup that seems to be excluded or somehow less prominent in collective discussions and decision-making.

Asked with patience, such questions help to create a reflective space for group problem-solving. The reflective space enables people to step back and identify possible alternatives that are more inclusive and participatory.

Quite commonly, proponents of large-scale community meetings suggest steps such as going house-to-house well in advance of meetings in order to make sure that everyone in the community knows there will be a meeting and that everyone is welcome. In regard to this option and others that might be suggested, it is not for the facilitator to support or reject the option, as that is up to the community. But you should invite reflection on the strengths and weaknesses of each option, for example, by asking follow-up questions with an appreciative attitude. Such questions could include things such as: "Thank you for this suggestion—what do other people think of this?" or "How is this option helpful?" and subsequently, "Will everyone be able to participate in full community meetings?"

Through the ensuing discussions, most communities come to the realization that even with advance notice and a welcoming attitude, it will likely be difficult for people such as the poorest of the poor and people with particular disabilities to come to the meetings. This realization typically leads people to suggest other options. Home visits and small group discussions are frequently among the options that communities develop. Part of the excitement of community-led work is to see the imaginative solutions that local people can develop.

TRN 9. Keeping One's Boundaries

The facilitator's main function is to support the communities in making inclusive decisions about which harm(s) to children to address through community-driven action. To serve this function, facilitators live in the communities and spend extensive time building trust, listening, learning, asking questions that trigger reflection and dialogue, supporting an inclusive process, observing, dialoguing, and accompanying the community in a spirit of solidarity. Doing these things involves being with the people and not creating too much social distance from community members.

At the same time, though, facilitators are not community people and have an independent role. This tension can create conflicts and ethical challenges, as illustrated in the scenarios below. Consider each, one by one, and write down some ideas about how you as facilitator would deal with the situation.

Scenario 1: You (the facilitator) are sitting in an open meeting of community A, three months into community discussions about which harm(s) to children to address. Through discussion, three issues have surfaced repeatedly—early marriage, out-of-school children, and child-beating. The community discussions are respectful, yet community people continue to differ in regard to which harm or harms they want to address. Getting weary of discussions, the leader puts you on the spot and presses you by asking, "What would you do?" How would you respond in a way that is consistent with the facilitator role, even if other people as well press you for your views?

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This one is relatively easy. Did you consider reminding people that it's natural for different people to have different views, and that ongoing dialogue will likely help community members reach a clear idea about which harm(s) to children they want to address?

Also, it might be helpful for you to point out that what is really important are community people's ideas—not your ideas. If they continue pressing you, you could more directly point out that this could compromise your role as facilitator and move the community away from the community-led approach that you are there to support. You could also note that you signed a contract saying that you would stay true to your role as facilitator.

ETHICS

Scenario 2: Please assume you are a male facilitator. After spending much time in Village B and talking with teenage boys at length about the harms to children in the community, you have become friends with the boys. One evening they invite you to come talk with them, and when you arrive you observe that they are drinking a beverage containing alcohol but they do not appear drunk. One of the older boys offers you a drink, and the other boys urge you to take it. You think to yourself that drinking is so normal in this village that it could be seen as disrespectful to refuse the drink. Should you take the drink—what would you say to the group? If you took the drink, what would be the likely implications? If you did not accept the drink, what would be the likely implications? How would you manage this situation?

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This one is more complex and may require choosing the least bad of two relatively bad options. One option would be to take a very small sip as a symbolic gesture of solidarity and a means of building trust and relationship with the boys. You might see this as a respectful thing to do, and as facilitator, you are eager to avoid giving any appearance of judging their behavior. This minimalist approach could significantly increase your ability to get the boys more engaged in the community-led process and to learn more deeply about their situation, values, aspirations, etc.

Significant drawbacks of this option include that taking a sip could support and even legitimate an activity that harms children. Some people would say it's unethical to drink with the boys. Also, it could break down the role boundaries in a way that reduces your ability to facilitate, as the boys might come to see you as one of them or as somehow on their side.

A second option is to kindly refuse the drink but do it in a way that does not seem to pass judgment on the boys. You could reiterate your interest in talking with them and ask whether they could talk with you tomorrow morning. A significant drawback of this option is although you have obeyed the law and not condoned a harmful activity, the boys might feel disrespected and judged, leading to reductions in their willingness to engage with the community-led process.

Of course, there are many other options for responding to this situation. Like many issues related to ethics and roles, there may be no tidy answers regarding the "best way to handle it." In view of these complexities, it can be useful to discuss this scenario on going out with an underage girl with your mentor or a larger group in the workshop to prepare facilitators.

TRN 10. Gallery Walk and Discussion on Community Ownership

A. Background

Purpose: Community and child protection workers often speak of "community ownership" as if everyone understands the term as if it had the same meaning. In fact, however, practitioners often use the term in somewhat different ways. An important step, then, is to unpack the meaning of "community ownership." To strengthen practice, it is also important to identify things that support or limit community ownership. The purpose of this gallery walk and discussion is to help participants to conceptualize community ownership and reflect on what enables it and what impedes it.

Time: 75 mins.

No. of participants: Over 25 people, ideally.

Materials needed:

- 3 decks of 25 or so index cards each, and writing pens
- relatively large space, with walls on which cards can adhere to walls, or space for them to be displayed on the ground
- material for sticking cards to the wall, if relevant

B. Facilitator's Notes

In learning about and thinking how to develop community ownership, it is important to have a clear understanding of what "community ownership means" and also what promotes it or limits it.

The activity involves 5 steps, with approximate time frames as indicated below:

(1) Assign participants to three groups of approximately equal size, giving 15–20 index cards to each group and assigning them to particular spaces (5 mins).

(2) Give the groups their three-part assignment while they stand in their respective areas (5 mins).

(3) Groups complete their assigned tasks (30–35 mins). Through discussion, each group generates key elements of "community ownership" and places them on the wall or the ground surrounding the term "community ownership" (10–15 mins). Each group also generates five things that are obstacles to community ownership, writing each on a card

and placing the cards in a column to the left of “community ownership” (10 mins). Lastly, each group also generates five things that promote or enable community ownership, writing each on a card and placing the cards in a column to the right of “community ownership” (10 mins).

(4) Gallery walk. Groups leave their own station and walk around to other stations to view and discuss the work of other groups, leaving one member behind to explain the thinking of one’s own group (15 mins).

(5) Plenary discussion while standing (15 mins).

Step 1: Formation of three groups

To divide participants into three groups of approximately equal size (ideally, about 8–10 people per group; use more small groups for a large number of people) on a random basis, ask people to count off as “one,” “two,” or “three.” Then ask all the “ones” to stand together, all the “twos” to stand together, and all the “threes” to stand together. Give each group about 20 index cards, several markers, and sticking material for attaching the cards to the wall, if relevant.

Step 2: Group assignments

Invite each group to move to a space, where there is a way of displaying the index cards once they have been written on. At the center of the display space, place a card that says: “COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP.”

Speaking loudly so everyone in the room can hear, tell the groups that they have three tasks.

1. Each group should take a few minutes and identify five main elements of community ownership. They should write each one on a separate card and place the cards in a circle around the card saying “COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP.”

2. Each group should identify five things that block or limit community ownership. Each item should be written on a separate card and placed in a column on the wall to the left of the community-ownership card.

3. Each group should identify five things that promote or encourage community ownership. Each item should be written on a separate card and placed in a column on the wall to the right of the community-ownership card.

Step 3. Groups complete their assignments

During this time (30–35 minutes), walk around to each group, make sure they have understood the instructions, and answer any questions. Ask the group to indicate to the facilitator when they have completed their assignment. When they have, ask each group to designate one person as a “discussant” who will stay by the group’s cards to share (not defend) the thinking of the group when others come to read their cards.

Step 4. Gallery walk

Invite everyone except the three discussants to leave their own group and visit the other group sites to read their work. Ask them to pay attention to the differences in the descriptors used by the three groups and differences in how the cards were placed as well. Remind people to read the items that block and promote community ownership too, and to feel free to talk and discuss as they move around with others. Invite people to “mix it up” and talk with lots of people, breaking out of their own group as they walk around and learn what other groups have done.

Step 5. Group discussion

With everyone still standing, announce that now there is time for reflection and larger group discussion. Ask questions such as:

- What common elements came up in regard to community ownership?
- Thinking about community ownership, were there elements or aspects that seem more important than others or that were somehow underemphasized in the exercise? [Note: It would be odd not to see items such as “responsibility,” “strong motivation,” “identity—sense that this is ours,” “mobilization of community resources,” and related items coming up.]
- Thinking about the obstacles to community ownership, how strong and widespread are these? Are there steps that could be taken to change them? [Note that a frequently identified obstacle is donor requirements for short-term projects and immediate results. On seeing and recognizing the weight of this obstacle, some participants may become a bit despondent. It is wise to use this as an opportunity to remind participants that donors are people, have their differences, and are educable. It is important that participants see steps that could be taken, even if they are not part of a long-term social change process.]
- Thinking about the things that promote or enable community ownership, do agencies and practitioners do enough of these to promote community ownership? What might encourage them to do more?

TRN 11. Sample Workshop Agenda for Initial Training of Facilitators

A. Background

Purpose

The purpose of this workshop is to prepare the agency facilitators on how to enable and support community-led processes of child protection. It also brings together key stakeholders, strengthening their understanding and support for a bottom-up approach.

Objectives

The main objectives of the workshop are to:

1. Promote collective understanding of the community-led approach and its value-adds;
2. Develop in facilitators the necessary skills, self-awareness, and reflection for using a community-led approach;
3. Enable an ethical approach to facilitation;
4. Construct an initial work plan for facilitators.

B. Facilitator's Notes

The process of this workshop should seek to mirror that of the community-led process. Thus, it should be highly participatory, the participants should make key decisions, and it should be collectively owned. It is highly valuable for the group to decide how to adjust the agenda each day, and to choose and develop particular scenarios and role-plays that will help the facilitators to develop contextually relevant skills.

Although some of the role-plays and activities are scripted in the Toolkit, others are to be creatively constructed by the group. The reflective tools included in the "Facilitation" section of the Toolkit can suggest useful pointers and approaches for the scenarios that the team constructs.

Throughout, the workshop coordinator should model and encourage self-awareness and individual and group reflection. To help the facilitators acquire the skills they need, it can be useful to repeat role-plays or particular parts of them, giving the facilitators an opportunity to criticize how they handled something and to then try to do a better job the next time around.

If a facilitator clearly needs more practice on a particular skill, it is important for the team to provide for that on multiple days of the workshop. Although ethics has its own session, ethical issues and expectations should be discussed throughout the workshop.

Agenda

Monday, Week 1

9:00–10:00 Purpose and overview of this meeting

- Introductions
- Purpose of the workshop
- Agenda overview

10:00–11:30 The limits of a top-down approach

- Scenario and role-play
- Collective reflection

11:30–12:00 Tea

12:00–1:00 Dialogue: the limits of top-down approaches

1:00–2:00 Lunch

2:00–3:30 What is "community"?

- Small group discussions
- Gallery walk with plenary reflection

3:30–4:00 Tea

4:00–5:00 Community power relations: a social justice framework

Tuesday, Week 1

9:00–10:00 Example of a community-led approach

- Presentation (e.g., the Sierra Leone case study)
- Discussion

10:00–11:00 How to build the community's trust and respect

- Discussion in pairs of what supports or reduces trust
- Plenary discussion
- Reflection on how NGOs frequently develop limited community trust and respect

11:00–11:30 Tea

11:30–1:00 Deep listening

- Group constructed role-play
- Reflection, with focus on empathy

1:00–2:00 Lunch

2:00–3:30 Learning by asking open-ended questions and probing questions

- Practice in pairs, with feedback
- Plenary reflection

3:30–4:00 Tea

4:00–5:00 Thinking through the role of facilitators in a community-led approach

Wednesday, Week 1

9:00–11:00 Enabling dialogue and inclusive participation

- Group role-plays, with reflection
- Plenary discussion

11:00–11:30 Tea

11:30–1:00 Enabling full participation of teenagers

- Group role-plays, with reflection
- Plenary discussion of complexities and how to manage them

1:00–2:00 Lunch

2:00–3:30 Enabling the participation of younger children

- Group role-plays, with reflection
- Plenary discussion of complexities and how to manage them

3:30–4:00 Tea

4:00–5:00 Mentoring

- Group discussion of mentors' roles
- Discussion of mentor–NGO and management issues

Thursday, Week 1

9:00–11:00 Entering the community

- Role-play on engaging with the chief/leaders, and reflection
- Deciding whether to collaborate

11:00–11:30 Tea

11:30–1:00 How to explain your purpose and role

- Role-play of initial discussion with the full community
- Development of key elements of a scripted explanation

1:00–2:00 Lunch

2:00–3:30 Managing conflict in a constructive manner

- Group constructed role-play, with facilitator practice and reflection
- Plenary discussions, with tips on handling one's own anxiety
- Repeat the process as needed

3:30–4:00 Tea

4:00–5:00 Engaging with people on the margins

- Learning when and how to engage
- Role-play: transect walk and discussions

Friday, Week 1

9:00–11:00	Ethical considerations in facilitation • Group discussion on key ethics issues • Child safeguarding • Discussions of pros and cons of mandatory direct reporting of violations against children in the context
11:00–11:30	Tea
11:30–1:00	Managing the ethics issues • Thinking through how the facilitator should respond when they have learned of a violation against children • Possible adjustments in agency expectations and procedures for the facilitator • Ongoing importance of reflection and mentor's advice
1:00–2:00	Lunch
2:00–3:30	Helping communities to avoid exclusive focus on poverty and health issues in deciding which harm to children to address • Role-play and discussion • Group discussion of framing and setting boundaries
3:30–4:00	Tea
4:00–5:00	Participant observation (see Learning Tools)

Monday, Week 2

9:00–10:00 Gender and inclusivity

- Role-play on learning from girls and women in mixed gender context
- Discussion of the limits of such an approach
- Reflection on limits on trust and learning imposed by one's own gender

10:00–11:30 Helping the community to decide through an inclusive process which harm(s) to children to address

- Scenario and role-play
- Collective reflection

11:30–12:00 Tea

12:00–1:00 Going deeper on inclusivity: Enabling everyone to have a voice and influence on decisions

- Discussion of contextual problem-solving by the community
- Locally relevant ideas

1:00–2:00 Lunch

2:00–3:00 Going deeper on inclusivity, cont.

- Sierra Leone approach (with cautions about imposing it)
- Plenary discussion of strengths and limits
- Reflection on facilitator's responsibility for enabling inclusive participation

3:30–3:30 Tea

3:30–5:00 Creating space for community dialogue and decision-making

- Role-play on "facipulation"
- Reflection on how to do facilitation in a way that creates adequate space for communities and places power in the hands of the community

Tuesday, Week 2

9:00–11:00 Enabling inter-community planning

- Discussion of possible benefits of collaboration
- Supporting communities in deciding how to work together (e.g., forming and supporting an inter-community planning group, with roles and functions identified)
- Facilitator's and mentor's roles in enabling collaboration

11:00–11:30 Tea

11:30–1:00 The planning cycle: group discussion and problem-solving

- Linking the inter-community discussions with individual communities
- Feeding from communities (large group discussions, small group discussions, and home visits) to inter-community discussions
- Narrowing down options, and finding common ground

1:00–2:00 Lunch

2:00–3:30 Linkage and collaboration with formal stakeholders

- Discussion of how action considerations could arise even in discussions of which harm(s) to children to select
- Background, exploratory discussions with formal stakeholders—role-play
- Planning how to scope out the formal stakeholders' interest and capacity to deliver

3:30–4:00 Tea

4:00–5:00 Documentation

- Keeping regular records
- Agency expectations
- Value of a journal

Wednesday, Week 2

9:00–10:00 Role-play on community entry

- Group role-plays, with reflection
- Plenary discussion

10:00–11:00 Managing people who dominate discussions

- Role-play
- Group discussion of management strategies

11:00–11:30 Tea

11:30–1:00 Managing difficult people

- Group role-plays, with reflection
- Plenary discussion of complexities and how to manage them

1:00–2:00 Lunch

2:00–3:30 Role-play on community discussions of which harm(s) to children to select

- Group role-plays, with reflection
- Plenary discussion of complexities and how to manage them

3:30–4:00 Tea

4:00–5:00 Work planning for facilitators, with focus on first two months

- Group discussion of key elements of work plans
- Plan who develops full work plan
- Wrap-up and group reflection on the workshop

SECTION 3:
LEARNING (LNG) TOOLS

Section 3: Note to Users

Although there are many different ways of learning about communities, this section features ethnographic methods since they enable learning about children's lived experiences, bring forward the views of local people, and build the deeper levels of trust and respect that are needed for community-led work on child protection.

The tools were developed and used in Sierra Leone (with some modifications) but can be adapted to many different contexts. The Sierra Leone emphasis is presented here in order to show a contextually specific adaptation of learning tools.

Although this section focuses specifically on the early phase of learning about (and with) the community, the tools from previous sections are relevant as well. It can be useful to think through how the people who will be collecting information in communities might benefit from first using several tools related to empathy (FAC 4), asking probing questions (FAC 6), and enabling inclusive dialogue (TRN 7), among others.

LNG 1. Learning Phase: Dos and Don'ts

DO	DON'T
Approach community people with humility.	Judge local people as the "expert" on child protection.
View community people as actors who already do much to protect children (even if they don't describe it that way).	Regard people as beneficiaries, passive victims, or as having little ability to help themselves.
Following cultural scripts, meet with chiefs or senior leaders, explain your purpose in learning, and ask their approval for your learning activities.	Bypass leaders or fail to learn from them.
Dress appropriately and be with the people, without showing smart phones, etc.	Present oneself as wealthy and somehow "above" local people.
Speak the local language and use simple, local terminology, holding in the background your own terms and ideas.	Speak only in English or use only the language of international child protection, which positions you as the "expert."
Engage in a slow, respectful process to learn more deeply than usual about communities.	Conduct a 2-day rapid assessment and assume one knows what the child protection issues are or how to address them.
Learn from different subgroups (e.g., girls, boys, women, men), including people who are marginalized.	Learn mainly from leaders or people who are in positions of power.
State your purpose as being one of "learning from the community."	"Plant your flag" by focusing on your agency's work and promise of intervention.
Learn through participatory methods that empower and give people a voice.	Ask mostly survey questions or structured interview questions that leave people feeling objectified.
Identify and learn about strengths or assets of the community and different subgroups.	Focus mainly on problems or deficits.

Consider having one or two staff members live with the affected people, doing participant observation and ongoing learning.	Visit only periodically and with a focus on “your” or “our” project that limits learning about the community and its people.
View the term “community” with a critical eye, recognizing there may be little sense of community.	Assume that local people who live as neighbors view themselves as a community.
Make learning about the community an ongoing process.	Take a one-off approach to learning, as communities and their situations are dynamic.
Feed what is learned back to the community, inviting them to reflect on what they could do.	Take an extractive approach of taking information from people without giving the information back.

LNG 2. Sample Workshop Agenda for Training Data Collectors

Ethnographic Phase of Action Research on
Strengthening Community-Based Child Protection Mechanisms in Sierra Leone

January 17–28, 2011

Note: This workshop was used in 2011 to prepare data collectors for the learning phase of community-led work in Sierra Leone. This kind of workshop has been conducted in multiple countries in Africa and Asia, with adaptation to the local context. This workshop has a different focus, with more attention to ethnographic methods, and a different set of participants than did the previously presented training workshop for facilitators (TRN 11). However, there is some crossover in content, as both facilitators and learning phase data collectors need to learn how to enable inclusive dialogue in groups, manage conflicts that arise, and so on. There may also be crossover in regard to the participants if the facilitators had also served as data collectors during the learning phase. In adapting the trainings to your own context, it is useful to think in advance about how the trainings might connect, the sequencing, and the division of labor between them.

Purpose, Methodology, and Outcomes

Rationale and objectives

Community-based child protection is essential for the protection and well-being of children and also for the construction of effective national systems of child protection. An interagency study[4] that reviewed 160 evaluations of community-based child protection mechanisms (CBCPMs) indicated that too often, CBCPMs are initiated externally (for example by NGOs), without understanding or building on the mechanisms and processes that are already present in communities. As a result, these mechanisms have limited effectiveness and sustainability, and some have caused unintended harm.

[4] Wessells, M. (2009). *What are we learning about protecting children? An interagency review of the evidence on community-based child protection mechanisms in humanitarian and development settings.* London, UK: Save the Children.

To strengthen community-based child protection in Sierra Leone, interagency action research will document the functioning of existing CBCPMs and test whether and how CBCPMs can be made more effective by strengthening their linkages with other components of the national child protection system. The functioning of existing CBCPMs, whether indigenous or externally facilitated, will be documented through rapid ethnography and related qualitative research methods in February 2011.

The purpose of this workshop is to prepare the prospective national researchers to collect quality data in an ethical manner during the ethnographic phase of the research. The objectives are to: (1) build the capacities of prospective national researchers to collect quality data using rapid ethnographic and related tools; (2) increase the sensitivity of participants to issues of research ethics and child safeguarding and prepare them to conduct research in a safe, ethical manner that respects the participants' dignity and human rights; and (3) review collectively and finalize the methodological tools.

Key questions

The key questions to be answered through the research in the ethnographic phase are presented in Tool LNG 4.

Methodology

The workshop will use a participatory methodology designed to develop skills in using the various methods in appropriate, creative ways. The primary methods will be group discussion and problem-solving, observation and reflection, role-plays, scenario analyses, and practice using different tools, with coaching and mentoring. Working closely with the prospective national researchers will be key members of the Sierra Leone National Research Team—Dora King (Lead National Researcher) and David Lamin (Moyamba Research Team Leader)—and international researchers from the Columbia Group for Children in Adversity—Drs. Kathleen Kostenly, Lindsay Stark, and Mike Wessells.

Expected outcomes

By the end of the workshop, prospective researchers will:

- Understand the purpose, phases, key questions, and methodology of the action research
- Understand the roles and responsibilities of the researchers
- Demonstrate appropriate skill in using the various ethnographic and qualitative tools and in recording quality data to answer the key questions listed above
- Understand and be willing to adhere to the child safeguarding policy

- Be more aware of the ethical issues associated with this research and be prepared to make sound decisions in regard to these issues
- Have increased understanding of how the data will be analyzed
- Help to finalize the methodological tools

Working Schedule

Day 1: Monday, January 17—Foundations and Context

9:00–10:40	Introductions, Purpose of the Action Research and Workshop
10:40–11:00	Coffee break
11:00–12:30	What is child protection in the Sierra Leone context?
12:30–1:30	Lunch
1:30–3:10	Phase 1 findings on CBCPMs, ethical and practical issues, implications
3:10–3:30	Coffee break
3:30–5:30	Linking CBCPMs with national child protection systems

Day 2: Tuesday, January 18—Design and Methods

9:00–10:40	Design of the action research and key questions, methods
10:40–11:00	Coffee break
11:00–12:30	Ethnographic methods
12:30–1:30	Lunch
1:30–3:10	Participant observation
3:10–3:30	Coffee break
3:30–5:30	Participant observation

Day 3: Wednesday, January 19—Methods

9:00–10:40	In-depth interviewing
10:40–11:00	Coffee break
11:00–12:30	In-depth interviewing, key informant interviews
12:30–1:30	Lunch
1:30–3:10	Functional network analysis
3:10–3:30	Coffee break
3:30–5:30	Informed consent, note taking and record keeping

Day 4: Thursday, January 20—Ethics and Child Safeguarding

9:00–10:40	Child safeguarding policy
10:40–11:00	Coffee break
11:00–12:30	Child safeguarding policy implementation, and ethical considerations in the action research5
12:30–1:30	Lunch
1:30–5:30	Field learning: participant observation

Day 5: Friday, January 21—Methods and Gender Issues

9:00–10:40	Debriefing on field learning
10:40–11:00	Coffee break
11:00–12:30	Field learning discussion
12:30–1:30	Lunch

[5] Note that ethics issues will be discussed throughout the workshop.

1:30–3:10	Gender issues
3:10–3:30	Coffee break
3:30–5:30	Gender issues

Day 6: Monday, January 24—Methods

9:00–10:40	Learning about children's development
10:40–11:00	Coffee break
11:00–12:30	Timeline planning discussions
12:30–1:30	Lunch
1:30–3:10	Note taking
3:10–3:30	Coffee break
3:30–5:30	Data analysis

Day 7: Tuesday, January 25—Methods

9:00–10:40	Group discussions
10:40–11:00	Coffee break
11:00–12:30	Group discussions
12:30–1:30	Lunch
1:30–3:10	Note taking and record keeping
3:10–3:30	Coffee break
3:30–5:30	Note taking and record keeping

Day 8: Wednesday, January 26—Field Work

Morning	Field learning
Afternoon	Field learning and debriefing

Day 9: Thursday, January 27—Methods and Planning

9:00–10:40	Skills building
10:40–11:00	Coffee break
11:00–12:30	Skills building
12:30–1:30	Lunch
1:30–3:10	Skills building and planning
3:10–3:30	Coffee break
3:30–5:30	Skills building and planning

Day 10: Friday, January 30—To be decided and Wrap-up

9:00–10:40	Skills practice, open space for discussion
10:40–11:00	Coffee break
11:00–12:30	Skills practice, open space for discussion
12:30–1:30	Lunch
1:30–3:10	Skills practice, open space for discussion
3:10–3:30	Coffee break
3:30–5:30	Wrap-up and closing

LNG 3. Ethnographic Principles

- Build trust and learn in a slower, respectful manner about views of children, harms, pathways of response, prevention strategies, and connections with the formal system that does not judge local people.

- Using local language and idioms (avoiding imposition of international terms such as “child labor”), ask elicitive, open-ended questions that assume “we don’t know” and that invite learning about local categories and practices.

- Learn through direct observation about the risks to children and the ways in which families and communities seek to protect children.

- Learn from different subgroups, contrasting their views by gender and age (developmental stage), about their views of harms to children, the main responses to them, and how to prevent them.

- Learn about the power dynamics of the community and which people or groups are marginalized, and develop a way of learning from marginalized people that does not stigmatize them.

- Avoid ethical problems by managing expectations, protecting confidentiality, respecting informed consent, etc.

LNG 4. Ethnographic Research Tools, Sierra Leone[6]

Note: These tools are not intended to be used as semi-structured questionnaires but as topical guides and items one wishes to learn about in a respondent-driven discussion.

Contents

- Key Questions for the Ethnographic Research
- Participant Observation Tool
- In-depth Interview Tool
- Discussion Guide on Protection Risks and Functional Responses
- Timeline and Guide on Learning About Child Development
- Key Informant Interview Questions, Chief
- Key Informant Interview Questions, Community Social Worker
- Key Informant Interview Questions, CWC Member
- Key Informant Interview Questions, NGO Child Protection Worker
- Tool on Note Taking
- Tool on Body Mapping
- Functional Network Matrix

[6] These tools were developed by the Columbia Group team in Sierra Leone on behalf of the Interagency Learning Initiative.

Key Questions for Ethnographic/Qualitative Research in Sierra Leone, February 2011

The aim of the research to be conducted in Moyamba and Bombali Districts in February 2011 is to learn about existing community-based mechanisms of child protection and support for children. The task is to describe the mechanisms and support processes that currently exist, as they are understood by local people who occupy diverse positions in the social system. The research is not prescriptive in that it does not attempt to identify what communities ought to do to support children. To accomplish its descriptive task, the research will focus on ethnographic and related qualitative methods to answer the questions outlined below.

The main questions this research seeks to answer are: When children have been harmed by child protection issues (abuse, exploitation, violence, neglect) whom do they go to for help, and what are the processes and perceived outcomes?

The more specific key questions to be addressed in the ethnographic phase are:

- How do local people understand:
    - What is childhood and children's development?
    - What are girls' and boys' normal activities, roles, and responsibilities?
    - What are the main child protection risks or sources of harm to children?
    - What processes or mechanisms are used by families or communities to support children who have been affected by various protection threats? What are the outcomes of those mechanisms, and how satisfactory are the outcomes in the eyes of different stakeholders?
- How do child protection risks vary by gender?
- Whom do girls or boys turn to for help when protection threat X arises?
- Who are the natural helpers and what networks do they have?
- What are the indigenous, "traditional" mechanisms of protection and how are they regarded by different groups?
- Apart from indigenous mechanisms, what groups or structures (e.g., Child Welfare Committees or CBCPMs facilitated by NGOs) exist in communities and/or chiefdoms? How are they perceived by local people? What are their roles, responsibilities, and functionalities?
- How are very sensitive/complex issues addressed?
- Who has or does not have access to existing protection mechanisms (e.g., do the poorest of the poor or people not related to the chief have access)?

- What do government and NGO actors see as their main roles and responsibilities in regard to CBCPMs?
- What are the linkages of community mechanisms with the national child protection system? How do communities perceive government mechanisms such as Family Support Units?
- What are the gaps in those linkages?

Participant Observation

Purpose

To make first-hand and detailed observations of the various contexts in which children interact with peers, family, school, work, community life, and religious practice. As a participant observer, you will go into these contexts to observe, make notes when necessary without being intrusive, and compose detailed field notes soon after the observation. The aim is to observe and describe, without judging whether people's activities, practices, norms, or values are good or bad or whether their beliefs are accurate or inaccurate.

Participants

The national researcher; the members of a household, classroom, mosque or church; participants in a community gathering; the traders and customers in a marketplace; officials in a traditional or local court; police stations; any other contexts in which children interact.

Materials

- A small notebook where you can jot down your observations
- A larger notebook for field notes to be written at the end of the day
- A log book to plan and keep track of your activities
- A pen
- A tape recorder

Length of activity

Participant observation lasts as long as the activity you are observing. You may want to stay and ask the participants questions after the activity is over or linger to capture more details.

What is participant observation?

> *"The final goal ... is to grasp the [informant's] point of view, his or [her] relation to life, to realize his [or her] vision of his [or her] world."* Bronislaw Malinowski
>
> *"Participant observation involves establishing rapport in a new community, learning to act so that people go about their business as usual when you show up, and removing yourself every day from cultural immersion so you can intellectualize what you've learned, put it into perspective and write about it convincingly."* H. Russell Barnard

Participant observation involves two main components: (a) participation in the culture and life of a community, and (b) observation of its members' behavior, language, and material culture, that is, the objects and artifacts they use to conduct their lives.

What will you do as a participant observer? You will:

- Pay attention to everything you see, hear, and observe about children.
  - Listen to what is said to, and about, children. What do adults say to children about what they should and should not do, and how is it taught and enforced in the classroom or in the home? Do they say or expect the same things from boys and girls? Are these things enforced and taught in a gender-neutral manner?
  - Document the objects that pertain to children's lives in each setting you are in. What objects do men, women, and children use in the home, in the marketplace, at the river?
  - Listen to what children say to each other. Listen to what adults say to children. What happens during moments of tension or conflict between adults and children, between children and their peers? What do they say? What do they do? Pay attention to gender.
  - Observe the activities that adults and children engage in together during the course of the day. What are their respective roles?
  - How and why are children punished? Pay attention to gender in terms of forms of punishment and who (male or female head) has the authority to administer what forms of punishment.
- Immerse yourself in the day-to-day lives of the people in your village as they cook, play, go to the market, sit outside in the evening, or go to the local court.
  - It is helpful to act in ways that make you a part of the setting. You can participate in activities by helping out a seller at the market. Accompany him or her to set up the stall or prepare the soap they will sell. Ideally, the people you are observing will go about their daily lives as if you are not a stranger. Understand the gender dynamics of participating. Some villagers may welcome and encourage your full

participation, while others may not. Be aware of class, religious and ideological differences.

  - Have casual conversations as often as you can. It will be helpful to do so before you have more formal interviews. Casual conversations will lead to helpful insights and establish rapport.

  - Before you go to a local court, meet the officials involved in the case. If you can, meet the people involved in the case. Introduce yourself and the purpose of the research you are conducting. Be careful to maintain neutrality while you show empathy.

- Have casual conversations with individuals and groups. Always stay focused on the questions about children and how they are protected from harm, abuse or exploitation.

  - These will be done in the compounds of households, at the market, at family meetings and other settings.

  - Listen closely to what is said so that you can remember what you hear.

- Take good notes

  - Jot down what you see and hear using key words and phrases. They will jog your memory later as you write up your notes.

  - Make mental notes when you cannot write immediately. You can devise your own system to help you recall the observations you made earlier in the day. When you return to your room in the evening, make detailed notes about what you've seen, heard, and observed.

<u>Indigenous ethnography</u>

You are what is referred to as an indigenous ethnographer because you have some familiarity with the way of life of the people you are going to be working with. This means that you can speak the language, you may behave in similar ways, and will have facility with the objects used in the village.

So, how do you study something you believe you already know?

- Approach what you are observing as if you have encountered it for the first time. This is your role as an indigenous ethnographer.

- Distance yourself from your cultural know-how. Become naïve. Assume that you do not know how things will unfold or what people mean. Distancing will help you listen more closely and observe more carefully. Distancing is especially important in relation to gender, because depending on the context, male researchers could be expected to know, lead and give opinions, while female researchers will not be expected to do any of these things. Or there could actually be a backlash against what is perceived as an articulate and "pushy" female researcher.

- Become a student of your informers. Let them teach you about childhood in Bombali or Moyamba District.

- Ethnography studies the point of view of a community. When you listen to group discussions in the compound or during a community meeting, set aside your own ideas and opinions. Be completely attentive to what is unfolding.

The stages of participant observation

These are the four stages of participant observation. It is not a rigid prescription, nor is it exhaustive. Use it as a guide when you enter your field site or when you arrive to observe an activity. It is a process that has been used successfully by many ethnographers.

Stage I. **<u>Entering the field</u>** It is helpful to introduce yourself to the people who are in authority in a community or a home when you start fieldwork, such as, the chief, the headman, the women's leader/section chief, or the district chief. Introduce your project and get the necessary permission to do research in the village. It will ease your ability to live and work in the community.

Stage II **<u>Establishing rapport</u>** Rapport means the presence of trust between researcher and informant. In order for your informants to trust you and share information with you, they should not feel judged, put down, or discriminated against. How can you build trust? Here are four techniques:

- Become a student. *A good ethnographer approaches his or her informants with the openness of a student. Whether they are young or old, poor or rich, male or female, disabled or abled, your informants are always your teachers. You are there to learn <u>their</u> stories, <u>their</u> views, <u>their</u> experience.*

- Do not judge your informants' lives or opinions. *A good ethnographer is not judgmental of the people he or she is studying. S/he works to make them feel safe and respected, no matter what they think or believe or do. This will give them the confidence to answer your questions and to share information that may be sensitive.*

- Become aware of your own biases and your own cultural assumptions. Pay particular attention to your own cultural and ideological assumptions about masculinity and femininity, or maleness and femaleness. *This is called reflexivity. Reflect on your own views and cultural assumptions about childhood and how children should be protected. Then put some distance between your views and the views of your informants about what is right or wrong, what is moral or immoral, what is just or unjust, what is normal or abnormal*.

- Practice neutrality. *A good ethnographer will endeavor to stay neutral when there is conflict between people in the community they are studying.*

Note: It can be highly challenging for any person to adopt a non-judgmental, neutral stance. These challenges are increased for people who are activists or child protection workers who are trained to make rapid assessments, identify violations against children, and take urgent action. Time, mentoring, and patience are needed to develop this orientation, which can be a useful complement to the more rapid, judgmental approach that is widespread in child protection work.

Stage III. **Mapping** Once you begin to visit schools or markets or community discussions to observe the risks to children and their protection, make social and physical maps of the settings.

- Physical mapping: What is the layout of the market or local court or school? If you have difficulty drawing this, describe it in your fieldnotes.

- Social mapping: Who sits next to whom in the local court? Where do children who are traders sit or stand or walk in the market? What is the physical location of children in other social contexts? Are these physical locations gender-specific, and do they provide special forms of protection?

- Transect walks: When you enter a setting, for example, a market, pick a path that you will walk as you make observations. You can take a census of this circumscribed path. How many children and adults trade on this path? What are the physical attributes of the transect? The people in this transect can become your informants. Which gender uses this path the most and why? There could be issues of safety, cultural taboos and superstitions.

Stage IV **Immersion** At this stage, you should already have a sense of the layout of your village, and the people who you are studying. You will immerse yourself in the culture of your village by participating and observing events, activities, and interactions that will answer your research questions about childhood and children's protection from harms. Immersion requires repetition. For example, you will visit the same market several days in a row. You will observe the same classroom several days in a row. When you spend the night in the village you will sleep in the same household each night. This gives you access to detail and helps build your memory.

Note taking

Writing notes is the most important and time intensive aspect of ethnographic practice and require consistency.

Field notes happen in stages, every day.

1. Jottings: While you are out in the field, jot down what you hear and see. Keep a pen and a small notebook with you always. Record key phrases, key words, the stages of a proceeding, major actors and parts of an event.

2. Detailed notes: At the end of the day, you will make detailed notes. These include

   i. Descriptions of scenes, including characters, actions, and conversations.

   ii. Descriptions of activities, including the plot and the actions of the participants. How did the proceeding begin? How did it end? What happened in between? What was said?

3. Log: Use your log to keep track of your activities and to plan follow-up activities. Start off the first day filling up the right-hand side with what you saw, who you met, and what you did. Repeat for the second day. On the third day, fill out the left-hand side of the log with the people you would like to talk to again, others you may want to approach, or events you want to attend.

Helpful tips on conducting participant observation

The following settings are examples of contexts where you will practice participant observation. Use the four stages of participant observation outlined in the previous section to guide your research. These steps suggested here are provisional and not prescriptive. Ethnographic research requires flexibility and the willingness to respond to the situation as it unfolds.

Because you are working on a focused, short-term project, always keep the key questions in mind when you enter a research site, and as you make mental and written notes. (For the full set of key questions, refer to the Workshop agenda [LNG 2]).

Marketplaces

Marketplaces are ideal settings to conduct ethnographic research on child protection. It is possible to observe children at work and interactions between adults and children in a natural setting that can demonstrate implicit beliefs about childhood and children's exposure to risk. Find out the types of markets villagers frequent: daily markets, once-a-month markets, small or large markets, with different activities:

- Visit the market 3–4 days in a row each week.
- Using a transect walk, identify a section of the market and the sellers you will study.
    - Choose either a child, a group of children, or adults and children who work together.
- Introduce yourself and explain what you are doing in the village.
- Begin a casual conversation. These traders will become your informants.
- Offer to help the traders with small tasks, for example, looking for change or adding items to the stall. Let them show you what they need done. Remember that you are their student.

- After a day or two of going to the market to sit with the children or adults at work, you can begin to ask probing questions about their experience and their views.

- If you find that a particular child or adult answers your questions with a lot of information, you can choose to spend a lot of time with them. They could become your primary informants.

- When you make your notes at the end of the day, map out the scene. Describe the interactions you observed, the items that were being sold, the conversations that you witnessed, and any threats and responses to children's safety.

<u>Classrooms and schools</u>

- Request to meet some teachers in the village. Introduce yourself and the project.

- Is there a particular teacher with whom you developed good rapport? He or she might make a good informant for your questions about child protection.

- Choose one of the teachers as a primary informant. You will visit their classroom multiple times during your stay. Attempt to visit a male-led and a female-led classroom. Students may respond to a teacher's "discipline," "empowerment," etc., differently, based on gender.

- As you observe the classroom make detailed notes during and after the class on the interactions between teachers and students and between students. How is the physical space arranged? Are classrooms safe environments for children and youth? What occurs inside and outside of class that compromise the dignity of students, or that makes it difficult for them to learn without fear?

- Pay attention to what is done and said. How do actions and words change based on the gender or age of the person?

- Observe the wider school environment and how children travel to school. What protection and safety concerns might arise on the way to school, outside the school, or between classes? How do these concerns differ for girls and boys?

- Observe the sanitary conditions—latrines/toilets—whether separate for boys and girls. (This has been found to affect the attendance of girls, especially those who have started their menses.)

<u>Local courts</u>

- Request permission from the appropriate officials to sit in on the proceedings of a court case if there is a case going on or that will go on while you are in the village.

- Request permission from the people involved in the case.

- Establish trust using some of the suggestions made earlier. For example, communicate your neutrality in verbal and non-verbal ways. You could say to court officials and to families involved in the case: "I am interested in learning how the court system functions in an effort to protect children from violence. For my research to be valid and so that we can strengthen the systems we have now, it is important to hear the views of everyone involved in a case like this." Non-verbal cues of neutrality could be choosing where you sit in a room, or showing the same level of courtesy to everyone.

- Do social and physical mapping of the room where the case is being heard.

- Follow the proceedings from its beginning to its resolution, or as your time in the field permits.

- As you make your notes, use your log well. A court setting is a rich social field with multiple actors, various plot lines, and a combination of traditional and civil rules and processes. It can yield a lot of data and suggest possible avenues for follow-up research with individuals or events.

Dealing with the anxieties of fieldwork

Fieldwork can be an anxiety-inducing experience. It is common to feel overwhelmed by the social demands of research, and to worry about whether you are getting enough or the right data. There are two helpful responses to these anxieties.

- **Make detailed notes**. This cannot be overemphasized: write all the time and write everything down.

    - Do not let time elapse between an event or an activity and when you make your fieldnotes. <u>Never</u> leave the writing of your fieldnotes for the next day.

- **Use the support of the research team**. Talk to the lead researcher and your other team members about the research process. Ask questions when you are not sure what to do.

Ethical issues

Participant observation as a field research method raises basic ethical questions about conducting research. Unethical research is research that causes harm to the people with whom researchers are working. How can researchers ensure the wellbeing and the rights of the people they are observing? There are many ways, including the following:

- **By always striving to not cause harm.** As ethnographic researchers, we are bound by the code of conduct of our profession to not cause harm to any of our informants or the people we are observing as a result of our research.

    - It means being aware at all times of the possible impact and meaning of what you are doing as a researcher. Always strive to not cause harm. For example, when dealing with sensitive issues, how do you balance your need for information and the potential negative impact it may cause your informant? Your first obligation is to the welfare of your informant.

- **Respecting people's dignity**. One of the ways we show respect for the dignity of the communities and individuals who we work with is to disclose our research agenda. A researcher must always request permission to enter a community from relevant officials. Without doing so, we compromise the legitimacy of our work and of our profession and jeopardize the ability of other researchers to conduct research or realize their long-term projects.

- **Respecting all persons equally** regardless of their age, social class, gender, religion or other identity. Strive to build good relationships by showing respect and always communicating your intentions.

(Please refer to the tool (MGM 8) on Thinking Through Facilitators' Ethical Responsibilities for more discussion on ethical questions associated with community-led work.)

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In-depth Interviews on Local CBCPMs in Bombali and Moyamba Districts

Purpose

To have open-ended, in-depth interviews with youth and adults about their views of childhood, the threats to children's wellbeing and the responses to those threats in their village or town; to use good listening and probing skills as you speak with adults and youth about how they respond to and prevent threats to children's safety.

Participants

A national researcher and individual members of a village, community group, local government or non-governmental organization.

Materials

- Notebook
- Pen
- Voice recorder

Length of activity

The length of an in-depth interview should last long enough to answer the key questions of the research project. It is important to stop an interview if the interviewee is tired.

What is an in-depth interview?

An in-depth interview is an intensive exploration of an individual's perspective or experience of the key questions of a research project. It should give you detailed information about an individual's perception of childhood, children's safety, and the responses to threats to children's wellbeing that they are aware of.

What are the characteristics of an in-depth interview?

- **It is unstructured:** This means it is guided by a set of questions, but it is not administered as a questionnaire. It is more flexible than the formal, structured format of the questionnaire. The questions are there to guide the conversation and to gather the information relevant to the purpose of the research. Translate the key questions to make them understandable while keeping them intact.

- **It is controlled by the participant:** It follows the lead of the participant. Allow the interviewee to determine how he or she will respond, while you pay attention to the key questions of the research project. The goal is to give the participants a lot of room to express themselves and go into depth about their views, perceptions, and knowledge. Make use of good interviewing techniques to arrive at your answers, like listening actively, using prompts, and asking interviewees to tell you more about a response.

- **The interviewee's responses have depth:** Simple yes or no answers are not adequate in an in-depth interview. Ask your questions in such a way that the respondent offers rich, complex answers. This can be achieved by asking good open-ended questions. A closed question only has a yes or no answer, whereas an open-ended question gives the respondent the opportunity to fill in the content of his or her answer. Probes should be used as much as possible to clarify issues, to understand more and elicit adequate answers from respondents, and to help structure and direct the interview and reduce irrelevant and ambiguous answers.

What are the key questions of the research project?

The key questions of this research project are listed below and should guide your interviews. Read them as often as you can so that they inform what you look for as you do participant observation, what you listen for as you conduct interviews, and what you write down as you make notes.

The questions are **not** a questionnaire and should not be administered as such. Phrase the questions in the best way possible for your interviewees to understand them and be able to offer details.

- How do local people understand:
  - What is childhood and children's development? Researchers should be aware that a response could, to a certain extent, focus mainly on boys. They should therefore try to probe deeper by asking what childhood is for boys as opposed to girls and how they develop differently. For example, some communities may not see menstruating girls as children and could have a different set of expectations and rules for this group. The same can happen for a well-developed 12-year-old boy.

- What are girls' and boys' normal activities, roles, and responsibilities? What can, and cannot, boys and girls do? What are the taboos? Do boys and girls start working at the same age? Are the time and location for recreation the same?

- What are the main child protection risks or sources of harm to children?

- What processes or mechanisms are used by families or communities to support children who have been affected by various protection threats? What are the outcomes of those mechanisms, and how satisfactory are the outcomes in the eyes of different stakeholders?

- How do child protection risks vary by gender?

- Whom do girls or boys turn to for help when protection threat X arises?

- Who are the natural helpers and what networks do they have? Attention needs to be paid to the make-up of these natural helpers. Are they mainly men or women? How did they come to occupy such a position in the community? How many women are in the decision-making structures in the community?

- What are the indigenous, "traditional" mechanisms of protection and how are they regarded by different groups?

- Apart from indigenous mechanisms, what groups or structures (e.g., Child Welfare Committees or CBCPMs facilitated by NGOs) exist in communities and/or chiefdoms? How are they perceived by local people? What are their roles, responsibilities, and functionalities? Be aware that the gender of the service provider could affect how they are perceived in the community and even how they provide services to boys and girls.

- How are very sensitive/complex issues addressed?

    - Who has or does not have access to existing protection mechanisms (e.g., do the poorest of the poor or orphans or people not related to the chief have access?) Also look out for women stigmatized as "witches," "free women," and those with "bad luck." Their children may be protected differently.

- What do government and NGO actors see as their main roles and responsibilities in regard to CBCPMs?

- What are the linkages of community mechanisms with the national child protection system? How do communities perceive government mechanisms such as FSUs?

- What are the gaps in those linkages?

- How should those gaps be bridged, and by who?

Planning for and carrying out an in-depth interview

The following sections will give you some tips and tools on carrying out an in-depth interview. It is structured as a "before," "during," and "after" guide.

<u>Before the interview</u>

It is recommended that you spend the first week in your assigned village doing participant observation, facilitating group sessions, doing body mapping, and constructing timelines, and the second week conducting interviews and functional network analyses.

During your first week of participant observation, you will meet the people of the village in different settings. Begin to think about and schedule your in-depth interviews.

- While you are conducting participant observation, you will have plenty of casual and open conversations with your informants. Pay attention to those children, youths and adults who will be good candidates for in-depth interviews. Choose them so that you will have a range of perspectives from different social groups: men, women, boys, girls, officials, traders, school teachers, etc. They may be members of community groups or they may be grandmothers or grandfathers who are knowledgeable about the goings-on in the village.

- Schedule your interview. Explain the purpose of the interview to the interviewee and why you have chosen to speak with them. Tell them approximately how long the interview will last.

- Also pay attention to work schedules for both men and women in the community and work around their schedules. Since a majority of women work around the clock, go to the farm, and then come back home to prepare the evening meal, it will be useful to observe when they are a bit relaxed and to enquire about what they see as free time.

<u>What to bring to an interview</u>

- **Recorder**

    - Before you arrive for your interview, always check your digital or tape recorder to make sure that the batteries are charged. You do not want to run out of power during a very interesting or important conversation.

    - Check the recorder to be sure it is functional. If it is being reused, make sure you have finished writing the notes from the previous recorded interview.

- **Notebook and pen**

    - Take running notes during your interview. Write down your interviewees' responses verbatim as much as you can. The recording will help you fill in the blanks later. Running notes will save you time as you write up the transcript from the interview.

- Do not let time elapse between the time of the interview and the write up of the notes or transcript.

Beginning the interview

- **Find a comfortable place to talk** Make sure that you and your interviewee are in a quiet place, or in an environment in which you are both comfortable and can speak without fear or hesitation. Avoid secluded places.

The first tasks of an interviewer are ethical. Following the ethical protocol will help to build trust between you and the interviewee.

- **Informed consent:** Inform the interviewee about the purpose of the research. Ensure that the interviewee understands the aims and limits of the project. Get oral or written consent from the interviewee to participate in the research.

- **Confidentiality:** Inform the interviewee that anything shared during the conversation will be kept confidential and be used only to meet the goals of the research project.

- **Permission to record:** Some interviewees may be uncomfortable about being recorded. This is not common in Sierra Leone but nevertheless ask the interviewee's permission to record the interview.

During the Interview

You will be able to have successful in-depth interviews if you use good and effective interviewing techniques.

The most effective techniques are **active listening skills** and **knowing how to ask good questions,** particularly the use of probing questions.

- **Active listening skills** An active listener is an alert and engaged listener who communicates interest in and respect for what an interviewee has to say. Active listening also communicates empathy for the interviewee and builds a relationship of trust.

    - Be attentive and alert—While the participant is speaking, use verbal and non-verbal expressions of attention that are appropriate for the setting. In krio, you can intermittently say "yes" or "ehn henh"; use what is linguistically and culturally appropriate. Non-verbal cues often use body-language. This could be expressed by nodding your head, having an open facial expression and not crossing your arms.

- Use silence to listen effectively—Do not overdo the expressions of attention. Silence can allow space into the communication and give the interviewees room to hear themselves and think more clearly. While being silent, remain engaged and attentive by using open and friendly facial expressions and body language.

- Do not interrupt the flow of your interviewee's responses—Allow the speaker to get to the end of his or her sentence. Jot down an interesting or important question and ask it later.

- Keep your opinions and personal stories to yourself—Sharing your personal opinions takes the focus from the research project and the goals of ethnographic enquiry, which are the views and opinions of the people who live in Bombali and Moyamba on childhood and the threats to children's safety.

- **Asking good questions**

  - Ask open-ended questions—Open-ended questions do not have yes or no answers. An example of a closed question is: "Are girls more likely to work in the kitchen than boys?" The answer here is yes. An open-ended question would be: "How do the responsibilities of girls and boys differ in the home?"

  - Do not ask leading questions—Leading questions contain the answers in the question and do not give the respondent a choice in the answer. For example, a leading question would ask: "Is child-beating one of the ways in which children's well-being is threatened in the village?" A non-leading question would be: "Tell me about one of main child protection risks in this village?"

  - Ask probing or exploratory questions—Probing questions are useful when you are looking for information that has been left out of a respondent's answer. For example, you can say "Tell me more about that", "Anything else?", or "What do you mean?"

  - Use prompts—They can communicate that you are listening, like the non-verbal "enh henh" or a more verbal prompt like "Really?" They can also help the interviewee to continue their train of thought and deepen it. What are the prompts of the language you will be using?

  - Use repetition as a form of feedback—Repeat the last word or phrase of interviewee's answer. This can encourage them to say more, and it indicates that you are listening.

  - Don't editorialize—Do not add comments to the key questions that express your opinion about them. For example, an editorial question would say: "It must be very difficult for children in foster care who are regularly punished. Is foster care a child protection risk?" This is also a leading question.

  - Ask naive questions—Naïve questions allow you to set aside your prior assumptions about the subject you are researching. They are basic questions that can lead to in-depth answers with information you may not get otherwise. For example, a naive question is: “What makes someone a child?”

Working with difficult informers

- Be patient—The most effective response to difficult interviewees is patience. Be patient and communicate empathy.
- Show respect for their time and opinions even if you disagree with them.
- What are their concerns?—If their concerns are about the project itself, give them some room to discuss their concerns about the research project. It could be helpful information.
- If an interviewee is resistant or unresponsive—Ask them questions about their lives or about another topic that is easier to talk about. Then return to the research questions.

Other things to consider

- When women/girls or men/boys cannot speak freely in front of the other group, arrange for separate interviews and, if necessary, arrange for each group to be interviewed by a researcher of the same sex/gender.
- Be sensitive to other factors that may influence gender relations in the families and communities—lack of services, migration, politics, etc.
- Be aware of the power dynamics between researcher and participant, even if of the same gender and ethnic group.

Concluding the interview

- Thank your interviewee for their time
- Ask them if you can follow up with them if you need to make clarifications.

Discussion Guide on Protection Risks and Functional Responses[7]

Purpose

To identify the main protection risks to children, the networks that support affected children, the outcomes of various channels of help and action, and the level of satisfaction with the networks and outcomes by children, parents, community.

Participants

Multiple groups of seven to ten participants for each group with attention to diversity (for example, different economic status, including the poorest of the poor; different social status, those living in difficult circumstances, etc**.**

Separate groups are needed for each of the following categories, ideally with women interviewing women and men interviewing men:

- Adult men
- Adult women
- Young women (14–19 years old)
- Young men (14–19 years old)

Time: 2 hours

- Introduction: (15 minutes)
- Activity 1: (45 minutes)
- Break, (10 minutes)

[7] With permission, this discussion guide draws extensively on a guide developed by Child Frontiers as part of their research on mapping national child protection systems in West Africa.

- Activity 2: (45 minutes)
- Wrap-up and thank group: (5 minutes)

Materials

- 1 facilitator
- 1 note taker with notepad and pens
- Voice recorder (test battery beforehand)
- Spare battery for voice recorder
- 10 different items (stone, stick, cup, etc.)

I. Introduction (by David Lamin, facilitator of the group discussion):

Note: It can be useful to pause briefly during the introduction to check that participants understand what is being said.

Good morning. I am very happy to see all of you. Your attendance shows how much you care about your children. And, as I had said earlier, this meeting is about children's welfare, and we'll be discussing your children—not other children, but your children.

My name is David Lamin. I am a researcher, and I work for the Columbia Group. The full name of the group is The Columbia Group for Children in Adversity. This organization works on behalf of children who are in situations that pose a threat to their wellbeing and safety. But Columbia Group itself is conducting this research on behalf of an interagency group made up of other NGOs and UN organizations that work on behalf of children. They collaborated to form the interagency group, which does research to learn which interventions can best help children, because without the right information it is not possible to address someone's need. It's like going to the doctor. If you just say to your doctor, "I am sick," he or she will not know which medicine to use to treat you. He or she first needs to know the precise nature of your illness to be able to give you the right medication. Working for children's safety is the same. If we do not have the right knowledge, we will not know what to do.

So, as I said before, my name is David Lamin and I am a researcher with the Columbia Group. We work on children's issues and want to learn how communities, how villages and towns, ensure their children's wellbeing, what they do when their children are in trouble, how they support their children's development. This is the goal of our research. The research is not limited only to your village. It is being carried out in three countries, and Sierra Leone was chosen as one of the countries to conduct this research. And in Sierra Leone, the Group chose two districts: Moyamba District in the South and Bombali District in the North. Here in Bombali District, we chose two chiefdoms: Magbaiamba Ndowahun and Libeisaygahun. We also chose *two chiefdoms in Moyamba. We chose Dasse and Kongbora. Within the chiefdoms, we also chose three villages, because we cannot go everywhere. And your village was one of the villages we chose for the research.*

But before we begin the research itself and begin to talk to you about how you care for your children, first, I want to tell you something very important. I want to request your permission to talk to you, to ask you questions, and record your answers. If there is anyone here who would prefer to not take part in this discussion, you are free to say that you would not like to participate. And you are free to leave.

In addition, everything that we will say to each other is confidential and will stay between us. We are not going to take anything that is said here and share it with anyone else. The people who will get a report of our discussions are the ones who will pick it apart and tell us what is good, what is helpful, or will tell us this is what happened, and that is what happened. In English, they are called analysts. And when we have collected information that will tell us how to better help children, we will not identify the speakers in our report and say Mr. Joe said this, or Mr. Y said that, whether we use it to teach or to inform others. The report will be about Sierra Leone and how people respond when things go wrong or when the wellbeing of children is at risk; these are the ways that people respond. This is the kind of research we do. It is confidential. So, I'm going to ask each of you for permission before we continue with our discussion. So, Mr. George, what do you say? Okay, Mr. George has agreed. Mr. Sesay has agreed. Everyone has agreed. So, we can now continue with our discussion because everyone has given their consent.

But again, before we start, it will be good for us to get to know each other. We cannot be here for an hour or an hour-and-a-half, and we don't get to know each other, because we are one in this work on behalf of children. So, as I told you before, my name is Mr. David Lamin. Please introduce yourselves so I can get to know you. Okay, everyone has now introduced themselves. Thank you.

Now, we are going to begin the discussion we came here for about children and their wellbeing. Now, we all know that how you see it here may perhaps be different from how it is seen in Freetown. That is why, today, we are going to discuss what happens here, in your village, where we are now. Not what someone from Freetown may have seen, but what happens here that we know, that we see. That is what we want to discuss. We want to talk about the things that hurt children; we want to talk about the things that hurt their development. We want to talk about the things that happen to children that make them unhappy, that they do not like to experience. We want to discuss the things that happen to children that make even you. their mothers, unhappy. We want to talk about the things that make you as a community come together to discuss what you want for your children. So, all of those things that are not good for your children, that make you unhappy, that make your children unhappy, these are the things we want to discuss today.

But before we begin our discussion, I want you to know a couple of things. Everyone here is free to express themselves, and whatever anyone says it right. No one here is wrong, anything anyone says is right. That is the first thing. We should respect the views of everyone here because everyone is right, no one is wrong. Secondly, as I said, it is a good thing for everyone to express themselves. But if we all talk at the same time, my colleague who is taking notes here will not be able to write everything down. He will miss some of what you say. I myself will not be able to *listen to all of you, and I will miss what you say. So please, as we speak, let us speak through the chairperson. Let us ask the chairperson, who is me, and we will call on who wants to speak. That way, the discussion will go well, and everyone will have a chance to speak, and everyone will get a chance to hear what their neighbor is saying. Please, don't be shy, I want all of us to be comfortable, and for all of us to speak freely. Whatever we say here will remain here.*

II. Activity One: Listing and ranking of child protection risks (45 minutes)

Steps:

1. To provide a framework for the discussion, provide an explanation such as that below about the first part of the discussion. Note that this is not a script to be read—it is best to use a conversational approach:

So let's begin. The things that make children unhappy, that affects their development, that ruin their ability to be successful, that make us, their mothers, unhappy on their behalf. We don't want to talk about poverty, because poverty affects all of us. And we can talk about it today, or even for a month, and we can go on talking. So, let us put poverty aside for now. And the problems with health care and hospitals, we know that that is a problem everywhere. We, in fact, know that there aren't enough hospitals for all the areas that need them. So, please let us put that issue aside for now. There are other things, like the okadas (motorcycle taxis) that hit children, we know that happens. So, let us put that one aside, as well. Let us not discuss it, because those things are things that are out of our control. Those are things that people who do not live in this village are responsible for. They have not done what they should do. But let us look at our children, at the things that we do and that we do not do that make them unhappy, that affects their development. Those are the things we want to discuss. So, who wants to start? Who wants to be the first person to tell us about one of the problems?

2. Ask participants: *What makes children feel unsafe or insecure*?

3. Ask participants: *Are there additional problems that children experience:*

- *At home?*
- *At school?*
- *In the community?*

4. Continue until at least five risks have been identified. Let the process continue up to ten if the group is very energetic and then explain that we need to close this discussion now and decide which are the biggest or most important risks to children in their village/area.

5. Identify objects: with the list of problems/threats/risks in hand, have the group identify for each problem an object that represents the problem (for example, a stick might represent a problem such as severe physical punishment). Place it on the floor/ground so that all can see it. As risks are named and objects identified, be sure that the objects are spread out to allow room

for the subsequent voting/ranking process. The notetaker should record which object goes with which problem.

6. Ranking: explain to the participants that they will be using pebbles to rank the objects/issues in order of importance. Remind everyone what risk each item represents.

Give each participant one pebble (or a locally available item such as a seed) and ask them to place the pebble in the basket (or circle) by the object they think is **most** important. The recorder should record how many pebbles have been placed in each basket or circle. If participants talk with each other or speak out loud, it is useful to record what they say since it can be revealing.

Identify the issue with the most votes, and report this to the participants. Then set the object representing the top ranked issue aside, and return all the pebbles to the participants (one per person). As this occurs, be sure to listen to (and record) what participants say, since some will likely make useful statements about why they see a particular issue as most important. You can also probe by asking out of curiosity why some people voted for a particular issue/object.

Ask participants to repeat the process at least two more times, with each person placing their pebble beside the remaining objects/issues that they think is most important. Continue to record how many pebbles have been placed in each basket for each object.

7. Announce the outcomes for the top-ranked issue, the second ranked issue, the third ranked issue, etc. At the end, there should be at least three issues ranked as most important/biggest problem, second most important and third most important. If ties occur in voting, there should be another vote which involves only the tied items.

Short break (optional): icebreaker and small refreshment (if available). Note that although participants are not asked to talk about child protection issues during the break, they may do so spontaneously. It is valuable to listen and capture through notes what people say.

III. Activity Two (45 minutes)

This activity provides a broad, preliminary mapping of the functional networks for support/action/services available to children and the outcomes and levels of perceived satisfaction associated with each line of support/action/service. For each of the three top-ranked child protection threats identified in Activity 1 above:

The focus will be on:

- which steps would be taken;
- the people who would be involved in making the decision;
- the likely outcomes of the response;
- the level of satisfaction of different stakeholders with those outcomes;

- which other alternatives might have been available and why they were not utilized;
- recommendations for improvement of supports for children exposed to the three top-ranked child protection threats that had been identified in Activity 1 above.

Steps:

1. Tell participants: *I'd like to ask you what would happen if a child were affected by one of the three main risks/sources of harm you identified. Let's take your first ranked item, which was—[NAME the top ranked item]. Suppose this had happened to an 8-year-old girl in your village.* (Or if the risk is specifically related to a boy, the example would be a boy).

2. Ask the group the following questions:

> *Q: Who can a child who has been affected by this issue go to for help? Who is told about the issue?*

Make a list of all the people and places that may be told about the issue or that may respond. Ask which of these is MOST TYPICAL, and explore this one by asking the following questions:

> *Q: What are the key steps?*
>
> Probes:
>
> - Describe what would happen step by step.
> - Who would the child go to for help?
> - What would the family do?
> - What would the community do?
> - Who would be involved?
> - What supports would actually be provided for the child and family?

> *Q: Who would be the key decision-makers about what would happen?*
>
> Probes:
>
> - Who would be involved?
> - What role would be played by people/services outside the community?
> - Who makes the decision?

Q: What would be the likely outcomes of the responses to the problem?

Probes:

- What would likely happen to the child?
- What would likely happen to the family?
- What would likely happen to the perpetrator?

Q: How satisfied with this outcome would various stakeholders (child, family, community, people outside the community) be with this outcome? Why?

On the same problem issue, repeat for one other person or place in order to trade out a second pathway, repeating the questions above.

Then also ask:

Q: What other options did the child/family have?

Probes:

- Describe what would happen step by step.
- Who would the child go to for help?
- What would the family do?
- What would the community do? Who would be involved?
- Who would be the key decision-makers about what would happen?
- What role would be played by people/services outside the community?

Q: Why wouldn't other named options be used?

Probes:

- Would children, families, community leaders know about this option?
- Why or why not?

- Would it be viewed as less safe? Less appropriate? Less effective? Please explain why.

Q: Is there a legal responsibility related to this problem?

Probes:

- Who would it be reported to? (For example, Police? Family Support Unit? Social workers?)
- Who would report this problem?
- What would be the response of the agency/person it was reported to?
- If not reported, why not?

Q: What recommendations would you make to better ensure that the child is protected from harm and that the risks of the harm re-occurring are minimized?

Probes:

- What might have made it easier for the child to seek or access help?
- How could the help/services that the child received have been made better?
- Who else should have been involved in the process? What could be changed so that they become involved in the future?
- Is the risk that the harm will re-occur still present? If so, what could be done to minimize this risk?

3. Repeat the process, focusing on the second-ranked item (if there is time and participants seem engaged).

4. Repeat the process, focusing on the third-ranked item (if there is time and participants seem engaged).

Don’t worry if you run out of time since other risks and responses can be explored in the in-depth interviews.

5. **Conclude** by thanking the participants for their time.

Working Guide on Learning About the "Typical" Childhood Development of Girls and Boys in Sierra Leone

NOTE: This tool focuses on "typical" child development as a first step towards understanding childhood in Sierra Leone. However, it would be useful to apply this tool multiple times, asking about different children such as children with disabilities, children from very poor families, etc. This could provide a richer, more differentiated view of childhood as it pertains to children who are positioned in very different ways.

Purpose

In order to learn about community-based child protection mechanisms, it is essential to gain an understanding of how people understand children and childhood, the usual course of children's development, and children's activities and roles at different stages. Rather than impose outsiders' views on these issues, it is useful to take an approach that elicits local understandings of childhood and child development.

The purpose of this timeline method is:

- To understand the "typical course of development" for boys and girls by learning at what age, and in what order stages of development and markers of development usually occur
- To understand when childhood ends and what marks the transition to adulthood
- To understand the typical roles and activities of children at different stages of development

The method uses a narrative methodology that invites informants to tell the life story of a fictitious girl or boy in their village and sets the stage for discussion and probing questions. It also includes more directed questions that aim to learn about age- and gender-appropriate activities and roles.

Participants

This activity can be conducted with a range of key informants including girls, boys, elders, teachers, religious and community leaders, etc. It is important is to solicit this information from a diverse range of informants—young, old, male, female, leaders, community members, those particularly knowledgeable about children, etc.

There is no clear sample size for this activity, which should be conducted until saturation is reached, that is, until the stories and discussions do not elicit any new information.

Materials

- A notebook and pen to record the time line and the respondent's narrative.

- Recommended: a piece of paper and markers to draw an actual timeline with the respondent. These items are listed as recommended because in some cases a respondent may feel more comfortable telling the story of typical childhood development verbally, and in other cases respondents may enjoy having a physical, tangible timeline to chart the development of the child whose story they are telling. The interviewer should monitor whether the material aids are helpful to the participant and decide whether to use narration plus visual timeline or narrative methods only.

Length of activity

Approximately 45–60 minutes.

Process

This activity is conducted with individual respondents, and it occurs in two parts. The first part involves learning about the normal life and development of a typical girl, and the second part involves learning about the normal life and development of a typical boy. In each part, you will initially work with respondents to develop a timeline and then ask questions about the activities of roles of a typical girl or boy at different ages.

Explain to the respondent that you are interested in learning about the childhood and life development of a normal girl and a normal boy from that village. Explain to them that they are going to tell you the story of "Isatu" and "Ibrahim," a made-up girl and a made-up boy, respectively, from their village.

A. Girls' Development

Child development and timeline. Begin with Isatu. Explain that you are interested in knowing about Isatu's life from the time she is born until the time she becomes a woman (i.e., an adult). You are interested in knowing what her life is like, what important events happen along the way, what good things happen to her and what bad things happen to her. Explain to the respondent that they can think of real girls from their village and use parts of their stories to tell the story of Isatu. The real girls that they think about should be neither the very best-off nor the very worst-off girls in the village, but should be "typical" girls.

If you are using the visual timeline to help tell the story of Isatu, take out a piece of paper and draw a long line on the paper. At the left-hand side of the paper, draw a figure and explain that this is the baby Isatu, who has just been born. Or, invite the participant to draw a figure of the baby. Now ask the respondent to tell you the story of baby Isatu.

The respondent may need a bit of help to get started with the story. If the respondent appears confused or does not know where to begin, ask probing questions such as:

- “How is life for this baby when she is first born?”
- “Where does she sleep?”
- “Who takes care of her? *How* does that person/do those people take care of her?”
- “What does she eat?”
- “What is the first important thing that happens in this baby’s life?”

You may also make clear that baby Isatu has not yet been named when she is first born, and probe about how she will acquire her name. This will normally lead respondents to discuss a naming ceremony. If the respondent starts discussing the naming ceremony, it is appropriate to say that these are the types of important events and markers of childhood that we are interested in knowing about.

As the respondent identifies important events—events such as a naming ceremony, going to school, initiation, etc.—ask probing questions about why these are important. This will increase understanding of how local people think of the process of child development.

As the respondent continues telling the story of Isatu, the respondent can continue identifying events and life skills on the timeline. This can be done using pictures or words, and every time an activity or event is described, the interviewer should probe to understand Isatu’s age at the time of the event or activity. This age information should also be included on the timeline.

If the respondent is still having trouble identifying the kinds of information of interest, it may be helpful to stop the narrative and first have the respondent generate a list of events (both good and bad) that happens to most girls in the village (e.g. naming ceremony, begins taking solid foods, begins or helps with household chores, starts school, initiation into *Bondo*, menstruation, etc.). After the list has been generated, the respondent can go back with the interviewer’s help, and place all of the events on the timeline.

When the narrative has been completed, the interviewer should review the timeline with the respondent, checking for any information that has been left out. To identify clearly the transition to adulthood, you should ask the respondent at what point along this timeline Isatu is considered an adult. The respondent may associate this moment with age, or with a certain event such as initiation to *Bondo* or marriage. The interviewer should make sure to record this marker of “end of childhood,” either in the written narrative, or on the timeline itself.

Age-appropriate activities and responsibilities. The next step is to learn about age-appropriate activities, recognizing that people may be uncertain about the actual age of children. Explain that you would now like to learn about Isatu’s normal activities and responsibilities at three different times.

Ask:

(1) Just before Isatu became of age to go to school (around age 5 years), what were her usual activities each day?

- What did she do after waking up?
- What did she do later in the morning?
- What did she do in the afternoon?
- What did she do in the evening?
- What were Isatu's responsibilities? For example, what did her family expect her to do?

(2) When Isatu had gone to school for three years (around age 9 years), what were her usual activities each day?

- What did she do after waking up?
- What did she do later in the morning?
- What did she do in the afternoon?
- What did she do in the evening?
- What were Isatu's responsibilities? For example, what did her family expect her to do?

(3) Before initiation, after Isatu had begun menstruating (around age 12–13 years), what were her usual activities each day?

- What did she do after waking up?
- What did she do later in the morning?
- What did she do in the afternoon?
- What did she do in the evening?
- What were Isatu's responsibilities? For example, what did her family expect her to do?

B. Boys' Development

Child development and timeline. When Isatu's story is complete, repeat the process, this time asking about Ibrahim. The interviewer may preface this by saying something along the lines of:

> "We know that boys and girls have some similar experiences and some different experiences growing up. Now that you have told us the life story of Isatu, I would like you to tell me about Ibrahim, a typical boy in this village. I would like to understand his life story, and to know what is the same about his childhood and life, and what is different compared with Isatu's."

Repeat the process, collecting details about typical child development for boys in the village until the timeline and/or narrative is complete.

Age-appropriate activities and responsibilities. The next step is to learn about age-appropriate activities, recognizing that people may be uncertain about the actual age of children. Explain that you would now like to learn about Ibrahim's normal activities and responsibilities at three different times.

Ask:

(1) Just before Ibrahim became of age to go to school (around age 5 years), what were his usual activities each day?

- What did he do after waking up?
- What did he do later in the morning?
- What did he do in the afternoon?
- What did he do in the evening?
- What were Ibrahim's responsibilities? For example, what did his family expect him to do?

(2) When Ibrahim had gone to school for three years (around age 9 years), what were his usual activities each day?

- What did he do after waking up?
- What did he do later in the morning?
- What did he do in the afternoon?
- What did he do in the evening?
- What were Ibrahim's responsibilities? For example, what did his family expect him to do?

(3) Before initiation (around age 12–13 years), what were Ibrahim's usual activities each day?

- What did he do after waking up?

- What did he do later in the morning?
- What did he do in the afternoon?
- What did he do in the evening?
- What were Ibrahim's responsibilities? For example, what did his family expect him to do?

Thank the respondent for their time, and make sure to collect and save any timelines that have been created during this process.

Optional: Elders

If there is time and interest, this method can be adapted for elders. Instead of asking an elder key informant to talk about a girl (Isatu) and a boy (Ibrahim), the interviewer may choose to ask about *two* girls or *two* boys—one who is growing up in current times, and one who grew up when the elder was young.

So for example, the interviewer might begin the activity by asking a female elder about Isatu, as usual. Once the respondent completed Isatu's story, the interviewer would now explain that she would like the elder to now tell her the story of Aminata, a typical girl who had grown up before the war (when the respondent was a girl). The interviewer can explain that she is interested in hearing how things were the same or different for Aminata compared with Isatu. Did they experience the same events, stages, etc. and did they have similar responsibilities? Did these events and stages happen at the same age for Isatu and Aminata?

Analysis (for reference only)

When it comes time to analyze the results of the timeline data that has been collected (the analysis is often done by people other than the data collectors), it may be useful to think of the following "types" of data:

- EVENTS, STAGES or CATEGORIES of child development as defined by the community.
- FREQUENCY of times these events, stages, and categories are mentioned by different respondents.
- The AVERAGE AGE at which these events, stages, and categories occur.
- Vivid STATEMENTS that clarify the MEANING of these events, and that justify and contextualize the importance of these events, stages, and categories.

EVENTS, STAGES or CATEGORIES

Make a list of all the events, stages, or categories identified by respondents. Some respondents may have used exactly the same words for events and stages, others may be slightly different, but basically saying the same thing. These can be grouped together. In other cases it will be harder to decide if stages or categories should be grouped together or listed separately. Discussions amongst those who conducted the interviews will be helpful to decide which categories should be put together, and which should kept separate. If the additional optional element is included where a respondent is asked to tell the story of a child pre-war and post-war, it will be important to identify whether events, stages, and categories differ and, if so, how they differ.

FREQUENCY

After you have established the events, stages, events and categories, count the number of times each one was mentioned across all interviews. Using the same categories, you can compare the frequency by different groupings in the same community. For example, do females and males discuss the same events and stages and with the same frequency? Do elders identify certain stages that are not discussed by children? This indicates whether there are similar understandings of childhood development across all members of the community, or whether certain groups have particular insights or particular concerns about certain stages of development. If the optional element is included, frequency of events pre-war and post-war should be examined.

AVERAGE AGE

Similarly, after you have established the events, stages, and categories, you can calculate an average age to understand when these events typically happen in a child's life. As with the frequency, you can analyze whether the average age for certain life events is estimated to be the same when reported by children versus adults, males versus females, etc. If the optional element is included, age of events pre-war and post-war should be examined.

STATEMENTS CLARIFYING MEANING

Arguably the most important part of the analysis, key descriptive statements are both a key source to illustrate the themes identified and prioritized by respondents, and also provide greater insight into the experience and meaning of childhood events and stages. Vivid quotations can “give voice” to the experiences being described and can be used to “tell the story” of child development in Sierra Leone. If the optional element is included, special attention should be paid to how respondents discuss pre-war childhood development and post-war development. Do respondents use different words, phrases or ideas to describe these two time-frames? What is similar about pre and post-war development? What is different?

Key Informant Interview Questions—Chief

Note: A useful way of beginning the interview is to ask, "How is the well-being of children in the community?" This focus on positives can warm up the conversation and also avoids a deficits focus.

Child Protection Issues

- What are the main sources of harm to children in this village/town?
- Are the sources of harm the same or different for girls and boys? Please explain.
- Are the sources of harm the same or different for children of different ages? Please explain.

Child Protection Mechanisms

Traditional mechanisms

- What are the traditional mechanisms/processes for responding to the harms to children you have identified? (Probe in regard to other harms not mentioned.)
- What is your role in the process? What guides your decisions and whom do you consult with?
- How effective are the traditional mechanisms/processes? Please explain or give examples (without names or identifying particular individuals).
- When do you make referrals (what kinds of cases) and to whom (e.g., Family Support Units, FSUs)?

Child Welfare Committee (CWC)

- Does your village/town (or chiefdom) have a Child Welfare Committee?
- Who are the members and how were they selected?
- What are their roles and responsibilities? How are they intended to work?
- What is your involvement with cases handled by the CWCs?
- How well do the CWCs work at present? What challenges do they face?

NGO-facilitated child protection processes, mechanisms, or initiatives

- Are there any international NGOs that work on child protection in your village/town?
- What are their child protection activities?
- If the NGO(s) facilitate child protection mechanisms not called CWCs, ask as above about who participates, roles and responsibilities, the chief's involvement, and effectiveness and challenges.

Government processes or mechanisms and social workers

- How well or poorly enforced are the national laws regarding children's well-being in this village or town?
- Do you and your village/town have access to a government child protection mechanism (e.g., an FSU)? If so, ask:
    - What kinds of cases are referred to them and how (e.g., via referral from the chief, direct contact by the family, etc.)?
    - What are their roles and responsibilities? How are they intended to work?
    - What are your roles and responsibilities with respect to the mechanism?
    - How well does the mechanism actually work? What challenges does it face?
- Does your village have access to a government-trained or employed social worker? If so, ask:
    - How often are they in your village/town?
    - What are their roles and responsibilities, activities?
    - What is your involvement with them?
    - How well do they accomplish their goals? What challenges do they face?

Relations between government and traditional mechanisms of child protection

- At present, what is good about relations between government employed people or mechanisms of child protection and traditional mechanisms and leaders on child protection?
- What gaps or problems are there in the relations or connections between the two?
- As Chief, do you feel well respected and supported by the Government (e.g., by District officers in the Ministry of Social Welfare, by police, by Magistrates)? Please explain.

- What should be done to improve the linkages between traditional mechanisms and government mechanisms of child protection and well-being?

Key Informant Interview Questions—Community Social Worker[8]

Note: A useful way of beginning the interview is to ask, "How is the well-being of children in the community?" This focus on positives can warm up the conversation and also avoids a deficits focus.

Child Protection Issues

- What are the main sources of harm to children in this village/town?
- Are there any harmful traditional practices in the community, including elements of traditional protection and justice mechanisms?
- Are the sources of harm the same or different for girls and boys? Please explain.
- Are the sources of harm the same or different for children of different ages? Please explain.

Social Worker

- What are your main roles and responsibilities as a social worker?
- How have you been trained?
- If you do case management, please describe the process, including referrals.
- How do you connect with or coordinate with community-based child protection mechanisms such as indigenous processes, CWCs, or committees facilitated by external NGOs?

[8] This is not necessarily a government employee since many people who are called social workers at community level have been trained by NGOs and are not employed by the government.

Child Protection Mechanisms

- Please describe the community system or mechanisms of child protection. Ask probing questions about what happens when issue X occurs—who does a child go to for help, what happens next, what are the perceived outcomes, and who is happy or not happy with the outcomes.

- What do you see as the main strengths and weaknesses of the traditional community mechanisms for protecting children?

- What NGO-facilitated or other externally facilitated or supported child protection mechanisms are there in the community? For each, ask:

  - Who are the members and how were they selected?

  - What kind of training or capacity building have the members received?

  - What are their roles and responsibilities? How are they intended to work?

  - When does the Committee or mechanism make referrals and to whom? Please describe the process.

  - What are the strengths and weaknesses of this mechanism? How effective is the mechanism and what challenges does it face?

- How does coordination occur across the various community mechanisms for child protection?

- What are the main gaps in the community system of child protection?

- What should be done to strengthen community-based child protection mechanisms?

Linkages with the National System

- Does this community have access to any government mechanisms/services (e.g., FSUs) that are active on child protection? If so, ask:

  - What kinds of cases are referred to them and how (e.g., via referral from the chief, direct contact by the family, etc.)?

  - What are their roles and responsibilities?

  - How are they intended to work?

  - How do they relate or connect with them?

  - How are they viewed by community members?

- How effective are the mechanisms? What challenges do they face?

- How would you describe the relationship and connections between community-based child protection mechanisms and aspects of the national child protection system such as district workers or services?

- What should be done to strengthen the linkages between community-based child protection mechanisms and the national child protection system?

Key Informant Interview Questions—CWC Member

Child Protection Issues

- What are the main sources of harm to children in this village/town?
- Are the sources of harm the same or different for girls and boys? Please explain.
- Are the sources of harm the same or different for children of different ages? Please explain.

Child Welfare Committee (CWC) and Linkages

- Who are the members and how were they selected?
- What kind of training or capacity building have the members received?
- What are their roles and responsibilities? How are they intended to work?
- When does the CWC make referrals and to whom? Please describe the process.
- How do the CWCs link and coordinate with the chief and traditional mechanisms?
- Are there any international NGOs that work on child protection in your village/town? If so, ask who participates, what are their roles and responsibilities, how are they linked with or involved in the work of the CWC, how effective are they, and what challenges do they face?
- Do people in your village/town have access to any government employees (e.g., Social Workers) or mechanisms (e.g., FSUs) that are active on child protection? If so, ask:
    - What kinds of cases are referred to them and how (e.g., via referral from the chief, direct contact by the family, etc.)?
    - What are their roles and responsibilities?
    - How are they intended to work?
    - What are your roles and responsibilities with respect to the mechanism or worker?
- How effective is the mechanism or worker? What challenges do they face?

Effectiveness and Recommendations

- How well do the CWCs work at present? What challenges do they face?
- What should be done to strengthen them?

Key Informant Interview Questions—NGO Child Protection Workers

Child Protection Issues

- What are the main sources of harm to children in this village/town?
- Are there any harmful traditional practices in the community, including elements of traditional protection and justice mechanisms?
- Are the sources of harm the same or different for girls and boys? Please explain.
- Are the sources of harm the same or different for children of different ages? Please explain.

Child Protection Mechanisms

- Please describe the community system or mechanisms of child protection.
- What do you see as the main strengths and weaknesses of the traditional community mechanisms for protecting children?
- What NGO or other externally facilitated or supported child protection mechanisms are there in the community? For each, ask:
    - Who are the members and how were they selected?
    - What kind of training or capacity building have the members received?
    - What are their roles and responsibilities? How are they intended to work?
    - When does the Committee or mechanism make referrals and to whom? Please describe the process.
    - What are the strengths and weaknesses of this mechanism? How effective is the mechanism and what challenges does it face?
- How does coordination occur across the various community mechanisms for child protection?
- What are the main gaps in the community system of child protection?
    - What should be done to strengthen community-based child protection mechanisms?

Linkages with the National System

- Does this community have access to any government employees (e.g., Social Workers) or mechanisms/services (e.g., FSUs) that are active on child protection? If so, ask:
    - What kinds of cases are referred to them and how (e.g., via referral from the chief, direct contact by the family, etc.)?
    - What are their roles and responsibilities?
    - How are they intended to work?
    - How are they viewed by community members?
    - How effective are they?
- How effective is the mechanism or worker? What challenges do they face?
- How would you describe the relationship and connections between community-based child protection mechanisms and aspects of the national child protection system such as district workers or services?
- What should be done to strengthen the linkages between community-based child protection mechanisms and the national child protection system?

Note-taking Tips and Strategies

In order to take good notes, practice active listening.

Take notes during interviews and group discussions using one of the following strategies:

1. Running notes or a close-to-verbatim record of what has been said
2. Jottings of key words and phrases as the interviewee states them
3. Categories, e.g., (a) main points, (b) related points, (c) examples

What you should listen for:

- **The main points:** When an interviewee responds to a question, what are the main points he or she makes?
- **Key words and phrases:** What are the key words and phrases that express these points?
- **Elaboration:** How does s/he elaborate on those points?
- **Examples:** Does s/he give examples? Does s/he explain what s/he means?
- **Repetition:** Does s/he repeat words? Repeated words and phrases are important.
- **Non-verbal cues:** What is the body language of the respondent? What does his or her body language express?

Verbatim transcript

The document you are expected to prepare for each in-depth interview or group discussion is a verbatim transcript. Use the voice recorder to fill in omissions from your jottings and other notes, checking that you have used the exact terms used by the respondent.

Don'ts

- Don't rephrase the respondent's words in your own words.
- Don't describe the interview.
- Don't omit vivid, concrete statements.

Dos

- Do use the respondent's own words.
- Do use verbatim quotations.
- Do make running notes.
- Do use abbreviations to speed up your writing.

Full Verbatim Transcript Example

I: Mary, I understand that you told me that you had spent time with the RUF in the bush, and that now you're back home in your village of origin. I'd like to learn a little bit more about your situation. What can you tell me about your situation and the kinds of challenges you face?

R: It has been so hard since I came back. I came back, I did not even have a piece of cloth to cover myself, and when I came back, the people they treated me like dogs. My baby is sick, he has malaria, and how can I get the medicine? The health post is far, and I don't even have 10 Leones. How can I take him to the health post? How can I get him to be well? My parents, they reject me and they reject my baby. They call him rebel child. They do not even call him by his name. And then his father, he does not help, he has gone back to the bush, but he comes around and he want me to come with him and to have sex with him. And what can I do, I do not want to be with him. He raped me. He has treated me badly and has beaten me. But what can I do, I need something. Sometimes he has given me money but most times he gives me nothing, he just abuses me. He says bad words. He beats me. There was a man I met on my way back when coming to Freetown, he took me into his house and he gave me food and let me sleep on his bed, but now he went out and one day he was cutting a tree and it fell on him and now he's dead and I have nothing. And I come back and my parents won't even let me eat off the same plate, they throw me in the corner like dogs. They're afraid of me, and what have I done. They say that I'm contaminated... But what have I done, I'm a child, I'm only 16.

I: What does this mean, you cannot eat off the same plate? What does that mean to you?

R: They've rejected me. When they eat, they eat all the best parts and they just throw me in the corner like a dog.

Jottings—an example

- Understand. Time. RUF. Bush. Family. Challenges.
- So hard. Cloth cover. Treat like dog. Baby sick malaria. Health post. 10 Leones. Parents reject me. Baby rebel child. Father wants me sex. Treated badly raped. Sometimes

money. Beats me. Abuses me. Man took me in. house. Food. Sleep in his bed. Man dead. Tree fell. Parents afraid of me. Throw me in corner. Eat off the same plate. Afraid of me. What have I done? I'm a child. Only 16.

- Mean? Same plate
- Rejected me. Throw in corner like a dog.

Below is an unacceptable transcript.

Unacceptable transcript

The interviewer said to the respondent that he understood that she spent time in the bush with the RUF. He asked her, "What are the challenges of your situation?" She said her life has been difficult and she doesn't even have a blanket to cover herself and her baby at night. She looked angry and traumatized. She said she was treated like a dog and her baby was sick with malaria. She could not even take him to the hospital. The respondent said she had been rejected and disowned by her parents and her baby was called a rebel child. The father of her baby was a rebel man and he came around sometimes but he only came to have sex and he treated her badly. She came back to her parents but they said they were afraid she would bring them bad luck. They threw her food in a corner and gave her leftovers. She was treated like a dog. She has been rejected by her parents.

What is wrong with this reconstruction? Identify the following:

- What words are not the respondent's words?
- What important points did the interviewer leave out?
- What facts have been altered?
- What statements are inferences and reflect the analysis of the interviewer?

Body-Mapping Tool

Purpose

To understand the perspectives of children, including younger children, with regard to their likes and dislikes, as well as sources of harm and support for them.

Parents' permission

Before beginning the body mapping activity, get informed consent from the child's parent/guardian before talking with the children. Explain to the parents that you will be playing a game with children that asks them what they like and don't like, to understand children's sources of well-being and distress.

Materials

- Sheet of paper, approximately 1 meter by 1.5 meters (poster paper can be taped together)
- 1 box of crayons

Participants

Approximately ten to twelve children aged 7–12, with separate groups for boys and girls and for younger children (7–9 years) and older children (10–12 years).

Before beginning, get informed consent from the children.

Procedure:

1. Gather the group of children
2. Ask for one child to volunteer to have their body traced
3. Ask for a child to volunteer to trace the outline of the child as s/he lies on the paper
4. Ask the children to color the drawing (give each child one crayon)
5. Ask the children to make up a name for the figure that was drawn

6. Ask the following questions and write all the answers on a separate sheet of paper. Encourage all children to provide an answer. Tally the number of children who reported each answer.

Questions (for each question, point to the part of the body that the question is asking about):

- What do eyes like?
- What do eyes not like?
- What do ears like?
- What do ears not like?
- What do noses like?
- What do noses not like?
- What do mouths like?
- What do mouths not like?
- What does the head like?
- What does the head not like?
- What does the heart like?
- What does the heart not like?
- What does the stomach like?
- What does the stomach not like?
- What do hands like?
- What do hands not like?
- What do feet like?
- What do feet not like?

Thank the children for talking with you!

LIKE	**DISLIKE**

Eyes

What do the Eyes like (also record no. of participants who agree)	What do the Eyes dislike? (also record no. of participants who agree)
____________	____________
____________	____________
____________	____________
____________	____________
____________	____________

Ears

____________	____________
____________	____________
____________	____________
____________	____________
____________	____________

Nose

____________	____________
____________	____________
____________	____________
____________	____________
____________	____________

Mouth

____________	____________

Head

Heart

Stomach

Hands

Feet

Functional Network Matrix

Note: This is developed by a skilled data analyst. There will be one matrix per protection risk, and by the end of the research, the top ranked main protection risks should have been covered.

<table>
<tr><th>Protection Risk</th><th>Questions</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Name of risk:

Victim/survivor (e.g., girls)

Definition: (as understood by participants)

Brief description or example:</td><td>(1) If the child lived in your community, what do you think might happen to him or her?

Please describe what would happen step by step.

Who could the child go to for help?

What would the family do?

What would the community do? Who would be involved? What supports would actually be provided for the child and family?

Who would be the key decision-makers about what would happen?

What role would be played by people/services outside the community?</td></tr>
<tr><td>(2) What would be the likely outcomes of the responses to the problem?

What would likely happen to the child/perpetrator/family?

How satisfied with this outcome would various stakeholders (child, family, community, people outside the community) be with this outcome? Why?</td></tr>
<tr><td>(3) What other option did the child/family have?

[Use same probes as in question (1) above.]

Why wouldn’t this second (or third) option be used?

Would children, families, community leaders know about this option?

Why or why not? Would it be viewed as less safe? Less appropriate? Less effective? Please explain why.

Note: If they have not been mentioned already, ask whether the child/family could have gone to the police, a social worker, or a Child Welfare Committee?</td></tr>
</table>

Context information: (e.g., did participants vary in the definition of this risk; was it gender specific, when and where did it tend to occur, who was the likely perpetrator [e.g., teacher, parent, community member, etc.])	*(4) What recommendations would you make for better ensuring that the child is protected from harm and that the risks of the harm re-occurring are minimized?* What might have made it easier for the child to seek or access help? How could the help/services that the child received have been made better? Who else should have been involved in the process? What could be changed so that they become involved in the future? Is the risk that the harm will re-occur still present? If so, what could be done to minimize this risk?

LNG 5. Feeding Back to Communities the Key Findings from the Learning Phase

Introduction

Rationale

Feeding back to communities information from the learning phase is a priority for reasons having to do with ethics, research accuracy, and practice. The process of feeding back helps to avoid the ethical problems associated with a strictly extractive approach. Demonstrating respect and gratitude to the people of the participating communities, it is part of the learners' accountability to the communities. In addition, the feedback process provides a validation check, as it gives the participants the opportunity to identify possible inaccuracies in the findings or to offer clarifications. By including opportunity for collective reflection, the provision of feedback becomes part of the process of communities taking steps to strengthen child protection.

Objectives

The objectives of the feedback process are to:

- enable communities to learn from the key findings from the learning phase,
- check overall accuracy by asking whether these findings resonate or are inaccurate in particular respects, and
- invite reflection by community people on steps that they could take, without external support, to address harms to children and strengthen support for vulnerable children.

Methodology

The methodology will need to be adapted to the context and one's wider purpose. Also, it may need to be refined on the basis of what is learned in the initial one or two feedback sessions. Overall, though, there are three key steps:

(1) Preparation for the feedback meeting

(2) Presenting the key findings in a participatory manner, with discussion of whether they resonate

(3) Collective reflection on the implications of the findings

Preparation

The first step in preparing to feed back is to meet with the top civil society leaders in the area, thank them for their support during the learning phase, explain the purpose of feeding the information back, and ask their support in doing so. In explaining the purpose of the meeting, it is important to recognize the challenges that children and families face, and affirm how important it is to learn together through dialogue about how to strengthen child protection mechanisms and processes. In this context, feeding information back and discussing the findings is part of the process of learning together what the community can do to strengthen its supports for vulnerable children.

It is important to avoid raising expectations by keeping the focus on what communities are already doing and what additional things they could do themselves to improve community child protection mechanisms and processes. However, if the Chief or community leader says that they would like help in addressing harms to children and one is receptive to helping, it is important to say so and to emphasize that the emphasis should be on what communities themselves do, noting that the role of the outsiders is to facilitate. One could add that this topic deserves further discussion and ask to have a follow-up meeting after the feedback to pursue this topic further.

In this meeting with the Chief or top leaders, it is useful to ask about when and where the meeting should be held and also about what arrangements could be made for food. This is respectful because it helps to schedule the meeting at a time and place where many people can participate. Typically, the Chief or other leaders can identify and offer without charge the space where the meeting should take place. To reciprocate, it can be useful to plan to provide food for the meeting, especially since participants may have to take time off from their business or farming in order to participate in the meeting. Usually, the Chief or the community organizes the food, with the outsiders paying the food costs and helping to pay the travel costs of people who will need external transport in order to participate in the meeting. This reciprocal arrangement helps to build a sense of local ownership without overburdening the community.

A full community meeting can be useful. However, it can also be useful to have a somewhat smaller meeting to allow greater discussion. In some contexts, it can be helpful to cap the meeting at under 50 participants and make sure that the invitees include people who are positioned in very different ways and with attention to issues such as gender, age, religious orientation, etc. It is critical to avoid a situation in which the participants are mainly the family and friends of the Chief.

At community level, the participants would include a mixture of leaders (e.g., Chief, elders, women's group leader, religious leader, teachers, youth group leader, leaders of important committees, etc., and everyday people, including girls, boys, women, and men. Ideally, it will include also people who are not part of the community elite and who may be marginalized in important respects (e.g., out-of-school children). Particularly if one's aim is to help strengthen the wider child protection system, it is valuable to invite formal stakeholders. These could include district- or province-level social workers, health or education workers, Child Welfare Committee members, NGO child protection workers in the area, and city-level staff who help to oversee child protection.

Feeding back on the key findings

Typically, the meeting begins with prayers as are appropriate to the local context. Following a welcome and greeting by the Chief or leader, the facilitator (or mentor) greets people and puts them at their ease by saying that this is a "family meeting" and that "everyone should speak—man, woman, big, small." Out of respect, the facilitator may add that "You know more than we do about children. You are grandmothers, aunties, mothers, sisters; you know more since you live with children." This opening is consistent with the spirit of the learning, namely, that we had come to the community as students who seek to learn from local people. Also, this opening signals that the focus of this meeting is the community, not the outside learners.

The facilitator then thanks the Chief and the people for coming, thanking also all the people who had taken time to teach us about the good things the community does for its children. The facilitator also reminds everyone that "we are a community" and can speak openly with each other, and everyone's view is welcome. The facilitator then tells everyone that he wants to hear people's views about children again today and will then share what the full community had taught us during the learning. The facilitator could add that it is always useful to check to make sure that we heard you correctly and our findings in fact reflect local people's views.

To feed findings back in a participatory manner, the facilitator then asks the group some of the same questions that had been asked during the learning session, such as: "Who is a child?", "What are some of the main harms to children here?", and "What happens when those harms occur?" If participants say things or ask questions that do not relate to these questions, the facilitator respectfully puts them on the "parking lot," recording them so people can discuss them later. Most participants see this as a respectful way of keeping on subject and not digressing onto topics such as farming, recent government actions, or other topics that do not relate directly to children and the learning phase results.

The skilled facilitator works through each question fully before moving to the next, asking probing questions as they go. For example, if in response to the question, "Who is a child", someone says "A child is someone who cannot do things for himself—he depends on parents",

the facilitator could ask "What do others think—is that what a child is?" If several people affirm this view, the facilitator could add that "This too is what the full community told us in the learning—the child is someone who is dependent." The facilitator could then ask "What other things tell you someone is a child?" Other aspects such as age or doing children's things, not engaged in sex, etc. might come up. For each of these, the facilitator probes and then describes the relevant result from the learning. Conducted in a lively back-and-forth exchange with a chant-like rhythm, this approach is highly engaging.

The facilitator also probes in regard to how similar are the learning findings with what the meeting participants just said, and any discrepancies could be discussed. Of course, some divergence could occur owing to the fact that the learning engaged with the full community, whereas only a subset of people, including people who are trained in international child protection, are in the meeting. Nevertheless, it is possible that something new such as "child selling" will come up even though it did not come up during the learning phase. This becomes an opportunity for asking probing questions aimed at learning more about when, where, how, and why this happens, how widespread it is, what people do when they learn a child has been sold, etc. This information could be added to an addendum of the learning report or, better yet, could trigger some focused learning following the meeting in order to learn more fully about the issue.

Reflection on the implications of the findings

The meeting is also intended to be a reflective space that enables village people to explore what steps they could take on their own to help prevent or respond to particular harms to children. To some extent, this collective reflection might arise spontaneously, without prompting by the facilitator. For example, in the discussion of harms to children, people sometimes become impassioned about a particular issue and ask emphatically "What are *we* going to do about this problem?" This can be something of a magic moment that stirs the fires of collective empowerment and dialogue that could lead to community action. The skilled facilitator would likely let this discussion run long enough to help it gain traction and to affirm its importance. At the same time, the facilitator would likely point out that this question is so important that later in the meeting, we will have time to explore that question fully. The facilitator would likely add that it will be useful to reflect on what we should do when we have all the issues before us. Following the discussion of all the issues, the facilitator can then help the group to revisit its question: "What can we do?" to address the harms to children that have been raised. It is important to add that this is the first part of a longer discussion and that there is no need today to rush into final decisions, as there is a need to have a fuller discussion with the entire community.

The second way for the discussion to turn toward what communities could do to address the harms to children is for the facilitator to ask a question such as: "In regard to any of the harms that you just discussed, are there steps that the community could take, without outside help, to help address those needs? How could this be done?" Here, too, it is important to remind the participants that this is only the beginning of a longer discussion. To avoid raising expectations respectively, it is crucial to focus the discussion on what people can do without the support of outside agencies.

However the discussion about implications begins, the facilitator should promote an inclusive discussion by encouraging different people, including children, to speak. Also, the facilitator should ask questions that invite thinking about different options or ways of possibly addressing a particular harm to children. The discussion should close with a sincere thanks to the participants and by expressing one's hope that these discussions will continue with the entire community.

If the question arises whether the learning group or the facilitator will continue working with the community, it is best to answer honestly but in a way that keeps the focus on the community and does not raise expectations too much. For example, one could say that we will be discussing some possible collaboration with the Chief in the days ahead. One could add that if the community wants us to stay involved, we would likely have a small role since the focus is on what communities themselves can do. It will not be like a large, international NGO coming in with lots of money. It would be more like us helping the community to do more of the thing it already does a lot on—caring for its vulnerable children.

Do No Harm considerations

Various Do No Harm issues should be managed as part of this feeding back process. Beyond the issue of raised expectations that was discussed above, there may be breaches of confidentiality that are harmful in themselves and that can stimulate gossip. During the discussions, if someone said “Yes, that problem happens here as just yesterday Ibrahim over there beat his son,” it would be crucial to intervene and explain that we are not here to discuss particular cases or individuals but want to learn and discuss wider practices in this area. It may also be useful to encourage people to engage in a dialogue process among themselves about how they can work collectively, without blaming or accusation, to care more effectively for their children. This problem-solving orientation should inform the discussions throughout.

SECTION 4:
MANAGEMENT (MGM) TOOLS

Section 4: Note to Users

The tools in this section invite managers and other users to reflect critically on their agency's approach to engaging with communities and to consider a more community-led approach.

It also recognizes that many managers will have a host of practical questions about things such as qualities to look for in facilitators, the phases of engaging with communities, and the kinds of benchmarks one can use to tell whether one is on a productive track, among others.

Recognizing that there are no "final" or universal answers to these questions, the tools in this section seek to give illustrative examples that stir the imagination and invite one to think how it might go in a particular context.

Managers also may find it useful to have a more in-depth look at an example of community-led work, together with tools that were used to support it. For this reason, this section includes a case study from Sierra Leone and some of the tools used as part of the community-led work.

It is important to recognize, though, that there is no one-size-fits-all in regard to community-led approaches. The Sierra Leone example and tools are best seen as illustrations and should not be seen as prescriptions for how to do community-led work.

MGM 1. Questions for Reflection by Managers and Agencies

Enabling community-led work is not just a different approach to child protection but rather a transformational one. As Chapter 3 of the accompanying Guide points out, we first have to change ourselves and our agencies before we are in a good position to take a community-led approach. Each agency has its own organizational culture and modalities of change.

Nevertheless, one of the best pathways toward change is collective reflection, which involves an honest stock taking of our approach to engaging with communities, an admission of our current limitations as well as strengths, and openness to change.

The box below presents questions to begin the process of agency reflection and change. It is suggested that managers of child protection teams, groups of child protection workers, or both, meet in a quiet place with few distractions to discuss these questions. Or, recognizing that there is no universal recipe for organizational change, you may want to start by exploring a particular issue (e.g., how to achieve sustainability) that currently galvanizes much discussion within your agency, examining how that issue relates to how one engages with communities.

Questions for Group Reflection Within Your Agency

- What does my agency get out of presenting itself as an expert on child protection and describing itself as using the latest, state-of-the-art interventions?
- How are my agency's approach and work with communities respectful and humble? How are they less than respectful and humble?
- How does my agency view communities? As "Well-intentioned but uneducated and saddled with backward beliefs and practices that harm children"? Or does the agency see them more as agents who already do quite a lot to help children?
- How trustful is my agency of community processes for supporting vulnerable children?
- How willing is my agency to put power for decision-making in the hands of communities?
- How does my agency benefit through the use of logframes and timetables, most of which are predetermined? How does this affect community power?
- Communities sometimes tell us what they think we want to hear. Sometimes we talk mainly with people in the community who like partnering with outside NGOs. If we could get beyond these biases and enable people to speak freely, how do you think community people see your agency and its projects?

A valuable element of the discussion is to follow one's curiosity, as good questions and discussions tend to awaken other important questions. One need not feel overwhelmed by the proliferation of questions, as reflection itself is valuable. Also, it is unproductive to press for immediate, easy answers, which tend to fall apart in the face of the complexities associated with child protection work. Habits of reflection and open discussion need to find a home in one's agency if it is to support facilitators and enable communities to develop their own solutions.

MGM 2. The Sierra Leone Case Study: Community-led Child Protection and Bottom-Up System Strengthening

Note: Community-led child protection work is highly contextual, and there is no single "best way" of doing it. This case study is intended to be illustrative rather than prescriptive.

Following up on a global review of community-based child protection mechanisms[9], a group of NGOs, UN agencies, and donors formed the Interagency Learning Initiative on Community-Based Child Protection Mechanisms and Child Protection Systems in 2010. Save the Children coordinates its global Reference Group, and the Child resilience Alliance (formerly the Columbia Group for Children in Adversity) serves as the technical arm of the Interagency Learning Initiative. Through a consultative process, a decision was taken to develop and test the effectiveness of community-owned and driven work on child protection as an alternative to the dominant, top-down approach. A decision was also taken to investigate community-led approaches in two different regions of sub-Saharan Africa—West Africa and East and Southern Africa, respectively. Primary among the criteria for the selection of a specific country to work in within each region was the willingness of UNICEF to host and support the action research. The two countries selected were Sierra Leone and Kenya, respectively. The example given here is of the work in Sierra Leone, but the work in both countries is described on the electronic arm of the Learning Initiative—the Child Protection Exchange (www.childprotectionforum.org).

The Sierra Leone Context

Sierra Leone, a West African nation of approximately six million people, is one of the poorest countries in the world. Even before the Ebola crisis of 2014–2015, Sierra Leone ranked near the bottom on the Human Development Index. The average life expectancy was 46/47 years, and the under-five-years' mortality rate was 182 out of 1,000. The population of Sierra Leone has a predominantly rural, agricultural mode of living. Formally, Sierra Leone is led by an elected President and Parliament. Yet many Sierra Leoneans view their main leader as their Paramount Chief, who oversees each of Sierra Leone's 149 Chiefdoms and is viewed as the "keeper of the land."

[9] Wessells, M. (2009). *What are we learning about protecting children in the community? An inter-agency review of evidence on community-based child protection mechanisms*. London, UK: Save the Children.

Sierra Leone endured a brutal, 11-year armed conflict (1990–2001) that was infamous for its atrocities, some of which had been committed by children.[10] The war displaced approximately one third of the population and created or worsened child protection risks such as exposure to violence, family separation, sexual exploitation and violence, mental health and psychosocial distress, disability, and child recruitment, among many others. Sierra Leone also has serious gender-related issues such as widespread female circumcision and discrimination against females. To address these issues, many international NGOs had formed during the war Child Welfare Committees, which monitored risks and responded to child rights violations.

In an effort to support children's protection, the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) passed in 2007 the National Child Rights Act, which had as its conceptual foundations the CRC and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. The Child Rights Act mandated the establishment of a Child Welfare Committee (CWC) in each village to handle minor offences such as petty theft, and to refer criminal violations of child rights such as the rape of a child to Family Support Units (FSUs), which include police and Government social workers who have been trained to handle cases involving children. UNICEF/Sierra Leone and the GoSL encouraged and enabled financial support for work by diverse international NGOs (e.g. Save the Children, Plan International, World Vision, ChildFund, etc.) to establish, train, and make functional chiefdom level CWCs, which were located mainly in chiefdom headquarter towns, and to teach local people—particularly children—about child rights. The approach was top-down since it came from the GoSL and outside consultants, with minimal input from average citizens.

Research Design

The research took place in three phases and, following the advice of members of the national Child Protection Committee, focused on the northern district of Bombali and the southern district of Moyamba, which were seen as broadly typical of many rural areas in Sierra Leone. The first phase, conducted in 2011, consisted of ethnographic learning. Trained Sierra Leonean researchers who knew the local languages lived in rural communities and learned in a non-judgmental manner about who were considered to be children, what harms they faced (other than poverty and health problems), what happened when those harms occurred, and what supported children's well-being. This phase built significant trust with local people and enabled learning about both the challenges and the strengths of local people in regard to their children.

People identified the top four harms to children as being out of school, teenage pregnancy out of wedlock, heavy work, and maltreatment of children not living with their biological parents.

[10] Denov, M. (2010). *Child soldiers: Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press; Wessells, M. G. (2006). *Child soldiers: From violence to protection*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Further, people spontaneously identified "child rights" as one of the top ten harms to children, saying that child rights had undermined parents' authority and ability to teach their children good behavior through the use of corporal punishment. Overwhelmingly, local people reported that they did not use the CWCs or other formal mechanisms in addressing these problems but preferred to use their traditional family and chiefdom mechanisms for addressing them.[11] In fact, there seemed to be a severe disconnect between the nonformal aspects and the formal aspects of the child protection system. This pattern fit that observed in other research as well.[12] The ethnographic findings were shared with each cluster of communities, who validated the findings and reflected on their own on what they should do to address the problems. In important respects, these reflections set the stage for the next phase—the action research phase.

In the second phase (2012), the research team used a free listing methodology to learn about how local adults and teenagers (13–18 years of age) understand children's well-being.[13] They consistently identified aspects such as participation in education, contributing to one's family, respect for elders, and obedience as key signs that children are doing well. These, together with those derived from the ethnographic research, were used to define key outcome areas regarding children's risks and well-being. Subsequently these outcome areas were used to define specific indicators and to construct a survey that measured children's risks and well-being outcomes. In this manner, local views regarding important outcomes for children were incorporated into systematic measures. The survey that was developed also reflected a balance of outcomes for children that were based on international child rights standards.

In the third phase (2013–2014), the research used a quasi-experimental design in which clusters of communities were assigned on a random basis to an action (intervention) condition or to a comparison condition (see Figure 1 below).[14]

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[11] Wessells, M. G. (2011). *An ethnographic study of community-based child protection mechanisms and their linkage with the national child protection system of Sierra Leone*. New York, NY: Columbia Group for Children in Adversity; Wessells, M., et al. (2012). The disconnect between community-based child protection mechanisms and the formal child protection system in rural Sierra Leone: Challenges to building an effective national child protection system. *Vulnerable Children and Youth Studies*, 7(31), 211–227.

[12] Behnam, N. (2011). *Awkward engagement: Friction, translation and human rights education in post-conflict Sierra Leone.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania; Child Frontiers (2010). *Mapping and assessing child protection systems in West and Central Africa: A five-country analysis paper*. Bangkok, TH: Author.

[13] Stark, L., Muldoon, K., Lilley, S., King, D., Hotanga, P., Lamin, D., & Wessells, M. (2013). *Change that counts: Baseline report for the evaluation of an action research intervention to strengthen community based child protection mechanisms in Sierra Leone*. London, UK: Interagency Learning Initiative on Strengthening Community-Based Child Protection Mechanisms and Child Protection Systems.

[14] For both ethical and practical reasons, the action research is currently being extended to the former comparison communities, with support from the Oak Foundation.

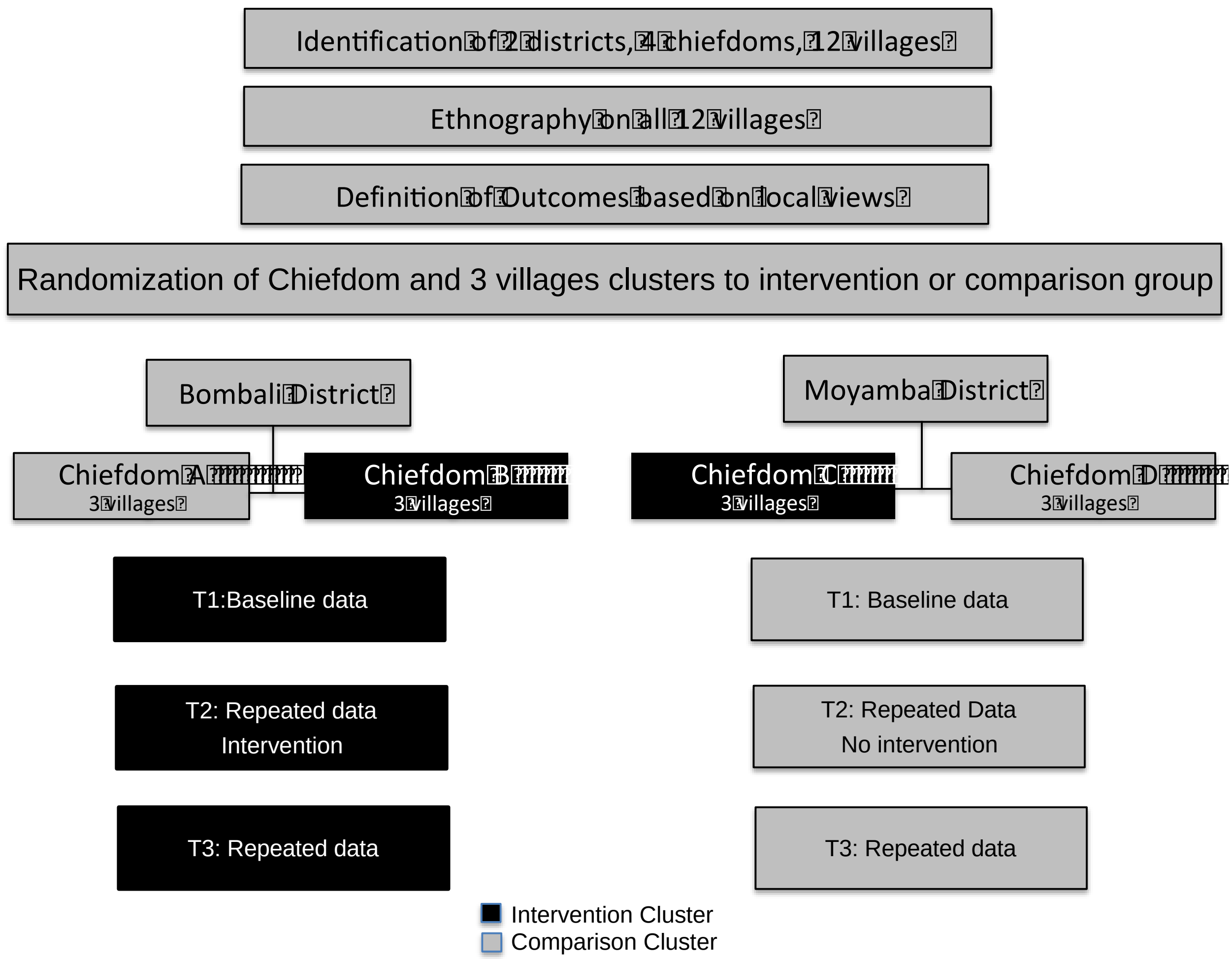

Figure 1. The design of the three-phase action research in Sierra Leone.[15]

To enable community ownership of work to support vulnerable children, the approach taken was that of participatory action research. In participatory action research, local groups of people collectively identify a problem of concern and then mobilize themselves to plan, implement, and evaluate an action to address the problem. This approach generates high levels of community ownership since it is the community that defines the problem, manages or implements the action, and holds the power and makes key decisions. The idea was to have communities choose a harm to children and then implement a self-designed action to address it. To promote bottom-up

[15] From Stark., L., Macfarlane, M., King, D., Lamin, D., Lilley, S., & Wessells, M. (2014). *A community-driven approach to reducing teenage pregnancy in Sierra Leone: Midline evaluation brief*. London, UK: Save the Children.

system strengthening, the communities were to choose and collaborate with formal (government) actors in the child protection system. The plan was to collect baseline, midline, and endline data by means of the aforementioned survey, and to collect qualitative data as well.

The Work of the Facilitator

Living within each intervention cluster was a trained facilitator who was highly process-focused and who enabled inclusive participation, slow dialogue, and group problem-solving and decision-making by the communities. The facilitator used the skills that are promoted through the use of the tools in Section 1 of this Toolkit. The facilitator rotated among the villages, spending one week per month in each village, and documenting the process through a mixture of summary notes and participant observation records. Working in sequential steps, the facilitator's role was to first help develop a process in which all community members have a voice in taking decisions and then to help the community decide which harm to children to address, which intervention to use, and how to implement it and take stock of its effects.

Avoiding directive action such as counseling or advising, the facilitator asked large numbers of questions that were designed to spark discussion and group awareness or to enable group problem-solving and decision-making. For example, the facilitator enabled inclusive participation by asking questions such as: "How does the community usually make a decision about something?" If local people answered, "By having a whole community meeting in the Chief's *barray*," the facilitator asked, "Does everyone come to the *barray* meetings?" If the answer was, "Yes, everyone comes to the *barray* meetings," then the facilitator followed up by asking, "What about the blind teenage girl who lives over there—does she go to the *barray* meeting?" or, "Are there people here who are poorer than other people and who have to work many jobs? Do they go to the *barray* meetings?"

By asking such questions and enabling discussion about them among many different people, the local people came to realize that the *barray* meetings were useful but excluded particular people. Also, the facilitator asked, "Does everyone who goes to the *barray* meetings speak up—for example, would a 12-year-old girl speak up?" Such questions typically evoked knowing smiles and answers such as "Well, no. It is adults who speak, and a child would not speak unless they were asked to."

The facilitator followed up with questions about what it means for a community to take a decision, asking, for example, whether everyone should have a voice in regard to a full community decision. Over time, people agreed that all community members should have a voice, and that the *barray* meetings, although very important, did not allow everyone to have a voice. This realization sparked much discussion about how the community could create a process that enabled everyone to have a voice. Having small group discussions was an alternative that community members rapidly identified.

To help communities think this option through, the facilitator asked questions such as: "If children and adults are in the small group together, will all members of the group feel free to speak?" or, "If girls and boys are together in a small group, will the girls feel free to speak?" The ensuing discussions evoked the realization that children would be most likely to speak individually if adults were not present. Also, girls would be most likely to speak freely, particularly about sensitive issues related to gender or gender-based violence, if boys were not present.

Through extended discussion, the communities agreed that there should be a mixture of *barray* meetings and small group discussions among girls, boys, women, men, or elders, respectively. Each small group would identify a representative who would feed back to the *barray* meetings the main points from the small group discussion but without identifying who had said particular things. Because people with disabilities and the poorest of the poor did not attend meetings, communities made provisions for home visits to learn the views of people, including children, whose voices were typically not included in community discussions.

This achievement of an inclusive process for discussion and decision-making is best viewed as a social change process led by the community members themselves. The facilitator did not enter the discussions with a predetermined arrangement they wanted communities to adopt. In fact, communities were free to use their own imagination and to develop different alternatives. Nor did facilitators speak in favor of particular arrangements. Rather, they asked questions designed to help people to reflect on what would create an inclusive process. Community people themselves debated and discussed the merits of different arrangements, and they persuaded each other to change the more customary arrangement wherein the community held a *barray* meeting and took a decision, often with directive inputs from the Chief.

To enable this process of open discussion and collective decision-making, the action research team took three important steps, the first of which was to enable the Chief to step back a bit. This was done by talking with the Chief and asking whether it would be valuable to have the community people more involved in reducing harms to children and enabling children's well-being. Since Chiefs typically favored this, they answered in the affirmative, saying that Chiefs by themselves could not do all that is necessary to reduce harms to children.

This led naturally to a discussion of the benefits of a process in which many community people talked openly about harms to children and decided collectively how to reduce and prevent them. Recognizing that such a process required space for disagreements, the research team asked Chiefs whether they should be involved day-to-day in such discussions. The Chiefs typically replied by saying, "If I take part directly, it may be a problem because no one would disagree with the Chief." Out of these discussions came the agreement that the Chief would not himself participate in the discussions and actions by the community. However, in respect of the Chief's authority, the community process would report to the Chief. Also, the Chief appointed his operational officer—the Chiefdom Speaker—to listen in on discussions without guiding them and to report back to the Chief.

The second important step was to offer training and ongoing mentoring for the facilitators (see tool TRN 11). The initial week-long training was conducted with the support of district social workers, UNICEF workers, selected NGO workers, the research team members, and, of course, the facilitators. Having identified through discussion the key skills that facilitators needed (e.g., skills of listening and empathy, inviting different points of view, allowing time for discussions to occur, managing animated discussions, enabling collective decision-making, etc.), the group developed and conducted numerous scenarios and role-plays that anticipated discussions between community members and brought to the forefront the role of the facilitators. Examples of these scenarios and role-plays are available in Section Two of this Toolkit. Following each role-play, a reflective space was created in order to invite the facilitators to reflect on how they had done, inviting feedback from the other participants, and discussing various options for improvement. In numerous cases, role-plays were repeated until the facilitators and others agreed that the appropriate skill levels had been attained.

Recognizing that more than one-off trainings were needed and that facilitators would likely encounter new challenges which required outside support, the team organized for the facilitators to be backstopped by more experienced mentors. David Lamin of UNICEF provided much of the backstopping for the facilitator in Moyamba, and Marie Manyeh, formerly of UNICEF, provided the backstopping for the facilitator in Bombali. Ongoing mentoring proved to be valuable in addressing difficult situations like that which arose in one community in Bombali, where there was contestation over who was the Chief. Also, the mentors observed the facilitators in action, suggested improvements, and in some cases helped community members think difficult questions through in a constructive, nondirective manner.

The third step was to emphasize the importance of respecting “community time.” This meant that neither the facilitators nor the other research team members would rush communities or expect them to meet pre-defined time-tables and benchmarks. If communities needed more time to discuss which harm to children to focus on, the facilitators respected their process and followed the pace of the community discussions. Also, if the facilitators saw that there continued to be significant disagreement on an issue such as the use of contraceptives (which, for a time, elder men viewed as potentially corrupting teenagers’ morals), they encouraged additional time for discussions.

In other words, the facilitators avoided rushing the process, and they harbored no preconceptions that agreement would eventually be reached. In fact, the training for the facilitators had emphasized that it is natural for communities to discuss and reach an agreement on how to move forward on some issues but not on others. It was not the facilitators job to try to force or impose agreement or, if agreement were achieved, to define its terms or elements. Throughout, the focus was on enabling community people themselves to lead the discussions, share divergent views, and take ownership for any decisions that were reached.

Communities' Planning Discussions

The community planning discussions were intended to focus initially on the selection of one harm to children[16] to address and then on how to address that harm through a community-designed action. Although these discussions were flexible and community-guided, they occurred within boundaries set by the action research team. For example, the research team set various action criteria (see tool MGM 5). Because the action research aimed to help strengthen wider child protection systems through bottom-up processes, one criterion was that a community-led action should link or collaborate with a district-level aspect of the formal child protection system. Other criteria were that the action should be low cost, feasible, sustainable, and ethical.

In addition, the three communities in each intervention (action) cluster were asked to work in a collaborative manner, selecting together which harm to children to address and then developing together an action to address that harm. This criterion enabled communities to learn from each other and ensured that the action would be tested in more than one community. Also, it enabled the establishment of a multi-village foundation for eventually scaling up the action to the entire chiefdom.

In order to plan together, the three communities in each action cluster decided to form an Inter-Village Planning Task Force (see tool MGM 3). This Task Force had five members from each of the three villages, with the five members elected from each of the subgroups: girls, boys, men, women, elders. The Task Force had a facilitative role and was not a master planning group. Through an iterative process, ideas were generated at community level through a mixture of *barray* discussions and small group discussions. The ideas from these dialogues were fed into a meeting of the Task Force, where the representatives from different villages could hear the thinking of their counterparts from other villages. At the Task Force meetings, the facilitators did not steer the discussions but helped to keep a focus on the action criteria and on finding common ground. The thinking from the Task Force discussions were then fed back to communities, thereby stimulating another round of discussions.

The discussions for selecting which harm to children to address were conducted over a period of nine months. A slow process was important in enabling the communities to develop highly inclusive participation and also to have the intensive dialogues that were needed to work through different views and to negotiate disagreements. Early in the discussions, male elders resisted the idea of focusing on teenage pregnancy since they were concerned that action would likely involve the use of contraceptives, which they saw as undermining the morals of young people. Their views on this issue did not change by means of debate.

[16] As pointed out in the accompanying Guide, communities may choose to address multiple harms to children or a single harm. In this case study, the focus on a single harm to children reflected the desire of the research team to simplify the intervention in hopes of making it easier to determine which aspects benefitted children.

Over time, however, the elder men's wives tended to bring them around by asking questions such as, "Isn't it true that our daughters are still being harmed by becoming pregnant out of wedlock and that nothing we have tried has worked to change this? Wouldn't it be better to try a different approach?" Also, moderate men began speaking in favor of the use of contraceptives, setting a model for accepting the use of contraceptives. Equally important was that teenagers gave thoughtful, mature inputs into these discussions, and adults were impressed with their insight and sense of responsibility to their families.

By all accounts, the negotiation of views occurred not only in public discussions such as those in the *barray* but also in private discussions such as those which took place in homes. As this example indicates, the discussions of which harm to children to address overlapped with discussions about what action to take.

Both clusters of action communities chose teenage pregnancy as the harm to children to be addressed. This was not surprising since the ethnographic research had identified teenage pregnancy as one of the top four harms to children. Teenage pregnancy caused some children to drop out of school, and the conditions surrounding teenage pregnancy were linked to violence. In Sierra Leone, nearly one-third of the teenage pregnancies were the result of sexual abuse and exploitation.[17] Since many families were unable to feed another person, teenage pregnancies and births frequently led girl mothers to turn to sex work as a means of survival. Throughout Sierra Leone, the problem of teenage pregnancy is of such great magnitude that in 2013 the President declared a state of national emergency in regard to teenage pregnancy.

The Community Action and Its Preliminary Effects

In both districts, the action cluster chose to address teenage pregnancy through a mixture of family planning, sexual and reproductive health education, and life skills. These were enabled in part through trainings provided by Marie Stopes and Restless Development in Bombali and by Restless Development in Moyamba. High levels of ownership were achieved by virtue of the fact that the communities themselves created an inclusive planning process, defined the problem to address, chose how to address it, and implemented the action. Collaboration with the government was achieved by virtue of the District Ministry of Health providing contraceptives, training health post staff on how to use implants, and having health workers educate on issues of puberty, sexuality, pregnancy, and pregnancy prevention.

The community action included: dramas followed by discussions; parent–child discussions on puberty, sex, and pregnancy; creation of and transmission by teenagers of youth-oriented messages about preventing teenage pregnancy; ongoing community dialogues and reflection

[17] Coinco, E. (2010). *A glimpse into the world of teenage pregnancy in Sierra Leone*. Freetown, SL: UNICEF.

about teenage pregnancy; and support from health workers and authorities. The main action elements are outlined in the box below:

Table 1. The main components of the community-driven action to reduce teenage pregnancy.

Element	Description
Collective dialogue, awareness raising, and negotiation	In village meetings and subgroups such as teenage girls, teenage boys, adult women, adult men, and elders, groups discussed the main harms to children, which issue should be addressed, how to address the issue, and diverse aspects of teenage pregnancy. These dialogues raised collective awareness and created readiness to receive various messages associated with teenage pregnancy.
Collective decision-making, empowerment, and responsibility	The communities made their own decisions about which issue to address, how to address it, etc. As a result, they saw the decisions and action process as "theirs," and they took responsibility for ensuring its success.
Linkage of communities with health services	The District Medical Office agreed to keep up the supply of contraceptives and train health post nurses to do procedures such as implants. Feeling supported by health staff, people visited the health post for contraceptives and invited nurses to visit the villages and help to educate people about puberty, reproductive health, and pregnancy.
Peer education	Having been trained by NGOs, community-selected Peer Educators (including teenage girls and boys) helped to educate their peers on an ongoing basis. Informal peer education occurred also through everyday discussions in the community.
Use of culturally relevant media	Using song and drama, peer educators conducted culturally appropriate educational activities such as role-plays followed by group discussions in which teenagers and adults discussed the benefits of good decisions made by young people, and the problems associated with bad decisions.
Child leadership and messaging	Girls and boys played leadership roles. Recognizing that children talk in distinctive ways, children created their own messages based on what had been learned in NGO-led workshops and discussions with health workers.
Inclusion and outreach	Representatives of diverse subgroups took part on the Task Force that facilitated much of the work to prevent teenage pregnancy. To include marginalized people such as children with disabilities, the Task Force members and also Peer Educators made home visits on a regular basis.

Parent–child discussions	Rejuvenating an older practice that the war had disrupted, parents and children discussed issues of puberty, sexual and reproductive health, sex, and teenage pregnancy prevention. In some cases, the children were better informed than adults and helped to correct parental misconceptions.
Role modeling	By taking part in activities such as dramas and singing songs, young people, including teenage boys, signaled that they wanted to prevent teenage pregnancy. Similarly, parents provided role models for each other in talking constructively with their children about teenage pregnancy.
Legitimation by authority	The Paramount Chiefs publicly supported the importance of preventing teenage pregnancy and encouraged people to get involved in the intervention. Other community leaders such as teachers and religious leaders, also encouraged support for preventing teenage pregnancy.

The flavor of the community-led action may be obtained by considering a drama and discussion activity. Following the action plan developed by the communities (see tool MGM 12), a teenage girl and teenage boy acted out informally two key scenarios designed to stimulate awareness and discussion of the harm caused by teenage pregnancy and of means of preventing it. In front of a village audience, the first scenario showed a girl and a boy feeling attracted to each other and agreeing to meet up later at the video hall that night. There, they consumed alcohol and marijuana and afterwards had impromptu, unprotected sex. The next scene showed the girl being pregnant, having morning sickness, and feeling very badly because she had dropped out of school. The boy, too, was feeling badly since he had dropped out of school and was uncertain whether he was ready for family responsibilities. Both felt their futures had been ruined.

The second scenario showed the same girl and boy feeling attracted to each other. This time, however, they discussed their relationship and their mutual dream of obtaining an education and building a family together. Exploring the question, "What will it take for us to fulfill our dream?", they agreed that early pregnancy could shatter their dreams. Having agreed to be careful in their sexual activity and to use contraceptives, they went on to earn their education, and married happily and started a family when they were ready.

Together, these scenarios sparked animated discussion about the harm caused by teenage pregnancy, about sexual and reproductive health, and about the importance of life skills in enabling young people to make good decisions and act in a responsible manner. These discussions frequently continued between parents and their children and also between teenagers who had not been in the drama. Together with the other intervention elements, they helped communities to mobilize themselves for social change away from the norm of teenage pregnancy.

With the community action having begun in March–April, 2013, the midline effects of the action were assessed in 2014 using the quantitative survey[18] and qualitative findings from key informant interviews and a community self-assessment.[19]

As shown in the box on the following page, the results at this stage were promising and featured high levels of community ownership and diverse signs of the action effects in addressing teenage pregnancy.

However, the results are preliminary in that more time was needed to see fully the effects of the action. Also, descriptions and qualitative data were not triangulated fully with the quantitative data. It was hoped that the subsequent endline measures would allow full triangulation and thorough analysis of the results, including systematic comparisons with the control clusters.

Unfortunately, the Ebola crisis erupted in Sierra Leone in August 2014. This made it impossible to collect the endline survey data as had been planned at the end of that year and which would have enabled the documentation and analysis of the full effects of the community-led action. Further, as the Ebola crisis continued, data from the field indicated that the Ebola crisis had interrupted the action and had introduced a host of confounding variables and threats to children, including increases in teenage pregnancy.[20]

Policy Impact

Notwithstanding the impact of the Ebola crisis, the interagency research approach and findings, which converged with the findings of other studies (e.g., Child Frontiers 2010), enabled the action research to have a significant influence on the national policy to support vulnerable children in Sierra Leone.[21] The findings that local people relied mostly on family and community mechanisms, and that community-owned processes were effective even in addressing

[18] From Stark., L., Macfarlane, M., King, D., Lamin, D., Lilley, S., & Wessells, M. (2014). *A community-driven approach to reducing teenage pregnancy in Sierra Leone: Midline evaluation brief*. London, UK: Save the Children.
[19] Wessells, M., Lamin, D., & Manyeh, M. (2014). *An overview of the community-driven intervention to reduce teenage pregnancy in Sierra Leone*. London, UK: Save the Children; Wessells, M. G. (2015). Bottom-up approaches to strengthening child protection systems: Placing children, families, and communities at the center. *Child Abuse & Neglect: The International Journal*, 43, 8–21.
[20] Kostelny, K., Lamin, D., Manyeh, M., Ondoro, K., Stark, L., Lilley, S., & Wessells, M. (2016). *'Worse than the war': An ethnographic study of the impact of the Ebola crisis on life, sex, teenage pregnancy, and a community-driven intervention in rural Sierra Leone*. London, UK: Save the Children.
[21] Wessells, M. G., Lamin, D., Manyeh, M., King, D., Stark, L., Lilley, S. & Kostelny, K. (2017). How collaboration, early engagement and collective ownership increase research impact: Strengthening community-based child protection mechanisms in Sierra Leone. In J. Georgalakis, Ramalingam, B., Jessani, N., & Oronje, R. (Eds.), *The social realities of knowledge for development: Sharing lessons of improving development processes with evidence* (pp. 74–93). London, UK: Institute for Development Studies.

challenging issues such as teenage pregnancy, augured in favor of a policy that emphasized the importance of supporting existing family and community mechanisms. At the same time, research conducted by Harvard University with UNICEF indicated that local people were more likely to report severe violations against children to two people—focal points—who had been chosen by the community and trained for their work.

The findings were sufficiently encouraging that the Sierra Leone Government and UNICEF decided to develop a new policy that placed support for families and communities at the center and avoided the "add a structure" approach that governments frequently take in addressing problems. To support the drafting and development of a new policy, UNICEF hired Child Frontiers, the consulting group that had led the initial mapping of the child protection system in West Africa.

The development of this new policy was interrupted by the Ebola crisis beginning in August 2014, and also hampered by turnover in the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs (MSWGCA). Nevertheless, the Government of Sierra Leone enacted in December 2015 a new Child Welfare Policy that embodied the insights from the interagency action research. Ultimately, the GoSL listened to the research because they saw it as their own and as addressing the questions that were at the heart of their efforts to support vulnerable children.

Promising Findings

The results included positive outcomes related to child protection, the community process, and system strengthening.

Community ownership. High levels of community ownership were evident in how many people volunteered their time and work, without material compensation, and regularly referred to the intervention as "ours," stating that NGOs and the government support them but do not lead the intervention.

Nonformal–formal linkage and collaboration. The intervention process significantly improved communities' collaboration and linkage with the local health posts. In contrast to previous low use of health posts, many teenagers and/or their parents visited the health posts regularly for contraceptives or advice. Also, villages frequently invited nurses and other health staff to visit in order to educate villagers about puberty, sex, and preventing teenage pregnancy.

Contraception. The District Medical Officers fulfilled their promise to supply the contraceptives and train the health staff. Relative to the comparison condition, teenagers in the intervention communities reported increased intent to use condoms regularly and increased willingness to ask their partner to use a condom. These can be precursors of wider changes in behavior and social norms related to sex.

Life skills. Teenage girls reported that because of the intervention, they said "No" more frequently to unwanted sex. Both girls and boys said that they had learned how to discuss and negotiate with their partners in regard to sex, and also how to plan their sexual activities in light of wider life goals. In addition, boys said openly that they had a responsibility to prevent teenage pregnancy. This responsibility-taking contrasted sharply with the boys' previous behavior.

Teenage pregnancy. Participant observations and interviews with health post staff, monitors, teenagers, and adults indicated a significant decrease in teenage pregnancies. In the intervention communities in both districts, participants reported that in an average school year (September–June) before the intervention had begun, there were five or six teenage pregnancies. In contrast, in the 2013–2014 school year, many fewer teenage pregnancies had occurred. During that period, half the communities reported no new teenage pregnancies, and the other half reported only one new teenage pregnancy. Grandmothers, who are respected community figures, assured that it is impossible to hide pregnancies in the villages.

Spinoffs. Participants said that school dropouts had decreased. Also, some villages had spontaneously begun to discuss the problem of early marriage. Having learned more about the adverse effects of teenage pregnancy, villagers had begun to question the appropriateness of any teenage pregnancy and also of early marriage.

The implementation of the new policy faces challenges related to scale, cost, and the capacities of different partners to enable effective implementation. Via UNICEF, a technical unit of four agencies that had been very active in the research has been convened to plan and prepare for the rollout of the new policy using the methods and approach of the research. The plan is to go to scale in a measured approach that enables learning about capacity building and implementation on a continuing basis.

Initially, the approach will be extended throughout Moyamba and Bombali Districts through partners that have been trained on how to facilitate the community-driven approach. Subsequently, the community-driven approach will be extended to cover all 14 districts. In this manner, UNICEF, the GoSL, and the research team hope to address the frequently expressed concern that bottom-up approaches have difficulty going to scale. Collectively, this work will transform the strictly top-down approach to child protection system strengthening toward the mixture of top-down and bottom-up approaches that are needed for building a system that effectively enables children's protection and well-being.

MGM 3. Enabling Inter-community Collaboration: A Sierra Leone Example

Inter-community collaboration offers numerous advantages, not least of which is the opportunity for co-learning by peers working in different contexts. Collaboration across communities can also serve as a means of scaling up a community-led approach.

Whether to enable inter-community collaboration and how to enable it are questions that are best answered not by outsiders but by communities themselves. As is true of most matters pertaining to community-led child protection, the context is critical, and communities themselves should be in the driver's seat. In an urban setting in which one neighborhood feels that it is too different from other neighborhoods or is in too conflictual a relationship to enable effective collaboration, a community might elect not to collaborate with other neighborhoods or communities.

If, however, different communities are open to collaborating, they should decide how to collaborate, and which processes would enable the collaboration.

This tool outlines the approach for inter-village collaboration that communities in Sierra Leone developed. It is not intended to be a prescription for different settings but serves as one useful example of how communities may enable productive collaboration with each other on their planning and action in support of vulnerable children.

The Formation of the Inter-Village Task Force (IVTF)

In Sierra Leone, communities decided to work together after individual communities had begun to discuss which harm to children they wanted to address. This timing was likely beneficial since the discussions heightened awareness of the situation of children in the wider area as in the village itself. Also, the discussions pointed out the complexity of the harms, and this may have increased people's desire to learn how other communities saw the question of harms to children and were thinking of how to address them.

When the communities indicated their desire to collaborate, the facilitators asked how, practically, that could happen. Discussions at community level rapidly noted the challenges of distance, time, and cost that might be involved in bringing together entire villages for discussion with other villages. Various community members in each village suggested that maybe there could be a small group of people from different villages who could help move the planning forward. Because each village already worked with small groups of girls, boys, women, men, and elders, respectively, it was natural for communities to raise and support the idea of a cross-village planning group that included members of each subgroup from each village.

This cross-community group—called the Inter-Village Task Force (IVTF), consisted of 15 people—5 from each community. The 5 people from a particular village were representatives who had been selected from their respective small groups. Thus, each village had a teenage girl, a teenage boy, a woman, a man, and an elder represent them on the IVTF. This afforded each village an equal voice and ensured diversity and representation of each of the five subgroups. Consistent with its facilitative role, the IVTF was a forum where each community shared its views, learned from each other's views, and attempted to find areas of agreement, which would then be shared back to each community. The IVTF could suggest which harm to children to address, although the individual communities continued to hold the decision-making power.

To maintain equal power, it was agreed that the IVTF should meet in a place that is readily accessible for all three communities. If the communities are far apart, it can be useful to rotate the meetings across villages, paying small transport and food costs while the host village provides sleeping accommodation if needed. The importance of symbolism should not be underestimated, since perceptions that one village is favored in the process could have presented a significant obstacle to the work of the IVTF. Both the facilitators and the IVTF members in Sierra Leone team managed these expectations successfully and reminded everyone that the IVTF had a facilitative role, all three villages were equal partners within it, and individual villages held significant power.

Planning Discussions and Cycles

In the initial IVTF meeting (which usually lasts a full day), both the facilitator and a senior mentor were present. The meeting opened with a prayer and greeting from the host community with wishes for a productive collaboration in support of vulnerable children. Following introductions, the facilitator set the stage by welcoming the members from all three communities and thanking everyone for their spirit of collaboration. From there, the main tasks were sharing, co-learning, and finding common ground. The first substantive discussion gave equal time to each community to discuss its context and what people saw as the top main harms to children that could be addressed via a community-led intervention. In the afternoon, there were open discussions of similarities or areas of agreement. By identifying common ground, these discussions began to lay the foundation for agreement and collaboration. It was natural, however, for people from each community to focus first on pressing the views of their own community. Yet the facilitator and the mentor kept the focus on areas of agreement and built on expressed views about the importance of flexibility and collaboration. This approach helped the communities to settle on a common harm to children to be addressed.

To reach this point, there had been sufficient time for the completion of several planning cycles, where each cycle consisted of a full community meeting and subgroup meetings in each village followed by an IVTF meeting. This iterative process enabled the IVTF to help the communities to move forward together, yet it also kept the individual communities highly empowered and feeling ownership for the process and decisions taken. By about the third cycle, the IVTF narrowed down to two harms to children, and communities were supportive of this "shortlist."

When it came time to choose between the two alternatives, there was a divergence of views between the IVTF and one of the communities regarding which harm to children should be selected and addressed collectively. Additional diplomacy helped to overcome such challenges, and the facilitator spent extra time in that community in hopes of enabling full discussion. It was important that the facilitator avoided imposing on the community by pressing it to accept the wishes of the other two communities. In one case, this required slowing down and inviting the

IVTF members and others to help find a solution that balanced the value of collective action with respect for the rights of each community to make its own decisions.

The Sierra Leone facilitators also found that it was useful to help community members identify overlaps or connections between the two short-listed harms to children. Often this happened as community members began thinking ahead about possible community actions to address the harm to children. For example, if the one community wanted to address out-of-school children while the IVTF favored addressing teenage pregnancy, it was useful for the facilitator to highlight the learning phase findings that teenage pregnancy is one of the primary causes of children being out of school. In this respect, it made sense for community actions that aim to address out-of-school children to have elements of helping to prevent teenage pregnancy. This approach helped to build agreement across all three communities. During this process, the facilitator reminded everyone that the detailed intervention planning lay ahead and that the insights from the current dialogues would be fed into the subsequent planning discussions. As this example suggests, it can be helpful during these discussions to keep an eye on what is practical to accomplish.

Through this iterative process, the communities in both regions of Sierra Leone chose to address the problem of teenage pregnancy. Many such pregnancies stemmed from sexual abuse, and the girls who became mothers at a young age not only had to drop out of school but also suffered economic hardship that led them into sex work. A key to the planning process at this point was its inclusivity. Through the subgroup discussions and home visits, care was taken to ensure that the voice of each child was heard in the discussions of which harm to address.

Planning the Community Action

After the communities, working with the IVTF, had decided to address teenage pregnancy, it seemed clear that working via the IVTF was potentially useful and could be extended to facilitate the planning of the community action. An important prelude, however, was to ask communities whether the IVTF membership needed any adjustment. After all, individual Task Force members could have changing circumstances such as a family illness that could have made it difficult for them to continue. In addition, teenage pregnancy is a problem that involved and affected young people. A natural question to ask is whether the IVTF composition needed to be reconfigured to allow, for example, increased inputs from children. In reflecting on these questions, the IVTF and the communities decided to add an additional female and male youth leader from each community. Thus, the IVTF included 7 people from each village, with a total of 21 members. That nearly all the previous members continued indicated the keen interest and excitement that the process was generating.

As the IVTF met to begin planning action by all three communities to address teenage pregnancy, the facilitators helped them to reflect on their facilitative role and the importance of enabling all three communities to reach agreement on a single intervention. The facilitators stressed that general agreement rather than universal consensus was needed. IVTF members were invited to think back on the importance of the planning cycles that included a mix of IVTF discussions and community planning discussions, with the latter including full community meetings, small group discussions, and home visits. This reflection led the IVTF to choose to continue using this iterative approach in planning the community action.

As the action-planning discussions began at community level, particular ideas came forward about what actions would help to prevent teenage pregnancy. One idea was that girls needed the confidence and life skills needed to say “No!” to sexual advances or harassment. Another was that children and parents needed better understanding of puberty, pregnancy, pregnancy prevention, and issues associated with sexually transmitted infections. Still another was that teenage pregnancy could be reduced by providing better education and building schools in villages that had no secondary schools.

During these discussions, the facilitators helped the IVTF to take into account the action criteria (see tool MGM 6), which included things such as low cost, sustainability, and linkage with formal stakeholders. Although the criteria came from the action research team, they were not imposed on the IVTF or the communities themselves. For example, the facilitators stirred discussion of sustainability by asking whether most NGO projects continued beyond their period of active funding. Typically, IVTF members answered this in the negative. The facilitator then asked whether the harm to children they want to address is likely to continue over time. Having answered this issue in the affirmative, the IVTF members reflected on how they wanted the communities’ intervention process to benefit children over longer periods of time. In this manner, communities embraced the sustainability criterion as being within their own interest. Once communities embraced the importance of sustainability, it was a short step to helping them to see the benefits of using a low-cost approach. These discussions also helped the IVTF to consider which actions were feasible. Impoverished people were quick to realize that expensive approaches such as building schools would not be sustainable if there are shortages of qualified teachers and little support from the Ministry of Education.

The IVTF members also reflected on the potential value of linking with and collaborating with formal stakeholders, which is crucial in a systems-strengthening approach. Having selected teenage pregnancy as the issue to be addressed, communities wanted the Government to help by, for example, providing contraceptives. The IVTF moved this process forward by asking the facilitators and mentors whether this was possible. This question led the facilitators and mentors, in collaboration with UNICEF, to enquire whether the district level Ministry of Health could be reliable partners in providing contraceptives. Having received an affirmative answer, they visited the district MoH and began discussions that eventually led to collaboration with the communities. The IVTF and the communities were happy with this process since it was not imposed, and the collaboration could help them to address a problem—teenage pregnancy—that they had not succeeded in addressing on their own.

Throughout the planning discussions, the IVTF facilitated the process but did not direct it. Among its most important tasks was to enable an inclusive planning process. IVTF members did this by encouraging many community members to participate in the dialogues and in planning how to address teenage pregnancy. Each IVTF meeting was followed by a cycle of whole community discussion, small group discussions, and home visits. The cycles continued until the communities seemed to have achieved a general agreement on the outline of the action they wanted to take.

At that point, the facilitators and mentors invited the IVTF to have a two-day workshop for the purpose of developing a working plan for the action that could then be shared with communities, subjected to any final revisions, and approved at local levels. This working plan consisted of an intervention matrix (see Tool MGM 12) that spelled out each action element (family planning, sexual and reproductive health, and life skills). For each element, there was a corresponding objective and rows of the matrix that defined the who, what, when, and where of the associated activities that would help to achieve the objective. In other words, for each objective, participants defined what steps will be taken or activities implemented, who will do them, approximately when they will do them, and any other information concerning the how. The draft plan was shared with the respective villages, and minor adjustments were made to the action plans. The process ended with the three villages and the IVTF agreeing to the action plan.

Enabling Community-Led Action

With the communities having decided which action they would take to address teenage pregnancy, the next step was for communities to decide how to organize themselves for implementing the action. Since the IVTFs had already been formed for planning purposes, the facilitators asked the communities whether the IVTFs would be useful for facilitating or overseeing the community action. Importantly, there was no pressure from the facilitators to have the IVTFs continue. Indeed, the facilitators were open to other possible processes the communities might have developed as a means of enabling the community-led action. As it was, the communities liked the approach of carrying on with the IVTF, which they themselves had formed, and they wanted the members of the IVTF for each village to facilitate the action process in their respective villages.

An important question was whether the IVTF membership should remain the same as it had been during the action planning. This question was important because members of the IVTF did not initially volunteer for a long-term post. Also, it was possible that the circumstances of some IVTF members had changed (e.g., due to an illness in the family), making it difficult for them to continue on. Since the action process was usually more time-consuming than the planning process had been, it was respectful to give people space to make their own decisions about whether to continue.

Further, the nature of the action raised questions about the composition of the IVTF. Since the intervention involved high levels of activity by teenagers, it made sense to ask the community whether it wanted to reconfigure the IVTF membership to take that into account. The communities decided that since the intervention aimed to prevent teenage pregnancy, it made sense to add additional female and male youth leaders to the IVTF. Thus, each village had seven rather than five members on the IVTF, with four of the seven members being young people. This arrangement made sense to the communities, which recognized the central role of young people in pregnancy prevention. Elders accepted this shift because they saw young people as taking responsibility for achieving community-defined aims.

As the communities implemented their self-designed action, the IVTF members encouraged full participation by different people in the communities. They also worked closely with the Peer Educators who had been trained by NGOs on issues of family planning, sexual and reproductive health, and life skills. Across the villages, the IVTF helped to monitor how the community action was going and whether adjustments were needed. For example, if contraceptives were not available to people in one community, the IVTF members in that community could bring the situation to the attention of all three communities and also the facilitator and mentor. The mentor played a key role in working with the Ministry of Health to make sure that the supplies of contraceptives were maintained.

Over time, the IVTF members and the Peer Educators realized that the inter-village monitoring and coordination would likely be more effective if each village had a focal point as the main point of information. This change, however, did not diminish the important role played by the IVTF. Not only did the IVTF help to promote and coordinate the community action but it also provided a useful means of collective reflection and making any needed adjustments. Over a year after the community action had begun, the IVTF played a key role in taking stock of how the action was working, what challenges it faced, and what, if any, adjustments were needed. This type of self-reflective, local evaluation process is important for enabling ongoing community-led action.

It is worth emphasizing, however, that the IVTF is not a “silver bullet” approach that will work well in all circumstances. The essence of a community-led approach is that communities themselves must be free to decide how to organize themselves and conduct their collaborative action. Collectively, we have much to learn from different communities and groups thereof about how communities can effectively take action together on behalf of vulnerable children. Thus the IVTF approach is only one of many possible approaches, and it is offered here in a spirit of co-learning.

MGM 4. Phases, Objectives, Steps, and Benchmarks

Note: This tool provides an indicative overview of the various phases of the community-led work. However, it is not intended to be a checklist or template for all community-led work. Also, it is important to note that in practice, the process is often more circular than linear, with extensive overlap between different phases and steps.

Phase	Objective	Steps	Benchmarks
Agency preparation (2–3 months)	• Promote coordination and buy-in from different actors • Help the agency prepare for this process	• Discussions with relevant coordination groups and Government actors • Agency senior managers learn about community-led approach • Agency reflection meetings on changed role and modalities of work • Hiring and initial, week-long training of facilitators • Agency thinks through issues of ethics and child safeguarding in regard to community-led approach	• Different stakeholders, including the Government, buy into and support the community-led work • NGO decides to use a community-led approach • NGO makes needed adjustments in human resources, program approach, and child safeguarding procedures • NGO formulates its boundary rules and intervention criteria
Learning about the community (2–3 months)	• Learn deeply about the community and the perspectives of many different people • Establish respect and trust with the community	• Meet with chief, elder men and women, youth leaders, etc. to explain purpose and approach • Use a nonjudgmental, participatory, open-ended approach to learning • Analyze the data with close attention to participants' narrative and direct observation • Feed findings back to the community	• Authentic spirit of trust and co-learning with the community develops • Community validates the learning findings • Community begins to reflect on what they could do to address the harms to children that were identified • Community agrees to continue thinking about action with the agency

Planning, issue selection (7–12 months)	• Enable the communities to select which harm(s) to children to address • Enable inclusive community planning on which harm to children to address • Enable meaningful child participation	• Mentors are hired and oriented • The community holds open meetings to discuss which harm(s) to children to address • The community discusses how to create a more inclusive process • If the community decides to have small group discussions, those begin, with representatives feeding key points back to the community discussions • If the community decides to collaborate with other communities, then it decides how joint planning will occur • Throughout, the facilitator enables a process of slow dialogue, collective reflection, and joint decision-making • Communities decide whether they want to collaborate with formal stakeholders • Facilitators and mentors check on appropriateness and feasibility of linkages and collaboration with district or provincial authorities • Iterative discussions at different levels continue until wide agreement has been achieved	• First community planning discussion is held • Community recognizes the limits of open community discussions • Community decides how to create an inclusive process • Highly inclusive process for choosing the issue is established • Small group and inter-community planning groups form, if relevant • Individual communities develop a shortlist of the most important harms to children to address • Communities select which harm(s) to children to address • Transition plan for facilitator and agency is developed
Action planning (2 months)	• Enable inclusive community planning on a community-led action • Enable meaningful child participation	• Facilitators and mentors receive training on action planning • Continue the community, small group, and inter-community dialogue processes as above but with a focus on the communities' action • Communities explore whether they want to adjust the representation on the inter-community process	• Highly inclusive process for communities deciding which action to take in addressing the selected harm(s) to children • Community develops action plan that fits with the broad intervention criteria • MoU signed with community-selected

		• Communities decide whether they want to have particular trained subgroups (e.g., Peer Educators, Parents' Group, Youth Group, etc.) lead or conduct work on particular aspects of the action • Communities decide which formal stakeholders to collaborate with • Meetings with formal stakeholders regarding how they could collaborate with the communities and support the community-led action	formal stakeholders who will collaborate with the communities on the action
Action (ongoing)	• Enable inclusive participation in the community-led action • Enable meaningful child participation	• Facilitators receive training on their changing role, the transition process, and documentation • Community chooses and receives capacity building as needed • Community develops and implements its own messages and activities (e.g., role-plays, community drama and discussion, campaigns, parents' discussions, meetings with school officials, etc.) • Space is included for impromptu supporting activities • Community monitors its activities and adherence to its action plan, making adjustments as needed • Mentors or agency staff monitor the support by formal actors, advocating with them as needed	• Highly inclusive process for communities implementing their action plans for addressing the selected harm(s) to children • Communities receive needed capacity building per their plans • Formal stakeholders do their part to support the action
Evaluation	• Take stock of how inclusive and community owned the action process	• Communities hold periodic meetings to reflect on the action process and how to make improvements or address challenges that have arisen	• Narrative data on the action process, benefits, and challenges • Data on actual outcomes for children

	is • Collect empirical data on the effectiveness of the action, with comparison of baseline and endline data	• Near its exit time, the external agency conducts a participatory evaluation that includes data on outcomes for children	• Learning from both the community-led and the external evaluations are fed back to communities, who decide on adjustments

MGM 5. Qualities of Facilitators of a Community-led Approach

Qualities	Description
Humility	Does not put themselves "above" or judge other people; recognizes the many things that local people know about the situation, their children, their values and practices, etc. that they do not know. Does not position themselves as an "expert."
Empathy	Uses elicitive questions and reflective listening to understand the other person's perspective; seeks to "walk a mile in the other person's shoes."
Trust and respect	Treats all people with dignity and builds positive, appreciative relationships. Recognizes the unique situation of each individual. Sensitive to issues of power, equity, gender, class, and power.
Inclusive/participatory	Seeks to engage with everyone and to invite their voice and agency in the planning discussions and decisions. Invites the participation of girls and boys of different ages, without upsetting local norms.
Accompaniment	Is patient with the community as it moves in "community time." Neither guides the community toward a pre-defined end nor forces it to meet outsider deadlines.
Adaptability	Able to deviate from a plan, changing approach and timing as new opportunities or obstacles arise; good problem solver.
Versatility	Develops rapport and relationship with different people using different approaches and interpersonal skills as appropriate to the particular individual or subgroup.
Ethical	Acts in accord with accepted ethical principles; reflects regularly on ethical dilemmas that arise, seeking others' advice as needed; protects the best interests and well-being of children.

MGM 6. Sample Action Criteria

Note: These action criteria are illustrative only. Although action criteria may be set by external actors such as NGOs, they could also be set through a participatory dialogue with communities.

1. ***Addresses a community-selected harm or harms to children.*** The harm(s) should be child protection issues (defined broadly) that diverse people, including children, view as important and that are chosen by the community itself, without being pushed or guided toward it by outsiders. The harm(s) need not be the most important issues—they can be ones that people feel are ripe and feasible. Most likely, the selected harm(s) will be issues that communities had identified in the learning phase.

2. ***Inter-community collaboration.*** We want three communities to work together, if possible, in selecting which harm to address and in developing and implementing a community-led intervention. This collaboration enables co-learning across communities and likely strengthens the quality of the intervention. In practice, the collaboration means that all three communities will need to identify a commonly agreed harm to children to address, a commonly agreed intervention to address it, etc.

3. ***Linking intervention***. The intervention involves collaboration—making a linkage (or strengthening an existing one)—between the three communities and a formal, government-led aspect of the national child protection system. This could involve social welfare, health, education, etc. This criterion rules out many otherwise valuable actions (e.g., livelihoods actions such as animal-rearing to prevent children from being out of school—unless such actions include collaboration with formal system stakeholders).

4. ***Common action by all three communities***. There is one action plan for all three communities. That one action could address a single issue (e.g., teenage pregnancy) or multiple issues (e.g. a successful intervention for reducing teenage pregnancy would likely increase ongoing school attendance for girls, thereby addressing another risk). The common action could involve multiple facets. For example, an action to reduce teenage pregnancy might have (but does not "have to" include) things such as condom distribution, reproductive health education by health workers, and community health education. Individual communities could still improvise, yet the improvisations would be in the service of the wider action plan.

5. ***Likely to be effective***. One of the challenges in community-led work is not to support community actions that have proven to be ineffective in different settings. The facilitator will need to work with communities to help them reflect on the likely effectiveness of different approaches and, if needed, to learn from other resources such as other communities or NGOs.

6. ***Social justice.*** The action should be owned and supported by diverse people, including marginalized people, children, and people outside the chiefs' family, favorites, etc. It also means that the action "belongs" to all three communities, and is not guided mainly by people in only one community.

7. ***Ripeness***. People in both the villages and the government office involved should be enthusiastic and ready to implement or support the action. The implication is that community discussions and government discussions need to be initiated around the same time. It would be unproductive for communities to select an action that involves stronger links with social workers if the Ministry that oversees social workers was unsupportive.

8. ***Feasibility***. The action should be doable, keep within budget constraints, and not be hindered by excessive logistical requirements (e.g., weekly visits during the rainy season when the rivers flood and bridges wash out) or political complexities.

9. ***Low-cost***. We don't want a fancy action that is costly and unsustainable. We're basically facilitating straightforward actions that include sustainable, useful linkages.

10. ***Sustainability***. If the community action is likely to end or collapse at the end of the funding period, then it is unsustainable. The action should be a process and piece of work that community people and government workers will carry forward even after the end of the funding.

11. ***Ethics***. The action process and the steps taken should respect ethical principles, avoid causing unintended harm, and manage ethical issues such as raised expectations.

MGM 7. Sample Roles and Responsibilities of Mentors

Note: The roles and responsibilities of mentors, and even the use of the term "mentors," is highly contextual. This tool is offered for purposes of illustration only.

A team approach is of vital importance in enabling community-led work on child protection. Facilitators benefit from having an experienced hand serve as a mentor, who serves as a role model, guide, sounding board, and support for their work. Typically, the mentor works with a small number of facilitators. Here is a summary of the mentor's role and responsibilities in the community-led work of the Interagency Learning Initiative.

Role. The mentor's role is to support and backstop facilitators who enable community-led work. The mentor serves as a co-learner, coach, role model, and support for the facilitators and provides a senior presence who helps to solve problems and address challenges.

Responsibilities

- Communicate biweekly with the facilitators, offering encouragement and support;
- Listen to community people in bi-monthly field visits, and use what is learned to help the facilitator reflect on how to make improvements;
- Coach the facilitators, giving them ongoing advice and training on how to improve the quality of their work;
- Engage regularly with the facilitators in discussing and solving problems that have arisen;
- Advise the facilitators on how to stay true to their intended roles and a community-led approach;
- Engage with the facilitators on ethical issues, helping them think through dilemmas and take appropriate courses of action;
- Liaise regularly with the facilitators' line manager(s);
- Facilitate district government partnership in the linking intervention, as stated in a written plan or MoU that spells out roles and responsibilities, timetable, etc.;
- Monitor government and NGO fulfillment of their responsibilities, pressuring them when needed;
- Make regular visits (preferably one per month) to the communities in order to work with relevant community members, government, and NGO partners;

- Keep a journal or monitoring log of all meetings and discussions with Government and NGO stakeholders, identifying key points of discussion, agreements or actions taken, and any gaps or challenges.

MGM 8. Thinking Through Facilitators' Ethical Responsibilities

Facilitators in a community-led approach are required to behave in ways that are ethical, role appropriate, and respectful. Ethical issues are omnipresent and do not allow simple black and white answers. They are sufficiently complex that facilitators should never feel that they are left to address them "on their own." In fact, dialogue with mentors, superiors, and community people of high integrity is essential for taking stock of different situations, reflecting on one's own behavior, and following a contextually appropriate course of action.

A dilemma for many NGOs is how to balance a community-led approach with their Child Safeguarding and child protection policies. This issue is particularly acute with regard to the question of whether a facilitator in a community-led approach should be obligated to report violations against children that they observe or become aware of. For example, should a facilitator who observes a father beating his child for misbehavior following the local social norms report this violation to their agency? For many agencies, there may seem to be no dilemma, as their Child Safeguarding policies dictate that all staff have an obligation to report in ways that follow their agency procedures. This reporting obligation recognizes that the NGO has an ethical obligation to respond and that it would be unethical to do nothing while violations are occurring and children's rights are being trampled.

Although this approach has its merits, it poses significant problems in a community-led approach. For one thing, if a facilitator reported a violation and their agency responded, even referring the case to authorities, local people would see the facilitator as judging or monitoring local people, thereby undermining trust and the facilitator's perceived neutrality. From the agency's standpoint a significant problem is that the agency's Child Safeguarding policy, which has a top-down approach, is on a collision course with a community-led approach. Adherents of mandatory reporting will likely argue that such a collision is appropriate and that ethical reporting processes take precedence over the continuation of community-led approaches.

However, an alternative way to conceptualize the ethical issues here is to recognize that the undermining of a community-led approach also has ethical implications. If the community-led approach is having benefits for children now, would it be ethically advisable to undermine the process that yields those benefits and protections for children? Also, if the community-led approach has more sustainable benefits for children, is it ethically advisable to deny children those benefits? Perhaps a mandatory reporting obligation reflects a case-based approach to thinking about ethics, whereas ethical consideration should be given to the wider group and to the benefits that come with effective community ownership and prevention.

Let's explore this further using a hypothetical scenario. Using a community-led approach, your agency has enabled a community process that has made significant reductions in teenage pregnancy. Across six villages, there have been reductions each year of approximately 15 teenage pregnancies, which carried increased risks of things such as maternal mortality, dropping out of school, and engagement in sex work for purposes of survival. Now consider whether a facilitator who observes a father beating his child for misbehavior should report this violation to their agency. They know that reporting will undermine the community trust since the agency will be likely to follow a top-down process of either visiting and educating the father, or, if the beating were severe, reporting the father to the authorities. For ethical reasons, the facilitator is reluctant to undermine the community-led process that seems to be helping to save lives and reduce girls' exposure to significant risks such as teen pregnancy and sexual exploitation. At the same time, the facilitator thinks it would be unethical to do nothing, as that could enable the beating to continue and might make them and their agency complicit in it.

This kind of ethical dilemma, which has many facets, admits no simple answers. It is not presented here as a way of suggesting that agencies should do away with their Child Safeguarding policies or should go along with whatever communities want to do in raising and guiding their children. Rather, it is to suggest that agencies need to wrestle with these ethical issues and not leave facilitators in a community-led approach either paralyzed in their dilemma or left to think it through on their own, which could lead to inconsistent approaches across facilitators.

This tool invites agencies to intentionally think through the ethics of this kind of situation and to give coherent guidance to their facilitators. In a spirit of dialogue, the box below shares the approach that has been developed by one interagency team.

Example: Interagency Action Research on Community-led Child Protection Processes in Jharkhand, India

A group of four Indian agencies (CINI, Chetna Vikas, Plan/India, and Praxis) and one international agency (the Columbia Group for Children in Adversity) developed the approach below in addressing the ethical dilemma raised above.

- In general, agencies and facilitators should stick to the role of "facilitators" in view of the demands of this role. Facilitators should stay away from a case-management approach, and engage with child protection issues with a generic, preventive focus during our interactions with various community level stakeholders.
- In case a child reports to a facilitator a violation against a child, the facilitator will make available to them a list of contact details of relevant authorities, so that they can pursue the matter if they wish to, with the help of trusted people in their close circles. CINI and Chetna Vikas will make available to facilitators such a list for their respective districts.
- Should a case of serious or urgent nature be intimated to our facilitators, e.g. related to sexual offenses or suicidal tendencies, they will pro-actively reach out to a trustworthy person within the close circles of the child (identified on the basis of the child's own judgment) and confidentially advise/persuade this person to take necessary actions, without compromising the dignity or interests of the child.
- Agency partners will continue to focus on working towards emergence of an effective community-based child protection mechanism in the selected villages, which can respond to such situations appropriately in the future.
- In case any facilitator faces any other unexpected situation or has any dilemmas, they could get in touch with seniors within their respective organizations for guidance as per the Child Protection policy of the organization.

MGM 9. Sample Initial Work Plan for Facilitators

Note: This work plan from Sierra Leone outlines the early part of the planning phase in which communities engage in dialogue and select which harm to children they want to address. It assumes that the work on preparation and learning about communities has already occurred, as facilitators may or may not have been involved in those phases. It also assumes that the facilitators have been trained and are prepared for their work. This outline is for purposes of illustration and is not intended to be a template for all settings.

Month 1

- Initial meeting (with Mentor) with Paramount Chief, Chiefdom Speakers, and Government Social Worker assigned to the Chiefdom, explaining our purpose and process, and asking the Chief's support (without them controlling the process) in collaborating with the community, which will use a slow, inclusive process of dialogue to select a harm to children that will subsequently be addressed through community-designed and -led intervention.

- Meet informally with key community stakeholders—section and town chiefs, imams, pastors, teachers, influential women, youth leaders, etc., explaining our purpose and process.

- Enable first open community meeting (one in each of the three communities), to explain our purpose, invite collaboration, spark thinking about harms to children (which may have changed significantly due to the Ebola crisis), explain the process of the community-led work, and identify the prospective roles of (a) the community, and (b) the facilitator.

- Facilitator takes transect walk, stopping to meet and talk with people in difficult circumstances who may not attend community meetings.

- Facilitator lives/works in communities at least 21 days of each month, getting to know people, building relationship and trust, doing participant observation, ensuring inclusive process, and keeping records of their work. In general, the facilitator lives in each community for one week each month, although following a schedule that is flexible and fits the needs and situation of different communities.

- The facilitator outlines the temporary nature of his or her engagement and how it supports community-owned action.

- Facilitator submits the monthly report by the end of the month. (The report includes two elements—(a) a short summary of the community process and the key events/accomplishments by the community, and (b) one participant-observation).

Month 2

- Facilitator lives/works in communities as above, continuing relationship-building, doing participant-observation, and learning about power relations via transect walks and discussions.

- At the next community meeting, the facilitator enables initial dialogue and reflection about how to develop a process in which all community members have a voice and help to select one harm against children to address through collective action. The facilitator also invites ideas about which harm to children should be addressed by the community.

- If the community meeting suggests having subgroup discussions, organize and facilitate initial discussions with groups of approximately 10 people, inviting dialogue about which harm to children to address via a linking intervention (and why). Conduct discussions with 5 separate subgroups.

- Talk with people at random and in daily activities (e.g., over meals or on the way to school) about their thinking on which harm to children should be addressed.

- Submit monthly report by end of the month.

Months 3 and 4

- Facilitator lives/works in communities as above and continues to promote an inclusive process.

- At next community meeting, the facilitator invites ideas about which harm to children should be addressed by the community, with ideas from the previous small group discussions fed in anonymously. By asking questions, the facilitator also invites the group to reflect on the fact that some people cannot or do not participate in community meetings or small group discussions. The community engages in problem-solving dialogue about how to invite and include the views of such people. Home visits may be an option, but the community may have better ideas.

- The facilitator helps to prepare for the home visits or other option the community has chosen for including marginalized people and people who do not or cannot attend community meetings and small group discussions.

- Subgroup discussions continue on which harm to children to address. This time and from here on, the subgroup discussions should be facilitated by a member selected by the group, with the facilitator present as an observer and resource, or not present. Afterwards, the facilitator should work with the subgroup facilitator on how to feed the main points back to the full community meeting.

- Facilitator submits monthly report by end of the month.

Month 5

- Facilitator lives/works in communities as above. If the discussions within the community are inclusive and include a cycle consisting of community meeting—subgroup discussions—home visits, the facilitator now begins discussions on inter-community collaboration.
- At the next community meeting, the facilitator encourages the community to consider the value of collaborating with other villages. If communities are receptive, a planning facilitation group such as an Inter-Village Task Force (IVTF) is conceptualized.
- Facilitator works with each subgroup to select one member to represent the subgroup on the IVTF.
- Plans for the first IVTF meeting are developed. Facilitator works to make sure that people understand that the IVTF is not directive but facilitative.
- Subgroup meetings continue, with home visits and outreach to include the views of marginalized children and other people.
- Facilitator submits monthly report by end of the month.

Months 6–8

- Facilitator lives/works in communities as above.
- Each month, there is a full planning cycle consisting of an IVTF meeting followed by (in each community) a community meeting—subgroup discussions—home visits. Over time, the facilitator helps the communities to develop a common short-list of, e.g., the top two harms to children that the communities want to address collaboratively.
- Facilitator and mentor scan for how to link action options under discussion with government collaborators, encouraging options that have positive, sustainable linkages.
- Facilitator submits monthly report by end of the month.

Month 9

- Facilitator lives/works in communities as above.
- There is a full planning cycle consisting of an IVTF meeting followed by (in each community) a community meeting—subgroup discussions—home visits. Over time, the facilitator helps the communities to develop a common short-list of, e.g., the top two harms to children that the communities want to address collaboratively.

- Facilitators and mentors further explore linking aspects of the short-list options.
- Facilitator submits monthly report by end of the month.

Month 10

- Facilitator lives/works in communities as above.
- There is a full planning cycle consisting of an IVTF meeting followed by (in each community) a community meeting—subgroup discussions—home visits. The facilitator helps the communities to develop common ground and agree on a single harm to children to address through an action that links with formal stakeholders.
- Facilitators continue the process if additional time is needed. When agreement across the communities is reached, the facilitator begins preparing for the next phase—the planning of the community-led action.
- Facilitator submits monthly report by end of the month.

MGM 10: Sample Memorandum of Understanding Between Government Ministries, Non-governmental Organizations and Communities in Kongbora Chiefdom

Note: A formal memorandum of understanding (MoU) may not be necessary in all contexts. In Sierra Leone, the processes of enabling dialogue and achieving agreement among the various partners was useful in itself, and the actual MoU was useful in achieving accountability by the formal system actors. This MoU is for purposes of illustration only. Less formal processes may be useful in other contexts.

Preamble

In August 2012, a one-day meeting of government ministries (MSWGCA, MOHS, MEYS), the FSU, child protection NGOs and representatives from Gondama, Senehun, and Levuma was held to discuss how they could work collaboratively to address the issue of teenage pregnancy, which has been identified as the most serious child protection problem in the three villages.

The meeting was organized by the action facilitator (recruited by the Columbia Group for Children in Adversity), after consultation with traditional leaders in Gondama, Senehun, and Levuma in Kongbora chiefdom and in collaboration with the MSWGCA in Moyamba. The following people/organizations attended the meeting:

- MSWGCA
- MEYS
- DHMT
- FSU
- PLAN
- DCI
- SLRC
- ActionAid
- Restless Development
- DRIM

- Pikin to Pikin
- St. George's Foundation
- Marie Stopes
- Moyamba District Council
- Four representatives from Gondama
- Four representatives from Senehun
- Four representatives from Levuma

At the end of the meeting it was agreed that all the participants, through their respective organizations, would work collaboratively to address the problem of teenage pregnancy in Gondama, Senehun, and Levuma in Kongbora chiefdom through:

- Raising community awareness on the sexual and reproductive health of adolescents and youths
- Strengthening children's life skills
- Increasing access to sexual and reproductive health services

This memorandum of understanding therefore provides the framework by which the MSWGCA, DHMT, MEYS, FSU, Moyamba District Council, and the child protection NGOs listed above will work collaboratively to address the problem of teenage pregnancy in Gondama, Senehun, and Levuma in the Kongbora chiefdom. The MoU will outline the different roles of each of the players and the mechanisms for monitoring and coordination.

Background

In 2011 the Columbia Group for Children in Adversity on behalf of the Inter Agency Action Group for Child Protection carried out an ethnographic research into community-based child protection mechanisms in the Moyamba and Bombali districts in Sierra Leone[22]. The purpose of the research was to learn about existing functional mechanisms of child protection at the grass-

[22] The research was carried out in Kongbora and Upper Banta chiefdoms in Moyamba district, and in Magbaiamba Ndowahun and Libeisaygahun chiefdoms in Bombali district.

root level. The research involves three phases; an ethnographic research, an outcome definition phase, and an intervention phase.

The ethnographic phase identified protective factors and preventive mechanisms which included: proper parental care, support from siblings and the extended family, support from natural leaders such as teachers, religious leaders and women's leaders, education, chiefs, and the work of NGOs. Four main risks or harms, among others, to the well-being of children were identified: children out of school, teenage pregnancy, maltreatment of children not living with their biological parents, and heavy work. In addition, the ethnographic phase identified functional networks and pathways of response to child abuse.

In the outcome definition phase, communities identified broad outcomes of wellbeing. The following were identified as the main outcomes of wellbeing:

- Education
- Contribution to household activities
- Obedience
- Respect
- Not involved in "mammy 'n daddy" business (sex)
- Contribution to family livelihood
- Good character
- Good manners

The action phase focused on working with communities through respectful dialogue to develop interventions that will strengthen linkages between community-based child protection mechanisms and the formal child protection system. A community facilitator recruited through consultation with traditional leaders organized community members into small groups ensuring inclusiveness of all social categories. After a series of consultations within small subgroups, a village-wide and then inter-village consultation (of the three villages where the research is carried out) was conducted. At the end of the consultations, the three villages agreed on an action to address what was considered as the most serious child protection issue. This process happened in the Kongbora chiefdom, which was randomly selected as the intervention chiefdom. The action will be delayed in Upper Banta chiefdom (which will also act as control chiefdom for evaluation of the efficacy of the intervention). Before the development of the intervention, a baseline survey of the wellbeing of children was carried out in both Kongbora and Upper Banta chiefdoms.

Purpose of the memorandum of understanding

The purpose of this memorandum of understanding between the native administration of Kongbora chiefdom represented by their Paramount Chief and the Moyamba District Council, the MSWGCA, DHMT, MEYS, FSU, PLAN, DCI, ActionAid, SLRC, DRIM, Restless Development, Pikin to Pikin, Marie Stopes, and St. George's Foundation is to define the terms of collaboration between the different parties of this MoU in their drive to address the problem of teenage pregnancy in Gondama, Senehun, and Levuma in the Kongbora chiefdom in Moyamba District.

Parties

The parties to this memorandum of understanding shall be the:

1. Gondama, Senehun, and Levuma communities in Kongbora chiefdom in the Moyamba District represented by the Paramount Chief of Kongbora chiefdom
2. Moyamba District Council
3. MSWGCA
4. DHMT Moyamba
5. MEYS Moyamba
6. FSU Moyamba
7. PLAN
8. DCI
9. SLRC
10. ActionAid
11. DRIM
12. Pikin to Pikin
13. St. George's Foundation
14. Marie Stopes
15. Restless Development

Role of different parties in the MoU

Through this memorandum of understanding, Gondama, Senehun, and Levuma communities in Kongbora chiefdom in Moyamba District, and the MSWGCA, MOHS, MEYS and the non-governmental organizations listed above have agreed to work together to address the problem of teenage pregnancy in Gondama, Senehun, and Levuma communities. The parties have agreed to perform the following specific and joint functions:

Specific roles of the village chiefs

1. Raise awareness on MoU and its implementation in their respective villages.

2. Provide accommodation for government/NGO staff that may need to stay overnight in their villages to implement activities in the MoU.

3. Work with the action facilitator to appoint representatives from the village who will participate in radio discussions when required.

4. Ensure that their villages are represented in the district coordination meeting where implementation of the MoU will be discussed.

5. Monitor implementation of the MoU in his/her village.

6. Support the facilitating role of the action facilitator.

7. Chiefs will support pregnant teenage girls through traditional mechanisms—mediation, counseling, and legal assistance (at community level), and will report and refer cases as appropriate to MSWGCA/FSU and NGOs.

Specific roles of MSWGCA/Moyamba District Council

1. Ensure there is social-worker presence in the chiefdom to work with the three villages and support implementation of all activities.

2. Organize coordination meetings of the different parties to the MoU through district child protection committee meetings.

3. Will receive cases of teenage pregnancy and provide/refer victims to appropriate services.

Specific roles of the MOHS

1. Assign staff to facilitate awareness-raising sessions on sexual and reproductive health with adolescents, youths, and parent groups.

2. Facilitate awareness-raising with religious leaders on sexual and reproductive health of adolescents and youths.

3. Manage supply of contraceptives at village level through the PHUs.

4. Provide medical examination and treatment for teenage girls who are pregnant through the PHUs.

5. Will provide psychosocial services for pregnant teenage girls as and when appropriate or refer to other service providers.

6. Will document cases of teenage pregnancy reported to the PHUs.

Specific roles of the MEYS

1. Ensure schools in the three communities provide space and time for age-appropriate sexual and reproductive health education.

Specific role of the FSU

2. Will receive and document all cases of sexual abuse referred to them.

3. Will address all cases of sexual abuse in line with its mandate.

4. Will inform parents/chiefs about the status of cases of child abuse that they are addressing.

Specific roles of NGOs

PLAN

1. Will participate in radio panel discussions on “teenage pregnancy” as and when required.

2. Will provide staff to participate in awareness-raising discussions on sexual and reproductive health and teenage pregnancy issues.

3. Will provide IEC materials on the problems of teenage pregnancy.

Restless Development

1. Will provide peer educators to work with the intervention facilitator to conduct dialogue sessions in Gondama, Senehun and Levuma communities and schools.

DCI

1. Will participate in radio panel discussions on “teenage pregnancy” as and when required

2. Will provide staff to participate in awareness-raising discussions on sexual and reproductive health and teenage pregnancy issues.

3. Will provide IEC materials on the problems of teenage pregnancy.

SLRC

1. Will participate in radio panel discussions on "teenage pregnancy" as and when required.
2. Will provide staff to participate in awareness-raising discussions on sexual and reproductive health and teenage pregnancy issues.
3. Will provide IEC materials on the problems of teenage pregnancy.

ActionAid

1. Will participate in radio panel discussions on "teenage pregnancy" as and when required.
2. Will provide staff to participate in awareness-raising discussions on sexual and reproductive health and teenage pregnancy issues.
3. Will provide IEC materials on the problems of teenage pregnancy.

DRIM

1. Will provide air-time for radio discussions on sexual and reproductive health education.
2. Will provide staff to participate in radio discussions on sexual and reproductive health and teenage pregnancy issues, especially as they relate to the disabled who are most vulnerable to sexual abuse and at increased risk of teenage pregnancy.
3. Will provide appropriate IEC materials for use in schools and communities.

Pikin to Pikin

1. Will participate in radio panel discussions on "teenage pregnancy" as and when required.
2. Will provide staff to participate in awareness-raising discussions on sexual and reproductive health and teenage pregnancy issues.
3. Will provide IEC materials on the problems of teenage pregnancy.
4. Will train children to develop community drama to highlight the issues of teenage pregnancy and sexual and reproductive health.

St. George's Foundation

1. Will participate in radio panel discussions on "teenage pregnancy" as and when required.
2. Will provide staff to participate in awareness-raising discussions on sexual and reproductive health and teenage pregnancy issues.
3. Will provide IEC materials on the problems of teenage pregnancy.

Marie Stopes

1. Will maintain adequate and regular supply of contraceptives in the three communities.

2. Assign staff to facilitate awareness-raising sessions on sexual and reproductive health with adolescents, youths, and parent groups.

3. Facilitate awareness-raising with religious leaders on sexual and reproductive health of adolescents and youths.

Coordination

The MSWGCA will include the implementation of this MOU as an agenda item in its monthly district meetings. During the meetings the facilitator will report on progress of the implementation of the MOU and any issues related therein. One representative per community will attend the district monthly meeting.

Monitoring of implementation of the MoU

Monitoring of the implementation of the MoU will be done at two levels:

1. At the village level, the action facilitator will develop a monthly action plan in consultation with community members, government, and non-governmental organizations that are party to the implementation of this MoU. The chief or his/her representative will monitor the implementation of the monthly action plan through weekly and monthly reports to be provided by the facilitator and through discussions with community members.

2. At the chiefdom level the chiefdom speaker will have fortnightly meetings with the intervention facilitator to be updated on the implementation of the MoU and will inform the Paramount Chief and other chiefdom authorities appropriately. The chiefdom speaker will conduct at least one visit to each village on a monthly basis to check with community members and get feedback on the implementation.

Review of the MoU

This MoU will be reviewed at the end of the intervention phase of the research on community-based child protection mechanisms. Based on the outcome of the review the parties to the MoU will make recommendations on future directions.

This MoU is agreed upon on this ______________________day of the month of October 2012 between the under-mentioned parties and shall come into force on the day of signing by the said parties.

1. ____

The Executive Director, Defense for Children International

2. ____

The Country Director, PLAN International

3. ____

The Director, Pikin to Pikin

4. ____

The Director, St. George's Foundation

5. ____

The Director, Restless Development

6. ____

The Director, Disabled Rights Movement

7. ____

The Director, Pikin to Pikin

8. ____

The Country Director, Action Aid International in Sierra Leone

9. ____

The Country Director, Marie Stopes

10. ____

The Director, Sierra Leone Red Cross Society

11. ____

The Paramount Chief, Kongbora Chiefdom

12. ____

The DMO, Moyamba District

13. ____

The Deputy Director of Education, Moyamba District

14. ____

The Chairman, Moyamba District Council

MGM 11. Sample Community-Developed Action Plan

Note: This action plan outline is not intended as a template and is for purposes of illustration only. In community-led work, it is valuable to enable communities to be creative in how they want to develop and express their action plan.

Harmonized Implementation Plan and Task Force

Roles for Magbaiamba Ndowahun Chiefdom, Bombali District to Address teenage pregnancies

What	How	When												Who	Where
		Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Service Providers	Village 2 (Pelewah)
Family Planning	Train group of Taskforce members on family planning	V			V						V			Task Force & Community/youth/ children	Respective Community
	Educate the community & families (village) meetings, CTA meetings, house-to-house outreach		V		V	V	V		V	V	V		V	Task Force & Community/youth/ children	Respective Community
	Send key messages (drama, music, radio, song)		V		V	V	V		V	V	V	V	V	Service Providers	Respective Community
	Provide contraceptives		V		V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	Task Force & Community/ youth/children	Respective Community

	Monitor & report to the community & service providers in FP		V		V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	Service Providers	Village 3 (Hunduwah)
Sexual Repro-duction Health Education	Train group of Task force members on Sexual Reproductive Health SRH			V		V								Task Force & Community/ youth/children	Respective Community
	Educate the community & families on ARH (hold meetings, door-to-door visits, peer drama)			V		V	V		V	V	V		V	Task Force	Respective Community
	Monitor and report to the community & service providers			V		V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	Service Providers	Respective community
Life Skills	Link with NGO/CSO to teach about life skills	V	V						V		V			Task Force	Makeni
	Train group of task force on life skills			V					V					Service Providers	Village—3 Pelewala
	Train community members (teachers, parents, children), Nurses on life skills			V	V				V	V	V		V	Task Force	Respective community

	Monitor & Report to the community & service providers on life skills.			V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	Task Force	Respective community

Harmonized task force roles

1. Link up with service providers for task force trainings and supply of contraceptives
2. Train and educate community members/youth/children on family planning/sexual reproductive health/life skills
3. Sensitizing the community through house-to-house visits, role-plays/drama/Songs/public announcements, CTA meetings, Peer-to-Peer activities
4. Mobilizing community members towards meetings and community activities
5. Arrange accommodation, meals for service providers
6. Manage resources relevant to the work (training logistics, posters etc.)
7. Monitoring of community activities/supply of drugs/use of drugs and report regularly on a bi-weekly basis to update chiefdom and village authorities
8. Coordinate the implementation, ensuring that the plan is followed
9. Encourage parents and families to ensure the co-operation of children in the entire work
10. Exercise/model by example a servant leadership role to engage every sector of the community in the implementation process

MGM 12. Sample Outline for Review Meeting

Note: There are many different modalities and processes that communities can use to take stock of their accomplishments and any adjustments that might be needed. This discussion and reflection-oriented tool is only one illustration.

Outline for Review Meeting: Adults

Purpose

For the past two years, the communities have worked hard to prevent teenage pregnancy. However, it is important to step back periodically and reflect on successes and challenges, and to use our collective learning to strengthen the intervention.

Objectives

The specific objectives are to:

- review the strengths and accomplishments ("good things done") of the action;
- identify the challenges that could limit the community-led action or make it difficult to implement it fully;
- define the way forward through collective problem-solving; and
- discuss the transition (exit) strategy and the new role of the community.

Working Agenda

9:30–9:40	Introductions and overview of the purpose of this meeting. (Overall facilitation by Marie and David)
9:40–10:00	Identify what they had planned to accomplish back at the time of the implementation planning meeting. (Plenary discussion; write key items on flip chart)
10:00–10:30	Tea break
10:30–11:30	Strengths & accomplishments discussion:

- In small groups by village, participants identify the things that have gone well in the intervention and the accomplishments, writing them on a flipchart (20–30 mins).

- Each of the village flipcharts is posted on the wall, and we go through them, identify areas of overlap and difference, and engage in plenary discussion about them. As we go, we ask: "How did villages achieve X?"

11:30–1:00 Challenges discussion

1:00–2:00 Lunch

2:00–3:00 How to address the challenges/The way forward. (Plenary discussion)

3:00–3:15 Soft drinks

3:15–4:15 New arrangements. Plenary discussion of:

- transition strategy and reduced presence of Ernest and Samba;

- the increasing responsibility of the community; and

- ongoing but reduced support from David and Marie.

4:15–4:30 Wrap-up

Note: To enable full participation by children, a separate meeting was conducted with children using participatory methodology and a small competition.

Outline for Review Meeting: Children

Purpose

For the past two years, the communities have worked hard to prevent teenage pregnancy. However, it is important to step back periodically and reflect on successes and challenges, and to use our collective learning to strengthen the community-led action.

Objectives

The specific objectives are to:

- review the strengths and accomplishments ("good things done") of the action;

- identify the challenges that could limit the action or make it difficult to implement it fully;

- define the way forward through collective problem-solving;
- discuss the transition strategy and the new role of the community.

An additional yet important objective with the children is to conduct a competition for the children, with their performances captured on video camera.

Working Agenda

9:30–9:40	Introductions and overview of the purpose of this meeting. (Overall facilitation by Marie and David)
9:40–0:00	Identify what they had planned to accomplish back at the time of the implementation planning meeting. (Plenary discussion; write key items on flip chart)
10:00–10:30	Tea break
10:30–11:30	Strengths & accomplishments discussion: • In small groups by village, participants identify the things that have gone well in the action and the accomplishments, writing them on a flipchart (20–30 mins); • Each of the village flipcharts is posted on the wall, and we go through them, identify areas of overlap and difference, and engage in plenary discussion about them. As we go, we ask: "How did villages achieve X?"
11:30–1:00	Challenges discussion
1:00–2:00	Lunch
2:00–3:00	How to address the challenges/The way forward. (Plenary discussion)
3:00–3:15	Soft drinks
3:15–3:30	Update on new arrangements. Update on: • transition strategy and reduced presence of Ernest and Samba; • the increasing responsibility of the community; • ongoing but reduced support from David and Marie.
3:30–4:30	Competition and wrap-up