

ETHICAL GUIDELINES

For ethical, meaningful and inclusive
children's participation practice



Save the Children

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Save the Children

2008

The vision

Save the Children works for:

- a world which respects and values each child
- a world which listens to children and learns
- a world where all children have hope and opportunity

The mission

Save the Children fights for children's rights.

We deliver immediate and lasting improvements to children's lives worldwide.

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Preface

These guidelines have been drawn up to ensure ethical, meaningful and inclusive child participation practice, both with and by children, young people and adults, during the Thematic Evaluation and Documentation process.

They draw upon existing Save the Children policies, practice standards and good practice guidelines for involving children in research, consultations, advocacy and so on (see *reference list at the end of this document*). In particular, these guidelines are underpinned by and should always be used in conjunction with the Child Protection Policy of the Save the Children or partner organization and the Save the Children Practice Standards in Children's Participation (2005).¹

The guidelines focus on:

- ensuring that Practice Standards on Children's Participation are fully incorporated in the process
- developing some general principles for good child participation practice
- exploring possible risks faced when working with children in conflict situations and ways of dealing with them
- ensuring that Child Protection issues are dealt with appropriately and sensitively
- ensuring that the diversity of children's experiences is captured
- ensuring that issues which reflect or reinforce child-adult power relations are dealt with
- exploring discrimination and ensuring non-discrimination is practiced
- ensuring effective communication and co-ordination

At the end of the guidelines there is a Checklist of some key ethical considerations for research involving children and young people.

These guidelines include some specific Scenarios which were discussed between participants (adults, children and young people) during the International Start Up Workshop for the thematic evaluation (November 2006) and the solutions for dealing with them as determined by the participants, as well as some additional scenarios of ethical issues faced by each of the 4 country teams during the evaluation and their solutions for dealing with them.

¹ An example of Save the Children's Child Protection Policy can be found in Annex One of this document

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This is an updated version of the guidelines originally produced in December 2006 and updated in March and October 2007. This final version (June 2008) incorporates suggestions made by children, young people and adults and ethical issues faced by them during an International Start Up Workshop (November 2006) and during the consultation, implementation and analysis phases of the thematic evaluation (November 2006-December 2007). These guidelines have been applied at country and global levels throughout the research and evaluation process.

Continuous reflection and action planning to ensure quality, ethical and inclusive participation practice has been a key feature of this evaluation process. It has been achieved through regular communication: among children, young people and adults who are involved in community based peace initiatives; among children and adult representatives who are periodically engaged in local and/or national level advisory groups (to guide the thematic evaluation work); and between the global researchers and country research teams via monthly updates, the virtual interest discussion groups, and key national workshops.

Country teams have also been encouraged to compliment these ethical guidelines with similar codes of conduct that may have been developed within country – for example, the code of conduct developed by the Children’s Council in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The evaluation has offered an opportunity to promote such examples of ethical considerations, frameworks and practice developed specifically to ensure the genuine involvement of children in various processes.

Incorporating Good Child Protection and Child Participation Practice

Save the Children’s Child Protection Policy and the Practice Standards in Children’s Participation (2005) should be applied to all Save the Children’s participatory work with children.

The Practice Standards are intended to ensure consistent, high quality work with children. They can be used to establish a safe and meaningful environment for the participation of children which minimizes the risk to children from their involvement in participatory processes.

Save the Children supports meaningful, good quality children’s participation that gives children a genuine opportunity to express their views, be involved in decisions or take action.

The Practice Standards have been developed based on years of experience of supporting children’s participation and on feedback and consultations with Save the Children staff, partner organizations and children. They should be interpreted within the context of the following principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

- Children have rights to be listened to, to freely express their views on all matters that affect them, and to freedom of expression, thought, association and access to information.
- Measures should be put in place to encourage and facilitate their participation in accordance with their age and maturity.
- Participation should promote the best interest of the child and enhance the personal development of the child.
- All children have equal rights to participation without discrimination.
- All children have the right to be protected from manipulation, violence, abuse and exploitation.

Overview of Practice Standards

- Standard 1 – An ethical approach: transparency, honesty and accountability
- Standard 2 – Children’s participation is relevant and voluntary
- Standard 3 – A child-friendly, enabling environment
- Standard 4 – Equality of opportunity
- Standard 5 – Staff are effective and confident
- Standard 6 – Participation promotes the safety and protection of children
- Standard 7 – Ensuring follow up and evaluation

Each standard is accompanied by a set of criteria. For more information consult the Save the Children Practice Standards in Children’s Participation (2005), available in pdf format and printed copy in English, French and Spanish.

SECTION ONE – Some General Principles

These ethical guidelines begin by outlining some general principles that need to be considered when involving children and young people in processes. These general principles are intended to be universally applicable although they have been adapted to the specific context in which each of the country research teams has been working. **Participants at the International Start Up Workshop agreed upon a set of collective issues outlined below that are relevant to the thematic evaluation and its documentation process.**

Under each heading, some key issues to think about are stated. This is however not an exhaustive nor an exclusive list of issues but rather important examples of some of the key things to be considered under each of the headings.

Avoiding harm to participants – researchers are responsible for making sure that the research they conduct will do no harm to children or adults. Children and young people must not be put at risk. Therefore, efforts must be made to analyze risk and to develop strategies to reduce risk to children and young people - for example, to ensure that children do not travel alone, late at night or in unsafe areas where there are landmines or other dangers. This risk analysis and development of strategies to overcome any real or perceived risks should be carried out together with the children and young people involved and their support adults. There must also be skilled support available to children and young people (and adults) to help them deal with any distress they may feel in cases where they have disclosed information about harmful, abusive, exploitative or negative experiences (whether from their past or present experiences). **It is crucial that local and trusted psycho-social help is available in each research location throughout the research / evaluation process.** In addition, regular supervision mechanisms should be in place for all researchers (adults, young people and/or children) to ensure they are dealing appropriately with any stress/distress arising from their involvement in research or evaluation processes.

Child protection – ensuring child protection is an integral part of planning and implementing research. A child protection strategy must be developed for each participatory process. This will include, **among other** issues: adequate supervision and protection of children; assessment of the risks of children speaking out, campaigning or undertaking advocacy; protection of children’s identities; obtaining informed consent for the use of all information provided by children; the establishment of formal procedures – for example, for sensitively responding to disclosures from children about abuse or inadequate care or protection; organizing the proper insurance of children when they are participating in external events outside of their area. This includes both travel and medical insurance.

Informed consent - participation must be both relevant and voluntary to the children involved. Consent should also include agreement with the type of tools and methods being used. Informed consent implies that participants have access to adequate, appropriate, reader (child) friendly information before consenting/dissenting. The use of simple consent forms is essential to this. Participants must be aware of their rights – for example, to withdraw from the research process at any time. It is also important to

gain consent, understanding and acceptance from parents, step-parents and the wider community, and not just the individual participant. For school based children's groups it may also be necessary to gain written consent from the head teacher or other key teaching staff.

Confidentiality – as a general rule confidentiality must be maintained at all times and participants' identities must be protected. Research teams are responsible for confidentiality. In particular, when children or adults share negative experiences it is crucial to protect their identity. In contexts where children or adults have shared positive experiences regarding their individual or collective contributions to peace building, the research team should discuss with them whether they want their real name / their Child Group's real name included, or whether they would prefer that an alternative (made up) name is used. For example, children and/or young people who play an active role in the evaluation process may wish to be included as authors, contributors. This should be discussed with the participants before a final decision is reached. Some issues to be considered and discussed may include:

- are there people who might want to harm you as a result of public acknowledgement of your participation/contribution? How would your friends and family react? Are there people you need to protect? It may be appropriate for researchers to sign a confidentiality agreement.
- *Confidentiality must never replace the need to protect children* – appropriate action must be taken if participants disclose abuse they are suffering or have suffered (*as per child protection point above*).

An ethical approach – this is an approach which recognizes the power imbalance between children and adults – and/or between different groups of children and young people – and develops strategies to address this. It means that care is taken to ensure that researchers do not impose their research or their views on children. An ethical approach ensures respect and appreciation for the contributions of all children and young people, whatever their age, ability, background etc. An ethical approach requires awareness and consideration of the local and national socio-cultural, religious and political context.

An inclusive approach – this means that equal opportunities are created for all girls and boys, no matter what their age, ability etc., to take part. Children and young people are themselves encouraged to reflect on and address patterns of exclusion or discrimination. The diverse childhoods and different experiences of girls and boys in different contexts should be explored and reflected. Fair and transparent processes for representation need to be developed that give equal opportunities to all children and young people.

Timing of the research – ensuring research and evaluation planning that responds to both the constraints and the opportunities in the time children have available for their meaningful and effective engagement in these sort of processes and activities is crucial. In particular, workshops and more intensive research activities should be planned at times that do not interfere with children's school work, especially exam periods. School holidays are one key opportunity for organizing key workshops which require participants to be available for 3-5 days. The school and cultural calendar year should therefore be taken into consideration when planning research and evaluation with and by children. Children and young people's household, agricultural or income generation work, as well as the timing of festivals, should also be taken into account when developing realistic research and evaluation plans with and by children and young people. Cooperation and support from adults within local NGOs may also be vital during holiday periods to support children in undertaking their research, evaluation or action plan activities. Broader efforts to secure the support of NGO senior managers to allow their staff to support children during such periods are therefore important.

Motivation for research – transparency is needed about the criteria and motivation for participation. It is important to manage any expectations about material or symbolic 'rewards' for participation. It is also important to ensure that the work does not lead to an increase in status or attention for individuals or groups leading to tensions between groups and/or within communities. Payment for transport and incidental costs should be part of research and evaluation budgeted activities and refreshments and meals

should be provided during participation. A certificate is often a good way to acknowledge participation. Efforts should also be made to ensure that people's livelihood is not negatively affected by the time engaged in research activities. If this is identified as a significant need by children and young people during the research activities then links with existing programs need to be made to see what possibilities exist – or can be made available – for marginalized groups of young people to access information about increased livelihood / income generation opportunities. Attention to the additional child care needs of child mothers also requires consideration to ensure that the participants' own children are adequately cared for and not put at risk while their mothers are actively participating in the research/ thematic evaluation process. Consideration of the time and support expected of adults who work closely with the children's groups/ clubs and accompany them through this process also needs to be kept in mind. This needs to be done at the beginning of the process to ensure clear and realistic expectations and transparency about the possibility for and provision of any allowances (for example, to cover transport costs etc).

Wider accountability – this includes providing feedback on results and findings to children, communities and other stakeholders who participate, acknowledging the capacities of children and responding to and acting upon their concerns, recommendations and priorities. The development and distribution of child/age friendly summary reports (in local languages) from key workshops or processes is one way to support such feedback.

SECTION TWO – Possible Risks Faced when Working with Children in Conflict Situations and Ways of Dealing with Them

In a Working Paper (see list of **Key Resources** below for more details) Jason Hart and Bex Tyrer explore the ethical issues involved in undertaking research with children living amidst armed conflict.

They note how the “*environment of armed conflict poses particular challenges for safe, ethically responsible research involving children*” (Hart & Tyrer, page 18). They therefore emphasize the need for good preparation and the need to be aware of and anticipate possible risks beforehand and have strategies to deal with them.

They suggest a list of key questions to be asked before meeting and working with children and young people in the difficult and challenging situations caused by conflict (Hart & Tyrer, pages 18-19). These (slightly adapted) questions have been made available to country teams when planning their work with children and young people during this evaluation.

- What concerns are likely to exist amongst the immediate community about bringing children together for research activities? How can these be dealt with?
- How might such concerns relate to the specific composition of groups of children – for example, mixed groups of males and females or children from different class, caste or ethnic groupings? How can these be dealt with?
- Are the local political-military actors likely to take an interest in these activities? If so, what relationships may be needed to be built and what assurances received and given?
- Does the schedule of issues to explore through research contain anything that participating children, their families, communities and political-military actors might consider inappropriate?
- In the event that the research creates upset for individual children or division amongst participants or adverse reaction from others, what resources – individual or organizational – exist to provide back-up support (including psycho-social support) in addressing such problems?
- What spaces, if any, exist within the immediate area where it is possible to conduct research with children and young people in a manner that ensures security and privacy without raising suspicion?
- Which areas need to be avoided during research activities to avoid risk of danger to children such as landmines, child abduction or armed conflict?

- How can the research action plans for different areas be flexible enough to take into consideration the socio-political context, the possibility of strikes, continued conflict, insecurity or instability, disruption caused by elections etc?
- How can children and young people be supported to safely engage and participate in political/ policy making processes that concern them (such as the formal peace talks for Northern Uganda taking place in Juba; the constitutional election process in Nepal; the presidential elections in Guatemala) while also being protected?

Strategies to identify and minimize risks to children and young people in situations of conflict and post conflict include:

- The need to understand the local context and gather information to identify and analyze potential risks. It is especially important to understand the context of the conflict and its impact on various aspects of the community, family and children's lives. It is also important to understand the policy environment and existing decision making structures within the local community, at district or national level, as appropriate
- Assess the risks of children meeting with different target groups, to ensure that children will not face significant risks by interacting with certain stakeholders, and support preparations for safe, meaningful and influential interactions between children and key adults. Share background information with children about the adults that they are considering interacting with, such as, government officials, members of parliament, rebel leaders, religious or cultural leaders. Share information about the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders, the kind of work they do and the influence they have. Work together with children to help them analyze and plan the most safe and effective ways to influence these key adults in positive ways. Remember to refer to and apply good practice in supporting children's participation which promotes the safety and protection of children. If risks are deemed too high then consider other appropriate and safer alternatives – for example, adults speaking or advocating on behalf of children while keeping children's voices at the centre of the debate
- The importance of having a flexible research process which keeps the principle of 'do no harm' at the forefront of all planning so that if strikes or political instability occur the work with children and adults in communities can be postponed until it is safe enough to continue
- The need to hold meetings with different stakeholders – community leaders, leaders of political parties, religious leaders – and discuss with them the importance of listening to children's views and to ensure that children and the spaces closest to them (schools etc) are protected from involvement and incursions by armed forces and groups or political party interests, manipulation and propaganda
- Adults need to think about what they can do to support children – in terms of ensuring neutrality, transparency and trust
- The need to prepare children for any consequences of actions – through a comprehensive child protection plan / strategy
- The importance of ensuring that psycho-social support is available (for immediate support and/or for referrals of children, young people or adults) throughout the research/ evaluation process
- The need to make national and international advocacy links and work to prevent abductions and the recruitment of children into conflict
- The need to identify any high risk areas which should be avoided during the research activities

SECTION THREE – Child Protection – Identifying Key Protection Issues and Ensuring Appropriate and Sensitive Responses

Confidentiality must never replace the need to protect children and appropriate action must always be taken if participants disclose abuse they are suffering or have suffered. In addition, during research or evaluation work, children or adults may identify cases where follow up is needed to ensure children access education opportunities or better care and protection. This must be done in a responsible and sensitive way.

In abuse cases: If a researcher, evaluator or facilitator has concerns that a child is at risk of harm they must first of all talk carefully with the child before taking any action. The researcher may wish to encourage the child to talk with a trusted adult so that action can be planned and taken. If the child does not wish to tell anyone, a researcher may still need to take action to protect the welfare and well-being of the child concerned. The child must be told that this is going to happen.

Research/evaluation/facilitation teams should have plans in place to deal appropriately and sensitively to situations of possible disclosure and other forms of protection and/or education needs. This includes the need to identify in advance local organizations and/or individuals who have skills to provide psycho-social support to children who have faced traumatic experiences.

In other cases, children and/or adults involved in research activities may identify working children or children with disabilities, for example, who are not attending school; or, cases of orphaned children who are living without adequate care and protection. In such scenarios, initial sensitive discussions with the children and adults concerned will need to take place before taking further action. Wherever appropriate (and with the permission of both the child and adults) referral to relevant local agencies may be made to ensure appropriate and adequate support and follow up.

SECTION FOUR – Exploring the Diversity of Children’s Experiences

There is increasing recognition that children’s experiences of childhood are diverse and are affected by gender, age, dis/ability, level of family income, ethnicity, culture, religion, geography, socio-political context and other factors. Throughout the thematic evaluation and documentation process it was important to ensure that the diversity of children’s experiences was adequately explored and reflected. This application of ‘respect for diversity’ could be determined by some clear objectives for the research process. For example:

- How has the evaluation led to a better understanding of the experiences, reflections, views and aspirations of both boys and girls in different contexts?
- How were boys and girls, children with disabilities and ethnic minority children supported to have equal opportunities to participate in the evaluation process?
- How have some of the most marginalized groups of children (for example children who have been internally displaced, who are living in camps, who are formerly abducted child soldiers, child mothers or working children etc) been able to share their experiences and views?
- How were tools and processes adapted to enable younger children and children with disabilities to participate? How did children participate actively according to their age and abilities?
- How has children’s ethnicity, caste or religion impacted upon their experiences of conflict, or their understanding and approach to peace building?
- Is all information separated out and analyzed according to gender, age, dis/ability and background - wherever appropriate highlighting differences in children’s experiences during the evaluation and documentation process?
- How are adults’ views of childhood and behavior with girls and boys influenced by an understanding of diverse childhood experiences?
- Do adults recognize children’s role as social actors and as agents of peace? How have adult’s views of children and children’s childhood changed as a result of the conflict or post-conflict situation?

SECTION FIVE – Dealing with Adult-Child Power Relations

There are inevitable imbalances in power and status between adults and children, particularly in contexts affected by conflict (see *also Section Six*). This calls for an ethical approach to participation as described above under **General Principles**.

Researchers may support group discussions and the use of participatory activities with separate groups of girls and boys of different ages and/or backgrounds to ensure that each group has a fair chance to express their views and opinions. In addition, adults (parents, step-parents, teachers, community members etc) should be encouraged to understand the importance of providing space for children to express their own views to ensure that adults do not dominate, dictate or manipulate children's views. With this in mind, it is usually beneficial to organize sensitization or capacity building workshops with support adults and other adults in the community in order to engender a better understanding of the meaning and benefits of children's participation.

The difference between children's and adult's views may create conflict. There is a need to ensure that children's views are not ignored by adults and that children do not face risk as a result of any perceived differences in opinion. The community needs to be prepared to listen to the views of girls and boys and to take these views seriously and positively. Efforts to involve parents, step-parents, teachers, head teachers, community members, NGO staff and managers, government officials and other key adults in children's lives throughout the evaluation process helped them to develop behavior and attitudes which support children's expression. The establishment of Advisory Committees/ Boards with representation of children (who are actively involved in the thematic evaluation process) and adults (such as parents, local NGO members, government officials, Save the Children) provided a useful forum to discuss and address differences in opinion. In addition, the use of formative dialogue research helped generate dialogue between adults and children through a sensitive exploration of differences of opinion and identification of how adults can positively respond to, support and act upon children's views and suggestions.

SECTION SIX – Discrimination and Non-Discrimination

Power relations also exist between groups of children and young people - for example between older and younger children, children of different ethnic, caste or religious groups, school going children compared with non-school going children, children with different abilities/ disabilities, children who have been internally displaced compared to children living in their own communities and children associated (or formerly associated) with the armed forces or military groups, including child mothers.

Participatory processes and work should challenge and not reinforce existing patterns of discrimination and exclusion. They should encourage those groups of children who typically suffer discrimination and who are often excluded – especially from consultations, activities and/or decision-making processes – to be involved.

Children and young people should be encouraged to reflect on patterns of inclusion and exclusion in their own participatory and peace initiatives. They should be supported to address exclusion and discrimination and helped to achieve more inclusive processes.

Strategies to include children of different ages, abilities and backgrounds include:

- Talking to parents, step-parents, community leaders, teachers, NGO staff and government officials to make them aware that all children have equal rights to express themselves (regardless of age, ability, background or gender).
- Support child club/ association members, parents, step-parents, community leaders, teachers, head teachers, NGO staff and government officials to recognize the capabilities and positive potential of all children and to overcome discriminatory attitudes towards certain groups of children (such as formerly abducted child soldiers, child mothers, children with disabilities, younger children).

- Analyze and adapt existing information and tools to ensure their effectiveness for engaging younger children and children with different abilities.
- Make special efforts to ensure that children with disabilities have physical access and support to participate
- Use creative (song, dance, drawing, drama) and/or alternative forms of communication (sign language, support communicator) to support younger children and children with disabilities to express their views and participate
- Observe younger children's play and facilitate discussions with younger children about the meaning of their play/ games
- Help children with disabilities and younger children to build their self esteem and to recognize their capabilities and capacities
- Ensure safe environments for girls (and boys) of different ages: make sure that they are accompanied by adults they know and trust; ensure access to first aid, including sanitary provision for young girls
- Work separately with children of different age groups or from particular backgrounds (working children, children associated with armed forces or military groups, child mothers etc).
- Ensure child mothers have adequate support so that their own children are looked after and protected while they are actively engaged in the research/ thematic evaluation process
- Respect children's religious beliefs and practices (for example, in Uganda, children and young people's commitment to prayer was supported during the evaluation workshops).

SECTION SEVEN – Communication and Co-Ordination

To ensure effective communication and meaningful participatory work with children and young people as researchers it is essential that effective communication and co-ordination mechanisms are in place at each level. These need to involve children and young people (from clubs, associations, groups), their parents/ step parents, adults associated with their clubs and groups, school head teachers, NGO facilitators and managers, SC staff at field offices, SC national office, the national researchers and global researchers.

During the evaluation, clear systems for information exchange, co-ordination and communication needed to be in place between the SC national office, the relevant SC field offices and the NGO partners who were supporting children's clubs/ groups to participate in the research. Ongoing communication and co-ordination with community leaders, head teachers (for school based children's groups), and district government officials was also advantageous for supporting safe and meaningful participation and for ensuring adequate and appropriate responses to children's views and recommendations.

Significant time is also needed to translate any globally-produced documents/frameworks/information into the relevant local languages as well as to translate local reports to English for wider sharing. This was a considerable challenge during the evaluation which was largely overcome through good and advanced planning in order to allow the timely distribution of relevant materials.

Logistic, administration and financial procedures also needed to be in place to ensure that the children and young people who were working as researchers at the local level were provided with the resources necessary (such as flipchart paper, pens, tape, files etc) and support (for example, transport and refreshment where necessary) to undertake their research and evaluation work.

The establishment of an *Advisory Committee/ Board* (as mentioned above) with representation of children and young people, adults supporting their clubs and groups, parents, NGO partners, SC field office staff, SC national office staff, government officials, the national researchers, and other key stakeholders was key to enhancing effective communication and co-ordination. Depending upon the geographic spread of the research and evaluation work either one national Advisory Committee was established and/or Project level Advisory Committees were established in key geographic areas – with linkages to the National Advisory Committee. It was proposed that the Advisory Committees met 3-4 times a year to inform and strengthen implementation of the study and genuine follow up action with and by children, young people,

key NGOs and other stakeholders. To ensure meaningful information exchange and advice among members of the advisory group – each agency/ group represented should – from the outset - be encouraged to send the same representative to each meeting.

CHECKLIST – Some Key Considerations for Ethical Research and Discussions with Children and Young People

- Ensure effective communication and co-ordination systems are in place with all stakeholders (from local to national / global level)
- Ensure that all researchers are introduced to and fully understand the organization's Child Protection Policy and that they have signed it or a similar Code of Conduct as part of the contracting procedure
- Assess the risks to participants before you begin the research and make sure you have strategies to deal with or minimize any risks
- Plan research and evaluation activities at times that suit children and young people, and at times that do not interfere with their school work (or other important household or other responsibilities)
- Ensure that children and young people have access to the materials and support they need to carry out the research and evaluation activities safely and effectively
- Make sure that all participants have given their informed consent to their involvement and that they can withdraw this consent at any point. Make sure that parents/step-parents/carers/guardians understand, accept and support the process that their children are involved in and that they give their consent
- In addition, seek the support of the wider community/ school and people who are also important to the lives of the children and young people locally, especially to raise awareness about children's rights for all children
- Make sure that you respect the privacy and anonymity of the children and young people during research and evaluation processes – while being prepared to deal with any disclosures
- Ensure that children's views and experiences remain anonymous and confidential in written documents or media reports – particularly if negative experiences are being shared. For example, if sharing a quote or story provide key background information to indicate where the information comes from but not enough to identify the child/children – *11 year old boy, child club, Nepal*
- Be prepared to take responsibility when children need immediate support or protection, especially in relation to distress or possible disclosure
- Make arrangements for follow up psycho-social or other forms of support to individual children if they need it
- Make sure that methods are used which allow all children to actively participate according to their age, abilities etc
- Make sure that issues of discrimination are dealt with and that the research is conducted in a non-discriminatory and inclusive way which particularly allows the voices of discriminated-against groups to be heard
- Check with children and young people their spoken or written words or drawings and any interpretations of them. Be clear with children and young people if and how these will be used – while respecting confidentiality *as above*
- Make sure that you address issues of material or symbolic rewards for participation in a transparent and fair way and that you manage all expectations in this respect
- Make sure you give quality and good feedback to all those involved, including the wider community

FOUR SCENARIOS and ways of dealing with them – examples from the International Start Up Workshop (November 2006)

SCENARIO 1: FOR ADULTS – LOCAL POLITICAL-MILITARY ACTORS TAKE AN INTEREST IN THE ACTIVITIES OF LOCAL CHILDREN'S CLUBS

The adult group drew on the actual experience of the Nepal country team for resolving this scenario.

- Need to map the scenario – what is happening in the conflict situation (risk mapping)
- Need to hold meetings with different stakeholders – community leaders, leaders of political parties, religious leaders. Discuss with them that children are politically neutral and all stakeholders need to protest about use of children and children's groups to impose their slogans and ideologies
- Children's clubs can mobilise to protest against political-military activities within children's groups. This actually happened in Nepal. During a campaign for school enrolment rebel groups removed the campaign banner because permission had not been asked. The children's clubs held a meeting between adults and the children's clubs and convinced the rebel groups that education and children are zones of peace
- Adults need to think about what they can do to support children – in terms of neutrality, transparency and trust. They need to bring on board those who are powerful and have decision making power and get them to support children. The risks in connection with this have to be mapped however
- Need to prepare children for any consequences of actions – through a comprehensive child protection plan / strategy
- Need to make the international advocacy links and work to prevent abductions and the recruitment of children into conflict

SCENARIO 2: FOR CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE – A CONSULTATION ABOUT A NEW RESEARCH PROJECT IS BEING COORDINATED IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY. YOUNG GIRLS AND CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES ARE BEING EXCLUDED

- In a community there are girls and boys, including children with disabilities – the views of all children should be taken into account, including children of different ages and children with disabilities
- Need to talk to parents, community leaders and government officials to make them aware and to convince them that all children have equal rights and a chance to express themselves (regardless of age, disability or gender). May need to convince the parents of children's capabilities and ensure access and safety measures for children to participate.
- Special efforts to enable children with disabilities to participate, such as:
 - Access - go to see children in their own homes, and/or provide wheelchair or porter to assist children to join meetings
 - Use alternative creative forms of communication – helping those who cannot hear to write or draw; ensuring that those who cannot see can still hear and share their views; get someone who knows the child best to support communication
- Ensure safe environments for girls (and boys) of different ages – let them come with their escorts/ accompanying adults; ensure access to first aid including sanitary provision for young girls
- Help children with disabilities and younger children to build their self esteem and confidence and to recognise their capabilities and capacities
- Hold separate group work with children of different age groups
- Use forms of creative expression including song, dance, drawing, drama
- Researchers should be kind, patient, understanding and flexible – they should be prepared to include all children (of different ages and abilities)

SCENARIO 3: FOR ADULTS – CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN A RESEARCH PROJECT AND ARE READY TO MAKE THE RESULTS PUBLIC. THEIR VIEWS ARE NOT THE SAME AS THOSE OF THE ADULTS IN THE COMMUNITY

- The difference between children's and adult's views may create conflict therefore need to do a risk assessment of presenting the results as they are. Need to avoid – adults ignoring children's views because they disagree with them and/or children being placed at risk
- Need to prepare community for the different opinions and views. Use different strategies to do this but also need to empower children so that when the results are presented the risks are minimised
- By doing this you would meet all the necessary Practice Standards, except practice standard 4 (equality of opportunity)

SCENARIO 4: FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE – ONE CHILDREN'S GROUP IN THE AREA IS CONSTANTLY BEING SELECTED TO REPRESENT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

- Give opportunity to other people so that they feel, learn and understand what it is to be a leader. Make sure that people communicate with kindness and give opportunities to other children so that they too can become leaders. It's important that other children understand what leaders are doing and why they're acting like they do
- Involve all children so that they know what is being done in peace activities is being done for all of them and not just for a few. Otherwise, if only a few children are involved then the others will think that they are not involved in the peace activities
- All members of the group should get a chance to represent the group. For example, consider a system of rotational representation for each main research or workshop activity
- All children have an equal right to participate
- Discrimination should be discouraged
- I would like to share – and recommend - my experience of my group when we have a change of leadership every year through an election process
- All children should discuss all questions and ideas – every child should be involved in the discussions
- NGOs must make sure that they reach all children so that children do not feel that they are excluded
- Every child in each group has the same position and they must all be able to express their opinions and ideas. Representatives of groups must express the ideas and interests of a wider group of children

ADDITIONAL SCENARIOS and ways of dealing with them – examples from Country Team Experiences (2007)

These additional scenarios indicate the importance of ensuring continuous efforts to act upon, reflect upon and further implement ethical guidelines with careful consideration of the local socio-cultural, political context.

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA: OVERCOMING PARENTAL CONCERNS TO GAIN CONSENT FOR CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION.

In two project locations where the thematic evaluation has been carried out, after the introductory activities of children to the thematic evaluation the children were asked to take the consent forms to their parents to give their approval to children's participation in the thematic evaluation.

The parents of children that are the representatives of ethnic minority groups in these locations refused to sign the consent form after they read the title of the evaluation. They explained that they did not want their children to take part in discussions talking about the past, and suggested that the partner organization and Save the Children Norway should rather be focusing on the future.

This issue has been indicative of two things – lack of readiness among people of different backgrounds (particularly ethnic) to talk/confront the past, as well as concerns of parents that are a minority in the community about the safety of their children in situations where their views and inputs regarding the past are requested.

To overcome this problem the following was important:

- The Save the Children Norway research team and partner organizations organized a meeting of parents (groups or individuals) in order to provide additional information about the thematic evaluation, its purpose and objectives as well as benefits for children;
- During the presentation the SC practice standards on child participation and child protection issues were particularly highlighted;
- The credibility and trust that partner organizations have in their local communities, as well long-term partnerships that have been built with Save the Children Norway, have proven important in building the trust and confidentiality of the parents regarding this;
- The role of the main researcher was also important in this process and her follow up with the children and partner organizations regarding this issue; as well as her sensitivity and communication skills in presenting to parents and children that Save the Children Norway and partner organizations would ensure that no harm would be done to children participating in the research process;
- The role of other minority children whose parents allowed them to participate was important as they could present to their peers and their parents the positive aspects of the research and the relevance of it as they experienced it throughout the thematic evaluation – for example, opportunities to meet with children from other ethnic backgrounds and from different parts of BiH;

An indication of the success of this work is that, throughout the thematic evaluation process, the number of children from minority groups in these project locations has been steadily growing.

NEPAL: ISSUES CONCERNING REPRESENTATION AND EXPOSURE OF THE SAME CHILDREN IN BARDIA, WESTERN NEPAL

Prior to the global thematic evaluation start up workshop that took place in Uganda (in November 2006), one of local NGO partners of Save the Children Norway Nepal selected one of the child club chairpersons in their region – a girl from a dalit family - to participate in the international workshop as a child representative.

However, when the girl returned from the start up workshop to her home town, the community members along with other Child Club members questioned her about her representation - why had she had this opportunity for exposure and learning and why not others? Although she was from a dalit family, within the local context she was from a well off family. Thus, some of the community people and Child Club members showed their frustration, mentioning that only rich and elite have better opportunity. Some of them threatened the girl that they would file case against her.

The girl explained her case, that she and her family did not have any role in the selection. She suggested that perhaps Save the Children Norway might have faced time constraint to follow the proper selection process and had therefore asked the local NGO to select a potential candidate for the purpose of attending the workshop.

The local NGO also intervened to further explain the case to the community and child club members. They explained that the thematic evaluation would provide opportunity for more children to be actively involved and to further develop their skills. The girl herself also encouraged other members of the Child Club CC to participate actively and gave opportunities for other children to represent in other opportunities.

This has been an important lesson for Save the Children Norway Nepal and the local NGO partners. Systematic efforts must be made by Save the Children Norway and their NGO partners to put into practice its key quality element where-by the child participation process which is based on inclusiveness, equity, respect honesty, transparency and non- discrimination and promote the principles of sharing leadership and decision making.

UGANDA: DEVELOPING A ROTATIONAL SYSTEM OF REPRESENTATION TO ENSURE INCLUSIVE PRACTICE:

During a peace club's meeting attended by the research team, children asked whether the same members who attended the last workshop would be the very ones to attend the next workshop! In fact, one member remarked, "If the same members keep on going for workshops, then there is no need why we should stay as members in this club."

This issue of representation was raised by almost all the clubs and associations involved in the Thematic Evaluation. As a result of this, the research team arranged for consultations with other stakeholders about it. The children were raising an important issue of inclusive and increased participation.

It was subsequently agreed that different children/young people, other than those who attended a previous workshop, be given the opportunity to attend the next workshop. This was immediately communicated to all clubs and associations. Since then, the rotational system of representation has been the mode of selecting children and young people to participate in activities organized under the Thematic Evaluation.

How the rotational system of representation works:

- Democratic elections: Children/ young people through a democratic process elect their own representatives to represent them each time in any activity.
- Inclusive and ethical participation: Children/ young people ensure that the process is inclusive and ethical. That is, equal number of boys and girls involved of different: age groups; ethnic/tribal background; abilities (including children living with disabilities); educational background.
- Peer sharing and learning: Elected children/young people have the responsibility to share knowledge and skills they have gained with peers in clubs and associations.

GUATEMALA: RISKS FACED WHILE PAINTING A MURAL IN A LOCAL COMMUNITY WHICH HAS BEEN AFFECTED BY INSECURITY

The young man's father threatened to kill the youths from ACJ who had intervened during the fight. He said he was willing to defend his community from those who kept alive the idea of the war and that he was not afraid of anything or anybody.

The youths from ACJ and the researcher decided to leave the place. As they were preparing to leave they were intimidated and insulted by the young man and others who threw stones and brandished a firearm.

Children who were participating in painting the mural got scared and started running away. Young people from Santa Isobel (who were from the local area and also participating in the development of the mural) advised the rest of the group that it would be best for them to leave the place immediately. To ensure the safety of the participating children, adolescents and young people, they all left the area. Young people from Santa Isobel II informed the National Civil Police but police officers never arrived to provide assistance or control the violence being perpetuated.

After the incident discussions were held with the neighbourhood committee during which the participants shared their experience of that day and discussed issues relating to insecurity, violence and migration as well as the process of the Thematic Evaluation.

The neighbourhood committee expressed their interest in the mural and the broader thematic evaluation activities. They assured the group that, if new activities related to the evaluation were to be carried out, they could accompany participants. During the discussions the committee emphasized the insecurity in the settlement and the municipality of Villa Nueva with gang members, hit men, armed drug traffickers and others engaged in criminal activities. They offered to attend future workshops in order to understand and learn more about the topics addressed by the Thematic Evaluation which are relevant to the violence experienced on that day.

Ethical considerations:

When planning the mural no specific precautionary measures were taken since the ACJ works in the area and there had previously been no such incidents. Participants were therefore not afraid. The incident however raises questions such as:

- Is it safe to carry out activities where children are exposed to risk?
- If this kind of activity is carried out should police officers be present to protect those involved?
- The insecurity that prevails in the community is not conducive to carrying out this kind of activity. Many people who live in the area have firearms
- What effective support could ACJ and Save the Children Norway provide in a worse case scenario whereby harm comes to participants as a result of their participation?

Adult opinions:

Parents have expressed the most concern since the incident. They are concerned about the safety of their children who live in this environment of fear. They have expressed their resistance to holding this kind of activity.

What it means to children and young people and their peace building work:

About 60% of the mural was completed that day. Some time later young people involved in the workshop completed about 30% more. The group still needs to work on a quote from the Guatemalan poet Otto René Castillo, to complete the mural: "NADA PODRA DETENER ESTA AVALANCHA DE AMOR ARMADA DE FUTURO HASTA LOS DIENTES. Y NADA PODRA CONTRA LA VIDA, PORQUE NADA PUDO JAMAS CONTRA LA VIDA" - 'Nothing can stop this avalanche of love fully armed with future. And nothing will stop life, because nothing has been able to fight against life'. Children who had started working on the mural decided not to work on it further as they were strongly affected by the violent incident. However, they have recently expressed their willingness to continue working to build peace. Continuation of this work will depend on the follow up of ACJ with the groups of children and young people involved within the framework of peace building generated by the evaluation.



NEPAL: ENSURING CHILDREN (ESPECIALLY GIRLS) DO NOT TRAVEL OR WORK ALONE DURING THE THEMATIC EVALUATION PROCESS, A CASE EXAMPLE FROM TANAHUN, CENTRAL NEPAL

After attending a Capacity Building workshop in April 2007 child researchers from the project research team in Tanahun, Naumati Gurung planned to visit one of the child clubs to carry out activities for the thematic evaluation. However, as one of child researchers fell sick, the other child researcher travelled alone. She walked alone through a jungle, where she felt insecure and afraid to reach the Child Club on time. Fortunately she reached the Child Club safely, without harm.

However, this was identified as dangerous practice. Protection must also be a priority during the process of child participation, including protection from any risk situations that may arise from their involvement in any initiative. Save the Children Norway has a policy where-by a child should be accompanied by someone, ideally an adult with the same gender – for example a boy with another boy or man, and a girl with another girl or women, to further their protection.

Based on the ethical guidelines which had been discussed in different working meetings, as well as Save the Children Norway's child protection policy, the National research Team discussed this issue with the project research team (with adult and child members). They clarified the importance of always following the ethical guidelines and the child protection policy to ensure safe, good practice. The project research team took these considerations seriously.

Some Key Resources

Save the Children (2003), So you want to consult with children? A toolkit of good practice

Save the Children Sweden (2003), Child Participation in Research: Reflections from the Care and Protection of Separated Children in Emergencies Project. Gillian Mann and David Tolfree

Save the Children (2004), So you want to involve children in research? A toolkit supporting children's meaningful and ethical participation in research relating to violence against children

Save the Children, (2004), Documentation and assessment of capacity building in child participation in Viet Nam and the Southeast Asia and Pacific region since 2000, Protocol document, *English language version*

Save the Children (2005), Practice Standards in Children's Participation

Save the Children (date), Child Protection Policy (*available below in Annex One*)

Save the Children (2005), Tools for Exploring Diverse Childhoods: Implications for Protection (Tina Hyder and Claire O'Kane)

Save the Children Sweden (unpublished, undated), Children's Participation – What to do with the information collected?

Refugee Studies Centre (2005), Protection through Participation: Young People Affected by Forced Migration and Political Crisis (Jesse Newman, RSC Working Paper No 20)

Refugee Studies Centre (2006), Research with Children Living in Situations of Armed Conflict: Concepts, Ethics and Methods (Jason Hart and Bex Tyrer, RSC Working Paper No 30)

Save the children (2007), Child Protection in Emergencies; Priorities, Principles and Practices

Appendix: Save the Children's Child Protection Policy

Introduction

States Parties shall protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse. (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), Article 19) Members of the International Save the Children Alliance have a common commitment to the prevention of child abuse and the protection of children. The abuse and exploitation of children happens in all countries and societies across the world. This policy sets out common values, principles, and beliefs and describes the steps that will be taken in meeting our commitment to protect children. The policy was adopted by the International Save the Children's Member's Meeting May 2003.

Our commitment to protect children

Our values, principles and beliefs

- All child abuse involves the abuse of children's rights.
- All children have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation.
- The situation of all children must be improved through promotion of their rights as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This includes the right to freedom from abuse and exploitation.
- Child abuse is never acceptable
- We have a commitment to protecting children with/ for whom we work
- When we work through partners, they have a responsibility to meet minimum standards of protection for children in their programmes.

What we will do

We will meet our commitment to protect children from abuse through the following means:

Awareness: we will ensure that all staff and others are aware of the problem of child abuse and the risks to children.

Prevention: we will ensure, through awareness and good practice, that staff and others minimise the risks to children.

Reporting: we will ensure that staff and others are clear what steps to take where concerns arise regarding the safety of children.

Responding: we will ensure that action is taken to support and protect children where concerns arise regarding possible abuse.

In order that the above standards of reporting and responding are met, members of the International Save the Children Alliance will also ensure that they:

- take seriously any concerns raised
- take positive steps to ensure the protection of children who are the subject of any concerns support children, staff or other adults who raise concerns or who are the subject of concerns
- act appropriately and effectively in instigating or co-operating with any subsequent process of investigation
- are guided through the child protection process by the principle of 'best interests of the child'
- listen to and take seriously the views and wishes of children
- work in partnership with parents/carers and/or other professionals to ensure the protection of children.

How we will ensure our commitments above are met

- All International Save the Children Alliance staff (locally appointed and internationally appointed) will sign up to and abide by the attached code of conduct
- All partners will sign and abide by the code of conduct
- All staff and volunteers will have access to a copy of the child protection policy
- Recruitment procedures will include checks on suitability for working with young people
- Induction will include briefing on child protection issues
- Every workplace will display contact details for reporting possible child abuse and every member of staff will have contact details for reporting.
- Systems will be established by every Member to investigate possible abuse once reported and to deal with it
- Training, learning opportunities and support will be provided by Save the Children members as appropriate to ensure commitments are met.

Code of conduct

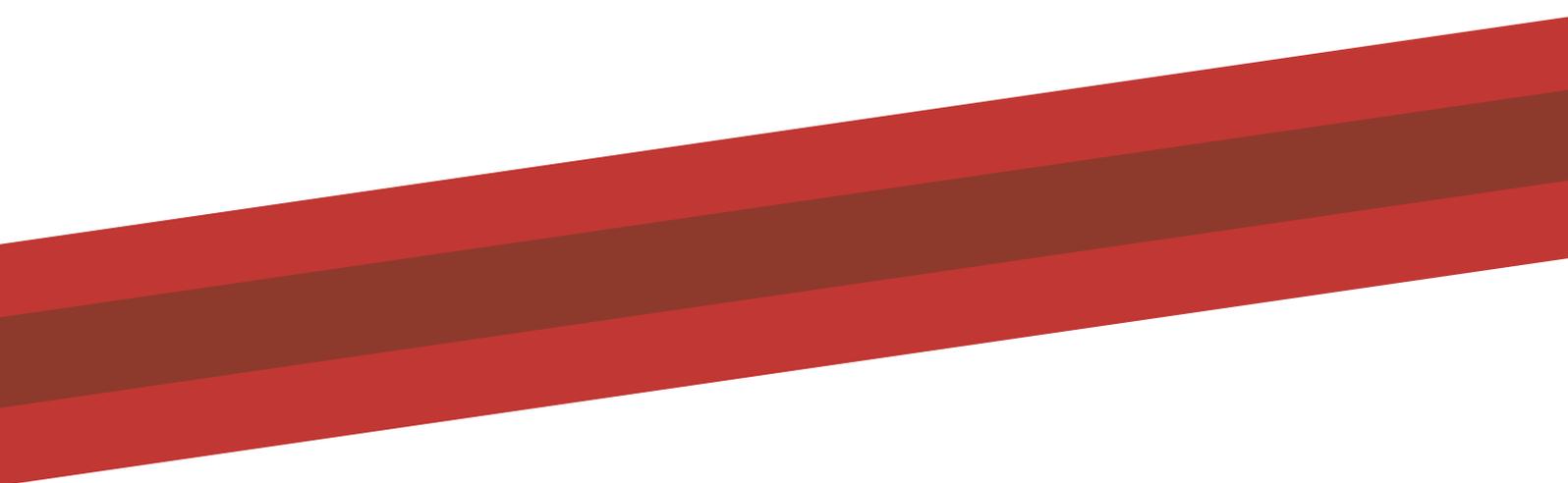
All Save the Children staff must sign up to and abide by this Code of Conduct.

Staff and others must never:

- hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children
- develop physical/sexual relationships with children
- develop relationships with children which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive
- act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse.
- use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive
- behave physically in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative
- have a child/children with whom they are working to stay overnight at their home unsupervised
- sleep in the same room or bed as a child with whom they are working
- do things for children of a personal nature that they can do for themselves
- condone, or participate in, behaviour of children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive
- act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse
- discriminate against, show differential treatment, or favour particular children to the exclusion of others.
- This is not an exhaustive or exclusive list. The principle is that staff should avoid actions or behaviour which may constitute poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour.

It is important for all staff and others in contact with children to:

- be aware of situations which may present risks and manage these
- plan and organise the work and the workplace so as to minimise risks
- as far as possible, be visible in working with children
- ensure that a culture of openness exists to enable any issues or concerns to be raised and discussed
- ensure that a sense of accountability exists between staff so that poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour does not go unchallenged
- talk to children about their contact with staff or others and encourage them to raise any concerns
- empower children - discuss with them their rights, what is acceptable and unacceptable, and what they can do if there is a problem. In general it is inappropriate to:
- spend excessive time alone with children away from others
- take children to your home, especially where they will be alone with you.



Children's Participation in Armed Conflict, Post Conflict and Peace Building, 2006–2008

Save the Children Norway's Thematic Evaluation on children's participation has taken place in four countries: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Guatemala, Nepal and Uganda. It is based on the active involvement of girls and boys who are members of children's organisations, clubs, associations and groups.

The overall purpose has been to contribute to strengthening children and young people's capacities regarding peace building initiatives and to promote the inclusion of children's voices in peace processes.

Children and young people have been actively involved as advisers, peer researchers, active respondents, development workers, peace agents, documenters and advocates. In partnership with adult researchers,

they have been using a range of participatory tools to explore their experiences of armed conflict, their understanding of peace building, the factors which limit or support children's active participation in peace building, and received support for peace building initiatives. Adults' views on these issues have also been explored.

'Formative dialogue research' has been used as an overall research methodology to encourage dialogue on differences in perspectives between adults and children, and/or among children. It is also being used to support ongoing efforts to strengthen children's participation initiatives based on the knowledge gained during the research process.

