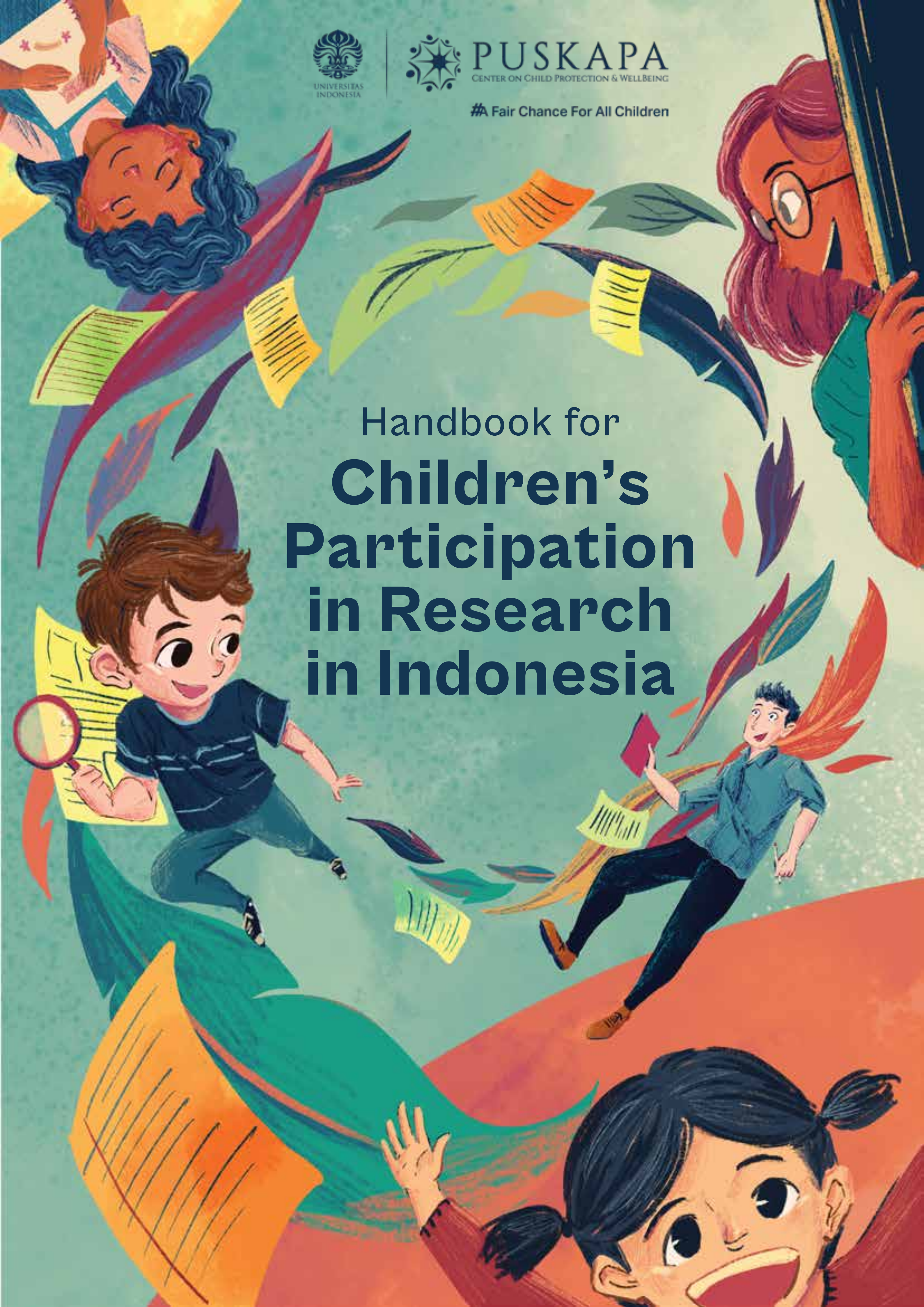

UNIVERSITAS INDONESIA

PUSKAPA
CENTER ON CHILD PROTECTION & WELLBEING

#A Fair Chance For All Children

Handbook for

Children's Participation in Research in Indonesia

This book is produced by PUSKAPA, Center on Child Protection and Wellbeing at Universitas Indonesia.

Through interdisciplinary research, advocacy, capacity building, and program actions, PUSKAPA works to contribute to building a safe, just, and inclusive society that provides equal opportunities for all children and vulnerable populations.

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Hello!

If you want to work ethically with children in your research in Indonesia and/or are curious about how children can meaningfully participate in research, this handbook is for you. This handbook was developed by a group of multidisciplinary research and program practitioners who are of Indonesian origin or have worked for a significant period of time in different parts of Indonesia.

Not only is this handbook informed by years of fieldwork, but it has also gone through consultations with several researchers, academicians, program implementers, and development partners, all working on issues revolving child protection and wellbeing. We hope this handbook will be relevant to people working in or with those capacities.

FOREWORD

Understanding children's adversities is one of the best ways to ensure that the work to ensure all children equal opportunities is evidence-based. Therefore, PUSKAPA does research that continue to look deeper into the problems faced by children and those closest to them; research on which we base our policy recommendations and actions.

Research to explore the lives of children are generally carried out through adult representatives, including parents, caregivers, guardians, teachers, health workers, or other professionals. However, those who have long worked on children's issues are aware that research on children are incomplete when they are carried out only on behalf of the children, and rarely with them.

To that end, more and more efforts are put in place to listen to children directly, to understand the way they perceive and experience their own lives. Research that actively involve children fall under the umbrella of "child participation".

Fundamentally, such an umbrella encourages adults to actively engage in dialogue with children on matters that are relevant to their lives. More than listening to children's perspectives and experiences, their participation should actually mean more room for discussion that involves children and young people in exploring certain issues or policies, including through scientific disciplines such as research.

However, involving children in research is not without its challenges. There are many dilemmas that need to be managed and overcome to ensure our process is meaningful, ethical, and poses no harm to the children. Traditionally, research methodologies are still very much adult-oriented. It is necessary to make adjustments through continuous testing to ensure that these research do not perpetuate existing power imbalance between children as participants and adults as a researchers. More importantly, when a research does involve children, we should ask ourselves in what way and when we should involve them, and how might we mitigate the occurrence of new harm if the topic is sensitive, such as violence.

Those were some of the topics often discussed among PUSKAPA researchers. We appreciate the few guidelines currently available on how to conduct research with children. However, many of the nuances are missing from such technical guidelines. Not to mention the fact that existing guidelines have yet to reflect much of the experience of researching children's issues in Indonesia.

On the one hand, there are research on children that do not involve children at all. On the other end, there are research on children that are led by children themselves. What's on that spectrum, what is the context behind a particular approach, what is the philosophy behind setting a minimum age for participation, whether there is contestation between pursuing validity and meeting ethical standards, how to deal with it, were some of our routine conversations in the office. We then wrote them down, explored the literature, and reflected. All written down initially as our internal notes.

After four years since the first note was produced and through reviews by international experts on research on children, we are launching this Handbook of Children's Participation in Research in Indonesia.

This book is an open source to support those whose work intersects with research on children or who wish to work with children in their research. This is not a blueprint, but a reference that can be read at any time.

This handbook will not give instructions on what to do and what not to do, but instead discuss the social and structural factors that influence children and childhood in Indonesia. This book is not a "manual" either, but rather one that offers a variety of considerations to inform our decisions about children's participation in research, from the design, process, data analysis, to communicating research findings.

It is our hope that this book contributes to the continuing development of ethical research methods that enable children to participate in knowledge generation in a safe, meaningful, and dignified manner. All while maintaining scientific rigor in research.

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This handbook can be accessed via our website, **www.puskapa.org**

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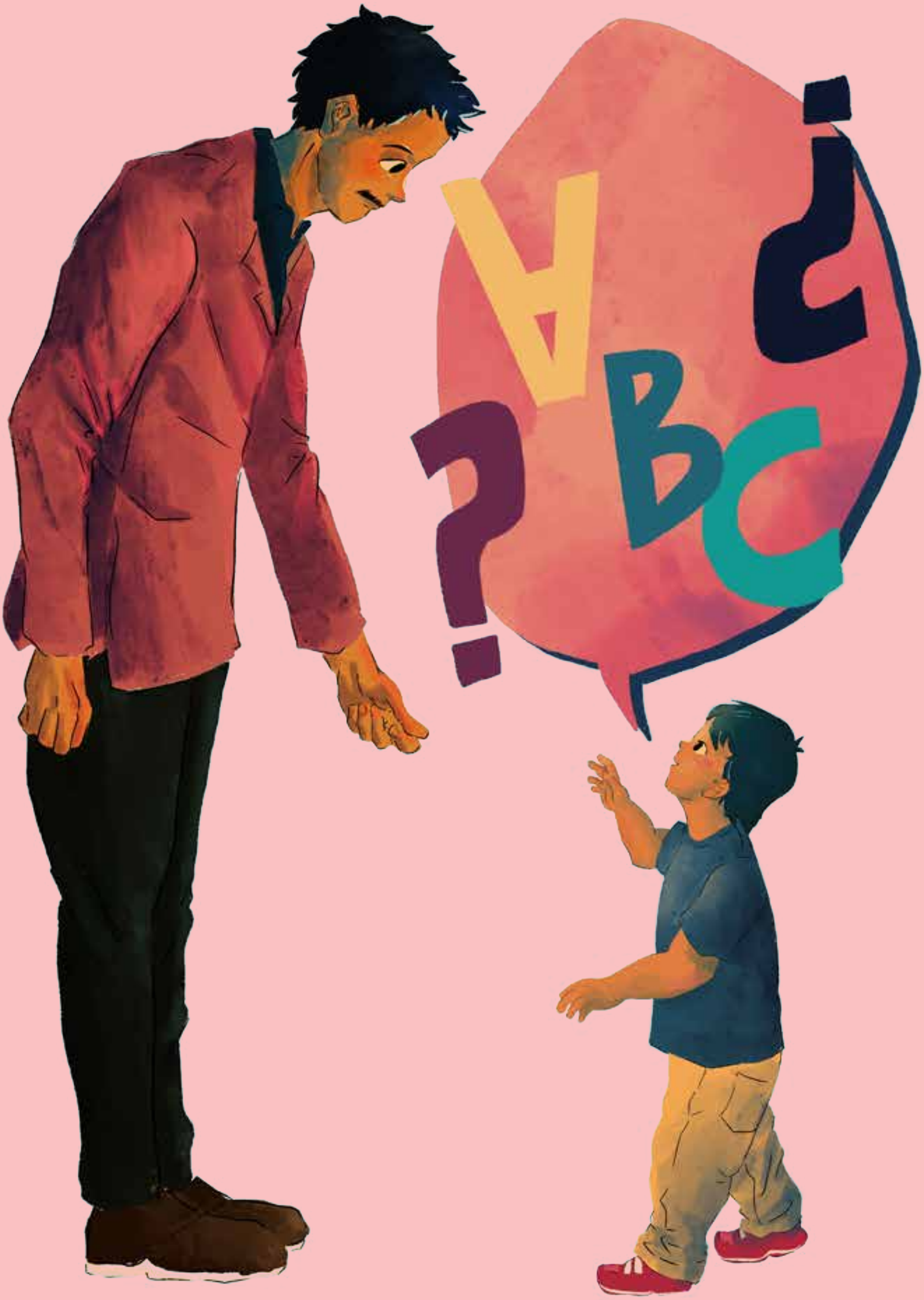
Part 1

What is This All About?

> **"Grown-ups never understand anything by themselves, and it is tiresome for children to be always and forever explaining things to them."**
>
> Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, The Little Prince

Do you remember once being asked to explain yourself to someone else? It is not always easy to articulate our thoughts and experiences to others, especially those who might not come from similar backgrounds. This also happens to children in social research contexts. As children's issues are increasingly moving onto the public stage, there is more interest in gaining an understanding of children's lives. Commonly, research that explores children's lives is conducted by talking to adult proxies such as parents, guardians, teachers, healthcare workers, and other professionals. However, increasingly there are efforts to listen directly to children, to understand the ways they themselves view and experience their lives. Many have concluded that a child's needs cannot adequately be met or their true potential fulfilled without first understanding their position and experience in life or hearing their perspective. While caregivers and service providers can serve as valuable interlocutors for children, they are not capable of fully representing them. Studies that actively engage children and seek their perspectives as part of knowledge production is often called 'child participatory research'.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As the above quotation from The Little Prince implies, it is not always easy for children to convey their thoughts and experiences to adults, and in the case of social research, to researchers. The fact that research is predominantly and traditionally an adult-oriented endeavor often means it is not a welcoming setting for children. Considering the socio-cultural contexts in which studies are conducted, research also carries forward the power imbalance between children and adults, which is amplified by the fact that children are only participating while adults are doing the research. Researchers may not know how to question children properly in a research setting, let alone how to make sense of the responses and report them to others.

But research can be designed and conducted in a way that allows children to express their views and to contribute knowledge in a more ethical and responsible manner without compromising the intellectual rigor of the study. Research on children comes in many different arrangements, occupying a wide spectrum based on the level of children's engagement with the study. At one end, we have the traditional approach where researchers rely on interlocutors and have minimal to no engagement with the children. At the other end, more and more action research is being conducted in which children are involved in the decision-making processes of the research project; this might include determining the objectives, questions, and methods as well as collecting and analyzing the data or implementing and evaluating subsequent actions. Most studies, however, fall somewhere in between these two ends, and this middle ground is the focus of this handbook. We will discuss the different levels of engagement, the methods that usually accompany these engagements, and the debates around them.

It is important to remember we cannot "simply" invite children to participate in a research project. Working with children can be quite different from working with adults, depending on their level of development in terms of language, education level, emotional regulation, social awareness, and comfort with strangers. There is also a range of cultural and legal nuances that determine how researchers may interact with children in various contexts, including socioeconomic status, gender norms, and cultural or environmental contexts that each shape the interpretations of research ethics and protocols (Ruiz-Casares et al. 2013).

> *Researchers working with children will face a number of risks, especially when exploring research questions related to sensitive topics, such as violence, reproductive health, criminal activity, or underage labor. Minimizing these risks while maximizing the benefits of children's involvement in a research project requires considerable training, careful preparation, and reflexive practice.*

This handbook will not provide a definitive account of the social and structural factors that influence the lives of children and the evolution of childhood in Indonesia. Rather than providing directives, the handbook will present some factors that may have a strong influence on shaping the lives of children, which are worth reflecting upon prior to making plans that involve children in research.

This handbook is intended to support those who want to work with children in research. The goal is not to create an instruction manual or blueprint for an ideal research project, but rather to serve as a flexible reference that can be called upon at any time in the research cycle, from writing proposals and ethical review protocols to collecting data and disseminating results. This handbook should aid those conducting research with children to ensure that their participation is safe, meaningful, and dignified.

Box 1 Definitions

Child

A common definition of a child usually refers to what the law says. In Indonesia a child is defined as any individual under the age of 18 years, according to the Law on Child Protection. This handbook recognizes that 'child' can be seen as a social construct, which is interpreted differently across contexts, and that numerical age is not universally recognized as the most important marker of adulthood. It is also important to note that there is an enormous diversity within the population of people under the age of 18 years and using this same word to describe someone that is one-year-old and someone that is 17-years-old can be of limited use. There is the added complication that many individuals under the age of 18 years would not consider themselves "children," and prefer their own terms, whether "teen," "youth," "young adult," or otherwise.

Nevertheless, the term "child" is a helpful simplification for the purposes of this handbook as it denotes not only a legal category in Indonesian and international law but also a category of research participant for whom the research process should be specially designed. While "child" is used as a unifying term throughout the handbook to make it easier and more enjoyable to read, this handbook urges users to adapt all components of their research (including terminology) to the ability, capacity, and preference of the individuals participating in the research, regardless of their numeric age.

Research

Any activity that aims to generate evidence using the scientific method, whether for the purpose of contributing to science, programs, or policies. This handbook recognizes differences in meaning between the terms "research," "evaluation," "assessment," and "data collection," as these may vary from one another in objective and method, but the handbook uses the composite term "research" for the purpose of simplicity rather than more cumbersome terms such as "evidence generation activity."

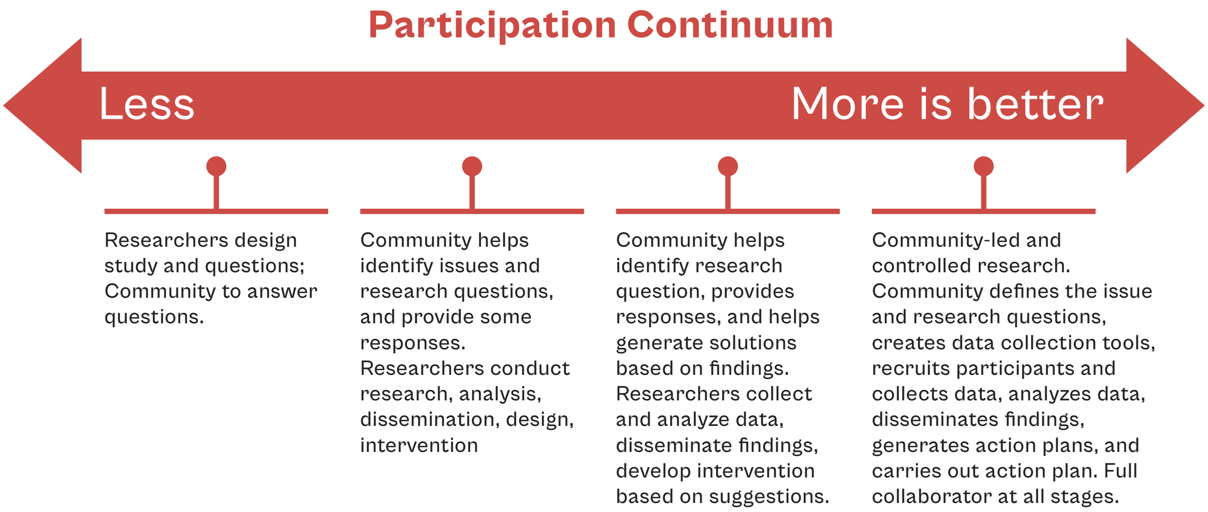
A

Participation and the ethics of research

What is a participatory approach?

Children can participate in research in a large number of ways. As mentioned before, children's participation in research represents a continuum based on their degree of involvement and the control they have over the course of the research. As research involves several stages, children can also participate in any or all stages of a study. We will discuss this in detail in the next chapter.

Figure 1.
Source: (Healthy City and Advancement Project 2011)



Researchers design study and questions; Community to answer questions.

Community helps identify issues and research questions, and provide some responses. Researchers conduct research, analysis, dissemination, design, intervention

Community helps identify research question, provides responses, and helps generate solutions based on findings. Researchers collect and analyze data, disseminate findings, develop intervention based on suggestions.

Community-led and controlled research. Community defines the issue and research questions, creates data collection tools, recruits participants and collects data, analyzes data, disseminates findings, generates action plans, and carries out action plan. Full collaborator at all stages.

But before looking specifically at children's participation in research, let's take a step back and reflect on the notion of participation more generally. "Participation" simply denotes an individual's engagement in an enterprise or a process, but the nature and degree of that participation are important considerations. Is the person participating voluntarily? How much of a say does the individual have based on the way that the activity is conducted?

"Participation" has increasingly become a development buzzword that is used to indicate that activities are "inclusive" and "empowering." However, participation can just as easily be tokenistic or even exploitative if participating individuals are not given adequate information about the activity or if their involvement in the activity is mostly used to benefit those in charge of the activity. This is not just a matter of intention, but also of training and preparation. The best-intentioned person can accidentally undermine meaningful and safe child participation.

In principle, participation is a political act that provides space for decision making by people who will potentially be affected by such a decision. This includes the decisions made during a research endeavor. Research on vulnerable populations, such as indigenous groups, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, migrants, and children (especially children who come from vulnerable groups), is traditionally done with paternalistic approaches that do not acknowledge participants' rights and/or their capacity to produce knowledge about their own lives and experiences.

As a political approach, participatory research is often conducted with groups or populations that are commonly excluded from decision making, such as vulnerable groups, children, and young people. Making research more participatory is an attempt at rectifying power imbalances between those who traditionally initiate the activity (e.g. researchers) and those who serve as its subjects (e.g. respondents).

> *Increasing the level of control that respondents have over the research process can serve both ethical and pragmatic purposes.*

Ethically, individuals have the right to self-determination, and as such, should have an opportunity to influence the way they are represented. Given the many ways that individuals have historically been harmed during research and thereafter, including through mischaracterizations, this ethical imperative is not only an abstract or philosophical point.

In qualitative and interpretive research approaches, internal validity is often measured through the credibility or authenticity of the findings—that is, how the findings resonate with the view, narratives, and experiences of the participants (Schwartz-Shea 2006). Methodologically, working more closely with participants on a research project can also make the findings of the research more valid for interpretive as well as quantitative approaches. For example, the Violence Against Children Survey (VACS), which was conducted in Indonesia in 2013, had extremely low response and disclosure rates. A recent review of VACS Indonesia, which included enumerators from the initial study, cited a respondent as saying, "insufficient attention was paid to the diversity of cultures in the fourth most populous country in the world. International tools and approaches need to be adapted" (Rumble et al. 2018, 417). To redress this limitation, and therefore hopefully improve study validity, the authors recommended, among other things, that local researchers, children, and adolescents review or even participate in adapting the study instruments before using them in the field.

Finally, there are some practical benefits that can potentially emerge from participatory research. Participatory research setting can offer a learning environment for children who are actively involved in the study. This learning potential, of course, depends on the way children are engaged and the level of their participation. When children are involved as co-researchers, they learn certain skills that are not only valuable in themselves but that also might be beneficial for future endeavors. Furthermore, research projects are often associated with community authorities and a respected research institution or organization. For young people, this association can be an opportunity to collaborate with new people and to learn valuable life skills. In action-oriented research, active participation of children can potentially affect positive changes for specific issue, but also serve as a proof of children's capacity to participate in public life, thereby opening up more space for their public participation.

Box 2 Should children be actively involved in a study?

Despite everything discussed above, there are some cases in which we should consider not involving children in research. Here are some questions to ask before deciding to include children in research.

? Will involving children in this project likely expose them to greater risks than gains?

It can be extremely difficult to calculate the outcomes of research participation for children. Nevertheless, it is critical that researchers attempt to identify the potential risks and benefits of participation before determining that children should be included. In part, this process includes stating the intended benefits of the research clearly and explaining the ways in which the research should bring about those benefits. This process can also involve working with stakeholders and gatekeepers to understand the local factors that might potentially harm children should they participate.

? Are there primary and secondary sources of data that already answer our research questions, meaning that we do not need to collect further primary data?

In many parts of Indonesia, communities have repeatedly participated in different data collection efforts, potentially creating "research fatigue." It is critical that research teams familiarize themselves with the relevant literature and other accessible data sources before planning data collection efforts in an area. For example, researchers can consider existing programmatic or governmental databases, previous childhood surveys, or surveys in which child-related information was relayed by proxy, such as through interviews with parents. Researchers should not only identify and review data, but also evaluate whether data were collected in an ethically and methodologically sound manner. If reliable and valid data are available to answer the study's research questions, researchers should consider what value might be added to the study by including child participants and whether this added value is worth the potential risks of their involvement.

? Will we be able to use the research findings to benefit child participants in any way?

In Indonesia, as in many countries, data are often collected yet never analyzed or released to the public in a manner that can influence policy, practice, or science. Researchers should first of all have a realistic analysis plan that aims to make use of all quality data collected for a study. Secondly, especially when researching sensitive issues such as poverty, violence, and health among children, researchers have a responsibility to disseminate their findings to affected populations as well as decision-makers.

? Are services and support systems in place to respond to the needs that children have communicated during the research project?

For research concerning sensitive topics in particular, researchers should be prepared to refer participants to appropriate health, psychosocial, and/or legal services, depending on the type of research being conducted. If these services are not available or accessible—or if these services are of unacceptable quality—the researchers should reconsider including children and should also reconsider conducting such sensitive research in the area at all.

Seven core principles of ethical research with children

Before exploring the different ways in which researchers can engage children in scientific studies, we will define the core principles that underlie this handbook and discuss them by considering common trade-offs that sometimes complicate even the best efforts at principled research. While many principles overlap and reinforce one another, some circumstances may pit concern for one principle against concern for the other, and such cases are well worth considering and anticipating. It is worth stressing, however, that the guidelines in this handbook do not replace the Institutional Review Board (IRB) process, which may be warranted and required. In fact, this handbook can be used as a reference to prepare submissions to an IRB.

1 Respect

Regardless of age and ability, all individuals are endowed with human rights that researchers have a duty to uphold and protect. While children may not have the complete legal autonomy and decision-making capacities of adults, researchers should recognize their dignity, integrity, and subjectivity. Respecting children demands treating them with utmost care for their individual rights, especially in regard to their participation in research. In the process of research, the principle of respect is partly reflected in the method of gaining and treating consent, something that we will discuss at length in Part 3 of this book. Although respect does not necessarily entail agreeing to the children's values, judgments, and actions, it nonetheless requires attentive listening to their perspectives and narratives as well as understanding how their contexts shape them as individuals. The principle of respect can begin with the researcher learning about what counts as respect and respectful engagement in the participant's context and how these are commensurate with the research.

Several actions described in the subsequent parts of this handbook are designed to uphold the principle of respect. The principle of respect demands that even in a study with minimal to no harm, the informants should have the final say on whether or not they want to be involved (Stark 2007). Inviting children to participate in research is a first step in demonstrating respect for children, but it is not sufficient on its own.

Researchers must be trained and prepared to communicate respect actively throughout the research process, from communicating the purposes and risks of the project in an accessible manner before asking for consent, to disseminating research findings in a manner that recognizes children's input and safeguards their confidentiality (see Part 3 of this handbook). The principle of respect is foundational to all the other principles, as none of them can be upheld in the absence of respect.

2 Non-maleficence ("do not harm") and beneficence ("do good")

Non-maleficence is a principle that obligates researchers to take all reasonable measures to minimize the potential negative consequences of a research project to participants and their communities. Researchers can expose child participants and their communities to harm in a number of ways. It is also important to understand that harms come in different forms including psychological, socio-cultural, economic, as well as legal-political harms. For many people including children, the act of discussing sensitive topics with a stranger, for example, can make them upset, especially where the researcher is ill prepared to support the participant. In other cases, a child can disclose sensitive information that can implicate community members in a crime. If a child shares sensitive information, such as their sexual preferences, and the privacy of this disclosure is not properly safeguarded, it can cause stigma, shame, and even expose them to violence (more on how to safeguard in Part 3). Researchers have a duty to assess the direct and indirect risks associated with each component of the research and to take careful actions to remove or reduce those risks.

However, avoiding harm is not enough. The principle of beneficence holds that research should provide some measure of benefit to participants, whether directly or indirectly. According to The Belmont Report, beneficence requires that "persons are treated in an ethical manner not only by respecting their decisions and protecting them from harm, but also by making efforts to secure their well-being" (1979, 5).

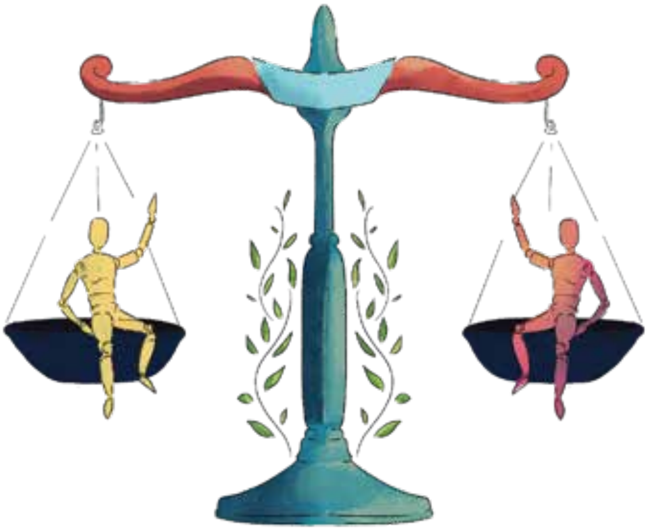
In projects focused on sensitive topics, such as children's exposure to adversity, researchers must ensure that they are collecting information from children not just for the sake of it but should instead have a sensible plan for analyzing and using such data for the benefit of the participants and the population they represent.

These benefits do not have to be direct or tangible. However, it is crucial for the researcher to understand how research participants wish to benefit from their participation and to communicate to participants what kind of benefits they can expect. For example, participants may be satisfied that they have contributed to a public good by providing valuable perspectives on how to improve a given program. Others may want to be compensated for their time, whether monetarily or through the provision of useful goods, training, or otherwise. In any case, researchers should always aim to maximize reciprocity by ensuring that they are giving as much if not more than they are taking (see Part 3 for further discussion).

Sometimes, efforts to uphold the principle of non-maleficence may clash with efforts to uphold the principle of beneficence. For example, when a participant starts to cry during an interview, the researcher may want to stop the interview altogether to avoid causing further harm. However, the participant may still want to continue the interview despite the apparent risks or harms that their participation can incur. In such cases, the researcher must determine whether it would be better to respect the participant's self-assessment and preference because the benefit outweighs the harm or decide that the risk of harm is too high.

3 Justice

The principle of justice in research concerns fairness and equity. It primarily demands that the benefits and risks of research be distributed equitably among all parties involved in research in accordance with a child's capacities, competencies, needs, and resources. Control groups provide an apt example of this principle. In a study of treatment (or program) effectiveness, such as a randomized control trial (RCT), researchers must consider how participants in the control group will benefit from the study.



If the treatment is shown to be significantly more effective than what the control group is receiving (whether they are receiving nothing, a placebo, or the status quo treatment), it may be unethical to continue withholding the treatment from the control group members who helped to establish its effectiveness.

Application of the justice principle also demands that researchers identify their values and scrutinize their biases as well as investigate any arbitrary preferences and discrimination as much as possible in all research methods from recruitment and data collection to analysis and the dissemination of findings. Part of this process means being careful about which individuals and groups are excluded from research and how selection criteria are explained to potential participants and non-participants (see Point A, Part 3 for further discussion). For example, if one child in a household is selected but others are not, the researcher is responsible for communicating this decision in a manner that does not make the non-selected children feel that they have done something wrong or been excluded for personal reasons (see Part 3 on avoiding envy).

Theoretical concepts of justice have, however, been criticized for privileging uniformity and upholding universalist assumptions that fail to take account of situations and consequences (Edwards and Mauthner 2002). Edwards and Mauthner offer a potentially valuable way forward by reframing justice 'as a process rather than rules: a process involving an ethic of care in a situated way based on values of reconciliation, reciprocity, diversity and responsibility, with an awareness of power' (R. Edwards and Mauthner 2002, 23). An ethic of care encourages researchers to contextualize 'what is just' with the aim of preserving, if not improving, individual's wellbeing.

4 Best interest of the child

The principle of the best interest of the child is paramount when deciding on any matter that involves a child. Article 3 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) mentions that the best interest of the child should be a primary foundation in all actions affecting children. Unfortunately, however, determining the best interest of the child is not always straightforward. Individuals may hold different values and biases, and the decision-making process to determine interests, either in general or the best interest individually, can incur biases.

Best interests relate to key principles concerning the autonomy, beneficence, and non-maleficence of an individual. Children's own voices and aspirations should also be taken into consideration. Therefore, the best interest of the child must focus on the child's own interests, but they cannot be assessed without taking into account the judgements made by their primary caretaker(s). This process also includes consulting professionals to obtain their interpretation of a particular issue, such as, for example, in cases of violence against children and the appropriate standards of care.

> *In principle, best interest considerations entail weighing all the rights of the child against each other and involving the child in making a final determination.*

5 Voluntariness

All research participation should be strictly voluntary. This principle requires researchers to communicate information about the research to children and those responsible for them in a manner they can understand.

> *This information should include the funding sources and objectives of the research project, what the research will involve, the intended uses of the research findings, the actors involved, and the potential harms of the research to participants or people who are close to them.*

However, researchers may consider omitting information from caregivers in certain circumstances. When the research concerns domestic violence, for instance, it may compromise the validity of the research (as well as its safety) for researchers to inform caregivers that they will be asking child participants about their experiences with violence in the household. Such concerns should be weighed very carefully, which is a process that will be discussed in greater depth in the third part of this handbook.

It can be difficult to discover whether participants are providing their consent voluntarily. Because children in Indonesia often find it difficult to disagree openly with adults, they may not find it appropriate to decline the invitation to participate, especially when adult caregivers have already provided their consent. For this reason, it is important for researchers to regularly explain to a child participant throughout the research process that they can refuse to participate, withdraw, or refuse to answer certain questions at any time. Researchers must also explain in a clear manner that none of these actions will have a negative consequence. (See Part 3 on assuring consent and reciprocity for further discussion.)

6 Confidentiality, privacy, and anonymity

Participation in any study should be voluntary. Participants should also remain free to provide or refuse to provide information in a study. Information gathered from participants should also respect their right to privacy and confidentiality. Children, like adults, have the right to share and to withhold information when participating in research. Furthermore, children's right to privacy is enshrined in article 16 of the CRC. Information, in this case, is not just about obtaining spoken information, but all identifying information, such as names, addresses, dates of birth, photographs, video footage, and biological data.

There are two different ways of ensuring children's privacy in regard to the information and data they share with researchers. The first is anonymity. Anonymity means that data is not linked to any identifying information, such as name, address, and phone number, that can be traced back to specific participants. In an anonymous study, even researchers do not have access to any identifying information. There are several ways of ensuring anonymity, which we will discuss further in Part 4. Complete anonymity is hard to uphold: even in many qualitative and interpretive studies researchers need to have identifying information to understand data and to enable follow-up.

The difficulty of ensuring complete anonymity thus necessitates the use of confidentiality as a principle. Confidentiality demands that researchers protect participants from potential harm by concealing identities and any identifying information that can be traced back to participants from the public and people outside the research team.

In any kind of research, however,

> *the researcher must be very clear in explaining during the consent process who will have access to the information that is shared during the research project as well as what will happen to the data when the research is complete*
>
> *(see Part 3 for further discussions)*

In certain cases, confidentiality may be hampered by mandatory reporting laws as well as ethical considerations about the best interests of the child. In many countries, mandatory reporting laws obligate a researcher to report crimes against minors to authorities, such as physical abuse. Although Indonesia does not have mandatory reporting law in the research setting, Law No. 23 of 2004 on Elimination of Domestic Violence stipulates that everyone witnessing domestic violence should report such incidences, and provide support and protection with consideration of his/her maximum possible efforts. Similarly, article 72 of Law on Child Protection No. 35 of 2014 also stipulates the role of citizens to report any violation of child rights to authorities. In other cases, where researchers feel that the child risks immediate harm and must be referred to services, the researchers may choose to violate the participant's confidentiality in order to safeguard their wellbeing. These considerations should be very carefully deliberated, and if the decision is made to violate confidentiality, researchers must discuss this with the participant.[1]

7 The right to be heard and the right to be properly researched

Article 12 of the CRC holds that children have a right to express their views freely and, depending on their age and capacity, for those views to influence matters that concern them. We interpret research about children as falling into the category of *"matters that concern them."* Engaging children in research is one means of ensuring that their voices are heard, so research personnel and instruments should be sensitive to the degree of support that a child may need to participate meaningfully (see Part 2 for further discussion on ensuring children's participation in research).

Drawing on four articles of the CRC, including article 12, researchers have articulated the right of children to be properly researched, which reinforces many of the principles described above (Beazley et al. 2009).

> *This right means that a researcher must use the highest scientific standards to formulate appropriate instruments and methods that enable children to express themselves freely.*

Furthermore, researchers must take children's perspectives into account without harming or exploiting them.

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[1] At the same time, the Law on Statistics (16 of 1997) (art. 21) stipulates that researchers or data collectors have to guarantee the confidentiality of individual data that they gather from participants.

The Belmont Report, which was issued in 1976 by the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research in the United States, identified three fundamental ethical principles for using humans in research that are similar to the seven principles outlined above: the respect of persons or autonomy, beneficence/non-maleficence, and justice and fairness. What is crucial in the implementation of these principles, is to understand these basic principles within their socioeconomic, cultural, and environmental contexts and to apply them accordingly (Ruiz-Casares et al. 2017).

A note on reflexivity

From the beginning of the research process, it is important for researchers to be reflexive about their status and position in the social and political context of the study. Researchers often come from a more privileged position than the children they work with. This privilege does not only stem from age difference (being adults with relative power over children), but also from the intersections of class, gender, disability, and ethnicity; these factors will affect power relations between the researchers and research participants. Being professional, highly educated adults, researchers are often considered to be competent. However, this is not always the case. For example, children are experts when it comes to their own lives and experiences; the lack of recent experience with this topic means that researchers are 'incompetent adult[s]' (Matthews 1998). Therefore, research relationships between children and adults can be characterized as fluid, negotiable, and unpredictable (Madge et al. 1997; Laurie et al. 2014). As argued by Barker and Smith (2001), sometimes researchers cannot control the complex sets of power relations that constitute the field, but researchers can apply and shift between multiple identities by employing reflexivity and caution in order to protect children and themselves during the research.

B

Understanding Children and Childhood

This handbook takes a critical approach to multi-disciplinary perspectives, such as, among others, psychology, sociology, and anthropology on understanding children's lives. One of the dominant narratives about childhood concerns the biological and physiological factors that constrain and shape children's lives, particularly in early childhood. For example, the most influential perspective from developmental psychology, which was initiated by Jean Piaget (1972), identifies multiple stages of cognitive development in which children from 0-15 years of age move from one stage to the next by reacting to "sensori-motor" stimuli (sensory-based knowledge) and to "formal operations" (reflexive thinking). According to Nicola Ansell (2005), Piaget's cognitive development model implies that all children will move through certain stages and that these stages are taken as hierarchical with greater status and value attached to later stages. Another model is offered by Lev Vygotsky, who emphasizes the importance of understanding children's cognitive development as being informed by cultural values, beliefs, and problem-solving skills through their interactions with more knowledgeable members of society rather than passively growing into society (Vygotsky 1978 cited in Ansell 2005). These are important models, but both assume that children go through universal phases, and both imply that a child transforms into a rational and mature adult (Caputo 1995). However, many studies reveal that these processes are not necessarily universal. An anthropological study by Margaret Mead in Samoa, for example, suggested that although young people there went through adolescence, this life phase was very different to the experience of 'storm and stress' that is believed to characterize adolescence in the West (Mead 1928 cited in Ansell 2005).

In our considerations about involving children in research, we need first to understand the diverse factors that shape children's lives and childhood. These are some key considerations when thinking about children and childhood:

1 Children are heterogeneous groups, and their contextualized life experiences vary

Particular conceptualizations of childhood need to be understood in relation to the social conditions that give rise to them (Heywood 2001). Researchers need to be aware that children are not monolithic beings and that their life experiences are diverse. An intersectional lens is particularly important when examining how social, cultural, political, and economic factors influence the position of children in specific contexts. For example, young adolescents living in rural areas might face differences in accessing health care services compared to their peers in urban areas and other populations due to regional differences and the specific socio-cultural norms that might prevail there.

Researchers often have assumptions about children's needs and interests that are based on their own childhood experiences or observations in other contexts. There is no single assumption or stereotype that can capture the real lives of all children (Boyden and Ennew 1997). Therefore, children's lives and childhoods cannot simply be understood on the basis of material differences, but must be grounded in their specific socio-cultural, economic, and political contexts.

At the same time, children are also "human belongings," an integral part of families, communities, and nations (Abebe 2019). It is necessary to examine how they experience their relationships with others, including how adults conceptualize and influence the lives of children and youths (Boyden and Ennew 1997). In this regard, a generational perspective is useful for understanding the position of children in the web of power relations and discourses that characterize any society (Honwana 2012). While it is paramount to take into account children's own voices in order to understand their situation, research also needs to take place in partnership with caring and skilled adults who provide relevant information and appropriate guidance. To ensure the meaningful participation of children in research, adults and researchers need to ensure a safe and enabling environment for children to express their views and concerns.

6 Childhood as a phase of life in many societies and modern administrative systems

Even though children are a heterogeneous group with diverse characteristics, in most settings, children are considered a group that is distinct from that of adults. Most children are expected to behave differently than adults as they have certain roles and responsibilities in society. In many cultures, a rite of passage marks the transition from childhood to adulthood, but when and how this transition begins varies by culture. Most modern administrative systems define childhood as a phase of life that is distinguished by chronological age categories (number of years since birth). This demarcation is also reflected in "minimum age" regulations (i.e. age of majority, age of consent) as well as policies that affect a chronologically defined age group. Children are often further categorized in terms of age in accordance with their roles and entitlements, such as marriageable age, age of criminal culpability, voting age, and different levels of education.

> *Regulatory and legal provisions for children are influenced by idealized conceptions of childhood.*

However, the use of chronological age as the defining feature of childhood is not always commensurate with social and cultural conceptions of childhood as well as with how children are valued within their communities (Abebe 2019). Moreover, while age categorization is useful for social policies, age itself does not operate simply as a category to which roles and behaviors adhere (Ansell 2016).

3 Childhood as defined by children's human rights

Children and young people have the right to be listened to and heard within the context of the CRC. This convention sets out a range of rights that are in alignment with universal human rights. It includes defining children as 'every human being below the age of eighteen years' and lays out their entitlement to a broad range of rights including: to express their views, to freedom of expression, to seek information, to have their best interests treated as a primary consideration in all actions affecting them, to free education, and to the highest standard of health and living. Child participation is specifically mentioned in Article 12, which says that 'every child has the right to say what they think in all matters affecting them, and to have their views taken seriously.'

4 Children are both human beings and human becomings

Children are often regarded as human becomings, thus not yet full citizens, so they are not able to fully participate in political life. Even when they are allowed to participate, their participation is often limited to consultation, and they are rarely involved in public decision-making. However, as researchers, it is important to consider children as social actors in their own right who are able to construct their own childhood and whose participation in their environment is not fully captured by official definitions of civic participation. For example, children's contributions to domestic work are under-recognized as a form of participation in community and society.

The common perception that children are "future adults" often dismisses the present reality of being a child. Additionally, framing children as 'human becomings' implies that children lack competency. Competency is seen as something that is acquired once children have become adults and not as something that they can possess in the present as children. Childhood is defined solely as a time of apprenticeship. This conceptualization of competency is not only troublesome to children, 'who seemingly cannot be competent at anything, but it is also troublesome to adults who are seemingly competent at everything' (Uprichard 2008, 35).

5 Children's situated and relational agency

Agency can simply be defined as the capacity of subjects to choose and implement alternatives (Kabeer 1999). For agency to be effective, such alternatives should be equally meaningful to a person (Kabeer 1999). However, someone's agency is influenced by many things, such as their cultural context, access to resources, social norms, social interactions, and power relations, as well as broader political factors. It is important to acknowledge that the agency of children is connected to the ways other people as well as society at large see them. Due to this dynamic, some groups in society may be marginalized, including children who are viewed primarily as vulnerable and weak, which often reduces their agency. Children in marginalized situations are constrained and lacking ideal options, which diminishes their ability to exercise agency. Klocker, for instance, coined the term "thin agency" to describe this particular situation (Klocker 2007).

All young people exercise some control over their own situation, and this reality should be recognized by those studying young people's lives (Ansell, 2005). It is important to note that children can exercise their agency in many ways despite facing multiple challenges, but adults (parents, teachers, governments, even researchers) sometimes fail to recognize such attempts at exercising agency. A study conducted by Okwany (2008), for example, found that girls' agency can take on many forms, and range from negotiating, minimizing, contesting to even rebelling against the constraints of their context and their position in society. It is critical to keep in mind that children possess different forms of agency that are shaped by their situation and position in society. Researchers need to take into account children's experiences and voices in order to understand them and to develop research methods that are in line with the children's capacities and interests. (See Part 2 for further discussion)

C

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

A robust and ethical piece of research depends largely on the researchers' capacities, actions, and conduct in pursuing two objectives at the same time: to do research with academic and methodological rigor, and to ensure the rights and safety of their subjects. It is not always easy to pursue these twin objectives, and in some situations they can clash. As researchers may have a vested interest in completing a study, and given that researchers may have more power than their participants, it is important for an independent party to provide ethical counsel and to make sure that the study's plan and instruments comply with ethical and legal guidelines (S. J. Edwards 2009).

Researchers affiliated with an academic institution are usually required to submit human ethics applications to their Institutional Review Board (IRB). The length and the intensity of this review process are usually commensurate with the risks of the study, and involved a consideration of the possibility of any risks to participants and researchers as well as to non-participants and the larger public, the likelihood of their occurrence, and the severity of cost or harms should any of these risks occur (S. J. Edwards 2009). Risks and harms, as mentioned before, not only cover physical risks, but also socio-cultural, psychological, economical, and legal harms. Clinical trials involving human subjects are frequently considered high risk. Research that directly involves vulnerable and protected identities, such as children and indigenous populations, are also often classified as high risk.

The higher the risk of the study, the more safeguarding protocols are required as part of the general research protocol. Applications for ethical clearance from an IRB vary from one organization to another, but they usually contain: background and rationale for the study (including the potential academic and public benefit), profile and composition of the research team, methods and instruments involved, a data management and analysis plan, description of the profile of participants, the geographical setting, the project timeline, a protocol to seek and ensure informed consent, incentives and compensation for participation, any risks and ethical dilemmas that might arise, and risk mitigation plans. If there are potential physical and emotional risks, such as in a study about experiences of violence, an IRB usually demands that researchers be prepared with information about available referral services (preferably with no cost to participants).

Donors are increasingly requesting that research conducted by non-government organizations (NGOs) go through ethical review bodies as well.

International donors sometimes request that researchers have approval from an ethical review body both in the sponsoring and in the host country. This requirement is to ensure that the study satisfies the ethical standards of both countries. In Indonesia, Law No. 11 of 2019 on National System on Knowledge and Technology stipulates that all studies, including ones conducted by NGOs, should undergo an ethical assessment by an ethics committee (article 39). However, at the time of the finalization of this handbook, a more detailed regulation on the research ethics mandated by this Law had yet to be issued.

It is important to treat IRB not as the be-all and end-all of the ethical review for a study. There is a difference between receiving ethics approval and being an ethical researcher (Rivière 2011). First, an IRB application is usually conducted at the beginning of study, often before researchers make significant contact with participants or employ their methods with participants. There is always a possibility that things do not turn out as researchers had expected or planned for, regardless of how familiar researchers are with their participants, the setting, and the methods. Furthermore, it is impossible for any ethics committee to have complete knowledge about the particular research setting, methods, and the specific subject of every study proposal, which makes their assessment contestable (Hammersley 2009). In most institutions, researchers are required to submit updates to the ethical review board whenever they make substantial changes to their protocol based on what they encounter once they start their data collection; some IRBs also require periodic reporting on research progress. However, others have pointed out that pre-research IRB ethics clearance is necessary to prevent foreseeable harms to participants even if the study is carried out with the best intentions (Kent et al. 2002).

Secondly, there are ongoing debates about the appropriateness of IRB practices for social research, especially when studies take place in non-Western contexts. Although this handbook is not the place to discuss these debates at length, in summary there are two main critiques of current IRB practices. First, some scholars have criticized the IRB process as being heavily based on biomedical and clinical research in which the risks are higher, and more identifiable and calculable, than in social and humanities studies (Kent et al. 2002; Bell 2014). But as Stark points out, ethical scrutiny is essential not only in regard to the harms it prevents, but also to maintain the integrity of individuals and 'people's rights not to be researched, even when everyone involved regarded the practices as harmless by any definition' (2007, 778).

Second, some scholars have drawn attention to the European and Anglo-Saxon values and socio-cultural biases underpinning the criteria for ethical research that are established by contemporary IRB processes (Abebe and Bessell 2014; Skelton 2008). Accounts from academics, especially scholars doing ethnographic studies in non-European and developing countries, have shown that dilemmas arise from applying procedural ethical standards endorsed by IRBs in their fieldwork (Chilisa 2005; Ajuwon and Adegbite 2008; Morris 2015; Mollet and Cribb 2011; Morrell, Epstein, and Moletsane 2012). Samuel Okyere reported on a dilemma that arose in applying double consent procedures (that is, getting consents both from parents/guardians as well as children) during their study of children working in a gold mining site in Ghana (Okyere 2018).

Most children in Okyere's study, who were aged 14-17 years old, did not appreciate the requirement that their parents needed to give consent before they could participate. Since many of these children were independent migrants who traveled great distances to these sites, it was also hard to locate and contact their parents. Okyere also found that many parents did not think it was their place to provide consent for their children's participation and left this decision solely to their children. Okyere traces this dilemma to the universal assumption that children do not make important decisions on their own and that parents are still very much part of the decision-making matrix (2018). Similar dilemmas also confronted other academics researching certain groups of children in Indonesia, such as working children (Bessell 2009) and street children (Beazley 2003).

These debates around the IRB process and its application should not deter researchers from obtaining formal ethical clearance. Rather, IRBs should be seen as an initial conversation for any study and a chance for researchers to reflect on and prepare for their ethical engagement in the field. This conversation should continue during and even after the fieldwork and should include reflection by researchers on the tension between the procedural formal ethical review that takes place before fieldwork and the contextual/situational ethical issues that arise during and after fieldwork. Investigating the assumptions underpinning certain IRB procedures and their prescriptions, and working out which assumptions might hold and might not, are a good place to start. Since no ethics protocol that is developed prior to data collection is foolproof, researchers will often be confronted with ethical conundrums onto which a static ethical matrix cannot be mapped (Hammersley 2009). The dilemma calls for a situated ethics (Ebrahim 2010; Perez 2019), or an ethics-in-practice that includes awareness and sensitivity to 'local ethos' that 'encompasses the values and beliefs (formal and informal) by which a community lives and operates' (Abebe and Bessell 2014, 130). In regard to child participatory research, participatory principles indicate that children are co-producers of knowledge and should therefore be included in thinking about and practicing ethics in research. Children, in other words, should also be invited to 'inform us about ethics and researcher relations' (Abebe and Bessell 2014, 131).

Law No. 11 of 2019 on National System on Knowledge and Technology mandates that all studies should seek ethical clearance from an ethics committee (article 39). Indonesia has a number of ethical review bodies, which are mostly for health-related research that involves human subjects. The Ministry of Health has a National Committee on Research Health Ethic (KNEPK), and some Universities have created their own ethical boards, such as the Faculty of Health Science at Universitas Indonesia, the Faculty of Medicine at Universitas Gadjah Mada at Yogyakarta, and the Faculty of Medicine at Universitas Hasanuddin at Makassar. However, only a few ethical boards are available for social research; the ethical review boards of Unika Atma Jaya Catholic University at Jakarta is the most frequently used by researchers from the disciplines of social science and the humanities. It is a good practice to explore which ethics committee exist and which will be best capable of assessing and reviewing the ethics of one's study protocols.

How do I use this Handbook?

This handbook is organized to answer the typical sequence of questions that occur during common research processes.

Part 1

Begins with a brief background on the methodological foundations of child participation as well as the core principles of ethical research. This section provides a fundamental review of the first step in the research process, namely the phase in which research objectives and questions are being formulated.

Part 2

Looks closely at the design phase and reviews the range of possibilities that exist for involving children in pre-data collection stages

Part 3

Discusses approaches to data collection that involve children as subjects/respondents, and examines the practical and ethical issues that might emerge during this process, including methods to reduce and respond to such issues.

Part 4

Elaborates on the stages after data collection and reviews potential methods to involve children in analyzing and disseminating research findings.

❗

Please remember that this handbook is no substitute for training. Training procedures require an emphasis on practice and reflexivity. However, this handbook can be used to plan or complement a training curriculum. Data collection personnel should always be trained before conducting any research activity, especially because the objectives, research questions, methods, logistics, and research settings vary across studies. Child research, however, demands specific training, not only because this sub-population can be particularly susceptible to harmful research practices, but also because a truly child-centered approach can enable children to participate more meaningfully in research. Dedicated child-focused training should be integral to any research study that involves child participants

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Part 2

So, I Want to Conduct Research with Children. Now What?

Previously, we discussed the fundamental arguments as to why children should be involved in a study. The human rights argument emphasizes that children have the right to participate in all activities and decisions that matter to their lives, including in a study, as enshrined in the CRC. The instrumentalist argument emphasizes that involving children is a way to understand children's voices and to take their perspectives into account. Above all, we also learned that any research that involves children in any stage or capacity should uphold the highest ethical standards. In addition, child participation must be informed, respectful, beneficial, voluntary, and meaningful.

In this Part, we will discuss the different ways that children can participate in research, especially in the early stages of research or the pre-data collection phase, and in what capacity. We will also elaborate on the central values and risks of involving children during this phase and what we can do to mitigate the risks. Furthermore, in this Part we will also look at the methods or activities commonly used in child-centered studies in which children are seen as active respondents. Finally, we will discuss several aspects that need to be considered should one decide to involve children.

A

How do I decide when to involve children?

Data collection has changed in the past two decades. Studies are increasingly placing children's experiences and perspectives at the center of the discussion.

> *Children are seen as the experts of their lives whom no proxy can genuinely represent.*

A research cycle can be defined as comprising three broad phases that each highlight the progressive stages of research (Figure 2). Although children can engage in any and all of the stages of a study, most studies involve children as active informants during data collection through various sorts of methods. In this type of research, children are still seen as subjects of research, but the approach is different. Children are encouraged to share their views, observations, thoughts, opinions, aspirations, and lived experiences directly with researchers. Appropriate methods and tools are devised to enable children to meaningfully communicate with adult researchers. We will discuss this approach in more detail in sections C and D of this Part below.

Figure 2. Phases and stages of research

1

Pre-data collection phase

- Identifying research objectives
- Shaping and formulating research questions
- Designing the methods and data collection techniques
- Selecting sites and developing timelines
- Developing sampling or respondent protocols
- Selecting co-researchers or facilitators

2

Data collection phase

- Developing informed consent techniques, referral pathways, and security protocols
- Actively participating as respondents or informants
- Assisting with data collection
- Assisting with recruitment of respondents
- Conducting the fieldwork

3

Post-collection phase-data

- Storing, cleaning, categorizing, and sharing data
- Analyzing and interpreting data
- Writing findings and reports
- Disseminating findings and reports
- Evaluating the research process
- Taking actions based on research findings

Children in the research process: deeper participation

Studies that involve children solely as active respondents have received criticism. The primary criticism is that children are still conforming to the norm of traditional research, which is informed by the agenda of adults. Scholars call this type of research "adult-led child participatory research," because children are co-producing knowledge with adults but are not making any decisions in regard to the research (Cahill 2007). For instance, the objectives and questions of the research project are still predetermined by adult researchers and might not reflect children's priorities.

> *Consequently, some scholars have called for a more collaborative and democratic way of researching children by sharing decision-making power with them, which is an approach that is often called "deeper participation" (Beazley et al. 2009; Cahill 2007; Horgan 2017).*

Children’s direct and deeper participation promises some benefits. Greater involvement and discretion that children may hold over the course of the research project may redress, to some extent, the power imbalance between children vis-a-vis adult researchers (Greig, Taylor, and MacKay 2012). Children can be involved in identifying, formulating or reshaping the research goals and questions (Lundy, McEvoy, and Byrne 2011). For example, when deciding on an issue for a research study, children and youth can have the opportunity to choose an issue that is important and valuable to them. Decisions need to be made concerning the type of study that will be appropriate for the issue, the data that will be needed to answer the research questions, and whether there is any existing and accessible data (Ozer and Piatt 2017). Finally, studies in which children participate in the analysis of data and the dissemination of the findings are increasingly common (see further details in Part 4). Allowing children to not only provide stories, data, and information but also interpret data can help increase the validity of the analysis and the overall quality of the study (Cheney 2011; Greig, Taylor, and MacKay 2012).

There are benefits from research that may flow directly to children themselves. These benefits, however, may vary and be different or unique depending on the culture and environment in which the research is conducted. In a study in India in which young women conducted qualitative participatory research, the benefits accrued involved creating new friendships, sharing challenges of being identified as young Muslim women, developing new skills such as photography, and cultivating expertise on the research topic (Chakraborty 2009). Indirectly, children's active participation is envisioned to result in the better planning and implementation of programs for children and their communities. However, it is recommended to consult children, parents, and the communities (including teachers, health workers, etc.) to understand what they want to gain from their participation. Researchers should not assume that their participants share the same definition of benefits. Similarly, researchers should not assume there is an equal value of benefits to the researchers or participants. We will talk more about expectations during fieldwork and the dilemmas around this in the next chapter.

According to Kirby (2004) and Shaw et al. (2011), there are three models of children’s direct involvement in research: as consultants, as collaborators, and as owners or lead researchers. Researchers need to decide early in the research process what type of direct involvement they would like to pursue with children. Children's roles should be elaborated in the research proposal. Often, children may have different roles and there are various types of involvement at various stages of the research. In the case of URDC’s participatory research on urban design (Kusumaningdyah and Purnamasari 2018) (see Box 3: Case Study 1), children evolved from informers to collaborators during the third stage where their ideas were translated into a proposed design. In the next section, we will discuss the considerations that adult researchers need to consider when deciding if and at which stage, and in what capacity, they should involve children.

Box 3 Case Study 1: Involving Children in Participatory Design for Inclusive Public Space Provision in Kampung Kota of Surakarta

(Kusumaningdyah & Purnamasari, 2018)

Overview

In 2017, the Urban Rural Design and Conservation (URDC) Laboratory at Universitas Negeri Sebelas Maret (UNS), with funding from the Bernard van Leer Foundation, initiated the 'Kampung Layak Anak' (child-inclusive urban neighborhood) project. This project aimed to gather and visualize data about the public spaces that children use within the dense kampungs in Surakarta. The project was set up to inform government's interventions on kampungs. A collaborative design for inclusive public spaces was implemented in two kampungs based on children's participation in the project. The project also informed the development of a community participation design technique that can be used by the government to implement more inclusive spatial planning.

Children's participation in the project

The project had four stages, three of which have been completed. In all three stages, children were involved in different capacities. The first stage was involved mapping and focus group discussions (FGDs) where children completed a participatory mapping of the existing public space in their neighborhood. Children's perceptions about all these public spaces were elicited during the process, including such considerations as accessibility, frequency of utilization, and aspiration for future use. The techniques employed were FGDs, transect walks, and simple surveys. The second stage involved children in a collaborative design process. Researchers facilitated processes for children to identify and verify potential locations for public infrastructure through "placemaking" methods activities. Using drawing and sketching activities, children were invited to think of a new public location that conveyed their inspiration, ideas, and creativity. The third step was to translate children's ideas into a design that was applicable in real life. The fourth step will focus on the evaluation and monitoring of these public spaces in both kampungs.

In the first and second stages, researchers initiated the activities but let the children direct the process and make important decisions. In the third stage, children took the role of informants or consultants. Their ideas informed how researchers and architects developed a feasible design for a new public space. During the development of the blueprint, children were consulted regarding the design. However, as children did not have the architectural language, they were not involved actively in creating the blueprint, nor were they physically involved in building the space for reasons related to safety and competency.

Challenges during the data collection

One of the main challenges was to convince adult stakeholders, who acted as the gatekeepers of these communities, of the importance of child participation before researchers could begin to approach children. The team employed two different approaches in recruiting child participants. In the first kampung, children were recruited from one school, and permission from the school administration was sought. For the second kampung, the researchers sought endorsement from the local authorities (head of neighborhood or Kepala RT/RW). Each discussion with gatekeepers required a different framing as they had different interests and concerns. The researcher needed to invest time in order to convince local authorities of the importance of listening to children's voices and to build trust with parents and the larger community.

Getting permission from the school was easier. However, because the school was used as an entry point, children felt obligated to participate, and researchers were not able to interact freely in classroom settings. Therefore, for the second location, the researcher approached local authorities. This approach resulted in more flexibility in interacting with children.

Children as consultants or advisors

Children can act as advisers to researchers and provide recommendations to help researchers make key decisions.

Children's assistance can be sought at any stage of the research process and can be particularly important during the development stage. There are also examples in which child advisors played a role in reviewing research reports and disseminating results (more on this in Part 4). However, the role of children as consultants is different from the role of the adult researcher. Children have less control over the research activities than adult researchers; sometimes the information they have is limited to what the researchers communicate during consultation meetings. Therefore, adult researchers should continuously keep child consultants informed so that they can understand these activities and make contributions during the consultation process (Sime 2008).

Children as collaborator

In this model, children co-direct one, several, or all stages of the research process together with adult researchers.

As collaborators, children are part of the decision-making process, while as consultants, they only give recommendations that might influence the research process.

Moreover, they might be involved in designing the research project, selecting the methods, collecting and analyzing data, or even writing and disseminating the reports (see Part 4). Approaches that involve children as collaborators are frequently aligned with the goals and principles that underpin Participatory Action Research (see Box 4 for a brief review). In her research with street girls in Bogotá, Colombia, Ritterbusch applied Participatory Action Research (PAR) with street adolescents, who were involved in designing and conducting parts of the research, as a way to transform how the public understands their lives (2016). Children can also be involved as co-facilitators or research assistants (Cheney 2011; Greig, Taylor, and MacKay 2012; see also Box 5: Case Study 2 for an example). However, this type of involvement requires a deep commitment both from adults and children, and a clear understanding of the various roles and the precise nature of such a collaboration.

Children as leads

Instead of only responding to or being part of research projects, children can also be involved in a type of research that centers their leadership and that allows them to take control of the research project (please see Box 5 Case study 2 for an example).

> *In this model, children are responsible for leading all the stages of research with a team of peers (see Figure 2).*

The role of the adult researcher, in this model, is to provide technical assistance to children, such as providing training on research skills or overseeing the implementation of ethical guidelines. Adult researchers play a role that is similar to that of a consultant or steering committee from whom children seek advice or recommendations. Barnardo's research in Case Study 2 shows that when children lead a study, the research is provided with a different perspective that would have been missing if adult researchers had led the study alone (see Box 5). In Barnardo’s research, young people asked different questions than adults would have, and could better engage child informants because they could relate to informants by drawing on personal experiences.

Box 4 Various Examples of Participatory Action Research with Children and Youth

A few key examples of PAR with children and youth are evident in Turkey, Thailand and Indonesia. A three-year PAR project conducted with children living and working on the streets in Turkey attempted to reveal the lived experiences of street children and their abilities to take control of their own lives (Ataöv and Haider 2006). The project resulted in the empowerment of children as lead actors and an increase in their self-confidence (Ataöv and Haider 2006). Another key PAR project in Thailand explored the lifelong education model for 'out-of-school' children and youth by community organizations (Vayachuta, Ratana-Ubol, and Soopunyo 2019). The findings from the Thailand PAR project revealed that children and youth were more enthusiastic about schooling in this model than in other models, more capable of expressing their opinion more openly, had more developed knowledge-seeking skills, and were generally happier (Vayachuta, Ratana-Ubol, and Soopunyo 2019). Another key PAR project in Sikka and Rembang in Indonesia investigated the roles of children as agents of change in support of risk reduction and climate change adaptation (Haynes et al. 2010). The project emphasized the importance of including children and youth in research as their concerns and expectations are imperative in all levels of decision making for disaster risk reduction (Haynes et al. 2010). Shamrova and Cummings (2017) conducted an integrative review of 45 articles that document projects which implement PAR with children; many authors of the selected papers observed changes in children and youth's social-emotional and cognitive development, as well as their skills as agents of change from the PAR project.

Despite all these benefits, participatory research with and by children still has some ethical and methodological dilemmas. Children are involved in participatory research because they are considered 'experts' of their own lives.

> *However, because children are not a homogenous group, there are always issues with the representativeness of the views and experiences that child researchers present.*

We discuss inclusion and representativeness among respondents further in Part 3.

Besides allocating adequate resources for facilitating child and youth leadership in research, it is crucial for researchers to be reflexive about their practices. For instance, researchers need to be aware that children who are leads are vulnerable to be coopted by the research agendas that are developed by research professionals (Coppock 2011; Tyler, Turner, and Mills 2006).

> *Seeking children's support for carrying out the agenda of research professionals may (inadvertently) force children's voices into the mold of adult researchers' frameworks, thus undermining the goal not only of having children produce their own analysis, but also of providing more accurate knowledge from a child's perspective.*

Moreover, adult researchers have a responsibility to explain the role of children in the research to external parties and gatekeepers.

Box 5 Case Study 2: Involvement of Barnardo's Yorkshire Peer Research Group in research about bullying

(Tyler et al., 2006)

Overview

Barnardo's Policy Research Unit established a peer research group (PRG) in 2002 consisting of five young people who were 14-20 years old. This group was involved in a two-year project that ran from 2004 to 2006. For the research, the group received trainings that enabled them to design a meaningful research project. The PRG chose the topic of bullying for their research project as they had experienced bullying at some point in their lives. The PRG also provided feedback on the developed intervention.

How were the PRG and adult researchers involved? What were the benefits of engaging children in this way?

The PRG and adult researchers provided complementary roles to the research project: the PRG provided their expertise on the research topic whereas adult researchers provided their technical expertise in conducting research. Despite the differential expertise that each party offered, adult researchers provided necessary information to the PRG at decision-making points. The PRG led the design of the data collection methods and decided on the three most appropriate methods for conducting the research. These methods included observations, semi-structured interviews, and questionnaires. Following the data collection, the PRG conducted the data analysis by tallying questionnaires, listening to recorded interviews, interpreting and prioritizing emerging themes, and verifying findings with a local school. They also produced six posters tailored to different types of audiences and institutions such as primary schools, Barnardo's staff, and a conference organized by Barnardo's for disseminating research findings on bullying.

Some of the benefits, according to the adult researchers, of having the PRG lead the research were uncovering some of the most critical aspects of bullying among children, and the ability to provide non-judgmental assessments to respondents who were bullies by openly acknowledging the motivations of bullies. While designing the research methods, the PRG provided feedback on how to conduct observations to minimize the harm this may impose on children. The PRG's involvement was not only beneficial for generating knowledge about bullying, but also beneficial for young people themselves as they developed more confidence and improved their social skills during their participation.

What problems can be expected from of this type of involvement despite its benefits?

Adult researchers faced some dilemmas in balancing their role as research expert and facilitators. In some instances, facilitators considered the PRG to be overconfident about their research skills, and it was difficult for some professionals to regard them as researchers. Adult researchers also felt that they could have developed better interview questions, making it difficult for them to not make suggestions to the PRG for improving the questions. This tension pushed adult researchers to question themselves on the real purpose of the research project, which limited their ability to facilitate. The project had two purposes: to test how research implementation might be different if children or non-professional researchers are in charge, and to provide an opportunity for children to actively participate in research. To fulfil these two purposes, adult researchers had to adjust the degree to which they might influence the research by providing feedback.

What were the lessons learned from implementing this type of engagement?

The facilitators invested a considerable amount of time and effort in the project. Training was an essential component of this project. Before leading the research, the PRG received research training twice a month, either in the evenings or on Saturdays for a few hours at a time. The training was given to the PRG, depending on the research stage they were in, to enhance their understanding through working on relevant cases at the right time. Additionally, it was imperative for adult researchers to limit their role to being research facilitators instead of research leads. Maintaining the delicate balance between conducting scientifically sound research and having child-led research required adult researchers to be reflexive about their engagement with the PRG.

Deciding when and how to involve children: some considerations

Acknowledging that children are able to actively participate and that their views should be highly regarded in research about them does not imply that all research projects must include children. The researcher must carefully consider the scope and objective of the proposed research before determining the role of children in the proposed study. The researcher should review the primary objectives of the research and its scope to determine whether children's involvement in the research is necessary and ethically sound. It may well be that the initial set of decisions to make about a study is not thematic or disciplinary, but rather ethical and methodological: first, the researcher should examine the necessity and ethics of child-led research processes. There are several reflexive questions to assist the researcher's decision provided in Box 6. The answers to the following questions concern some of the primary theoretical considerations and may inform a decision about children's involvement in research. More practical factors should also be considered, such as the capacities both of children and the research team.

Box 6 Checklist questions to make decisions on children's involvementin research (taken with some adjustment from "Designing and doing Research with Children and Young People: The Importance of Questions'

(Greig et al. 2017)

☐ Is the topic relevant and worthwhile for children? Does it affect the lives of children?

☐ Does the research include children as a data source to answer questions?

☐ What type of information is required? Does it involve children's views, perceptions, and experiences?

☐ Do the research project open possibilities for engagement with children, including in terms of the resources and timeline?

☐ Does the research involve policy evaluation or service delivery?

☐ How will the information be used and analyzed? Are children able to provide informed opinions and make informed decisions?

☐ Do children have the capacity to be involved in the research, and at which stages?

☐ Would other methods of obtaining data without children's involvement be more effective?

Consider the capacity of potential child participants

Children's capacity is often viewed as a reason for not involving them in research. This presumption suggests that children are not able to express their views in a meaningful manner in order to benefit the research process, especially if the process involves making decisions. The application of multiple methods, techniques and approaches in various stages of research can allow children with varying capacities and abilities to be directly involved in research projects in different ways. For a study aimed at developing an out-of-school-hours program for children from disadvantaged communities, Lundy and colleagues (2011) facilitated activities with preschool-age children to engage them early on in the research cycle and to hear their views. At the other end of the spectrum, some children with more developed cognitive skills may be capable of mapping an issue to identify allies, resources, and channels of dissemination (Ozer and Piatt 2017) (see section *'What to consider when selecting methods'* in this Part for a discussion on cognitive abilities).

Although children might have some research skills, their competency is often incommensurate with the demands of academic and ethical rigor. Because of this difficulty, some scholars argue that the full participation of children may compromise the potential of a study to meet academic and ethical standards (Kim 2016).

> *Even though children may co-direct a study, it is still the responsibility of the adult researcher to ensure the academic and ethical rigor of such a study.*

Other scholars contend that adult researchers may need to train and teach children on research skills and improve their knowledge to meet the level of validity and rigor required for academic research (Bradbury-Jones and Taylor 2015; Kellett 2005). However, it is vital for researchers to be self-reflexive about their own biases and how these may influence the education and training of children.

In practical terms, researchers need to remember that deciding to involve children and youths in research studies requires some forethought about the age of participants, how much time will be required, the kind of commitment that will be asked of them, and whether there are any physical or mental disabilities that need to be considered.

In particular, children of very young ages or with varying cognitive abilities may require researchers to adjust their modes of communication.

Engaging children through pictures, photos, and drawings rather than through writing and speaking may be useful for communicating with very young children (Greig, Taylor, and MacKay 2012). Similarly, many studies employ visual methods to engage adolescents and adults. If researchers choose to engage with children and youth with disabilities, then the research processes and methods should accommodate for their specific abilities and disabilities, which includes but is not limited to exploring effective communication styles, such as the use of sign language with children who are deaf (Kellett 2011).

For children, allocating time to participate in a research study may be challenging due to several other competing demands. Adult researchers who facilitate child participation should keep in mind that children are likely to be attending school; they may also have social and domestic obligations as well as other pursuits and interests. Likewise, some of them may engage in economic activities. Researchers who want to work with street children or working children might need to be careful about not reducing their working time or non-working time, which they use to rest or socialize. Children's time is as valuable as adult's time. Therefore, adult researchers need to consider the benefits of child participation relative to the investment that children will make in participating (Kennan and Dolan 2017). Researchers also need to gain consent from children's gatekeepers as children will have to commit some of their time for the project (please see discussion on Consent in Part 3).

Researchers must consider whether or not to compensate children and youths for their time. If adult researchers conclude that compensation is appropriate, then budgeted funds will be necessary. Further, the type of compensation should be determined beforehand, and potentially in collaboration with children and youths (if appropriate) (see Part 3 for further discussion). For example, children may be compensated for their time because of the risk and/or discomfort that is potentially caused by their participation, or to compensate for lost earnings if someone is working or begging (Alderson and Morrow 2011). There are many and diverse ethical conundrums associated with compensation, and we will discuss these further in Part 3.

The capacity of the research team

Time and resources are important considerations for adult researchers to explore before engaging children in research. It is important for a research team to consider the issues mentioned previously, such as which means of communication are most effective, whether children need training to contribute to the research effectively and efficiently, and whether competing schedules need to be considered (such as school or work).

> *Engaging children and youths will require investment from the adult researcher to ensure that the potential benefits outweigh the potential harms.*

For example, children should not be involved in "tokenistic" practices in which children do not receive any feedback on their ideas or are not made aware of the impact of their input (Hill et al. 2004). Consequently, meaningful child participation is likely to require extra time and resources from adult researchers to determine their capacity and to mentor children through a research study. As mentioned above, children also have demands on their time, and they may need additional support throughout the research process.

The relationship between adult researchers and their youth or child counterparts should be considered, mainly in relation to the balance of power in decision-making. Effective collaboration when conducting research requires adults to facilitate at different stages of the research without taking over the entire process. When children assume the role of research leads, researchers need to be realistic and reflexive about their role and the influence they have on children. By being reflexive about their positionality, adult researchers should realize that their identity as adults may put children in a lower position of power and influence. Adult researchers must also critically examine their prejudices about children's capacities, capabilities, and decision-making power. These practices are essential for helping adults maintain a balanced role that will not dominate the research.

Youth may be capable of completing different stages of the research cycle described above, and adults can assist by creating manageable steps and timelines for these younger researchers (Ozer and Piatt 2017). There is also a role for adults to guide children and youths on ethical decisions by helping them to anticipate the impact of exploring a sensitive issue or interacting with marginal groups. Adult researchers have an essential role to play in preventing harm by considering and interpreting the broader context and by predicting situations that could result in unwelcome attention or even failure for the research team (Ozer and Piatt 2017). Along the same lines, adults should be cautious about research topics and data collection methods that (may) cause protection issues for children or youths (Kellett 2005). Balancing this decision-making authority with safeguarding concerns without dampening the motivation of young researchers requires careful planning and management by adult researchers.

Box 7 Before we continue, we must be very sure.

After all of the above points have been considered, researchers who still want to obtain information from children must make sure that:

- They have the expertise to work with children or are working with a credible source who has this expertise.
- They develop comprehensive protocols and tools to ensure ethical and sound methodological approaches.
- These protocols and tools are approved by an ethical review board.
- They prepare a response plan and mechanism in case they encounter children who need immediate assistance.

B

How can children be involved in planning and designing research?

As discussed above, children's involvement can begin at any stage of research—discussing objectives, identifying topics and planning for them, developing and refining data collection instruments, collecting data and evaluating field processes, analyzing and validating data, and disseminating results. In a research project that is directly related to children's perspectives and actions, it can be valuable to have children involved as early as possible in the research cycle – in the pre-data-collection stage.

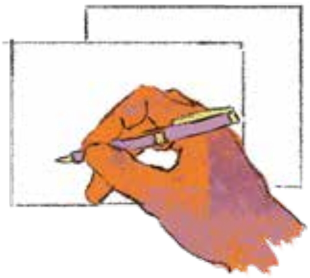
As the description suggests, the pre-data-collection stage includes steps that need to be taken before researchers conduct data collection. It consists of several steps that include: planning and designing the research, justifying why one should do the research, setting the research objectives, formulating the research questions, deciding what data that needs to be collected, and the methods for collecting the data. How researchers involve children at this stage of the research will depend on the context, objectives, and ethical principles that researchers have set – there is no single standard. While some researchers have involved children in discussions about aims, methods, topics, research questions, and even the selection of participants, there may also be other external factors to consider, such as requirements from funding sources and ethics committees. As France and Bloomfield (2000) note, we can improve the likelihood of children gaining a "sense of ownership" over the research by involving them early in the process. Early involvement will help maintain children's interest throughout the different stages of research.

Setting the objectives and shaping the questions

In the pre-data collection process, setting the objectives and shaping the questions is important, especially when children are directly involved as consultants, co-researchers, and leads.

> *In a formative, child-led consultation, children's concerns and ideas inform the research objectives and questions.*

Later on, this formative process will assist the researcher in exploring connections and relationships between the research project's results and the children's perceptions. However, adult researchers may still assist in encouraging young participants to think ahead about who else may care about an issue and how an issue is situated in its broader context. For sensitive issues, such as stigma, trauma, and violence, children's concerns, feelings, and lived experiences are a useful guide for setting research objectives and drawing boundaries around the themes and questions that will be explored. The researcher can also engage children in reshaping or reformulating both the initial and general research questions. Children may also add qualifications to an overarching question so that it will be more attuned to their needs and interests.



Designing the methods and preparing child-friendly activities

One of the principal considerations for children's participation in research is whether the research methodology and data collection processes are appropriate and inclusive for all participating children. To ensure appropriate and inclusive research,

> *children's participation in the early stages helps ensure that planning and research design are relevant to the needs and the rights of children, which will lead to more effective, relevant, and accountable research outcomes.*

Through the participation of children in the pre-data-collection process, data collection plans can include specific ways of approaching and interacting with children of particular ages. The involvement of children should take into account the age groups related to developmental stages, which is a process that can help manage child participation levels and their expectations (Greene and Hogan 2005). The range of methods employed should ensure that all eligible children have equal opportunity to participate irrespective of their gender, ethnicity, disability, literacy level, school participation, or any other specific circumstances (within the parameters of the research objectives and questions).

Piloting research techniques with a group of children and asking for their feedback is a standard way for involving children in the design of the methods and tools used for collecting the data. By piloting such techniques, subtle observations, and thus also adjustments, can be made, such as about the selection of probes used and the anticipation and interpretation of responses from children (see Johnston 2006). For example, when an adolescent answers a question with "whatever," how might a researcher interpret what this means? What meaning are they trying to convey? Are they simply bored with the long duration of the research interview? Are they giving this answer because the interview is held after school when they are keen to go back home and play with their friends? Or is it because they are not interested or because they do not understand the topic? (Greig, Taylor, and MacKay 2012). If a research tool prompts responses such as "whatever," some adaptations are clearly needed. The researcher needs to adapt the research methods and processes to be inclusive and appropriate to the given sample.

Selecting respondents, sites, and time of data collection

Research plans and designs have to accommodate to what is the best time, place, and environment for working with children in a safe situation (Kennan and Dolan 2017; Kirby 2004). Children's situations are diverse depending on their routine activities involving schooling, working, family responsibilities, and other commitments.

Assessing children's leisure time in every context (directly from a child's perspective) is a mandatory procedure. Referring back to the principle of beneficence in Part 1,

> *researchers must be mindful of the time and environment in which research is conducted to ensure that harm towards children is minimized and that their free time is not violated. We also need to consider the best setting to provide a comfortable environment for children and their peers;*

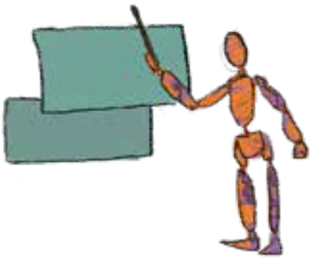
this consideration depends on a child's developmental age, gender, cultural situation, and any issues and topics that are relevant to the research questions.

Building a relationship with children's gatekeepers is important for ensuring children's active and direct participation. Moreover, children and gatekeepers' viewpoints regarding the harm and/or benefit of participating in research should be considered. Given this situation, researchers should try to consider all possible expectations, and strive to minimize the harm done to children who invest their time in a research project as respondents, consultants, or co-leaders (Kennan and Dolan 2017).

Children can also be consulted in the process of sampling and selecting target respondents. Children can have the opportunity to suggest respondents who are knowledgeable about the research topic or capable of speaking appropriately about children's lives. For example, children might suggest including friends, domestic workers, or grandparents who might have more specific information about a child's daily activities compared to their parents who are working (and therefore less likely to have this information).

Deciding research sites is also an important topic to discuss with children. Research sites need to be suitable for examining the given issues as well as the children involved. For example, it might not be ideal to conduct a study on bullying in schools when there is a likelihood that the bullies are their school-peers. Similarly, conducting data collection processes in schools might precondition children to 'classroom situations' in which adults are to be obeyed, thereby influencing children to provide socially desirable responses.

It is also important to consult with children so that the chosen sites represent sites that are of interest to the research question. Observing occurrences and types of violence against children in slum areas, for example, should include a variety of sites that children are familiar with. Consulting with children to discover their lived experiences and perspectives, and identifying their needs, will strengthen the research design. Likewise, children may be consulted to consider any past experiences or to obtain information about the history of certain communities that might impact the current research activity.



Selecting facilitators or enumerators

When selecting participants, it is essential to consider whether the research objective is to work with individual children or with groups. In various socio-cultural settings, children are taught to obey adults; for this reason, the presence of adult facilitators or enumerators might be intimidating to them. Not only will the presence of adults compromise the willingness of children to participate, but it might also skew their responses to suit what they perceive to be the "correct" answer—a clear example of desirability bias. That is why we need to ensure that facilitators/enumerators who are chosen know how to work with children, and more importantly, know how to appreciate children's opinions.

Children may be consulted in recruiting facilitators or enumerators by asking for their preferences in terms of the characteristics of potential candidates (age, gender, etc.) or even by asking them to nominate enumerators or facilitators who they believe might be strong research partners. Selecting children as co-researchers or enumerators is an option and can sometimes benefit both the study and the children. By involving children as co-researchers, some scholars believe that children may gain confidence, have a higher level of engagement, and have a better understanding of and relationship with adult researchers (Pinter, Mathew, and Smith 2016; see also Ritterbusch 2013). Facilitators or enumerators must be self-reflexive of their positionality within the research project and work with children in a comfortable environment.

Box 8 Case study 3: Diagnostic Study of Child Labor in Rural Area, with Special Emphasis on Tobacco Farming

(SMERU, personal correspondence)

What was the research about?

In 2016, SMERU partnered with the Eliminating Child Labour in Tobacco-Growing Foundation (ECLT) to conduct research to identify the contributing factors and root causes of child labor in tobacco-growing areas, and to provide a representative study of children and youths working in agriculture and on small-scale tobacco farms in Indonesia. The study took place in two tobacco-growing districts in East Java and West Nusa Tenggara. The research aimed to identify viable and sustainable solutions for improving the lives of children working on small-scale tobacco farms.

What were the procedures to get informed consent from the participants?

Informed consent was obtained from both parents and children. Given that children were the main respondents, the research team pushed for obtaining informed consent from children prior to obtaining informed consent from parents. However, in practice the researchers obtained informal consent from the parents first as they were usually the ones the researchers met first. After introducing the study to the parents and the children, researchers then asked children and parents to participate in interviews that were conducted in separate rooms. Children completed the informed consent forms away from their parents, thereby minimizing potential pressure of parents on children. However, in some cases, children's consent was reobtained when their parents were within sight, but not hearing distance, which is a strategy to make children feel more comfortable yet not pressured.

Throughout the study only one parent pushed back against the activities of the study during the photo elicitation interview. In this particular case, all three children in a family were chosen to participate in a photo elicitation interview activity; however, the father refused to allow all three children to be given cameras, which was the standard procedure for the photo-elicitation interviews, and would only allow one camera to be given to all three of his children. To reduce the risk of one child dominating the production of the pictures, all three children were invited for more detailed individual interviews.

What were the challenges that the team faced during data collection?

Boredom and fatigue during data collection stood out as particular challenges, especially for children of younger age groups. To address these issues, the team brought along coloring book and pens. The coloring books not only reduced the risk of children getting bored, but also helped researchers to interact more comfortably with children.

Children have busy lives; it was important to time interviews in a way that would not make their participation physically demanding. Upon reflection, the researchers learned that the best time to conduct data collection with children in this sample, whether it was in-depth interviews or focus group discussions, is in the afternoon. Giving children time to rest between coming home from school and participating in the data collection process was found to be crucial for children's active participation. As afternoons are usually allocated for children to play, they were observed to be in a much more rested state, which helped them articulate more insights and provide more information.

There was a risk that children who participated might be intimidated by their employers as their participation implied that some outsiders might consider them as child laborers. Employers might also pressure children to give specific information to researchers. As such, the team decided to conduct interviews only in the children's homes, and FGDs were conducted in the house of a community figure.

Pressure on children could also occur through the kind of compensation given. During the quantitative survey, as the unit of observation was the household, child participants did not receive any compensation, per se, despite their participation in interviews. However, each household received a tote bag from SMERU as a token of appreciation. During the qualitative survey, each child respondent, for both FGDs and in-depth interviews, was given a pencil box with a set of writing tools. For FGDs, since they took much longer and sometimes even ended during dinner time (6 PM), the team also provided children with meals.

What are the key lessons learned from this study for researchers who want to involve children?

Researchers in child-participatory studies should be aware of and familiar with the participating children's communicative and cognitive capacities so as not to develop instruments that might not be compatible with their abilities. It is important to note that tools that are deemed too easy or too complicated will inhibit children's active participation. Researchers also need to be prepared to adjust and adapt their tools along the way. In addition, researchers need to be self-reflexive and always check the power dynamics between themselves and the children. Researchers need to be ready with practical ways to ensure that children feel as comfortable as possible.

During the research, it was clear that the team had higher expectations of older children than of younger children. The team expected that older children would be more articulate and receptive, something that the team observed during the pilot stage of the study. However, during the fieldwork, the team found that this was not always the case, especially with children in West Nusa Tenggara. During the pilot study, the team found that younger children had relatively strong communication skills and that child-researcher interactions were effective. These communication skills were not as prevalent, however, when researchers engaged with children in rural sites in West Nusa Tenggara. Therefore, the team had to adjust their tools and questions as well as their expectations of the data obtained during the interviews and FGDs.

C

Common child-centered or child-friendly methods

One of the most common approaches to child participatory research is to center the study on children's concerns and lived experiences, which is sometimes also referred to as "child-centered research" (C. D. Clark 2011). Children's voices are increasingly considered as crucial both in academic settings and in policymaking.

> *However, without careful design and deliberate attempts to provide spaces for children to articulate their opinions and experiences, child participation can easily become a token for legitimizing research as participatory.*

As frequently stated in this handbook, the decisions to involve children at any stage, including as active respondents, consultants, or co-leaders, need to be made at the very onset of the research project by considering the research questions, the capacity of the research team, and the potential of children to contribute.

Child-centered research does not comprise any specific method or tool, but is an approach employed by researchers. Beazley et al, (2009) argue that no single method is genuinely participatory. Similarly, Christensen & James (2008) assert that children, like adults, can be engaged in all sorts of ways that range from questionnaires to action-based methods. When deciding what method to implement, researchers need to consider the particular group of children that they want to work with and their identity (such as their socio-economic status, cultural context, and ability/disability). Equally important is to ensure that, whatever the methods of choice are, children are protected and can enjoy the process while simultaneously upholding the validity and rigor of the data.

The following table summarizes the various methods and activities that have been used in different studies with children (see Table 1). The methods in Table 1 are used to elicit children's perspectives, which can take place in a variety of ways. Children can be encouraged by drawing pictures, taking photographs or videotaping stories, creating scenarios, and acting out different roles or scenes in a role play. Other approaches include using a ranking method, writing in a diary, explaining an observation, or participating in a focus group or online survey. Sometimes props (a doll or toy phone) can be practical to create stimuli for preschoolers. In traditional child-centered approaches, the below methods have been used in face-to-face consultation.

However, the current era is creating opportunities for consultations using online mediums, such as online video and instant messaging applications. It should be noted, however, that online mediums carry different, if not greater, risks that require additional consideration and moderation in comparison to face-to-face consultations.

As suggested above, the presented methods may be applied to different activities and serve particular purposes. This is not an exhaustive list. Different methods can be recombined and different types of activities can be adjusted according to the needs of the research project or the specific situations of children. It is common that self-narrating methods, such as drawings, photographs, videos, or journal diaries are used as part of a larger repertoire of tools that include participatory observations, interviews, and discussions, as a way to confirm researcher’s interpretation and to triangulate data. Often, drawings or photos serve primarily as props to start conversations between researchers and participants.

Table 1. Common Child-Centered Data Collection Methods

1 Semi-structured conversations/interviews

Activities

- ○ Allow for open discussion around a general theme/topic and are guided by open-ended questions.
- ○ Talk with children as they get more comfortable with the researcher.
- ○ This activity usually involves stimuli like drawing or playing.
- ○ Can be applied in a group setting or with an individual child.

Advantages

- \+ Useful for obtaining detailed personal information about feelings, perceptions, and opinions. Interviewers can establish initial rapport with children, which can generate insightful responses, especially regarding sensitive topics.
- \+ Requires minimal equipment (except for an audio recorder, if necessary).
- \+ Particularly useful with children from oral-dominant cultures and those who have limited exposure to mass media.
- \+ Useful for children who did not readily participate or did not feel comfortable sharing in other methods.

Disadvantages

- – Require time to develop rapport and to gain trust in order to engage in conversations with children.
- – Require time to limit power imbalances (these may be present when the researcher tries to push the conversation).
- – It might be tricky to find appropriate spaces and to get parents' permission so that children can talk in private with researchers.
- – Researchers may be unable to ask appropriate questions. However, by providing open-ended questions and allowing participants to steer the interview, it should provide a space for them to share their personal experiences/ideas.

Example of Studies

Studies on child poverty in Ethiopia (Tekola, Griffin, and Camfield 2009), street children in Ethiopia (Fikre 2016), child domestic workers in Indonesia (Patunru et al. 2013), and a study on Identity Narratives among 12 Young Muslim 14-17 years old in Australia (Zulfikar 2017).

2 Drawings

Activities

○ Icebreaker to build relationships with children.

○ Prompt children to share or remember a topic/theme related to the research question.

○ Example of drawings:

- **Maps** are used to understand children's perception of places or spaces.
- **Mobility maps** are used to understand children's daily mobility (to demonstrate where they live, travel, and to place themselves in society). A useful tool to reveal access issues and for getting children and young people's viewpoints on their geographies (Ennew and Plateau 2004).
- Children can be prompted to develop a **mind map** or a particular drawing such as a tree with branches and roots to help children to explain a particular issue, any related conditions, and causes of an issue.
- **Body maps:** using drawings of the body to narrate a story. For example, children may be asked to scan their body and identify areas of joy and pain (Ennew and Hastadewi 2004)

⊕ Advantages

+ Useful and quick to provide a considerable amount of information in a short period using very simple tools (paper, markers/crayons).
+ Give a sense of control and ownership to the child to draw and share as much or as little information during the discussion. Maps must be interpreted by the people who drew them; researchers should allow time for comments, explanations, and discussion (Ennew and Plateau 2004).
+ Good to use with young children who might have difficulties in articulating their thoughts in writing.

⊖ Disadvantages

– The process of understanding what children say about their drawings and understanding the drawings that children produce requires advanced skills in decoding drawings.
– Some children are inhibited because of a lack of drawing skills.
– Not all children view drawing as a fun activity (youths may find it boring, or they may be afraid of being assessed).
– In group settings, children tend to copy what other children/ the group draws – reflecting the social construct instead of their individual experiences.

Example of Studies

- Drawing methods were used to work with seven-year-old children. This encouraged children to join in the research without fear of having to face a test-like situation (Harpham et al. 2005).
- Bima et al., (2017) used drawings to stimulate children to talk about how they perceive poverty, wellbeing, and everyday life struggles.
- Transect walks and community tours/mapping are often used to understand children's spatial understanding and experiences (see Case Study 1).
- Body mapping enabled conversation around physical memories of good and bad events in children's lives (Camfield 2010).
- In a multisite research on violence against children, body mapping enabled children to express the frequency and severity of direct assault and the worst forms of violence that they had experienced (Ennew and Plateau 2004)

3 Photographs

Activities

○ Children take their own photographs, and researchers use them as interview stimuli. The photos taken by the children can act as prompts to a child's personal history and help children to develop their answers.

○ Children can work individually, in groups with other children, or in partnership with the researchers.

○ Photovoice: children take photographs and write about their meaning or use photos to develop narratives in interviews or focus group discussion. It is important to always ask a child or young person to interpret their photo and to hear their perspective (Vakaoti 2009; Chakraborty 2009).

⊕ Advantages

- + Reflect conditions about what matters in children's lives.
- + Children can learn and choose from various ways to take pictures (or selecting objects in the process), thus representing the uniqueness of children's experiences and views.
- + Instant cameras are easy to use. It is also possible to use disposable cameras or smart phones.
- + Provide researchers with insights into those spaces and activities that can be accessed only by children.
- + Having children and young people discuss their image/s of choice breaks down the power balance of the researcher as the expert (Ennew and Plateau 2004).
- + Training about proper camera use might provide children with new photographic skills.

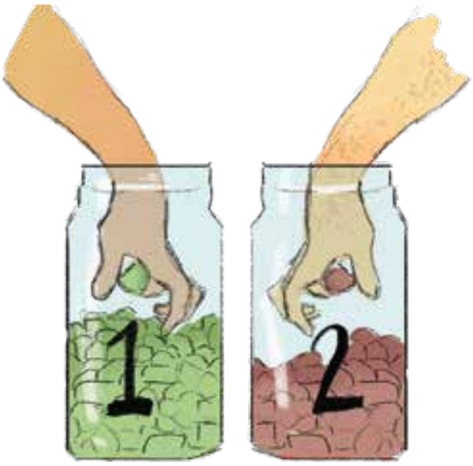
⊖ Disadvantages

- − Low control of the researcher over the photographs captured by children.
- − In some settings, cameras might attract unwanted attention to participating children.
- − Some children might not be comfortable using cameras and feel embarrassed of their inability. There may be a need for a training or workshop to help children use the cameras correctly and comfortably.
- − Photography is a relatively high-risk activity as the capturing of images (specifically of people) carries specific cultural meaning and privacy concerns. Ethical issues: need to seek consent from individuals captured in the photographs or from locations considered to be private settings, especially if the photos will be published or can be used for the identification of a person or place. Even when children agree to the images being published, researchers are ultimately responsible for protecting identities (Ennew & Plateau, 2004). If this is not feasible and privacy cannot be ensured, photographs should not be taken.

Example of Studies

- The social worlds of migrant children in primary schools in Ireland was explored through children-centered visual research methods, primarily artwork and photography (White et al. 2010).
- Adams et al., (2012) also used photovoice to facilitate Aboriginal children aged 6-12 years in learning about their parent's healthy eating habits.
- Ruiz-Casares et al., (2013) researched child protection in Liberia and used photos of basic infrastructures, family and peer relations, school environments, sports and leisure activities, religious practices, and working conditions that children could easily relate to (both negative and positive images).

4 Participatory Ranking Assessments (PRA)



Activities

- ○ Researchers usually work with children in groups. Children are usually asked to rank pictures, problems, or types of activities by order of importance.
- ○ Ranking is a great tool to identify preferences and priorities and to establish shared perspectives.
- ○ Children can also be helped with developing timelines or charts using the PRA method.

Advantages

- \+ PRA encourages children to collaborate inclusively in developing their own understanding of themes/issues in greater depth.
- \+ It provides a visual focus that can encourage the participation of children who may not readily take part in open discussions (Ennew & Plateau, 2004).
- \+ Ranking exercises can also lead to a diverse discussion on varying topics/themes.

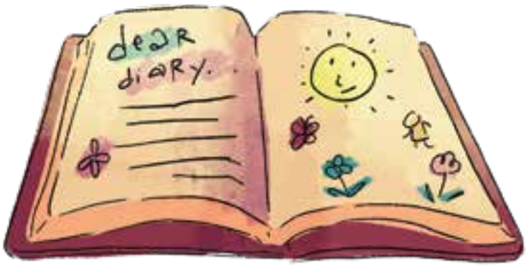
Example of Studies

A ranking method was used to stimulate a discussion to understand children's needs and barriers in achieving wellbeing when mobile or migrating (PUSKAPA 2011).

Disadvantages

- Requires a considerable number of researchers to facilitate sessions.
- PRA is often time-consuming.
- Depending on the cognitive development of certain age groups, children might not respond well to the quantification of objects.
- Researchers might lose children's attention due to fixation on the quantified results instead of the process of ranking that took place. (See Barnes and Wright 2012 for further insights.)
- There is a chance that researchers/facilitators are biased in terms of the criteria/weighting of given topics (Narayanasamy 2009). Therefore, it is important that the scoring is discussed with and decided by the children and young people involved, and that they are given sufficient time to form a decision.
- Another issue that might occur during discussions is that participants might not be content with their decision and may want to change their minds after discussing the given topic (Narayanasamy 2009).

5 Diaries or Life Narratives



Activities

○ Usually used for children to tell their life stories.

○ Life story books, memory books, diaries, life maps, story games.

- Story games: children create a story; each child develops a line and passes to the next child.

○ Daily timetables used to identify children's activities and allocation of time use.

Advantages

+ Useful for understanding children’s time use and perception of time.
+ Each part from a life storybook will focus on different parts of the child’s life, allowing for in-depth exploration of each topic.
+ A life story or map helps children to explore and understand their past and present situations.
+ Pictures and narratives in the life storybook help children to tell stories in chronological and structured order.
+ Side benefits include the increase of children’s writing skills and their ability to express themselves using words (Tekola, Griffin, and Camfield 2009).

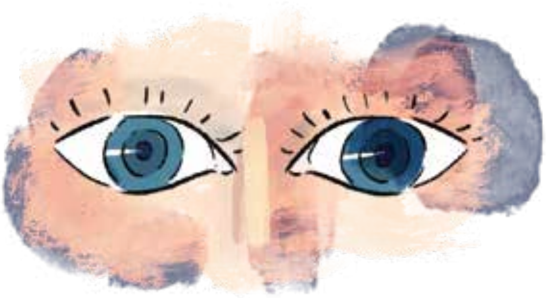
Disadvantages

- Might be perceived as schoolwork for some children.
- Privacy concerns over the content of the diary when teachers (at school) or parents (at home) can access a child’s diary.

Example of Studies

- Life story books used in research with foster and adopted children (Watson, Latter, and Bellew 2015).
- Story games have been used in research with children who experienced traumatic events such as conflict (Veale 2005).

6 Observations (including participant observation)



Activities

○ Participatory observation involves children being engaged in conversations during the observation. Researchers are not limited only to watching but can also participate in the activities that take place during the time of the observation.

Advantages

- + For young children who might not be fully aware of the observer's presence, children will be involved in conversations with observers naturally.
- + Can be used to understand a child's environment, such as the working conditions of street children.
- + Can be an effective technique, especially if allowed/invited by children.

Disadvantages

- – Might only be useful for young children. Older children might not feel comfortable while being observed.
- – Privacy issues may arise in observing a family/child's home or personal space. It might increase the security risk for children who are involved in risky or criminal activities.

Example of Studies

- Purwaningrum et al. used observation to assess children's methods of motor development in elementary school (2017).
- Participant observation in combination with go-along interviews and human mapping has been employed to understand children's physical activities (Gunson et al. 2016).
- Spitzer employed participant observation for studying children with autism, and discussed the ideas, insights, and challenges in the process of data collection and analysis (2003).

7 Use of stimulus materials and prompts

Activities

- ○ Use of written stimulus (sentence completions, word choices, vignettes/cases).
- ○ Use of visual stimulus (pictorial cards, feeling cards, feeling faces – happy/sad).
- ○ Use of physical objects (dolls, puppets, models that a child can touch).
- ○ Researchers can also collect pictures from different websites that are related to the research themes and contexts to be utilized in group discussions with children (Ruiz-Casares et al. 2013).

Advantages

- + Different prompts help researchers to initiate discussion with children in interviews.
- + Pictorial cards help children to understand a given process, such as adoption, and allow children to share their own thoughts and experiences.
- + As a scaffolding approach, prompts help children with painful emotions and memory retrieval.

Disadvantages

- – Researchers must have the ability to choose the appropriate stimulus to get relevant responses.

Example of Studies

- Feeling cards/feeling faces are frequently used to ask children about how they feel about a situation, used in interviews or questionnaires.
- Pictorial cards used in research with adopted children to understand the adoption experience (Thomas et al. 1999 in Fargas-Marlet et al. 2010).
- Physical objects are most effective for younger children above the age of 5 years old to ‘convey complex or emotionally difficult information, information that is beyond the child’s level of verbal fluency or sophistication’ (Alison Clark 2011, 137).
- Faller (2005) and Bruck, Ceci, and Francouer (2000) used an anatomical doll in an assessment of children aged 3-4 years who may have been sexually abused.

8 Role Play

Advantages

- + Role plays may involve acting out scenarios to problem solving and/or story making through dramatic play.
- + This method can help children to practice coping with real-life situations and support children's social-emotional growth and development.
- + Role play can give children skills to deal with problematic social interactions in their environment (for example bullying).
- + Role play can help children develop a positive self-image and attitude toward others.
- + If performed for a broader community, role play can empower children to communicate their voices to significant adults (Johnston 2006).

Disadvantages

- – Role play requires time and skill to manage the power dynamics of a situation.
- – Role play can evoke unpleasant feelings if the topic being played out is sensitive and/or was experienced by the individual child or group of children participating in the role play.

Activities

○ In role play, researchers can develop several scenarios for children to follow as a prompt for children to develop scenarios that are based on their own experiences.

○ Children can also develop their own scenarios. Scenarios should be collected and presented anonymously. For example, have children write ideas down on pieces of paper, which are handed in, rearranged, and handed out again. When ideas are anonymously shared in this manner, children may begin to learn that others have had similar experiences.

○ A role play provides a safe environment for children to enact particular roles and spontaneously 'live' the situation from beginning to end.

○ Reverse roles played by children allow children to experience such roles and therefore identify with the various roles played.

○ Debriefing is a crucial part of role play. This can be used to further explore children's feelings, shared experiences, problems, solutions, and obstacles.

Example of Studies

- Role-playing assisted researchers by enhancing the personal intelligence of children aged five years in early childhood education setting (Wee, Shin, and Kim 2013).
- Mavroudis & Bournelli (2016) used drama and role play as an experiment to counteract the bullying in 190 primary schools in southern Finland.

9 Questionnaires [specifically self-administered questionnaires]

Activities

- ○ Self-administered questionnaires can be designed specifically for children through techniques that use pictures and short, simple sentences.
- ○ Audio/pre-recorded questionnaires are a type of questionnaire that allow children to listen at their own pace and write down answers in a separate booklet.
- ○ Questionnaires may be conducted using CAPI (Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing) applications or telephones.
- ○ Questionnaires can be developed flexibly to give children the opportunity to choose sections that are most pertinent to them.

Advantages

- \+ Quick and easy for researchers to administer.
- \+ Can generate a significant amount of standard data and obtain a large sample size.
- \+ Some children might feel more comfortable answering questions compared to direct face-to-face interactions.

Example of Studies

- Have been used in household surveys and school-based surveys, such as Young Lives (Roelen and Camfield 2013).
- PUSKAPA & UNICEF (2014) used questionnaires to assess the circumstances that affect family separation and the lives of children in and out of family care in DKI Jakarta, Central Java and South Sulawesi.

Disadvantages

- – Wording and language must be well considered.
- – Children’s responses to questions will depend on children’s levels of reading comprehension for written questions as well as children’s use of different languages in the home and school settings.
- – Questionnaires can be of limited use for children whose views and experiences might not be as binary or as rigid as the available answers (see Barnes and Wright 2012).

10 Computer Applications

Activities

○ Online surveys can be administered individually to children or self-administered using web survey software packages or online survey related services.

○ Real time computer applications can also be utilized to facilitate data collection using the focus group discussion method (Andrews, Nonnecke, and Preece 2003).

○ Audio-Computer Assisted Self-Interview (ACASI) is a method of data collection that may also be utilized for conducting research about sensitive topics such as violence (Falb et al. 2016).

Advantages

+ The researcher can gain access to people who share specific interests, attitudes, beliefs, and values regarding an issue, problem, or activity.
+ The internet enables communication among people who may be hesitant to meet face-to-face.
+ Online methods can be more time and financially efficient. Online surveys allow the researcher to reach many participants in different locations in a short period of time.

– Might exclude children who do not have access to or cannot use computers and the internet.
– Online methods may increase access issues for certain participants and thus, exacerbate feelings of exclusion if they are not able to participate (Andrews, Nonnecke, and Preece 2003; Hudson and Bruckman 2004).

Example of Studies

- An example of online methods involving children is U-Report by UNICEF that involved approximately 4000 children and youths in an online survey using the Twitter platform (UNICEF 2015).
- Livingstone et al., (2011) assessed the relationship between child's age, online internet use, and risk and safety, through an online study across 25 countries via EU Kids Online.

D

What to consider when selecting the methods?

Age and debates about developmental stages

Age is commonly used as a proxy to understand and classify children based on their developmental stage. The main objective in the field of developmental psychology is to understand the process of change in the cognitive and psychological functioning of individuals and its relation to age (Greene and Hogan 2005).

> *The concept of developmental stages helps researchers select an approach or methods that is appropriate for the age-linked competencies and cognitive development of children*

As briefly discussed in Part 1, one of the most referenced resources on developmental stages is Piaget’s classic theory, which argued that children’s development takes place in a series of discrete, hierarchical, and integrative stages. Those stages are associated with specific age groups: 0-18 months is associated with the development of sensory-motor skills; 18 months – 7 years with pre-operational thinking; 7 to 11 years with concrete operational thinking; 11 years and older with formal thinking (Greene and Hogan 2005). These varying stages are often perceived as universal; although children grow up in different cultures and environments, Piaget’s theory holds that children proceed through the same stages in the same order across cultures (Ansell 2005; Kolucki and Lemish 2011). These stages have been applied in practical ways to understand a child's cognitive development. For example, preschool children are often depicted as having a tendency to talk about the present and as having difficulties in describing the past or the future, whereas children aged 11 years or older are often said to be able to recall historical events and elaborate on “why” questions.

SMERU's study of urban childhood poverty and PUSKAPA's case study on children out of family care (see Box 8: Case Study 3 and Box 10: Case Study 5 in Part 3) exemplify how studies often synthesizes different approaches for selecting child participants who are suitable for the objective and method of a study.

As mentioned briefly in the previous Part, researchers also need to be aware of the criticisms leveled at such developmental theories. Child development perspectives are valuable for constructing appropriate questions about children's experiences or for choosing suitable activities and data collection techniques that will allow such questions to be answered. However, theories of child development have been criticized for obscuring the actual and contextual nature of childhood experiences, which are affected by culture, environment, power dynamics, ethnicity, and developmental delay.

> *Children might develop their cognitive, motoric, and psychosocial capacities in different ways to what developmentalists have suggested.*

Greater emphasis is now placed on the micro-environment (the home) in which children grow up as well as their macro-environments (society and culture) (Kolucki and Lemish 2011). Socio-cultural approaches to human development, such as the work of Lev Vygotsky (a contemporary theorist who was also a follower of Piaget), emphasize that child development is shaped by human interactions and social processes (Haynes et al. 2010). An explorative study of the lived experiences of children under four in South-Africa found that children's numerical age cannot be used as the sole determinant of appropriate research methods; methods should instead align with the lived experiences of children (Ebrahim and Muthukrishna 2005). However, researchers also need to consider the role of literacy and the level of formal education in a culture as well as children's exposure to reading materials and external references. For instance, children from oral cultures might be more comfortable in expressing themselves through conversation rather than through writing or drawing, despite their literacy skills.

Gender and culture

> *Children's experiences and capacities are also shaped and differentiated by gender relations.*

In youths with more complex thinking (not only concrete), cultural experiences and analyses of these experiences may be different for boys and girls. The older the children are, the more likely they are to have internalized the expected social roles of their genders. Conducting separate research sessions based on gender to explore gender-related issues as well as matching facilitators to children based on gender would be helpful for capturing their nuanced and different experiences (Johnston 2006). In studies of commercial sex work in Surakarta (Wahyunadi and UNICEF 2004), the research design was not only attuned to children, but also prepared for probing girl-related issues. Likewise, a toolkit established by Save the Children for ethical participation in research on violence against children mentioned that a best practice is for women researchers to work with girls, and for men to work with boys, although in some cultural contexts boys may find it easier to openly discuss issues with adult women (Laws and Mann 2004).

Identity

The gender identity of children and young people may not fit the norm of heterosexuality or binary representation of male/female. Communities frequently exclude and bully minority groups, such as members of the LGBTIQA+ community, and others who are seen as transgressing social norms (Laws and Mann 2004). Particular efforts need to be made when involving such children and youths, who may feel relatively excluded from their community, and specific support may be necessary to build confidence among these children for their participation (Laws & Mann, 2004). From Cameron and Stinson's (2019) perspective, any gender-inclusive measure is better than a binary one. Researchers should adopt practices that respect and reflect gender diversity by using gender-inclusive measures and language (Cameron and Stinson 2019).

Ability/disability

Children and young people with an impairment or disability, such as those related to vision, hearing, cognition/intellect, communication, and physical and psychosocial disabilities, are often denied participation in research due to inflexible research designs and unsensitive methods (Jenkin et al. 2020). Family members and communities are frequently resistant to children participating in research due to the assumption that children with disabilities are incapable of active engagement (Jenkin et al. 2020). It is not necessary to be an "expert" researcher to include the voices of marginalized children, including those with disabilities, but additional efforts may be needed (Laws and Mann 2004). In order to conduct accessible and inclusive research with children with disabilities, researchers need to focus on using alternative and diverse methods as well as providing adaptations and supports that enable children to communicate directly about their own views and experiences (Jenkin et al. 2015). The principles of inclusive research for children with disabilities employed by Deakin University in Melbourne Australia are: respect, trust, relationship building, sufficient time, strengths-focused approaches, diversity, active listening, and freedom of choice and comfort (Jenkin et al. 2015).

Since the selection of methods and designing approaches for data collection vary and are often affected by many factors, the best way to create an appropriate approach for children is to involve them. Before selecting one's research methods, it is recommended to consult, in an inclusive manner, children from varying characteristics that are potentially included in the main study, such as age, gender, ability, reading comprehension, and personal interests. In a complex assessment, researchers need to first test their methods and approach with children who have similar characteristics to the intended target sample. Their feedback will be helpful for adjusting the methods or approaches of a research project to specific issues of culture or the environment as well as the power dynamics as these are perceived from the vantage point of the children.

Combining various methods

There are a myriad appropriate data collection methods, tools, and techniques that can be utilized to involve children as reliable informants and to ensure that children are engaged and participating according to their capacities and conditions.

> *All techniques have advantages and shortcomings, and it is widely recommended to combine various activities and techniques*

for the following reasons:

- A mixture of activities and techniques gives children a sense of control and choice in familiar ways for them to express their voices (Racelis, Aguirre, and Peña-Alampay 2006).

- Since no one tool is effective for the entire range of children's preferences, employing mixed techniques will enable researchers to engage children from various ages, genders, schooling experiences, literacy abilities, and skills using different techniques. It will also help to increase the generalizability of the findings (Crivello, Camfield, and Woodhead 2009).

- Using different techniques —such as paraphrasing in discussion, co-facilitation, or activities such as drawing or writing— assists children in explaining more complex, abstract, and sensitive issues, thereby capturing more dimensions of a topic than one or two methods would otherwise permit. The use of multiple techniques will also assist the research team in triangulating information across methods, and to gauge pertinent information about children, particularly in regard to complex or sensitive issues (Fargas-Malet et al. 2010).

- Mixing activities and techniques gives children the opportunity to not feel pressured in providing answers because of a limited participation process (Fargas-Malet et al. 2010).

Mixing visual methods with oral discussions

Some researchers combine visual methods with oral discussions to allow children with different interests and skills to participate, which is a process that also enriches researchers' understanding of specific findings (Camfield and Tafere 2009; Crivello, Camfield, and Woodhead 2009; Tekola, Griffin, and Camfield 2009). Combining individual interviews with journal activities will also help to uncover issues that might not emerge using only one method (Tekola, Griffin, and Camfield 2009). Most studies which employ visual methods, such as drawing, mapping, or photography, draw most of their findings from the conversations that follow (Beazley et al. 2009; Harpham et al. 2005; Tekola, Griffin, and Camfield 2009). Without conversations at the end of the activity, researchers risk interpreting children's visual products only through the lens of adults, thereby undermining children's own voices as well as the validity of findings.

Mixing individual and group sessions

Combining methods can also mean mixing individual and group sessions. In some studies, individual sessions (interviews or journal keeping) were used to elicit personal information and explore issues that could not be addressed in group settings, perhaps due to issues of confidentiality or sensitivity (Bima et al. 2017; Crivello, Camfield, and Woodhead 2009; Johnston 2006; Tekola, Griffin, and Camfield 2009). Group sessions are particularly useful to identify the "collective knowledge" that is shared among a particular group of children through dialogue, and to gain multiple perspectives in a short period (Ansell et al. 2012). Children engaged in collective activities are usually asked to express their views in generic, hypothetical terms (using questions such as "what would a girl of your age do in...?") and to distance themselves from their own experiences. However, similar to adults, group activities with children are also prone to "group thinking," which can be dominated by specific individuals, exclude participants who do not fit a group in specific ways, or lead to confidentiality issues if some respondents disclose personal information or harm themselves or others.

Researchers capacities in implementing child-friendly methods

The role of language in communicating abstract concepts to children

Language plays a vital role in ensuring effective data collection from children. Researchers need to ensure consistency of meaning, especially when working with children who speak different languages (Barnes and Wright 2012; Crivello, Camfield, and Woodhead 2009). Even if researchers and participating children speak the same language, misunderstanding and misinterpretation may still happen (Johnston 2006). A challenge often arises when researchers need to communicate abstract concepts to children, especially young children who have little to no schooling (Camfield 2010; Racelis, Aguirre, and Peña-Alampay 2006). As a way to deal with such language and communication issues, researchers usually try to use simpler words or phrases that connote more or less similar meanings. Likewise, researchers may resort to using images or symbols to deal with language and communication issues. For example, methods such as ranking, photo story, or role play can be useful in adapting to various learning needs. The Young Lives studies, for instance, use simple prompts such as “things we need to live well” or “what constitutes a good or bad life” to understand wellbeing from the perspective of young children (Camfield and Tafere 2009; Crivello, Camfield, and Woodhead 2009).

However, researchers can find it hard to understand children’s meanings, especially when they are not able to articulate them in a way that adults or academics can comprehend. Children and adult researchers (who most likely come from different socio-economic and educational backgrounds) might have different definitions when referring to words such as “work” or “crowded”. Rewording and paraphrasing such terms instead of repeating them is not only necessary but also encouraged (Andrew Clark, Prosser, and Wiles 2010; Racelis, Aguirre, and Peña-Alampay 2006).

When interacting with and interviewing children, researchers should avoid falling into an interrogative mode. It is recommended that researchers spend time to earn the trust of children and build rapport with them and their caregivers, which is a process that will also help with obtaining informed consent.

During an interview, it might be helpful to gradually transition from general to detailed questions, concrete to abstract concepts, less sensitive to more sensitive issues, and descriptive to explanatory models (Wilson and Powell 2012). When working with younger children it is recommended to take an indirect approach (Laws & Mann, 2004); thus, observation is commonly used in research with young children, toddlers, or babies. Older children, however, may be insulted if one uses an approach that they consider "babyish". Researchers might be able to gain valuable insights by spending some time observing children in their natural environment and during their daily lives, or by consulting older children on what the best way is to hold discussions with them.

Sensitivity to signs of disinterest and lack of understanding

We should be aware that even though the methods and techniques described above can help to stimulate interactive dialogue, there are other considerations to take into account in order to keep children comfortable and engaged during the process. The researcher needs to monitor his or her responses, being careful not to use judgmental phrases such as "that is right" or "that is good" in response. When checking for understanding, the researcher should ask children to repeat what they have heard rather than asking, "Do you understand?", as children might hesitate to say no (C. D. Clark 2011).

Many children develop a level of concentration that is in alignment with the course of their school level experience (Salkind 2001). Tekola et al. (2009) found that children around the age of 10 tend to digress or become bored after 30-40 minutes of interviewing. Clark (2011) argues that a strategy to monitor a child's affective state should not only be based on what a child is saying, but also on traits that a child is showing, such as anxiety, glee, disinterest, tiredness, boredom, frustration, and so on. Researchers should be sensitive to repetitive answers or short responses from children because these might signal children's disinterest or lack of understanding. One strong way to ascertain a child's emotional state is by asking about their feelings and asking how a researcher can best support them. Since asking a child or a young person directly about their feelings might not be the best way to determine their emotions, however, researchers can also resort to other tools, such as wheel charts or pictures of people expressing different emotions, songs, or even emojis.

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Part 3

Ethics in the Field: From Plans to Actions

In Part 2 we discussed how children could be engaged in a study in various ways, in different capacities, and at any stage of the research. We elaborated on some of the benefits and risks of involving children in different capacities including engaging them in the design phase of a research project. We also reviewed some of the common methods to gather data from children that are respectful and suitable to their different needs, interests, and capacities in order to situate them as the core subject of our research and as potential leaders in the research process itself. We will continue that discussion in this Part, taking a step closer to the data collection phase. In this Part, we will discuss the stages in preparing for fieldwork and the issues that might occur when conducting data collection. Although children can be involved during data collection in different capacities, as we have learned previously, in this Part we will mainly talk about involving children as respondents.

A

Preparation stage

1 SELECTING PARTICIPANTS

A reminder as we develop our plan to involve children as respondents: always start with unpacking our research questions to first decide what the appropriate and ethical level of child participation is that will serve our research. We have already covered the topic of establishing research questions and child participation in Part 2 of the Handbook. Next, we need to consider the following issues to ensure that the participation of children in our research is sound and ethical.

Evolving capacities of a child

As we elaborated in the previous chapter, age is commonly used as an indicator of a child's capacities especially within certain legal and social structures. Age, for instance, is generally commensurate with certain schooling levels in a country; the older the child, the higher the education level they are expected to have obtained—with the critical exception of children who never go to school, those who leave school early, or children with disabilities (who may have disability-specific education systems). Age is not only a consideration in selecting methods but also in identifying and selecting participants. However, age should not be the only criteria, or even the main criteria, for a child's eligibility to participate in research. In addition to their biological age, there are other factors that shape children's awareness and their ability to understand research objectives, to weigh the risks of participation, and to make decisions for themselves. These factors include, for example, their developmental stage, their physical, mental, and cognitive health or ability, their culture, environment, political context, economic bracket, religious beliefs, and life experiences as well as the presence and competencies of their caregivers and the stability and dynamics of their home (see discussion in Part 2 section D).

A child who is working at the age of 14 years old, for example, may be more aware of their household's income and challenges than a child of 17 who does not work.

In recognition of the way that these various factors come together in determining children's evolving capacities, the researcher has a responsibility to develop the skills and procedures needed to assess the appropriateness of involving a child in a specific research project. Some ways to determine a child's capacities include:

1. Researchers should consult with the child's caregivers, siblings, or peers, observe the child's behavior in their natural environment, and speak with the child in an unstructured manner ahead of recruitment.

2. Researchers should assess themselves about their capability of engaging the child meaningfully in the planned data collection activity.

3. During these activities, researchers should ensure the participant's emotional and psychological readiness to participate in the research (see Part 2: Deciding when and how to involve children). The investigators should ask themselves: is the child capable of understanding consent? Is the child capable of providing meaningful information through the established methods? Whether the study instruments have a high probability of harming the child because of the child's capacities (e.g. their maturity and factors affecting their vulnerability) and because of their contexts (including past experiences and current realities)?

4. Researchers should be ready to modify the methods and/or adapt activities and instruments to match children's capacities and to expand or restrict the scope of children's eligibility in accordance with the study's research questions and objectives even during the data collection phase.

Inclusion and representativeness

When developing research questions and sampling plans, it is critical to consider in what manner the study design acknowledges, ignores, reinforces, or disrupts existing power dynamics related to identity in the area of study. For example, power dynamics might emerge between adult interviewers and child participants because of differences in their social position and age, and the research might influence these existing power dynamics either by increasing these imbalances or minimizing them (Schenk and Williamson 2005). Researchers should also make special efforts to include participants from under-researched, under-served, or otherwise marginalized segments of the study area's population. Depending on the research objectives and resources, this process may involve recruiting children from ethnic, racial, tribal, religious, linguistic, sexual, and political minority groups, children with disabilities, children living in poverty, and children who are difficult to reach because they are mobile, living in remote areas, or living outside of family care. This process also involves recruiting girls, boys, and individuals identifying with any other gender in proportionate measure as identified in the research goals.

Of course, this identification process must happen without increasing the risk of harm and in a way that iteratively corresponds with the research questions. In some cases, when a study employs specific terms to categorize children as its subjects or publicly targets recruitment of children with specific characteristics, it can either introduce new labels for the participants or reaffirm a stigmatizing label that already exists in the community. Categories such as "child soldier" or "sexual violence survivor", or binary terms such as "migrant versus local" may be acceptable in academic discussion and useful for analysis. However, these terms may carry different meanings, and thus have different consequences, in non-academic spheres such as in children's own social environment. Okyere's experience in working with migrant children in Ghana alerts us to the fact that a careful understanding of how research is presented to participants as well as the terms that we use in conversing with children matters greatly in building trust with participants (2018, see also Ritterbusch 2013).

Social inclusion often requires special attention and additional resources throughout the research process, and this reality can be discouraging to investigators and donors. However, taking careful steps to ensure justice, inclusiveness, and representativeness is crucial to ensure both the upholding of ethics and methodological rigor. Below are some of the considerations and actions that can be taken to enhance inclusivity. It should be noted that researchers need to apply these measures in a non-judgmental and empathetic manner, with enough time and patience, and with a readiness to go through a potentially complex and long process in order to engage and build trust with the community and potential informants.

- **Consultations with members of marginalized groups,** targeted travel to remote areas, the use of interpreters, adaptation of instruments to local culture, and—in the event of longitudinal data collection—more sophisticated participant tracking to reduce asymmetric attrition of respondents.

- **Systematically excluding under-researched and under-served groups,** however, violates the principle of justice and further contributes to the silencing of these individuals. This can also bias research results, which in turn may reinforce or exacerbate inequities in programming and policy. For instance, a study that aims to understand children's general experiences in a school in a community, but that only recruits children from an elite private school, may systematically exclude children who come from low socio-economic status who are more likely to be enrolled in public schools

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- **At the same time, systematically over-researching certain groups can present its own set of risks** by unfairly burdening those involved (leading to research fatigue), disproportionately representing such groups in the literature, and potentially causing or exacerbating resentment against those groups for being over-represented (Patel et al. 2020). Furthermore, when a group of children is over-researched, and they do not perceive any benefit accruing from their participation, this can threaten overall trust in research enterprises in general.

- **Researchers should consult with various local leaders or suitable key informants** who can represent the different interests and norms of an area in order to make decisions about which children are eligible for participation in any given study area. These may include, for example, officials from village or district offices, service providers, locally based investigators, and civil society representatives, including youth groups. Youth groups might provide more information about their peers, but in some areas where youth groups are not available or inactive, local leaders and officials might also be able to provide input to researchers. These consultations can offer important insights into which factors contribute to children's capacities to participate in an area, what types of exclusion are common, and which approaches are most feasible and appropriate for reaching and involving different kinds of children. Social protection providers, for instance, can help to identify working children who are outside of school and can facilitate relationships between researchers and the children's caregivers. Older members of transient or hidden groups, moreover, such as children living in the streets or drug users, can help to build and maintain trust among such communities ahead of participant recruitment. Consultations can also identify over-researched groups.

- **Household visits and screening questionnaires** conducted by researchers can be utilized in initial visits to the homes and institutions of potential research participants. This approach was used in research on child protection in Liberia. In pairs, researchers visited homes to select participants and used questionnaires to ensure the participation of children from different religious backgrounds and different geographical parts of the area (Ruiz-Casares et al. 2013). This method allows for more systematic ways to include children from various backgrounds and to start building rapport for participation.

The capacity of the research team

Please remember that not every researcher is equipped to conduct research on children or with children. Moreover, there is a diversity of competencies needed to work with different kinds of children: the approaches and skills needed to work with young adolescents will be different from the set of skills and attitudes required to work with preschoolers. A good deal of these necessary skills can be obtained through rigorous training before the fieldwork phase and through mentoring during the data collection phase, but experience also matters. That is why it is always important to have a team with a variety of skills and experiences. Training may include sessions on the basic principles on doing research on and with children, research skills that cover child-centered methods, ethical considerations, and referral systems for specific cases such as violence against children (see discussions on ethical principles in Part 1).

Most importantly, researchers can conduct research on and with children only if they can remain open to children's perspectives and views, and if they have a willingness to adjust the power relations between them, especially when children are actively involved in the research itself. The various skills, attitudes, and capacities demanded from researchers will also depend on the nature, method, and topic of their studies. Some topics are particularly sensitive, and researchers might need to approach and engage with participants more slowly and cautiously. According to Dickson-Swift and colleagues, sensitive research is research that can impose a substantial potential threat or have a negative impact on all who are involved (Dickson-Swift, James, and Liamputtong 2008). This is admittedly still a broad definition, but it nonetheless serves as a warning to investigators to assess the harms, and the likelihood and the magnitude of such harms, that may befall not only child participants but also their parents, guardians, friends, siblings, or even the researchers (Dickson-Swift, James, and Liamputtong 2008). In researching sensitive topics such as violence against children, the research team needs to employ more sensitivity in approaching children, and have the capacity to recognize stress and trauma in children who might be victims of violence and who might exhibit signs of distress during discussions (more of this in the next section).

There are suggestions that some studies, especially those that elicit personally sensitive information, may incur harm sometimes even after the fieldwork has been carried out. Traumatic memories and depressive or suicidal thoughts, for instance, may not appear during interviews or activities, but instead appear well after their completion. When researchers identify a potential of delayed harm in their study, they must arrange for referral resources and contacts to remain active for some time after the data collection has been completed. It may also be necessary from an ethical standpoint to follow up with some, or all, of the respondents who researchers have identified as being particularly at risk after data collection to ensure their wellbeing and to find out if there has been a delayed consequence of having participated in the study. In a study on alternative poverty measurement in Indonesia, the research team followed up some survey participants to find out whether or not the survey had caused issues in their households (Siagian et al. 2020). The findings from this follow-up were also used to modify and improve the ethical and methodological aspects of the survey.

2

PLANNING RISK PREVENTION AND MITIGATION STRATEGIES

Research can pose risks to everyone who is involved, especially the participants. Children may be vulnerable to heightened or unique risks compared to adults due to their specific characteristics or social status.

> *It is crucial that all protocols for studies involving child participants should include detailed plans for preventing and mitigating safety concerns. A good exercise is to envision and identify any methodological and ethical dilemmas that may emerge during data collection and to devise plans to deal with these issues.*

We also need to budget the time and resources for developing a comprehensive plan to respond to acute needs that might surface during data collection, especially for the needs that are directly associated with the topic explored during the data collection activity.

Identifying risks and threats

It is imperative for researchers to identify what sorts of risks can occur and how they might impact children participating in the study. Things can go wrong at times, and this can potentially cause risk and harm to child respondents, family and community members, and researchers. Research can reveal any number of (violent) crimes, whether by participants or individuals associated with them, including violence, abuse, labor and sexual exploitation, and negligence. During research activities, researchers may also identify acute conditions that require emergency medical attention, such as severe malnutrition, severe disability, obstetric complications, life-threatening diseases, and suicidal ideation.

IRBs (institutional review boards) can be useful for a study team to help identify potential risks, threats, and ethical dilemmas (see Part 1: Institutional Review Board). In addition to IRBs, an external group that consists of people from various walks of life and with diverse expertise, including researchers experienced in the topic and location being studied, can help to identify multidimensional risks, threats, and dilemmas that researchers sometimes forget or ignore. Additionally, testing research tools prior to data collection as well as consultation with local experts can help identify risks associated with a research project's techniques or questions (see Johnston 2006 for a report on Young Lives method pilots).

Asking sensitive questions

Research projects, especially those on sensitive topics and/or in crisis contexts, can also cause or exacerbate distress for participants. Research can lead to tension between participants or individuals associated with them, and can cause trouble within the wider community as well as among certain identity groups. Risks can also emerge from the range of questions being asked. For instance, asking young unmarried teenagers about whether they are sexually active might put them at risk of conflict with their families, especially if adult members of the family are aware of the nature of the questions. A good rule of thumb is to start with general questions and proceed to more sensitive questions only after trust is earned, rapport is built, and privacy is ensured.

Another technique is to avoid phrasing questions as an inquiry about personal experience, but instead to ask participants their opinions or observations about children in their community in general. However, these techniques do not always work and participants, children and adults alike, will often steer the conversation towards their personal experiences. Researchers should be prepared for all of these eventualities.

3 DEVELOPING RISK PREVENTION MITIGATION STRATEGIES

Although there are still debates about whether or not researchers are mandated to report cases of abuse (see Uttal 2003; Melton 2005; Allen 2009), in many jurisdictions, including in Indonesia, professionals, which includes researchers, are generally under a legal obligation to report suspected cases of abuse. Risk prevention and safeguarding plans should be developed by primary investigators and field supervisors, and adapted through consultation with data collection teams and key informants in the local area. All researchers or members who are involved in a study should understand and commit to adhering to these plans. Key informants can include local leaders and other representatives of community interests and norms, including youth groups (when possible). Methods to mitigate the risks that arise from data collection, such as changing the way a question is asked or finding a safe place to interact with participating children, can be embedded in the research tools and techniques. At all times, however, referral plans should be clear and agreed upon.

In the development of a risk prevention and mitigation plan, we should consider the following steps:

- **Investigators should agree on a common definition of acute safety concerns that require immediate attention** (more on this in the next section). This definition should be written in the risk prevention and mitigation plan and its instruction should be included during training. This common definition should be used as a threshold to determine when researchers should discontinue data collection and trigger a referral or response. Investigators are also recommended to work with local key informants to develop multi-sectoral referral pathways that correspond to each of the potential safety concerns. Investigators can provide related service providers with information about the data collection activity and consult them on the best approaches for referring child cases to their services.

For instance, if child malnutrition and child labor are highly prevalent in the selected enumeration area, investigators should engage the closest health provider *(e.g. puskesmas or posyandu)* and the closest social protection officer (e.g. social workers or facilitators of various social protection programs).

- One selection criterion for conducting research on a sensitive topic, such as violence, might include the availability of psychosocial services in the study area. In an area where no psychological services exist for children, other resources, such as community-based approaches and supports, can be considered as an alternative. In Mozambique, for instance, this approach included building partnerships with local capacities and traditional healers as a means for providing alternative services in rural contexts where spirituality and community were the center of life (Kaplan 2005). Although Indonesia also has a community-based innovation, named Integrated Community Based Child Protection/*Perlindungan Anak Terpadu Berbasis Masyarakat (PATBM)* since 2016, the approach is slightly different. PATBM focuses on community involvement in violence prevention as well as on the development of local referral pathways to related services (without community involvement) in order to provide direct services for children. Therefore, **careful decisions should be made at the onset of a research project whether to include sample sites where no referral service is available or where services are of dubious quality.**

- **Field leaders should prepare a contact list of all relevant services and ensure that these services are available and accessible to the research participants.** Here are some general considerations when developing such referral pathways in the context of Indonesia:
    - Identify an integrated center that provides services for children and families or local child protection CSOs. In some districts, this center can be the office of Sistem Layanan dan Rujukan Terpadu/Integrated Referral and Service System (SLRT), *Pusat Pelayanan Terpadu Perlindungan Perempuan dan Anak*/Center for Integrated Services for Women and Child's Protection (P2TP2A) or *Dinas Perlindungan Perempuan dan Anak, Rumah Perlindungan Sosial Anak*/Home for Children's Social Protection (RPSA), or *Program Kesejahteraan Sosial Anak Integratif*/Child Social Welfare Program (PKSAI), or *Pusat Kesejahteraan Sosial*/Center for Social Welfare *(Puskesos)* at the village level. Any of these institutions could be the designated coordinator for any referrals, and research teams should pre-identify which of these is appropriate for a given site before any data collection begins.
    - If researchers are unable to identify any referral centers, researchers should deliberate with all related agencies and agree on the main coordinator(s) for any referrals.
    - The consultation process should involve a range of institutions including agencies that are not typically associated with children's services. Typical agencies include the Office of Social Affairs, the Office of Women Empowerment and Child Protection, the Office of Health, the Office of Education; the District Hospital; and the Police. Service providers who should be involved are: social workers, para-social workers, psychologists, counselors, nurses, and legal aid workers.

4

ETHICAL AND LOGISTICAL DILEMMAS IN IMPLEMENTING REFERRAL PATHWAYS

As mentioned before, there are still debates around a researcher's mandate to report or to refer children who are suspected of being in physical or emotional danger. Opponents of mandated reporting argue that researchers often do not have enough information or the necessary skills to detect genuine maltreatment. In many studies, researchers interact with children only for a very brief period of time, and it is hard to assess cases of abuse based on "syndromes" within a small timeframe (Melton 2005). In the US, for instance, around 60 to 75 percent of reports of suspected child maltreatment (reported not only by researchers but also by counsellors and health care workers) were found to be unsubstantiated (Melton 2005; Allen 2009). It is important to stress that, unless it is part of the research design or objective, it is not the researcher's responsibility to actively seek out individuals with acute needs. In fact, doing so might risk increasing certain expectations within the community while also undermining the research.

The risk that mandatory reporting might jeopardize the research enterprise is another argument put forward against researcher's duty to report. The reporting researcher might have to shift their focus and process and monitor a report to ensure that this report is attended to as well as possible. Scholars have pointed out that when such reporting becomes known to others in the community, this may reduce their willingness to participate since it signals a breach of confidentiality (Allen 2009).

Perhaps the most intractable dilemma is when there is a possibility that reporting maltreatment might create more harm to children than not reporting it. There are a number of reasons why this could be the case, but the quality and approaches of existing services are the most dominant factors to take into account. When the available service provider does not have the capacity or resources for correctly managing a case, for instance, by relying heavily on police enforcement or by prioritizing family integrity over a victim's safety, reporting could harm the participant. As there will always be a time lag between the first time a researcher encounters a suspected case and the response from the referral services, it is hard to ensure participants' safety in this interim, especially in cases of domestic violence in which victims live together with the perpetrators. If it is known by the perpetrator that a child has confided in a researcher and that this researcher has reported the abuse to authorities, this child's safety might be threatened. Furthermore, an investigation might actually cause more harm to children and their families, especially if a report is later found to be unsubstantiated.

There are no easy answers to all these ethical quandaries. The most appropriate response varies from one case to another, and researchers have to factor in a host of variables and critically consider various basic ethical principles. It is good policy for researchers to confidentially discuss as a group any particular cases that might require referral and what the appropriate course of action is that the research team should take. Team leaders should create a safe space in which researchers are encouraged to voice and reflect upon any ethical concerns they encounter in the course of the study. This process should also be part of ongoing mentoring and capacity building exercises for researchers beyond the pre-data collection training.

The decision to refer a child to services should at least be discussed with the child in question according to their capacities and competencies (Cater and Øverlien 2014). Ideally, the decision also involves their primary caregivers, and researchers should clearly inform caregivers about their assessment, the reason for suggesting referral or for reporting, as well as the quality of the service provider and what can be expected once the case has been reported. However, there is also a possibility that a caregiver is the perpetrator of violence or abuse, and disclosing a referral might thus result in further harm to the child. In this case, if the child is competent to give consent, they might decide on referral options themselves; if not, an alternative responsible adult who is trusted by the child might fulfil the role of caregiver in the process of referring a child to services. If the research itself focuses on an illicit activity, the researcher may opt not to report a child's involvement in this activity, depending on the scope of the project, the evaluation by the ethical review body, the nature of the illicit activity, and local laws. In some cases, failing to intervene may itself constitute a crime.

Lastly, for very sensitive and high-risk research, it may be best to set up a separate team for dealing with the referral system. The advantages of such a setup are at least threefold. First, it reduces the time taken away from field researchers to facilitate, monitor, and follow up the outcome of the report; therefore, the research itself does not have to be put on hold. Second, it allows a study to recruit people with the necessary set of specific skills for assisting participants during the referral process, which is most likely be a different set of skills required for data collection. Third, when there is the likelihood of delayed onset of harms, the operational period of the referral system can extend beyond the research timeframe.

5 | ASSURING CONSENT AND RECIPROCITY

The informed consent process is a fundamental step in ensuring that the participation of research respondents is voluntary and respectful. Communicating all relevant information about the research to potential participants, including the potential for harm, and asking for their voluntary approval, is a necessary and crucial step in the informed consent process for ensuring both the safety of the respondents and the rigor of the study. Requesting informed consent demonstrates respect for the dignity of potential participants, but this requires knowledge about their situation and their ability to assess the potential risks associated with research participation. This process is important for building trust between researchers and participants. Seeking informed consent relies on initial trust because potential participants allow the researchers to approach them. The principle of voluntary participation in research does not end after first requesting consent, but is maintained throughout the study, and especially during data collection. Participants should be assured that it is okay to ask questions, to skip questions that they consider inappropriate or potentially painful to answer, to withdraw from the study, and to refuse to participate at any point. Some studies, for example, forewarned respondents about sensitive questions and sought consent again before proceeding further (Siagian et al. 2020; Schenk and Williamson 2005; Gallagher 2009; Ybarra et al. 2009).

In the Indonesian context, ensuring voluntary participation is sometimes tricky as some communities may place a high value on politeness. Some adults and children may feel bad about saying no to researchers, especially if they have already obtained permission from local authorities. At the same time, Indonesians are diverse and cannot be categorized into a single identity, which means there is no simple formula for understanding their attitudes toward participation in diverse settings.

> *Consent, therefore, should be seen as an ongoing process that takes place throughout the study and as something that is maintained or challenged based on the interaction and relationship between researchers and participants*

Sometimes, especially when working with children who are marginalized by adults and the general public, researchers should only seek informed consent after a certain degree of trust has been built with participants. To earn trust, researcher needs to be caring and attentive listeners (Ritterbusch 2012).

It is also important to reinforce participants' sense of their own value and to emphasize the value of their experience and participation, because "to effectively convey the principles of consent, prospective participants must first recognize value in themselves" (Ritterbusch 2012, 19).

Who should give informed consent?

Most studies that involve children as informants apply a process of dual consent by seeking informed consent from both children and their parents, caregivers, or guardians. By employing dual consent, studies ensure that a child can participate only if both the child and their parent or guardian has consented to their involvement in the study. Sometimes researchers need to secure parental consent before they seek children's consent, but there are times when the latter's consent is sought first--for instance, when potential child participants are approached through schools. In the case where recruitment is conducted through schools, the research team also needs to seek prior consent from the school's administration and/or teachers. There are, however, instances where parental or guardian consent can be waived, which is something that will be discussed in the next section.

In the Indonesian context, there is no specific national regulation for obtaining informed consent in research involving children, especially for social science studies that do not necessarily involve biomedical interventions. Law No. 35 of 2014 on Child Protection stipulates protection against medical research that involves children without parental consent and without consideration of the child's best interest (article 47). This law also specifies that biomedical samples from children must be collected with a consideration of children's health conditions. Meanwhile, article 56 in that same law stipulates that every child has the right to freely give opinions and thoughts based on their conscience and religion and to freely receive verbal or written information in accordance with their age and stage of development. In the context of research, these articles highlight the importance of parental permission for protecting children from research risks. However, every child also has the right to determine their participation in research for themselves, and to receive verbal or written information about what they and their gatekeepers are consenting to through methods that are appropriate for their age and capacity.

On a global level, there is no internationally agreed standard on the age of consent, but in general children below 12 years old are considered incapable of making significant decisions, such as whether or not to undergo a certain medical procedure (Hein et al. 2015). This age limit is, of course, just a rule of thumb that might differ from one context to another. Context, in this instance, does not cover only the socio-economic and cultural setting, but also the complexity of the research and the risks that are involved with participation. Furthermore, one's real competence or capability is not always commensurate with legal assumptions concerning competence or capability. In the United Kingdom Law that covers 54 Commonwealth countries, children over 16 can give legal consent to interventions such as medical treatment (Alderson and Morrow 2011; Skelton 2008), while in Portugal and Denmark children can consent to such interventions at the ages of 14 and 15, respectively (Hein et al. 2015). In Canada and Switzerland, children's consent to treatment is decided on a case-by-case basis (Hein et al. 2015).

For social science research purposes, particularly when research risk is relatively low, it is commonly understood that young people should be able to consent if they are capable of understanding the risks and benefits of the study, able to assess their own best interests, and able to make a voluntary choice. This understanding is also consistent with the CRC, which recognizes both the evolving capacities of children to make independent decisions about their wellbeing and the various risks posed by different research programs. Even if children are capable of providing informed consent or are legally empowered to do so, they may nevertheless value consultation with their caregivers (Santelli, Haerizadeh, and McGovern 2017).

▶ Consent, assent, and dissent

Consent is different from assent. Assent involves an informal agreement to participate in research for children who are not able to provide a legally valid form of consent. Some laws, especially in the USA, assume that children cannot typically give legally valid consent until they are 18 years old unless they are considered "mature minors" (Alderson and Morrow 2011). Mature minors refer to a stipulation in law that deems children below the legal age of consent to be capable of making their own decisions about health treatment without their parents' consent if healthcare authorities are satisfied with their capability to understand the complexity of a treatment (Sigman and O'Connor 1991). Some scholars are of the opinion that the term "assent" is potentially confusing and that it may be misused to cover children's refusal (Alderson and Morrow 2011; Powell et al. 2013). Assent can mean "at least not refusing," which can be very different from actually consenting, such as when children are too afraid, confused or distracted to refuse (Alderson and Morrow 2011, 103). In a similar fashion, Beazley et al. (2009) raise concerns about the way a child's inability to dissent can sometimes be interpreted as consent.

In Indonesia, the power imbalance between adults and children is very dominant. If the researcher is older and has already been given permission from gatekeepers, such as parents or teachers, the child might be less likely to decline to participate in a project, a process sometimes called "failure to dissent" (Beazley et al. 2009). Because of these cultural attitudes, some researchers tend to focus on simply gaining consent from adult gatekeepers rather than taking the time and finding creative ways to explain the research to children.

An understanding of how local people, especially children, express refusal or dissent can prevent researchers from unwittingly forcing children to participate. A preferable alternative approach is to craft methods and activities in such a way that children can opt out easily without having to go through a lot of steps or to feel that they need to explain why. The downside of this approach is it can make researchers blind to children's grievances or complaints, which could otherwise be insightful for the study as a whole. Furthermore, it is possible that some of these dissatisfactions could readily be addressed, thus ensuring children's continuing participation (Parsons, Sherwood, and Abbott 2016).

Informed consent can be pragmatically viewed as a sort of contractual obligation that must be completed before the real work of data collection can start and that must be revisited at each stage of the process. However, informed consent does not mean that a person is obliged to complete their participation. Without respecting this principle, a research can be coercive or exploitative.

> *Enumerators must understand that even when informed consent/assent is given, children are able to terminate their participation at any time during the research process.*

Beyond informed consent, children's rights to privacy and safety must also be adhered to by the enumerator/researcher. Research leaders are responsible for training enumerators to think of informed consent as an ongoing process for securing children's safe, voluntary, and dignified participation. Even when children say that they understand everything related to the research and agree to participate, enumerators should be sensitive and responsive to children's behavior while they are consenting and throughout their involvement in the research.

B

Fieldwork stage

It is important for researchers not to rush into seeking consent. Researchers should take time to introduce themselves, make their presence familiar, build rapport, and earn initial trust before proceeding to a formal request for consent. In many cases, before researchers can approach children, they have to explain themselves to the various groups of gatekeepers that might surround children. This is also an important step that should not be bypassed and should be budgeted into the research timeline. Trust is an important foundation for any interaction, including research with children, and it therefore pays for researchers to learn how to present themselves in front of different gatekeepers and how to earn trust from everyone who is involved in the study.

1 HOW TO SEEK INFORMED CONSENT?

Informed consent can be given orally or in writing. The decision to seek written or oral consent will be determined by participants' capacities, their specific situations, and the availability of resources. Regardless of the type of consent, researchers should prepare an informed consent script that outlines all pertinent information regarding the research. This script can later be transferred into a written form or be read out orally during the consent-seeking processes (Morrow 2009; Schenk and Williamson 2005).

Oral consent is sometimes preferable as certain individuals might feel reluctant to give their names and signatures in a written format. Children, and even adults, might have low literacy skills or may not be familiar with signatures; children especially may not yet have created a unique hand signature. Participants may also have certain disabilities that prevent them from reading and signing. Any of these factors may cause humiliation and could potentially lead to a refusal to participate, even for those who initially intended to do so. In engaging participants with low literacy levels or in working with children, oral consent should be considered. In certain situations, children might feel safer without having to create a record or proof of consent, such as some children who are household heads (Ruiz-Casares 2009). There are several options to explore or to consider in such situations. It is common practice to not record the process of requesting consent, and recording the provision of consent might cause undue pressure on participants. In some instances, the process of seeking informed consent can be registered as an audio recording but not transcribed if proof of consent is required in such situations (Alderson and Morrow 2011). A written consent could be signed by a witness so that the participant does not need to give her name and signature to the researcher (Schenk and Williamson 2005). To ensure consistency, the informed consent script could be recorded and played during the consent process (Stark et al. 2017). However, this approach tends to make seeking consent a formalistic and scripted process rather than an individual process that takes into account participant's needs. In any case, proof of informed consent should not be used against participants or to pressurize them in any way into participating during the research process.

Information about research can sometimes be overwhelming, and participants and their gatekeepers are not necessarily familiar with academic settings, not to mention specific disciplines and lexicons. Investigators are therefore strongly recommended to provide information in the language and format that are accessible to their participants without oversimplifying this information. Research involving children has made use of various media, such as information leaflets, tapes/DVDs, letters, photographs, and oral presentations, to explain the research project to children, their parents/caregivers, and other gatekeepers. DVDs have been suggested for explaining studies on sensitive issues, such as adoption. When utilizing paper-based formats, researchers can make use of diagrams, pictures, and large prints to engage children (Fargas-Malet et al. 2010).

More importantly, researchers should provide ample time for participants to take in the information. The Young Lives project, for instance, stipulates that children and their families should be given at least 24 hours to consider whether or not they want to participate (Alderson and Morrow 2011). The more intrusive a study is and the more risks it poses, the more time the research team should allocate to providing information in a gradual manner and to seek consent as trust is developed. Budgeting enough time for the consent process will also take pressure off the participants to provide consent when they do not yet feel ready.

▶ Seeking informed consent from children's gatekeepers

Most of the time, research with children requires negotiation with adult gatekeepers before children can be invited to participate in a study. Gatekeepers can be parents, extended family members, teachers, community leaders, institutional caregivers, religious authorities, and even government officials, depending on a specific case, the individual's relationship with a particular child, and the broader context of the research.

The role of gatekeepers is crucial, especially when research involves very young children. Where consent is required from gatekeepers for children's participation, the first portion of the informed consent process for caregivers should ideally take place separately from the potential child participant (Powell et al. 2013; White et al. 2010).

This separation helps to reduce the likelihood that the gatekeeper's consent will pressure the child into consenting. In the event that the gatekeeper does not consent, it also minimizes the chance that the child will become upset by their caregiver's refusal. In most cases, the gatekeepers should be provided with the same information about the study as the information given to the potential child participant. The role of gatekeepers includes assisting children to make decisions about taking part in research and helping researchers to see whether the research is appropriate according to the children's capacities.

> *In some cases, researchers have chosen to withhold sensitive information about the study from gatekeepers.*

For instance, in violence against children surveys, researchers often do not communicate the purpose of the research to gatekeepers, preferring to describe the studies as focusing on children's wellbeing (UNICEF Kenya, CDC, and Kenya National Bureau of Statistics 2012; WHO 2001). The thinking here is that parents who abuse their children are unlikely to provide consent for their children to participate in a study on violence against children. Concerns about gatekeepers using their power over children to block their participation in a way that might be detrimental to that child are also relevant to research on other sensitive subjects, such as substance use, sexual orientation or preference, political activities, or exploitation (Greene and Hogan 2005; Djamba 2002; UNICEF 2015). Another concern about being forthright with gatekeepers about such sensitive research topics is that they may pressure children to provide certain answers or retaliate against children whom they suspect of having shared private information (Bushin 2007). It is also important to note that gatekeepers are not always aware of children's attitudes, behaviors, and experiences of victimization. In these cases, disclosing the purpose of sensitive research to gatekeepers may expose children or invite unwanted questions.

The approach of masking the purpose of sensitive research when speaking with gatekeepers is widely used to avert such complications, but such an approach can also present its own challenges. For example, if children tell gatekeepers about the true subject of a study after a data collection session, it may lead to retaliation against researchers or their institutions. Such situations can be particularly problematic for community leaders and local organizations who are affiliated with the research project as well as for long-term studies and in terms of general trust in research processes. If gatekeepers learn about a study's true purposes, children may also be punished for having answered the researcher's questions. For all these reasons, decisions about how to present such sensitive research to gatekeepers should be made on a case-by-case basis after careful consideration and consultation with local experts and ethics bodies.

Gatekeeper consent is important, especially for young children,

> *but waiving parental consent is also a potential alternative in some situations.*

Waivers of child, parental, or guardian consent may be sought when:

- The research involves only minimal risk for the research participants (this should be consulted with ethics bodies and local experts).
- The research could not practically be carried out if consent is required. For example, in addition to legal considerations, there can also be difficulties with gaining parental consent in cases that involve: the absence of parents in child-headed households or a lack of parent or children's mobility (see Okyere 2018), problems establishing who the child's guardian is (e.g. street children), low rates of literacy, and skepticism about signing documents.
- Parents are sources of potential harms and do not have a reasonable requirement to protect the child (e.g. they act irresponsibly and are abusive and/or have been legally removed from their guardianship responsibilities) (Ritterbusch 2012; Clacherty and Donald 2007; Santelli, Haerizadeh, and McGovern 2017; Schelbe et al. 2015).

In any of these conditions, a complete assessment needs to be provided by a professional who is not conducting the study, and a waiver of consent should follow the principles of best interests and evolving capacities. The role of the ethics committee is especially important for carefully reviewing research that requires consent waivers.

Seeking informed consent from the children

Every study involving child respondents should have an informed consent procedure, whether through the use of written forms on which participants must either provide their signature or a fingerprint, or through a verbal process, in which participants simply tell researchers that they understand the study and are willing to participate. The informed consent process can be difficult for any group of participants as it requires explaining a complicated, and often unfamiliar, process relatively quickly. Researchers are often in a position of power relative to that of respondents because researchers usually are affiliated with large institutions and have asymmetrical knowledge about the research process. Research with children can heighten this power imbalance dramatically, especially in very hierarchical cultures where children of all ages are taught to be obedient to elders. What is more, the rate of development and maturation can differ tremendously from child to child, making it difficult to use simple indicators, such as age, to discern whether a child is truly able to understand the research project and its potential risks. Such concerns may give rise to numerous additional questions. Three of the most pertinent ones are:

- How to explain research to children in a manner that they can understand?
- If a child has the right to free expression and self-determination, what is the role of caregivers and other gatekeepers in obtaining children's consent?
- How does compensation for research participation affect the voluntariness of child consent, and what implications does this have for the risks of participation?

The following subsections will draw on the available literature and best practices to answer these questions (See Box 9).

Box 9 Good practices on informed consent

The Ethical Research Involving Children (ERIC) Compendium by Powell et al (2013) summarizes seven best practices that should be considered by researchers related to informed consent:

1. Obtain consent from all children participating in research.
2. Make sure children are fully informed as to the purpose of the research and what their involvement will be.
3. Respect children's decision about participating in research, including their dissent or unwillingness to participate.
4. Carefully consider the strengths and limitations of obtaining parental consent.
5. Ensure that children (and others) understand that consent is negotiable and that children can withdraw at any point.
6. Design the consent process to take into account the evolving capacities of the child as well as the overall research context.
7. Consult locally to ascertain if informed consent needs to be obtained from community leaders or representatives.

Special considerations regarding consent when using visual methods such as photovoice

1. If a photo or video includes an image of non-participants, when is seeking informed consent from such non-participants necessary? If the setting is a public space, will it be necessary? How should researchers seek their consent if it is deemed necessary?

2. What are the laws pertaining to capturing, using, and publishing people's images in public spaces? How should researchers obtain consent when some images might be socially, culturally, or even legally considered as "collective properties" (Byrne, Daykin, and Coad 2016)?

3. Consider applying the concept of staggered consent, in which different forms of consent are sought at different steps of the research process (data collection, interpretation, publication, and dissemination) when a study heavily relies on using, interpreting, and publishing photos or videos.

4. Reflect on the need of preserving people's dignity and identify the ways to do this when showcasing their images.

5. Some scholars suggest that a dilemma arises when blurring images for purposes of confidentiality, and argue that too much blurring may undermine the authenticity of an image and its ability to "make a point" (Byrne, Daykin, and Coad 2016). Furthermore, sometimes children may want to be identified publicly to lend weight to their voices. However, the confidentiality of pictures or videos is important to protect children and to prevent potential misuse of such images beyond the research timeframe.

6. Researchers may be warranted in forgoing children's wishes to be identified and resort to blurring identifiable information for at least two justifications. First, researchers should "future-proof" images against any unintended and unforeseeable consequences that might arise from the publication such images, which is a process that requires researchers to attempt to hypothesize and foresee future problems (Byrne, Daykin, and Coad 2016). The second reason for blurring images is to protect the indirect confidentiality of people or community members related to child participants who do not want to participate and who have not consented to the image, and to ensure that a certain community or neighborhood is not identifiable.

2 MANAGING EXPECTATIONS: COMPENSATING FOR CHILD PARTICIPATION

As part of the informed consent process, researchers need to manage participant expectations and plan strategies for explaining how the research can benefit the participants or what risk it has of inflicting harm. This step is important because children and gatekeepers may have various expectations about the process and its results. Some of them may not have any expectations while others may expect payments (cash or gifts) or access to specific services or institutions. Others may expect simply to learn more about the research topic or may just want to build up a relationship with the researcher.

Wendler et al. (2002) explain that, in general, there are

> *four types of payments that are related to participation in research: reimbursement, compensation, appreciation, and incentive.*

Similar to procedures for conducting research with adults, child participants should be appropriately reimbursed for any expenses, compensated for their effort and for any lost time or lost income, and acknowledged for their contribution, but only when this does not breach confidentiality without prior consent. The cost of transportation, meals, and any other expenses related to the research process should be covered by the research team.

Furthermore, there are times when it is ethical to compensate children and young people for their time and efforts, especially when research is conducted with children who spend part of their time working in which case, they may have a higher opportunity cost for participating in the research. Researchers may also provide gifts or cash to participants as a symbol of appreciation for their contribution to and participation in the study. Providing refreshments during and after the data collection is also good general practice and may even be encouraged when culturally appropriate (Alderson and Morrow 2011).

An incentive is probably the most contentious type of compensation as it is, by nature, designed to induce participation although in practice any type of payment can act as an inducement to participate. Cash, souvenirs (which usually have monetary value), prize draws, or even course credit (especially in the context of students participating in research at their universities) are several examples of the kinds of incentives offered to participants. Most guidelines for child participatory research warn against employing an incentive, as it may border on coercion or create “undue influence” because compensation can create pressure on children to participate or to alter their responses (Alderson and Morrow 2011; Schenk and Williamson 2005).

Although an incentive is not necessarily coercive, it may alter people's initial intentions, and make them agree to participate in a study they would otherwise refuse to participate in (Stones and McMillan 2010). Other scholars point out that when child participants receive incentives, or even appreciation or compensation for that matter, it may cause resentment among those who are not included in the research (Alderson and Morrow 2011).

In principle, all studies should explain payment or non-payment during the informed consent process. It is also a good practice to inform potential participants when there is no payment or no direct benefit involved to minimize unrealistic expectations and to avoid disappointment at the end of the research. Nevertheless, sometimes researchers provide a token of gratitude or appreciation after a data collection event without giving prior notice to avoid the danger of affecting the consent process. When a token of appreciation is given at the end of the research without any expectation from the respondent, it might not be considered an incentive by the individuals receiving it. However, if the practice becomes generalized and widely known, people may begin to expect material gains when considering participation in the future. Any kind of payment for participation, especially but not only in-cash, may in the long-term create an impression that research engagement is a monetary and transactional interaction, and children and other community members might expect monetary payment for participation in future studies.

▶ Contextualizing payment and reciprocity

Researchers should take social, local, and cultural contexts into account to decide what kind of payments are suitable for research participants. It may well be that what is most suitable is not a payment (whether cash or in-kind) but some form of reciprocity. What the most appropriate and ethical forms of payment or reciprocity are is something to be discussed and consulted with the study's stakeholders including community figures or leaders and local partners or local researchers. Failing to provide an appropriate kind of payment and/or reciprocity may be considered as exploitative practice.

Abebe and Bessell (2014) contend that, in terms of the participatory principle for child participation, the idea that children are "knowledgeable actors" should also be extended to engaging children in discussions about the definition of reciprocity and how it should be applied in specific contexts (2014, 131). In doing so, researchers should be prepared to encounter situations in which local understandings of what constitutes appropriate reciprocity are incongruent with formal academic definitions of reciprocity and payment. A survey with children and young people in Australia found that many children want to participate in a study even without any payment (Taplin et al. 2019). Most importantly, however, is that although payment increases the likelihood of a child participating in a study, the risks they perceive in participating remain the main consideration (Taplin et al. 2019). However, this particular Australian survey should be taken as a general indication and not as a reflection of what children and communities in other contexts might think.

Any payments should be developed based on the research themes, objectives, and methods and should be in line with local living standards, socio-cultural contexts, and the contribution made by participants. The complexity of these factors is why payment, especially in the form of incentives, is very much still an issue of debate, particularly when participants come from economically disadvantaged or marginalized backgrounds. Some child participants and/or their guardians may be unduly compelled to participate due to poverty, and ignore the potential risks and harms associated with the study in order to receive a payment (Alderson and Morrow 2011). A payment does not have to be in the form of money. Any valuable in-kind payment could arguably be problematic. Schonfeld and colleagues argue, for instance, that a decent coat is as valuable as money for a homeless person during winter (2003).

Nevertheless, in some contexts, monetary payment as compensation for time and effort might be warranted and deemed appropriate from the child participant's point of view. For example, in research on child labor, participants might include children who are workers. Such children may work to contribute to the family's economic status and wellbeing, and participating in research might cause them to lose income from work or even take valuable time away from much needed rest. In such cases, financial compensation might be appropriate to compensate for their loss of potential income. Another dilemma is apparent in cases where adult participants are monetarily compensated for their participation but children are not. Should children who participate in the same study be compensated in a similar manner?

Furthermore, in a few cases, payment in the form of cash may be part of the research method. For example, if a study on child welfare wants to examine children's priorities in spending money, the researcher can, as a form of data collection, give some amount of cash to child participants and let them use this as they wish to determine what their priorities are. In other kinds of research, such as research on youth potential, a researchers' interest in learning about youth potential can dovetail with youths' efforts to identify their own future potential, so reciprocity might also be considered as a form of research "compensation" (Alderson and Morrow 2011).

One of the ways out of the conundrum of monetary payments is to provide a valuable in-kind gift. In such instances, researchers should take some time to identify what kind of gifts are valuable, appropriate, and commensurate with children's time and effort. In one of our earlier studies on children who are on the move, for instance, PUSKAPA offered a range of gifts from which participants could choose, such as hygiene kits, sandals, and t-shirts (PUSKAPA 2011). Although their examples do not directly address the topic of child participation, Schonfeld and colleagues (2003) provide arguments against in-kind payment for marginalized participants—in this case, homeless people. Their main argument is that in-kind payments presume what is useful and valuable for different people, which takes away participant's autonomy to choose what item is valuable for them for an equivalent amount of money (Schonfeld et al. 2003).

As mentioned before, payment can be understood as a short-hand version for reciprocity between researcher and participants. Reciprocity can be in the form of non-monetary and non-itemized compensation, such as awareness raising, knowledge or skill development, or training (Powell et al. 2013; Skelton 2008; Yardley 2014).

For example, in the hypothetical case of a research project on children's perspectives on vaccines, a researcher might want to withhold an awareness-raising campaign about the value of vaccines until the research has been completed; researchers can, however, hold discussions or organize trainings on how to apply for health insurance or birth certificates or other topics depending on participant's needs.

Researchers should avoid providing reciprocity for individual participants in the form of access to valuable services that others in the community are also deprived of, such as offering specialized healthcare to individual children with disabilities who have been selected to participate. Not only is this discriminatory and therefore unethical, but it may also create tensions, which can later backfire on participants. Researchers may instead choose to give payments or other forms of support to institutions, such as schools, agencies, or community groups (Bushin 2007). Payments to larger entities may reduce the potential for resentment and jealousy that is inherent in giving payment to specific individuals or families, but again, such a decision should rely on local knowledge and/or discussions with a broad range of community stakeholders to ensure fair distribution. Schools, agencies, or community groups may use such payments, for example, to provide care, health, or sanitation services to a broader range of children. At the same time, institutions typically already have established, formal processes through which researchers can offer reciprocity through their research. A researcher may also find new ways in which a study can benefit an institution, such as innovative uses of data or alternative methods for the collection of additional data that agencies could use to develop proposals for government or donor assistance.

Box 10 Case study 5: Understanding Vulnerability: A Study on Situations that Affect Family Separation and the Lives of Children in and out of Family Care

(PUSKAPA & UNICEF, 2014)

? What was the research about?

In 2014, the Center on Child Protection and Wellbeing (PUSKAPA) partnered with UNICEF Indonesia to conduct a study on the conditions of children out of family care, their living situations, and the driving factors that lead them to leave their families. The findings of this research informed various policies and programs for child protection and social assistance that address the vulnerabilities of this group of children and their families. The study was conducted in six sites in three provinces: DKI Jakarta, Central Java, and South Sulawesi. It involved a total of 641 children aged 13-18 years old who were living in 56 institutions in these three provinces.

? Who were these children, how were they involved, and why?

The study built upon the categorization of seven types of childcare institutions that was developed by the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA), which were then clustered into three broad groups: voluntary institutions (panti), Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), and correctional facilities. Local governments provided lists of the institutions in their districts according to the determined categories, and these lists were used to create the sample universe. Based on the type and availability of institutions, the team developed a list of potential institutions. The research team then randomly selected institutions to represent each category. Children were randomly selected from a list provided by the chosen institutions. Any child of 13-18 years of age who had been living in the institution for at least one month was eligible to participate.

Because this study aimed to create a snapshot of the lives of these children and their prior experiences when living with families, children were involved as the primary informants. Although adults might be able to provide narratives of these children's lives, such stories would not really represent the children's experiences. Only children themselves capable of narrating their own lives.

The team chose to develop a survey as the primary instrument to engage children for several reasons. The survey was a relatively expedient tool, especially considering that the study had to cover six districts in less than one month. The research also needed to test some complex quantitative analyses, and the survey allowed the team to collect data from a sizeable number of respondents. The children's accounts were used as a proxy for examining their lives with families before institutionalization. This method required that children have the ability to recall and articulate their living conditions before they lived in an institution; thus, the findings were prone to recall bias. To minimize recall bias and the problem of limited articulation, researchers targeted children aged 13-18 who had relatively good faculties of language and articulation.

What were the ethical risks of the study?

Researchers acknowledged that questions regarding family life, separation, and violence might influence children's psychological well-being. The study employed several strategies to mitigate the risks. First, the study recruited only local researchers who had the relevant educational training and experience in working with children, and especially in responding to emotional discomfort. Moreover, before data collection, researchers were trained in sensitive interviewing techniques and practical ways for mitigating psychosocial distress manifested by participants. All researchers participated in a preparatory workshop on child protection in a module prepared by UNICEF and completed an online module on ethical issues in research.

The second strategy was to make use of several practical safeguarding techniques that researchers could deploy when a participant became upset. These practical guides included: affirming the participants' feelings, allowing time for breaks, and reminding them of the voluntary nature of the research, and that they could withdraw their participation at any time. The last strategy was to develop a referral pathway to attend to participants who might demonstrate signs of depression during the data collection process or who indicated that they had experienced serious abuse. This pathway was developed in collaboration with local service providers to ensure that services were available and of high quality. According to the protocol, children who recounted having experienced abuse or violence were to be immediately referred by the field coordinator to the appointed referral person. The appointed referral person would conduct a follow-up assessment with the field coordinator, and initiate a referral based on the result of the assessment.

The team encountered particular ethical dilemmas when researching children in correctional facilities. Discussions with children revealed that officers inflicted violence on them. However, as part of the study design, these officers had to be involved in the study during FGDs and KIIs. Most importantly, the referral procedure could not be implemented since any intervention for children living in correctional facilities was limited to services available within these facilities: any harm or health problem was only to be reported to the facility staff. Following such referrals, staff decided whether or not to call for external professional help. As a way to circumnavigate these limitations, the team reported any violence that the children reported as having occurred within the facilities to a local NGO, which followed up these reports through their programs and advocacy efforts.

A short data collection period minimized the possibility of building rapport with children. Interaction with children was brief and occurred mostly with respondents who had been randomly selected. Even though all children were aware of the research activity, the researchers did not have sufficient time to explain the research to all children. Even though there were no complaints from children who did not participate, there were questions and curiosity. Researchers explained the limitations and the random nature of the study and invited other children to join a debriefing game after the survey.

Other issues that might arise during data collection

A In cases where the investigator feels that a research activity itself has caused or exacerbated distress

- Signal to the participant that the activity is stopping and, where relevant, stop recording (e.g. "I think it would be better if we stop these questions for now. I am turning this recorder off, okay?").

- If the investigator is not a trained therapist, they should not probe the participant for any further personal information on what may have caused the distress or attempt to provide counsel, but should instead focus on reducing the negative effects of the data collection activity. Researchers in this situation should consider the following approaches: acknowledging the participant's feelings ("I understand that this can be difficult to talk about"), listening attentively, apologizing for upsetting or offending the individual, continuing to use nurturing, comforting, and supportive language, and asking the participant if they are close with any people who might be able to provide comfort.

- In some situations, the child may signal that they are ready to continue with the activity, but the researcher should use their best judgment, guided by the research principles covered above, to determine whether that is appropriate. Several studies that explored sensitive topics with adults found that, for many participants, the interviews or discussions themselves were a cathartic experience as participants could share things that they might not be able to share with other people (Elmir et al. 2011; Crowther and Lloyd-Williams 2012). However, this cathartic result should not be assumed prior to research design, because it is an assumption that could lead researchers to unethically ignore or neglect important precautionary steps in interviewing participants.

B When a child has disclosed a sensitive issue that may be causing distress, such as sexual abuse or hazardous work conditions

- **Use nurturing, comforting, and supportive language,** and find ways of reassuring the child that the incident is not their fault and that they did the right thing in discussing the issue (International Rescue Committee and UNICEF 2012)

- **Avoid asking the child to reveal detailed information about the abuse** unless the researcher is specially trained to do so for the purposes of the research. The investigator should ask the child if there are any adults whom the child trusts and whom they can speak with about the incident, and whether the child has already done so. If this is the first time the child is disclosing an incident, the researcher should encourage them to speak with a trusted adult about the incident or should offer to speak with a trusted adult on behalf of the child. If the child trusts the researcher to move forward in talking to a trusted adult, this may be an appropriate time to discuss the referral protocol with the child, and to indicate who will be informed, in what timeframe, and what follow-up the child can expect.

- If the child does not wish to speak with other adults about the incident, the investigator should confer with the field supervisor to decide whether to disclose the incident and to whom. If the decision is made to disclose the incident, the child should be informed ahead of the disclosure, and special care should be taken to protect the child from the potential negative consequences of this disclosure. Guidance on how to make this determination should be provided in the research protocol's risk prevention and mitigation plan, which ideally is informed by a review of local laws and policies on mandatory reporting and by consultations with local key informants.However, the decision should be made on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the best interest of the child principle, and should be informed by the severity of the incident, the risk of reprisal, the risk of other negative consequences (e.g. separation from family), and the availability of, and access to, appropriate services.

C Children, and especially adolescents, may disclose illicit behavior or may engage in illicit or harmful behavior during the course of research. A teenager may, for instance, smoke a cigarette in front of the interviewer or may describe having committed a crime such as theft. In many cases, such disclosures will be directly related to the research topic whereas in other cases disclosures may be accidental. In these cases, researchers should recall the principle of confidentiality and may want to err on the side of maintaining strict confidentiality unless the disclosed behavior presents acute risk of harm to the participant or someone else.

D In both individual and group activities, children may give away their own or other people's personal or sensitive information during or even after the event. The information might be used by other participants or other people in a way that could bring harm to an identified child.

- In such cases, researchers have to ensure that all participants agree that all personal and sensitive information obtained during the research process is confidential, and they will not distribute any information to anyone under any circumstances. This particular point might be written out or recorded as part of the process of obtaining informed consent, and revisited as a reminder when needed throughout data collection processes.

- During group activities, researchers should remind participants that they should share sensitive personal information only if they are comfortable doing so. Researchers should encourage participants not to share sensitive information about themselves, to interrupt participants who are sharing sensitive information about others, and researchers should provide options for all participants to remain silent or write down or share with researchers in private setting the information that they do not want other participants to know. If a participant still wishes to share additional personal information about themselves, the researcher can suggest they make it anonymous.

- In the case of individual interviews, researchers might carefully design the sampling method by taking into account the possibility of security breaches, such as when other people learn about a participant's response to sensitive questions after the research is completed. For example, a study on domestic violence recruited only one participant in each household to minimize the possibility that other people in a household would know that a participant had been asked about domestic violence, and potentially shared information about their experiences with this (Kishor and Johnson 2005).

Box 11 Case Study 6: Children's Perceptions of Violence against Children: A Participatory Study with Children in Yogyakarta

(Rifka Annisa, personal correspondence)

Research summary

In 2017, Rifka Annisa partnered with UNICEF Indonesia to conduct a study that explored children's perceptions and conceptions of violence, and to assess some of the methods frequently used to elicit their views on and experiences with violence. The results from this study were intended to inform the revision and development of further studies on violence against children in Indonesia.

? What were the methods employed, and what did they show?

Gender differences seemed to play throughout in the process. Female students in their first and second year of junior high school tended to be shy during the first trial of focus group discussions and often had trouble expressing their opinions. In contrast, adolescent boys were usually outspoken and actively engaged. The facilitator did not encounter problems in collecting information, especially with boys. As the boys' group was slightly older than the girls' group, the gender differences in participation might also be due to this age difference. The researcher also observed that some children who were survivors of violence preferred to disclose their experiences when talking in a group setting.

The research team also worked with slightly younger children of 10-12 years of age in both urban and rural areas using ranking and mapping methods. Their experience showed the limitations of using visual methods with young children. Participants responded with only one or two words and did not use long sentences. As their abstract thinking skills were still in their early development, the younger children found it hard to translate their thoughts into words and pictures. As a result, when asked to draw a certain map, children often continued drawing for very long periods, and usually only drew objects that were at the forefront of their mind, even though these were not relevant.

? What was the composition of the research team? What were the advantages and shortcomings of this composition?

Rifka Annisa employed counselors as researchers in this study. Using counselors in a study on violence with children brings certain advantages and disadvantages. The decision to engage counselors in the research process was a way to address the possibility that participants might be traumatized by the violence they had experienced and that they might relate these experiences to the researchers. The counselors had experience in working with child survivors of violence and abuse. However, they were also required to participate in training and activities to increase their research capacity and to understand their primary role as researchers. For the counsellors, the research experience gave them an opportunity to better understand the precise nature of the violence that occurs in children's lives, and to identify some of the most effective methods for engaging future clients to tell their stories more comfortably.

The main challenges occurred in situations in which participants got carried away when describing their experience of violence. This phenomenon put researchers with a counseling background in an awkward position. As counselors, they had a strong urge to dig deeper and to pose questions that aimed at counseling the clients. The researchers had to remind themselves repeatedly of their roles as researchers, and to bear in mind that there were already designated counselors available for participants in need. Nevertheless, no child asked for counselling assistance even though they were quite emotional during the research activities. That children did not ask for any assistance might be because children felt uneasy asking for help. Rifka Annisa's experience in similar studies indicates that only a few participants will end up asking for counseling help, and most children prefer to talk with a familiar adult, either a parent or teacher, or a friend.

As part of the research team, two youth advisors (18 and 19 years old, one young woman and one young man) were chosen by Rifka Annisa due to their involvement in Rifka's Go to School program. They were both regarded and treated as equal partners in the research team. Their involvement in Rifka's programs made them familiar with the various topics that surround violence against children. Both were involved in the research to review research components and to provide their perspectives. The youth advisors were also involved during the preliminary processes, which started with reviewing the methodology and tools, and especially the choice of words and language to make sure that the terminologies and questions could be understood by children. The advisors also supported the pilot studies, reviewed the results, and recommended improvements for the actual fieldwork. They were also part of the data collection team and were also involved in the analysis of the data.

3 | ISSUES THAT MIGHT ARISE IN THE COMMUNITY

Avoiding the possibility of envy

When recruiting children as co-researchers or respondents, it is also important to be attentive to those children and their families who have not been selected for the study so as not to provoke feelings of exclusion, envy, or resentment. Recruiting children in private and safe spaces, such as within their homes, for example, can help to avoid such situations. In other cases, it can be valuable to explain to children who have not been selected that those who were selected will not be privileged over others. In such cases, researchers should consider different means of including these groups of children, if not as respondents, then as consultants during the data collection, validation, analysis, or dissemination phases. If it is impossible to include these children—or if doing so would entail disproportionate risks—then the researchers should work with these children's caregivers to explain how the research project selects children and to reassure them that not being selected does not imply anything about their merit or value.

In quantitative research, randomization is a common and acceptable method to select respondents. Moreover, randomization is often utilized in RCTs methods for evaluation research. The RCT method is viewed as one of the strongest methods for examining causal inferences related to program or intervention impact (Powers and Glennerster 2016). The ethical considerations involved in applying the RCT method in research are complex. What will be discussed here is related to the selection of research participants, particularly in situations in which some receive interventions while others do not, or some receive delayed interventions (so-called "treatment groups" and "control groups") that could create tensions or lead to envy among community members. To avoid tense situations, the following strategies may be implemented (Oakley et al. 2016):

- Provide sufficient time for discussions with related community members (children, parents, informal leaders) on the objective of the research, and determine clear procedures for selecting participants.
- Conduct piloting processes or recruitment exercises and procedures to get informed consent, in particular to practice ways of explaining the RCT design.
- Find ways to encourage control groups to support the research, particularly through their contributions to the research on issues that might in might be their interest or viewed as a priority by them.
- Researchers have a responsibility to work closely with community leaders, research participants, and other local stakeholders in cases where research activities might provoke tensions between community members or between communities and government officials. This may involve, for example, issuing materials that clarify or correct misrepresentations of the research findings or convening local leaders to mediate in conflicts.

4 | MANAGING RELATIONSHIPS AND EXITING THE 'FIELD'

Much of what has been written about fieldwork in participatory research revolves around entering the so-called "field" and the process of engaging with informants to collect data. There is relatively little discussion about what to do when the fieldwork comes to an end. This is strange, especially considering that leaving the field is as important as entering the field. After all, even in situations in which researchers maintain contact with the children, researchers will almost always leave the physical location of their research. Researchers should therefore be mindful about the impact of their work on children's lives and the legacy they might leave behind (D'souza et al. 2018).

The intricacies of leaving the field depend on the methods and the topic of the study, the intensity of the interaction between researchers and the children (and their communities/families), and the length of the interaction. The more personal and sensitive the topic, the more likely it is for the researchers to be intricately connected with the respondents as the latter shared intimate thoughts and feelings as well as traumatic memories and experiences. Methods such as ethnography or longitudinal research may, over time, transform the relationship from one of researcher-informant to one of friendship. When researchers assume a role within a family or community, as is often the case in ethnographic studies, their departure may be felt as a painful loss.

Ideally, researchers determine the expected duration and nature of the research interaction at the beginning of the research project. But it is not always easy to determine these expectations right from the start of a project. Furthermore, sometimes researchers may engage with children who are predisposed to seeking friendship and who may develop personal attachments to researchers despite researchers' best efforts to underscore the professional nature of their relationship. Researchers may also find it difficult to compartmentalize their emotions (Bashir 2018), and may come to value their friendship and relationship with children as well as their families or communities in ways that go beyond the conventional boundaries of the research agenda.

There are a few things that researchers can consider doing before leaving the field, and some of these considerations should be contemplated even before the fieldwork starts, even if plans are still subject to change. First, researchers need to have some indication or plan regarding their departure; even if the departure date may be revised, this plan should be communicated in advance with the children and their guardians. Researchers should also think about how best to convey their plans of departure to the children (D'souza et al. 2018).

Second, researchers should not give false promises to children about post-fieldwork relationships that they cannot fulfil, such as, for instance, whether researchers will stay in touch with or visit children in the future. This can admittedly be difficult because expectations about relationships are often unspoken and are rarely recognizable both by children and researchers. Researchers may also be tempted to imply such promises in the hope of building trust and rapport with children. Lastly, for researchers who assumed a substantial role in children's lives, such as certain emotional roles, and/or in the community, it may be necessary to find local support or a replacement to mitigate the potential impact of their departure, and potentially to connect children or the community to such organizations (D'souza et al. 2018).

▶ Self-care during field work

It is important to remember that researchers also risk personal distress, particularly when conducting emotionally demanding research. Kumar and Cavallaro (2018) define emotionally demanding research as research processes that demand a tremendous amount of mental, emotional, or physical energy and that have the potential to affect and deplete a researcher's health or wellbeing. Such emotional demands can become apparent during the process of listening to participants' painful narratives, or while transcribing interview data, or coding and analyzing data. Researchers can feel exhausted by sharing emotional experiences with participants (Hubbard, Backett-Milburn, and Kemmer 2001) or feel guilty because they assume that they have certain responsibilities for their research participants (D'souza et al. 2018).

Additionally, Kumar & Cavallaro (2018) call for institutional and individual arrangements to address the potential risks of emotionally demanding research. Institutional and individual arrangements must both be mutually supportive and interconnected. Institutional initiatives may include: IRB or relevant ethical committees' guidelines on researcher's self-care for emotionally demanding research, a researcher self-care curriculum, committee support that is built into research processes, researcher mentoring programs, and free access to counseling services. Individual actions may include raising a researcher's awareness on the importance of self-care, the development of a self-care plan linked to the research design, utilization of institutional resources and support, and the active practice of self-care initiatives.

Since it is not always possible to predict what will cause distress or how it will manifest among various individuals, researchers should be actively encouraged to communicate their personal challenges with one another and with their supervisors without fear of negative consequences. Field supervisors should also provide adequate space for reflection and communication, and provide mechanisms for addressing distress, such as debriefing sessions or written memos (Powell et al. 2013).

> *Researchers also incur risks of being harmed, risks that may be exacerbated when children are involved as participants.*

In high-risk studies that take place amid ongoing conflicts or in post-conflict settings, child participation may be interpreted as a form of political indoctrination or recruitment, and researchers' risk being attacked by armed groups, armed forces, or simply by offended or distressed caregivers. For this reason, all research protocols should include basic security measures with special precautions and contingency plans for contexts characterized by a high degree of insecurity. Researchers should also receive security training prior to data collection and should have clear and accessible reporting channels to communicate risks or harms to higher levels of management.

The importance of briefing and re-briefing

It is advisable to make our presence known to the local authorities. Be polite and respect the local culture. If possible, make sure to re-brief the team to make sure everyone is on the same page about how to work in a specific area.

Make sure there is an accessible support system

Fieldwork can be very exhausting, both physically and mentally. Make sure there is someone to talk to if things are overwhelming, be it one of the team members or someone else.

Know when to stop

This advice applies to two parties: our research participants and ourselves. If we see that participant looks very overwhelmed, know when to suggest pausing or ending the activity. If we ourselves feel overwhelmed, take a break and communicate with team members.

Keep a journal

It can be important to write about personal experiences in research. We can write down the methods we have used and our own experiences and impressions with using particular methods in a journal. A journal can also capture information that would otherwise not be captured by our research instruments, including our observations about the research sites, team dynamics, or other topics of interest. It is important that we ensure that the journal is stored in a secure location, particularly if it contains sensitive information.

Researcher's Reflection

In 2018, I was involved in a study with children in urban Makassar for approximately one month. The study explored children's lived experience in urban areas and their perspectives on poverty and deprivation. The chosen methods allowed for intensive engagement between researchers and children in the community. Researchers spent most of the days in the neighborhood. When we were not collecting data through group discussions, we spent the day walking around, making observations, recruiting children, and seeking consent inside their homes.

That study was the hardest I have ever participated in, not because of the burden of work, but because of the emotional toll it took on me. The nature of the study demanded that we delve into the various hardships that children experienced and the discontents they expressed. We asked about their aspirations, but amid the modest dreams that some of them conveyed, we also heard and observed the barriers that prevented many of them from even having any dreams.

The hard realization that researchers are outsiders to children's lives did not make our participation any easier. No matter how hard we tried to understand their lived experience, the fact remains that we come from different places and enjoy far more comfortable lives. During the data collection period, I tried to make sense of the differences between our lives and their lives every day before entering their neighborhood and again after leaving it. Every day, we were confronted by the stark difference between the pleasant accommodation we had just left an hour before and the dark alleyways in which these children's lives unfolded. Every day the research team sat in uncomfortable silence as we ate our lunch in the breezy mall near the neighborhood in which we, just an hour before, had listened to the struggles of the children and their families under the scorching heat of the Makassar sun. Needless to say, we felt very helpless and guilty.

Fortunately, the team not only shared these feelings with each other, but also made efforts to process them a healthy manner. We conducted daily and weekly debriefings during the data collection phase. These debriefings helped us not only to map our data, but also to share our worries. It also helped to emotionally decompress, and knowing that other team members felt the same way helped assuage our guilt. By the end of the data collection period, we invited a professional counsellor to lead an emotional debriefing and sharing session collectively with the other team members. The counsellor-led sharing session at the end also helped us to reflect on our emotions and to deal with them in a healthy manner.

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Part 4

I have collected my data, now what do I do with it?

In the previous Part, we discussed the necessary preparations and ethical considerations that researchers need to take into account during data collection that involves children. We learned about the vital role of getting informed consent from participating children and their significant adults as well as some of the dilemmas that might arise. While the primary objective of informed consent is to provide all necessary information for potential participants to make decisions about their engagement, the informed consent process is also important for establishing rules of confidentiality and the protection mechanisms that researchers provide to participants. In this Part, we will discuss how researchers can maintain confidentiality once data collection has been completed.

We will also elaborate on the post-data collection stages and explore how children can be involved in the analysis and dissemination phases. We provide discussions about the challenges, risks, benefits, and strategies to mitigate risks associated with research. Relevant examples are provided where appropriate.

It is important to note that this chapter deals primarily with data that is collected firsthand by researchers, and with processes wherein informants actively provide the information with their consent through various formats such as audio recordings, texts, and pictures. We do not delve into the complexities and dilemmas involved in collecting and analyzing digital data that is acquired through social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter, which is a process that is often referred to as “mining”. Nor do we discuss the use of secondary data, such as the data that is found in open-source repositories and that is often analyzed by researchers who were not involved in the data collection process (see Corti and Fielding 2016). These types of data and their associated data collection methods deserve a separate discussion that covers the various appropriate methods, the dilemmas that may be encountered, and the applications of common ethical standards (such as, for example, who owns the pictures that users post on Instagram?).

A

Data entry, storage, and sharing

At all stages of research, the confidentiality of respondents and any other people involved is paramount. Some of this safeguarding of confidentiality is embedded in the data collection process and is communicated to respondents as part of the informed consent process. Aside from the safety protocol, researchers also need to maintain the privacy of their respondents. Maintaining confidentiality is especially crucial when conducting research that gathers sensitive personal information from children who represent the least powerful parts of society.

Researchers are the custodians of the information that is shared with us by the children who participate in our studies. Data must be secured to prevent children’s identifying information from being exposed to the public, because exposure could threaten their safety and wellbeing. Furthermore, we need to ensure that the ways we input, categorize, store, share, analyze, and disseminate data do not breach our confidentiality agreements or threaten anyone’s safety.

1 WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY?

Confidentiality and anonymity are distinguished by the extent to which collected data can be linked back to research participants. Confidentiality involves being careful with personal identifying information, such as name, age, address, phone number, state ID, or other personal information, and preventing unauthorized parties from linking research respondents to their responses and inflicting harm upon respondents. Unless a respondent specifically asks for their name to be publicly attached to their responses (and even in this situation, researchers should assess the potential harms), confidentiality should apply to all respondents. Anonymity is different from confidentiality in that it refers to not collecting certain types of personal identifying information, thus making it impossible for anybody, including researchers, to identify the respondent from the responses (Powell et al., 2013). An option to maintain anonymity during data collection is to assign pseudonyms to respondents or to change the names of particular locations or community groups while data is being collected. However, this option may affect researchers' ability, for example, to analyze sex-disaggregated data if assigned pseudonyms are not gender-specific, which may not be suitable for research requiring gender-related data (Powell et al. 2013).

> *However, researchers might encounter situations in which maintaining anonymity may not always be possible or even necessary due to methodological and ethical considerations (Powell et al., 2013).*

For example, in research on children's experiences with violence, abuse, and neglect, using a computer-aided self-administered questionnaire in the UK in 2008, it was considered unethical if researchers were unaware of the identifying information of specific children in need of immediate follow-up. To respond to this ethical concern, the research team from the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) designed a red flag alert system that would only notify researchers if response combinations indicated the existence of risks that required immediate follow-up. Once researchers learned about specific respondents who might need specific protection, they discussed how to breach the confidentiality agreement and to uphold the best interests of specific child respondents.

In many cases, following up and protecting children means telling a third party about these children and sharing their private information. In the case of the NSPCC,

> *the decision to have limited confidentiality instead of full anonymity was made after thorough consultations with parents, children, and young people who were child abuse survivors.*

As discussed in Part 3, it is important to first assess local mandatory reporting obligations and policies as part of the development of an ethics protocol.

The important lesson is that during research proposal development, researchers need to anticipate and analyze the potential dilemmas and legal requirements (or the absence of such mandates) concerning children's safety and confidentiality that might emerge throughout the entire research process. Mitigation plans and procedures to handle such cases need to be laid out in the research protocol through consultation with stakeholders, and these need to be reviewed during IRB reviews (please refer to Part 3 on referral pathways). When new ethical dilemmas emerge during the research process that had not been anticipated during the research development phase, investigators need to update their risk mitigation plans and procedures and re-engage with IRBs and other stakeholders as necessary.

In Indonesia, Law No 11/2019 on the National System of Science and Technology stipulates that primary data and outputs from any research conducted in Indonesia that is funded by the national government, local government, or any government entity, must be reported to the national government and must be stored for at least 20 years. Further guidelines on the reporting and storage of primary data and research outputs have not yet been provided. Research projects carried out by foreign research institutes and/or foreign researchers are also required to seek permission from the national government. It is also stipulated that any research conducted in Indonesia must adhere to the ethics of academic discipline to which the research in question belongs. A commission on ethics will be established to assess the adherence to ethical principles in various fields of research. Foreign researchers and research institutes are obliged to submit their primary data and research results to the Government of Indonesia. Foreign researchers and institutions are not allowed to transport any materials or specimens out of Indonesia. However, to date, there have been no implementing regulations to further specify requirements in terms of ethics, permissions, and the submission of data.

2

WHO IS ENTITLED TO ACCESSING OUR DATA ON CHILDREN?

Different research settings have different limitations in terms of data accessibility and to whom authorization can be granted. In general, research leads, such as principal investigators, have direct access to sensitive information about children, especially in research settings that potentially require follow-up, such as research on violence against children. Principal investigators decide which other parties might need access to identifiable data, such as, for example, social workers, para-social workers or service providers designated to follow up in accordance with the response protocol. However, other involved staff, such as interviewers, interpreters, drivers, cultural brokers, and administrative staff, are some of the people who may also need access to children's information for follow-up purposes (Powell et al., 2013). A data collection plan should lay out the circumstances in which data can be shared, what the limitations are, and what data security protocols should be in place.

> *Parents, primary caregivers, or members of children's social networks, however, should not have access to children's responses obtained during the research as this may put respondents in danger. If withholding such information from significant adults in children's lives might put them at greater risk, then the research team may override this general rule.*

It is mandatory for all staff involved in the research to be trained in research protocols and to follow such protocols in order to maintain confidentiality and to safeguard the data of children. All research staff could, for example, be required to sign a confidentiality agreement that delimits what data can be shared and what can never be shared as well as with whom different types of data can be shared and under what circumstances.

Data Entry

To the furthest possible extent, researchers need to record identifying information, such as respondents' ID numbers, separately from any other documentation that is associated with data collection such as field notes, voice recordings, and transcripts. This separated recording of information might not be ideal for some types of analysis in which a deep and contextualized understanding of an individual child's specific background is required. In such instances, once the analysis stage has been completed, it is important to de-link identifying information from the raw data and to ensure that only specific researchers have the ability to link these separate forms of information. This method prevents other people from tracing back sensitive data to an individual respondent (Powell et al., 2013).

Data storage

A number of considerations need to be taken into account for data storage procedures. Data such as photographs, videos or child-produced work that are entered into storage systems are vulnerable to the risk of theft, virus attack, hacking, hardware and software failure, human error, and disaster or accident (Van den Eynden et al. 2011). Researchers are also required to keep collected data for a specific period of time. Different institutions have different requirements, sometimes informed by government-specific regulations, on how long data should be kept before being destroyed.

An illustrative example of the dangers of insufficient data protection is a data breach that occurred in March 2016, which involved a stolen laptop of an employee of the Feinstein Institute containing the data of approximately 13,000 patients and research participants (McGee 2016). The institute ended up paying USD 3.9 million in a settlement for violating HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996), which is a US law on medical data protection. The Office of Civil Rights investigation highlighted key flaws in the research institute's data security system, which included:

- Lack of policies and procedures governing access to the institute's patient research database, i.e. no policies and mechanisms were in place to restrict access to unauthorized parties;
- No mechanism for remote wipes of laptops containing the database;
- Lack of encryption on laptops with access to the patient research database; and
- Lack of standards for maintaining electronic equipment according to HIPAA requirements.

This incident pushed the institute to take corrective actions, such as proper training for its staff as well as stricter policy enforcement (McGee, 2016). Even though this case did not explicitly affect children, some of the lessons learned can be applied to doing research with children.

Critical and sensitive data about children such as their name, address, age, school, and parents could be exposed to potentially harmful third parties, including violent criminals and other potential perpetrators. Thus, it is crucial for researchers to develop protocols that ensure the security of data that is stored on hard disks as well as online, and for all involved research team members to be trained on these protocols early on in the research. In some cases, researchers can follow and adapt institutional or donor's requirements for data storage and safety. Furthermore, researchers need to think about having data backups and periodic checks and upgrades. Some recommendations for ensuring data security are discussed below.

Online security

Most contemporary studies store data either electronically using an internal or external hard drive, virtually using clouds or remote servers, or both. In addition to these options, there is an increasing trend toward using digital methods, such as virtual applications, by which data is acquired in digital format. Applications such as Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) and Audio Computer Assisted Self-Interviewing (ACASI) have been utilized for conducting surveys (Falb et al. 2016). The utilization of applications reduces the size of physical data in paper-based format as well as errors in data entry processes. In these new methods, data are collected electronically through tablets or laptops that are used by enumerators or directly by participants. Online security is a crucial infrastructure that must be in place for storing and accessing such electronically collected data. Connections used both for collecting and storing data should always be secured and encrypted (Eynden et al., 2011). Researchers should also make efforts to protect data servers from malicious attacks. Online connections can be protected by frequently updating firewalls and using updated operating systems as updated versions usually have improved security features (Eynden et al., 2011). Electronic data from the data collection process should immediately be transferred to a safe data storage system that can be accessed only by certain individuals within the research team.

There are warnings against relying solely on digital storage, especially when cloud-based computing services are private or commercial. There is no guarantee that these services will stay in business for the period of mandatory data keeping (Corti and Fielding 2016). The technology required to sustain certain forms of cloud computing, including hardware and software, may become obsolete and no longer usable (Corti and Fielding 2016). Furthermore, it is advisable to check and understand the terms and conditions of any cloud storage facility, including their regulations on safety measures and access to stored data.

Computer security

Office computers, laptops, and tablets used for electronic data collection and storage should be protected by passwords that should be changed periodically if possible. Different levels of protection can be imposed on highly sensitive data files via encryption as well as various accessibility formats such as read-only, read and write, or administrator-only depending on the level of authorization (Eynden et al., 2011).

Physical security

If online data storage is not available or data cannot be stored electronically, areas designated for data storage should be solidly built and not be prone to fires or floods. Data and data-storing media or devices should be stored in a locked room or a locked filing cabinet or drawer to prevent theft (Powell et al., 2013). Access to data storage areas should also be monitored by keeping a log that is updated on a real-time basis (Eynden et al., 2011). Transporting media that contain sensitive data should be done only during critical circumstances, such as necessary repairs, because the movement of physical data can potentially compromise data confidentiality. The storage of physical data will require more resources, such as cabinets and storage space.

Therefore, for monitoring and evaluation purposes, physical data should be stored at least for the duration of the research program. Physical data, once transferred into an electronic format or when no longer needed, should be destroyed following the organization's regulations on destroying data that contains private information.

Data sharing

Data can be shared for various purposes, ranging from sharing with service providers (social workers, psychologists, and the like) for case management to sharing with researchers for journal publication on research about violence. At the outset of the research process, researchers should lay out rules about the ownership of data (for instance, who has the property rights over the data) with all interested parties, including funders and donors, and establish confidentiality agreements with these parties through contracts. For case management purposes, the research team needs to define specific protocols and set limitations on which external parties, such as service providers, can access children's data in order to provide necessary support for children. Data sharing protocols can also include requirements for signing non-disclosure agreements by external parties. An agreement can also include statements regarding the non-commercial use of data or prohibitions regarding the sharing of data without further consultation.

Journals often require researchers to submit anonymized raw datasets for public access. Data sharing in this context is beneficial for the research community as it enhances learning and knowledge generation (Eynden et al., 2011). There are also possibilities to reuse data for further research by other academics (Corti and Fielding 2016). However, publishing raw data raises concerns about confidentiality, especially the case of highly sensitive research. Researchers should consult with a research ethics committee before submission of a manuscript to a journal if publication of raw data is not possible (Hrynaszkiewicz et al. 2010). In some situations, raw data can be submitted to data centers or online repositories with restricted access.

External parties will be required to sign a non-disclosure agreement or an end-user license agreement that explicitly outlines the scope of data sharing granted to external parties (Eynden et al., 2011). Additionally, data owners can work together with data centers to define the most appropriate forms of access restriction. Researcher can consider: i) granting access only to specific researchers in an institution; ii) blocking external access to raw data for a period, and making it available only when data owners deem it safe for sharing; and iii) allowing only remote data analysis instead of the downloading of raw data (Eynden et al., 2011). All of the potential options for data sharing should be documented in the research protocol and explained to participants during the processes of gaining informed consent.

B

Involving children in data analysis

1 WHY DO WE INVOLVE CHILDREN IN DATA ANALYSIS?

In previous Parts, we briefly discussed the possibility of involving children in all stages of research, including the analysis of data. Adult researchers have different ways of seeing the world compared to children, which is something that runs the risk of generating inaccurate knowledge about children if data is interpreted solely by adult researchers (Coppock 2011).

A growing body of literature has shown that child participation helps improve researcher’s knowledge and understanding of the issues that children face (Chakraborty 2009). Thus, there has been a shift to more participatory and active approaches to involving children in all stages of research, including during data analysis (Coad and Evans 2008).

Before going into a detailed discussion of children's roles in analysis, it is essential to briefly discuss how research quality is generally judged. For quantitative research, the most common measures of rigor are reliability and validity. Reliability refers to the consistency or reproducibility of a survey's measurements. A reliable measurement will yield the same result every time it is used to measure a similar object. It suggests that the more reliable the measurement instrument is, the more consistent the results will be (Litwin 1995). Validity usually refers to the degree to which a test actually measures what it sets out to measure (Mitchell 2018). In other words, validity deals with the accuracy of a measurement (as opposed to its consistency). There are various types of validity, but the most common ones are internal and external validity. Many quantitative surveys aim to provide some degree of causal explanation or to test various hypotheses. A survey is internally valid if there are strong cause-effect relationships between its variables. External validity refers to how applicable the relationship between variables is when the same survey is conducted among other yet similar populations. External validity is often also known as the replicability of a study (Mitchell 2018).

There are some issues with applying reliability and validity criteria to judge the rigor of a qualitative study. It is often the case that qualitative studies do not employ rigid theoretical frameworks or do not aim to test hypotheses. Similarly, many qualitative-interpretive studies do not necessarily focus on finding causal effects, but instead strive to understand the ways people, including children, understand, perceive, and make sense of their lives or certain social phenomena in particular contexts. As such these studies do not make statistical inferences that can be applied to other similar populations or to the general population of a country or region. Many participatory studies fall into this category.

Some scholars have developed a new approach to validation and have adapted certain criteria for the evaluation of qualitative research (Schwartz-Shea 2006). A dominant approach among these divergent views deals with the core concept of "validity." Validity in qualitative research is generally assessed through the resonance of findings and analyses of a certain study with the population that the study purports to represent (Schwartz-Shea 2006; Carl and Ravitch 2018). For instance, if a study presents findings on research with children with disabilities in Jakarta, its findings and subsequent analysis should resonate not only with child participants in the study, but also with other children with disabilities in Jakarta who did not participate in the study. To a lesser extent, the analysis should also echo the experience of children with disabilities in other big cities in Indonesia.

Member-checking, which is a term frequently used in qualitative psychological research (Carl and Ravitch 2018), is a way to ensure the resonance of qualitative and interpretive studies. In general, the process can involve two steps: verification and validation. In this handbook, verification means confirming the empirical findings of a study with the informants or participants (a kind of "fact-checking") whereas validation involves a deeper dialogue between researchers and participants to discuss the preliminary inferences and analyses emerging from the empirical findings.

Verification can mean, on the one hand, confirming the biographical data and historical events relevant to the study (e.g. Is it true that this village was flooded in June 2012?). Validation, on the other hand, may also involve discussing the ways participants' lived experiences are portrayed in the report, the extent to which findings fit with certain theoretical assumptions (Morse et al. 2002), or the applicability of a report's recommendations in real life (Schwartz-Shea 2006). Sometimes validation is done with new informants who were not part of the data collection to test a study's generalizability or resonance with other populations. It is clear that validation involves deeper engagement with participants and that it requires additional investments of time, effort, and resources from both researchers and participants.

2

HOW DO WE INVOLVE CHILDREN IN ANALYSING DATA?

The extent to which it is possible or appropriate to involve children in the analysis or interpretation of data depends on the nature of the research project and the interest of children in being involved in this phase of the project. Children's rights, confidentiality, and safety also need to be considered when involving children in data analysis.

> *It is important to remember that the decision to involve children in data analysis should be considered at the onset of a research project as it influences the required time and resources.*

Here is a quick summary of considerations that a researcher needs to take into account if children are invited to analyze data.

- Ensure that the type of involvement that children will participate in during the analysis stage is costed at the beginning of the research and properly funded. This is a step that may require advocacy with funders for additional resources. Ideally, children's involvement in data analysis is already included in the research proposal.

- Assess the benefits of having children analyze the data and any potential harms that may arise. Harm may arise when a child data analyst is exposed to sensitive topics or when they sense that their feelings are not being taken seriously. Researchers should ask themselves: How important is it to have children's full participation during data analysis or the overall process? What benefits would their involvement bring? Is the purpose of our research to test how children-led research might be different? What are the risks of their involvement, and have we prepared mitigation strategies?

- Develop plans to address, mitigate, or reconcile conflicts of interpretation between children and adult researchers.

- Adult researchers should be ready to adjust their roles to the type of children's engagement that is chosen; in the analysis stage of child-led research, adults may even shift to a supporting or facilitating role. Adult researchers need to be mindful of the degree to which they need to lead the analysis process in order to uphold research rigor while also allowing children to analyze the data. Steps to help adult researchers consider and adapt their roles should be planned ahead and discussed openly rather than undertaken in an ad hoc manner.

- Adult researchers should equip children with relevant knowledge and skills, such as learning about rigorous data analysis processes, so that children may make decisions that adhere to research ethics and principles.

- Training for children should consider their age groups and capacities; subsequent methods should be developed to ensure children's understanding of complex concepts as well as to accommodate for the needs of different children.

This section presents examples from various research projects, but it will not focus on the types of analyses or analytical methods that are most suitable for children to be involved in. Instead, it will highlight the benefits of involving children in analysis as well as factors that can contribute to the success or failure of children's meaningful participation in data analysis. We will discuss various forms of children's involvement in data analysis and the appropriate corresponding roles for adult researchers. These different forms of child involvement include children as verifiers and children as analysts. There is no "most correct" way for engaging children in analysis as the selected approach will depend on the different facets of various research projects, such as the goal of a research project, its institutional requirements, and the availability of resources.

▸ Children confirm or validate the interpretation of preliminary research findings

Interpretation undertaken solely by adult researcher risks generating an incomplete picture of children's lived situations (Coad and Evans, 2008). In exploratory research on children's neighborhoods and networks, the same child participants were asked to verify preliminary findings that had been analyzed by an adult researcher (Morrow 2008). As a consequence of this approach, children were able to identify a gap in the analysis, namely that the researcher had not explored the quality of the relationship between teachers and students. Subsequently, the researcher added this topic to her analysis (Morrow, 2008). This is an example of the most common way of involving children in the analysis stage (Coad & Evans, 2008). In this case, the technicalities of data analysis are primarily the responsibility of adult researchers, which receives some feedback from children.

The verification or provision of feedback on a research project's preliminary interpretations can be undertaken either with the children who participated in the data collection or with other groups of children. In Part 2 we discussed the possibility of having children be members of an advisory group or of forming a child advisory panel. During the data analysis process, adult researchers may consult child advisors to seek their views on the interpretation of research findings and themes. The case study below illustrates how children can analyze research data even if they were not part of the research project from the beginning. The research team consulted a particular group of children about their initial analysis of a systematic review of several studies on children's obesity. Some of the reviewed studies involved children.

Involving children in the analysis stage requires the allocation of time to allow: i) children to understand the research data and to produce the expected level of analysis; and ii) researchers to understand children's interpretations of data, which itself has been presented in a way that children can understand. A lack of time to provide for the above two processes can compromise a research project's integrity and the meaningful participation of children. Equally important to consider is the question how children might interpret the voices of other children who often come from different backgrounds. This is a consideration that leads back to the issue of intersectionality in an analytical framework that seeks to understand children's lives as well as undertake research with children. If it is within the remit of a research project's questions and capacities, adult researchers should be as inclusive as possible in their recruitment of children as advisors or as collaborators.

The decision to not have a more significant involvement of children in the analysis—for instance, to include them fully in interpreting data—is usually made due to the technical capacities required to perform analysis as well as due to the complexity of data (Morrow, 2008). Engaging children in the various processes that take place after data collection might sometimes also be a disadvantage to them as they have to commit time, energy, and the opportunity cost of doing something else. This observation, however, is true for any stage of the research in which children might be involved.

Box 12 Case study 7: Involving children research participants ages 10-17 years old in two ongoing configurative reviews about causal links between obesity and educational attainment

(Oliver et al. 2015)

Research Summary

The Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Coordinating (EPPI) Center conducted systematic reviews in the area of public policy, one of which was a systematic review of childhood obesity for the United Kingdom Department of Health. At the same time, a charity team from the National Children's Bureau (NCB) Research Center that was working with children and young people started a project entitled Public Health, Education, Awareness, Research: Our Voices, Our Health (PEAR). Funded by the Wellcome Trust, the PEAR project aimed to connect young people, researchers, and policymakers in producing public health information. The PEAR project lasted for two years and worked with two London- and Leeds-based groups of young people aged 12-17 years old. The EPPI Center and NCB Research Center conducted participatory research involving young people from the PEAR project to achieve two purposes. The first was to confirm the findings of a review of children's views on obesity and to suggest appropriate interventions for addressing childhood obesity (a so-called "views review"). The second was to identify causal pathways between obesity and educational attainment (a "correlational review").

The "views review" and "correlational review" occurred at different stages because the former already had a set of findings regarding childhood obesity that needed children's confirmation whereas the latter required children's views on the plausible causation pathways that might link obesity and educational attainment.

How were children involved, and how did the research benefit (or not) from it?

Children were asked to discuss five major obesity-related themes in groups of two and used stickers to identify which themes they thought were most important. The PEAR children group emphasized the important role of the media in body size idealization and body image formation, which were themes that were present but not explicitly mentioned in the original review. Overall, researchers were able to confirm that all possible risk factors for obesity were explored in the review. However, researchers did not use the results from the ranking activity, nor did they add the theme of media to the review, as the EPPI Center researchers did not have sufficient quotes about media influence. Additionally, researchers were asked to develop relevant interventions for addressing obesity. However, this exercise was unsuccessful as not enough time was allocated to further clarify the written statements provided by children. Thus, researchers were unable to draw valid conclusions from the exercise.

Correlational review

Children identified forms of discrimination or stigmatization, such as bullying and victimization, as central factors in mediating obesity and educational attainment, a fact that was not accounted for by the studies included in the review. For instance, among the 29 studies included in the review, only four studies included mental health as predicting variables. Although six studies acknowledged the potential link between bullying, obesity, and educational attainment, none of the studies included bullying in their model. This discrepancy highlights the difference between what children consider important and what adults see from their point of view. Thus, this exercise found new information for filling a gap in the current literature on obesity and educational attainment.

Besides this exercise, children were asked to interpret themes from the review to develop a causal framework for examining how obesity might influence educational attainment. However, this exercise failed to meet its intended objective as there was not enough time for children to develop a full understanding of the themes presented to them. In this exercise, themes were presented in the form of labels with minimal explanation from the adult facilitators. In fact, the researcher who was in charge of developing these themes was absent during the consultative workshop with young people. Thus, children ended up providing information that was not aligned with the initial purpose of the exercise.

What were the risks for children, and what did we learn from this process?

Although this paper did not reflect on children's experiences with being involved in the research, it nevertheless highlights the importance of adequately allocating time and resources to the process. Allocating time and resources is essential for minimizing the risk of children having negative experiences while participating in research. Adverse experiences may prevent children from participating in further research activities, particularly if they feel that they are not taken seriously or if they believe there are unrealistic expectations of their participation (Coad et al., 2008). A step that could have been done differently in the research project discussed above is to have researchers explaining complex themes to children, which is an approach that is consistent with acknowledging children's evolving capacities in comprehending complex concepts.

▶ Children as the main analysts

In Part 2, we discussed a type of research in which children take a position of leadership over the entire research process. In this type of engagement, children not only have control over the research topics, methodologies, and tools,

> *but they also actively analyze the data, and in some cases, also disseminate research findings with assistance from adult researchers (Coad and Evans, 2008).*

These adult researchers act as facilitators who supply children with the necessary information on a particular topic to allow children to make informed decisions.

The case study on bullying conducted by Barnardo's Yorkshire Peer Research Group (see Box 5: Case Study 1 in Part 2) illustrates some of the essential considerations regarding the implementation of child-led research and for upholding the intellectual rigor of a research project. In the analysis stage, children were able to offer different views than adult researchers on bullying as they were better able to relate with research participants through reflection on their own experiences. Since children were involved from the onset of the research project, they were also able to provide feedback and improve the methods for collecting data from child participants in the design process (Tyler, Turner, and Mills 2006).

As discussed previously, child-led research does not mean that children have total control over the research or that adults do not play any role (Shaw, Brady, and Davey 2011). Adult researchers play an important role in providing the necessary information for children to make ethical decisions. In Barnardo's case, the role of adult researchers was limited to facilitating instead of driving decision-making. This was difficult because adult researchers often thought they had more technical knowledge about conducting research than children. Adult researchers continually had to remind themselves that they were trying to test how child-led research might make a difference, thus allowing them to stick to their role as facilitators.

C

Disseminating research findings

The dissemination of research findings is often seen as the final step of research. Dissemination occurs when researchers communicate their findings to a target audience. However, sometimes researchers put more effort into communicating findings to research funders and less into sharing findings with their respondents and the general public. Academics and researchers have also been criticized for their lack of creativity in disseminating their findings to various groups of audiences. More often than not, the strategy to disseminate a study’s results is limited to the publication of a report that is then sent to stakeholders (Van Blerk and Ansell 2007).

In this section we will look at the different ways that children can be involved in disseminating research findings. It starts by discussing when and how researchers can effectively communicate their findings to children, including what to do with sensitive information and private content such as photos or videos. Finally, we will discuss children’s participation in conveying the findings to a broader audience as well as the advantages and the risks that may come with this particular form of participation.

Why does dissemination matter?

Dissemination is an essential part of the research process for at least three reasons. First, it is a form of **academic accountability** in which researchers present the results of a study to direct stakeholders, such as funders and sometimes also policymakers.

> *Researchers also have a duty in terms of accountability toward the informants and respondents from whom the data was gathered (Valentine 1999).*

Dissemination can be built iteratively into the data analysis phase as a way to confirm and verify researchers' interpretations (see section B in this Part), but it can also be done as a separate phase. Studies that conduct research with children as participants or respondents have the ethical responsibility to "give the data back" to them.

The second reason to communicate findings is **to gather feedback about the study** from different stakeholders. In doing so, researchers can learn which methods and ethical safeguards worked with participants and which ones did not. In terms of content, researchers can also identify what particular areas of interest require further research, if there is any additional information available, and if there are any objections to the findings or the research in general. Third, communicating the findings plays an important role for the impact of a study, because researchers can **trigger changes in the understanding about and in the actions toward** a particular topic or subpopulation (Ritterbusch 2016; Harmsworth et al. 2000). Studies centered on children as active respondents or as collaborators are mainly geared toward challenging the prevalent idea that children are incapable of engaging in public affairs. Van Blerk and Ansell, for instance, disseminated their study not only to increase awareness, but also to encourage dialogue between officials, community leaders, and children and to open up opportunities for children to participate in future actions (2007).

Should I communicate my findings to children?

In accordance with the accountability principle of research, some degree of dissemination is imperative for studies conducted through child involvement. Furthermore, researchers may want to gather feedback from the participating children to evaluate and improve the study's methods and methodologies in the future. Even if children are not actively participating in the process,

> *researchers should consider disseminating the results of the study to children if the topic and the results might be of interest or benefit to them.*

An example might be communicating with children about a study on the environmental risks of a certain manufacturer's pollution in an area where children are affected by this pollution. By communicating their findings to children, researchers can increase children's awareness of an issue and encourage some actions or changes in their behavior. To have access to information that matters to them is also one of the children's rights that are included in the CRC (Kolucki and Lemish 2011).

In delivering research results to children, researchers must consider how children might best receive these results, how they can benefit from them, and any potential risks that this knowledge may confer. Researchers should be clear about the primary purpose of the dissemination for children. Researchers should also decide what part of a study's findings should be conveyed to children and whether other groups surrounding children—such as their parents, teachers, or peers—should also be informed. There might be instances in which researchers feel the need to withhold some sensitive information, or think that some of the results may be inappropriate or too problematic to share with children. All of these decisions will depend on the specific nature of a topic or finding, the capacities and characteristics of the child audience, and the communication skills and resources of the researchers.

One issue that might hinder the process of communicating results back to participating children is the time lag between data collection and dissemination. In some cases, this delay means that some of the children may have moved on to other places (e.g. in research with street children), or that children may have graduated from a certain school or transferred to another (van Blerk and Ansell, 2007; see Box 13: Case Study 8). Researchers have to anticipate the possibility of not being able to locate all respondents or of needing to conduct dissemination activities multiple times (van Blerk and Ansell, 2007). In other cases, children may have changed their interests or priorities due to changes in their circumstances.

▶ How to disseminate my findings to children?

It is crucial for any dissemination activity to make findings accessible for a target audience, but even more so for children. One necessary, but not always sufficient, step is to ensure the availability of research materials in formats that are most accessible to different target groups of children. A written report has to be translated into age-appropriate language, and visual representations are likely to be helpful. Children who are illiterate or semi-literate will not be able to understand a report if the findings are presented in written form only. Moreover, using CDs or digital files will not work in places where children do not have adequate access to computers or the internet.

When deciding to present findings using written or verbal text, researchers must be mindful of children's capacities in terms of literacy and articulation as well as their communication preferences. Researchers should also be mindful of critical aspects related to how children of different age groups process information and how they perceive, learn, conceptualize, and act on what they have seen and heard. Careful selection of words and statements is crucial. Even in the case of adults, academics are advised not to use jargons, technical words, or convoluted statements.

Researchers are increasingly experimenting with various media through which to convey their scholarly findings to all audiences. Bartlett (2013), for instance, used cartoons to communicate research findings to participants with dementia. Alternatively, researchers can opt to disseminate their findings through participatory activities. One study employed a participatory approach to involve young people in designing a dissemination project to communicate their research on violence to a broader audience of youths through a series of animations (Vaughn, Wagner, and Jacquez 2013). Mand (2012) staged an exhibition to display children's artwork and paintings as part of a more extensive dissemination process, while Weller (2012), working with children's full consent, created a series of videos that used snippets of recorded interviews and showed vignettes of children's lives.

Children participating in Van Blerk and Ansell's study were involved in a series of discussions in which the researchers presented nuanced and detailed findings of their study. Children and their peers were encouraged to pose questions and to discuss possible solutions to the issues at hand (2007). In some instances, the children helped the researchers to disseminate their findings to a broader audience through drama performances. In Ritterbusch's Participatory Action Research project in Bogotá, street adolescents who had participated in the research later facilitated a dialogue with health providers, community members, and policy makers in which they also shared their own reflections, a process called "critical dissemination practices" (2016). Although the dialogue was at times heated and emotional, the event enabled participants to subvert the patronizing practices that they were often subjected to, convey how they wanted to be represented, and demand changes from the health providers.

▶ Withholding sensitive information about children

There are times when we need to select what kind of findings we disseminate back to participants and stakeholders. Even if we have de-identified the data, there is the possibility that adults or parents may infer something personal from the general findings, which might impact child informants negatively. For instance, if a study shows that the majority of teenagers in a given group are sexually active, researchers must carefully measure the potential impact on children of sharing this finding. Researchers should anticipate potential reactions from parents, community members, and the general public as well as the likelihood of various reactions and measures that might be taken against the potential positive change that could otherwise result from sharing research findings. Such anticipatory processes may help researchers to craft their dissemination messages in a more carefully targeted way.

Researchers should proceed with extra caution when sharing images—of children, other people, locations, landmarks, or other identifying features—or the direct testimonies of children (Powell et al., 2013). Research teams should be strategic about which images to use for dissemination materials in each research location so as not to expose children's involvement unwittingly. For instance, Young and Barrett (2001) discussed the potential harm of naming the streets that their participants, street-connected children, often frequented. Researchers risk taking away children's "safe spaces" by exposing such spaces to governments by publishing photos of these locations.

Photographs and all other materials collected during a study should be used only for the purposes outlined in the consent process. Cautious and judicious use of these materials is an ethical and safety imperative for both researchers and children. Breaching consent means betraying the trust earned from children and other participants. What is more, dissemination efforts often lag far behind data collection exercises, especially in the case of longitudinal studies, and children may not always remember having consented to being photographed. In these cases, researchers should again request consent from children before using their photographs or any documents identifying them widely within their community (Kaplan and Howes 2004). Additionally, in research that produces pictures or photos by children (such photovoice), researchers need to ensure that all people who are recognizable in the photos give their informed consent if these photos are to be displayed, reproduced, and disseminated (Clark, Prosser, and Wiles 2010).

Even when consent has been given, researchers still need to think carefully about using children's images. Once an image has been published, researchers can no longer control how the image will be interpreted or used and how it will be circulated. Therefore, researchers should assess the possibility that images will fall into the wrong hands and be used for potentially harmful purposes and should weigh this consideration against the potential benefits of using the images in publications. In some cases, researchers refrain from using an image, no matter how powerful it is in conveying a particular message, due to this concern. The most common way to render photos confidential is to pixelate or blur the images of children's faces (Clark, Prosser, and Wiles 2010). At the same time, concerns about blurring photos have been raised in regard to so-called issues of "overprotection," because this can be perceived as taking the agency and ownership of the image away from children and putting them in the hands of researchers (Clark, Prosser, and Wiles 2010; Kaplan and Howes 2004). This concern is particularly salient when participants specially requested public attribution as a way to express their voices and visual identities. Researchers working with children should be cautious in negotiating such requests due to children's relatively weak position within society. Other important questions in this regard include the potential embarrassment of the children as they grow up and acquire different perspectives or understandings of their public personas in the future (Clark, Prosser, and Wiles 2010).

Although it is beyond the scope of this handbook to delve deeply into this issue, other ethical debates about displaying children's images have also emerged. For instance, the messages conveyed by images matter and can raise several points for consideration. Sometimes, it is not the face of a child that is problematic, but rather the general situation portrayed by a picture. Some organizations have internal safeguarding policies and guidelines about the capture and use of people's images, including those of children (see a list of online resources for these guidelines in the reference section).

Some guidelines address ethical, artistic, and interpretive judgments—such as selecting pictures that portray children in an empowering way instead of ones that stigmatize or victimize them—may not be applicable in certain research contexts. Other recommendations in such guidelines include not displaying nudity, not cropping the rest of a scene to make a child appear removed or isolated, and to use imagery in empowering ways whenever possible.

Should I involve children in disseminating findings to others?

Children's involvement in disseminating findings depends on the purposes of the research and the availability of resources. Children's involvement in research dissemination can help convey findings effectively to other children and provides a space for children to share their own experiences, which can also be empowering for them (Shaw, Brady, and Davey 2011). Some scholars argue that the active involvement of children participants in the dissemination stage, when done in an ethical and participatory manner, can help encourage policymakers and other stakeholders to take action or formulate solutions to a particular issue (van Blerk and Ansell, 2007). Despite researchers' limited ability to ensure that policymakers take action and follow the recommendations put forward in their research, it is vital for research findings to, at the very least, increase awareness about important issues among different audiences. For example, van Blerk and Ansell (2007) involved child participants in a series of enactments of these children's stories, which the researchers videotaped and presented during workshops with officials, NGOs, and community leaders in Southern Africa. These videotapes helped to bring the issue of children who have migrated as the result of AIDS within their families to the attention of policymakers and service providers (2007).

Children's roles in the dissemination of research findings can be seen as situated on a spectrum of participation. At one end, children are not at all involved in the dissemination of research findings, whereas at the other end, children lead the dissemination of research findings (Shaw, Brady, and Davey 2011). The latter is common in participatory studies where children are the leaders or co-leaders of the whole research endeavor. In between these two poles, children can be involved to varying degrees. For instance, they can provide feedback and comment on the draft of a dissemination plan and its materials, or they can be part of some of the dissemination activities.

In the case study below (Box 13: Case Study 8) dissemination involving child participants was conducted for two years after the data collection because the research team realized that conventional methods of dissemination (i.e. sending reports and giving presentations to targeted stakeholders) were not capable of communicating children's voices and issues to broader groups of stakeholders. The team therefore implemented an active dissemination approach that involved research participants and that employed a participatory technique to achieve the objective of promoting children's voices.

The technique was chosen because of its appropriateness for facilitating children's abilities to share their ideas and for its potential to avoid stigmatizing children when dealing with sensitive topics. The selected role play method prevented specific individuals from being identified based on their personal experiences, an approach that served as an integral part of maintaining children's confidentiality. Due to time constraints, a practical and ethical decision was made to videotape the role play rather than perform it live on stage. Even though the researchers did not make it explicit in their paper, providing adequate psychosocial support also appeared to be key in maintaining the safety of children and ensuring an ethical approach to conducting dissemination activities about sensitive topics such as HIV and AIDS.

Moreover, the research team decided not to have children present the findings in person in front of an audience because the team did not have enough time or the financial resources to properly prepare such an event. The researchers opted for a videotaped approach as an alternative to putting the children in an intimidating situation unprepared, which might have resulted in negative consequences for the children and that would likely have represented their voices inaccurately. The team settled on showing the videotaped dramas to the audience, because this still provided the opportunity to promote children's voices without putting undue stress on the children. This situation underlines the importance of early planning in which time and resources are well allocated for implementing a chosen method for engaging children in dissemination. Finally, although not explicitly discussed by the researchers, obtaining consent from children at the beginning of their involvement in dissemination activities is crucial and cannot be overlooked. The considerations involved in obtaining children's gatekeepers' consent for participation in research (laid out in Part 2) also pertain to dissemination activities.

As mentioned before, when children lead or co-lead a study, they are also involved in the dissemination stage of the research. In their role as researchers, children are active throughout the research processes from the design of the research to its dissemination (see Part 2 and previous sections in this Part). The case study below was taken from Barnardo's case study on child-led research described in the data analysis section (see Box 3: Case Study 1 in Part 2). In this section, we will examine the involvement of the peer research group (PRG) in disseminating the study's findings and we also discuss some of the valuable lessons learned.

In addition to designing research and analyzing data, the PRG was also involved in developing dissemination materials in the form of posters. After deciding on the most important findings to communicate to a broader audience, the PRG developed six posters about bullying (Tyler et al., 2006). The research team, which also consisted of adult researchers/facilitators, employed both passive and active dissemination methods. The posters were sent to relevant staff at Barnardo's (passive dissemination), but the PRG also presented their findings to students in a primary school, to Barnardo's senior staff, and at a conference. In the dissemination process, the PRG provided input on Barnardo's anti-bullying policies, which included highlighting existing guidelines that were in need of further review. This dissemination sparked a potential policy change for Barnardo's services across the UK (Tyler, Turner, and Mills 2006).

The PRG itself was a crucial part of the Barnardo's project. The research generated interest within Barnardo's by virtue of its having been led by children. Had it been conducted by adult researchers without the PRG's involvement, the level of interest from Barnardo's staff would likely have been lower. To ensure the continued impact of the research, an internal structure within Barnardo's was set up to be able to connect findings from PRG-led research with other projects within Barnardo's.

Involving children in dissemination can help promote children's voices and raise broader public awareness of particular issues affecting children. In some cases, children's involvement in dissemination may further a policy reform agenda. There are many essential aspects researchers need to consider before involving children in dissemination.

Box 13 Case study 8: Involving children affected by AIDS aged 10-17 years old as research participants in disseminating findings from research about children's migration resulting from the AIDS pandemic in Malawi and Lesotho, South Africa

(van Blerk and Ansell, 2007)

? What was the research about?

In 2001, van Blerk and Ansell researched the various situations faced by children in Malawi and Lesotho who had migrated there as a response to the AIDS pandemic. The children who participated in the study were 10 to 17 years old and were identified through a variety of ways: schools, orphanages, street involvement as well as having dropped out of school. At the sampling stage, children were only involved as research participants as they were not involved in other stages of the research.

? What led the researchers to involve children in the dissemination stage?

One of the objectives of the research was to “promote the voices of AIDS-affected young people” (pg.316). However, the passive dissemination efforts that the researchers had initially chosen made it unlikely that they would achieve this objective. They therefore decided to involve children more actively; in 2001 children participated in data collection efforts and developed dissemination ideas and materials. They received further funding in January 2003 for dissemination activities. The research team went back to the research sites two years after the data collection. The dissemination activities had three objectives. First, the researchers wanted to receive feedback on the analysis and findings from children. The second objective was to promote the voices of children and communities affected by AIDS by having them formulate solutions for communities and policymakers to help child migrants cope. Finally, the activity was designed to enable researchers to work alongside policymakers in formulating and implementing policies that would cater to the needs of child migrants affected by the pandemic.

? How were children involved, and how did the research benefit (or not) from their involvement?

The research team first developed three key messages about the research that were tailored to policymakers and practitioners. After that, the research team obtained feedback from children on the analysis and research findings, and subsequently incorporated this feedback to improve their dissemination plan. The research team then used participatory learning and action (PLA) techniques, such as dramas, to encourage children to develop their own solutions to recommend to policymakers and practitioners. Using drama was also a good technique to discuss sensitive issues and help children to avoid stigmatization. These dramas were recorded for further dissemination purposes.

Even though the researchers initially wanted to have children and communities present their ideas directly to policymakers, it was impractical and financially unfeasible. Not enough time had been allocated to train or prepare children for presenting at dissemination events. Had the researchers pushed the participants into such unfamiliar situations, the resulting scenario could have created negative experiences for the children, and this would have been unethical. Such an approach would have put these children “on display for dissemination.” The videotaped dramas, which had been prepared in safe and ethical circumstances, were a solution that avoided exposing child participants to intimidating situations while nonetheless providing policymakers and others with a picture of the magnitude of problems and difficulties faced by child migrants.

What were the difficulties faced by researchers in reaching out to the research participants?

It was difficult to find research participants two years after the data collection, especially considering the temporary nature of their presence in particular locations. Some participants had moved away to new areas, and it was difficult to track participants with high mobility in large urban areas.

Were there any critiques of the chosen dissemination approach?

First, because children were not present during the dissemination events, they were unable to actively engage in a dialogue with the broader audience. However, researchers felt that it would be even less acceptable to create a negative, and potentially harmful, experience for children who had not been adequately prepared for such public events. Moreover, this approach would probably also result in incorrectly representing children's voices rather than allowing them to voice their views openly. Second, this dissemination approach did not facilitate the translation of research findings into policies or implementable actions. Given the particular nature of their research, which was not a form of action research, researchers did not have control over policy actions. However, the research team suggested an active form of dissemination represented a step toward increasing awareness of the extent of a problem, which might ultimately lead to actions.

What were the risks for children, and what did we learn from this process?

This paper did not discuss issues concerning participants' confidentiality. However, the videotaped dramas did provide a way of preventing the exposure of a specific case or experience that could be tied to a certain individual. Overall, the research team minimized the risk of negative experiences, which children might experience during face-to-face interaction with policy makers, by playing videotaped dramas instead of having live performances.

Table 2.
Dos and Don'ts when involving children in the dissemination stage

✗ DON'Ts	✓ DOs
✗ Involve children in dissemination for the sake of involving children.	✓ Assess and reassess how involving children in the dissemination process would achieve the research objectives and/or how this process would add value to the knowledge generation process about children. ✓ Assess if children's involvement would jeopardise their safety, particularly in research related to drug use, sex work, and child abuse. If the harm outweighs the benefits, it would be better not to involve children in the dissemination process.
✗ Force children to participate in the dissemination activities.	✓ Provide adequate information and time for children to decide on their participation in the dissemination activities. ✓ Provide a space for children to discuss how they want to be involved in the dissemination activities. ✓ Explain how children's data will be utilised and how the research team will maintain confidentiality. ✓ Obtain consent to participate from children and, where relevant, their caregivers.
✗ Use a method that makes it difficult for children to share their views.	✓ Use participatory techniques that facilitate children's ability to develop their ideas and share their views. ✓ Use techniques that minimize the risk of stigmatisation, e.g. role play, particularly for sensitive topics such as child abuse, neglect, AIDS, andmany more. When audiences know that role plays are being acted, thepotential for stigmatisation for individual players is reduced.

✗ DON'Ts	✓ DOs
✗ Put children 'on stage' or 'on display', forcing them to be in unfamiliar and intimidating situations without adequately preparing them.	✓ Involve children who are comfortable with presenting. ✓ Provide adequate training for children to present in front of the target audience. Such training may require time and resources that should be budgeted for. ✓ If it is not possible to train children, choose a dissemination method that would still share children's views with their permission but without exposing them to unfamiliar, uncomfortable, awkward, or tokenistic situations.
✗ Expose children's identifiable personal information, putting their safety at risk.	✓ Develop and implement data confidentiality protocols in all dissemination materials including videos, posters, brochures, and flyers.
✗ Assume all children want to be involved in the same way (Shaw et al., 2011).	✓ Provide support for children who wish to be involved in particular ways. ✓ Provide children with options about the ways they can be involved in dissemination (Shaw, Brady, and Davey 2011; Wilkinson 2001). ✓ Identify target audiences. ✓ Identify opportunities for dissemination of research findings. ✓ Write articles for websites, press releases, or reports. ✓ Develop dissemination materials such as posters, brochures, and videos. ✓ Present at seminars, conferences, or other dissemination events.]Help children organize dissemination events.
✗ Involve children in dissemination without asking their feedback on the research findings.	✓ Obtain feedback from research participants to ensure more accurate representation of children's situations if data are interpreted solely by adult researchers.

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Resources for Ethical Use of Children's Image

Medecins Sans Frontier's guideline for photographer:
https://media.msf.org/Docs/MSF/Media/TRMisc/1/f/c/9/MSFMSC5608.pdf?d63652301670

Save The Children's research report on the perspective and experience of people involved in Save the Children's image making process (contains valuable recommendation):
https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/12425/pdf/the_people_in_the_pictures.pdf

UNICEF's guidelines on the use of children's image:
https://weshare.unicef.org/CS.aspx?VP3=CMS3&VF=UNIUN1_30&FRM=Frame:UNI_RespectRealSituation#/CMS3&VF=UNIUN1_30&FRM=Frame:UNI_Respect

Oxfam's guideline on ethical reporting (including taking and using children's image):
https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/620935/gd-oxfam-ethical-content-guidelines-%20240120-en.pdf?sequence = 1 & isAllowed = y

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