
Consultations with children on their priorities for the post-MDG framework

TOOLKIT

October 2012

Family for Every Child is a diverse, global network of hands-on national organisations with over 250 years' combined experience. We work with the millions of children in extended family care, in institutions, in detention, on the streets, as well as those without adequate care within their own families. We are a catalyst for global and local change. Our network provides a platform for sharing and amplifying the expertise of our members. We work with others who share our vision to enable significantly more children to grow up in secure families and access temporary, quality alternative care when needed.

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Introduction

This document outlines a workshop-based approach to consulting children on their priorities for a post-MDG framework. It provides a series of activities designed to be fun and engaging for boys and girls of different ages and in different contexts.

Two workshop frameworks are provided: one for children 8-12 years and another for those 13-17 years. There is significant overlap in the activities for both groups, in part because these can be adapted according to the age and ability of participating children and in part to simplify the process for facilitators at the country level.

The workshops are designed to be held with 6-8 children. It is recognised that in some instances, individual children selected for involvement may not be able to participate in group consultations. Where appropriate, the tools described below can be adapted to one-on-one or smaller group settings.

These tools were field tested in Guyana in July 2012 and in India in September 2012 and have been adapted and revised accordingly. They are now ready to be used in other country contexts. Planned consultations are scheduled to take place between October 2012 and April 2013.

General Issues related to the consultations

Selection for children's workshops: These workshops aim to gain the perspective of boys and girls whose experiences and perspectives are the least visible and the least often heard. We will focus on children outside of parental care across a number of different categories.

In each of the countries in which the workshops will take place, agreement has been reached on which categories of children we will speak with. It is important that these agreements are adhered to so that we can ensure a spread of children with different experiences of living outside of parental care in our global work.

It is important that separate workshops are held for boys and girls, for older and younger children, and for children of different categories of living outside of parental care. This differentiation will help us to better understand the differences in the experiences and views of these different groups.

Special care should be taken to identify participants through existing relationships and networks so that participating boys and girls are able to participate in feedback sessions as well as future discussions and advocacy efforts, where appropriate.

Data collection for children's workshops: Each workshop will be conducted by two people: 1 facilitator and 1 recorder (who, part of the time, will also act as a helper to pass things to children, paste things on wall, etc). In those instances where training needs are identified, both facilitators and note-takers will receive training both on how to conduct consultations with children in a participatory manner and how to use the tools designed for these workshops specifically. The role of the facilitator and recorder are of equal importance and this toolkit contains guidance for both.

Ethics: Special attention will be paid to research ethics and to ways of supporting children in sensitive, appropriate and responsible ways, including in instances where current or previous abuse is disclosed. Consultations will be conducted in a professional manner and will adhere to the Family for Every Child Standards for Consultation and Research with Children (see Annex 6). Children's explanations will be sought in all activities. The meanings that facilitators attribute to children's drawings or comments should not be assumed to be the same as those of the children.

A checklist to assist in planning for the consultations is included in Annex 1. Please read through it carefully when organising the logistics and practical aspects of the workshops, being sure to add any additional items that need to be considered in the particular context in which you are working.

Workshop outline for children 8-12 years old

Number of participants:	6-8	
Duration of workshop:	Approximately 2 hours (this will depend on the age of participants, the depth of discussion, etc.)	
Make-up of group:	Where possible and appropriate, groups should be segregated by sex. They should also be split by category of children outside of parental care (see Annex 3 for list of categories).	
Personnel required:	1 facilitator, 1 recorder	
Materials required:	Notepad + pen (for recorder) Flipchart paper Pens/pencils Masking tape	Workshop coversheets Markers Plain paper Ball for tossing

Please note that guidance for recorders is included in Annex 5. It is extremely important that this guidance is followed and that detailed and clear notes are taken during each focus group.

Time	Activity
10 minutes	<p>Introductions of facilitator, recorder, and the MDGs in general</p> <p>Step 1: Introduce the research team, and any other adults present and explain their roles.</p> <p>Step 2: Explain to the children why the consultations are taking place and what the information gathered from them will be used for. This will involve first presenting to children a visual representation of the different levels of decision making at the municipal, national and global levels. (This activity is important as some children may have only a very vague view of how ‘policy’ decisions are made and we are keen to shift discussion away from thinking only about their own families and friends to broader issues).</p> <p>Step 3: Weave this discussion into a brief explanation of what the MDGs are, why they were developed, areas in which success has been achieved and areas that require more work and more input from children and young people, families and communities. This is also the time to introduce the idea of the post MDG framework. (Suggested points for inclusion in this discussion are provided in Annex 2).</p>
5 minutes	<p>Gaining consent and filling in cover sheets</p> <p>Step 1: Use the script provided in Annex 2 to provide further information to children about the consultation process and about the use of the findings. Given the nature of this research and the questions being asked, it will be especially important not to raise expectations about direct benefits from the research for them or the communities in which they live.</p> <p>Step 2: Seek consent to participate from each child and record this consent on the coversheet provided in Annex 4. Additional details required for the coversheet should be completed at some point during the workshop session.</p>

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5 minutes	<p>Introductory exercise with children:</p> <p>Sit in a big circle on the floor. Ask each child to share their name and their age. Ask them to tell the group something about themselves, for example, their favourite food, something that makes them laugh, something that they are good at, etc. (This exercise can be made more active by tossing a ball, asking those who catch it to answer a question before tossing to another child).</p>
5 minutes	<p>Active game: to be determined by country-level team conducting the consultation or by children themselves</p>
40 minutes	<p>Tool 1: What makes a child feel happy/safe and what makes them feel sad/unsafe?</p> <p>This tool uses a spider diagram - a collective activity that is designed to gain children's perspectives and experiences in a non-threatening and enjoyable way. Using a piece of flipchart paper on the ground, the facilitator makes a large drawing of a spider, while the children crowd around. The purpose of the activity is to reveal the things that make children feel happy and safe and those that make them feel sad and unsafe. We have chosen the words 'happy' and 'safe' as a way to begin discussions with boys and girls using terms and concepts that they understand. The information we learn from them will help us to better understand what they see to be the factors contributing to child protection and well-being in their community and elsewhere.</p> <p>Step 1: Ask the children to sit in a circle. Once they are seated, ask them if there are spiders in their community. If so, what do they look like? Are they big? Hairy? Do they bite? Are they pretty? Ugly? Harmless? Scary? Ask the children to demonstrate the way a spider moves, how it looks, etc. The goal is to make them feel as relaxed as possible.</p> <p>Step 2: When it seems right, place a large piece of flipchart paper on the ground and ask children to crowd around the paper. As you draw a big spider on the paper, tell them that there is one more big spider in their community, and that it is on the paper in front of them.</p> <p>Step 3: Divide the body of the spider in half lengthwise, and write "happy and safe" on one side and "sad and unsafe" on the other (drawings of a happy/sad face could also be used). Then add a number of legs on either side of the body (this spider will have more than 8 legs!).</p> <p>Step 4: Start on the side where you have written "happy and safe". Ask the children first to tell you what makes a child happy? Write each answer down on a separate leg of the spider on that side of the drawing (alternatively you can ask a child to write or draw the responses). Follow up by asking them 'what makes a child safe'? Write each of their answers down on a separate leg, still on the same side of the drawing as the "happy" responses, continuing to add as many additional legs as required.</p> <p>Step 5: When they have told you all they can about those things that make them feel happy and safe, try to get a sense from the children how commonly shared these views are: for those things that are generally agreed upon, put a star at the end of the spider leg on which the item is written. For those items about which there is less consensus, leave the space at the end of the spider leg blank.</p> <p>Step 6: Once all issues have been clarified and discussed, move on to ask the children</p>

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40 minutes	<p>about those things that make a child feel sad and unsafe, and record their answers on the legs on the other side of the spider. Again, it may be necessary to ask this question in two parts – “what makes you feel sad?” and, after they have given all of their responses, “what makes you feel unsafe?”. Probe throughout to find out if any of these things apply only or especially to specific groups of children (girls or boys; younger or older; able-bodied or disabled; those living in particular family or household circumstances, etc).</p> <p>Step 7: Ask the children if they think their list would look the same as those compiled by other children in their community, their city, country, the world, etc? Ask the girls-only groups if they think their list is different from the boys’, and if so, how and why? Ask the boys the same questions about the girls’ list. The key point here is to learn from boys and girls in the workshop not only what problems they and others face, but why children face these problems and why certain children may be more vulnerable than others to the problems they have identified.</p>
15 minutes	Break with refreshments
5 minutes	Active game: to be determined by country-level team conducting the consultation or by children themselves
40 minutes	<p>Tool 2: What needs to change?</p> <p>This tool uses drawing and then a gallery walk. Its purpose is to gain information from children on the things that they would like to change about their lives and the lives of other children in their community and elsewhere.</p> <p>Step 1: Sit in a circle on the floor. Remind the children of the earlier discussion about the things that make them feel happy/safe and the things that make them feel sad/unsafe. Explain again that the purpose of the consultation is to find out from them the things that they think should be done to improve the lives of children in their community/situation so that children are more happy and safe.</p> <p>Step 2: Give each child a pile of index-sized cards and a pen. Ask everyone to spend a few minutes quietly thinking about what these things might be and then ask them to either draw or write their ideas on the cards (one per card). This exercise can be done individually, or in pairs if children want to work together. Each individual or pair can use as few or as many cards as they would like.</p> <p>Step 3: When each person/pair has finished drawing or writing down their ideas, ask them to stick their cards on the wall. Encourage everyone to walk around and to look at/read the cards. Step 4: Using the gallery of ideas as the focus, gather the children around and read each card aloud and ask for explanation or clarification as required. Place a big piece of paper on the wall. With each card, ask ‘is this a big priority, a medium priority or a small priority?’, being sure at all times to ask why.</p> <p>Step 5: As each card is discussed, stick those determined ‘big priorities’ in the centre of the paper, the ‘small priorities’ towards the edge of the paper and the ‘medium priorities’ between the two. Be sure to note those ideas about which there is general consensus and those that evoke greater discussion and debate.</p> <p>Step 6: Sit again in a circle and ask the children if there is anything else that they would like to add or comment upon. Tell them that the ideas that they have generated will be shared</p>

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	with many different people, including other children, in an effort to let as many people as possible know about their views and experiences.
5 minutes	<p>Closing Exercise</p> <p>Step 1: Thank the children for participating in the workshop and for sharing their ideas and experience.</p> <p>Step 2: Ask them if there is anything else that they would like to discuss or tell the facilitators about.</p> <p>Step 3: Reiterate the importance of hearing the children's views and relate this back to the development of the post-MDG framework.</p> <p>Step 4: Ask for a volunteer to lead the group in a fun song or dance.</p>
Total: 2 hours (approx.)	

Workshop outline for boys and girls 13-17 years old

Number of participants:	6-8	
Duration of workshop:	2-2.5 hours	
Make-up of group:	sex-segregated, and also split by category	
Personnel required:	1 facilitator, 1 recorder	
Materials required:	Notepad + pen (for recorder)	Workshop coversheet
	Flipchart paper (preferably in a large roll)	
	Markers	Pens/pencils
	Coloured pencils	Masking tape
	Index-sized cards (at least 10 per participant)	
	Scissors	Ball for tossing

Please note that guidance for recorders is included in Annex 5. It is extremely important that this guidance is followed and that detailed and clear notes are take of each focus group.

Time	Activity
10 minutes	<p>Introductions of facilitator, recorder, and the MDGs in general</p> <p>Step 1: Introduce the research team, and any other adults present and explain their roles.</p> <p>Step 2: Explain to the children why the consultations are taking place and what the information gathered from them will be used for. This will involve first presenting to children a visual representation of the different levels of decision making at the municipal, national and global levels. (This activity is important as some children may have only a very vague view of how ‘policy’ decisions are made and we are keen to shift discussion away from just thinking about their own families and friends to broader issues).</p> <p>Step 3: Weave this discussion into a brief explanation of what the MDGs are, why they were developed, areas in which success has been achieved and areas that require more work and more input from children and young people, families and communities. This is also the time to introduce the idea of the post MDG framework. (Suggested points for inclusion in this discussion are provided in Annex 2).</p>
5 minutes	<p>Gaining consent and filling in cover sheets</p> <p>Step 1: Use the script provided in Annex 2 to provide further information to children about the consultation process and about the use of the findings. Given the nature of this research and the questions being asked, it will be especially important not to raise expectations about direct benefits from the research for them or the communities in which they live.</p> <p>Step 2: Seek consent to participate from each child and record this consent on the coversheet provided in Annex 4. Additional details required for the coversheet should be completed at some point during the workshop session.</p>

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10 minutes	Introductory exercise with participants: Ask children to pair up and discuss the following: name, age, favourite thing to do in their spare time, and something that makes them laugh. Participants come back into the large group and introduce one another. (Try to have individuals pair up who do not know each other very well. This exercise can also be made more active by tossing a ball, asking those who catch it to answer a question before tossing to another child).
10 minutes	Active game, activity or song: to be determined by country-level team conducting the consultation or by participants themselves.
45 minutes	<p>Tool 1: Things that I like and dislike about my life (and safe/unsafe)</p> <p>This tool involves creating a group drawing and then using it to spark a discussion. Its purpose is to reveal the things that girls and boys like and dislike about their lives, and the things that make them feel safe and unsafe. This information will help us to better understand what boys and girls see to be the factors contributing to child protection and well-being in their community and elsewhere.</p> <p>Step 1: Ask children to sit in a circle. In the middle of the circle, place two very big sheets of paper, some coloured pencils, markers, pens, scissors and tape.</p> <p>Step 2: Explain that the papers are to be used to create two big posters: one of all the things that they like about their lives and the things that make them feel safe, and another of all of the things they dislike about their lives, and the things that make them feel unsafe. Encourage everyone to feel free to express themselves in any way they like – by writing words, drawing pictures, creating images and sticking them on the paper, etc. If the group is slow to start, ask participants to begin by verbally sharing some of their likes with the group, and write these down in various areas on the ‘likes’ poster.</p> <p>Step 3: Once all participants are working together comfortably – you can encourage people to work in pairs or small groups if desired, and to move between the ‘likes/safe’ and ‘dislikes/unsafe’ posters as much or as little as they please – let the process unfold on its own for several minutes. You may need to break the question down for them so that first they draw the things that make them happy, then they move on to adding those things that make them safe (and a similar process could be used for unhappy/unsafe).</p> <p>Step 4: When participants have stopped adding to the posters, sit with the group and discuss first the ‘likes/safe’ poster by going through each item, being sure to seek clarification and explanation where appropriate. Try also to establish the extent to which the individual things identified in the poster are shared amongst the group as a whole.</p> <p>Step 5: Run through the same process for the ‘dislikes/unsafe’ poster. Be sure throughout to invite participants to offer additional ideas, and add these to the posters (or ask a participant to do so). Try at all times to explore with participants why the things they have identified are important, and the reasons that lie behind their likes and dislikes (ie ‘I like the place where I live’: Why? What is it about where you live that you like? Probe who they live with, where they live, how long they have lived there, etc). Be sure also to encourage children to consider how decisions at different levels contribute to safety/happiness/unsafety/unhappiness etc.).</p> <p>Step 6: At the end of the exercise, ask the children if they think their poster would look the</p>

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	<p>same as those compiled by other children in their community, their city, country, the world, etc? Ask the girls-only groups if they think their list is different from the boys', and if so, how and why? Ask the boys the same questions about the issues they think girls might identify.</p> <p>The key point here is to learn from boys and girls in the workshop not only what problems they and others face, but why children face these problems and why certain children may be more vulnerable than others to the problems they have identified.</p>
15 minutes	Break with refreshments
5 minutes	Active Game: to be determined by country-level team conducting the consultation or by participants themselves
45 minutes	<p>Tool 2: What needs to change?</p> <p>This tool uses drawing and then a gallery walk. Its purpose is to gain information from children on the things that they would like to change about their lives and the lives of other children in their community and elsewhere.</p> <p>Step 1: Sit in a circle on the floor. Remind the children of the earlier discussion about the things that make them feel happy/safe and the things that make them feel sad/unsafe. Explain again that the purpose of the consultation is to find out from them the things that they think should be done to improve the lives of children in their community/situation. You can frame this in terms of the things that would make them feel "happier" and the things that would make them feel "more safe".</p> <p>Step 2: Give each child a pile of index-sized cards and a pen. Ask everyone to spend a few minutes quietly thinking about what these things might be and then ask them to either draw or write their ideas on the cards (one per card). This exercise can be done individually, or in pairs if children want to work together. Each individual or pair can use as few or as many cards as they would like.</p> <p>Step 3: When each person/pair has finished drawing or writing down their ideas, ask them to stick their cards on the wall. Encourage everyone to walk around and to look at/read the cards.</p> <p>Step 4: Using the gallery of ideas as the focus, gather the children around and read each card aloud and ask for explanation or clarification as required. Place a big piece of paper on the wall. With each card, ask 'is this a big priority, a medium priority or a small priority?', being sure at all times to ask why.</p> <p>Step 5: As each card is discussed, stick those determined 'big priorities' in the centre of the paper, the 'small priorities' towards the edge of the paper and the 'medium priorities' between the two. Be sure to note those ideas about which there is general consensus and those that evoke greater discussion and debate.</p> <p>Step 6: Sit again in a circle and ask the children if there is anything else that they would like to add or comment upon. Tell them that the ideas that they have generated will be shared with many different people, including other children, in an effort to let as many people as possible know about their views and experiences.</p>

10 minutes	<p data-bbox="327 436 534 459">Closing Exercise</p> <p data-bbox="327 492 1420 560">Step 1: Thank participants for participating in the workshop and for sharing their ideas and experience.</p> <p data-bbox="327 593 1420 683">Step 2: Ask them if there is anything else that they would like to discuss or tell the facilitators about. Do they have any final thoughts on key messages that they would like to share with policy makers and those who provide them with services and assistance?</p> <p data-bbox="327 716 1420 784">Step 3: Explain that their individual concerns and ideas may at times feel unrecognised and undervalued, but that there is power in putting our voices together.</p> <p data-bbox="327 817 1420 1030">Step 4: To demonstrate the power of working together for change, lead the group in creating a rainstorm. To do so, ask everyone to stand in a circle. Inform the group that they should watch the facilitator and do what s/he does. Begin by 1. rubbing two fingers together in a circular motion, then, after a short while, 2. rub hands in a circular motion; 3. clap one finger alternately on each leg; 4. clap one hand alternately on each leg; 5. clap hands together, harder and harder. Then reverse it step by step. The whole thing should sound like a big, powerful rainstorm.</p>
Total: 2.5 hours (approx.)	

Annex 1: Checklist for planning consultations

The following are some of the key issues that should be kept in mind when planning for these consultations with children. This list is not exhaustive. Please add other items as appropriate. Please also see the issues raised in Annex 6.

	Yes/No
Is the workshop scheduled to happen at a time and place that is convenient for children (and guardians if necessary)?	
Have you explained the purpose of the workshop to children and their guardians beforehand, and gained consent?	
Have you selected a space in which children will feel free and open to express themselves? (eg Is it private, with minimal distractions and potential interruptions? Is there ample space to move around? Is it conveniently located, and easy for children to get to?)	
Have you planned the timing of the workshop so that it does not exceed the children's attention span and interest? (here it is important to ensure that children don't have to wait around for too long before the workshops start)	
Do you have all of the materials you need, including pen and paper for the recorder?	
Have you read through the materials carefully, and become fully familiar with the tools and questions so that you don't have to keep referring to the guidance? (if possible, do a practice focus group with your colleagues acting as children)	
Have you thought through how you might re-phrase questions or terms if the children do not understand or if they need more prompting? (e.g. if they need assistance with understanding the concept of 'changes' or 'improvements')	
Have you thought through what you will do if a child or children become upset or distressed in the workshop or afterwards? Do you have clear referral mechanisms in place if situations of abuse are revealed?	
Have you made a list of extra games and ice-breakers that you can use if the children need a break or to feel more comfortable?	
Have you bought or planned for refreshments for participating children?	

Annex 2: Primer on the Millennium Development Goals

The MDGs were developed in 2000 after many years and numerous international agreements aimed at tackling extreme poverty on a global level. Together, they endorse a multi-dimensional view of development and recognise the cross-cutting nature of many development problems (for example: lack of access to clean water may mean that children – usually girls – need to spend up to several hours a day carrying water and are therefore unable to attend school). There are 8 goals in total.

Ultimately, the MDGs also help to concentrate the international community's efforts on issues that matter most to the world's poorest children – issues like whether they eat nutritious food or whether they go to bed at night hungry; whether they can go to school in safe and stimulating environments; and whether they can access information to help protect themselves against disease and ill-health.

The MDGs include:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development

Success has been achieved in some of these areas, but much more needs to be done. In particular, the care and protection needs of children need to be prioritised. Despite representing more than half of the population in many countries, children do not receive an equitable share of the benefits of poverty alleviation strategies. In interventions where children are prioritized in order to reach targets on child survival, nutrition and education, there is also a lack of recognition of inequality between children, with the most vulnerable groups continuing to miss out.

Amongst these most vulnerable groups are those boys and girls who live without parental care. Until the needs and rights of such children are acknowledged and addressed, equitable progress towards the MDGs will not be achieved. Among these are the central importance of family-based care for child wellbeing and children's rights to be free from violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect.

Child-friendly MDGs

In 2000 governments around the world all agreed that there were certain changes that needed to happen to make the world a better place for children and adults. They agreed that they everyone should work together so that by 2015:

- 1. Everyone should have enough food to eat and enough money to live a decent life.**
- 2. All children should be able go to school no matter where they live or how much money they have.**
- 3. Treat girls and boys and men and women equally and fairly.**
- 4. Make sure that all children can get good quality health care and medicine if they need it.**
- 5. Make sure that pregnant women can get good quality health care and medicine if they need it.**
- 6. Take better care of people with AIDS, malaria and other diseases.**
- 7. Take better care of the planet.**
- 8. Countries and citizens should work together to achieve these goals.**

Since 2000, much work has been done to try and achieve these changes. Now that we are nearly at 2015, some of these changes have happened and others have not. For example, there are many more children in school around the world than there were 10 years ago, but still lots of children don't have enough food to eat. Governments are now deciding what to do next. Should we stick with these goals or have new ones? Are there important changes that need to happen to make life better for children that are missing from these goals? Many people feel that to work out what to do next it is really important to ask children and adults around the world their views.

Annex 3: Points to include when seeking informed consent from children

- Introduce yourself and any other researchers present.
- Explain what will happen today, and the roles of the different researchers present.
- Explain what the research is about and why you are doing it. Remember to use words that the participant(s) can easily understand, and explain any terms such as 'MDGs'.
- Make sure that they understand that the results will be anonymous. You will share the results with other people, but alternative names will be used to protect their identities.
- Be honest, and clear that there will not be any direct benefits to them or their families as a result of taking part in this research. It might help other children, but it will not help them directly.
- Explain why they have been selected to take part.
- Ask them if they have any questions about the research.
- Ask them if they want to take part, and make sure they know that they have a choice. If they say that they do not want to take part respect their decision.
- Ask them if they are happy for you to take notes.
- Ask them permission for you to take the products of the workshop with you at the end – the drawings, etc – as these will be used when writing up and presenting the research findings.
- Play an ice-breaking game or chat with the participants to make them feel relaxed.
- Fill out any necessary coversheets (see below and Annex 3 for more details).

Annex 4: Sample Workshop Coversheet

Country:

Date:

Start time:

End time:

Facilitators name:

Note-takers name:

Workshop number:

Workshop participants included (please tick relevant category/categories):

Children in extended family care	
Children in residential care	
Children in formal foster care (not living with relatives)	
Children living on the streets	
Children working on the streets (but not living on the streets)	
Children currently living with employers	
Children who have previously been living with employers	
Children who are currently in detention	
Children who have previously been in detention	
Children with disabilities who are separated from parents	
Children who have been separated from parents as a consequence of emergencies	
Other (please specify)	

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	Name	Age	Gender	Category of the child (choose from the list above, include more than one category if necessary)	Has this child given consent?
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					

Any information about the research process:

Annex 5: Guidance for recorders

The importance of systematic and comprehensive note taking

In all research, the researcher taking notes plays as important a role as the researcher asking questions. If you fail to take proper notes, you will forget the information that has been gathered, and all of the hard work of the research team will have been wasted. Note taking is hard work as note takers are expected to write down as much of possible of what is being said by both the researcher and the participants. This can mean up to an hour of constant writing and some sore hands as a result! It is always a good idea for research teams to work in teams of at least two, with one researcher asking questions and the other focusing exclusively on the note taking. Some top tips for note-taking are included in the box below.

Top tips for note-taking

- Write down as much information as possible
- Try to write down exactly what is being said, or as close to this as possible.
- Describe the research process as well as well as the research findings. Explain what the researchers are doing/ saying as well as what the participants are doing/ saying. Record any problems faced on the cover sheets for the notes.
- Don't let the recording slow down the research process. For example, don't pause the research so that you can catch up with your note-taking or ask children to speak more slowly.
- Try to make sure that the note-taker is as inconspicuous as possible so that the participant is focusing on the person who is asking questions, rather than the person taking notes. In group discussions, for example, this might involve the note-taking sitting outside of the circle of participants.
- Try to take some 'interesting' direct quotes which record exactly, word for word, what has been said. These are for use in the final report.
- Remember to take copies of any diagrams or pictures that are produced and to write down descriptions of any plays performed.
- If you're finding note-taking tiring and are struggling to keep up during group discussions, try working in teams of three, with one person facilitating the discussion, and the other two taking in turns to act as note-taker.

Rules for note-taking

1. Make it clear who has said what by writing their name alongside their statement (or allocate a number to each participant and write down this number instead). E.g.

Shayla: *What a lovely day*
2: *'Yes, the sun is shining and the sky is blue'*
Saya and Munir: *It will rain later*

2. When you are writing a direct quote, use speech marks:

Saya: *"Do children in this area beg?"*
Munir: *"Many, many children here beg, I would say that most of the boys are out begging now."*

If you are not able to write down exactly what people have said, summarise, but do not use speech marks e.g.:

All: *I wouldn't want my children to beg* or
Rezu and Lilly: *I think its OK for children to beg as long as they are not too big or*
Two or three people: *We don't have a choice, our children have to beg*

Use to indicate any gaps in your note taking.

3. When you are writing down something that you have seen, or something that you think, write it in brackets e.g.:

(Azad left the room for a cigarette, everyone seemed to be much more relaxed after he had gone)

4. At the end of the notes, make sure that you add any information on the research process that you think is important. E.g.

(We couldn't find anywhere quiet to sit and everyone kept coming up and disturbing us)

5. As soon as you have finished taking your notes, read through them to check that they are clear to you and to add any missing information. As soon as possible after you have written your notes, you must write them up neatly. If you leave this too long, you will find it hard to understand what you have written.

After you have written your notes, share them with other members of the research team to check that you haven't missed anything important. Go through the tools used to jog your memory. If there is any additional information that you have that can help answer these questions add this to the end of your notes even if you are not sure exactly who provided you with this information.

Always photocopy completed notes and keep the copies in separate places. Keep notes well organised and labeled, including the date, time and location of the workshop, as well as the number of participants, their ages, and the names of the facilitator(s) and recorder(s).

Annex 6: Family for Every Child: Standards for consultations and research with children

Deciding whether to do consultations/ research

- We will only consult on topics that are of relevance to children's lives. Children's views and priorities will be taken into consideration in deciding which issues we explore (and in determining our policy, research and advocacy agendas).
- We will not carry out consultations if we cannot do them properly (e.g. if we can only consult a token number of children, if we cannot ensure that the findings will be used, if we can't properly prepare adult facilitators)
- We will not carry out consultations with children if we are not able to offer them on-going support following revelations of abuse, neglect or exploitation. We will generally try and consult or carry out research with children with whom we have an on-going relationship.

Designing methods and preparing facilitators

- Where possible, we will involve children in the early stages of research and consultations, to help refine research goals and questions.
- We will ensure that the methods used reflect the evolving capacities of children. Where necessary, we will adapt methods so that children of different capacities can fully take part.
- We will use culturally relevant methods and modes of communication that enable children to use their own concepts and words to convey their ideas, insights and experiences.
- We will field test and gain feedback from children and other relevant actors about the methods we have chosen.
- We will ensure that facilitators have sufficient skills to carry out consultations with children, including the ability to communicate effectively with children and listen properly to their views. We will also make sure that facilitators understand the importance of these standards and are fully trained in child protection during research and consultations.
- We will, where possible, conduct police checks on researchers to see if previous allegations of abuse have been made against them.
- We will endeavor to use methods that ensure that children taking part in consultations and research learn from the experience.

Selecting children to take part and ensuring that all children who take part have a say

- We will select children whose views are of relevance to the subject being explored.
- We will work to include all groups of children whose views are of relevance to topic of consultations and research and will not exclude children on the grounds of age, disability or language, ethnicity, gender or religion.
- We will seek to involve those children whose views are least often solicited and examined.
- We will be sensitive to gender and intergenerational differences and power relations between children and adults as they appear in specific research contexts.
- We will not engage in token research or consultations, whereby we use the views of only a few children to represent children in general.
- We will train researchers to ensure that all children who take part in consultations have a say, and select methods which encourage the participation of all groups.

- We will generally try and work with children with whom we have an on-going relationship so that we are able to offer them support should they reveal situations of abuse, neglect or exploitation during consultations or research.

Before the consultations/ research

- We will work with local researchers, children and other stakeholders to develop an ethical protocol. This will identify strategies to minimise specific risks and costs identified by research teams/ children/ other stakeholders, and will provide detailed, locally appropriate, guidance on the issues outlined below.

Doing the consultations

We will seek informed consent from children and other stakeholders. We will:

- Develop child friendly information on the purpose of the research/ consultation, the methods that will be used, the time commitments involved, and the anonymity of findings. We will use this to produce a script that we will read to children and other stakeholders (which can include visual aids) and either ask them to sign to give their consent, or we will tick a box to indicate that we have asked for verbal consent from each stakeholder (depending on the literacy of participants). This should include detailed information on what the findings will be used for. This should also include information about the research team and their roles and responsibilities.
- Where possible and appropriate, we will seek consent from children, and from their families (if they are living with families) or, where possible and appropriate, other relevant adults, such as community leaders or employers.
- Ensure that children understand that they can withdraw without punishment or retribution from the research/ consultation at any time and respect their views if they chose to do so.
- Avoid raising expectations about the direct benefits of the research/ consultations. Be honest and clear about how the outcomes of the research will affect those who are taking part.

We will conduct the research/ consultations at a time and in a place that is safe and convenient for participants. We will:

- Ensure that research/ consultations never interfere with children's schooling or rest, or, where relevant with their work (as this can cause problems with employers or parents and impact on children's earnings)
- Avoid keeping children or adults waiting and recognise that their time, like ours, is valuable
- Have discussions in environments which encourage free speech. Where possible children will choose the location.

We will carefully consider the anonymity and confidentiality of findings. We will:

- Decide whether there is a research or child protection imperative for ensuring that findings will remain anonymous, and, if we make this commitment, work carefully to change identifying details.
- Be clear that commitments to anonymity do not contradict our commitment to respond to cases of abuse and act in the best interest of the child.
- Work to understand the full ramifications of revealing information that is not anonymous to a wider audience through discussions with local teams and children themselves. We will only do

this if children's best interest are not threatened.

- Only share research notes and transcripts within research teams, unless all identifying details have been changed.
- Carefully store information that has been gathered to ensure that confidentiality has been maintained.
- Communicate information about the confidentiality and anonymity of the findings with participants to help enable them to make informed decisions about their involvement in research/ consultations.

We will work to minimise the risk of abuse by adults conducting research or consultations.

We will:

- Where possible, check the police records of research teams for previous allegations of child abuse.
- Work in pairs to minimise the risk of child abuse and to protect researchers against false allegations of child abuse.
- Ensure research teams understand the dynamics of child abuse, neglect or exploitation.
- Ensure that research teams know and use reporting procedures for reporting suspicions of abuse, and that children who take part in research are also aware of where they can go to report abuse and discuss any concerns about the research/ consultation process..
- Communicate and follow the child protection policies of organisations who are helping to conduct the research.

We will support children who become upset as a result of the issues being discussed, or who reveal allegations of abuse or neglect. We will:

- Have strategies in place to respond to children who become upset when recalling their experiences e.g. changing the subject, stopping the discussion, having a break, etc.
- Have referral mechanisms in place to help children who reveal cases of abuse, neglect or exploitation during research and ensure research teams are well rehearsed in using these mechanisms.

We will provide adequate refreshment and necessary transport for all research participants. We will:

- Ensure that children who have to move long distances to take part in research or consultations have safe means of transport.
- Provide refreshments for children if necessary.

Accountability, analysis and using the information gathered

- Where possible/ appropriate, we will make every effort to feed key findings back to children to ensure that they understand the outcomes of the research, and to give them an opportunity to comment on our analysis and on the research/ consultation process more generally.
- We will make sure that the information gathered is used and do our very best to ensure that it leads to improvements in children's lives.
- Where possible/ appropriate we will involve children themselves in advocating for change.

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