

## **Forced Child Begging**

Tools for an introductory

# **training course**

on qualitative research methods

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Anti-Slavery International 2009



# Acknowledgements

This training manual follows eight months of work with partner non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in four countries:

- Albania and Greece: Terre des hommes-Albania (Tdh-Albania) and their partner agencies Association for the Social Support of Youth (ARSIS) and Children of the World and of Albania (FBSH).<sup>1</sup>
- Delhi, India: The HAQ: Centre for Child Rights, and their partner agency Childhood Enhancement through Training and Action (CHETNA).
- Senegal: Tostan.

Many staff from these organisations worked extremely hard to collect the data included in this report. Particular thanks are due to those who managed the data collection: Mindy Michels in Albania/Greece, Vipin Bhatt and Sanjay Gupta in India, and Khady Diarra and Arona Bathily in Senegal. These individuals, along with Enkelejda Tabaku and Birahim Diakhaté also contributed greatly during a meeting in London to discuss the findings. Thanks also go to Amy Farris and Malick Diagne who provided invaluable support to the team in Senegal, and to Emily Bild who helped greatly in India.

The help and support offered by the team at Anti-Slavery International in London is much appreciated. In particular: Catherine Turner, who initiated the project and continued to contribute throughout despite being on maternity leave; Meghan MacBain who managed the latter stages of the project, and Chris Cutter who put in many hours on a voluntary basis. Lorna Dubois, an intern at Anti-Slavery, did an excellent job researching background information on global studies and legal frameworks.

Special thanks must go to the many children and adults from Albania, Greece, India and Senegal who gave up their valuable time to talk to us about child begging.

Finally, these tools for an introductory training course on qualitative research methods could not have been produced without generous financial assistance from: The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Human Rights Division; The Norwegian Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs; The Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency, Department for Democracy and Social Development; The Rufford Maurice Laing Foundation; Trade plus Aid® Charitable Trust; The Rowan Charitable Trust; Fondation Terre des hommes; and The Lions Club of Sudbury.

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Anti-Slavery International 2009  
ISBN: 978-0-900918-74-2

<sup>1</sup> The NGO Amaro Drom did not take part in conducting the research in Albania as originally hoped because their representatives were unable to attend training sessions on the research methodology and techniques. However, they were consulted on the documents that resulted.

# Forced Child Begging

## Tools for an introductory training course on qualitative research methods

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# Introduction

This document contains tools developed for training research teams who took part in a pilot research project on forced child begging, initiated by Anti-Slavery International. The pilot involved qualitative research with children and adults in Albania/Greece, India and Senegal (see the box below for further details). The research teams who were involved in this project all had limited or no previous research experience. The training aimed to provide them with the basic skills needed to carry out qualitative research, with a particular emphasis on research with children. The tools outlined in this document have been developed by the author over the past decade and have been used with research teams investigating a range of topics in many different countries. They can therefore be adapted for use with research teams working on subjects other than forced child begging.

The research teams involved in the pilot were initially trained using the tools presented in this document over a three day period. Importantly, this training was immediately followed up with field testing the research methods used in the pilot. This gave the researchers an opportunity to practise their new skills, and trainers a chance to provide feedback to the researchers. The trainers also continued to provide feedback well into the pilot by commenting on the notes that the researchers took during interviews and group discussions. Such reiteration of the key messages and skills presented during the initial three day training course was found to be crucial.

The tools included in this document are designed for use with fairly small groups of around 10-15 participants, but many of them could be adapted for use with bigger groups. The training should be conducted by a trainer with experience of qualitative research, and preferably, some prior knowledge of training.

## Details of the Anti-Slavery International pilot project on forced child begging

In 2007, Anti-Slavery International conducted a pilot research project on forced child begging. The project defined forced child begging as: children who are made to beg by threats or use of violence or other forms of physical or psychological coercion. The pilot was developed following anecdotal reports of children being forced to beg in a number of different countries, and was thought to be necessary for two main reasons. Firstly, to find out if significant numbers of children are being forced by others to beg in order to determine whether further international work is required in this area. Secondly, to develop research techniques to examine the nature and causes of this challenging subject.

The pilot project was initially developed in three countries: Albania, India, and Senegal. Additional research was also carried out with Albanian children who had travelled to Greece to beg. The countries were chosen as they offer contrasting perspectives on the issue. In Albania and Greece, children come primarily from the long established ethnic minority groups in Albania, the Roma and Egyptian,<sup>2</sup> with some evidence of migration and/or trafficking involving other individuals. In India, boys and girls beg at railway stations, temples and other religious sites, traffic lights and other busy locations, with some reports of the involvement of criminal gangs and links to drug abuse. In Senegal, boys, known as *talibés*, are sent from villages to the cities to learn the Koran with teachers known as *marabouts*. *Marabouts* are not paid to care for the children and send them out to beg to earn their keep.

Anti-Slavery International has produced two other documents as a result of the pilot. A toolkit for researchers has been developed providing information on the different techniques used in the pilot. A report, *Begging for Change*, has also been written summarising the key research findings. Both of these documents are available on the Anti-Slavery International website:

**[www.antislavery.org](http://www.antislavery.org)**

<sup>2</sup> The Egyptian community is an Albanian ethnic group whose roots historically may or may not be traced back to Egypt, but who are commonly described as 'Egyptian' within Albania. Although commonly grouped together, the Roma and Egyptian minorities have distinct ethnic identities and perceive themselves to be very different.

# Part 1: Introducing research

## What is research?

### Aims

- To highlight the difference between quantitative and qualitative research.
- To encourage participants to recognise the benefits of more qualitative/participatory methods.

**This tool has been developed as individuals with little previous research experience often associate research with surveys and questionnaires. It is important that research teams understand from the start that this research is about exploring issues in depth, and not just about counting numbers. Researchers should also be encouraged to have the confidence to try out more innovative and imaginative techniques, and to think for themselves, for example, by following up on interesting issues raised by participants.**

### Time needed

One hour and 30 minutes.

### Materials and handouts

- Handout 1
- Small sheets of card
- Stones/sweets etc. for matrix ranking.

## Exercise

### Introduction

- Ask: What is research? Why do we do research?
- Write the answers you get on a flip-chart.
- Explain that you are new to this place and want to find out some interesting places to visit. We are now going to explore three different ways for gathering this information.

### Part 1: A survey

- Ask participants individually to complete a survey on good places to visit (see Handout 1 for an example. This will need to be adapted to your setting).
- Add up the answers you get on a tally chart whilst the training participants are doing the next task, the in-depth interview.

### Part 2: In-depth interviews

- Ask participants to spend 10 minutes interviewing the person sitting next to them using the following questions:
  - ▶ Where have you been to in (enter the name of the country where the training is taking place)?
  - ▶ Which of these places would you recommend for visitors who have never been to this country?
  - ▶ Why?
- Explain that they will need to listen to the answers which are given to these questions, and ask follow-up questions on any interesting issues which have been raised.

### Part 3: Matrix ranking

- Get everyone to sit in a circle.
- Ask participants to shout out the names of places to visit in their country and write down several places on separate sheets of card.
- Ask participants: What kinds of things would you think about if you were going to recommend these places to someone else? Write down several criteria on sheets of card.
- Lay the place names along the vertical axis and the criteria along the horizontal to form a chart.
- Use stones/sweets etc. to award points to each place according to the criteria given.
- Do a few examples and then sit back and let the participants complete the exercise alone.
- Ask the participants questions about the diagram. For example, which of these criteria is most important?

### Discussion: Advantages and disadvantages of the different methods

- Ask: What did you think about the different methods used? Probe on:
  - ▶ Which method was most enjoyable for the participant/respondent?
  - ▶ Which method was most enjoyable for the researcher?
  - ▶ Which method taught you most about good places to visit?
  - ▶ How much time did each of the methods take? How much time would it take to interview 100 people using these methods?
- At the end, emphasise the following:

- ▶ The speed of quantitative research, and the relative ease of analysing large amounts of this data.
- ▶ The detail gained from qualitative research.
- ▶ The advantages of open-ended research over closed ended questions. For example, learning about a range of places rather than just those on the list, and being able to get detailed information about why some places are better than others).
- ▶ The advantages of participatory research. For example, participants learning something from the research process as well as the researchers).

### Conclusion: Presentation on different methods

- As participants will have learnt from the exercises, there are basically two types of research:
  - ▶ Quantitative research: Collecting information that can be quantified or counted.
  - ▶ Qualitative research: Collecting more detailed information that usually cannot be quantified or counted.
- Qualitative research is often, but not always, participatory in nature. The matrix ranking is an example of such participatory research. Participatory research follows the following common principles:
  - ▶ A focus on learning for both participants and facilitators .
  - ▶ Gaining multiple perspectives on an issue everyone is different and everyone is important
  - ▶ Use of diagrams and/or group discussions.
  - ▶ Viewing the participants as the experts letting them take control of the research process
  - ▶ Leading to change.
- During this research we will be using qualitative research, and trying to ensure that this research is as participatory as possible.

## What is this research about?

### Aims

- To explain and explore the aims of the research project which this training addresses.

### Time needed

One hour.

### Materials and handouts

- Prepare a handout summarising the aims of the research project.

## Exercise

- Use a combination of presentations and group discussions to explore the aims of the research project.
- Ensure that participants are clear about what we are trying to find out and why the research is being done.
- If they have not already been given a chance to do so, make sure participants have an opportunity to comment on the aims. For example, to think about how useful the research might be in their work.
- Encourage one or two participants to explain the aims to the rest of the group in their own words to make sure that everyone is clear.

An example of matrix ranking from Albania

	Security	Beautiful	Good shops	Good bars	No traffic	Easy to get to
Tirana	••••	•••	•••••	•••	•	•••••
Elbasan	•	••	••••••	••••		•••••
Durres	•••••	••••••	•	•	••••	•
Burrel	••	•••	•••	••	••	•••

# Part 2: Research skills

## Listening skills

### Aim

- To highlight the importance of good listening
- To develop skills in good listening.

### Time needed

30 minutes.

### Materials and handouts

- None.

## Exercise

- Divide the participants into pairs and explain that one person should choose to be the questioner and the other the respondent.
- Ask the questioner to interview the respondent for five minutes about what they did yesterday, getting as much detail as possible. During these five minutes the questioner should be a good listener.
- Repeat the exercise, this time with the questioner being a bad listener.
- Ask:
  - ▶ How did it feel not being listened to?
  - ▶ Why is listening important?
  - ▶ How can we show that we are listening?
  - ▶ What can we learn from how people say things as well as what they say? (For example, how loudly they speak, accents, language, words used?)

## Observation skills

### Aims

- To highlight the importance of good observation.
- To explore the kinds of things that it is helpful to observe in research (including body language, and indicators of participants' backgrounds, for example, ethnic group, health, social status etc.)
- To understand that appearances can be deceptive.

### Time needed

45 minutes.

### Materials and handouts

- Prepare copies of a sheet with five/six photographs of a famous person in different poses.

## Exercise:

- Divide the participants into small groups and hand out the sheets of photographs.
- Ask participants to discuss what they can tell about what the person is thinking or feeling just by looking at the photographs.
- Feedback in plenary and discuss: Would any of this information help us with our research? Why? Why not?
- Ask: Aside from body language what other observations could you make that might help with the research (probe: indicators of wealth; signs of abuse and distress; indicators of religion or areas of origin etc.)
- Ask: Can you always trust what you see? How can appearances be deceptive? (Emphasise the importance of using observation skills in conjunction with other research skills, for example questioning).

# Questioning skills

## 1. Types of questions and ‘good’ questions/‘bad’ questions

### Aims

- To understand the difference between the sorts of questions asked in quantitative research and the more open-ended questions asked in qualitative research.
- To introduce the concept of probing questions.
- To understand the difference between a good question and a bad question. In particular to know to avoid:
  - ▶ Leading questions, where researchers indicate the kind of answers they want in the way the question is asked.
  - ▶ Two questions in one, where the researchers cover two issues in one question.
  - ▶ Confusing or overly formal language.

### Time needed

45 minutes.

### Materials and handouts

- Handout 2.

## Exercise

- Introduce three types of questions using examples:
  - ▶ Closed-ended questions, where the person who is being interviewed has to select one of a choice of answers. For example, do you like apples or oranges best?
  - ▶ Open-ended questions, where the person who is being interviewed is free to give any answer they like. For example, what is your favourite fruit?
  - ▶ Probing questions, which are asked after you have listened to the answer that the person has given you to get more information. For example, why are pineapples your favourite fruit?
- Explain that as this is qualitative research, we will mainly be using open-ended and probing questions.
- Explain that we are now going to look at how to ask ‘good’ open-ended and probing questions.
- Divide the participants into small groups and ask participants to identify which questions included in Handout 2 are ‘good’ questions or ‘bad’ questions.
- Feedback in plenary. Emphasise that:
  - ▶ Questions 1, 4 and 9 are leading questions, and explain the problems associated with leading questions.
  - ▶ Questions 2 and 6 are two questions in one, which may confuse participants and make it hard for researchers to interpret their answers.
  - ▶ Question 5 involves overly complex language, which may also confuse participants, especially children, and so should be avoided.
- Remember that participants may have different ideas from your own about which questions are ‘good’ and which are ‘bad.’ These responses may be based on knowledge of what is appropriate to ask in the local context and as such should be listened to and respected.

## 2. Responding and probing

### Aims

- To introduce the concept of question checklists, where researchers are provided with a list of suggested questions, and to ensure that researchers understand the difference between a question checklist and a questionnaire.
- To ensure that researchers understand the value of probing questions, and develop skills in probing.
- To help researchers avoid being judgemental or overly dominating with research participants.

**Questionnaires are used in quantitative research and need to be followed rigidly. In qualitative research, we generally use question checklists which provide a suggested list of questions. Researchers need to be encouraged to use these lists as a guide only, to help jog their memories about the topics to be explored. They will need to cover these topics, but can change the wording of the questions and the order in which they are asked as appropriate.**

In qualitative research, researchers also need to be encouraged to ask lots of probing questions where they ask a question from the checklist, listen to the answers given and respond with a question, which they have made up themselves. Researchers often find this challenging and lack the confidence to deviate from the questions provided in the checklists. Probing is very important as it provides the in-depth information needed for qualitative research. It also helps to clarify responses and in checking the validity of answers. The importance of probing will need to be reiterated throughout training and field testing.

### Time needed

One hour.

### Materials and resources

- An example of a question checklist from a qualitative research project.
- Handout 3.

## Exercise

- Introduce the concept of question checklists commonly used in qualitative research. Explain the difference between these checklists and questionnaires (see above under 'Aims'). If possible, provide an example of a relevant question checklist for participants to look at.
- Explain that we are now going to explore how to respond to the answers provided by participants once you have asked a question from a checklist. Here it is important not to:
  - ▶ Be judgmental towards the participant, no matter how much you may approve or disapprove of what they are saying. Ask: Why is this important?
  - ▶ Push people if they do not want to answer your question. Instead, talk about something else and then, if appropriate, ask the original question in a different way later on in the interview. Ask: Why is this important?
- In responding, it is essential to listen to what people have to say and ask further questions that you have made up yourself. This is known as probing. Ask: Why is probing important?
- Introduce the following probing words to participants:
  - ▶ What
  - ▶ When
  - ▶ Why
  - ▶ Who
  - ▶ How
  - ▶ Where.
- Divide the participants into small groups and give each group the set of comments included in Handout 3 (these can be adapted to be more relevant to your setting). Ask them to write down probing questions that they would ask next using as many of the questioning words as possible. Give them some examples to start off with and explain that they have to write down the whole question (not just 'what', 'who' etc.)

### 3. Seating, location and flow

#### Aims

- To encourage participants to understand the importance of choosing the right place and seating positions for qualitative research.
- To highlight techniques for ensuring that interviews and group discussions flow well.

Seating sounds trivial but can make a huge difference. If possible, researchers should find somewhere quiet to sit where they will not be disturbed. This place should be somewhere that participants feel comfortable in. Researchers and participants need to sit at the same level, and be able to maintain eye contact. In group discussions, this means sitting in a circle, and on the floor if appropriate.

#### Time needed

30 minutes.

#### Materials and handouts

- Prepare your own handout showing pictures of researchers and participants sitting in different locations and seating arrangements. Some of these should be 'good' arrangements/locations (for example, face to face in one-to-one interviews, or in a circle on the floor in group discussions) and some should be 'bad' arrangements/locations (for example, in crowded places).
- Prepare a visual aid of a river flowing smoothly.

## Exercise

### Part 1: Seating arrangements and locations

- Hand out the pictures of researchers and participants sitting in different arrangements/locations.
- Divide the participants into small groups and ask each group to explore:
  - ▶ What is good about these seating arrangements/locations?
  - ▶ What are the problems associated with these seating arrangements/locations?
- In plenary, develop a list of things to consider when choosing locations for conducting interviews or group discussions and when arranging seating.

### Part 2: Flow

- Using a visual aid of a river flowing smoothly, explain the importance of interviews and group discussions flowing in a natural way. Explain that this will make the participants feel more relaxed, as if they were in a conversation with you rather than a formal research exercise.
- Suggest the following tips for making interviews and group discussions flow naturally:
  - ▶ Ask easy questions first.
  - ▶ Ask broad questions, then specific ones. For example, what do you enjoy about your work? What skills do you learn from work?
  - ▶ Keep talking (ask irrelevant questions if necessary), but don't be afraid of silences to allow participants time to think.
  - ▶ Do not jump around from subject to subject, but it is not always a good idea to follow the order of the question check list.
  - ▶ If participants do not understand a question, try asking it in a different way.
  - ▶ If something interesting comes up, follow it up (as long as it is relevant to the broad topics of the research, it is interesting).

## 4. Practising questioning skills

### Aims

- To develop skills in gaining longer and more detailed answers from participants.
- To give participants the opportunity to apply the concepts learnt in previous sessions on questioning skills.

### Time needed

One hour.

### Materials and handouts

- Handout 4
- Handout 5.

## Exercise

- Introduce Handout 4 on techniques for open-ended questions and probing and give participants a chance to read this handout and ask questions about it.
- Introduce Handout 5 on 'dos' and 'don'ts' in questioning. Explain that this simply summarises concepts learned in previous sessions on questioning skills. Give participants a chance to read the handout and ask questions about it.
- Explain to the participants that they are going to practise conducting an interview. Divide the participants into groups of three people, and ask them to choose who will be the researcher, who will be the participant and who will be the observer. Any additional people can join the groups as extra observers.
- Explain that the researchers in each group will need to interview their colleagues about what they did yesterday, starting from when they woke up and getting as much detail as possible using probing questions. Encourage the researchers to go through the day as slowly as possible, asking many detailed probing questions. Explain that they will be stopped after ten minutes and we will find out which part of the day they have reached.
- Encourage the researchers to try out the techniques for open-ended questions and probing and to try and follow the 'dos' and 'don'ts' provided in the handout. Ask observers to think about what the researcher is doing well, and how they could improve in the future.
- After ten minutes of questioning, stop the researchers, and ask the groups to reallocate the roles, allowing another person to be the questioner this time.
- In plenary, encourage all of the participants to think about what the researchers have done well, and what could have been done more effectively. Participants should be encouraged to talk constructively about the sorts of things that could be improved in the future, but not to name names.
- Highlight the value of talking to someone about their day and how much can be learnt about their culture/lives from this simple exercise.

# Facilitation skills

## Aims

- To highlight the importance of good facilitation to ensure that participants stick to the topic, but have free and interesting debates, and where everyone speaks.
- To learn some techniques for stopping one or two participants from dominating a discussion and encouraging quiet participants to take part.

It is important to encourage participants to recognise the difference between a group discussion and an in-depth interview. There can be a tendency to treat group discussions like a series of in-depth interviews, going round the circle and asking the same question to each person individually. A good group discussion will have more debate and the participants will speak to each other not just to the researcher. This is where the really interesting information comes from.

## Time needed

One hour and 30 minutes.

## Materials and resources

- Handout 6.

# Exercise

## Part 1: What is a facilitator?

- When you do research, you can talk to one person at a time, or lots of people in a group.
- If you talk to lots of people in a group, you need someone to manage the group. If there is no one to manage the group, either everyone will speak at once, or one or two people will dominate the discussion, or no one will speak at all.
- A facilitator is the person who manages the group.
- Emphasise the difference between a facilitator of research and a facilitator in other settings, for example, training (i.e. gathering not giving information).

## Part 2: Saboteur

- Explain that a common problem in group discussions can be one person trying to dominate the discussion.
- Divide the participants into groups of three people, and allocate roles within these groups. One person should be the researcher, one person the respondent and one person the 'saboteur.' Any additional people can join the groups as extra respondents.
- The researcher should ask the participants about common problems faced by children in their community. Explain that the saboteur's role is to try and disrupt the discussion in any non-violent way possible.
- After ten minutes, get everyone to return to plenary and ask:
  - ▶ Was it easy or difficult to disrupt the conversation?
  - ▶ What were some of the different techniques that were used by the saboteurs?
  - ▶ What are some of the ways that you can deal with saboteurs?
- Wrap up by highlighting some useful ways to respond to participants who like to dominate. For example:
  - ▶ ignore politely
  - ▶ stop the discussion
  - ▶ use a 'gate-keeper' to take the person to one side
  - ▶ allow it
  - ▶ ask others for help
  - ▶ form sub-groups.

### Part 3: Facilitation skills role play

- Discuss what makes a good facilitator and show the participants Handout 6 on facilitation skills.
- Ask for two volunteers to practise their facilitation skills. Divide the participants into two groups with at least five participants in each group (or just one group if there are not enough participants).
- Ask the facilitator to lead the discussion for 20 minutes using a set of questions relevant to the research you are conducting.
- During this discussion, make a ‘secret analysis’ of who speaks the most by circling or putting a tick by the names of the participants on a sheet of paper each time that person speaks.
- Ask the participants:
  - ▶ What sorts of things did the facilitators do well?
  - ▶ In what ways could the facilitator improve in the future?
- Using your ‘secret analysis,’ discuss:
  - ▶ Who spoke the most?
  - ▶ Why?
  - ▶ Does it matter?
  - ▶ What can be done to encourage quiet people/ prevent the noisy ones from dominating?  
Here it is important to avoid embarrassing particularly quiet or shy participants by drawing attention to them. Keep the discussion general without naming names, for example, talk about whether men or women spoke the most, or whether more senior or junior people spoke the most.
- Wrap up by reminding participants about what they learnt during the previous saboteur exercise, and by highlighting ways to encourage quieter participants, for example:
  - ▶ If using diagrams, give quieter people the pen/stick so that they have some power.
  - ▶ Ask them direct questions, but do not highlight their shyness by pushing them.
  - ▶ Encourage them through your listening skills. For example, by showing that you are interested in what they are saying.
  - ▶ Consider why they are being quiet – are they intimidated by someone in the group? Think about group composition and avoid mixing up men with women, and powerful individuals with less powerful ones.

# Recording skills

## Aims

- To understand the importance of good, systematic note-taking.
- To learn how to take good, systematic notes.

**This is often the most challenging part of the training, as researchers often struggle with the idea that they have to write down everything that is said. Note-taking is also hard work, especially if researchers are not used to writing for long periods. It is very important to encourage researchers by highlighting the value of note-taking.**

## Time needed

One hour to one hour 30 minutes.

## Materials and handouts

- A tray, ten to 15 small objects and a cloth to cover the tray and objects
- Handout 7
- Notebooks and pens for note-takers.

# Exercise

- Put ten to 15 small objects (such as a book, pens, keys etc.) onto a tray and cover the tray with a cloth. Place the tray in the middle of a circle of training participants. Remove the cloth for one-two minutes and ask the participants to try and memorise as much as possible about everything on the tray without taking notes.
- Replace the cloth and ask participants to write down what they remember seeing on the tray in as much detail as possible. Discuss their answers. Highlight:
  - ▶ Their inability to remember everything
  - ▶ Their inability to record details such as the colour or size of objects
  - ▶ Bias in their memories. For example, remembering items that may be particularly interesting or significant to them.
- Use the exercise to explain why it is important to take notes during research. Highlight the fact that the note-taker plays just as an important role as the researcher, if not more important.
- Talk through Handout 7 with the participants, and make sure that they understand the rules for note-taking.
- Divide the participants into groups of three people, and ask them to allocate roles within the groups. One person should act as the questioner, one person as the participant and the other as the recorder. Any additional people can join the groups as extra recorders.
- Provide the questioner with a short list of questions relevant to the research that you are conducting, and allow them ten minutes to advise the participant about the process, seek permission to take notes and then ask questions while the recorder takes notes. After ten minutes, ask the individuals in the group to swap roles and repeat the exercise for another ten minutes.
- Allow the participants five minutes to review their notes and make any clarifications necessary.
- Ask the participants to swap notes with another group.
- In plenary, ask: Are the notes clear? Did they provide lots of details? Did the recorders follow the rules? It may also be a good idea to look through the notes yourself, and provide some feedback to the participants.
- At the end, talk about the importance of numbering group discussions, and the techniques for doing this (as outlined in Handout 7). If you are using forms and coversheets in your research, introduce these to the research team and give them an opportunity to practise filling them out.

# Part 3: Research ethics

## Introducing research ethics

### Aims

- To highlight the importance of ensuring that research is ethical so that it helps rather than harms those taking part.
- To encourage participants to think about the practical steps that they need to take in their setting to make sure that the research is ethical.

### Time needed

Three hours and 30 minutes.

### Materials and handouts

- Handout 8
- Handout 9.

## Exercise

### Part 1: Introduction

- Explain that we need to make sure that our research is ethical. Ask: What does this mean? If necessary, explain that ethical research helps, rather than harms the people who are taking part (children, adults, researchers).
- Introduce the sorts of areas that need to be considered to ensure that research is ethical, and explain that these will be covered during the remainder of the session:
  - ▶ assessing risks in each context
  - ▶ information and consent
  - ▶ timing and location
  - ▶ food and transport
  - ▶ confidentiality
  - ▶ avoiding abuse
  - ▶ dealing with distress and issues raised.

### Part 2: Assessing risks

- Divide the participants into three groups and explain that group one should think about research ethics in relation to children, group two in relation to parents and group three in relation to the NGO or other organisation carrying out the research.

- Ask each group to consider the following questions, allowing around 30 minutes for this discussion:
  - ▶ What risks might this group face in participating in our research?
  - ▶ What can be done to minimise these risks? Feedback in the plenary.

### Part 3: Timing and location

- Explain that it is important to do research at a time that suits the participants. For example, a time that does not interfere with their work/sleep/schooling etc. Ask: When is a good time for children? When is a good time for adults?
- Explain that it is important to do research in a location where participants will not be disturbed and can speak freely. Highlight the importance of not raising suspicions amongst parents and other adults by taking children away to a hidden location. Ask: Where are the best places to carry out our research?

### Part 4: Confidentiality

- Ask: What do we mean by confidentiality? Explain that it means that we will share the information that participants give us, but will not share their names or anything that could identify the participants, especially child participants, outside the research team.
- Ask: Why is this important?
- Ask: What steps do we need to take to ensure that confidentiality is maintained?

### Part 5: Food and transport

- Ask: How will the children get to the venue where the research is taking place?
- Ask: Will we provide food?

### Part 6: Abuse by adults and dealing with distress and issues raised

- Explain that it is a sad fact that some adults use their position working with children to abuse them, physically, verbally or sexually. Emphasise that it is necessary to take steps to stop this from happening. Explain that such steps will also help to protect research teams against false allegations.

- Emphasise the importance of working in pairs as one way to protect children from abuse and researchers from allegations of abuse.
- Ask: What would you do if you felt that a member of your team was behaving inappropriately with children? Who would you report this to? (NB: The organisation that is carrying out the research should have a child protection policy in place, or at least procedures for reporting and responding to abuse. Make sure that you discuss this with senior management before carrying out this session).
- Explain that it is also the case that children may reveal abuse to you during the research and may become upset recalling difficult events in their lives. Ask participants to discuss with the person sitting next to them how they might respond in such situations.
- Feed back in plenary and make sure researchers have thought about: referral systems for offering children help and support; the importance of not pushing children to talk about difficult subjects; the importance of moving away from topics that upset the child, and making sure that the child does not leave the interview feeling upset.
- Wrap up by explaining the principle of always acting in the best interest of the child. Remind them that the research is not as important as the children concerned, and should not be done if it damages the children taking part.

## Part 7: Information and consent

- Explain that children and adults need to make their own choices about whether or not to take part in the research, and to do this, they need proper information about the research.
- Brainstorm on the sorts of information the participants will require to make informed choices.
- Provide the participants with the list for introductions included in Handout 8.
- Divide the participants into small groups and ask them to develop a role-play, imagining that they are meeting a potential child research participant for the first time and need to find out if they are willing to take part in the research. Encourage them to cover all of the issues included in Handout 8.
- Share one or two of the role-plays with the wider group and discuss them.
- At the end, emphasise the importance of respecting children's decisions about whether or not to take part in the research.
- Wrap up by introducing Handout 9, summarising research ethics.

# Part 4: Research tools

## Introducing the research tools

### Aims

- To enable participants to become familiar with the tools that will be used in the research project.
- To give participants a further chance to practise their research skills.

### Time needed

- Approximately one hour in the training room for each tool being used.
- Two to three days field testing the tools with the research participants.

### Materials and handouts

- Copies of any research guides, question checklist, forms, coversheets etc. that will be used in the research.
- Handout 10.

## Exercise

The participants can familiarise themselves with the tools that will be used in the research project through:

- **Demonstration:** The trainer demonstrates a particular tool while the training participants act as research participants.
- **Role-play:** One training participant takes on the role of a researcher, while others act as research participants.
- **Reviewing research guides/question checklists:** The participants are given time to read through research guides or question checklists that have been developed for the research and ask questions or make comments. Researchers should be encouraged to become very familiar with the guides/checklists so that they do not have to keep referring back to them during interviews or group discussions. They can do this through highlighting key words, taking notes to summarise key points etc.
- **Field-testing:** The training participants try out the methods with real research participants. Time should be allocated beforehand for: setting up the trial research, including identifying research locations and securing participation where relevant; regular discussions between researchers and trainers about how the field testing is progressing; and for trainers to provide feedback to enhance researchers' skills. Remember to field-test note-taking as well.

At the end of this session, give participants Handout 10 which briefly summarises everything covered by the training.

# Handout 1:

## A quantitative survey on places to visit in Albania

Have you ever visited any of these places?

(Please tick the appropriate boxes below)

Tirana

Durres

Elbasan

Vlore

Berat

What do you think about these as places to visit on holiday?

(Please tick the appropriate box in the table below)

	<b>A nice place to visit on holiday</b>	<b>An OK place to visit on holiday</b>	<b>A horrible place to visit on holiday</b>	<b>Do not know</b>
Tirana				
Durres				
Elbasan				
Vlore				
Berat				

## Handout 2:

### Good question/bad question exercise

1. Aren't you angry with your parents for sending you to the city to live this miserable life?	2. What are some of the good and bad things that happened to you yesterday?	3. What happens when you misbehave at home?
4. Aren't you really angry about the way that your mother beats you?	5. Would you kindly provide me with a multitude of illustrations of the differing vicious punishments used by the begging master when you fail to collect sufficient funds?	6. Can you tell me about when you woke up yesterday and what you did next and what you had for your lunch and what you did after your lunch?
7. How much money do you make each day?	8. Have you ever been to school?	9. What do you think about the fantastic help that you are receiving from the NGO I work for?
10. Why did you leave home?	11. Who decided that you should go to school?	12. When do you start begging in the morning?

## Handout 3: Probing questions exercise

My step-mother is very cruel.

I had a really good day yesterday. I had lots of fun when I was out begging.

My mother sent me to live with my auntie in the city because she could not feed all of us.

The place where we sleep is very dirty

I collected lots of money yesterday.

I came to live here a long time ago.



## Handout 4: Techniques for open-ended questioning and probing

**Good open-ended and probing questions will encourage research participants to give long and detailed answers. Some of the ways to encourage participants to say more are given below:**

**1. Stay silent. Give the participant more time to answer your questions.**

**2. Repeat the last thing that the participant said. For example:**

Participant: I had a really bad day yesterday.

Researcher: You had a really bad day yesterday?

**3. Make encouraging noises, such as, “I see.”**

**4. Pretend to be stupid. For example, “I’ve never been to Abuja before, what is it like?”**

**5. Ask longer and more detailed questions. For example, instead of asking:**

“What problems do you face?”

Ask:

“Can you tell me all of the problems that you face?”

**6. Summarise what they have already told you and ask for more details. For example:**

“So, you don't like being beaten and having to beg for long hours at a time. Is there anything else you don't like about begging?”

## Handout 5: Questioning skills

### ‘Do’

- Ask easy questions at the beginning to make the person you are speaking with feel comfortable.
- Start by asking broad questions, moving onto specific issues later. For example, start by asking: “what are the bad things about your work?” Later on, inquire: “do you have accidents at work?”
- Try and get answers to the questions on the checklist that has been given to you. But remember that you can ask the questions in any order that you want, and using what ever words that you think are best.
- Ask probing questions to get as much detail as possible.
- Remember always to ask why.
- Clarify words such as ‘good’ and ‘bad’ that could mean a number of different things.
- Use language that the person you are talking to uses and can understand.
- Be attentive and interested at all times.
- Consider the flow of the discussion. Do not jump from subject to subject without warning.
- Consider the way that you sit when you are asking questions. Always sit at the same level as the person you are talking to and avoid placing barriers, such as desks, between you.

### ‘Don’t’

- Ask leading questions. Leading questions suggest to the person, whom you are interviewing, how they should reply. For example: “do you like school because you get to mix with other children?”
- Judge the informant, no matter how much you may approve or disapprove of what they are saying.
- Push people if they do not want to answer your question. Instead, talk about something else and then ask the original question in a different way later on in the interview.
- Ask two questions in one. For example: “tell me all the good and bad things about your day yesterday?” The person, to whom you are talking, will not know where to begin to reply, and you may find it hard to interpret their answer.

## Handout 6: Facilitation skills

### ‘Do’

- Be clear about the aims of the discussion and the research, before you start the discussion.
- Direct the opening question to the whole group, rather than asking people one by one.
- Encourage quiet people to talk by:
  - addressing questions to them, but without making them feel embarrassed;
  - giving them some ‘power.’ For example, by allowing them to draw diagrams;
  - showing them that you are listening and are interested in what they have to say;
  - making sure that you choose your groups carefully. For example, children may be shy in front of adults so it is best to speak to them separately.
- Allow people to talk to each other. Do not feel that they have to spend the whole time responding to your questions. It helps if you get people to sit in a circle so that they are facing each other, rather than facing you.
- Give people some control over the discussion. For example, if you are writing or drawing on large sheets of paper during the discussion, allow the participants to write things down or draw themselves.
- Ask lots of probing questions. Get as much detail as possible and always try and find out why.
- Make the discussion fun and interesting. Do not bore people by asking the same questions again and again. Use games and activities to provide variety, and include breaks.

### ‘Don’t’

- Allow one person to dominate the discussion. You can:
  - Ignore that person politely
  - Stop the discussion
  - Take the person to one side
  - Ask others for help
  - Form sub-groups
  - Explain that what they have said is interesting but that you want to hear from everyone else.
- Allow the discussion to get out of control. If people start talking about an irrelevant topic, lead them back onto the right subject by asking them more questions.
- Restrict yourself to a set list of questions during the discussion. Listen to what people have to say, and make up your own questions in response. Remember that, as long as the discussion meets the aims of the research, it is fine to ask other questions.
- Allow long awkward silences and try to keep the discussion going, even if this means asking a few irrelevant questions.

## Handout 7: Notes for recorders

### Top tips for note-taking

- Advise the participant(s) about the research process and ask permission to take notes. If the participant(s) agree(s):
- Fill out the relevant coversheet, including all of the basic information needed, such as time, date and place of the interview/group discussion as well as the names of the participant(s).
- 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 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 coversheets for the notes.
- Do not let the recording get in the way of the research process. For example, do not pause the research so that you can catch up with your note-taking or ask children to speak more slowly.
- Try and 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-taker sitting outside of the circle of participants.
- Try and 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 are 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 it in turns to act as gate-keeper and note-taker.

### 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 lose much of 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 as 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 to work in teams of at least two, with one researcher asking questions and the other focusing exclusively on the note-taking.

### Deciding whether or not to take notes during the interviews/group discussions

It is always better to take notes while the interviews and group discussions are taking place rather than afterwards, when it will be very hard to remember all that has been said. Basing notes on memory can also lead to bias as you are likely to remember what is most important to you, rather than to the participants. It is important to talk to participants about the note-taking and try and put them at ease about this process. You can then ask their permission to take notes or use a tape recorder if conditions allow. If they still say no, or if you feel that note-taking will make the researchers too conspicuous, it is important to make sure that notes are taken as soon as possible after the interview or group discussion has taken place.

### Rules for note-taking

You must make clear who has said what by adding their name (or allocate a number to each participant and write down this number instead):

**Saya: What a lovely day.**

Or

**“The sun is shining and the sky is blue.”**

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:

**All: I wouldn’t want my children to beg.**

Or

**Rezu and Lilly: I think it’s 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.

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

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

At the end of the notes, make sure that you add any information on the research process that you think is important:

**(We could not find anywhere quiet to sit and everyone kept coming up and disturbing us).**

As soon as you have finished taking your notes, you must 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 may 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 have not missed anything important. Go through the question checklists 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 a separate place. Keep notes well organised and labelled.

## Numbering the group discussions and interviews

You will need to number each of the group discussions and in-depth interviews so that the information is referenced and can be easily traced afterwards. This number should go on to all of the notes that you take:

- The number should begin with **GD** if it’s a group discussion, **I** if it is an interview, **RI** if it is a rapid interview, **KI** for a key informant interview, or **O** if it is an observation.
- You should then indicate which country the research took place. For example, for the pilot we used **SE** for Senegal **IN** for India or **AL** for Albania.
- You should then use the first few letters of the community in which the research took place. So, if it took place in a village called Kangama, you would write **KAN**.
- Finally add a number, with the first group discussion or in-depth interview you do in each community being number **1**, the second number **2** and so on.

So the whole number will look something like this:  
**GD-SE-KAN-1.**

## Handout 8: Introductions

- **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.
- 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 that they know that they have a choice. If they say that they do not want to take part, respect this decision.
- If you are taking **notes**, check that they are happy for the researchers to do this.
- Play an ice-breaking game or chat with the participants to make them feel relaxed.
- Fill out any necessary **coversheets**.

# Handout 9: Research ethics

## Assessing risks

- Assess the risks to participants and research team in your particular context and take steps to minimise these risks.

## Consent and information about the research process

- If children are living with their families, families should be consulted well in advance regarding the involvement of their children in the research. If parents are available, always ask their permission before talking with children.
- Where possible, seek the support of 'employers,' community leaders or others who play an important role in child participants' lives.
- Children (and adults) should always have a choice about whether or not they take part in research. To make this choice, they need to understand the purpose of the research and to what use the findings will be put. They must be aware that they can withdraw from the research at any time.
- Children's views about research methodology should be sought to ensure that their concerns and fears are allayed.
- Avoid raising expectations about the direct benefits of the research. Be honest and clear about how the outcomes of the research will affect those who are taking part. This can be extremely hard to do as poor communities may pin their hopes for a better future on the research. You may need to repeat messages.

## Timing and location

- The time at which the research takes place should suit those who are taking part rather than the research team. Research should never interfere with children's need to eat or sleep or their schooling.
- Consider the impact of taking part in the research on children's work. Try and do the research at times when children are not working, or, if this is not possible, consider compensating for incomes lost.
- Never keep children (or adults) waiting. Their time is valuable.
- Where possible, discussions should be done in settings where children can speak freely and adults cannot interfere with the research process.
- It is preferable to speak to boys and girls separately, and use female researchers to speak to girls.

## Confidentiality

- Views of children should be kept confidential. This

includes changing the names of children in final reports so that they cannot be identified.

## Abuse by adults conducting the research

- Where possible, check the records of all members of the research team 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.
- All research team members should be familiar with the child protection policy of the organisation carrying the research or at least agreed procedures for reporting and responding to abuse.

## Food and transport

- If children are being moved to take part in research to another community, transportation should be in place, especially if the distance to be travelled is over a mile.
- Children should never be moved from one location to another without two adults present (such as a parent, caregiver or NGO staff).
- Food should be prepared if children will be kept for long hours through lunchtime, and snacks provided for meetings of a few hours.

## Dealing with distress and issues raised

- Forced child begging is a distressing subject and children may become upset when recalling some of their experiences. Before the research starts, discuss how to respond to situations where a child becomes distressed by the subjects being discussed. For example, you may want to change the subject, stop the interview or have a break from discussions to play a game or sing a song.
- Before the research starts, discuss how to deal with cases where a child reveals extreme forms of abuse or neglect in their current daily lives – what support can be offered?
- Do not push children into talking about distressing topics. Avoiding these subjects might be part of their coping strategies.
- During the period of the research, hold regular meetings to discuss any concerns and keep records of how these concerns have been dealt with.
- Remember that we are working with children whose lives are hard enough already – try to make the research as much fun as possible.

**Always seek to act in the best interests of the child.**

# Handout 10: Introducing the research tools

## Top tips for facilitators and interviewers

- 1. Use question checklists:** The researchers' toolkit provides a series of question checklists for each group discussion and interview. These checklists should be considered as a guide only, reminding you about the key topics which need to be covered in the discussion/interview. You can change the wording of the questions or the order they are asked in, or leave out irrelevant questions.
- 2. Familiarise yourself with the tools:** Always read through the relevant parts of the toolkit several times before you conduct the group discussion or interview and try to memorise the areas you need to cover. You will be more relaxed if you have a rough idea in your mind about the topics you want to explore. This will also mean you can concentrate on asking questions and listening to responses.
- 3. Probe:** Always listen to the answers provided and then ask further probing questions based on the responses given to follow up on any interesting issues raised.
- 4. Get everyone talking in group discussions:** Try and encourage everyone to speak during group discussions by:
  - Selecting the composition of the group carefully. For example, do not include powerful community figures who will dominate discussions – interview them separately.
  - Directing questions to the whole group – do not ask people one by one.
  - Stimulating debate between participants.
  - Encouraging quiet participants to contribute by, for example, showing them you are listening to them when you speak, directing questions to them, letting them write on/draw diagrams.
- Discouraging those who try to dominate by, for example, telling them you want to hear everyone's views.
- 5. Arrange the seating:** Always sit in a circle (if in a group) or opposite the person you are interviewing so you can maintain eye contact. Always sit at the same level as the participants.
- 6. Ask questions:** Avoid leading questions (for example, are you happy with the good work that Anti-Slavery International has done?) and two questions in one (for example, tell me all the good and bad things about your day?) Keep language simple and easy to understand.
- 7. If you want to use diagrams:** Remember that:
  - The end product (the diagram) is interesting, but the debate that created it is more interesting.
  - Give control to the participants – let them do the drawing/writing. Face the diagram towards them, not you.
  - Only use diagrams if they are helpful and participants find them easy to understand.
  - Always review the diagram at the end (make sure that you understand it and ask probing questions to get more details).
- 8. Have fun and relax:** If you do not, the participants will not either. Remember that it is not the end of the world if you forget to ask one of the questions.

## Top tips for note-takers

1. **Never stop writing:** Write down (as much as possible of) everything that people say and your observations/ thoughts. Notes can never be too long or detailed.
2. **Record diagrams:** Make copies of any diagrams produced and include them in your notes. Record the debate/discussion that led to the diagram being produced as well as the diagram itself.
3. **Follow the rules:**
  - Write down who says what. For example:  
Ben: It's a nice day today.  
Denis: Yes, the sun always shines in Tirana.
  - Use “ ” for direct quotes only.
  - Use ( ) for your thoughts and observations.
4. **Check your notes:** Read through your notes after the discussion/interview. Imagine another member of the team who was not present reading them. Do you think they would be able to understand them? Add any missing information/explanations that you think would help the reader to make sense of the notes.
5. **Number the discussions/interviews:** Place this number on all of your notes and any diagrams produced for the same discussion/interview.

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Emily Delap  
Anti-Slavery International 2009

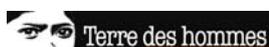
ISBN 978-0-900918-74-2



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