Regional Working Group on Child Labour (RWG-CL)

Handbook for action-oriented research on the worst forms of child labour including trafficking in children

Project to improve action-oriented research on the worst forms of child labour
Handbook for action-oriented research
on the worst forms of child labour
including trafficking in children

Regional Working Group on Child Labour in Asia (RWG-CL)
December 2002
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Foreword

The worst forms of child labour, including trafficking is a topic known for its complexities, but as yet largely unexplored. More reliable information about the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking in children, is a regional priority, so as to develop successful actions towards their elimination, following the ratification of ILO Convention 182 by a large number of countries in Asia.

In order to develop and strengthen the capacities of practitioners and researchers in South and Southeast Asia, the Regional Working Group on Child Labour in Asia (RWG-CL) created a project to improve action-oriented research on the worst forms of child labour. The project has been supervised throughout by the Reference Group on Research of the RWG-CL. It has endeavoured to gather knowledge, practical experiences and skills, as well as to stimulate creativity and innovation among those who are researching the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking.

The first result of these efforts was an RWG-CL publication, *Improving action-oriented research on the worst forms of child labour: Proceedings of a regional workshop and resource materials*, published in 2000. This charted the strengths and weaknesses of various research methods and recommended that a combination of methods should be used by the range of agencies collaborating in research on the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking.

The publication of this *Handbook for action-oriented research on the worst forms of child labour including trafficking in children* is the logical next step within the same project. The handbook aims to address gaps identified in the 2000 publication. The content is largely drawn from existing resource manuals and expert publications on child research, which do not focus directly on the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking. In a single, user-friendly volume, the handbook consolidates essential information about how to conduct effective, action-oriented research on the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking, using a children-centred approach. It shows that action-oriented research is a process carried out through a sequence of logical steps. A variety of stakeholders are involved at different points in the process and the result is action to address the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking.

This handbook seeks to be useful to practitioners who research the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking. It was developed in consultation with governments, research individuals and organisations, and is a truly collaborative effort.
We are indebted to Joachim Theis for taking on the challenge of compiling the handbook, for his efforts throughout this demanding task and for his patience and flexibility. We are also indebted to Prudence Lambert-Khan and Caspar Trimmer for their support and understanding in editing the document.

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Bangkok (Thailand), December 2002
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Acronyms and abbreviations

CRC UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
DFID Department for International Development (UK)
HIV/AIDS Human immune-deficiency virus/ acquired immune-deficiency syndrome
ILO International Labour Organisation
ILO-IPEC International Labour Organisation International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour
ILO-TICW ILO Mekong sub-regional project to combat trafficking in children and women
IOM International Organisation for Migration
NGO Non-governmental organisation
PRA Participatory rural assessment
RWG-CL Regional Working Group on Child Labour in Asia
SIMPOC ILO Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour
UNICEF United Nations Children’s Fund
Structure and purpose of this handbook

This handbook is designed primarily for the use of research practitioners who may have little or no experience of conducting research on the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking in children. Research on the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking has suffered from a range of limitations (described in Chapter 3), many of which occur because researchers try to apply outdated or inappropriate research methods in this very sensitive and complex field.

In addition, academics writing about research often present their ideas and findings in language that can be hard to understand, particularly for people whose first language is not English. This handbook is written in simple language and offers a series of clear steps, examples and ideas to help practitioners increase their understanding of - and their capacity to conduct - action-oriented participatory research on the worst forms of child labour.

The handbook will be useful for the national staff of local government, non-government and international organisations - people who are engaged in action in the field and need to make decisions on project interventions based on their own research and analysis and/or on the results of research by others. It is also a guide for managers who support fieldworkers, perhaps from distant offices in capital cities or abroad.

There are many excellent manuals and handbooks on child research, some of which concentrate on child labour, and a few of which describe participatory approaches that focus on children’s views and experiences. However, most of these manuals do not focus on application in the context of the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking. This handbook is based on these manuals and does not try to replace them. The aim is to bring together, in one easy-to-use book, all the information needed for action-oriented research on the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking.

Part I explains words, ideas and principles;
Part II provides a step by step guide to the process of research;
Part III describes methods to use in research tools, and examples of how they have been used by others.
PART I

INTRODUCTION TO THE HANDBOOK
Introduction

Research is carried out in order to collect information (data) for many different reasons. Programme managers need information to find out about different groups of people, their situations, the problems and the causes of those problems, their ideas, how well programmes work and their impact. The information is used for designing and evaluating programmes as well as in advocacy and raising awareness. For this, information is needed in various forms: in descriptions (qualitative data) and in numbers (statistics and quantitative data). No research method is necessarily either qualitative or quantitative and no method is superior to others. Everything depends on how well the method is used and analysed.

This handbook explains a variety of research methods and their use, as well as how to design research on the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking. By following the handbook step by step, basic descriptive and numerical data can be gathered and analysed. Information from the methods described in the handbook can be used to design action programmes, provided the steps are followed systematically.

The three chapters in Part I outline the research process and answer the following questions:

- What is this handbook about?
- Who will find it useful?
- Why and when it should be used?

Box 1 Collecting data

Qualitative and quantitative data are indivisible. It is not possible to count something until there is first a definition of what is to be counted - therefore the issue must be understood qualitatively. Questions cannot be framed for surveys without knowing what words and concepts will be understood by community members, including children. Statistics can only be correctly interpreted through an understanding of the context in which they have been generated. Collection of qualitative data is particularly important for the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking, which will not yield up their secrets to customary forms of survey based on the workplace or household, and using questionnaires or similar conventional research tools.

Adapted from: ILO, A Future without Child Labour, 2002
Chapter 1  An action-oriented research handbook

In this chapter you can read about

The idea of children-centred, participatory research

Definitions of key terms:
• Action-oriented research
• Children and child labourers
• The worst forms of child labour
• Trafficking
• Participatory research
• Children-centred.

This is a handbook for action-oriented, participatory research on the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking. The first stage in research is understanding its purpose and the consequent principles on which it is based.

Action-oriented research

Child labour and child trafficking are worldwide problems. In order to design programmes to combat them, valid, accurate information is needed - to identify the most urgent problems and the most effective ways to intervene, and to check the impact of projects and programmes. Research that is designed with this as its primary goal is "action-oriented research". This is different from academic research, which is designed mainly to prove or disprove a hypothesis. Action-oriented research collects information needed for an action to take place, in order to design practical solutions to practical problems.

Diagram 1  The action-oriented research process
Action-oriented research does not mean that the researchers themselves are directly involved in actions - they provide supporting information to others who actually carry out the actions.

Action-oriented research is a continuous process of collecting information, analysing what it means, designing programmes based on it and collecting further information in order to check the results. This means that actions can start before the end of the research process, as soon as information is sufficiently convincing. In this sense, action-oriented research is dynamic, with action - not just information - at its core.

For the purpose of conducting action-oriented research on the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking, a participatory and children-centred approach is the only sure way to obtain reliable information, because it means working with the children themselves, and making them visible. This is the way to build relevant programmes to eliminate the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking.

Results of action-oriented research on the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking, can facilitate relevant practical action to be taken as a direct result, and can include working to:

- Ratify international agreements and systematically monitor progress in complying with standards set in these agreements;
- Strengthen law enforcement and make it more child sensitive;
- Change national laws and policies in line with international agreements;
- Raise public awareness and change attitudes, behaviours and practices about the rights of abused and exploited children;
- Provide compulsory, free, flexible and good quality basic education;
- Raise awareness to prevent the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking;
- Identify children at special risk and take account of the special situation of girls in order to protect them;
- Remove children from the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking, through regulation and enforcement;
- Rehabilitate and re-integrate exploited and trafficked children;
- Provide vocational training, employment, and protected work schemes;
- Provide skills training for rural self-employment;
- Eradicate poverty and create alternative economic opportunities;
- Control and reduce the demand for child labourers.

Action-oriented research is generally structured around a set of research questions drawn up
by people or organisations that need to know the answers in order to start or improve projects and programmes.

**Children and child labourers**

All Asian countries are parties to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which means that 'child' refers to all human beings less than 18 years of age. The term 'child labourers' thus includes adolescents aged 15 to 17, who may be legally employed but who still need special protection in the workplace (see Box 4 under ILO Minimum Age Convention 138).

Children are vulnerable to abuse and exploitation, and need opportunities and support to develop their potential. They have been provided with special rights through the CRC. One of these rights is that all decisions taken on their behalf are taken in their best interests and with their opinions progressively taken into account as they develop the ability to express them (see Box 2).

Children are not 'objects of concern' but subjects of human rights, as made explicit in all United Nations human rights documents, including the Preamble to the CRC. This is important for researchers. A child who works or is trafficked probably also has a family, has health and education needs and experiences, and is a user (or potential user) of services such as housing, water and sanitation. Research therefore needs to take children's whole lives into account and not just concentrate on a single aspect.

**The worst forms of child labour**

Over the past decade many different words, such as 'hazardous' and 'intolerable', have been used to identify the types of work that are most damaging for children - the forms that must be the priority target of interventions. So why is there suddenly yet another term? 'Worst forms of child labour' is now the appropriate term to use for two reasons. Firstly, unlike the vague terms 'hazardous' and 'intolerable', there are clear guidelines to identify what is and is not a 'worst form' of child labour. These are given in Article 3 of ILO Convention 182 (see Box 3). Secondly, under international law, many countries are now obliged to take action against these 'worst forms' - ILO Convention 182 was adopted in 1999 and has been accepted as law by more than 130 countries (in January 2003).
The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was adopted by the United Nations in 1989 and has been ratified by 191 countries. It makes some specific provisions that are relevant to research on the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking.

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<td>Article 32 provides for ‘the child to be protected from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's spiritual, moral or social development’.</td>
<td>Accurate information is required on the hazards of child work, so that protection can be provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article 34 provides for protection ‘from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse’. It further requires State Parties to prevent: ‘(a) The inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity; ’(b) The exploitative use of children in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices; ’(c) The exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials’.</td>
<td>Accurate information is required on prostitution and pornography, so that protection can be provided to children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article 35 provides for prevention of ‘the abduction of, the sale of or traffic in children for any purpose or in any form’.</td>
<td>Accurate information is required on trafficking in children, so that protection can be provided.</td>
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<td>Article 12 paragraph 1 ‘States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child’.</td>
<td>Children's perspectives and opinions must be integral to research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article 13 paragraph 1 ‘The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice’.</td>
<td>Methods need to be found, and used, to help children to express their perspectives and opinions freely in research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article 36 protects children against ‘all forms of exploitation prejudicial to any aspects of the child's welfare’.</td>
<td>Children must not be harmed or exploited through taking part in research.</td>
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There are four kinds of 'worst forms' defined in ILO Convention 182. They are summed up as slavery, sexual exploitation, illegal activities and work that damages children's development. The first three of these are 'absolute' in that they are also forbidden by other international laws. The fourth is especially important for research because Convention 182 and related documents go on to explain that the type of work referred to should be defined in national contexts by groups such as government, trade unions, employers, families and children, and this normally happens based research findings.

**Box 3  Article 3 of ILO Convention 182 (1999) on the worst forms of child labour**

a) All forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict;

b) the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances;

c) the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties;

d) work that, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children [hazardous work].

It is not only the type of work that defines the worst forms, but also the conditions under which it takes place. According to Recommendation 190 of ILO Convention 182 these conditions include:

* work which exposes children to physical, psychological or sexual abuse;
* work underground, underwater, at dangerous heights or in confined spaces;
* work with dangerous machinery, equipment and tools, or which involves the manual handling or transport of heavy loads;
* work in an unhealthy environment which may, for example, expose children to hazardous substances, agents or processes, or to temperatures, noise levels, or vibrations damaging to their health;
* work under particularly difficult conditions, such as work for long hours or during the night or where the child is unreasonably confined to the premises of the employer.

Children's growing bodies are more vulnerable than those of adults. Thus toxic substances,
noise, vibration and dust have worse and more long-lasting effects and children may suffer physical damage from using tools and carrying out tasks that would not harm adults.

Other international laws (in addition to the CRC and Convention 182) which protect children from the worst forms of child labour are listed in Box 4. An early task for researchers is to find out which of these laws have been ratified by the national government, and what legal and policy measures have been taken to apply them in the country.

**Box 4 International legislation about the worst forms of child labour and trafficking**

The following is a comprehensive list of international human rights agreements that protect children from abuse and exploitation.

1926 United Nations Slavery Convention

1930 Forced Labour Convention (ILO Convention 29)

1949 UN Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others

1956 United Nations Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation or the Prostitution of Others United Nations Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade and Practices Similar to Slavery (which mentions child labour as well as forced and bonded labour)

1959 Abolition of Forced Labour Convention (ILO Convention 105)

1973 Minimum Age Convention (ILO Convention 138 and Recommendation 146)

This was adopted by the International Labour Conference in 1973 and by January 2003 had been ratified by 120 countries. This convention consolidates all previous minimum age legislation, which aims to protect children from starting work too early and from work that is dangerous for them.

1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC see Box 2)

1999 Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour (ILO Convention 182 and Recommendation 190), ratified by 132 countries by January 2003

2000 Optional protocols to the CRC on the involvement of children in armed conflict and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography

2000 United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime, Supplementary Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (see Box 5)
 Trafficking

ILO Convention 182 counts trafficking as a worst form of child labour (Article 3 paragraph a), but strictly speaking, it is not a worst form of labour but a process of recruitment and/or transportation and receipt of a person for the purpose of sexual or labour exploitation, during which the victim's rights are violated. Debates about the definition of trafficking were settled in 2000 by international law that makes it clear that children must be regarded as being trafficked, even if they have consented to it, as soon as they are recruited or transported with a view to their exploitation. Thus 'trafficking' does not only refer to the kidnap and sale of children (see Box 5).

Box 5 Definition of trafficking


a) Trafficking in persons means 'the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, or deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of giving or receiving or payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs

b) The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation...shall be irrelevant where any of [these] means are used

c) The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered 'trafficking in persons' even if this does not involve any of [these] means.

Participatory research

Research has not always been participatory. Until recently, all researchers collected data on problems they had defined, according to their own research design, without any consultation with the people who lived with the 'problem' and would be affected by actions taken on the basis of the research results. Researchers conducting research about children nearly always collected information only from adults, such as parents, teachers and psychologists.

Participatory research means that all the people and organisations who will be affected by the
information collected (and implementation of recommendations based on research) are fully involved in the research process. The collective name of these people and organisations is 'stakeholders' because they have a stake (interest) in research and its outcome. Stakeholders in action-oriented research on the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking, include child labourers and trafficked children, parents, communities, representatives of government agencies, donors, international organisations (such as ILO and UNICEF), non-governmental organisations (NGOs), media, employers and trade unions.

The principle of participatory research is that the people whose lives are being studied should be involved in defining the research questions and take an active part in both collecting and analysing the data. ‘Ownership’ of the ‘problem’ is increasingly shared between researchers and researched. This takes time. In the first instance, researchers are likely to ‘own’ the research ‘problem’ and design the research using methods that enable stakeholders to express themselves. But working directly with stakeholders (including children) and gradually handing over responsibility to them for setting the research agenda, changes the role of researchers to facilitators, and turns the research process into a joint project.

The strength of using participatory approaches lies in the fact that through them the researcher will be able to gain access to child labourers and trafficked children and make them ‘visible’. Indeed, it is unlikely that satisfactory assessments of bonded labour, street children or children in prostitution could be made using any other approach. However, these approaches are time-consuming, localised, and require researchers of high calibre and sensitivity to carry out the fieldwork.

Children-centred

Research described as 'children-centred' (or 'children-focused') takes an approach in which children are the focus of design, implementation and evaluation of efforts addressing their situation. Appropriate tools enable researchers to gain access to children’s ideas, thoughts and memories in their own words rather than in those of adult researchers.

Children-centred research and programming does not mean working only with children and ignoring adults. It simply means getting children into the picture. All communities contain adults and children, males and females. Most early social science research focused on men, and left women and children in the shadows. By focusing on women, feminist research since the 1960s has shown that they have different but equally valid perspectives. Research that focuses on children’s experiences and perspectives completes the community picture.
Key points in Chapter 1

• Action-oriented research is conducted explicitly for the purpose of developing programmes based on research results;
• When the results of action-oriented research are sufficiently convincing, action plans can be designed, even if the research process is not complete;
• A novel approach is needed to research the worst forms of labour, including trafficking - one that allows children to express themselves and to have a full say in the research process;
• An approach that is truly participatory and children-centred is needed in order to generate relevant and authentic information on the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking;
• Research on and with children needs to take the whole lives of children into account and not only concentrate on a single aspect;
• According to ILO Convention 182, the four main areas of worst forms of child labour, including trafficking concern forced labour and trafficking, sexual exploitation, drug trafficking and hazardous work;
• Trafficking in children includes more than kidnapping and sale.
Chapter 2  Action-oriented participatory research with children and about children

In this chapter you can read about

• What is different about research with children
• What action-oriented participatory research means in practice.

Research with children

Children’s participation in research is important because it:

• Affirms children’s right to express themselves, be heard and be listened to;
• Develops children’s analytical abilities, confidence and independence;
• Develops children’s ability to protect themselves, for example, from abuse;
• Changes the way adults view children;
• Changes the relationship between children and adults;
• Helps adults understand children better and thus to generate better data;
• Improves the quality of the research results (child researchers can get information that adult researchers cannot get);
• Changes the (power) relationship between children and researchers;
• Ultimately helps develop better policies and programmes for children.

Adults do not always know what children are doing and thinking, so asking parents and teachers will not always provide good information. Researchers should think back to their own childhood - did their parents always know what they were doing or thinking? Would they have told their parents if they asked? Did parents sometimes annoy them by telling other adults about their likes and dislikes and their feelings?

In children-centred research, we need to find ways in which children can feel empowered to tell their own stories in their own way. To a large extent, research with children is the same as research with adults (see Box 6). Children are capable and knowledgeable, and they are no more likely to lie or exaggerate than adult participants.

Nevertheless, children have less power, less information about the world outside their community and less knowledge about the long-term consequences of their actions. They may
feel unable to say no, and they do not usually have the same confidence with words as adults. Research methods must be found that enable children to express themselves - methods that minimise children's relative lack of power and any verbal inadequacies they may have.

Adults normally have power over children. But it is also important to remember other power relationships that may affect research and the relationships between researchers and children (and their communities). These include differences of gender, race, ethnicity, education, wealth, class and caste. All power relationships can affect research with human beings, of whatever age.

### Box 6  Children in research compared to adults

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children:</th>
<th>But children:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* Have less power</td>
<td>* Have valid perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Are more vulnerable</td>
<td>* Have valid knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Know less about consequences</td>
<td>* Are good informants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* May feel unable to say 'no'</td>
<td>* Are no more unreliable than adults.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Are less able to defend their own interests</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* May be less able to use words.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Boyden and Ennew, 1997*

### Appropriate research methods

Research methods must allow children to express their own views, experiences and perceptions. They should help children to do this in a variety of ways. Children (and adults) have different abilities and experiences. Verbal methods (interviews and discussions) may not work for younger children. Drawings and other visual methods such as diagrams and photos, as well as role plays, recall and ranking methods and focus group discussions, can be helpful alternatives, but it is important to be sure that methods are understood and do not offend cultural rules. It is vital that all participants work voluntarily with researchers and feel free to say 'No'. A frequently cited example of insensitivity occurred in Nepal, when researchers asked villagers to draw a map of the village on the ground with a stick, not realising that a local belief is that to disturb the ground unnecessarily will result in crop failure.

Secondary data, research diary and observation are the non-participatory bases for all research. Some work with both children and adults may also include interviews, surveys and
questionnaires but these should not be used until the later stages of research. These methods are described in more detail in the Toolkit in Part III.

Sometimes social research methods are called ‘participatory’. In fact, no research method is automatically participatory. What makes it participatory is the way it is used. A questionnaire for research on children can be more participatory if children are involved in its design, and if children use it to do research. On the other hand, drawings or role plays can discourage children if they have to follow adult instructions without understanding why this method is being used, and especially if they are not given the opportunity to explain what they have drawn and cannot be confident that researchers will not use the information, or drawings, in ways that might embarrass them or put them in danger.

The language used by children gives an important insight into their view of the world. Children have their own ways of talking, as do the communities in which they live. Researchers should use words that people understand and use every day, and be careful to avoid scientific jargon.

**Challenges for researchers**

An action-oriented participatory research approach reduces the dominant role of researchers and relies less on their direction than conventional research approaches. Researchers hand over more control to children and other research participants, involving them in defining the research agenda, choosing research questions, selecting and designing tools, collecting and analysing data, disseminating results and designing action plans and new research. At first this can be difficult for researchers to accept.

Research takes place in a world where important decisions are taken by those with the most power (governments, elite, donors, international agencies). Those with the least power are far removed from decision making. Research on the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking, deals with some of the most powerless members of society. If exploited and abused children are involved in research, this can challenge existing hierarchies and power relations. It also produces data that may not easily fit into existing planning frameworks of government and donor agencies. Some information can threaten established interests and positions.

Research with children requires flexibility and time. Children who have rarely been treated as equals by adults need time get used to a new kind of relationship with adults. They have to learn to participate. Equally, adults have to learn to treat children with respect and equality. In research in Java with children in prostitution, adult researchers initially only felt able to give
young sex workers who participated in the research the task of entering information onto a
computer. The girls enjoyed this, but their later comments on draft research methods made the
adult researchers think again, and acknowledge and use the girls' competence and ideas.

Meeting working children

It can be very difficult to gain access to working children. It may be possible to contact some
children, particularly trafficked children, migrants, street children, scavengers, beggars and
sexually exploited children, only occasionally, fleetingly or just once. Information on these
groups, like the children themselves, may also be hidden. Children may be under the control of
employers or may be too busy to talk to the researchers. Research can be dangerous for child
labourers. They may be afraid to talk because they risk being punished by parents or
employers. There are also risks for researchers themselves if they are investigating illegal
activities. Interacting with and interviewing pimps, traffickers and other criminals has to be
approached with care.

In general it is better to get information directly from child labourers themselves, but there are
situations where this is too difficult or too dangerous. It may be easier and safer to interview
people who used to be engaged in the worst forms of child labour that are being researched.
Such interviewees may be less afraid to share information, but it may be traumatic for them to
talk about their experiences again. Both current and past victims of exploitation may become
emotionally upset when talking about their experiences. This is hard for some researchers to
deal with. It can also be difficult to deal with the frustration of not being able to do anything
immediate to help the situation of exploited children.

There is no agreement among researchers about whether and how to interview children who
are being sexually exploited. Each research team must resolve this ethical dilemma
themselves. To avoid causing further emotional harm to children by questioning them about
abuse and other painful experiences, some researchers prefer to work with what are
sometimes called 'proxy (substitute) informants', whose experiences provide insight into the
children's lives. Box 7 lists some groups that may have this kind of information to share on the
worst forms of child labour, including trafficking. Even if child victims are involved in the
research, these 'proxy informants' should still be included in the research wherever possible.

Those involved in illegal activities do not want to attract attention. Personal contacts, built up
over time, can facilitate access to people who are involved in illegal activities, such as
trafficking in children, sexual exploitation of children and drug trafficking. This can be the safest
Box 7 ‘Proxy informants’ who may have information about the worst forms of child labour and trafficked children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of informant</th>
<th>Potential limitations as research participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Former children in prostitution</td>
<td>May suffer additional harm as the result of remembering and talking about experiences. Counselling may need to be offered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trafficked children who have been rescued</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trafficked adults</td>
<td>May suffer additional harm as the result of remembering and talking about experiences. Counselling may need to be offered. May have little knowledge of child trafficking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffickers, in jail and outside</td>
<td>May lie, but their lies (and self-justifications) are interesting in themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police and immigration officials</td>
<td>May be able to provide access to official records. Could be involved with traffickers. May lie, but their lies (and self-justifications) are interesting in themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local NGOs, such as human rights organisations and women's groups</td>
<td>May use stereotypical explanations and unreliable anecdotes. These are interesting in themselves, but must not be taken as 'truth'.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outreach workers, such as social workers, medical staff, and HIV/AIDS activists</td>
<td>May have good information, but may also provide the same stereotypical and anecdotal information as local NGOs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Court officials in legal cases involving children</td>
<td>May be difficult to access, but can provide excellent secondary data if good rapport is built and official permission is negotiated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clients of prostitutes</td>
<td>Can provide information about the demand for children in prostitution, but it is usually difficult to gain their confidence and cooperation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour inspectors</td>
<td>May have no direct information about children, but can be a good point of entry to places of employment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local officials and residents in areas of known trafficking such as borders or truck stops. Includes cafe' owners, and taxi and truck drivers</td>
<td>Worth interviewing or involving in focus group discussions if possible. But beware of raising too much local interest in the research and alerting criminals. This can put the research and researchers in danger.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
way to meet people who can provide direct information about illegal activities. For example, one Thai research team working with ILO found community-based organisations were invaluable in identifying work-sites where large numbers of children worked. Often it is best to use community members (children or adults) to collect data for the research team, but they need to be able to use research tools successfully and will need to be trained. Children who are familiar with the research population and area can keep a lower profile than adult outsiders, but researchers are responsible for making sure that child researchers are not sent into dangerous situations and that the children do not take personal risks to get information.

In situations where it is impossible to gain access to child participants openly, researchers may be tempted to collect data secretly. An example would be trying to get information about forced labour in a repressive state, or gaining access to information about drug trafficking. Secret research is unethical. The researcher essentially gets data by cheating the research participants, the exploiter or both. Data collected in this way are also not reliable. A male researcher who disguises himself as a client, for example, will get different answers from a sexually exploited child than if he identifies himself as a researcher. In addition, if someone who wishes to discredit the research accuses a researcher of being a ‘child sexual exploiter’, it is very difficult to prove that he did not have sexual relations with a child. Secret research is dangerous for everyone involved and should be avoided.

Establishing trust and rapport

Much is written in research handbooks about establishing trust and rapport without explaining what this means and how to do it. Both terms refer to two-way relationships - in fact other words to describe rapport are 'relationship' and 'understanding'. Children and adults alike are not going to reveal much about their lives to a stranger with a questionnaire. Trust and rapport are only built between people, over time. The key is for researchers to be reliable and open, never tell lies or make promises they do not keep.

**Time:** Establishing trust takes time, sometimes weeks or months. It will almost always take several visits before an employer will allow a researcher to interview a child domestic worker, or sex worker, in private. Allow sufficient time for researchers to build relationships with children, parents and communities. Repeated meetings and visits help to build rapport with children and their employers. Researchers need to show that they are not going to do any harm. It helps to have identity cards from the organisations sponsoring the research, letters of introduction and brief descriptions of the research that can be given to potential participants. Individuals need to explain who they are as people - children in particular like to look at researchers’ family
### Box 8  Practical guidelines for research with children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do</th>
<th>Don’t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Introduce yourself</td>
<td>• Lecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Create trust</td>
<td>• Rush</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Use simple language</td>
<td>• Criticise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Be patient</td>
<td>• Interrupt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Make sure you have adequate privacy</td>
<td>• Dominate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Be sensitive to a child’s emotions</td>
<td>• Overwhelm a child with several adult researchers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ask the child for permission</td>
<td>• Embarrass children, or laugh at them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Keep children’s views and answers confidential</td>
<td>• Reinterpret what children say</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Be flexible and creative</td>
<td>• Talk down to children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Listen to and respect children's views</td>
<td>• Stand or sit higher while children stand or sit lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Record exactly what children say</td>
<td>• Make negative comments to or about children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lower yourself to the level of children, don’t stand over them or sit on a chair, sit with them on the floor</td>
<td>• Praise, or otherwise favour, some children and not others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Be self-critical, reflect on your behaviour towards children</td>
<td>• Compare some children unfavourably with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Show interest and respect for children’s opinions, knowledge and skills</td>
<td>• Treat boys or girls, children with more schooling or from ethnic groups differently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Let them do things for themselves, in their own way</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Be humble</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Use methods that allow children to express their views, knowledge and skills.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from: Boyden and Ennew, 1997

photographs. It is neither fair nor reasonable to expect people to give information about their lives to people who refuse to provide any personal information about themselves.

**Intermediaries or go-betweens:** They help establish trust. An exploited child is more likely to trust researchers if they are accompanied by someone the child knows and trusts. But remember that some intermediaries may have their own agenda, will only introduce researchers to some children and not to others, and may influence what the child says.
Shared activities: Some researchers have established friendly relationships with children through social activities, such as going to the movies, to a musical performance, or on a picnic. They only start to discuss the research after they have established a trusting relationship with the children. However, there is a danger that the children will feel in the researcher's debt and be unable to refuse a request to take part in the research, which breaches the essential ethical rule about voluntary participation (see the following ‘eight ethical rules’). Researchers have to identify themselves as researchers from the beginning, even if it takes some time before they begin to gather information other than by observation.

Personal characteristics: Reduce barriers by using researchers who are likely to be the least threatening, perhaps by being similar to the participants in age, gender, socio-economic status, ethnicity, or language. Nevertheless, in some situations children may trust an older researcher, and some young men find it easier to talk about personal matters to a woman. Use experienced researchers who know how to deal with difficult and sensitive research situations. Make sure they understand how to deal with ethical dilemmas, and what to do if a child or adult becomes distressed. Check that they do not have a history of, or criminal record for, abusing or exploiting children.

Place: Meet research participants in a private, safe and non-threatening place, preferably of their own choosing. One researcher with street children in Uganda found that she had the best opportunities for research on the roof of an unused building, which was where they gathered for safety. But it took time before they even told her about where this was. In Ethiopia, researchers working with street-living girl prostitutes found that offering a safe place to come and eat, wash and sleep provided ideal conditions for research - but the girls were always so exhausted that they needed to sleep before they could participate. For some children, being alone with a researcher in a private space may be frightening or threatening, especially if the door is closed. They may have experiences of being held in police stations or locked up by employers, traffickers or abusive parents. It is best to ask the child to suggest a suitable place. In any case, researchers should avoid being completely alone with children if this could lead to later accusations of abuse.

Order of research: Leave the most sensitive questions until the end of an interview, discussion or sequence of research methods. Leave the most inaccessible participants until the end of the research. By that time the researchers have built up understanding of the general situation and the broader context. Where possible, meet the same research participants several times and leave the most difficult topics until the last meetings. Allow participants the right not to reply to questions that make them feel uncomfortable.
Researchers must be careful about the terms they use. Methods used early in the research should aim to find out how children and adults refer to themselves and to their work and what terms they use. Never use insulting or critical terms - even in private.

Eight ethical rules

Maintaining a code of ethics during any research process is essential as children have less power than adults. Researchers are responsible for making sure that research will do no harm to children, that participation in research is voluntary and that children agree to any subsequent action programmes as well as to the dissemination of research materials and results. All research should have a written ethical strategy that researchers agree to abide by at all times (see Part III, Toolkit). However, there are eight essential ethical rules:

Rule 1: All research participation must be voluntary

This means that informed consent must be obtained from research participants in any method. Informed consent means that a participant has been informed of and understands:

- Research aims
- Research methods and processes
- Research topics
- What the data will be used for
- That it is possible for the participant to withdraw from the research at any time.

In this last respect ‘informed consent’ might be better termed ‘informed dissent’. No participant should be cajoled, persuaded or intimidated into giving consent. NO means NO!

Because of the special position of children in society it is necessary to seek the permission of a parent or guardian as well as the individual consent of a child. However, the consent of an adult alone is not sufficient. Researchers must also obtain the consent of the children themselves. It is not enough to inform children and adults about the research - they need to understand what they hear and to know what will happen in a particular research method. When working with children, it helps to ask them to repeat back to you, in their own words, what you have told them.

Rule 2: Protect research participants from harm

Researchers are responsible for protecting all research participants from any emotional or...
physical harm that might result from the research, and to protect their rights and interests. This means judging whether the potential risks to the participants are worth taking, risks that may range from being stigmatised as a child in prostitution, to being identified by published photographs or information, to being beaten up or even killed by a pimp. Obviously, this rule is particularly important in research with exploited, abused and trafficked children. Research must stop immediately if it seems to put children at risk.

Harm can also arise from research methods that cause children to remember distressing experiences or feelings. It is not always possible to guess in advance what might cause another human being to break down. Counselling or other support mechanisms should be part of the research plan, as well as access to advice and support if researchers feel they must remove a child from a situation for his or her own safety.

Organisations that commission research, and research leaders and coordinators also have to ensure that children are safe from possible abuse by researchers. They need to check references and police records when recruiting, and monitor researchers’ field activities. Working in pairs, preferably a woman with a man, is essential with sexually exploited children, who must never be alone with a single male researcher.

**Rule 3: Ensure the safety of researchers**

Research on the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking, may put researchers at risk, especially when investigating illegal and criminal activities. Individual researchers should make sure that their colleagues, friends and family members know where they are and what they are doing each day. Think about the safest form of transport. Ensure that dress is appropriate and avoid carrying valuables. Carry documentation for establishing identity as a researcher. Where necessary, always obtain permission and support from the local authorities and, in any case, inform them, community leaders and local organisations that the research is taking place and what it entails.

**Rule 4: Respect cultural traditions, knowledge and customs**

Researchers must always respect and adhere to local codes of dress and behaviour. They should learn how people greet, thank, eat and ask questions as well as status rules such as who speaks first, who sits first etc.. Local customs, food and dress should not be criticised. Also, do not criticise research participants, do not act as a teacher or instructor, and do not give children information about things they do not know and are not yet ready to know.
Chapter 2  Action-oriented participatory research with children and about children

Rule 5: Minimise the power imbalance

Minimise the power imbalance between researchers and both adult and child participants. Use children-centred research methods and words that the research participants understand. Develop research approaches that are sensitive to children's ways of behaving and thinking: allow more time, especially for building trust, and use more interactive, participatory, visual and flexible methods.

Rule 6: Avoid raising unrealistic expectations

Researchers must be clear and honest about the research and what will be done with the information gathered. Always keep promises made to children, adults and communities and do not make promises you cannot keep, especially about future action programmes that might improve their situation. It is best not to pay participants, since this can raise expectations and lead to tensions in the community. It may also result in researchers being told what the participants think they want to hear. On the other hand, working children who spend time with you may lose income as a result; adults and children who travel some distance to take part in a focus group discussion should be offered refreshments; a hungry child will not be able to participate well in a research method. Any compensation to participants (whether money or food) should be agreed between researchers as part of the research plan. Compensation must be recorded in the daily research diary (see Step 5 in Part II) especially on those occasions when researchers spontaneously provide money or refreshments (see the example in the Toolkit in Part III).

Rule 7: Respect privacy

Always ask children's permission to use their stories and pictures - the permission of their parents or guardians, is not enough. Respect children's decisions if they refuse to be interviewed or photographed. Ask if a child or adult can spare the time to participate. Do not violate a participant's privacy by asking insensitive questions or by probing for information when it is clear that they would prefer not to answer.

Rule 8: Ensure confidentiality and anonymity

Protect the identity of the participants by changing their names, and if necessary the name of their community, in research reports and other publications. Researchers have a duty to doubt, they should discuss the issue with the children or adults involved. Share research results with the participants beforehand and seek their consent to plans for dissemination. This is especially important with respect to videos or photos, in which it is difficult to hide the identity of the participants.
Organisations that use research information in awareness raising campaigns and advocacy sometimes sensationalise in order to attract more attention. Get feedback on the report from participants before publishing:

• Acknowledge children's authorship and ownership of the research product, if this is their wish;
• Do not identify individual children or groups of children unless they have given their permission and it is certain that they will be protected from further exploitation;
• Do not use negative or degrading images of children either in pictures or in words;
• Analyse the facts, do not exaggerate or use unnecessarily emotional language.

Every research project raises specific ethical issues that have to be resolved before research begins as well as deal with dilemmas that arise in the field. Research plans must include an ethical strategy (See example in the Toolkit, Part III).

**Key points in Chapter 2**

• Children must always be allowed to speak for themselves; they know best about their own lives;
• Research with children starts with children's abilities, considers differences between groups of children, listens to children's views and ideas, and tries to involve children in all aspects of the research;
• Establishing trust and rapport between children and researchers is crucial, and involves a two-way relationship that develops over time;
• Appropriate research methods must be used with children, in particular those that decrease researchers' power and give children greater autonomy;
• Research on the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking, involves vulnerable children, who must be protected through a code of ethics for researchers.
Chapter 3  Action-oriented research on the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking

In this chapter you can read about

- Limitations of current research on the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking
- The need for different approaches and what these might be
- The 12 steps of action-oriented participatory research on the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking.

Research to date is generally of little value in designing effective programmes to help eliminate the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking. Far too often information about the worst forms of child labour is based on anecdotes and assumptions, rather than on well-designed research. Newspapers are still quoting inaccurate estimates made decades ago, such as 'there are 100 million street children in the world and the number is growing' or 'there are one million sexually exploited children in Asia'. Unfortunately researchers and otherwise competent organisations use these figures too. Reliable, locally relevant information must be collected to use in designing, putting into practice and monitoring programmes that work.

Limitations of current research

Large-scale surveys can offer useful information to researchers looking at child labour issues. Findings of national censuses or periodic household and labour force surveys can be helpful in identifying child workers in hazardous occupations. Information on large-scale migration patterns can indicate where children are being trafficked. Regional or citywide surveys, or surveys that focus on places of employment, can also be useful for pinpointing local problems, especially if studies are carried out regularly, using the same methods and can be compared over time to track changes due to programming or economic factors.

However, few valid large-scale surveys actually provide specific information on the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking. Surveys often only rely on adults (usually the head of household) to respond to questions. Questions about children's work are often only asked about waged employment of older children. If a questionnaire is too long, detailed and cumbersome, that participants give careless answers in order to make the interviewer go away. It may also be difficult to collect sensitive data on the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking, within the context of a household-based survey. Children involved in the worst forms
of child labour often do not live at home, trafficked children certainly do not, and household heads are not likely to give information about illegal activities, especially to government researchers.

Most research on the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking, seems to suffer from the eight types of limitations below. This handbook tries to challenge these limitations.

Type 1: Missing the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking

- Child labour research often misses those forms that are illegal, underground or invisible;
- Questionnaire surveys and national statistics produce little or no useful data directly about the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking;
- Data on employers of child labour are lacking;
- Assessment of programme impact, good practice and lessons learned from research and projects are in their infancy;
- Political analysis underlying policy formation is absent.

Box 9 Do not collect information that is not needed

There is a tendency to make survey questionnaires very comprehensive and to collect too much information, which cannot be analysed or stored. It is crucial to plan properly before collecting data and to focus on key information that is necessary for planning policies and programmes.

Source: Lessons learned in the ILO Mekong sub-regional project to combat trafficking in children and women (SELL-1)

Type 2: Inadequate definitions and concepts

- Unclear definitions of 'child', 'child labour' and/or 'trafficking';
- Muddled or non-existent conceptual frameworks;
- Focus on children's deficiencies and vulnerabilities rather than on their capacities and resilience (and hence solutions);
- Age groupings of children are not appropriate or sensitive to differences. For example, all children less than 18 years of age may be put into one age group, or the age groups may be arbitrary - 0-5 years; 6-10 years; 11-15 years - without taking into account the differences between children within a group. Newborn babies differ greatly from five year olds and pre-puberty 11 year olds are not the same as 15 year old young men and women. Help in drawing up age groupings for research with working children can be found under 'SIMPOC' on the ILO website (see 'Key websites' section);
• Insufficient separation ('disaggregation') of data on children from data on exploited adults, for example female sex workers of any age are sometimes referred to as child sex workers, while conversely, children in prostitution are simply lumped in with all other sex workers.

Type 3: Poor review of existing data

• Inadequate collection and analysis of secondary data;
• Research does not build on existing knowledge;
• Research repeats inaccurate information;
• Research does not question assumptions about children, work, gender and family life.

Type 4: Badly chosen samples

• The groups of people who are researched ('samples') are badly chosen;
• Different samples are used in different studies, making it impossible to compare findings;
• Migrants, homeless people, sailors, nomads or unregistered people are not included in household surveys;
• Data are not disaggregated according to age, and therefore children are invisible;
• Data are not disaggregated by gender, ethnicity, religion, location or disability, so important issues of vulnerability are missed;
• Failure to use 'control groups' when appropriate. It is not valid to collect data about, for example, illnesses suffered by working children and then say that these are the result of the work unless the data can be compared with data about the health status of a control group of non-working children, collected using the same methods. Unfortunately, researchers rarely make use of control groups when conducting research on the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking, so often their data do not justify their conclusions about the impacts of child labour and trafficking.
• Research tends to rely too often on interviews with a small number of 'key informants', often adults, or on anecdotal 'case studies' from children about whom nothing is known except their age and a pseudonym provided by the researcher.

Type 5: Inappropriate research methods

• Researchers rely on single-method studies and on anecdotes;
• Information gathered in research is rarely cross-checked (or 'triangulated') by using other methods, or by comparing the data with other studies and with secondary data;
Questionnaire surveys are often used as the only method. This is inadequate for research with children, especially where sensitive subjects such as sexuality and abuse are concerned;
• Poor-quality survey design;
• Inappropriate use of methods;
• ‘Multi-method’ studies usually consist of interviews, focus group discussions and questionnaires, which are not the most successful methods to use with children;
• Adults provide information about children rather than children speaking for themselves;
• Inadequate training and involvement of researchers;
• Inadequate quality control in data collection;
• Research does not always follow ethical guidelines;
• Research by activists tends not to follow standard research procedures, resulting in unreliable data (often in the form of ‘case studies’);
• Data are often unreliable if researchers gain access to participants through institutions, projects or programmes. Information gathered in this way may reflect what children think the project staff would like them to say, rather than what children really think, or what staff say in order to gain access to funding. Children who are provided with assistance often have less experience of the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking, than children who have found ways of coping and have not received assistance from helping organisations.

**Type 6: Inadequate data analysis**

• Badly designed research methods;
• Poor recording methods;
• Unsystematic, badly organised data;
• Opinions - gathered from interviews, focus group discussions and questionnaires - are treated as facts;
• Researchers lack experience and skills in reading numerical data and understanding what they mean;
• Researchers lack experience and skills in analysing data gathered with novel methods - sometimes this is due to a general weakness of social research in the country;
• Absence of triangulation of research results from different methods;
• Inappropriate expectations from the organisation commissioning the research;
• The topic of the research may be considered ‘too sensitive’ or ‘too political’. To avoid problems with their institutes or with censors, researchers ‘under-analyse’ their data and present ‘safe’ results;
Conclusions and recommendations are not based on the research data.

Type 7: Insufficient attention to the importance of context

- Research data are separated from the local and national context, with few details about the research subjects and no comparisons;
- When they appear simply as figures, data are taken out of context, losing the connections that help understand what they actually mean.

Type 8: Poor use of time and resources

- Trying to do too much in too little time with limited resources;
- Underestimating how long it takes to gather and analyse the data.

The remaining sections in this handbook aim to do away with, or at least minimise, these limitations.

What do you want to know?

Research has to have an aim. Action-oriented research on the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking, has the overall aim of recommending and justifying action taken to prevent, protect, provide for, or rehabilitate children caught up in these violations of human rights. The aim of action-oriented research must be to gather information for programmes that children themselves think will be successful. This means knowing what research questions to ask, and this requires prior information about context. There are two sources of information that may be useful for this: situation analyses and rapid assessments, some of which may have been undertaken by organisations such as ILO-IPEC and UNICEF.

Situation analyses

To design successful programmes to eliminate the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking, it is not enough to study groups of child labourers. It is also necessary to analyse the broader economic, social, cultural and political context in which children are abused and exploited, using what is often called a situation analysis, which has the following components, almost always drawn from already published reports:

- Review of legislation and law enforcement;
- Analysis of policies and programmes;
Institutional and stakeholder analysis (institutional structures, capacity, commitment, key actors, type and level of collaboration and participation);

Analysis of attitudes, beliefs and practices relating to children, child labour, gender, sexuality and trafficking;

Budget and resource review at national and local levels;

Analysis of what is known about the situation of children involved in the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking;

Analysis of broader socio-economic factors, such as the impact of the 1997 Asian economic crisis, or the situation of women;

In the case of cross-border trafficking, it is wise to look at situation analyses of countries on both sides of the border.

Rapid assessments

In addition to situation analyses, some rapid assessments may have been carried out, possibly by researchers commissioned by ILO-IPEC or UNICEF. Rapid assessment is a process of data collection that uses a variety of methods, such as observation, studying existing reports, interviews with key informants, group discussions, interviews with children and anecdotal case studies, to get a rapid overview of a population or a research topic. The results are not representative and the reliability is questionable if the time-frame for the assessment is too short. Rapid assessments should not be used to design long-term plans but can be used as the basis for more in-depth research and to draw up small pilot interventions. If researchers choose to carry out a rapid assessment themselves they should be careful to use ethical procedures and not to cause resentment, boredom or both among people who may be asked to participate in subsequent, more valid research. On the other hand, rapid assessments can be an excellent way of developing the relationships on which future participation in research can be built, if they include children, parents and communities as stakeholders in research planning from the beginning.

Triangulation

Situation analyses and rapid assessments can be used to identify problems and draw up research questions, but only if the data from different methods of data collection are cross-checked against each other and the similarities and differences analysed. This process is called 'triangulation'. It is a feature of all reliable research, from identifying the problem, to drawing up research questions, to research design and analysis. One danger of the term 'triangulation' is
that it might seem to imply that only two (or three) methods must be used in the research design. Good research requires many more.

Whatever the level or stage in research, the key approach to triangulation consists of two processes: comparing and contrasting. In other words, researchers need to look at - and explain - both the similarities and the differences between the information gathered by different methods. Triangulation between different research studies on the same topic can produce new understanding as different research methods complement each other. Together they can achieve more than each can separately. National household surveys can provide statistics on child labour and migration. These statistics can be compared with detailed community-level studies. For example, by triangulation between national survey and a community-level study, researchers found that the survey had underestimated urban poverty rates, since it did not include unregistered migrants in the sample. This led to follow-up research.

In the early stages of research, triangulation between different reports and sets of data means taking into account the different methods, definitions and assumptions. If there are not enough research data available, another way of triangulating in the early stages is to hold meetings of stakeholders from different government departments, NGOs and target communities (children and adults, male and female), and people with a range of professional backgrounds and experience, such as health, psychology, law, or education.

Box 10  Triangulation in practice

When they compared labour market statistics and migration patterns in Lao PDR, ILO-IPEC researchers noticed that 43.9 percent of the population is less than 15 years old. This means that more than 250,000 youth will shortly be looking for work, but there will not be enough jobs for them as 90 percent of the economy is based on self-employment in small-scale farming. Rapid assessments with youth and children show that they are not interested in working in agriculture, and are likely to try their luck over the border in Thailand - possibly through being trafficked.

This information was used to bring about a policy change in Lao PDR. The Government issued a decree allowing legal labour migration and signed an agreement with the Government of Thailand allowing more than 50,000 workers to cross the border and work legally. A labour migration system is being set up.

Source: Lessons learned in the ILO Mekong sub-regional project to combat trafficking in children and women (SELL-8)
The local context of childhood

A crucial question for child labour research is what prevailing ideas about childhood are being taken for granted in the secondary data. This question must be asked when reading a situation analysis or rapid assessment report. One major problem is the way people use the term 'child'. There are big differences between babies and teenagers, boys and girls, poor children and rich children. It is equally meaningless to talk about 'the girl child', 'the Asian child', 'the Thai child'. Childhoods vary considerably.

Many different factors contribute to the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking. One may be local expectations of what children are or can do, or what people believe are the duties of boys and girls (and their parents). These ideas may be different at different levels of society, or between rural areas and cities.

Action-oriented research has to take a broad and holistic view to identify the most important factors that contribute to the exploitation of children. Community-level action is not enough to eliminate the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking. Successful programmes also need to strengthen laws, policies and institutions that are responsible for protecting children from abuse and exploitation. It is not enough to concentrate on laws and policy-making at national level without considering the capacity and commitment to put them into practice at local level. Action-oriented research has to identify the actions that can have the biggest impact on the lives of exploited children.

The 12 steps of action-oriented, participatory research

Twelve steps carry us up from identifying a problem to taking action to resolve it. The next part of the handbook explains each of these steps with respect to research on the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking.
Diagram 2 The action-oriented research staircase

Level 1 Preparation

Level 2 Protocol design

Level 3 Data collection

Level 4 Analysis and report writing

Level 5 Follow-up

Step 1: Identify stakeholders and research team
Step 2: Define research aims and major research questions
Step 3: Collect, review and analyse secondary data
Step 4: Develop detailed research questions
Step 5: Develop research tools
Step 6: Pilot research tools and finalise research plan
Step 7: First phase of data collection
Step 8: Preliminary analysis of collected data
Step 9: Second phase of data collection
Step 10: Data analysis
Step 11: Prepare research report
Step 12: Disseminate report, store data, make action plans

Chapter 3 Action-oriented research on the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking
Key points in Chapter 3

- Because most existing research has serious limitations, action-oriented, participatory, children-centred research needs to be conducted in order to collect reliable data on the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking;
- Research on the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking, must be based on understanding of the wider context;
- Results of situation analyses and rapid assessments may provide useful information on the wider context;
- At every level, information must be cross-checked against information from other sources and about other groups (triangulation);
- The action-oriented research process consists of 12 distinctive steps. Each step must be properly carried out to ensure successful progress.
The ‘twelve steps’ for action-oriented research are divided into five levels: preparation, protocol design, data collection, analysis and writing, and follow-up.

Read all the 12 steps first, then follow each step systematically, in combination with the Toolkit in Part III, to carry out action-oriented, participatory research on the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking.
Level 1 Preparation

Level 5

Level 4

Level 3

Level 2

Level 1 Preparation

Step 3: Collect, review and analyse secondary data

Step 2: Define research aims and major research questions

Step 1: Identify stakeholders and research team
Level 1 Preparation

Step 1: Identify stakeholders and the research team

- Contact and involve those people and institutions interested in the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking, who are in a position to take action based on the research results;
- Raise awareness and build commitment among stakeholders;
- Encourage partnerships between stakeholders;
- Identify researchers from among the stakeholders. They need to be selected at the beginning of research.

Step 2: Define research aims and major research questions

- Arrange meeting(s) for stakeholders to discuss relevant issues and find out what they already know;
- Together with the stakeholders, define the aim of the research - what do you need to know in order to improve work to eliminate the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking?
- Agree on the key questions the research will answer and can answer within practical constraints (including time, money and skills).

Step 3: Collect, review and analyse secondary data

- Find existing books, research reports, statistics, policy, legal and programme documents, videos, films and other information relevant to the key research questions;
- Consider the assumptions, questions and data collection methods that are used in this secondary data;
- Compare and contrast secondary data; find inconsistencies and try to explain them;
- Try to recalculate statistics to make them children-centred;
- Identify information gaps and possible new research questions.
Step 1: Identify stakeholders and the research team

Definition

**Stakeholders**: People and organisations that have an interest or role (‘stake’) in an activity, event or organisation. Stakeholders can include clients, development agencies, donors, relatives, professionals, community leaders, agency administrators, volunteers, or child labourers.

If research is going to lead to action, it is necessary to involve a broad range of stakeholders in the entire research process. Stakeholder participation builds ownership and commitment, raises awareness and understanding. It also lays the groundwork for stakeholder collaboration beyond the research phase in planning and taking action. To identify stakeholders, ask:

- Which government and non-government agencies and which individuals have the power and the will to take action against the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking?
- Who has responsibilities related to children in the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking?
- Who should take action following the research?
- Which children have personal experience of the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking?

**Stakeholders might include people from:**

- **Government**: Ministries and departments of labour, justice, education, health, women, police, interior, social welfare, development, finance and investment, and statistics;
- **Civil society**: Organisations of child labourers, employers' organisations, children's rights organisations, trade unions, religious organisations, children's organisations, and charities;
- **Community**: Child labourers, community leaders, and parents of child labourers;
- **Other national institutions and people**: media, research institutes, and women's organisations;
- **International organisations**: such as ILO, IOM, UNICEF, the World Bank, and international NGOs.

Stakeholder involvement starts from the outset of the research project, with identifying the aim and focus of the research, and continues into the secondary data review, data collection, analysis, report writing and disseminating results. Participation does not mean that everybody
has to be involved in every step of the research. Discuss exactly who should be involved in which step, and why. Identify the most committed stakeholders and those who have the best potential to act upon research results. Work out how they should be involved, so that their role is clear to everyone.

**Initial composition of the research team**

All members of the research team, which should ideally include children, should be involved from the beginning in the development of the research. This will build their understanding of the situation of exploited children, develop their capacity for carrying out research and strengthen their ownership of the research results.

There are several other issues to consider in selecting members of the research team from among, or with the help of, the stakeholders. The team should include a range of ages and ideally have equal numbers of males and females. Try to ensure the team includes some people who are similar to the research population (same gender, age, class, background, ethnicity and status). Include people who understand the cultural beliefs and practices and are familiar with the local area, have contacts and/or speak the local language(s). Include people with experience of direct project work with vulnerable children and participatory projects, people with data collection skills, analysis skills, programme experience. A mixture of academic and professional backgrounds is advisable in order to ensure that research is holistic and does not, for example, concentrate only on children's psychological problems. Social workers, sociologists, economists, statisticians, psychologists, medical workers, journalists, activists, social anthropologists, public health workers, local government officials and many others can all play useful roles in a research team. The ideal is to have researchers who complement each other, rather than being all the same. A diverse team provides a broader range of perspectives and supports the principle of triangulation.

At an early stage appoint a coordinator to be responsible for overall team leadership. The main talents required by a coordinator are organisational skills, and ability to meet deadlines and motivate others. Coordinators should gather data alongside other researchers. They should not be desk bound in an office or a university.

In order to involve stakeholders fully in action-oriented research, organise the research process in a way that facilitates their learning about conducting research. It may be necessary to organise short and focused technical workshops at different times during the course of the research. These workshops might look at research methods that are likely to be used, how
to develop a research protocol, how to analyse data, how to field test research tools, and how to write a research report. Organise a workshop for the research team to discuss situation analyses and share experiences of the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking, working with children, data collection and other aspects of research. This should be a structured process which allows team members both to teach, and learn from, each other.

**Key points in Step 1**

- To ensure that the results of research are acted upon, it must involve all important stakeholders from the inception of research;
- Stakeholders will be children, child labourers, parents of child labourers, together with representatives of government, non-government, international and civil society organisations;
- Broad stakeholder participation in action-oriented research improves understanding of the issue, builds ownership and commitment to act, and lays the groundwork for future collaboration;
- Research team members should have a broad range of complementary skills.
Step 2: Define research aims and major research questions

Definitions

**Research aim:** Overall purpose of the research.

**Research question:** A question the research aims to answer, which follows from the research aim. Research questions structure the research. They are not hypotheses to be proved or disproved. Also, they should not be confused with the (lower-level) questions asked in interviews or questionnaires.

Once stakeholders have been identified, organise a meeting, or series of meetings, with groups of stakeholders to explore how they see the problem. What do they know about the proposed topic? What don’t they know? What do they need or want to know? For example, at the start of ILO’s Mekong sub-regional project to combat trafficking in children and women, national-level stakeholder meetings were convened and included representatives of governmental and non-government organisations, academics and activists. They discussed a situation analysis report, and decided on the selection of provinces for follow up research and pilot interventions.

Stakeholders need to agree on the aim of the research. Action-oriented research on the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking, will have the overall aim of finding out more about the children involved. But research has to be more specific than this if it is going to be useful for taking action. It must provide information that is needed, accurate and detailed. This means getting answers to the following questions:

• Why is this research needed?
• What will the information add to our understanding of the problem?
• Which stakeholders will benefit from the research?
• What kind of data are needed in order to plan for action?
• What is known already? (secondary data)
• Where are the gaps in existing knowledge?
• What should the main research focus be?
• What kind of research should be carried out?
• How much time and money are needed (or available) for the research?
• How will the research results be used and by whom?
• What could be achieved by taking action based on the research results?
• Are other people or groups trying to answer these questions? Should they be included among stakeholders, or is joint research possible?
A stakeholder survey asking questions such as these can be useful, if it is followed up by a workshop to discuss the results. A one-day workshop for stakeholders held by a team of UNICEF-sponsored researchers on children in prostitution in Indonesia provides a good example of how to focus these discussions: The researchers divided the stakeholders into small groups with similar interests and gave them the morning to answer two key questions:

• What do we need to know to improve our programme work?
• What do we need to know to improve our advocacy work?

The groups were facilitated by future researchers and included children in prostitution. In the afternoon, the groups shared their lists by presenting them on a flipchart and discussing them. The lists were consolidated and each question was written on a separate piece of card. The cards were then placed on the floor and all stakeholders grouped and prioritised the questions, helped by researchers. This was not only a participatory way of deciding on research questions, it also gave people experience of the kind of ranking method that is used in participatory research.

It is not possible to carry out research on the whole range of issues concerning the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking. Some questions cannot be answered without background information. Funding may not be available for comprehensive research. Thus some practical decisions must be taken on the limits and focus of the research project. Some options might be:

• An exploratory study to get an overview of the nature and extent of the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking;
• A detailed study to understand the mechanisms and patterns of child labour, its nature and causes, together with children’s views and coping strategies, in order to design a child-centred programme;
• A survey to identify the size and spread of the problem (for planning and monitoring);
• An assessment to plan community-based action on trafficking and to identify target areas and populations;
• Advocacy research to get accurate data for campaigning among policy and decision makers about the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking.

The list of main research questions from Step 2 will be refined in Step 3, through analysis of existing information (secondary data) and Step 4, when the main questions are broken down into concrete questions that can be answered using specific research methods. Diagram 3 shows the process of deciding on research questions.
Handbook for action-oriented research on the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking in children

Diagram 3  The process of asking research questions

New questions
What has the research not covered? What other question has it raised?

Main research questions
What do we need to know to improve our work?

Implicit question
How do we ask the main research questions using research methods in the field to fill the gaps in existing information?

Secondary data analysis
Does this information already exist?

Key points in Step 2

• Research must have a clear, agreed aim;
• The aim of action-oriented research is to gather information that is relevant to stakeholders;
• Key research questions must be closely related to the aim of the research;
• Key research questions must be practical, and achievable with available resources;
• Key research questions need to be systematically grouped and prioritised.
Step 3: Collect, review and analyse secondary data

Definitions

Children-centred statistics: Statistics in which the data are presented (for example in tables) so that they focus on children, rather than (as is usual) on adults, households, institutions or services.

Disaggregation: The process of dividing statistical data into smaller groups, for example by gender, age or location. This allows analysis that shows differences between groups of people and is a guide to finding inequalities and violations of rights.

Secondary data: Any existing information that was collected for other studies or purposes. Secondary sources include books, published or unpublished research reports, theses, statistics, records, media articles, videos, photographs or films.

Any advance in knowledge always begins by analysing what is already known. This is called ‘secondary data review and analysis’. Studies of child labour, like all other research, begin with collecting, analysing and evaluating all existing information that is relevant to the research topic. This is more than a literature review, it is an essential part of research, which takes a critical look at existing data, ideas, prejudices and images, before deciding what research questions or hypotheses need to be investigated, with which groups and using which methods.

Secondary data review and analysis underpins all good scientific research, and should be given sufficient time and resources. Initially, the secondary data you review and analyse will be more national than local. Later on, you can gather more localised secondary data from, for example, school, police and clinic records, when you work in the field.

Where to find secondary data

If researchers try to look for information specifically on the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking, they are likely to be disappointed, or to come back with one or two anecdotal reports. Yet the children affected can be found in a variety of secondary data, even in countries where official statistical records are scarce. Creativity and perseverance are required. In the first place, a large number of individuals and organisations collect data that include information on children. A few of these are:

- Researchers and research institutes that have studied child work and migration;
• Government departments of labour, social welfare, children, women, health, and education;
• Human rights organisations focusing on child rights, gender, trafficking, and child labour;
• NGOs and charitable organisations;
• International organisations such as ILO, IOM and UNICEF;
• Newspapers, magazines, radio and TV.

Some secondary data may not focus on children, but nevertheless include useful information about children. Background information on children and childhood can be found in:

• Reports on employment and labour force;
• Reports on education and schools, and health;
• Socio-economic household surveys;
• Reports on work-related accidents can be used to identify hazardous (child) labour;
• Research reports on child labour, trafficking, migration, street children;
• Surveys to investigate causes of social problems affecting children, such as child abuse or the commercial sexual exploitation of children;
• Poverty assessments;
• Project reports on work related to the abuse and exploitation of children;
• Country situation analyses - general and specifically on children (many donors carry these out periodically).

It is particularly important to do a survey and analysis of official documents, in order to find out what laws apply nationally; and of media (newspapers, magazines, television and radio programmes) in order to find out what people think about children, child workers and trafficked children. Following are some additional tips for possible sources of information about specific groups of children:

**Children exploited through commercial sex**

• Figures for sexually transmitted diseases for people under 18 years old (boys and girls), remembering to look for all sexually transmitted diseases, not just HIV/AIDS. Disaggregate by district and year of age and try to compare different years;
• Police and court records of prosecutions concerning sexually exploited children (remember to look for the definition of prostitution and for prostitutes, clients and pimps); pregnancies and abortions for girls under 18 years of age; adult offences concerned with pornography. Correlate figures for girls with early pregnancy where possible.
Child domestic workers

• Census and labour force data on domestic workers, looking to see if children less than 18 years of age can be separated from data on adults;
• Household surveys or censuses, looking for data that show the relationship of children less than 18 years of age to the household head. Unrelated children may be ‘invisible’ domestic workers;
• Record and contact women’s organisations and any projects for domestic workers;
• Any information (and legislation) about wages and conditions of service;
• Life histories, oral testimonies of current/former domestic workers.

Children living in the street

• Police, juvenile centres, and court records of ‘loitering’ offences;
• Mapping of organisations of, or working with, street children;
• Compilation of all theses, reports and research carried out on street children during the past decade.

Trafficked children

• Research on migration, especially if it is possible to identify boys and girls under the age of 18 years;
• Information from migration detention centres;
• Police and court records of prosecutions of traffickers or illegal migrants (looking at trends over a number of years);
• Media reports (for information about public attitudes, but also coverage of research reports and policy/legal changes).

Review and analysis of secondary data

The initial review of secondary data will give you an overview of the research topic, as well as help you to identify gaps in available information. It may answer some of your initial research questions, and help you to develop more specific or more detailed questions.

Some points to remember

In reviewing secondary data and planning new research on the worst forms of child labour,
including trafficking, a number of points should be kept in mind:

• You should consider children as active human beings and subjects of rights, not objects of concern, or victims, or categories. These preconceptions often distort data on child labour. The correct approach is to use human rights as a framework, which means that children are viewed as capable social actors rather than as victims. It also means that information about children must focus on their rights, rather than on the interests, views and actions of adults;

• To understand the child rights dimensions of any situation, data must be disaggregated to show which groups of children have their rights violated or not achieved. Disaggregation will aid precision. It is vital in programme planning because it helps target specific interventions to specific groups of children. Disaggregation is also an important tool for monitoring the impact of interventions. Typical disaggregations are by age, gender, ethnicity and location, but the precise disaggregation used in any research will depend on local social structures. Thus in South Asia, caste might be an important disaggregation; in Thailand and Viet Nam, disaggregation by province is important;

• Information about children is produced by different organisations and agencies, all of which have their own objectives. This information must be integrated and, where possible, reconciled to give a coherent picture. A crucial question for data that is supposed to be about children is how children-centred this information is. The unit of observation and analysis may be adults, households or institutions such as schools. To find out what is really happening to children you may have to recalculate the data (see Box 11).

There are biases in official statistics with respect to children. Because children tend to be discriminated against in society, they are also discriminated against in statistics. Information about children is collected and recorded but it is usually not presented as being about children in official publications and tables. Instead, the tables are about households, schools or hospitals.

Review and analysis of secondary data is a systematic process. This process has the following components:

Origin

What is the source of the information? Is it simply a one-off piece of information, such as a single survey of child labourers? If so, how does it relate to other information? The origin will tell you about why the information was collected. This is important as the information will vary
Box 11 Comparison of statistics based on households (adult-centred) and schools (service-centred) with children-centred statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household-centred statistics</th>
<th>School-centred statistics</th>
<th>Children-centred statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of households with no children;</td>
<td>Number of schools in the district;</td>
<td>Number of children in the school-aged population in the district;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of households with 1 child;</td>
<td>Number of children enrolled in school;</td>
<td>Number of children who are enrolled in classes with more than 30 children;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of households with 2 children;</td>
<td>Average number of desks in the school.</td>
<td>Average number of children per desk;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of households with 3 or more children;</td>
<td></td>
<td>Number of children in a household with two adults and no other child;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of female-headed households.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Number of children in household with three or more other children and a single mother.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Problems

- Gives no idea about children's place and situation in family structures.
- Gives no idea if there are enough schools for the number of children who need them.
- Gives no idea if there are enough schools for the number of children who need them.

depending upon the purpose for which it was collected. The aims of a census office, a Ministry of Education, Health Ministry or Justice Department are different, and each agency collects information according to its definition of, and interest in, children. For example, the Ministry of Education thinks of children as pupils, and the Justice Department collects information about juvenile delinquents. This affects the age groups and categories used to order the information. The strengths and limitations of different sources need to be taken into account. Some information is collected but not used, and this may be useful for research on the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking.

Different types of child labour are often not clearly defined or separated from each other. The lack of common definitions and age categories makes it difficult to compare data from different
surveys. Despite these limitations, official data can be useful for research on the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking. Sources of statistics include government surveys, ILO labour force surveys, IPEC child labour surveys (see SIMPOC on the ILO website), national household surveys (for example the World Bank's Living Standards Surveys), and surveys with street children, employers and schools.

Media reports, court records and reports by child protection agencies can be useful sources for identifying areas where children are exploited, for example in mines, on fishing platforms, or in salt making. However, such reports are seldom representative and may draw much attention to a few particularly visible forms of child labour, while overlooking the worst forms that are hidden from the public eye. The most reliable option is to use different sources of information to identify areas for research.

Collection and recording

The methods used to collect data affect their quality and usefulness. Research results can only be assessed and verified if there is transparency about the data collection methods used and how they were used. Is a copy of the research protocol (or research instruction booklet - see Level 2 for more information) included in the data presentation? How good and how relevant was this research protocol? It is important to know about the questions asked; the definitions used; the conditions under which research was carried out; sample sizes and how they were chosen; whether control groups were used and how; characteristics and training of researchers and composition of the research team; and the recording methods, language and definitions used. It is also important to know when or how often the data were collected. All this information should be provided in official reports, usually in an annex.

It would also be useful to know whether the researchers had sufficient training. Did they understand the research protocol or research tools? Did they have any part in the design of the research? How responsible were they? Is there any danger that untrained or uncommitted research assistants filled in questionnaires themselves, without carrying out interviews? What was the purpose of the data collection? Did the organisation work to ban child labour, to promote adult trade union interests, or to support children? What interests were at stake?

Organisation and storage of data

It is important to know how the secondary data are stored: whether in report form or on computer databases. If on computer, it may be possible to access the data and manipulate the
data categories. For example, tables may show children divided into age groups of five years (0-5, 6-10 etc.), when having the information on children by each year of age could be more useful to work out the age at which children tend to leave school and go to work in certain areas. Statistics offices can often provide data calculated in different age groups on request.

**Processing**

It is important to consider the degree of transparency with which the data are published and processed. Try making an inventory of available data, showing what exists, how it has been processed and by whom.

Ask some of the following questions: What different ages were given for childhood in different documents? How were these different ages presented in tables? What age groupings were used for data collection and presentation by different agencies (government, UN agencies, NGOs)? How easy is it to compare figures between agencies (for example children in school compared to children who are working)? What are the main problems in trying to compare age groups between agencies? How could these problems be solved?

It is important that the age groupings used to collect and present information about children are the same. In most countries the age groups depend on the perspective of the agencies involved in collecting and presenting data for different purposes. Thus, for example, national census offices usually publish information in five-year age groups: 0-5; 6-10, 11-15; 16-20. Ministries of education publish information according to type of school: 1-2 years (nursery care), 3-5 years (pre-school), 6-9 years (primary school), 10-13 years (lower secondary), 14-18 years (upper secondary). Ministries of health are likely to publish information according to the risks of illness and/or programmes for prevention, such as under 1 year; 0-4 years; 5-14 years, 15-49 years (for women).

Government statistics, labour force surveys, household surveys, and census data mostly cover people over 14 years of age. Figures about youth are mixed with data about adults, with the juvenile population often classified as aged 14 to 21 years, rather than 14 to 18 years. Accident, injury and mortality figures are usually not disaggregated by age. However, if they are, they can be used to identify hazardous child labour.

**Accuracy**

Not all numbers make sense, and many facts and figures are taken out of context. Some
unclear and their accuracy doubtful. Remain sceptical about numbers and check constantly that those presented in secondary sources are consistent. It is easy to see whether the numbers in tables add up, or whether numbers in graphs and tables are consistent with figures given in the text. But it is more difficult to assess whether numbers derived from one source are, or even should be, consistent with those from other sources. Important clues to the reliability of the data can always be found in the clarity with which tables and graphs are titled and data referenced. All the variables and units employed should be clear and unambiguous.

Analysis

It makes no sense to collect still more information when the existing data have not yet been fully analysed. It is worth trying to find out if all existing data has been fully exploited. Examine critically whether the analysis in previous research used the data appropriately and whether the conclusions reached were based on the data and relevant to the research questions. Conclusions must be based on available evidence rather than on previous assumptions.

To analyse available data about the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking, ask the following questions:

• How useful and reliable is the information for the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking?
• How was the information generated?
• Is the information action-oriented?
• Can it be used to design practical programmes?
• What do the data tell us about children and the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking?
• What do the data hide?
• Do conclusions reached match with presented data?
• Where are the gaps in existing information?
• How can the gaps be filled?

Compare different secondary sources with each other and with the data that are collected later during the fieldwork. Finding supporting and contradictory data and explaining the differences is an important part of analysis. Try to prepare lists and tables with key information from different sources. This will make it easy to compare data and assess their reliability.
**Dissemination**

Data are used and published in various ways and for different purposes, which affects the way the information is presented. Does the agency collecting the data have more than one means of disseminating information and more than one audience? It is worth examining the agency’s full range of publications and other products of research and comparing the information they contain. Are there differences between the information used internally and published in the media, for official consumption or for fundraising? With respect to child labour research, these differences may distort both the information received and the research questions raised.

**Assumptions, terms, concepts and definitions**

All data-collection is the result of assumptions made about the research topic, the people researched and the methods used. What did the people who generated the secondary data believe about society, families, gender, ethnicity, children and childhood?

In planning research it is important to clarify key terms and definitions. Secondary sources and discussions with stakeholders can be used to analyse these terms. Analyse the language used by government officials, media, campaigners and donors to describe different phenomena. You can count the number of times specific words or phrases appear, and use this to identify themes and concepts in documents, in films, audio tapes, or speeches. (This process is known as 'content analysis'.)

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**Key points in Step 3**

- Like all research, studies of the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking begin by collecting, reviewing and analysing all secondary data before planning a new research project;
- Sufficient time needs to be set aside for systematic collection, review and analysis of secondary data;
- Most secondary data, although about children, do not focus on children, so re-analysis of statistics and other data may be necessary;
- When analysing secondary data it should be recognised that different organisations have different objectives and collect, record, store and process data in different ways using different age groups.
Level 2 Protocol design

- Step 6: Pilot research tools and finalise research plan
- Step 5: Develop research tools
- Step 4: Develop detailed research questions
Level 2  Protocol design

Step 4 Develop detailed research questions

• Based on the topic of research and secondary data analysis, stakeholders identify specific questions for research;
• What information is needed to answer the key research questions?
• Who has that information and how can it be collected?

Step 5 Develop research tools

• Consider different ways of collecting the data required to answer the key questions;
• Choose research tools in the light of the aim, topic, key research questions, source of information and participants;
• Design research tools;
• Include an ethical strategy in the protocol.

Step 6 Pilot research tools and finalise research plan

• Once research tools have been designed, run a pilot of each one;
• Based on piloting results, modify or adapt the research tools as appropriate;
• Finalise membership of the research team;
• Finalise practical and logistical preparations (such as field timetable, budget, transport, equipment) and include this in the protocol;
• Make plans to ensure the security of researchers when researching illegal activities;
• Agree final research protocol with stakeholders and research team members.
Protocol: Instruction booklet for data collection, including definitions of key terms, all research tools, ethical procedures and other details of research design.

For each piece of research they undertake, researchers must design a new protocol that all of the researchers will need to use throughout the fieldwork. Because everyone follows the same set of instructions, it ensures that data gathered by different researchers, at different times and places and with different groups, can be scientifically compared - and is therefore valid and reliable. The protocol can be used to train new researchers, including research participants, and it can be used over time, once the first research process is finished, to gather data that can accurately monitor the results of actions.

A research protocol must contain:

- Background, justification, aims and objectives of research, and definitions of key terms and concepts;
- Research questions;
- A set of detailed research tools using different methods;
- Rationales for choosing particular target groups and research locations;
- Sampling technique(s) to be used, and information on the use of control groups;
- Ethical guidelines, including methods for obtaining informed consent and instructions for researchers' behaviour;
- Plan of research, with timetables, locations, numbers of participants, where each researcher will go, equipment and transport requirements.

Each researcher should carry a copy of the protocol at all times during the research, and constantly refer to it. It should be clear and well presented. Because it is so vital and used so often, the copies given to researchers must be perfectly legible and firmly bound. Part III, the Toolkit, gives some examples of the kind of material that should be included.

The protocol should be drafted and designed by the research team, and feedback from stakeholders should be sought and incorporated during this process. As well as improving the protocol itself, this will help the stakeholders develop an in-depth understanding of the research methods, research tools and research process. Finalise the draft research protocol before starting the data collection fieldwork, and revise it after the first phase of field research (see Step 8).

Steps 4, 5 and 6 explain what is involved in developing a research protocol.
Step 4: Develop detailed research questions

Definition

Research question: A question the research aims to answer, which follows from the research aim. Research questions structure the research. They are not hypotheses to be proved or disproved. Also, they should not be confused with the (lower-level) questions asked in interviews or questionnaires.

Initial stakeholder discussions on the research aim, and the review of secondary data (Steps 1-3) have already identified topics and question areas for the research. Now is the time to review these once more with the stakeholders. If necessary, ask again: What needs to be known to design or improve work to eliminate the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking? Where are the gaps in data, knowledge and understanding? Discuss how each piece of information will be used for later action and planning. Avoid adding more and more questions without a clear idea of how the data will be used. Get feedback on the draft list of questions from programme managers, government officials, child labourers and researchers. Organise the topics into a logical order.

To ensure that everyone has a common understanding, define the terms and concepts that will be used by the research team. (These terms and concepts should be used consistently throughout the research.) Do the participants understand these terms and concepts differently to you? For example, to the participants, is a 17-year-old with a job and a family still a child? What do they understand by the word ‘trafficking’? Ensure all the researchers and stakeholders are aware of these differences and the potential for confusion.

Once there is agreement among stakeholders and researchers about the broad topics and research questions, define more detailed questions. Each broad research question will 'hide' some smaller, detailed questions.

Selecting groups to be researched

Once the research questions are established, it is necessary to think about which groups of people will be able to help answer each of these questions as research participants - unless a complete and satisfactory answer can be found from secondary data. Each question will probably require two or more groups. Research on the worst forms of child labour, including
trafficking, is likely to define overall groups of participants, such as:

- Adults working with children in projects for child labourers;
- Parents of trafficked children;
- Children aged five to 15 years who do not attend school in a community (half girls and half boys).

Even if one group could provide the answer, it is often interesting to compare the results from using the same method with different groups, or in different places. Remember to always try to compare the perspectives of adults with those of children on the same topics. Collecting data from different sources is a form of triangulation. Many different participants can provide information about the situation of child labourers. They all bring their own perspectives and views on an issue.

Selecting the wrong groups of participants reduces the relevance of the data. For example, research about child labour in which parents give all the answers for their children, will not produce much useful information about what children themselves think.

Diagram 4 shows the range of people who might be used for information on children in prostitution.

**Diagram 4 Sources of information on children in prostitution**

![Diagram of sources of information on children in prostitution]

- Pharmacist
- Researchers
- Prison staff
- Journalists
- Lawyers
- Police
- Social workers
- Condom sellers
- Clients

- Parents
- Health workers
- Brothel, Bar owners
- Pimps, brokers, agents
- Children who used to be sexually exploited
- Adult sex workers

At play
At home
At work
In institutions
Key points in Step 4

• Define key terms and concepts for common use by research team members;
• Research questions are the basis of a research framework;
• Each broad research question can be broken down into a series of detailed questions.
Step 5: Develop research tools

Definitions

**Protocol:** Instruction booklet for data collection, including definitions of key terms, all research tools, ethical procedures and other details of research design.

**Research method:** A systematic, scientific technique for gathering data.

**Research tool:** Purpose-designed research instrument to gather systematic answers to specific research questions. These tools are structured within a data gathering protocol.

**Sample:** In general, the group of research participants who will be targeted to provide answers to a specific research question. Within a research tool, the precise characteristics and numbers of participants who will be asked to work with researchers on this tool. In certain cases, a selection of people (or places, or objects) chosen to represent the target population, using a variety of techniques.

The next step is to start the process of designing the research tools that will be used to collect data to help answer the research questions. The first thing to do is to decide which research methods are most appropriate for answering each research question with the groups of participants identified at the end of Step 4. Research tools will be based on these methods. Later on, it will be necessary to define samples and, if necessary, control groups for each tool, and to plan for using the tools in practice.

Choosing research methods

The research methods used to seek answers to each research question will depend on the question itself and on the types of participants being worked with on each question. However, two research methods - observation and research diary - are obligatory, and should always be included in the set of research tools in the protocol.

- Observation is the basis of all good research, and researchers need to make use of at least unstructured observation. Unstructured observation takes place throughout the research process, leading to the formulation of research questions that can be tested using other more systematic methods, including structured observation (see the Toolkit in Part III for a standard observation sheet).
Handbook for action-oriented research on the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking in children

• Research diaries should be kept by all researchers, from the first stakeholder meeting onwards. It is a good motivation if all researchers are given new diaries - plain ruled, hard bound notebooks that can easily fit into a bag - at that meeting or soon after (see the Toolkit in Part III);

**Individual and collective methods**

Observation and research diary records do not require direct contact with participants. Methods that do require contact with participants can be classified into 'individual methods' and 'collective (group) methods' - although some can be used both with individuals and with groups of people.

**Individual methods** are used with single children and adults who have special knowledge of a situation or topic. Individual methods are also used to give individual participants a confidential opportunity to talk or write about personal and sensitive issues that they might not express in public. These methods help to bring out a range of different views. Individual responses only reflect individual viewpoints, so it is necessary to use them with a significant number and variety of people.

**Collective methods** are useful for exploring consensus, such as community-level information and public attitudes. Collective methods such as focus group discussions or role play can make groups of children feel more comfortable and can reduce the role and power of the researchers. Observation of the ways people interact as they participate in a group method can be a useful source of information in itself.

Collective methods are not suitable for gathering data on individual views, sensitive personal issues or some major social problems. They can lead to superficial results if some participants do not dare speak up in front of others. In some cultures people are encouraged to express themselves freely in public, while in others the opposite is the case. Group methods benefit outspoken individuals but disadvantage quieter ones. Collective research methods are often not possible during conflicts or dangerous situations.

Make a table showing both broad and detailed research questions and the participant groups. Then consider the methods that would be most suitable for asking these groups of participants these questions, by looking at the Toolkit in Part III, and any other accounts of research methods that you can find. At least two methods should be used in tools to answer each question. Add these methods to the table (see Box 13).
Next, define the limitations and opportunities of using each research method with the selected participant groups. Discuss with stakeholders:

- Who are the participants from which data is collected? Different participants react
differently to the same methods depending on their age, ethnicity, or level of literacy.

- How sensitive is the topic? Are there particular challenges in getting access to the research population, such as language difficulties or 'invisibility' of the type of labour they are involved in?
- What is the unit of observation? What is the level at which the research topic is studied - individual, household, institution or community?
- What will be the unit of analysis? What is the level at which the research topic will be analysed - individual, household, institution or community?
- How much time, money and resources can the stakeholders spend on the research?

Once these questions are answered, refine the table like that in Box 13. Box 14 gives guidelines on when, why and how certain research methods can be used.

Detailed descriptions and examples of research methods are provided in the Toolkit in Part III. Other methods have been used in research with children in general and child labourers and trafficked children in particular, which can be found in other handbooks and manuals listed in the bibliography.

Each method needs to be used in a research tool designed to answer a specific research question or questions. Researchers should not be afraid of trying out their own ideas for new ways to use a particular method that are appropriate for the culture, age and other characteristics of the participants in their research.

**Sampling**

Each research tool must contain details of the sample group of participants with whom it will be used. Sampling is the process of selecting actual locations, participants, households or enterprises for study from among the available sources of information. The correct samples will provide reliable answers. A sample that is wrongly chosen or too small can make the research data invalid.

Each specific group of participants is referred to as a 'sample'. With the exception of a census, which counts and measures an entire population, social research can only work with a small number of people (the sample), who are taken to be typical of their group, in order to ask questions and/or test hypotheses.
### Box 14 Research methods - when, why and how to use them

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>When/why/how it should be used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Research diary</td>
<td>Every day, for planning and reviewing day-to-day research activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Observation</td>
<td>Researchers should be carrying out unstructured observation all the time, wherever they are. It can also take place at specific times/places. Structured observation takes place after patterns have been noted and need to be checked.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Time use and recall</td>
<td>Can be used at any time after initial observation. Use diaries, time lines, recall sheets. Recall is used to gather information on past events or experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Ranking</td>
<td>Can be used at any time after initial observation. Ranking methods are used to find out about people's preferences and priorities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Focus group discussion</td>
<td>Early in fieldwork to check opinions, language, ideas. Should be limited to a relatively small number of participants, as they are difficult to record and analyse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Visual methods</td>
<td>Can be used at any time. To break the ice and give material for comment in interviews and focus group discussions; to examine ideas with people (especially children) who are shy or find it difficult to speak; for particularly sensitive subjects; for mapping areas, rapid censuses, ranking and decision-making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Role play</td>
<td>Use when researchers have good rapport with participants; to explore sensitive issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Written methods</td>
<td>Can be used at any time with literate people and especially good for school-aged children. Diaries and recall schedules can be written or filled in by participants. Essays can be used to explore areas about which not much is known. Other types of written method include life histories; written checklists and rankings; sentence completion; self-completed questionnaires.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Interviews</td>
<td>For information about individuals, usually used later in the research process when correct words, ideas and questions have been identified. Can involve sentence completion or be used to gather life histories/testimony from people who cannot (or do not want to) write. Can be structured, semi-structured or highly structured (questionnaires). Questionnaires should not be designed or used until the last phase of fieldwork.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB. Also see section 'B' of the toolkit in PART III.
Because it works with people, not numbers or things, social research cannot produce exact, convenient samples, especially in sensitive areas such as the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking. People have minds and lives of their own. They can decide whether or not to take part in research, or whether to tell the truth about their lives, and they may be hard to contact if their activities make them very mobile or cause them to hide because of embarrassment, guilt, fear or the illegality of what they are doing. To overcome this limitation, sampling must be as systematic as possible in order to represent the broader group. Social researchers have devised a number of ways of deciding on groups, numbers and methods of selection.

**Sampling methods**

There are many different ways to select sample areas, participants, enterprises or households for a study. The choice of sampling methods depends on the purpose of the research, research approaches and population, and on the available time and resources. There are two types: probability sampling and non-probability sampling. The latter includes 'opportunistic sampling' (or 'convenience sampling'), 'purposive sampling' and 'snowball sampling'. All these methods are explained in the glossary at the end of this handbook and are described in detail in most manuals on social research.

In research on hard-to-reach and mobile populations, researchers cannot afford to be too rigid about sampling - the main problem is to gain access to the children and adults at all. The research will be scientific if researchers are truthful and exact in the way they write in their reports about how they made contact with the participants (see Box 15). The two methods that are most useful for hard-to-reach populations, such as child labourers and trafficked children, are opportunistic sampling and snowball sampling:

- **Opportunistic sampling**: Taking advantage of meeting people during research to involve them as research participants. Particularly useful for hard-to-reach groups, such as street children, children in prostitution or pimps;
- **Snowball sampling**: Selecting people by starting with one participant and asking for suggestions about, and introductions to, other people who might be interested in taking part in the research.

**Samples and age groups**

Research with children always entails being clear about age groups. In order to be able to
Box 15 Making contact with hard-to-reach research participants

Since prostitution, particularly child prostitution, is illegal in Viet Nam and is severely punished, many establishments offering such services are invisible to outsiders. Thus an extensive search was made through social networks of the research team for clients and informants who knew the establishments and, more importantly, were familiar to the employers. Although this task was time consuming, it was crucial because only through them could the interviewers contact the employers and seek their consent to conduct interviews with employees. This was not always successful, however, and the interviewers also had to rely on the assistance of the informants in meeting the children outside their workplace, in gaining their trust and in making them feel like friends through social activities, such as picnics and movies. Only when such trust was established and an agreement from the children was obtained could the actual interviews be conducted. Also, with the support of the Viet Nam Women’s Union in Ho Chi Minh City, the team contacted members of Doi Dong Dang Nu, a group of former sex workers who volunteer to do social work, to seek their help in approaching sexually exploited children for the interviews.

Source: Le Bach Duong, ILO-TICW Viet Nam

compare the data from one tool with data from another, researchers need to define a consistent set of age grouping that they use in all tools, or to design tools appropriate for younger and older children. This must be stated, and explained, at the beginning of the protocol. For example:

• ‘In this research child participants were divided into three age groups: five to 11 years, 12 to 15 years and 16 to 18 years, as this is the age grouping used by the education system.’
• ‘In this research child participants were divided into three age groups: five to nine, 10 to 14, and 15 to 17, as this is the age grouping is in line with ILO Convention 138 on minimum age of employment.’

Control groups

Control groups are useful in answering research questions that seek to find relationships between child labour and/or trafficking and other phenomena (such as working children’s health, education or attitudes) or to compare working or trafficking children with other groups. Every research tool in the protocol might require one or more different control groups in order to give a reliable answer to a research question.

The control groups for each tool must be as similar as possible to the sample groups, except for the key difference being tested. The more closely they resemble the sample group, the less chance there is that some other ‘hidden’ factors are influencing the results - and the more confident you can be in asserting (or eliminating) links between different facts and research findings.
For example, if the research question is ‘What is the level of school attendance among child beggars aged 6-10 in the target area?’, this can be answered by simply asking the sample group (and cross-checking with data from teachers, education department staff, social workers etc.). There is no need for a control group. If the research question asks how child beggars’ school attendance compares with all other children in the country, district or province, comparison with official statistics (if they are judged reliable) will be enough. However, if the research question seeks to establish a direct link between child begging and low school attendance, the same research tool(s) will need to be used with a control group of other children of similar age and background who do not beg. Depending on what is learned during the research, it might also be necessary to work with several different control groups to ensure that it is begging, and not other factors, that is causing (or at least directly linked to) this low attendance.

In longitudinal studies (where the same research tools are used with the same groups at different points in time), working with control groups is often less of a necessity.

**Sampling in complex studies**

In complex studies, such as multi-country research on trafficking in women and children, sampling follows the same basic steps as in smaller studies. The overall research can be broken down into smaller activities, such as research in different countries or regions, or different types of locations, such as places of origin of child labourers, places of work, or places of transit. Make sure each part of the research uses the same protocol so that the results from different regions or countries can be compared with each other.

**Research tools**

Decisions about methods and samples are recorded in detail in draft research tools, which should all follow the same structure and provide the same information. Exact and detailed research tools are the basis of scientific data collection and analysis. They can be used by different researchers, at different times, with different groups of participants and in different places. Because they are used in the same way in all situations, the data can be compared and are valid. The component parts of a research tool are always more or less the same (see Box 16 and the examples of research tools in Part III):

**Keeping records**

What happens during a data-collection session with any research tool can be recorded in a
### Box 16 Components of a research tool

| **Aim:** What this research tool aims to find out; |
| **Method:** Which method has been chosen (described briefly but accurately - it is not sufficient to write 'focus group discussion' for example); |
| **Sample:** The group of participants that will be involved in this tool (for example 'a group of up to ten children in any one session of children aged eight to 15 years who have returned to their community after being trafficked'); |
| **Number of researchers:** The number of researchers necessary for carrying out a successful data collection session using this tool; |
| **Location:** The type of place that is needed for the research to take place. For a focus group discussion with 12 participants and three researchers this might be 'a quiet place next to the river, free from interruptions'; |
| **Materials:** Exact list of the materials needed for each session (this is essential for planning the materials and equipment needed for the research as a whole). A typical list for a session collecting children's drawings from a school class might be '30 pencils, 30 sheets of drawing paper, flipchart sheet with written instructions, informed consent forms, standard observation sheet'; |
| **Instructions for researchers:** These must be detailed, giving the precise order of the data-collection session and what words the researchers should use. Instructions must include things that are done in all data-collection sessions: seeking informed consent, filling in a standard observation sheet and numbering data. |

Variety of ways. One necessity for every data collection session is for researchers to fill in a 'standard observation sheet', which records details of that particular session, the researchers, participants, place and any factors that may have affected the information collected. (See the Toolkit in Part III for an example of a standard observation sheet.)

For all methods, records can be made in writing, in drawings and maps, and/or using a tape recorder, photographs or a video camera. A written record must always be kept because tape recorders and cameras may fail. In addition, tape recordings are particularly difficult and extremely time-consuming to analyse.

Negotiate the recording method to be used. Make sure children and adults know and agree to the way in which the session is recorded and how this record will be used. In situations where it
is not possible to take notes, record the answers and your observations immediately after the interview.

Make sure recording methods do not interrupt communication: look at people. Make eye contact in interviews. Do not look all the time at what you are writing. Do not stop talk or action in order to record. In all research tools, try to tailor-make forms for easier data collection. Children and adult community members have their own ways of using words. Record the exact words in the language used. Do not summarise. Record the words, sayings, jokes, songs, body language and hand signs that different people use when they talk about 'sensitive' topics or illegal activities, such as sexuality and different types of people involved in sex work, drugs or trafficking. Do not 'correct' language 'mistakes'.

After focus group discussions, ask participants if they want to check and agree to the record of the meeting - the flipcharts, sketches, diagrams, photographs and videos.

**Ethical strategy**

Ethical considerations are of crucial importance in social research. Box 17 gives ethical issues to consider when developing the research protocol.

**Box 17 Checklist for ethical issues to consider in research**

- Is this research necessary?
- Is this research well planned?
- Is this research intended to be integrated into a programme of action?
- Have ways been found to address specific ethical issues raised by this research?
- How will informed consent be obtained from children?
- How will informed consent be obtained from adults?
- Is accessible information about this research being provided?
- What level of confidentiality and anonymity can be offered to participants?
- Is there appropriate stakeholder participation in this research?
- Is compensation for taking part in the research necessary?
- What kind of compensation will be offered, when and how?
- Are you offering appropriate compensation for assistance?
- Will participants be able to check your version of the information they have given you?
- How will participants be consulted on the results of the research?
- What are the risks to participants and how will these be minimised?
- What are the risks to field researchers and how will these be minimised?

Adapted from: Laws, Harper and Marcus, 2002
Key points in Step 5

- Key research questions lead to decisions about which groups to study and what methods to use;
- To answer key research questions takes more than one method and more than one research tool;
- Research diaries and unstructured observation are used in all research;
- Research methods can be collective or individual;
- Research methods must be shaped into precise tailor-made tools for data collection;
- Choice of sampling methods depends on the purpose of research, research approaches and population, and on the available time and budget;
- For research on the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking, opportunistic and snowball sampling are particularly useful;
- Research with children requires age groups to be selected and used consistently throughout research;
- It will often be necessary to use one or more control groups with each research tool;
- Ethical considerations are crucial in protocol design;
- Recording must be systematic - written records are essential.
Step 6: Pilot research tools and finalise research plan

**Definition**

**Piloting:** Testing draft research tools on limited samples before using them to gather data in the field.

Research tools must be piloted before they are used to gather data. Once the full set of tools and all materials necessary for using them have been designed, researchers should test them out on each other, friends and family members. This needs to be done in order to become familiar with using them and to correct any errors, such as wording in instructions, or visual materials that do not make sense.

Once these problems have been corrected, choose a community that is similar to the place you are intending to carry out the research. For each tool, select small groups of participants similar to the sample groups required for each tool and go through the entire procedure of using the tool. Record any problems on a standard observation sheet. Look for:

- Mistakes in the order in which things are done;
- Poorly worded instructions;
- Missing instructions;
- Instructions that are difficult for researchers to carry out;
- Samples that are too large or too small;
- Words and questions that are misunderstood by participants;
- Tools that do not gather the intended information;
- Visual materials that are misunderstood by participants;
- Informed consent methods that do not work.

Researchers then need to meet to compare their experiences with each tool, deciding what works, what doesn't work, and what can be done differently. Revise the tools and test them again, agreeing final changes with the whole team.

Make a printed version of the whole protocol so far. At this stage the protocol should contain:

- A statement of the background explaining briefly (one page) the reasons why the research is necessary, and its aims;
Planning for field work

The final part of the research protocol is the research plan, which contains all the practical instructions for how, when, where and by whom it will be carried out. Some of this planning will already have been discussed with the funding organisation, other stakeholders and the researchers. Now is the time to put it all down on paper.

Finalising the research team

Return to Step 1 to make final decisions about the size and composition of the research team. The size of a research team depends on the research purpose and topic, the research approach and population, and the available time and budget. Small, focused studies can be carried out by small teams or by individual researchers. National household surveys require dozens or even hundreds of enumerators and a hierarchy of staff.

Action-oriented research puts a strong emphasis on raising awareness and strengthening the commitment of stakeholders. This usually requires relatively large teams of researchers. All researchers in action-oriented research on the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking, should have been involved in developing the protocol. If others join the team at this stage, or are planned for inclusion at a later stage (perhaps children and other community members), time must be given for them to understand and use the ethical procedures and research tools so that they can operate as equals to other research team members. This is not the same as training ‘research assistants’. Participatory research does not permit differences of status of that kind. Researchers who do not understand and ‘own’ the research will not collect good data.

Decide if and when researchers work alone or in pairs. Consider the time it takes to build a good team spirit among the members of the research team. Even if all team members were involved from the beginning in the preparations for the research, team dynamics are likely to be different in the field.

If the research is carried out in more than one community, it saves time to have a smaller research team - with its own team coordinator - for each place.
Within a research team it can be useful to assign specific tasks to each team member. This allows each researcher to build up a deeper understanding of topics in a specific place and with community members. As long as the research protocol is followed correctly by all researchers, data from different places, collected by different people, can be compared - the standard observation sheet (see the Toolkit in Part III) and precise research tools ensure this.

**Timetable**

The first major constraint on how much time that can be given to the research is funding. It is important to be realistic, but it is also important to make sure that sufficient time is budgeted for each stage of data collection, analysis and writing. Once the protocol is finalised, the stages are:

- First stage of data collection;
- Initial data analysis;
- Second stage of data collection;
- Data analysis;
- Report writing.

Research timetables have to take into consideration practical factors such as seasonal differences, weekly and daily working rhythms, religious holidays and observances, school holidays, and irregular events such as national elections, a population census, even the football world cup. Specific points to check include:

- Seasonal differences in work patterns and workloads: people in rural areas are often busier during the rainy season; during the dry season people may migrate.
- The effects of rainy or dry seasons on transport to remote areas.
- Thinking about national holidays and local festivals.
- Work time: when is it least inconvenient for participants to meet researchers (during lunch breaks, in the evenings, on the weekends)?
- When and where to interview working children. Find out when children have time off and what they do in their free time (if any). Observation will identify meeting points or places where child labourers receive services. Drop-in centres, for example, are easily accessible and provide good opportunities to establish rapport. School playgrounds or bus and train stations might also be useful meeting points.
- Different methods and sources of information may be appropriate during different times of the day (or week). Weekends and nights are busy times for the entertainment industry,
which means that it may be a good time for observing interactions between sex workers and clients, but probably not ideal for interviewing children in prostitution. Working children may be free to meet the researchers only late at night. Check if researchers are able to work at weekends and at night, and if they expect extra pay for these anti-social hours.

• Participation requires time and flexibility. Adapt research schedules and tools to facilitate participation. Inflexible timing of research excludes the weakest, youngest and those with the least power. Make special efforts to include them.

Prepare a research schedule and allocate time for every part of the research plan. Allow more time for research during the rainy season due to transport difficulties and busy work schedules in rural areas. Add 10 to 20 per cent extra time for contingencies during data collection. Consider the time it takes to get to the research site, and the time it takes to get from the researchers’ living quarters to offices, houses of participants, and work sites. In rural and scattered communities it will take time to organise meetings and to bring people together. The research team will also need time for group meetings to plan and review the research.

Building trust with children, communities and officials also takes time. Especially if senior people are part of the research team, there may be delays due to official introductions and dinners. However, this is a necessary part of the introduction of the team to the community and important for getting support, for the research from community leaders, and for later action.

Sequence the steps of the research at the community level to make the best use of the available time and to avoid rushing, overlap, overwork, or long periods where nothing happens. Start with a general overview through observation, then systematically narrow down the focus of the research.

Allow time for numbering and indexing data, for inputting into a computer, if this is planned and for computing tables, for analysis, interpretation and report writing. The time required for these parts of the research depends on the skills and experience of the researchers, on the complexity of the research approach and methods, on the size of the research, and on the length of the required report. A rough guide is to plan one day of analysis for every day of data collection. If researchers are inexperienced or unfamiliar with the methods, or are trying out new analytical approaches, this analysis can take much longer.

**Logistics**

All the following details need to be considered and entered in the protocol:
Handbook for action-oriented research on the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking in children

- Government approval for research is needed in many countries. Obtain all necessary permissions (official and informal) from the relevant authorities;
- Explain the purpose and approach of the research. Make sure government staff will facilitate and support the study without dominating or directing the research activities;
- Find out what government officials know and expect and how they see community problems;
- Explain that staff of relevant agencies will be debriefed about the results of the research;
- Identify the contacts local government officials have with the community and different community groups;
- Assess the capacity, motivation, mandate and means of government officials to address the issues;
- Involve government officials from different levels in the research;
- Ensure that the people in the communities are ready to receive the researchers, and are willing to participate;
- Find out when it is convenient to do the research. Team members who know the area well can help communicate with the communities.

Equipment

Make a list of all equipment needed, using the research tools as a guide. Materials needed in the field include notebooks, paper (especially if children's drawings and essays are being collected), pens, flipcharts, markers, clips, plastic folders, scissors, camera, film, spare batteries, tape recorders, blank tapes, standard observation sheets, materials for each research tool.

Check out the local power supply, communications (phone, fax, e-mail) and photocopying services in research locations.

Consider the software you will need to use to store and process data.

Transport

Arrange transportation to the research sites and at the location, and a cash flow to pay for it. Check if there are any restrictions of movement (permission needed to visit sensitive border areas, ongoing conflicts etc.).
Accommodation, health and safety

Arrange accommodation for the research team, who should aim to stay in the communities they work in wherever possible. Make necessary arrangements for food, observing dietary restrictions and making sure that there is adequate food when travelling (and a cash flow to pay for it). Even if hospitality is offered by participants to be researched, be careful not to be a burden.

Identify medical facilities at the research location(s) as well as any potential risks to the health, safety and security of the researchers. Obtain adequate insurance for the researchers. Organise a kit of essential medicines and make sure that preventive measures (such as against malaria are taken). Leave contact information with colleagues and relatives at home.

Emotional support

Researchers must always be prepared to deal with situations in which children or adults break down during or after talking about abuse, exploitation or family crises. Ensure researchers are prepared for this and know how to deal with such a situation. Check around to find out who might be able to offer counselling or other support to participants who require it.

Before leaving for fieldwork

Make a final protocol check. Each and every research protocol must contain:

• A statement of the background explaining briefly (one page) the reasons why the research is necessary and its aims;
• A table of research questions;
• An ethical strategy;
• Detailed research tools for data collection;
• A plan for fieldwork logistics.

Key points in Step 6

• All research tools must be tested before they are used and modified where appropriate;
• Fieldwork should be prepared (team size, programme, logistics) so that data can be collected efficiently without undue strain on researchers or participants.
Level 3 Data collection

Step 9: Second phase of data collection
Step 8: Preliminary analysis of collected data
Step 7: First phase of data collection

Level 4

Level 3 Data collection

Level 2 Protocol design

Level 1 Preparation
Level 3  Data collection

Step 7 First phase of data collection

• Research team uses the protocol to collect data (following the ‘code of ethics’ and using all research tools);
• Data are systematically recorded;
• Regular team meetings ensure proper use is made of the research protocol;
• Ethical dilemmas in the field are resolved in team meetings.

Step 8 Preliminary analysis of collected data

Research team pauses to:
• Analyse data collected so far;
• Check recording and indexing;
• Develop categories;
• Review the research tools and modify them if necessary;
• Consider what collected data have revealed about the research questions;
• Modify or add new questions or hypotheses if required;
• Add new samples or field work sites if required;
• Pilot new research tools;
• Revise the protocol for the second phase of data collection.

Step 9 Second phase of data collection

Research team continue to:
• Collect data using the revised research protocol;
• Index data;
• Resolve ethical dilemmas.
Research team completes data collection in all sites, with all groups.
Step 7: First phase of data collection

After all preparations have been made and the researchers have arrived in the research location(s) (i.e. 'in the field'), the research protocol is used to guide all data collection. Don't forget to follow the agreed code of ethics and seek informed consent of children and adults involved in the research. Researchers should be prepared to support each other on a day-to-day basis. Researchers work as a team.

Box 18 Helpful research attitudes

- Learn to accept doubt;
- Learn from mistakes;
- Sit on the floor if everyone is sitting on the floor, even if you are offered a chair;
- Listen actively, with respect for, and interest in, children's, women's and men's knowledge, experience, analysis, feelings and thinking;
- Don't lecture children or adults;
- Create trust and equality - share information and knowledge;
- Do not dominate through verbal communication, body language or attitudes;
- Show patience - do not rush;
- Resist the temptation to provide answers or remedies;
- Don't interrupt people.

Source: Ennew and Boyden, 1997

Team coordinator(s) supervise, coordinate and manage the research team(s) to ensure high standards of data collection and recording during fieldwork. Coordinators should be active in the field, collecting data and checking the work of other field researchers every day. They are responsible for:

- Maintaining ethical standards at all times;
- Observing researchers at work and comparing their work;
- Observing relationships between researchers and participants and dealing with any conflicts;
- Ensuring fieldworkers use tools correctly;
- Checking quality and quantity of data;
- Checking recording methods and organisation of records;
- Suggesting where changes, additions and improvements could be made;
- Discussing problems and suggesting solutions;
• Supporting researchers and ensuring their morale remains high;
• Guarding against negative effects of research on field researchers, especially when researching child abuse and exploitation;
• Ensuring safety and security.

Coordinators need to watch the researchers' energy levels. Researchers who investigate stressful social issues in unfamiliar areas, under difficult physical conditions, may suffer from physical and emotional strain. Keep researchers' stress levels low by breaking the fieldwork into several shorter periods or by using a larger team and shortening the data collection time. Make sure the researchers get adequate rest, eat regularly and healthily, have access to medical care if necessary, and occasionally have breaks for fun and relaxation.

The research team should meet at the start or end of each day, to review, plan and solve problems. The purpose of these meetings is to report progress, ask for advice on problems, discuss solutions, get feedback on methods and data, try out new ideas, and do some preliminary analysis of the data. Topics and activities in these meetings may include:

• Ethical dilemmas and solutions;
• Surprises in data collection;
• Confirmation of prior ideas;
• Practical difficulties and solutions;
• Sharing research diaries, through reading passages;
• Talking about themes that appear to be developing.

Organise records

Unless researchers take detailed and careful notes, follow research tools exactly and number data systematically, the best research protocol in the world will fail and data will not be valid. The first part of analysis is to organise the records. Do this as part of the daily routine. Do not leave it until the end of the fieldwork. Records that are systematically numbered, ordered, stored and indexed are much easier to analyse. Well-organised records also reduce the risk that important information is overlooked or lost. Number notepads, individual pages, rolls of film, tape recordings and drawings. Date each research event (diary entry, interview, drawing session, focus group discussion, role play etc.). Fill out clearly a standard observation sheet immediately after each data-collection session and keep it attached to the data records.

Every record or piece of data (interview sheet, focus group discussion record, each drawing,
essay, recall sheet etc.) must have a unique number. If the data will be entered into a computer for storage and analysis, it makes sense to use a four-figure numbering system - so that 1 is written as ‘0001’ and 600 as ‘0600’. (Four figures will give you 9999 unique numbers. If there will be more records or data pieces than this, use a five-figure system or larger.)

Reserve a block of unique numbers for each research tool before starting data collection, corresponding to the maximum number of pieces of data it is expected to generate (see Box 19).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research tool</th>
<th>Maximum number of pieces of data it will generate</th>
<th>Reserved reference numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1a Unstructured observation of conditions, facilities and use of facilities in institutions</td>
<td>17 (written records)</td>
<td>0001-0017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1b Structured observation of conditions, facilities and use of facilities in institutions</td>
<td>5 (written records) 20 (photographs)</td>
<td>0018-0022 0023-0042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2a Essay: Child's institutional life history</td>
<td>109 (essays)</td>
<td>0043-0151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2b Individual interview: Child's institutional life history</td>
<td>26 (written interview records) 52 (audio tapes)</td>
<td>0152-0177 0178-0229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Drawing: Children's perceptions of conditions in the institution</td>
<td>433 (drawings)</td>
<td>0230-0662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Role play followed by focus group discussion: Children's perceptions of discipline and corporal punishment</td>
<td>13 (written records) 13 (video tapes) 26 (audio tapes)</td>
<td>0663-0675 0676-0688 0689-0714</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from: Robinson, 2000

Store materials and records in a safe place where they cannot be lost or damaged. Wherever possible, keep second copies in a separate place. Where practical, send copies of children's writing and drawings elsewhere for safekeeping.
Box 20  Typical mistakes made by field researchers in research on the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking

* Not following the instructions in the research tool exactly;
* Not keeping their research diary up to date;
* Forgetting to record observations;
* Not taking enough time for recording;
* Not filling in standard observation sheets;
* Not numbering data;
* Missing out questions;
* Inadequate note taking, such as not recording literally what participants say;
* Recording an answer incorrectly;
* Insufficient probing and cross-checking;
* Recording contradictory data without probing;
* Not maintaining ethical standards;
* Being too hasty about collecting informed consent;
* Listening to adults and not to children;
* Being obviously shocked by what they see or hear;
* Making value judgements about people;
* Criticising or lecturing children and adults whose behaviour they do not understand or do not approve of.

Key points in Step 7

* Researchers must follow the instructions in the protocol;
* Records must be kept systematically;
* All data must be numbered;
* Data must be safely and systematically stored;
* Researchers must meet to review data collection and ethical issues every day.
Step 8: Preliminary analysis of collected data

Definitions

**Analysis:** Logical, systematic process of examining data in order to improve understanding.

**Category:** An organising idea or topic, used to index, cross-check and analyse data.

**Hypothesis:** An idea, based on knowledge, information, previous observation or analysis that has to be proved or disproved through research.

**Indexing:** The process of organising data into categories.

The main activities of this step are:

- Sharing and reflecting on the field experience;
- Identifying and discussing initial ideas;
- Reviewing research tools;
- Reflecting on ethical issues;
- Considering difficulties encountered in the field and how to overcome them;
- Designing new research tools if necessary;
- Revising the research protocol.

Organising data

Data need to be organised to prepare them for analysis. Without categorising, indexing, coding and sorting the data it is impossible to carry out an analysis - in fact, data analysis is largely a process of sorting and re-sorting the data in different ways until the trends, links, similarities, gaps and contradictions appear.

The process of organising and sorting data consists of a number of sequential tasks. During Step 8, researchers carry out the first two tasks - categorising and preliminary indexing of data. Based on what is learned during these process, and discussions among the researchers, the protocol is then revised.
Developing categories

The first stage in preparing the data for analysis is for researchers to read through all their data, notebooks and research diaries. From this, they develop categories which will later help them to organise and index the collected data. To develop these categories, researchers begin by discussing the following guiding questions:

- What are the answers to the original research questions?
- What are the participants, including children, telling us - both in what they are saying, and what they are not saying?
- What is the community telling us about children?
- Are there any unexpected observations?
- Which data do we feel fairly certain about so that no further probing is necessary?
- What do we feel uncertain about?
- What research questions have appeared that might require some quantitative checking, perhaps using a new research tool?
- Have any contradictions surfaced from the different data sets (different in place, time, research tools, or researchers)? This question begins the process of triangulation.
- What interesting and unexpected ideas, concepts and problems have the data revealed, which had not been anticipated or thought about before?
- Which of these can be explored within the current research, and which should be recommended for future research projects?

In developing categories, each researcher should make a list of the following:

- Categories in the original research questions - the key topics (for example trafficking, orphans, parental duties, community views) and groups of participants (for example children, adolescents, sex workers, parents, opinion leaders);
- Categories that emerge from reviewing all the data collected so far: these will be issues, ideas or groups that were not foreseen in the original research question (for example children who voluntarily cross borders for work, children orphaned by HIV/AIDS, official corruption, parents who protect their children against the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking).

Categories may relate to themes, such as ‘family life’ or ‘child work’, or to questions, such as ‘What are the reasons why some children enter prostitution?’
Researchers should share and discuss their lists, first in pairs and then in groups of four, and then present combined lists to the group as a whole, for discussion. A final combined list of categories can then be drawn up. One technique is to write each category on a piece of card and then group, rank and sort them. Finally a list should be drawn up with the categories in alphabetical order, and with some organisation into sub-categories. For example, a list of categories and sub-categories in research on children in prostitution might contain the following entries:

**Clients of children in prostitution:**
* Characteristics;
* Reasons;
* Health status.

**Families of children in prostitution:**
* Family characteristics (size, education, location);
* Attitudes towards children;
* Attitudes towards sexually exploited children;
* Members of the family with experience of sex work.

**Children in prostitution:**
* Children's characteristics (age, gender, place of origin, family, education etc.);
* Attitudes towards prostitution;
* Views of children in prostitution;
* Places of work;
* Health status in general;
* Sexually transmitted diseases.

**Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs):**
* In general;
* In children;
* In clients;
* HIV/AIDS;
* Opinions of health workers;
* Clinic records.

**What children say about:**
* Families;
• Clients;
• Employers.

Note that some categories overlap. Data may need to be indexed under more than one category. Trying to put each piece of data under one 'true' category will limit analysis.

Indexing

Researchers should now begin to index data under the agreed categories. This means reading through all data, including research diaries, and marking them according to which categories they should be indexed under. (In Step 10, these categories will be transferred to index cards.) Box 21 shows how the life history of a child in prostitution might be marked up using the categories in the list above:

Box 21 Example of how to index data: life history of a child in prostitution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original data</th>
<th>Categories for indexing, noted by the researcher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data number 0093</td>
<td>Cross-border</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Child age: 14 | Education |
| Child's gender: female | Family |
| Child's place of origin: Cambodia | Domestic work |
| Child's place of work: Bangkok | Abuse |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Life history</th>
<th>Pimps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>I was born in Phnom Penh and went to school until the end of Primary Four.</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>My father died and my mother married another man, who did not like me and my brother. So we started to live by ourselves in the house of my mother's sister. She didn't give us any food. One day her friend said she would take me to Bangkok so that I could find work. So I left. I started to work cleaning a house but the family didn't give me enough to eat. The lady beat me if I made mistakes or did not speak Thai. One day I spilt some soup and I was afraid so I ran away. I met my friend who took me to his house. Now I have a good place to live and my friend gives me money. I meet foreigners in bars and take them home. They pay my friend. When I am sick he takes me to the clinic.</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clients' characteristic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Child in prostitution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>STDs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussing difficulties

During breaks from indexing, which can be boring and difficult to concentrate on if done for long periods of time, researchers share their experiences of using research tools, discussing any difficulties and how to overcome them. They decide which tools to continue to use (should be most of them!), and which ones need to be modified. The discussion can be organised around the sort of questions that now should have become a familiar part of the research process:

- What worked and what did not work?
- Why did some things work and others not work?
- What were the effects of these difficulties on the quality and reliability of the data?
- What should be done differently during the second phase of data collection?

The coordinator should lead these discussions and make sure that a record is kept of all ideas and decisions, which will be used to revise the protocol.

Revising the protocol

- Before revising any part of the protocol, check the table of research questions (like that in Box 12) to make sure that data are being gathered that can provide the types of answers that are needed.

Some data may already be good enough to share with stakeholders, so that they can begin to plan programme responses.

In order to check additional research questions, new ideas or collect information on topics that are not fully covered, new tools should be designed according to the processes followed in Step 5. This may be the time to develop specific, focused questionnaires. But remember that some checking can be done by adding other elements or questions to existing research tools.

- Make agreed changes to research tools;
- Design new tools;
- Pilot new tools using the process in Step 6;
- Make practical, logistical adjustments to the plans and timetable in the protocol;
- Share ideas and the new protocol by presenting them in a meeting with stakeholders to get their feedback;
• Make any final adjustments to the protocol, and provide each researcher with the new version.

Researchers are now ready to complete data collection in Step 9.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key points in Step 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The first stage of fieldwork reveals ideas, insights and difficulties;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Data categories must be developed and the process of indexing begun;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Difficulties in conducting data collection need to be discussed along with outstanding gaps in terms of addressing key research questions;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Adjustments may need to be made to the tools and plans in the protocol and new tools may need to be developed and tested depending upon the discussed difficulties researchers have found.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Step 9: Second phase of data collection

This stage of data collection is usually longer than the first phase, and researchers probably have some additional research tools to use. On the other hand they will have more experience and confidence than they had in Step 7.

This does not mean that standards of data collection or ethical procedures should slip. The research team should have higher standards with more experience with the protocol and with research on the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking, and after time spent discussing and solving problems.

All the procedures and practices of Step 7 must be observed, especially daily team meetings. The research team completes data collection using the new or updated research protocol, and newly designed research tools. They continue with the process of indexing data.

Key points in Step 9

- Researchers must follow the instructions in the protocol;
- Records must be kept systematically;
- All data must be numbered;
- Data must be safely and systematically stored;
- Researchers must meet to review data collection and ethical issues every day;
- All data must be indexed.
Level 4 Analysis and report writing

Step 11: Prepare research report
Step 10: Data analysis

Level 5

Level 4 Analysis and report writing

Level 3 Data collection

Level 2 Protocol design

Level 1 Preparation
**Step 10: Data analysis**

- Sort and aggregate the collected data;
- Triangulate the data;
- Identify main trends;
- Look for contradictions, gaps or weaknesses in the data;
- Involve all stakeholders in data analysis.

**Step 11: Prepare research report**

- Send draft report to key informants and stakeholders for comments;
- Report writers follow ethical strategy when writing up the research results - for example ensuring anonymity in texts and photos.
Step 10: Data analysis

**Definitions**

**Analysis:** Logical, systematic process of examining data in order to improve understanding.

**Category:** An organising idea or topic, used to index, cross-check and analyse data.

**Coding:** A procedure for ‘translating’ raw data into a standardised format, in order to group it for easier analysis. Coding qualitative data involves identifying recurrent words, concepts or themes. In quantitative research, coding involves turning data (answers) into numerical values, for example assigning numbers to all of the possible responses to a question, such as yes=1, no=2, not sure=3, no response=0.

**Hypothesis:** An idea, based on knowledge, information, previous observation or analysis, that has to be proved or disproved through research.

**Indexing:** The process of organising data into categories.

**Triangulation:** The use of a combination of research methods, sources of information and researchers in a study to examine a topic from different points of view. Triangulation is a way to cross-check data and to increase the reliability of research results.

The purpose of analysis is to find and explain patterns and trends in the data, as well as to identify and interpret differences, contradictions and exceptions in the information. It is an extremely complex process, many handbooks have been written just on data analysis. The researchers who collected data must be the people who analyse them, but support from people with experience in data analysis, especially with particular skills such as in coding and computing data and triangulation, is invaluable. Working with such people will also help to build the capacity of the researchers.

Data analysis has six phases:

Phase 1 Organising and sorting the data, preparing index sheets for each category;
Phase 2 Analysing the results of each tool;
Phase 3 Analysing the results across tools according to categories;
Phase 4 Interpreting and triangulating the data;
Phase 5 Getting feedback on the interpretation of the data;
Phase 6 Taking a final look at the data.
Phase 1 Organise and sort the data

Prepare a complete inventory of all of the pieces of data collected (see Box 22 - in this example piece of research, three research tools have been used). Put all of the pieces of data from each research tool together, making sure they are all numbered and have standard observation sheets attached. Set up a storage and filing system for them.

Box 22 Example of a record of data pieces according to reference numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research tool</th>
<th>Reference numbers</th>
<th>Total data pieces</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assigned</td>
<td>Used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drawings</td>
<td>0001-0100</td>
<td>0001-0063</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>0200-0299</td>
<td>0200-0222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus group discussions</td>
<td>0300-0399</td>
<td>0300-0306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is necessary to make an inventory in order to have a clear overview of:

- Number of data pieces;
- Number of participants in each tool and sample;
- Types of participant (for example adults/children; boys/girls);
- Places in which data has been collected.

The research coordinator should prepare inventory tables according to each of the issues in the list above (see Box 23 for an example of an inventory table by place of collection, from the same piece of research in Box 22). Double check that the rows add up in all directions.

Indexing

Finish indexing the data pieces under categories, which was started in Step 8. Use cards that can be kept in a box, or sheets that can be kept in a file. Use separate index sheets or cards for each of the categories and sub-categories. On each index sheet, list all relevant data by noting the reference number of the data piece and additional information to identify the information.
clearly. For example, '0237, p3' could refer to page three of data piece 0237 (a written record of an interview with a child in prostitution). You could add the first sentence of the relevant data, if it is a text, to make it easier for the researchers to locate it for analysis. Make a general index to keep track of all the data (see Box 24).

Coding

If data from any of the research tools are going to be used for computer analysis, it will have to be coded. This means giving a number to each type of answer to a question, or to each category under which you have indexed qualitative data. Make a manual to show the meaning of the codes for all the items that will be entered in the computer. The items on the standard observation sheets must also be coded, so that tables can be made to show frequencies (number of times it occurs) for each item according to the research tool, place of data collection, and characteristics of the participant, category and researcher(s) collecting the data. If researchers have not done this kind of analysis before, someone with specialist skills will probably need to be employed at this point.

Every sentence, answer, paragraph or drawing in the data may need its own coding. The same piece of information may need two or more codes because the data is relevant for several categories. Write the codes directly on the original data. Use different colours if this is useful. Coding should be checked by at least two researchers to ensure the coding is reliable and does

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>Number of pieces of data collected in</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Semi-urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drawings</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus group discussion</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>28</strong></td>
<td><strong>31</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Box 24  Example of how to begin a general index of research records

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category: Children in prostitution</th>
<th>Research diary (volume and page number)</th>
<th>Observation (data piece reference number and page)</th>
<th>Role play (data piece reference number and page)</th>
<th>Drawings (data piece reference number and page)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clients</td>
<td>Vol. 1 pp5-15</td>
<td>0102, pp 20-25; 0103 p6, 10</td>
<td>0002 pp 2 &amp; 12</td>
<td>0636, 0455, 0743</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families</td>
<td>Vol. 1 pp 7-8, 27, 85; Vol. 2 pp36, 38</td>
<td>0104 pp 5, 19</td>
<td>0002 pp 2 &amp; 12</td>
<td>0543, 0637, 0662, 0728</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Vol. 1 pp2, 5, 6, 9</td>
<td>0105 pp 35-6</td>
<td>0017</td>
<td>0728</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from: Boyden and Ennew, 1997

not reflect one researcher's perspective. Transfer the codes to coding sheets for input into a computer programme that can provide both frequency of occurrence and cross-tabulations (comparison of frequencies between different items, such as number of days worked in a week by boys, compared to girls). Microsoft® Excel is a good, easy-to-use programme, also useful are various database and analysis programmes from SPSS Inc.

Box 25 shows the coding system that might be used for occurrences of different sub-categories of the category 'punishment' if the research tool involved asking children to make a drawing entitled 'My Home'.

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Box 25 shows the coding system that might be used for occurrences of different sub-categories of the category 'punishment' if the research tool involved asking children to make a drawing entitled 'My Home'.
Box 25  Coding for occurrences of ‘punishment’ in child’s drawing ‘My home’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item (Type of punishment)</th>
<th>Includes</th>
<th>Coding number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confinement</td>
<td>Being confined to house for a couple of days</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Being shut in a cupboard</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical punishment</td>
<td>Being hit with a stick</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Being hit with a belt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Being punched</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Having to kneel on sharp stones</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chores</td>
<td>Sweeping the yard</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Washing someone else’s clothes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Watering plants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal punishment</td>
<td>Being shouted at</td>
<td>04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Being yelled at</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Being told I am wicked</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Being told I am stupid</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No punishment drawn</td>
<td></td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td></td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Phase 2  Analyse the results for each tool

A written account should be made for each tool, explaining how the data were collected, any surprises or difficulties, the way the data have been analysed, and what researchers think they mean. Include in this written account any tables that have been made, quotations from participants and examples of drawings or photographs collected. Write this account in as much detail as possible. It will form an important part of the research report in Step 11.

Numerical (‘quantitative’) analysis of data

When tables for frequencies and cross tabulations are complete, it is possible to start to write about what they mean. Remember that working with them as figures is just one way of
analysing data. Numbers neither tell ‘the truth’ nor have some kind of superiority compared with ‘qualitative’ data. Numerical analysis can, among other things, help to:

• Check perceptions;
• Check hypotheses (or ‘hunches’);
• Compare and contrast different populations meaningfully.

There are three steps to writing about numerical data:

First, look at the key research questions the tool was designed to explore:

• List the questions;
• Have you collected relevant data?
• If not, why not?
• Has the data raised new questions or provided extra interesting information?
• If so, what?

Next, look at the tables:

• Can you see regularities?
• Any surprises?
• What happens if you ‘play’ with the figures by combining some?
• Look particularly at percentages rather than frequency counts.

Finally, describe the tables in detail, including the following:
• Sample size;
• Disaggregations;
• Frequencies;
• Percentages (but do not give percentages for numbers below 100);
• Control groups used?
• Any surprises?
• Any disappointments?
• What factors in data collection may have influenced the data collected? (Check the standard observation sheets);
• What external factors may have influenced the data collected? (Check overall population data for example to see if the male-female ratio in the sample is equal);
What factors in your quantitative analysis may have influenced the tables? Have you used appropriate categories and codes? Have you asked for the appropriate cross-tabulations?

Check back with the ‘qualitative’ data from which you extracted the categories and started your numerical analysis:

- Do you think the numbers in the tables reflect the ‘reality’ of the original data set?
- Do the numbers confirm, shed light on or cast doubt on your assumptions, perceptions, hunches, and hypotheses?
- Can you find anecdotal material in your qualitative data that gives a good illustration what you have found out by looking at the tables? (Quotations, drawings etc.). Use these when you write about the numbers (remembering to reference them to the original data/index number);
- Write about the relationship between the numbers and the qualitative data.

Numbers can be displayed in many different ways - through tables and graphs for example. The ‘raw’ numbers that result from calculations in a programme such as those from SPSS Inc. or Microsoft® Excel® can be recalculated or reorganised in order to make particular points about the data collected and what you think this means with respect to the research questions.

Non-numerical (‘qualitative’) analysis of data

This applies to tools that have not been analysed using codes and computer, to tools for which simple counting of frequencies has not been sufficient, and also to the non-numerical data from all tools.

Once again go back to the list of research questions and ask:

- Have the quantitative and qualitative data from this research tool answered these questions?
- Have they answered them adequately?
- What else might you need to know?
- What else do the numerical data tell you?
- What extra questions/hypotheses are raised?
- How valid do you think these results are? How can you justify your opinion on this?
- What doubts do you have?
- What other research tools in the protocol will you need to check your results with?
Complete a written record of all the analysis for each tool.

**Phase 3 Analyse the results across tools according to categories of data**

Using the index as a guide to where the data are, write an account of each category of data using all the information from all the research tools. It is usual for a single researcher to do the first draft, and a second researcher to revise this after returning to the information. Do not forget to include the insights from analysis of each tool (the written records of this could be indexed to help this process). These written accounts of each category of data will form another part of the research report in Step 11.

**Phase 4 Interpret the results by triangulating between tools and categories of data**

This is the final stage in analysis. First identify the most important research results and ideas. Pairs or small groups of researchers can focus on a few categories each. Identify data that support the main results:

- Which data support these results? Where are the similarities?
- Look for patterns and develop ideas about trends in the data;
- Identify causes and effects;
- Keep in mind that your ideas are provisional. Avoid jumping to conclusions and avoid generalisations that cannot be supported by the data.

Compare and contrast the data. Find data from different tools and categories that clearly support each other. Find data that contradict each other across different times, places and groups, or in comparison with secondary data and the original research assumptions or hypotheses. Look for differences between children and adults; national policy level and community level; different research reports; different methods; and between boys and girls. Consider other differences that affect the data, such as wealth, ethnicity, residence status, religion, caste, or disability. Highlight the differences in perspectives and different views of participants.

Test your ideas: formulate hypotheses about what the data say. For example, 'Children from communities with weak leadership are much more likely to be trafficked than children from communities with strong leadership'. Compare these ideas with the actual data and with the interpretations of people, such as other members of the research team or key informants.
Diagram 5  Comparing and contrasting data sets through triangulation

Explain differences and contradictions in the data:

• What data do not fit?
• What data contradict the main results?
• What data challenge the original research questions and hypotheses?
• Why do they contradict? Are they the result of working with different groups, using different methods, external factors?

Identify gaps in the data:

• Where are the data insufficient?
• Did you forget to collect some important information?
Handbook for action-oriented research on the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking in children

- If so, is it possible to return to the field, or use secondary data, to fill the gaps?
- What topics did children and adults not provide information on or did not mention? Is there a 'social silence' about these topics?

Critically review your results - how reliable are they? Interpretations must be accurate and honest. Take into account all possible explanations, including those that conflict with your own. Relate results to other research, especially if the research challenges previous results. Has the research uncovered new information and ideas? How far do the results and conclusion fit with existing knowledge on the topic?

- Are they surprising?
- To what extent are the conclusions relevant for other areas and situations?
- Are they the result of any researcher's personal perspective?
- Do the data reflect the way the methods were used?
- Do the data reflect stereotypes held by the participants?
- Do the conclusions represent the complexity of the research topic?
- Are they internally consistent?
- Have alternative explanations been explored?
- Have the data been triangulated with other sources in order to strengthen confidence in their reliability?

Make a written record of your conclusions on all these points.

Phase 5 Get feedback on the interpretation of data.

An important part of checking data analysis is to share the conclusions with children and adult community members, with government officials, and with other researchers. Ask for feedback on the research results. Summarise the main conclusions from analysis and triangulation and prepare presentations for different groups of stakeholders.

Organise meetings with different groups of people to present the research team's results and conclusions. Listen to the comments from the participants. Record the feedback: agreements, disagreements and explanations. Differences in opinion may be the result of differences in people's concepts and definitions (of poverty, child labour, or sexuality, for example). Compare different views and explain why different groups of people hold different opinions. By the end of this process, it should be possible for researchers to defend the research data and conclusions.
Phase 6  Take a final look at the data

Once the data analysis is completed, look back across the entire research process. Ask: what is important about this study in the context of combatting the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking? Look at the results in relation to other research on the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking. Does it support earlier research, or does it challenge it? Ensure that the data really provide evidence for the arguments you want to make. Test the claims made by the research and think about the arguments other people might bring up against the conclusions. Make sure your conclusions and recommendations are supported by the research results.

Key points in Step 10

- Those who do the data collection should also analyse the data;
- The six phases of data analysis are organising and sorting data, analysing data from each tool, analysing data according to categories, triangulation, seeking feedback, final look at data;
- Skilled assistance may be needed for computer analysis and data interpretation;
- Written records are made of: analysis according to tools, analysis according to categories, and triangulation;
- Results, conclusions and recommendations should be shared with stakeholders and their feedback included in the analysis;
- The written records, including conclusions and recommendations, provide the bulk of the research report in Step 11.
Step 11: Prepare research report

The research report gives an account of what the research team tried to do, how it was done, what happened and the conclusions reached. Before writing a report, ask: Who will read the report (children, community, government, NGOs, donors)? What will the report be used for? What should the report contain? How should the information be presented? Consider alternative ways to present the research results, such as a Microsoft® PowerPoint® presentation, video, drama, CD-ROM, or website, although this step considers written reports only. If the original report is in English, prepare the report quickly in the local language so that the results can be used for decision making and local action.

Guidelines for writing a research report

Organise the report in a logical, easy-to-follow outline, with clear sections and sub-headings. Choose a form of presentation that catches people's attention. Keep the report short and use bullet points and diagrams where appropriate. Ensure key facts and figures are fully and correctly cited and referenced. Ensure maps are legible and have a clear explanation of any symbols used. Make full use of charts, tables, diagrams, and illustrations, label each item clearly, and link each one to the text. Use graphs or charts rather than tables of figures, but if you do provide tables ensure columns add up correctly. Provide sample size and raw numbers together with percentages (but do not give percentages for numbers below 100).

Whatever is done with the research results later, the research report should use short sentences and plain language without jargon. A research report should present and analyse facts alone, and should base conclusions on research results only that are both scientific and ethical. Do not exaggerate or sensationalise to make the results seem more compelling. Avoid emotive words and moral judgements.

In particular, do not use negative, degrading or stigmatising images of children, either in pictures or in words, in the research report, and remember the code of ethics in the protocol:

- Do not present children as powerless, helpless victims;
- Protect children from any additional risks through their identity being revealed;
- Did you ask children's permission to use their stories and pictures? (Not just the permission of adults, even if they are parents);
- Did you respect children's decisions if they refused to be interviewed or photographed?
The report should make clear, practical recommendations that follow logically from the research results and conclusions.

**Process of report writing**

Research team members should write the report using the written records produced in Step 10. Make a timetable and assign each researcher defined writing tasks. Prepare a report outline structure (see Box 26). Concentrate at first on the chapters in the section on research results according to categories, then on the sections on methods and process, and background and context. Once the report has been drafted, review and revise it with all team members, making sure that chapters refer to each other. Get feedback on the report from participants and stakeholders before finalising, and consider presenting the final draft report in a meeting of (government) stakeholders to ensure acceptance of the final report and promote follow-up. Get skilled help editing the final version.

**Box 26 Example of a report structure**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title page</th>
<th>Title, authors, date, organisation, place, contact information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table of contents</td>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glossary</td>
<td>Explain technical terms, special words used, terms in the local language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acronyms and abbreviations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(Executive) Summary</strong></td>
<td>This is a condensed version of the main report, not a description of the main report. The summary is always written last, once the main report has been completed. It should state in clear language: objectives, methods and circumstances of the research (who, what, where, why, when), main results, main conclusions and recommendations. The summary should ideally be no more than three pages long.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td>Background and justification of the research, audience and structure of the report.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Background and context of child labour
Population, economy, political background, legal framework; what we already know, have and do regarding child labour; other relevant events for understanding the situation of the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking, using the analysis of secondary data from Step 3.

Justification and purpose of the study
Use the research questions table from Steps 2 and 4, together with some details of the stakeholder meetings.

Methods and research process
Explain reasons for selecting overall research approach - participatory and child-centred. Describe each method, according to the research schedule. For each method say why it was used; what specific questions it was designed to ask; exactly how it was used; and what are the results according to each tool.

Comment on difficulties experienced, especially those that might have affected results; data obtained. Mention gaps in data and the shortcomings of the research. Researchers have a special responsibility to be transparent about the methods used and the practical obstacles encountered in the research. Lack of transparency makes research results invalid. If based on small samples, results should not be generalised.

Include profiles of the research area(s) in this section (and reasons for choosing them), including population, local economy, community infrastructure, etc.

A series of chapters on research results according to the main categories
This should be the bulk of the report, at least three-quarters of the total length. Structure and title these on the main categories and sub-categories that emerged from the data analysis, or on the original research questions. Each chapter should end with a conclusion based on the data and analysis.

Conclusions
Base these directly on analysis of the data collected and explained in earlier chapters. Do not present new data or ideas in the conclusion. Make a distinction between conclusions you can be sure about and those you think are not too clear. Include analysis of the pathways to the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking; and analysis of other factors critical to designing policies and putting them into practice.

Recommendations
Make a clear distinction between conclusions and recommendations. Make only practical recommendations that could be carried out by organisations likely to read and act upon the report; base recommendations on the data and analysis presented in the report.

(continued on next page)
Bibliography
List all sources cited and used in the report, using the style in the bibliography of this handbook.

Appendices/annexes
If necessary these can be used to present some examples of data that are too long or complex to be included in the main body of the report.

Key points in Step 11

• The written records from Step 10 are the basis of a research report;
• Concentrate on writing the research results, do not get distracted by glossaries and contents lists;
• Check that all information is accurate;
• Use plain language, avoid technical jargon, unnecessarily long words, emotive language and language intended to shock;
• Base conclusions on research results only;
• Make clear, practical recommendations;
• Remember that children and adults must not be harmed by the information or style of the report;
• Write the (executive) summary last.
Level 5 Follow-up

Step 12: Disseminate report, store data, make action plans

Level 4 Analysis and report writing

Level 3 Data collection

Level 2 Protocol design

Level 1 Preparation
Level 5 Follow-up

Step 12 Disseminate report, store data and make action plans

• Decide upon a strategy for sharing the report with different stakeholders;
• Disseminate research results so as to maximise awareness and impact among the people and institutions who can act upon them;
• Store the raw data and research protocol so that other researchers may have access to them.
Step 12: Disseminate report, store data and make action plans

In some ways, the final step is the most important because this is where the research leads to action (unless action has already started based on preliminary analysis). And although this may be the end point of this particular research process, it is almost certainly the beginning of another. Researchers do not have the responsibility of taking action at the policy and programme level, but they have an important role to play in ensuring that the research is used.

Disseminate the report

Sharing the research report is the first way to help the data to lead to action, such as policy-making, programming and advocacy. Make sure the report reaches the right people and institutions in the right language so that the results can be used for decisions concerning the situation of child workers. Share the report with those who were involved in the research as participants or researchers. To make best use of the research results, disseminate them in various ways - as reports, through workshops, the media, or in communities (for example through drama) in order to encourage debate at different levels.

Follow the ethical guidelines to protect the children who were involved in the research and consider the following:

- Conclusions and results should be shared with children;
- Adults have an obligation to ensure that children fully understand results and problems;
- Those able to identify themselves may feel upset by the way in which they are portrayed;
- The report may attract unwanted publicity to the research site or to the people living there;
- Publishing information about the research subjects may allow others to exploit them or may put their physical safety in danger;
- Lack of control over dissemination may result in misrepresentation. It can also lead to the issues and problems being sensationalised.

Sharing the information freely so that it feeds into action is vital - too many reports are regarded as the ‘property’ of the organisation funding the research and remain on their office shelves rather than being disseminated. Dissemination of results needs to take place at three levels: policy, programme and project, and participants. In all this dissemination, researchers have a role to play, not least because they have the greatest knowledge of the data and the participants and are in the best position to share the information effectively.
Policy level

The conclusions and recommendations of the report should be the basis for changes in policy and programme decisions by stakeholders in government and international organisations, such as ILO-IPEC and UNICEF. This may require not only bringing the conclusions to the notice of decision-makers but also 'lobbying', or making them aware that the information is important and that action should be taken.

Sending a copy of the report to key stakeholders who are in a position to take action is unlikely to be sufficient. Such people rarely have time to read a full report. A public launch of the report, with good media coverage may focus their attention on the research results. Both media and policy-level communication require brief, attractive materials, such as press packs, fact sheets, slide shows and Microsoft PowerPoint presentations, to communicate the main messages from the research (see the RWG-CL manual on communication Child labour: getting the message across for ideas). Researchers have first-hand knowledge of the data and the children most affected by child labour and trafficking and are in an ideal position to give lively, interesting accounts as well as to make sure that governments and other powerful actors become aware of:

- The importance of action-oriented, participatory, children-centred research, the methods used and the fact that they produce good quality reliable information about the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking - information on which decision-makers can base their policies and programmes with confidence;
- The key results of the research (conclusions);
- The actions that can be taken as a result (recommendations).

Programme and project level

The second level of communication is with the stakeholders who are most likely to take immediate action by designing programmes and projects on the basis of the research results, stakeholders from organisations at national and community level, who will have been involved throughout the research process. These are the partners who are most likely to read the full report, although many will prefer a version in a local language. Whatever their degree of involvement in the research, they will still need reminding of the methods, results and recommendations. Communicating about the methods used is particularly valuable at this level and a role that researchers can take up, training colleagues about the way they obtained the information, and showing that action-oriented, participatory, children-centred research produces valid, useful data. Documentation, such as the protocol document, should be as freely available as the research report itself.
**Participant level**

Last but not least, the research participants, their communities and others who will be affected by policy changes and programme actions have a right to know about the methods, results and recommendations. As major stakeholders they should already have provided feedback on early results and ideas from the research. But in many cases, written reports are not appropriate for communicating with community members, and almost certainly inappropriate for use with children. Visual materials such as posters, slide shows and videos can be very effective, as are role play and drama and group discussions, in getting the message across at community level so that children and adults are empowered with authentic knowledge about the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking, the implications of decisions taken on their behalf, and what they can do about both.

**Store data**

Reports and other communication materials shared immediately after research are not the only way the research results can be used. Data can be analysed and used in different ways and for different purposes, and it is important that other researchers and communicators have access to the systematically stored research records, statistics and process documentation. In action-oriented research, this is particularly vital. Programme designers may need to check facts from the report, and the data as a whole are the baseline for future monitoring of the impact of programmes.

Store all records and raw research data in a secure place, where they can be accessed easily by other users. Make the data and the research protocols available to others who are planning to carry out research on the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking. Start by listing all the materials available and telling stakeholders about them, then make the list available to a wider audience. One or more of the stakeholders may wish to post the list and information about how to access the materials on their website.

**Action plans**

Researchers do not usually take action on the basis of the information they have gathered and analysed. Inevitably, however, researchers who are involved in action-oriented research have contacts with, and often employment in, organisations that are in a position to take action, as well as to sponsor further research stimulated by new questions that have arisen. Researchers are well placed to motivate and carry out training within these organisations, principally on the
methods of action-oriented, participatory, children-centred research, but also on the meaning of results and their implications for programme and advocacy. They are also likely to be involved in designing new research processes.

**Key points in Step 12**

* The research should be made available quickly in the local language to facilitate action planning;
* An advocacy strategy should ensure the report is circulated and disseminated to the people and institutions able to act upon or influence the situation of child labourers and trafficked children at three levels: policy, programme and project, and participants;
* Other ways of communicating the main research results will need to be used as disseminating the report alone is unlikely to be sufficient to ensure action;
* Raw data should be stored together with the research protocol, and any other documentation and made available and accessible to other researchers on request;
* Communicating about research methods is as important as disseminating information about results and recommendations.
The Toolkit is divided into four parts:

A **Essentials for a protocol**

1. Informed consent
2. Standard observation sheet
3. Sampling

B **Research methods**

Methods of data collection are explained, with some general comments on their use, ways of recording, examples of the ways other researchers have adapted basic techniques to carry out their research, and tips from experience.

1. Research diary
2. Observation
   2.1 Unstructured
   2.2 Structured
3. Time use and recall
4. Ranking
5. Focus group discussion
6. Visual methods
   6.1 Children's drawings
   6.2 Maps, diagrams, and charts
   6.3 Photographs and videos
   6.4 Visual stimuli
7. Role play
8. Written methods
9. Interviews
   9.1 Unstructured and semi-structured interviews
   9.2 Structured interviews (Questionnaires)
   9.3 Surveys

C **Using methods to design research tools**

1. Protection Shield
2. Children's support networks
3  Community prevention of trafficking
4  Storyboard for identifying reasons for migrating

D  Minimum time-frame for research plan using the 12 steps
A Essentials for a protocol

This part of the Handbook Toolkit contains descriptions and examples for three of the essential elements for any protocol: (I) ways to seek informed consent, (II) a standard observation sheet to be used with all research tools, and (III) techniques of sampling. The full list of contents for a protocol can be found in Box 12. In addition, it is worth remembering that it is obligatory to include tools for research diary and observation in all protocols.

1 Informed consent

Definition

Informed consent: Agreement for voluntary participation of a participant in research, based on the individual fully understanding the goals, methods, benefits and risks of the study. Informed consent is given on the understanding that the participant can change his or her mind about taking part in the research at any time.

Every research protocol must include a written ethical strategy. The most important part of the strategy sets out in detail the ways informed consent will be sought from different groups of potential participants. Informed consent must not be hurried: children and adults should be informed and asked as individuals and given time to reflect and make their own decisions. A simple but effective technique is to ask people to repeat back to the researcher what they have been told about the research, and about the methods that will be used. How researchers phrase their explanations depends on the age and background of potential participants. Informed consent should be sought in the same way by all researchers. Researchers should keep a copy of the record of consent, as well as offering a copy to the participant. All participants have the right to withdraw from the research at any time, even after they have given their informed consent.

The following examples of obtaining informed consent are taken from the ethical strategy of the protocol of UNICEF-sponsored research on children in institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina and is interesting because it shows the way researchers had to adjust their original plans for obtaining informed consent with children, using a ‘traffic light’ technique. Researchers may have to adapt the techniques so that they are appropriate for participants who cannot read or write, or who live in rural areas and have never seen traffic lights, but the principles remain the same:

* Explain (inform) potential participants about the research;
• Check that the explanation has been understood;
• Provide more explanation if necessary;
• Make it clear that people can refuse to take part in the research if they wish;
• Obtain some kind of record of consent to participate;
• Share a copy of the record with the participant if possible;
• Store records of informed consent with the data obtained.

Example: Informed consent with adults

The following informed consent procedure was used in work with adults:

• Researchers will introduce themselves;
• Each potential participant will be given a copy of the consent form for adults (see below);
• The aim(s) and importance of this research will be explained to potential participants;
• Participants will be informed about how they will be involved, how much of their time will be required, and how confidentiality will be ensured;
• Researchers will make sure that participants have understood what has been said, and will give participants time to ask questions or to raise any concerns;
• Participants will be given time to read the consent form;
• No pressure will be put upon participants to sign the form or to take part in the research;
• Two forms will be completed for each participant, one for researchers’ records and the other for the participant to keep;
• An undertaking by researchers to share the results and conclusions of research with participants;
• The process includes asking participants their wishes about publication and dissemination of information.

Informed consent form for adult participants

My consent to be a research subject

This research project, entitled ‘Unaccompanied children and children at risk of being institutionalised in Bosnia and Herzegovina’, is an initiative of UNICEF Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). The aim of the project is to improve knowledge and understanding of children without parental care in institutions, or at risk of being institutionalised, in BiH in order to design effective interventions to improve the situation of those in institutions and provide support and alternatives for those at risk.

The research is being carried out by a six-member research team recruited by UNICEF BiH for this purpose only, and will be divided into two phases of fieldwork (July and September 2002).
Your participation in this study is voluntary. Thus, you have the right to choose not to participate, and you are free to discontinue at any time.

This research may include topics of a personal nature. However, all your answers and personal data will be kept strictly confidential and will be used only for the purpose of this research. Thus, we encourage you to be as honest as possible - there are no right or wrong answers. We are simply seeking to gain an accurate picture of the lives of children without parental care in institutions.

You will have the opportunity, if you wish, to obtain a copy of the results of the research in which you are taking part. If you have any questions regarding this project, you may contact [name and contact details of responsible UNICEF officer].

My signature of acceptance

I have read and understood all the information above, and give my voluntary consent to participate in this research. I understand that I can withdraw my consent at any time.

_______________________________Signature

___________________Date

'Traffic light' technique for seeking the informed consent of children

Researchers should observe the following rules when seeking informed consent from children:

• Introduce yourself as a person rather than as a status;
• Explain the purpose of the research;
• Inform children about the importance of the research;
• Inform children how they will be involved, how much of their time will be required, and how confidentiality will be ensured;
• Inform children what kind of information would be collected, how it will be collected, and how it will be used;
• Make sure children really do understand what you have told them by asking them to repeat back what you have told them;
• Give children time to ask questions or raise concerns;
• Listen to children;
• Make sure children know that they can stop taking part in the research at any time;
• Make sure children understand that you are making no promises about improving their conditions of life;
• Make no other promises you cannot keep;
• When children have made drawings or written materials for researchers they must be told how these might be used in research dissemination and asked afterwards if they wish to be identified as artist/author.

The original idea was to obtain children’s consent by giving them a picture of a traffic light and ask them to tick next to one of the three colours after reminding them that traffic lights in the street tell cars when to stop (red), pause (yellow), and go (green), and explaining that in this case the cards mean something very similar:

- Red means ‘No, I do not want to participate’
- Yellow means ‘I need more information’
- Green means ‘Yes, I do want to participate’

All the children who place a tick on the red light will not be included in the research, as they expressed their wish not to participate; all the children who tick on the yellow light will be given the extra information they need to make a decision; and all the children who tick on the green light will be included in the research.

If less than the number required for the research tool agree to participate, repeat the technique with others until there are sufficient children in the sample. Keep the forms that have green lights ticked clipped to the standard observation sheet, in order to check the number of consents against the number of participants.

Shortly before going to the field the research team realised that they would have to adapt this method because they had access to neither colour printers nor colour photocopying. It was decided to stick to the use of the traffic light colours but substitute red, yellow and green cards. Once the research itself had been explained to the children, cards in all three colours were given to each child, while a large picture of a traffic light was shown to them (drawn on a sheet of flipchart paper). The researchers discussed with children what each colour in traffic lights represents (stop, slow down, go). It was explained that the cards they had been given represented similar ideas:

- Red card ‘No, I do not want to participate’
- Yellow card ‘I need more information’
- Green card ‘Yes, I do want to participate’

Children were then asked to hold up the card that represented their views about taking part in the research. All children who held up a red card were not included in the research; children who held up a yellow card were given more information to help them make a final decision; children who held up a green card were included in the research. In each data collection session the number of consents was recorded on a standard observation sheet.

2 Standard observation sheet

This aid to research must be used at the end of every data collection session and needs to be attached to the relevant data set. Each person who is involved in a process of collecting data,
session as precisely as possible. There is little variation between the standard observation sheets of different protocols.

The purpose of this essential item in the protocol is to make it possible for the data collected to be compared between different times, places, groups and researchers, as well as to keep track of data collected using each research tool. The standard observation sheet provides scientific control for the research process as a whole.

*Example: Standard observation sheet*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name(s) of researcher(s):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date of session:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time of session:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tool used:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place of data collection:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number sequence of data collected:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What factors may have influenced the collection of data during this session?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher(s):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children/adults:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics of the place where data were collected:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weather:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interruptions/distractions:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3 Sampling

Definitions

Response rate: The percentage of sampled participants who have taken part in the research. For example, out of 100 sampled participants, 20 may not be at home and 10 may be unwilling to take part in the research. This makes a response rate of 70%. Sampling has to anticipate response rates and compensate by adding more participants to the sample if required.

Sample: In general, the group of research participants who will be targeted for answers to a particular research question. In research tools, the precise characteristics and numbers of participants who will be asked to work with researchers on this tool. In certain cases, a selection of people (or places, objects) chosen to represent the target population using a variety of techniques.

Sampling frame: Complete list of people (or places, or objects) from which a selection of people (sample) is made. Sampling frames include voting lists, lists of welfare recipients, school registers, lists of households, or the directory of villages in a district. Probability sampling techniques always require a sampling frame. Some non-probability sampling techniques commonly used in researching the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking, such as snowball sampling, quota sampling and opportunistic sampling, do not require one.

The aims and research questions for research will decide which groups of people will be involved in general (Steps 1 and 4) and any control groups required for comparison. Each research tool will also define a sample of participants (Step 3). As already noted, the most likely sampling techniques for research on the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking, will be ‘opportunistic’ and ‘snowball’ sampling. Below is a list of frequently used forms of sampling:

- **Cluster sampling**: Selecting naturally occurring groups within a population; for example, in a primary school with five grades, and three classes in each grade, choosing five classes - one in each grade;
- **Convenience sampling**: Another name for opportunistic sampling;
- **Opportunistic sampling**: Taking advantage of meeting people during research to involve them as research participants. Particularly useful for hard-to-reach groups, such as street children, children in prostitution or pimps;
- **Purposive sampling**: Targeting specific (named) people known to have information or to be opinion leaders;
- **Quota sampling**: Selection of a set number of people (quota) who share certain characteristics (such as the same age or sex). Select the same quota of people from each
group of potential participants; for example ten boys and ten girls aged between nine and 12 years in each place of employment covered by the research;

- **Random sampling**: A process of selecting a sample whereby each member of the survey population has an equal chance of being included. Sometimes this kind of sampling is done with a table of random numbers, or with a computer giving out random numbers, or by drawing lots.

- **Representative sampling**: A sample that has similar characteristics to the overall population from which it was selected. A representative sample can be used to draw conclusions about the population as a whole. For instance, a sample of children in which the ratio of girls to boys is the same as the national ratio for children in the same age group;

- **Snowball sampling**: Selecting people by starting with one participant and asking for suggestions about, and introductions to, other people who might be interested in taking part in the research. The same process is followed with each subsequent participant, so that the sample of participants increases.

In practice, researchers begin by selecting general groups of children and adults who are involved in, and/or have information about, the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking, and then use specific techniques or sampling frames for each group, or research tool. Age groups, gender ratios and other factors required for comparison must be kept constant throughout the protocol.

**Example: Sampling in a general child labour assessment in a large city**

Where little is known about the situation of children in the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking, it is useful to carry out a general assessment. This can provide a general overview and should be followed with more detailed research on specific types of child labour, or with more in-depth studies in communities with high concentrations of child labourers.

The research in this example was carried out in a Southeast Asian city with six million inhabitants, divided into 24 administrative districts, which are sub-divided into a number of quarters (wards). Each quarter has a population of about 15,000 people. To obtain an overview of the diversity of children in the worst forms of child labour, researchers decided to select a total of six out of the 24 districts (quota sampling). After dividing the districts into city centre, urban, semi-rural and rural districts, the research team consulted government officials, social workers and researchers about the best choice of districts (representative sampling). Selection criteria included large numbers of businesses, existing programmes against the exploitation of children, and a supportive attitude from the local authorities (representative sampling). After some negotiation, the team agreed on six districts and received permission from the relevant district authorities to carry out the research.
To make the research more manageable, the team decided to concentrate on two quarters per district (quota sampling). Again, the team consulted with different organisations to identify the most diverse selection of enterprises and economic opportunities in the 12 quarters (representative sampling).

Within each quarter, the researchers started with a general survey of the types of work children were involved in and a ranking exercise, to identify the worst forms of child labour in each quarter. The team gathered the information from government officials, social workers, child labourers, and through direct observation. The next step was to select the two or three worst forms of child labour that were particularly common in each quarter (representative sampling). The team avoided selecting the same form of child labour in more than one quarter (target sampling).

### Purposive sampling in a large city

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Number of participants involved in the research (individuals and groups)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Child labourers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>City centre district (a)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quarter 1</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quarter 2</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>City centre district (b)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quarter 3</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quarter 4</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Urban district</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quarter 5</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quarter 6</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Semi-rural district (a)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quarter 7</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quarter 8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Semi-rural district (b)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quarter 9</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quarter 10</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rural district</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quarter 11</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quarter 12</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>675</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The team visited places where children were working in the selected types of child labour. There they interviewed child labourers and employers (opportunistic sampling/snowball sampling). Focus group discussions were held with child labourers after they came home from work and with child workers who attended evening schools (opportunistic sample). The research team also interviewed children at home and talked to the children’s parents (snowball sampling). Finally, the researchers visited health centres to collect information about work-related accidents, injuries and deaths. They also interviewed government administrators to find out about existing government programmes to eliminate the worst forms of child labour.

In one quarter the team studied children working at the municipal garbage dump. The local authorities had already carried out a census of all children working at the garbage site, which showed that two thirds of the 300 workers were under 18 years old. The research team used the census data to select 50 (out of about 200) children for individual interviews and group discussions (random sampling). The group of participants included boys and girls aged 6 to 17 years. Some came from the locality, others had migrated from neighbouring provinces after flooding, landlessness or debt had forced their parents to leave their home villages. Different children specialised in collecting different kinds of garbage for recycling. Local children from the locality collected higher-value recyclables, such as metal and glass, while migrant children were forced to collect only low-value plastic bags. The research team organised interviews and discussions with groups of children to get an understanding of the situation of different children (purposive sampling).

**Example: Sampling in an assessment of children in prostitution in two cities**

Researchers selected a large city (M) and a smaller city (P) to carry out research on children in prostitution. In each city they consulted with government officials from the Department of Labour, the police and clients of brothels (purposive sampling) to identify three areas with high concentrations of sex establishments: one in the city centre, one just outside the urban area, and one in a semi-urban area (quota and representative sampling). The smaller city did not have any city-centre sex establishments.

With the help of local authorities and through observation the researchers compiled a list of all sex establishments in the sampled areas. During several visits they collected information about the number of children in prostitution and adult sex workers at these establishments. The researchers then visited the sex establishments regularly over a period of several weeks to develop friendly relationships with the children and to gain the trust of the owners. Once they had established good relationships, the researchers identified children who were willing to take part in the study (opportunistic sampling). See box ‘Sampling for research on children in prostitution’ on the next page.
## Sampling for research on children in prostitution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Number of sex establishments</th>
<th>Number of sex workers</th>
<th>Number of sexually exploited children</th>
<th>Number of children interviewed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>City M</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City centre - 3 streets</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peri-urban - 3 streets</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-urban (2 streets)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>City P</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City centre</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peri-urban</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-urban</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>35</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
B Research methods

Definitions

Research method: A systematic, scientific technique for gathering data.

Research tool: Purpose-designed research instrument to gather systematic answers to specific research questions. These tools are structured within a data gathering protocol.

Social research methods are generally accepted ways of collecting social data with people. Research tools are designed using one or a combination of these research methods. It is vital to remember that neither methods nor examples are research tools - they are just general descriptions of ways of gathering information during research, which can be used in research tool design.

This section gives some more detailed descriptions of the nine research methods listed in Step 5.

1 Research diary

Each researcher must keep a personal research diary from the start of the research process. A research diary is used every day to record:

• What happened today;
• Ethical issues;
• Problems and possible solutions;
• Questions and possible answers (‘hypotheses’);
• Impressions and feelings;
• ‘To do’ lists;
• Names and addresses of contacts;
• Brief unstructured observations;
• Records of conversations;
• Ideas about the meaning of what happened;
• Comments about the fieldwork or the research in general.
Recording

Research diaries are handwritten in hard-backed notebooks that are a convenient size for researches to carry with them at all times. Although they do contain some personal thoughts and feelings, their purpose is to record the research process.

Each day's entry should be dated and each page numbered. Most researchers develop a system of symbols that helps them to distinguish one kind of entry from another.

Tips from experience

- Researchers should have their diaries with them at all times;
- Diary writing should not be left to the next day;
- Some records can be made as they happen;
- Leave a wide margin on each page for later indexing;
- If researchers feel that they do not want to share some of the details in their diaries they can enter passages that are important for the research on a computer file, and index this for sharing with others.

2 Observation

Observation is vital for understanding context. It may be structured or unstructured. Observation should be a daily activity - researchers should never be 'off duty'. Brief observations should be recorded in the research diary.

2.1 Unstructured

Unstructured observations are especially useful during the early stages of research to produce research questions that can be explored later, using other methods. These observations record people, surroundings, sounds and speech, events, what is said, smells, behaviour and body language. They can be made at a fixed place, or while moving around.

Unstructured observations at a fixed place during research on the commercial sexual exploitation of children might focus on observing children and adults and what they are doing at places known for commercial sexual activities, for example:
• Saturday or Sunday night in a town's main bar area;
• Discotheque or karaoke bar late at night;
• Street outside a brothel;
• Tourist beach;
• Public park in the early evening;
• Railway or bus station.

Unstructured observations can also be made while driving or walking, indeed observations of sex workers and illegal activities may need to be made on the move in the first instance, until people in the area get used to seeing the researchers around. Ways of observing ‘on the move’ during research on sexually exploited children might include:

• A bus or taxi ride around town with a knowledgeable taxi driver (this might also be combined with an unstructured interview, asking the driver about his customers, destinations, entertainment areas, sexual services, sexual behaviours, police activities);
• A ride with a truck driver or a long-distance bus trip that requires overnight stops;
• Following an individual child (with the child’s permission);
• Observing with participants during community walks with local guides.

When people such as drivers, guides and children are involved directly in observation, they must first give their informed consent.

→ Recording

Written records, which must be made in as much detail as possible and can include sketches, are made either at the scene or as soon as possible afterwards. Observations made from a fixed point can sometimes be written down at the time, if researchers are sitting in a bar or restaurant for example. But standing in the street writing in a notebook will attract attention. Two researchers chatting can talk about what they see, which helps them to remember and write it down later. It can be easier to make notes on the move, sitting in a taxi for example, or recording what people say during a community walk.

Example: Unstructured observation

Following individual street children in Kathmandu, Nepal, involved a child being followed, at a distance, by a researcher for an hour, with activities and social interactions recorded on a minute-by-minute basis. Follows proved to be impossible in the streets; either researchers lost track of the swiftly moving children, or children interrupted the process by asking the researcher questions. Nevertheless, following children as they went about their work in a rural
village was very successful. It was particularly useful when children were wearing heart-rate monitors, so that heart rate activity during specific work tasks could be measured. This made it possible for researchers to measure the levels of activity for different types of work and revealed the extreme physical effort involved in carrying heavy loads. This showed that being a porter is one of the worst forms of child labour.

Source: Baker et al, 1996

Examples: Unstructured observation

Community or ‘neighbourhood’ walks were used in Cleveland, USA, to identify areas where children feel unsafe, a technique that could also be used with children in the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking, to identify significant aspects of their environment. Children led the researcher on a walking tour of the community, pointing out landmarks and responding to questions designed to stimulate general discussion about community likes and dislikes, dangers, safety, resources and people. If children wear unobtrusive tape recorders in a back- or belt-pack, their exact words can be recorded to complement the researcher’s notes.

Source: Spilsbury, 2002

Tips from experience

- While observing, researchers should keep a low profile;
- Wear clothes that help you to ‘blend in’ with the people around you;
- Disturb the location as little as possible;
- Try not to be noticed.

2.2 Structured

Structured observation tools are usually designed after other methods have identified themes, times, places and hypotheses about frequencies and timing. They are used to verify these reports, perceptions and hypotheses or reported regular occurrences. This last point is important because researchers carrying out unstructured observations often place too much importance on one particular type of behaviour and develop theories about how frequently it happens, and failing to notice other behaviour that is less obvious but more frequent. Methodical counting using a chart will correct mistaken impressions, and is a very basic form of triangulation. Structured observations can be based on:

- Frequency of events, activities or behaviour;
- Events at regular intervals at the same place (for example, checking outside a brothel at 20-minute intervals to see what happens and who is there);
Part III: Handbook Toolkit - Research methods

- Duration of events - for example the time a sexually exploited child spends with each customer;
- Sample of people - watching the individual activities and reactions of a child for half an hour, then repeating the observation with other children.

Structured observations on the worst forms of child labour might include the times children begin and end working, the tasks they perform and the way the employer behaves towards them; or the number of clients bar workers entertain during an evening.

→ Recording

Records of structured observations are made on charts (‘schedules’, forms, tables or checklists) specially designed for each research tool. They will usually need to be piloted several times to make sure that they are easy to use and that they do in fact record the events or behaviour correctly.

Examples - Structured observation

These two examples of structured observation charts can be adapted for a number of situations. The first example is for observing regular interactions between and activities of a group of street children. The second example is for observing the number and kinds of activities regularly carried out by regular children at different times of the day.

Structured observation chart for regular records of the activities of a known group of street children around a bus station

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Place</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>From</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day of the week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child</th>
<th>Activities with other children</th>
<th>Mixing with adults</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ramon</td>
<td>Talking</td>
<td>Gambling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jean</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butch</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from: Ernew, 2000
Structured observation chart for monitoring and recording rural children’s work at five day intervals, at the same time of day for one hour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0800</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0805</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0810</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0815</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0820</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>0825</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>0830</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>0835</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>0840</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0845</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0850</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0855</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from: Ennew, 2000

Tips from experience

• Structured observation is best done in pairs, with one researcher observing and the other recording on the chart;
• Structured observation charts can be cross-checked with time-use and recall charts.
3 Time use and recall

Research on child work often records the tasks carried out by children and the time taken to do them. This is a particularly good approach to use in order to understand and define the worst forms of child labour. A variety of techniques are used, but there are two basic methods: time use (recorded as it happens) and recall (remembered events). The method used may vary according to the type of activity and the period of time covered (see Box 27).

Time use

The way people use time is especially important for research on the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking. Time use can be measured as it happens, with detailed information gathered. As already seen, this can be done through observation charts while researchers watch children work. Alternatively, children can themselves fill in daily time sheets to show how much time they spend travelling to work, working, eating, performing household chores, playing and sleeping. It is not necessary for children to have wrist watches, or even to be able to tell the time, because a day can be divided into periods such as 'As soon as I wake up' or 'Between breakfast and lunch'. But it is important to make sure that the periods in the chart are meaningful to children. For example, children who do not eat breakfast will not recognise the period 'Between breakfast and lunch' as part of their lives.

Recall

In this method, participants are asked to recall past events - either specific events or routine activities, usually using some kind of chart. Typical topics for recall are daily routines (all activities during the previous 24 hours, or during the past week), or daily food consumption (all types of food consumed during the previous 24 hours). Rather than asking a long list of questions (When did you get up? What did you do first? What did you do next?), researchers give a participant a broad question or questions to answer in a chart that either the researcher or the participant can fill in. Probing questions can be added, to ensure that the information is complete.

→ Recording

There are many ways of recording time use and recalled events, ranging from detailed charts, to videos and autobiographies. Box 27 gives a guide to help choose between time use and recall methods, and ways of recording them.
Box 27 Time use and recall: ways of recording, and when

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period of time</th>
<th>Time use: As it happens</th>
<th>Recall: Remembered activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Best for getting details</td>
<td>Best for information about routines, but also good for unusual or one-time events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hour/day</td>
<td>Diaries and charts for participants to fill in, including observation charts</td>
<td>Charts filled in by researcher or participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Diaries and charts for participants to fill in</td>
<td>Charts filled in by researcher or participants; Structured interview or questionnaire.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Can be done if fieldwork is long-term, or research is a continuous process within a project</td>
<td>A variety of methods can be used individually or collectively, including visual methods, interviews, and questionnaires. Use of seasonal calendar, illness or employment episodes (especially for casual workers) are recommended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifetime</td>
<td>Not possible except with already-existing diary materials (secondary data), unlikely to exist outside highly literate societies.</td>
<td>A variety of methods may be used individually or collectively including visual methods, time lines, migration history, trafficking episodes, life history, and community history</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example: Daily time-use chart

A daily time-use chart (see next page) can be used to cross-check time spent on different activities with data from more detailed structured observation charts, which provide more information about the context of activities. Time-use charts can be filled in by participants, or through researchers questioning participants. It is best to define the categories of activity with participants before the chart is used (Piloting, Step 6).
Part III: Handbook Toolkit - Essentials for a protocol

**Example: Seasonal calendar**

Seasonal calendars are used to understand changes in people’s lives over a year. They show the main activities, problems, and opportunities throughout the annual cycle in the form of a diagram, or a number of diagrams, on a single sheet. Seasonal calendars help to identify the months of greatest difficulty and vulnerability, or other significant seasonal changes that affect people’s lives. Seasonal calendars can be used to analyse the relationship between economic hardships and the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking. They can show times when children have to drop out of school because they are needed to help with the harvest, or the months of lowest income and greatest debts, when children and adults leave home to seek work in the city.

Steps to prepare a seasonal calendar:
- Invite different groups of people to prepare seasonal calendars. Separate groups of girls, boys, women and men aged: 15-17, 18-25, over 26 years of age;
- Participants choose their own topics for the calendar, such as seasons, agricultural cycles, children’s work (types and workloads), times of indebtedness, times of hunger;
- Participants choose the materials needed to prepare the calendar. They can be drawn with pens and markers on paper or can be constructed on the ground using stones, or other small counters. Sticks can be broken into different lengths and used to indicate relative lengths of time;
- Participants choose the annual schedule that is most relevant to their lives (lunar, solar, festival, religious or standard calendar);
- Participants construct separate diagrams for each topic and then combine all seasonal patterns into one diagram to show relationships between different factors;
- Discuss the calendar with the people who constructed it and use the information to probe for a deeper understanding.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time of Day</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>13</th>
<th>14</th>
<th>15</th>
<th>16</th>
<th>17</th>
<th>18</th>
<th>19</th>
<th>20</th>
<th>21</th>
<th>22</th>
<th>23</th>
<th>24</th>
<th>Total hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal time</td>
<td></td>
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<td>*</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work at home</td>
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<td>*</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work outside home</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sleep</td>
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<td>*</td>
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<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Item

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>January</th>
<th>February</th>
<th>March</th>
<th>April</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>June</th>
<th>July</th>
<th>August</th>
<th>September</th>
<th>October</th>
<th>November</th>
<th>December</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School holidays</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>University holidays</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other national holidays</td>
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<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Festivals</td>
<td></td>
<td>New year</td>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Harvest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main sporting events</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Football season</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main trade events (fairs, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rainy season</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agricultural planting times</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Grain</td>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural harvesting times</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural slack season</td>
<td>Off-farm jobs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Work in town</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off-farm jobs</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influx of farm labour</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Construction season(s)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Main tourist season(s)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Period when money is short</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>People go to private lenders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time for debt repayments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Leisure time - non-farmers</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business away from home</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Truckers, traders, timber</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holidays away from home</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Times when migrants leave</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Youth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time when migrants return</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Visit</td>
<td>Help farm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seasonality of illness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Malaria, cholera</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seasonality of STDs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: FHI et al., 1998
4 Ranking

Ranking is a method that identifies individuals’ and groups’ preferences and priorities. Using words, objects, cards or visual images they rank (grade or place in order) ideas, events, people, things, types of activities and almost any aspect of their lives. Typical rankings used in everyday life are the most important people in a community, the most popular songs, and the position reached by football teams in a competition such as the World Cup. Ranking was the basis on which stakeholders decided their research priorities in Steps 2 and 4.

Ranking is a swift and enjoyable way of organising a discussion in which a group of people come to a collective decision about things they may not have actually talked about before, but which are important elements in their lives. For example a group of villagers might be able to make a list of the reasons why a child is trafficked, and then place them in order of importance. The results from using the same method in several villages in the same area would show what people’s experience leads them to think are the main reasons for child trafficking. Ranking and scoring methods provide a visual focus that can encourage the participation of people who might not readily take part in discussions. They identify and help to draw out the categories used by community members. They are useful for sensitive information, especially for data on income and wealth.

A variety of techniques can be used to rank participants' ideas about topics such as the effectiveness of government services, forms of child work from 'acceptable' to 'worst', or identify the most vulnerable children in a community. The various forms of ranking use objects ranging from stones and sticks to cards with messages written on them, and can be used by individuals or groups. Reading and writing skills are not essential to participate.

The topics can be divided into three main groups:

- Priorities and preferences;
- Criteria and reasons;
- Wealth and status.
All ranking begins with listing the objects, persons, events or people in a category: such as all types of work done by children, or all wealthy people in the village, for example. Lists can simply be divided into 'likes' and 'dislikes'. For example child workers can list, sort and rank the types of work they do, the things they do not like, or the problems they face in their life, in the community, at home, or at work.

Listing can be useful as an opening activity with a group of people, and the original lists can be used for further exercises, such as grouping the items on the list into broader categories. For example, children can group all the different types of work they do into lists of dangerous and non-dangerous work. This can lead into a discussion of what is dangerous work. In this way, the researcher can identify the children's own ways of categorising their work. Listing and sorting can lead to more complex ranking exercises and further discussions on each item or group of items, for example, forms of child labour can be given a ‘score’ in the ranking, according to different risks and hazards.

Lists that have been collected from a large number of people can be used for quantitative analysis by counting the number of times each item has been listed by groups or individuals. This can help identify patterns and differences between groups of people. If children are literate, they can prepare their own lists, for example in the classroom.

One of the most common topics for ranking is wealth. There are differences in wealth in every community that influence people's behaviours, economic coping strategies, and views. Community members have quite clear ideas about the external evidence of their neighbours' economic standing - as simple as counting the tin roofs in a remote Nepali village and relating this to the income gained from sending children with traffickers to get work. Outsiders and community members have different perceptions of poverty, wealth, well-being, and inequality. Local perceptions are important for obtaining a deeper understanding of a community, although different people (men, women, children, employers) may use different criteria for viewing wealth and poverty. Wealth ranking works best in communities with fewer than 100 households, in which people all know each other. In larger communities, especially in urban areas, it is difficult to find reliable informants who know all the households, although larger communities can be split by researchers into representative samples of smaller units.

The following guidelines are useful when planning to use ranking as a method in a research protocol:

• Discuss any ideas about what to focus on with knowledgeable people, before designing the tool;
• Be sure to get the perspectives of different groups of people in any ranking process you do: men, women and children will probably have different views;
• Ask questions to probe people’s reasons for the order of the ranking and their criteria (‘Why do you think that?’, ‘What makes this so important?’);
• Beware of misinterpreting the results of scoring tables. The numbers produced in scoring and ranking are relative rather than absolute. This means that the numbers usually cannot be used to make calculations during analysis.

→ Recording

In typical rural ranking exercises, participants use objects from their own environment, and move them around on the ground, or add extra counters (stones, sticks, leaves) to piles or rows to indicate preferences. Literate people write on cards, which they move around on a table or the floor, or stick on a wall or flipchart. Whatever is used, the result must be recorded in detail immediately, by reproducing the final order of things on paper. Remember to collect details of the people who have been involved in the ranking - names, ages, gender etc. - and to complete a standard observation sheet.

Tables (sometimes referred to as ‘matrixes’ or ‘matrices’) can be useful for recording people’s ranking decisions. They can be ‘drawn’ or marked out on the ground, in the first instance, using sticks or stones.

Example: Ranking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of reason</th>
<th>Activities girls do not like</th>
<th>Activities boys do not like</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hard and heavy</td>
<td>• Baby sitting</td>
<td>• Carrying water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Begging</td>
<td>• Carrying sand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Carrying sand for low pay</td>
<td>• Collecting firewood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Carrying firewood</td>
<td>• Ploughing and harrowing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Carrying heavy grass</td>
<td>• Taking care of younger siblings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Collecting left-over paddy</td>
<td>• Harvesting rice is adults’ work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Harvesting rice is adults’ work</td>
<td>• Ploughing and harrowing is too heavy for girls and women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Wage labour is demanding and difficult</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Handbooks for action-oriented research on the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking in children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of reason</th>
<th>Activities girls do not like</th>
<th>Activities boys do not like</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Embarrassing or shameful</strong></td>
<td>• Begging, ('I feel very ashamed')</td>
<td>• Begging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Risk of frequent punishment</strong></td>
<td>• Baby sitting</td>
<td>• Being hit by sister for letting the pan burn while cooking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Losing money while going to the market</td>
<td>• Losing ducks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Getting beaten when buffalo eat crops</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Getting scolded by employer when taking care of his/her buffalo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Losing ducks, they are too difficult to control.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 'Ducks come to eat rice, the field owner will beat me'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Getting punished for breaking dishes while washing them</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Being scolded by employer while baby sitting for other family</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Risk of accidents and injuries</strong></td>
<td>• Getting bitten by eels, snakes and pigs</td>
<td>• Afraid of leeches while catching eels, harvesting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Drowning while catching fish or taking care of ducks</td>
<td>or weeding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Cutting hands while collecting firewood</td>
<td>• Getting bitten while catching snakes or crabs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Getting burned while cooking</td>
<td>• Falling while collecting firewood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 'Afraid of cutting myself while cutting grass'</td>
<td>• Cut hand while cutting pig feed or grass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Afraid of leeches while picking vegetables and transplanting rice</td>
<td>• Being bitten by pigs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 'Spraying pesticides is not good for my health'</td>
<td>• Being injured by sharp fish fins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• It is easy to fall off a buffalo</td>
<td>• Breaking arm while playing football</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Getting kicked by a buffalo</td>
<td>• Getting kicked by a buffalo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Getting bitten by younger sibling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Example: Ranking the risks of the worst forms of child labour**

Lists of likes and dislikes from children can lead to, or be compared with, further probing of the worst forms of child labour, using other ranking techniques. The ILO-TICW project uses a form of ranking with different focus groups in
order to establish what people think are the risks of different forms of child labour. When a type of work has multiple risks, it can be defined as a worst form.

Participants first list the worst forms of child labour in the area, while researchers ask what reasons (criteria) are being used to define ‘worst’ by asking ‘What is bad about this form of child labour?’ ‘What else is bad about it?’ The criteria are also listed. Then a table is drawn, with the forms of child labour written on the left-hand side and the reasons across the top (see below). Researchers ask participants to fill in the table by giving a score to each type of work with respect to each criterion. When the table is complete, it can be the topic of further discussion, which might also raise awareness within the community about the risks of the worst forms of child labour.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forms of child labour</th>
<th>Types of risks and hazards</th>
<th>No freedom</th>
<th>Sexual abuse</th>
<th>Physical and health dangers</th>
<th>Illegality and insecurity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexual exploitation</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>xxx</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trafficking</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>xxx</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonded labour</td>
<td>xxx</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>xx</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining and quarrying</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>xxx</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child soldiers</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic workers</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street children</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Begging rackets</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scavenging</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>xx</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work in workshops</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tips from experience**

- Some cultures do not include ranking as a way of thinking about the world and may not have words and concepts for ‘better’ and ‘worst’;
- Some descriptions of ranking suggest using beans or rice to use as counters in ranking exercises. It is neither respectful nor ethical to use food for this kind of exercise in places where people go hungry;
- Wealth ranking allows the research team to understand wealth inequalities in a community, discover local indicators of poverty and wealth, and establish the relative social positions of households. This type of community profile can be used to select households for later interviews, or to identify and target project participants (such as the poorest households). Wealth ranking is also useful as an introduction to discuss coping strategies, opportunities, problems, and possible solutions;
5 Focus group discussions

Focus group discussions are facilitated discussions on a specific topic ('focus'). They are useful for exploring agreed ideas and attitudes, especially early in research, in order to find out what questions to ask and what words to use in interviews and questionnaires. It is essential to remember that focus group discussions do not produce factual data, they simply provide ideas about what people think are the facts. Focus group discussions are useful for identifying the knowledge, ideas, norms, beliefs, attitudes, behaviours, feelings and perceptions of a certain group. They are also useful for discussing questions about the kinds of interventions that people think would be successful.

Participants in a focus group discussion should share common characteristics - for example, a group of girl domestic workers of the same age discussing their work. Discussions should be arranged with more than one group, in different places, or of different ages and birthplaces, in order to cross-check the information. In addition, focus groups with adults (parents, employers and non-employers) could be organised to find out about attitudes towards child domestic workers. Separate focus groups of child labourers in different kinds of work could be organised, to discuss the same basic issues, in order to compare attitudes of boys who work and girls who work, but not as domestics.

The group dynamics at focus group discussions can reduce the role and power of the researcher, which can be empowering for children. Participants have greater control over the process than during an interview. Focus groups can be enjoyable for participants. Sometimes group members are motivated to take action as a result of sharing their stories. A group of children discussing punishment in school in Ethiopia became so animated and interested that they closed the adult facilitator out of their debate and later went on to organise focus groups with other children in the same school, in order to take action against cruel forms of physical punishment.
On the other hand, focus groups do not offer confidentiality and privacy. This may inhibit honest responses, which means that focus groups are usually not appropriate for asking about individual experiences with abuse and exploitation. For such topics, individual interviews are more appropriate. This is not a strict rule, however, since some participants may reveal personal experiences if they feel supported by other focus group members.

A focus group discussion requires:

- Eight to 15 participants with the same characteristics (gender, age, employment and wealth, for example);
- A comfortable place with no interruptions or spectators;
- Sufficient space for everyone to sit down comfortably in a circle, with no tables or desks to block the space between them;
- A set time for discussion (no less than one hour and not normally more than two);
- The list of ideas, questions or topics to be covered, from the relevant research tool;
- A skilled facilitator;
- At least one skilled note taker.

It can take time to organise focus groups and it is easiest to set them up in a place where people gather together anyway, such as a school or vocational training project, a clinic or a service-providing NGO. In rural communities it may be possible to take advantage of existing community meetings, women's groups or credit unions. Community leaders can be invaluable in helping researchers locate people to take part in a focus group discussion. Participants should be informed when the discussion will take place, what will happen, what will be discussed and asked for their consent as individuals.

Focus groups can sometimes be dominated by a few individuals who suppress controversial or different views. They may also exclude people who are not comfortable about speaking in public or who are not able to speak in front of someone of higher status. Focus group discussions were developed in Western societies that presume everyone has an equal right to speak, whatever their status. In Asia, it is customary for the person of highest status to speak first, often at length, followed by people of lower status in order of rank. Thus focus groups with adults may appear to be dominated by elders, the educated and the wealthy. This makes it all the more important to try to select people with the same characteristics. With respect to children, differences of status are small, and seldom make a difference in focus groups, except that it is often wise to hold discussions separately with boys and girls (although this is not an inflexible rule and depends on the topic). Adult women, who are not accustomed to having their
opinions sought, or listened to, may be too shy to talk and respond best to looking at pictures or videos to begin the discussion. Several other methods can be used before and during focus groups, including listing, ranking and scoring, diagrams, and drawings.

Apart from choosing appropriate groups, the success of a focus group discussion depends on the ‘facilitator’ (whose job is to make the discussion flow smoothly) and the note taker(s) who keep a detailed record of what is said. The aim of a well-facilitated focus group is to get the participants to discuss the topic with as little interference from the facilitator as possible - as in the case of the group of Ethiopian children described above. The role of the facilitator is to:

- Establish a friendly and positive atmosphere;
- Introduce the discussion;
- Encourage open discussion and active involvement of all participants;
- Monitor the discussion and minimise the domination of the discussion by a few individuals;
- Be prepared to deal with people’s emotions, including disagreements between group members;
- Summarise the discussion at the end;
- Listen to additional comments after the session.

A focus group discussion produces invalid data if the facilitator:

- Asks questions of each participant, as if in a group interview;
- Suggests responses;
- Gives personal opinions;
- Acts as an expert or teacher;
- Contradicts or corrects participants;
- Uses an authoritarian or patronising tone when speaking to participants.

Recording

An experienced note taker should record the group discussion. Agree on the methods of recording with the participants before the discussion begins. Possible additional recording methods include: recording main points of discussion on flipcharts - for everyone to see, typing into a notebook computer, audio tape recording or video recording. A written record must be made of:

- Date, time, place and names of participants;
• Names of facilitator and note taker;
• Content of the discussion throughout. Exact words where possible, and especially the words and phrases used by participants to discuss sensitive topics;
• Group dynamics: level of participation, level of interest, dominant and passive participants;
• Opinions and emotions;
• Body language and the way things are said (angrily, with humour, shyly...).

Audio tape recordings of focus group discussions are not easy to analyse and miss most important details, such as who said what. They should never be used as the only record and are probably best not used at all.

**Example: focus group discussion**

Eleven of the 49 focus group discussions held in research on children in need of special protection measures in Tanzania included questions about child domestic workers. The discussions were held in four different communities in the nation-wide sample, with community leaders, professionals, parents and young people, concentrating on rural communities that supplied girls as domestic workers to urban centres. The groups were not large, with an average of eight participants and, although the adult groups were male dominated, the young people's groups had an equal gender distribution. During the discussions, the groups were asked to explain and give reasons for their views on the push and pull factors that lead children to become domestic workers, advantages and disadvantages of allowing girls to work as domestics and their views about the families that employ girls rather than adult women.

A variety of reasons were given by discussants for parents allowing or encouraging their daughters to be employed as domestic workers. Poverty was the key factor, with many parents encouraging girls to migrate to the towns because of the financial benefits for the whole family. Another factor was the lack of schools in rural areas, as well as parents' inability to pay for education, combined with little or no rural employment. Other participants mentioned abusive home environments, which girls wished to escape, and also the peer influence of girls who had been to the city and returned for visits with new clothes and fashionable haircuts. Participants said that when these girls, who were described as 'glittering', return to town, they take with them three or four other girls.

Source: Ahmed et al, 1999

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**Tips from experience**

• Research coordinators need to observe pilot focus group discussions in order to improve facilitation and note-taking skills;
• Facilitators should not talk or intervene unnecessarily. Research should never use facilitators who dominate, give opinions and explanations, or move the discussion on to another topic before people have finished discussing the current one;
6 Visual methods

Some people find it easier to communicate if they do not have to use words and, as already seen, Article 13 of the CRC mentions the need to find alternative ways for children to express their opinions. Visual methods are especially useful for working with children (and adults) who find verbal expression difficult, for dealing with issues that are hard or embarrassing to talk about, and for stimulating a focus group discussion or interview. It is often easier to respond to a picture, photograph or other visual image than to a question. Visual methods can include drawings, sculptures, masks, maps, puppets, photographs and videos produced by the participants. They can be used with individuals or with groups. Yet these methods may not be suitable for all societies, and researchers must take into account different cultural forms in visual expression and different ways of seeing.

In general, visual methods are acceptable and enjoyable for most participants. But there are some situations in which they should be used sensitively. Visual methods may not be culturally appropriate - for example, drawings of people in Muslim areas. Researchers have to be familiar with local 'ways of seeing' to make sense of the images. Diagrams may be culture-specific and need to be adapted to the local context. People have to be 'visually literate' in order to use visual methods. Non-literate people may be unfamiliar with the use of pen and paper and people not used to 'wasting' paper may feel uncomfortable writing on flipchart paper. Illiterate children may feel inhibited by pen and paper, and disempowered as a result of being asked to draw pictures.
Visual methods reduce the risk of the researcher missing important points. They can result in new perspectives. For example, photographs taken by child labourers may capture details that an adult researcher may have overlooked.

There are two fundamental rules for all work with visual methods: interpretation and ownership.

Interpretation - Pictures, drawings, diagrams and maps must be interpreted by the people who draw them. It is unethical and unscientific for the researcher to interpret people's drawings and diagrams without consulting them. Researchers should allow time for comments, explanations and discussions. Listen to and record what people say about the pictures they make. This is as important for research as the pictures themselves.

Ownership - Participants own the pictures they have made. Ask permission if researchers want to take away drawings, maps, diagrams and photographs away, to publish them or to use them in a larger group. Make copies (with permission) for the research record if people want to keep the originals. Give the names of people who have provided drawings, maps and diagrams in any reports or publications, if this is the wish of the artist(s).

6.1 Children's drawings

Drawing allows participants to explore a topic without having to answer individual questions. It reduces eye contact between an adult researcher and a child, which can help reduce the researcher's role and power. Children usually enjoy drawing but must be asked what they have drawn because adult interpretations are almost always incorrect, or miss vital details that are important to the child.

Children's drawings can be valuable sources of information. They are particularly useful research tools in situations where children cannot or do not want to express themselves orally or in writing. Drawings may be useful in approaching sensitive subjects, such as experiences of abuse. Children's drawings are individual and cultural interpretations. Researchers need to understand local ways of seeing and drawing, respect local customs relating to visual representations, and understand what children draw at different ages.

Recording

All drawings need to have the following information recorded, in addition to the use of a
standard observation sheet for each data-collection session:

• Child's gender;
• Child's age;
• Other personal characteristics (such as type of work, or grade in school) that will enable
  the drawings from this research tool to be compared and triangulated with similar
  information collected using another research tool;
• Child's interpretation of the drawing;
• Replies made by the child to any questions from the researcher, together with the
  questions themselves.

Drawings and pictures - together with the explanations by the artists - can be coded to identify
the number of times certain ideas or images appear. The coded and tabulated data can then be
analysed. It is important to think about how to analyse before spending time and resources on
collecting large numbers of drawings, diagrams or photographs.

Example: Children's drawings

Pioneering research with street boys in South Africa asked the children to divide a page in half from top to
bottom and draw 'people doing good things' on the right-hand side and 'people doing bad things' on the
left. The boys were encouraged to draw as many things as possible. They drew in the open air, in a place
where they felt comfortable, which provided sufficient space between them to minimise copying. The
drawings were collected during several sessions with different groups of boys over a period of time, and
written records of their explanations of their pictures were kept with the drawings. The drawings were
categorised, counted and tabulated; results showing, among other things, that contrary to public opinions
these boys held very mainstream values.

Source: Swart, 1990

Tips from experience

• Researchers need to provide the paper and pencils/crayons. Children may want to keep
  them - what will you do about that?
• Children who do not often get a chance to draw or use coloured pencils may need time
  and many sheets of paper to enjoy the experience and practice before they draw what will
  be relevant for the research;
• Explain the purpose of the research and how the drawings will be analysed and used;
• Do not praise 'good' drawings or criticise 'bad' drawings;
• Do not select only 'good' drawings for analysis;
Tips from experience

- Children may not draw what you ask. This is not a problem. Find out why they draw what they draw. Never discard any drawings. Remember that ‘negative’ data are also data - they show that the researcher needs to know more about the topic and/or how to ask questions or describe what they would like participants to do.

6.2 Maps, diagrams and charts

A variety of visual methods, usually used with groups, has been developed for collecting information about space and time use. These techniques rarely use a pencil and paper in the first instance, but the results are copied on to paper by researchers. To make it possible for illiterate or semi-literate people to participate, extensive use is made of natural materials, such as sticks or stones, which are readily available locally - and free. Drawing and modelling is done on a large scale on the ground so that all participants can move around the map or diagram and the final product is agreed on by everyone. This approach has already been described in the section on ranking methods, but is particularly useful for exploring both individual and group ideas about their environment and daily activities.

These methods developed as a form of action-oriented research with communities in villages and are usually referred to collectively as ‘PRA’ (participatory rural appraisal). The aim is to involve community members in the planning process. These methods are also useful outside rural settings, particularly for rapid assessment, but are difficult to analyse scientifically. The main techniques are described in many manuals on PRA, some of which are referred to in the bibliography (see in particular ILO-TICW Project 2002; Bartlett, Hill and Arnold 2001; Theis and Grady, 1991).

The following techniques provide good examples of this type of method:

- Community (or social) mapping to identify different quarters; households showing wealth categories, ethnic groups, caste membership, disabled people, female-headed households, migrants, trafficked children; services; entertainment areas; different types of child labour; areas that are ‘dangerous’ or ‘safe’ for children. Community maps are useful for selecting households for interviews and further discussions to get more in-depth information on the things drawn on the map. Community maps are usually best drawn by groups of participants;
• Children's mobility mapping to understand children's range of movements (see the example below). Mobility maps are usually drawn by individual children and then be compared to find out differences in children's movements. Examples include mapping the mobility of scavengers or of street children. Mobility mapping can also be used to show limits in mobility, for example mapping the (lack of) mobility of child domestic workers;
• Mapping different trafficking and migration routes by individuals or by groups of children and adults together;
• Mapping the inside of homes and places of work to show the way space is used by different people. This can be useful for understanding work processes and working conditions, and can lead to further probing on these topics. It is particularly interesting to ask participants (for example domestic workers) to show places they are not allowed to enter;
• Historical mapping can be used to show changes in migration and trafficking routes in response to changes in laws, law enforcement or visa regulations.

➡️ Recording

Keep a permanent (paper) record of the map, including the names and any other relevant characteristics of the people who drew it.

Some visual tools, such as flow charts, are already analytical instruments. For example, a number of charts drawn by trafficked children to show the steps of trafficking can be compared to identify different patterns of trafficking. Lists of items, such as work that is not suitable for children, can be combined and can be analysed statistically to identify the types of work considered least suitable for children.

Example: Mapping

Children in a Nepali village were asked to draw the places they went to frequently. First they drew a circle to represent the house they lived in, then they drew circles around the house to represent the places that they went to, showing the relative distance and direction from the house. The mobility map below is a copy of the one drawn by 14 year old Maya Rani Waiba. Unlike boys she did not draw a school on her map, commenting that 'Boys and girls can earn money and become teachers if they are educated. I would like to go to adult literacy classes but my parents don’t let me go as I have to work.'
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6.3 Photographs and videos

Children and adult community members can easily be shown how to take photographs, and may already have experience using cameras. Children can take photographs and make videos as individuals or in groups. Photographs can be used to document and illustrate topics such as dangerous working conditions or hazardous machinery. In some situations child labourers are able to take photographs in places that are not accessible to outsiders. Pictures taken by child labourers can provide useful insights into the way they see the world but, like drawings, they have to be explained by the photographer. The interpretation turns the photograph into a useful source of information, rather than a mere illustration for a report.
Pictures taken during fieldwork can be used as visual stimuli during subsequent discussions and interviews. One of the most useful ways of using photographs to collect data is to ask a participant, or group of participants, to use all the shots on a disposable camera to make a 'photo-essay' to illustrate some aspect of their lives: 'Child work in our community' or 'The causes of trafficking', for example. When the photographs are developed (which in most large cities can be done within an hour), the photographer(s) can display them on a flipchart or wall and explain what they want to communicate, which usually results in lively and interesting discussion.

Photography and video are powerful ways to communicate and to raise awareness. They reach many people who would not read a written report. Yet, despite all these advantages, photographs and videos can raise ethical issues if they record illegal activities. Once they have been made public, films and photographs can take on a life of their own and are hard to control. Researchers must be especially careful when using photographs and videos that show trafficked, abused and exploited children (Steps 11 and 12). Even in situations where children agree to the photographs being published, researchers are ultimately responsible for protecting identities. In situations where the privacy of people cannot be ensured, photographs should not be taken.

Ask for consent when taking someone’s photograph. Make sure people understand the implications and potential risks if they have their picture taken. Do not take photographs if this may put children and adult participants in danger.

Using video or film shot by participants has a long history in social research, especially with non-literate people. Making the video is just the first step. Editing of video footage can completely change the meaning of the images and should include the participants who took the picture. The process is also expensive and should involve experts in film-making. Researchers who are interested in including video among the methods in a protocol will find ideas and advice on the website of the Granada Centre for Visual Anthropology (see ‘Key websites’).

→ Recording

Photographs are records in themselves but to be useful in research they must be collected within the context of a research tool and labelled with information such as photographer, date, location, subject, comments and interpretations from the photographer and other people, as well as a standard observation sheet. Informed consent is required from both photographers and people who are photographed.
**Example: Photographs**

A researcher in a remote rural village in Orissa, India, decided to use disposable cameras as an experiment in his research with boys involved in agricultural labour. The researcher could only afford one camera, and the boys had never used one before. They formed a group to make a photo-essay of 'work in our village', deciding jointly on the images to record, and with one confident boy taking all the photographs. It was two weeks before the researcher was able to go to the nearest town for the photographs to be developed and then return to the village. The boys excitedly arranged the photographs on the mud floor of a hut, explaining what they had been trying to communicate so fast that the researcher could barely keep up with them as he took notes. Despite the boys’ inexperience, each photograph was in focus and perfectly framed.

Adapted from: Boyden and Ennew, 1997

### Tips from experience

- Using photography, and especially video, is expensive;
- Using disposable cameras can be a relatively cheap option;
- Despite many adults’ fears that children will break or steal cameras, this almost never happens;
- It is important to remember that photographs reflect the viewpoint of the photographer - the photograph can ‘lie’.

#### 6.4 Visual stimuli

Single images, or a set of images, drawings or photographs can be used to stimulate discussion with individuals or groups. This approach is particularly useful for participants who are shy, or for difficult or sensitive topics, as well as for exploring ideas. For example, to begin discussion about early marriage in a rural area researchers might show participants’ drawings of different male/female couples (old with young, rich with poor) and ask 'What do you think is happening? Who do you think they are?' 'What is this?' 'What does this tell and show?' Or 'What does this mean?'. Pictures can also be used in ranking exercises.

A variety of visual stimuli can be developed from:

- Children's/adults' own photographs and drawings;
- A 'photo-essay' or set of drawings made by other participants;
- Pictures made beforehand by an artist or photographer;
- Collages;
• Posters;
• Films and videos;
• Pottery, sculpture and other objects.

Body mapping is an interesting technique that can be used to explore both children's understanding of, and ideas about, their own bodies and the physical effects of hazardous labour on children. This is a method that can be used with groups of adults and children. One participant volunteers to lie on the ground on top of a large sheet of paper (two sheets of flipchart paper stuck together), with face up and arms and legs spread wide. Using a thick marker, another participant draws a silhouette round the body of the volunteer. Then, with the volunteer back on his or her feet, the group discusses and marks on the 'map' places on the body that they feel correspond to a list of characteristics provided by the researcher, such as 'vulnerable places', 'private places', 'places that hurt'.

If drawings made by artists are used as stimuli, they will need very careful piloting in order to make sure that participants see what researchers would like them to see. Different sets of drawings may have to be made for rural and urban participants, or for participants from minority cultures. Each culture has its own ways and experiences of seeing. Participants from remote areas may have almost no experience of 'seeing' in two dimensions on a page and can be unable to recognise a photograph even of a close relative. Researchers should not take any visual image for granted.

Recording

The idea of using visual images is to stimulate discussion, so the form of recording should be appropriate to the focus group discussion or interview in the research tool.

Example: Visual stimulus

During the focus group discussions with schoolchildren on physical punishment described in the example for focus groups, Ethiopian researcher Tsegaye Chernet found that children were not clear about the definition of the topic. He explored with the children the meaning of the word Q’bat (punishment), used in the local language, and developed a list of different punishments, from being struck with a cane to being hung upside down over burning chili-peppers. Then an artist worked with children to draw pictures they would recognise of each type of punishment. These visual stimuli were used in a chart for week-long diaries of punishments kept by children themselves. Adapted from: Boyden and Ennew, 1997
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Tips from experience

- Visual stimuli are particularly effective for encouraging rural girls and women to talk;
- Do not include words in pictures that will be used with illiterate or semi-literate participants;
- Never use pictures from research tools developed in another country - replace them with local images.

7 Role play

Role play can help to establish rapport with children and give those who are less articulate an opportunity to express themselves. Drama also provides a means by which children revisit painful experiences with less danger of being re-traumatised. When they are playing a role the events in a drama are not ‘happening’ to them. It is also easier for children to criticise adult behaviour through role play, showing what the adults in their lives actually do. Role-play can stimulate focus group discussions.

It may be easier for children to respond indirectly through drama or puppets rather than by directly answering questions. If there is time, children can make masks and puppets to use in the plays. Role plays and puppet theatre enable children to express their views about sensitive issues without having to talk about themselves and their own (traumatic or illegal) experiences.

Children can express their opinions without risking punishment. Role plays help identify and understand the terms and language used by children. They are also used to enable children to provide feedback about the research process to the researchers. For example, children can be given a microphone and tape recorder to ‘make a radio programme’ to express their views about a topic. This puts children in charge (they hold the microphone and chose what to say) as well as making research fun.

Dramatic forms also vary with culture. Puppet theatre, song and dance may also be ways of communicating with children in research. In some communities proverbs, poetry, songs and drama are used to express sensitive social and political topics. Participatory research can build on these traditions by adapting existing forms of public expression to the purposes of the research.
Recording

Recording a role play happens in stages:

- Researcher takes notes about group dynamics as participants discuss and rehearse a role play;
- Researcher takes notes during the role play (perhaps backed up by video but without intruding on the action with a camera);
- After the role play is finished and has been applauded, if there is an audience, the researcher asks them ‘What did you see?’ and notes the answers;
- The actors are asked what they intended to show;
- Finally the researcher probes both actors and audience about the actions and behaviour in the role play: ‘Does that often happen?’ ‘Why did he do that?’.

Example: Role play

In the Sindhuti district of Nepal, girls use songs to express their perceptions of their present and their future. Many of the songs reflect the girls’ lives of hard work and their regrets about not being able to go to school. Songs are a means of entertainment as well as an informal method of venting feelings and emotions. When the girls made up songs for researchers they found that preferential treatment of boys is a recurrent theme:

Boys go to school daughters go to farm.
Who made this rule that daughters are less than sons?
My younger brother and I both fed at our mother’s breasts.
Why will he feed from our father’s land all his life?

Tips from experience

- Two researchers taking notes, which they compare afterwards and merge into a single account, is the most effective form of recording;
- Role play usually works best if children are given a topic and asked to make up a drama about it, rather than following a scenario written by researchers. Providing children with a topic (‘why children work’) and a set of roles (parents, children, neighbours, employers) can be particularly successful if the aim is to find out about interpersonal dynamics;
- Role play is an excellent stimulus to use before a focus group discussion with children. After they have finished the role play, children can sit down with the researchers, and give an explanation of the action in the drama (which should also be recorded). Researchers
8 Written methods

Written methods include essays, lists, diaries and recall charts kept by children who are literate and/or at school. Written methods are particularly helpful for collecting large data sets, if they are used in schools - whether formal or non-formal.

Essays, diaries and/or life histories can provide insight into the activities of children, particularly their own views, priorities and concerns. A good method for exploring sensitive issues is sentence completion, in which children are given a number of sentences to finish in their own words, such as 'I am good at...', 'I am afraid of...', 'I wish...'. Sentence completion is rapid and relatively easy to analyse, and can also be used to explore a number of different dimensions in one research tool.

To collect written material from groups of children:

• Give clear and consistent instructions (the exact words used by researchers should be written in the research tool);
• Stress that there are no right or wrong, good or bad answers;
• Do not give marks and ignore spelling mistakes;
• If the exercise is done in a classroom, the researcher, not the teacher, should give instructions to the children;
• Ask permission about possibly publishing their writing, and if they wish their names to be used.

Classroom-based research can produce large amounts of data that can be quantified in a relatively short time. Thus it is important to develop a good sampling frame to decide which kind of schools (primary/secondary), where (urban/rural/semi-urban), and which classes or grades, as well as how many grades in each school, to include in the research.
Recording

The method is the record, but each essay or sentence-completion sheet needs to have specific information provided by children, such as gender, age, place of birth (if migration is a topic of research) or wish for a future career.

Example: Written methods

Large-scale data sets of up to 3,000 essays per country have been collected by researchers in Jamaica, Peru and England, on the topic ‘What I do when I am not in school’. The combination of quantifiable data and children’s own words provided insights that could be reliably compared between three very different locations, with very high degrees of statistical significance. Essays allowed children to give information that was not pre-determined by the researchers’ assumptions and the broad title prevented the results being limited by the use of words such as ‘work’ and ‘employment’. In addition, it was possible to obtain a picture of the place of a variety of paid and unpaid work within the full range of children’s daily activities.

Source: Ennew and Morrow, 1994

Tips from experience

• In classroom settings in particular, children may be accustomed to writing essays in the majority language and not be literate in their mother tongue. Ask children to choose which language they prefer to write in;

• Some children will write more (and quicker) than others. Have a back-up activity for those who finish first - either a drawing to accompany the essay or (with the prior agreement of the teacher) permission to leave the room and go to the recreation space.

9 Interviews

Interview methods include informal, unstructured discussions on relatively undefined topics; semi-structured interactions about pre-defined topics; and a variety of written questionnaires. Interviews are the best known of all social research methods, but this does not mean that they are the best methods to use, especially with children. It is difficult to design a successful interview tool. The results are usually limited by the researcher’s inability to ask the right questions as well as being difficult to analyse. Unstructured and semi-structured interviews can be used sparingly in the first stages of research to find out more about context. Questionnaires are only useful in the final stages for checking ideas that researchers have developed on the
Part III: Handbook Toolkit - Research methods

basis of earlier analysis (Step 8). When questionnaires are used in this way they are very useful indeed - but not before!

The reason why interviews (and especially questionnaires) are so frequently used is because there is a myth that they are more scientific and produce numerical (quantitative results). But numbers on their own mean nothing at all without understanding the context. Interview tools (especially questionnaires) must never be used until researchers have an understanding of the specific context. This is why fieldwork is split into three distinct steps in Level 3.

Interviews are usually conducted with individuals, but also sometimes with groups. Individual interviews can be carried out with any participants (or samples) who can talk about themselves and their own experiences, as well as with key informants, who are experienced and articulate observers of local conditions, and who are willing to share their views and knowledge. Key informants may include community leaders; staff from government agencies, service providers or mass organisations; people working with community groups; managers and workers in businesses; academics and researchers; and journalists. Take your time to select useful key informants. Start with people who have been recommended to and ask them to identify other key informants (snowball sampling). Key informants have their own views and motivations. Do not rely too much on just a few of them or your research results will be biased.

Avoid using 'leading questions', which presuppose:

- A particular answer: "You want to go home to your village, don't you?"
- A particular situation, thought or behaviour: "When were you beaten up for the first time by your pimp?"

The questions in any interview can be designed to be either 'open' or 'closed'. Open questions, such as 'Can you tell me about the best day in your life?'; or 'What can you tell me about the journey from your village?'; encourage participants to think about and provide answers that are relevant to them. Closed questions, such as 'Do you like this town?', have a set of predetermined (and often pre-coded) answers. They are mostly used in structured interviews or questionnaires because they easily provide numerical data. Closed and open questions can be used together in the same interview. For example 'Do you like this town?' which can only be answered with 'yes', 'no', 'don't know', 'not much', can be followed by the open question, 'Why?'

9.1 Unstructured and semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews are informal sessions, usually with individual participants, using a
list of questions or themes rather than a questionnaire with fixed questions. The interviewer is free to phrase the questions, and to ask them in any order as long as they follow the broad themes of the research. This approach gives participants greater control over the direction of the conversation and allows them to tell their story in their own way. Participants usually enjoy such interviews.

Life history interviews are a form of semi-structured interview. They are useful for understanding the situation of individual children in greater detail: their lives, families, histories, work, education and experiences. Life history interviews are good for identifying career patterns in the lives of child labourers. Children should tell their own life story without interruption by the researcher. Possible topics for life story interviews include:

- Biographical details;
- Family background - parents, siblings;
- Community setting;
- Everyday life - household environment, domestic routines, household economy;
- Work and migration;
- Crises, difficulties and coping strategies;
- Education;
- Special occasions - births, funerals, weddings, festivals;
- Leisure and recreation.

Do not start with direct questions. Begin with socially accepted small talk. Introduce the interviewer(s). Explain the reasons for the interview and what will be done with the answers. Get informed consent from the participant. If the interviewee is uncomfortable with the situation, break off the interview. The key to a successful interview is to be natural and relaxed while guiding the conversation. Avoid sensitive questions at the beginning, leave them until later in the interview. If a question causes silence, or cannot be answered, avoid suggesting answers. Ask the question in a different way or ask the question again later during the interview. Avoid any indication of disbelief, contempt or ridicule of responses given by the interviewees. Avoid repeating questions (this may happen in poorly conducted team interviews, where interviewers do not listen carefully). Be flexible and modify the interview as information provided by the participant generates new insights. Listen closely and ask for more details (probing).

Recording

When taking notes, avoid rephrasing responses in your own words. It is important to
understand what things mean in people’s own language, using a back-up tape recording if necessary.

Example: Unstructured interviews

Tobias Hecht conducted what he called ‘radio workshops’ with street boys in Brazil, handing them a tape recorder and microphone and asking them to interview each other, using their own questions. He found that:

• The children tended to view the tape recorder not with suspicion but rather as a means of getting their opinions listened to;
• They often used role play, pretending to be on the radio, as the basis of their interview technique;
• Street child interviewers were not afraid to challenge a participant if they thought he was telling lies;
• They asked questions adult interviewers would not have thought of;
• They asked questions in words and ways that other boys understood;
• The questions they asked each other were often as interesting for the research as the answers they gave.

Source: Hecht, 1998

Tips from experience

• Questions that start with 'who, what, where, when, why and how' help to establish the situation. Use these as prompts (reminders for the researcher). They often reveal important information about things such as the division of labour between boys and girls.
• Keep your own comments, knowledge and conclusions separate from the answers you get from the interviewees.
• Pay close attention to the participant’s body language and facial expression. They can often tell if an answer is truthful.
• Be aware that participants may want to please the interviewer by giving answers they think the interviewer is looking for.
• Good interviews are intensive and tiring. Limit interviews to about one hour. Try not to conduct more than four or five per day.
• Interview data tell the researcher what people say they do. Check and observe what they actually do.
• Observe the participant, and things around the participant, during the interview. Observation data can be important additional information and can be used to interpret the answers of the interviewee.
9.2 Structured interviews (questionnaires)

Structured interviews use standard forms (or questionnaires) designed to collect the same information from all the people interviewed, and are by far the most widely used research method. Governments, donors and research departments use them because, with the right sampling, they generate representative quantitative data that can be used in planning, targeting and monitoring outputs and impacts.

Structured interviews are particularly suitable for collecting straightforward factual information. All questions on the questionnaire must be asked in the same standard way and in the same order. Possible answers are indicated on the form so that the interviewer simply ticks the selected reply. Questionnaire surveys offer a relatively cheap way of collecting data from large numbers of people. They are easy to analyse, if mainly pre-coded questions are used, but open-ended questions have to be coded after data collection, using the steps and processes described in Levels 3 and 4.

Questionnaire surveys are generally not successful methods for investigating the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking. The exploitation and abuse of children through labour remains largely invisible in surveys, since participants are unlikely to admit to illegal activities during a formal interview. In general, children are not good participants in structured interviews, because they can feel intimidated by both the interviewer and the formal interview situation. Structured interviews allow no flexibility and give little time for establishing trust and rapport between interviewee and researcher.

To produce valid results, a questionnaire survey must be based on considerable prior research to establish the context and to develop hypotheses about the situation. It can take substantial time to draft and pilot test a questionnaire. If structured interviews are used at all, they should come late in the research process. They should never be used as the only research tool. If researchers decide to use questionnaires, they should choose the sample carefully, and keep the questionnaire relevant and short.

→ Recording

Recording structured interviews and questionnaires is done using specially prepared forms, designed for each research tool using this kind of method.
9.3 Surveys

One way of obtaining child-centred data about the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking, is to add specific questions to other surveys, which is cheaper and more efficient than carrying out your own survey. If national statisticians can become convinced of the value of intensive, participatory approaches, and if those more versed in community-level methods can learn to work with macro-level data sets, then more comprehensive and useful research activities and programme interventions are likely to result through collaboration and information sharing.

Convince the National Statistics Office and donor agencies (for example World Bank, UN organisations, DFID, SIDA) to include questions relevant to the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking, in household surveys. Identify ways to modify the questionnaire design, the sampling or the coding (disaggregation of data) and the data processing and analysis to generate more data on exploited and abused children. Institutes carrying out national-level household surveys also need to standardise their definitions and categories to make statistical data about exploited children comparable.

'Capture-recapture' surveys of mobile populations

The 'capture-recapture method' (this term is taken from the experiments of animal behaviourists) can be used to estimate the number of working children. The method works best for situations where children can be easily observed and work is concentrated in a few well-known areas. It will not work well in situations where children and their work are hidden. The method allows generalisations from a small sample. It takes a non-representative sample and uses it to generate data representative of the larger population.

For example this method can be used to estimate the number of street children in a city. The researchers interview a few children at random one day. The next day they return to the same area to interview some more children at random and see how many of the first day's children are included in the second day's sample. In practice, it is not necessary to interview children a second time. The researchers simply ask the children they interview on the first day: 'If we came back here tomorrow at this same time, would we find you here?'

Occupational health surveys

Accurate definitions of the worst forms of child labour depend to a large extent on knowing
medical details about the effects of particular work on children, and comparing this with a control group of children from the same type of background who have never worked. One way of obtaining these data is to collaborate with health workers to organise a health clinic on a day when children do not normally work. Simple health checks can be made, along with referral to clinics and hospitals if necessary, and the results put together with information on age, type of work, number of years in that work, etc.. This can be beneficial for children and generates considerable useful information.

Be aware of the serious ethical issues surrounding disclosure of medical records and health status. Always seek participants' informed consent before the check-up. Whatever the result of the check-up, ensure the clinicians seek the participant's informed consent to pass this information to you. Do not give individual participants' names with data about the results of a check-up. If a participant is willing to reveal information about the results of the check-up to you, respect the confidentiality of this information - both among the other participants and among your fellow researchers. If the participant chooses to hide the information from the other participants, respect their right to do so.

Attitude surveys

Attitude surveys are formal versions of ranking exercises, which can be used to cross-check information from ranking and focus group discussions about people's attitudes and values. The questions are usually phrased as statements, such as 'Children should work to support their families', 'Trafficking is the main problem in my village', and answers graded from 'Strongly agree' to 'Strongly disagree'.

Example: Questionnaire survey used with children working on a municipal garbage dump

In this city of 4.5 million people, a government department, an NGO and a research institute carried out a study of children in worst forms of child labour. One of the groups of children identified during the research worked on the municipal garbage dump to collect things that can be recycled. The research team gathered much data from government offices (garbage dump management, health centre, education office) and conducted interviews and focus group discussions with children and adults working on and around the garbage dump. To complete the study, the team carried out a complete census of all the estimated 300 people (children and adults) working at the garbage site.

The purpose of this survey was to gather reliable figures about the numbers of children working on the dump site and to gather statistical data about the background of the children. The data was used as a baseline to plan and monitor a prevention programme. The survey only included questions that could not be collected more quickly through other methods.
Questions included in the survey:
Name;
Age;
Gender;
Place of living - address;
Place of origin (important for migrants);
How long have you lived in this area?
How long have you been working on the garbage dump?
What do you collect here: plastic, glass, metal, other?
Last week, how many days did you work here?
How many hours did you work per day?
When do you usually start working?
When do you usually finish working?
When and how do you get paid for your work (every day, every week, by sack of recyclables, other)?
How much do you earn per day, week, sack of recyclables, other: minimum, maximum, average?
Have you ever had an accident doing this work?
If yes, describe each accident: date, what happened, did you get compensation, how much compensation?

Source: Child labour in Ho Chi Minh City, Theis et al, 1998

Example: Collaborating with surveys

In 2002, the ILO Trafficking in Children and Women (TICW) project in the People’s Democratic Republic of Lao worked with the National Statistics Bureau to cover all 900 villages of Khammouane province as part of the government survey of poverty in order to get a picture of the overall migration patterns in a single province. The work included a provincial poverty assessment and data will be used in the design of the next national census in 2005, which will include statistics on trafficking and labour migration for the first time. Census interviewers included people trained for the last census in 1995 as well as some newly trained village heads. The ILO-TICW project is supporting this survey with transport costs and data analysis. These results will be used in developing a detailed plan of the next stage of ILO-TICW for 2003-2008.

Tips from experience

The following problems frequently occur when questionnaires are used:

• The sample is too small to be representative. For example, it is meaningless to calculate percentages based on a sample of 40 people;
• The types of prepared answers do not cover all possibilities. As a result, ‘other’ is the most frequent response, and is meaningless;
• Too many questions. Many surveys on child labour have over 100 questions. This is boring and exhausting for both interviewers and participants;
• People do not understand the questions and answer anything to get rid of the interviewer;
Tips from experience

- Questionnaires are filled in by the interviewers because they could not find the sampled participants;
- The sample choice is wrong because participant selection was poorly done.
C Using methods to design research tools

This section of the Handbook Toolkit shows how the methods described in the previous section can be used to design research tools for a research protocol. Each example uses the research tool pattern from Box 16 (in Step 5):

- **Aim**
- **Method**
- **Sample**
- **Number of researchers**
- **Time**
- **Location**
- **Materials**
- **Instructions for researchers**
- **Attachments**

The first two examples of research tools ('Protection Shield' and 'Children's support network') have been provided because they both explore children's strengths, and could be used together to triangulate data if used with the same groups of children. They are also similar in that they use multiple methods in the same tool. 'Protection Shield' is a tool that collects written and drawn data. 'Children's support network' uses drawing and visual stimuli to encourage discussion and semi-structured interview. The tools differ in that 'Protection Shield' is a quick technique that collects a large amount of data from groups of children (who write and draw individually), while 'Children's support network' collects in-depth information from small numbers of children working alone with researchers. 'Protection Shield' can only be used with literate children over seven years of age, while 'Children's support network' can be used with any children.

The third example is of a community ranking exercise, to be used with groups and making use of a chart and a group discussion. This can be used with adults and older children, who are literate. It can be adapted for other research questions concerning community activities.

In the fourth example, drawings made by children are used together with a pre-prepared drawing as visual stimuli for discussion. This method could also be used with adults, and can be adapted easily for use in interviews with individual participants, and indeed for other stories. These example research tools were designed for specific research, with specific participants in specific contexts. They are not blueprints and will not work in another research project if they
are simply copied as they are. Every research question and every group of participants will require different, tailor-made research tools. It is the job of the research team (with input from stakeholders and participants) to design the tools that will be included in the research protocol.

**Research tool-example 1: ‘Protection Shield’**

**Aim**
Research: To find out something about children’s support structure

**Methods**
Semi-structured interview with drawings used as visual stimuli

**Sample**
Age groups seven to 12 and 13-18 years; number in each session opportunistic as this method is used to follow on from other method(s) used with the same children

**Number of Researchers**
One

**Time**
15 minutes

**Location**
Wherever the previous method has taken place

**Materials**
• Two empty ‘Protection Shield’ forms per child (see below);
• Pens;
• Standard observation sheets;
• Sample ‘Protection Shield’ on flipchart;
• Informed consent forms.

**Instructions for researchers**
• Explain the purpose and method to be used and seek informed consent.
• Make sure that adults working in the institution know what is happening and that they should not interrupt nor interfere with the process.
• Make sure all children have pens, two forms of the ‘Protection Shield’ that they will be filling in and a flat surface to write on.
• Explain the task by saying, ‘Each of you has a picture of a ‘Protection Shield’ in front of you, which is for you to fill in. As you can see, on the board in front of you there is the same picture, a shield divided in five sections. In each section you should write an answer to one question.
  ‘This is where you write the most beautiful event in your life’ (point to the appropriate place on the flipchart).
  ‘This is where you write names of two persons you love most’ (point out on the flipchart).
  ‘This is where you write two things you are best at’ (point out on the flipchart).
  ‘This is where you write what would you do if you were powerful’ (point out on the flipchart).
  ‘This is where you write your life motto’ (point out on the flipchart).
• Ask children if they understand the task. Check by asking them to repeat the instructions back to you (give an example if it is necessary). If they do not understand what a ‘life motto’ is, explain; you may say, ‘It is OK not to write anything, but if you would like some help, we would be happy to help you.’ They can also colour in the shield if they wish.
• After they have finished, tell the children they can keep their shield if they wish. Ask them to copy their shield onto the second form, to be used as another source of information for the research.
• Thank the children for participating.
• Complete the observation sheet for the session.
• Number data.
Attachment Empty ‘Protection Shield’ form:

Most beautiful event: Two people I love most:

I am best at: If I had power:

My Life Motto:

Adapted from a psychological test by researchers in Bosnia and Herzegovina for use with children without parental care;
Research tool-example 2: Children’s support networks

Aim
To identify the sources of support used by individual children in a range of different situations

Methods
Semi-structured interview with drawings used as visual stimuli

Sample
Individual orphans and street children, aged eight to 18 years, with whom rapport has already been established; snowball sampling to include as many children as possible, both boys and girls

Number of Researchers
One (but ensure male researchers are not alone with a child who has been sexually exploited)

Time
One hour, or more

Location
Safe and comfortable place, free from distractions and interruptions

Materials
• Large sheet of paper (A3);
• Coloured felt tip pens;
• Question sheet (see attachment);
• Extra sheets of paper;
• Small squares of cardboard (25);
• Informed consent forms;
• Standard observation sheets.

Instructions for researchers
• Explain the method to the child and seek informed consent; say, ‘I am going to ask you a list of questions about who you go to see in different situations. Each time you tell me, please draw the person or persons on the big sheet of paper.’
• Ask the child the set questions on the question sheet (attachment).
• Each time a new person is mentioned, ask the child to draw him/her on the large sheet of paper.
• Do not hurry the child while drawing; encourage discussion about the person being drawn and record answers.
• If a person is mentioned more than once, put one of the small squares of card by that drawing.
• Record the person/category of person on the question sheet.
• If the child mentions an unfamiliar name, you may ask probing questions to identify the category of person - for example, if the child answers, ‘Mary’, ask, ‘Who is Mary?’.
• At the end of the questions, continue to talk to the child about the people drawn, especially those with a pile of cards besides the drawing. Record the child’s answers in the exact words used as far as possible, on the ‘record of discussion’ section of the question sheet, continuing on extra sheets if necessary.
• Thank the child and ask permission to keep the drawing sheet. If the child wishes to keep the drawing sheet, ask permission to take a copy of it.

• Number data.
• Fill in standard observation sheet.
### Attachment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who do you go to when you have a bad headache?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who do you go to when another child hits you?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who do you go to for food?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who do you go to for new clothes?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who do you go to when you feel lonely?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who do you go to when you feel sad?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who do you go to for medicine?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who do you go to for school materials?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who do you go to when you want to relax?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who do you share jokes with?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who do you go to for money?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who do you go to if an adult hits you?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who would you tell if you received bad news?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who do you share secrets with?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who would you go to if someone was bullying you?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who would you go to for help if you cut yourself badly?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who do you play with?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who would you go to if you were very sick?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who would you trust to look after your belongings? or money if you went away for a while?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who do you go to for advice?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Record of discussion

Source: Adapted from a sociological research tool for use with Western children, for research with street children in Sri Lanka, and subsequently used in Tanzania with street children and orphans, in Kenya with HIV/AIDS orphans and in India with street children.
Research tool-example 3: Community prevention of trafficking

Aim: To gather community opinions on how best to prevent trafficking, the obstacles faced and suggestions for how to overcome them

Methods: Listing and ranking, followed by focus group discussion

Sample: Three to four groups of three to 10 literate people of similar ages and the same gender, such as: girls 10-14 years, boys 10-14 years, girls 15-17 years, boys 15-17 years, young women 18-25 years, young men 18-25 years, older women (mothers), older men (fathers)

Number of Researchers: Six to eight (one facilitator and one note-taker for each group)

Time: One hour 30 minutes (for three to four groups working at the same time)

Location: Quiet location, with space for each group to work independently; either sufficient wall space for flipchart sheets to be attached, or tables/clean, level floor space

Materials:
• Set of two flipchart sheets prepared as in attachments for each group;
• Two marker pens for each group in dark colours;
• Masking tape for attaching flipchart sheets to the wall if needed;
• Plain A4 sized paper (eight sheets);
• Standard observation sheets;
• Informed consent forms or appropriate tools for seeking informed consent.

Instructions for researchers
• Explain the purpose and method to be used and seek informed consent.
• Find out if participants understand the symbols for happy/successful (happy face) and sad/unsuccessful (sad face) on the first flipchart.
• Explain that the topic is for the participants to discuss the question ‘How successfully are we preventing trafficking and labour exploitation in the community?’ Show the participants Chart 1. Say, ‘I should like you to think about whether your community is successful or not successful in preventing trafficking in children and women. List reasons for lack of success on the left-hand side of this chart (under the sad face) and reasons for success on the right-hand side (under the happy face). Write about actions that have been taken or are being taken now - not about what you think should be done.’ Let participants complete these tasks, working as a group.
• After Chart 1 has been filled in and discussed, place Chart 2 next to it and explain the three columns. Say, ‘This chart rates the success of the community as a whole, up to now, in preventing trafficking. I’d like each one of you to think about what has been written on the first chart (point to it) and discussed so far. Each one of you should now mark with an X on the second chart (point to it) in one of the columns to show your own opinion of how successfully the community is addressing trafficking and labour exploitation. Remember I need to know what you think yourself.’
• Leave participants alone to complete the task once it has been explained. This allows them to record their own views. The facilitator should keep careful notes about what is said during the discussion, especially about obstacles, problem areas and how they can be addressed. The final number of Xs should be equal to the number of participants.

Discussion - Participants discuss and write down suggestions for how to improve the community’s response to trafficking. Participants identify the suggestion they think is most important for tackling trafficking successfully. This is followed by discussion of who might take this action forward, how and when. Ask participants to label their flipcharts date, place, gender and age range of participants.
Part III: Handbook Toolkit - Using methods to design research tools

- Carefully and accurately copy results from all flipcharts onto smaller sheets of paper.
- Number data.
- Fill in a standard observation sheet for each group.

**Attachments**

Chart 1: How successfully are we preventing trafficking and labour exploitation in the community?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for lack of success</th>
<th>Reasons for success</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

[Diagram showing a sad face and a happy face]
Chart 2: Individually, rate your community’s performance against trafficking and labour exploitation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not successful</th>
<th>Fairly successful</th>
<th>Very successful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ILO-TICW project, 'Guidelines for participatory monitoring', 2002

Research tool – example 4: Storyboard for identifying reasons for migrating

**Aim**
To identify factors affecting children’s decisions to migrate and to find out more about children’s attitudes, values and knowledge about migration for work

**Method**
Drawings, used as visual stimuli for focus group discussion

**Sample**
- Literate children aged nine to 15 years;
- One group of girls and one group of boys;
- Each group should have between six and 10 participants (total 12 to 20).

**Number of Researchers**
Four (two for each group, one facilitator and one note-taker)

**Time**
One hour 30 minutes (perhaps longer if children enjoy drawing)
Materials
- A4 paper (40 sheets);
- Pens (20);
- Drawing of a city on a large (A3) sheet of paper;
- Informed consent forms;
- Standard observation sheets.

Instructions for researchers
- Explain the aim and procedures and seek informed consent.
- Give each child a sheet of paper and ask them to draw the members of their family.
- Say, ‘Now I’d like you to write the name of each person by the pictures you have drawn and also something about that person - such as what job they do, or where they live’. 
- When all the children have finished their drawings, say, ‘Now imagine that your family needs more money to survive the year. Someone has to go to the city to earn it.’ Place the picture of the city in the middle of the group. Say, ‘This is the city. Which member of your family will go there to earn money?’.
- Give each child a second sheet of paper. Say, ‘Please draw a picture of the person who the person to the city, by placing their drawing on the large drawing of the city.
- The facilitator prompts discussion with the following questions:
  - Why should these people go to the city and not other family members?
  - How will they be feeling when they leave home? (a happy or sad face could be added to each drawing);
  - What do you think s/he will find on arriving in the city? (participants could draw these onto the picture of the city);
  - Will they like the city better than the village?
  - Why?
  - What will they do there to earn money?
  - Where will they live?
  - Do you think that they will face any problems?
  - If so, what?
  - How will they get the money they earn back to their home?
  - When will they come back?
- Ask children to write their names and ages on their drawings.
- Check that they are willing to have the drawings taken away to be used in the research and if they would like their names to be used if the pictures are used in a report or published.
- Make copies if necessary.
- Number each pair of drawings.
- Fill in a standard observation sheet for each group.

D Minimum time-frame for a research plan using the 12 steps

Timetable: Six months

1st month

Steps 1-3

* Key stakeholders decide on purpose, topic and research questions
* Assemble research team (including stakeholders)
* Collect and review secondary data

2nd month

Steps 4-6

* Draft research protocol and detailed research questions
* Design research tools for data collection and pilot test them
* Build capacity of stakeholders/research team (ongoing process)
* Select sample locations and groups of people
* Agree ethical guidelines
* Finalise research protocol and prepare for field work

3rd month

Steps 7-9

* First phase of data collection. Separate research teams collect data simultaneously. Each team works in one district. Using the research protocol, each team completes data collection in one of the communities.
* The research teams meet to analyse and discuss preliminary results of data collection in the first communities. They share the preliminary analysis with participants, get feedback and revise the research protocol as necessary.
* Each of the teams goes on to the second phase of data collection, working in their districts, and completing the research in the remaining communities.
Handbook for action-oriented research on the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking in children

4th month

Step 10 - 11

- Research team organises, categorises, codes and sorts data
- Interpretation and triangulation of the data
- Team gets feedback from participants on the main results
- Draft research report is prepared, ensuring the confidentiality of participants (names, photographs etc.)

5th month

Step 11

Draft report is circulated to key informants, stakeholders and other researchers
Receive input and comments on draft research report

6th month

Step 12

Research report is finalised and circulated
- A successful strategy is developed to communicate the results to all stakeholders
- Report is circulated and disseminated
- The raw research data is archived for use by other researchers
- Advocacy to promote action by relevant people/institutions based on research results
Many of the technical terms defined in this glossary are not used in this handbook. Nevertheless, researchers are likely to come across them in other research manuals and thus they are explained here for easy reference.

**Action research** - Research through action. Projects are designed and put into practice in order to learn about a situation, for example through literacy classes for migrant workers to find out about their situation.

**Action-oriented research** - Research that leads to action (similar to applied research). Research is the first step of planning projects and putting them into practice. The research involves the people and institutions that will take action based on the results of the research.

**Analysis** - Logical, systematic process of examining data in order to improve understanding.

**Analytical framework** - A set of ideas and questions for analysis. This is used in research to interpret the gathered data. The analytical framework is based on a conceptual framework.

**Applied research** - Research that produces results to solve a problem. Research questions are most often chosen by programme and policy staff rather than by researchers - as opposed to research carried out mainly to get more understanding and knowledge.

**Assumption** - Belief that is taken for granted and that is mistakenly used as the basis of a statement or research question. Assumptions may be correct or false.

**Audience** - The group of people who are targeted to receive a specific message. An audience for research are people who are informed about the research, read research reports and use research results.

**Audit** - Systematic listing, evaluation, assessment and checking of resources and processes. Baseline study - The collection and analysis of data about a population before a programme or project is set up. In monitoring and evaluation, baseline data (data from a baseline study) are compared with later evidence to find out what has changed.

**Bias** - Any influence that distorts the results of a research study and that may lead a researcher to wrong conclusions. For example, using only quantitative methods, only male researchers, or gathering data only from adults leads to bias in research.
Bonded labour - The relationship of debt slavery, where labour is pledged (mortgaged) against debt (same as debt bondage). A bonded labourer has to work until all debts have been paid off. Some forms of debt slavery keep labourers bonded for life or even for generations.

Category - An organising idea or topic, used to index, cross-check and analyse data.

Causal relationship - The link between causes and their effects, for example, illiteracy (the cause) leads to poverty (the effect).

Census - A survey of all individuals or households in a certain area. Many countries carry out a national household census every ten years.

Child - Human being less than 18 years of age.

Child soldier - Any person under 18 who is part of any armed force or armed group in any capacity. The term child soldier is not only used for a child who fights in a war, but also for boys and girls who run errands, do cooking, carry arms for the soldiers, or girls recruited for sexual purposes ('sex slaves').

Child-centred - Concentrating on children and on what is in the best interest of children. This includes a consideration of broader social, economic, cultural and political factors and their effects on children. A child-centred approach is based on an understanding of children's views, opinions, experiences and perspectives.

Children-centred statistics - Statistics in which the data are presented (for example in tables) so that they focus on children, rather than (as is usual) adults, households, institutions or services.

Classification - A way of putting facts, things or people into groups based on something they have in common.

Closed questions - Questions in an interview or survey format that provide a limited set of predefined alternative responses.

Cluster sampling - Process of selecting naturally occurring groups within a population; for example, in a primary school with five grades, and three classes in each grade, choosing five classes, one in each grade.
Coding - A procedure for 'translating' raw data into a standardised format, in order to group it for easier analysis. Coding qualitative data involves identifying recurrent words, concepts or themes. In quantitative research, coding involves turning data (answers) into numerical values, for example assigning numbers to all of the possible responses to a question, such as yes=1, no=2, not sure=3, no response=0.

Cohort - A group of people with common characteristics, for example, people born in 1965.

Concept - Thoughts or ideas, especially about how to organise things or about how things are alike or different. A basic idea that is part of a theory. A theory might consist of several concepts that are linked to form a more complex idea.

Conceptual framework - A theoretical model (set of ideas) for explaining something. For example, there are different conceptual frameworks for explaining child labour and its causes. For example, they may see child labour as a labour market issue, a poverty issue, or a child protection issue.

Content analysis - A method that identifies themes and concepts in written documents, films, audio tapes, or speeches. Content analysis counts the number of times different words or phrases are used in different documents, for example different terms for the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

Control group - A group of people or things that are as similar to the sample group as possible, but differ from them according to one key factor. By using the same research tool(s) with the sample group and the control group, it is possible to compare data and check how this factor relates to other characteristics of the sample group.

Convenience sampling - Another name for opportunistic sampling.

Correlation - The relationship between two variables. For example, the relationship between poverty and child labour - the greater the poverty is, the greater is the prevalence of child labour.

Cross-checking - Comparing data with other data.

Data - Information (collected by a researcher).
**Data collection** - The gathering of information through surveys, interviews, experiments, library records, or other methods.

**Disaggregation** - The process of dividing statistical data into smaller groups, for example by gender, age or location. This allows analysis that shows differences between groups of people and is a guide to finding inequalities and violations of rights.

**Ethics** - Moral principles or rules of conduct.

**Evaluation** - Systematic assessment of progress and achievement, measured against agreed criteria.

**Feedback** - Comments, reviews, or other responses, often from the people who are being studied or from the people who will receive the results of the study.

**Field notes** - Detailed notes taken during data collection in the 'field' (field research).

**Field research** - A study of people in their everyday world, not in a laboratory or other special setting.

**Focus group discussion** - A method of information collection on a particular topic involving a carefully planned discussion among a small group led by a trained facilitator (or moderator). The members of a focus group usually share common characteristics, such as the same age and sex, or the same socio-economic background.

**Frequency** - The number of times a particular item of data appears, for example, a specific answer to a question.

**Hypothesis** - An idea, based on knowledge, information, previous observation or analysis, that has to be proved or disproved through research.

**Indexing** - The process of organising data into categories.

**Indicator** - A characteristic that represents something else. For example, height and weight of a small child can be used as indicators for the child's growth and health.
Informant - A person who gives information. Similar to respondent, but likewise better described as participant.

Information - Data and research results.

Informed consent - Agreement for voluntary participation of a participant in research, based on the individual fully understanding the goals, methods, benefits and risks of the study. Informed consent is given on the understanding that the participant can change his or her mind about taking part in the research at any time.

Interpretation of data - Analysis.

Interview - A method of data collection involving an interviewer asking questions of another person.

Key informants - People who are believed to have in-depth knowledge and understanding of an issue.

Key research question - See research question.

Leading question - Question that makes assumptions about the participant and leads the participant to give a certain answer. For example, 'do you have to work because your family is poor?' This question assumes that the participant sees poverty mainly as an economic issue.

Legislation - The act or process of making laws; the laws that have been made in this way.

Matrix - A table of rows and columns used to compare things.

Method - Way of finding and studying information, for example, interview, group discussion, literature review, observation.

Methodology - Study of methods, theory of research practice. Different research methodologies include quantitative, qualitative or participatory research approaches. The research methodology explains the reasons for using certain methods and the principles for using them.

Myth - A mistaken belief based on unproven ideas or on prejudice.
Non-probability sampling - The opposite of probability sampling. A sampling design where conditions of probability sampling are not fulfilled, such as is the case for opportunistic (or convenience) sampling, and purposive, quota, and snowball sampling.

Observation - A method of data collection where data are gathered by watching people, places or processes.

Open(-ended) questions - Questions that let people answer in their own words instead of having to choose from a limited, predefined set of answers.

Opportunistic sampling - Taking advantage of meeting people during research to involve them as research participants. Particularly useful for hard-to-reach groups, such as street children, children in prostitution or pimps.

Participant: Person (child or adult) who takes part in participatory research. In conventional research referred to as 'informant' or 'respondent'.

Participatory Action Research - Research done by people themselves in order to understand (and challenge) the problems they are facing. For example, working children research their own situation to bring about change.

Participatory Rural Appraisal - Informal, participatory research approach that mainly uses visual and group methods for data collection and analysis (also known as Participation Learning and Action).

Piloting - Testing draft research tools on limited samples before using them to gather data in the field.

Probability - The likelihood that a particular event or events will occur.

Probability sampling - Also known as 'random sampling'. Choosing people (or things, places) to be studied, in such a way that each person (or thing, place) in the total population has a known, non-zero chance of selection, and all are selected through a random process.

Probing - Searching for more information and cross-checking answers of participants.

Problem analysis - Analysing a problem to identify causes, effects and solutions. Problem
analysis provides an important foundation for development project planning (to address problems and causes).

**Prompt** - Reminder. Who, what, where and when can be used as prompts during interviews to remind the researcher of questions to ask. Prompts help in probing for more information.

**Protocol** - Instruction booklet for data collection, including definitions of key terms, all research tools, ethical procedures and other details of research design.

**Proxy indicator** - Indicator that represents another variable that is more difficult to assess. For example, condom sales as a proxy indicator for commercial sex activity.

**Purposive sampling** - Targeting specific (named) people known to have information or to be opinion leaders.

**Qualitative data** - Information gathered in narrative (non-numeric) form, such as information collected from focus groups or key informant interviews. Research approaches concerned with collecting in-depth data about human social experiences and contexts.

**Quantitative data** - Information gathered in numeric form, such as survey data. Research concerned with the collection of data in the form of various measures, and its description and analysis through statistical methods.

**Questionnaire** - Form with questions, often with pre-defined answers.

**Quota sampling** - Selection of a set number of people (quota) who share certain characteristics (such as the same age or sex). The same quota of people are selected from each group of potential participants; for example ten boys and ten girls aged between nine and 12 years in each place of employment covered by the research.

**Random sampling** - A process of selecting a sample whereby each member of the population has an equal chance of being included. Sometimes this kind of sampling is done with a table of random numbers, or with a computer giving out random numbers, or by drawing lots.

**Ranking** - Placing things in order, for example in order of importance, or of value. Ordering things from 'more' to 'less' or from 'low' to 'high'.
**Rapid assessment** - A process of data collection that uses a variety of tools (observation, key informant interviews, group discussions, visual methods) to get a quick overview of a population or a research topic. The results are not representative and often not reliable, but can be used for designing and planning more in-depth research.

**Rapport** - Friendly relationship between researcher and participant.

**Reliability** - A measure of whether the research results will be the same if the research is repeated. This term describes the extent to that a method of data collection will produce similar results if used by other researchers or by the same researcher more than once.

**Representative sampling** - A sample that has similar characteristics to the overall population from which it was selected. A representative sample can be used to draw conclusions about the population as a whole. For instance, a sample of children in which the ratio of girls to boys is the same as the national ratio for children in the same age group.

**Research** - Purposeful, scientific information gathering and analysis.

**Research aim** - Overall purpose of the research.

**Research method** - A systematic, scientific technique for gathering data.

**Research protocol** - see Protocol.

**Research question** - A question the research aims to answer, which follows from the research aim. Research questions structure the research. They are not hypotheses to be proved or disproved. Also, they should not be confused with the (lower-level) questions asked in interviews or questionnaires.

**Research tool** - Purpose-designed research instrument to gather systematic answers to specific research questions. These tools are structured within a data gathering protocol.

**Resilience** - Ability to resist and to deal with difficulties, stress and crises.

**Respondent** - A person who is being interviewed or studied, who answers a questionnaire, or who takes part in other research activities. Better described participant.
Response rate - The percentage of sampled participants who have taken part in the research. For example, out of 100 sampled participants, 20 may not be at home and 10 are unwilling to take part in the research. This makes a response rate of 70%. Sampling has to anticipate response rates and compensate by adding more participants to the sample.

Sample - In general, the group of research participants who will be targeted to provide answers to a specific research question. In research tools, the precise characteristics and numbers of participants who will be asked to work with researchers on this tool. In certain cases, a selection of people (or places, or objects) chosen to represent the target population, using a variety of techniques.

Sampling frame - Complete list of people (or places, or objects) from which a selection of people (sample) is made. Sampling frames include voting lists, lists of welfare recipients, school registers, lists of households, or the directory of villages in a district. Probability sampling techniques always require a sampling frame. Some non-probability sampling techniques commonly used in researching the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking, such as snowball sampling, quota sampling and opportunistic sampling, do not require one.

Secondary data - Any existing information that was collected for other studies or purposes. Secondary sources include books, published or unpublished research reports, theses, statistics, records, media articles, videos, photographs or films.

Semi-structured interview - Interview with open-ended questions. Interviewer uses a checklist of topics rather than a questionnaire with fixed, pre-defined questions.

Sentinel site - Location selected for long-term monitoring and surveillance. The monitoring is carried out at the same location (using the same methods). Sentinel sites are selected to be representative for a larger area.

Slavery - Any practices that restrict liberty, such as buying girls or adopting children with the idea of enslaving them, forced marriage, child labour, pledging labour against debt, and any compulsory labour whether paid or unpaid.

Snowball sampling - Selecting people by starting with one participant and asking for suggestions about, and introductions to, other people who might be interested in taking part in the research.
Source of information - Any origin (source) of data: documents (written), videos (non-written), participants.

Stakeholders - People and organisations that have an interest or role ('stake') in an activity, event or organisation. Stakeholders can include clients, development agencies, donors, relatives, professionals, community leaders, agency administrators, volunteers, or child labourers.

Stakeholder survey - Survey of stakeholders to find out what their interests are and how they will react to any changes in their work or institution.

Statistics - Data in numerical form. Also, the study of numerical information.

Structured interview - An interview conducted with a fixed questionnaire where all questions are predetermined and have to be asked exactly the way and in the order that may be listed on the interview list (questionnaire).

Testimony - Interview on a single topic. Collecting testimonies from many participants in a short time is useful to build up an understanding of the topic of the testimony.

Theory - A way of explaining or trying to explain a set of facts. Belief that has not yet been proven.

Theoretical framework - The conceptual basis of a research study that may be based on theory or a specific conceptual model (in that case it may be referred to as the conceptual framework).

Trafficking - The recruitment and/or transportation for labour exploitation by means of violence, threat, deception, or debt-bondage (see Box 5 for more details).

Trend - A steady change in one direction over time, for example, more and more children are being trafficked across borders in the Mekong region.

Triangulation - The use of a combination of research methods, sources of information and researchers in a study to examine a topic from different points of view. Triangulation is a way to cross-check data and to increase the reliability of research results.
Typology - A system that groups information into different categories.

Unit of analysis - Basic element of a research study, for example, an individual person, a family, a household, a city, or an enterprise. This unit will be different for different studies. For example, a child labourer in research about child labour; a household in a household survey.

Validity - Accuracy and truth of the data and results that are produced. It refers to the concepts that are being investigated, the people or objects that are being studied, the methods by that data are collected, and the results that are produced. A method can be reliable, consistently measuring the same thing, but not valid.

Variable - A characteristic that is being analysed in a study. A characteristic that can change or vary among different people (or objects) or in the same person over time. For example, race or ethnicity varies among individuals, and income varies for the same individual over time.

Worst forms of child labour - Forms of hazardous child labour that are most damaging for children and that must be the priority of interventions. They include child slavery, trafficking of children, sexual exploitation of children, children involved in drug trafficking and children working in harmful conditions and are defined in ILO Convention 182 and in ILO Recommendation 190 (see Box 3).
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**Other resource manuals**

Most of materials below are reasonably easy to find. A note has been added under each title to indicate what it would be useful for. See also the list of ILO publications, the Regional Working Group on Child Labour's 2000 report 'Improving Action-oriented Research on the Worst Forms of Child Labour: Proceedings of Asian Regional Workshop ...', and the 'Key websites' section for further references.

(Secondary data analysis)

(Participatory approaches and data analysis)

(Ideas about rapid assessment with child domestic workers)

(Comprehensive description of methods from an academic perspective)
Handbook for action-oriented research on the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking in children

Kirby, Perpetua, 1999, Involving Young Researchers - How to Enable Young People to Design and Conduct Research, Joseph Roundtree Foundation, York and Save the Children, London (Involving children as researchers in a Western context)


Nichols, Paul, 1991, Social Survey Methods - A Fieldguide for Development Workers, Oxfam, Oxford (Methods that might be used at the end of the protocol)

Pratt, Brian and Peter Loizos, 1992, Choosing Research Methods - Data Collection for Development Workers, Oxfam, Oxford (Biased towards 'traditional' research methods, but very practical)


Theis, Joachim and Heather Grady, 1991, Participatory Rapid Appraisal for Community Development - A Training Manual Based on Experiences in the Middle East and North Africa, IIED and Save the Children (US), London (Detailed descriptions of PRA methods)
(How to involve children as researchers, based on Western examples)
KEY WEB SITES
Anti-Slavery International
Email: info@antislavery.org
www.antislavery.org

Child Rights Information Network (CRIN)
Email: info@crin.org
www.crin.org

Childwatch International
Email: childwatch@uio.no
www.childwatch.uio.no

Child Workers in Asia (CWA)
Email: cwanet@loxinfo.co.th
http://lox2.loxinfo.co.th/~cwanet/

Concerned for Working Children (CWC)
Email: cwc@pobox.com
www.workingchild.org

Department for International Development (DFID)
Email: enquiry@dfid.gov.uk
www.dfid.gov.uk

ECPAT International
Email: info@ecpat.net
www.ecpat.net

Granada Centre for Visual Anthropology
E-mail: granada.centre@man.ac.uk
www.les1.man.ac.uk/visualanthropology/

International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)
Email: mailbox@iied.org
www.iied.org
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International Labour Organisation (ILO)
Email: ilo@ilo.org
www.ilo.org and www.ilo.org/asia/child/trafficking

Save the Children Sweden
Email: info@rb.se
www.rb.se

Save the Children United Kingdom
www.savethechildren.org.uk

The World Bank
www.worldbank.org

Understanding Children’s Work (UCW)
a joint research initiative of the ILO, UNICEF, and the World Bank
www.ucw-project.org/

UNICEF
www.unicef.org
RWG-CL Mission Statement

The Regional Working Group on Child Labour

• Aims to support actions against the exploitation of children through labour with special focus on the elimination of the worst forms of child labour as stated in the ILO Convention 182;
• Uses the UNCRC as the framework and guiding principle in all actions on child labour in Asia;
• Emphasises prevention and addressing the root causes that contribute to the exploitation of children;
• Promotes and strengthens the participation of children in decision making and interventions which affect their lives;
• Is committed to supporting capacity building of children and their families, communities through key actors at national and regional levels.

RWG-CL Definition of child labour

The Regional Working Group on Child Labour (RWG-CL) works with a definition of child labour that is guided by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and focuses on the ILO Convention 182 on the worst forms of child labour.

RWG-CL makes a distinction between child work and child labour.

• Child work includes activities that are not harmful, which may contribute to the healthy development of a child;
• Child labour consists of all types of work, performed by children up to the age of 18 years, that is damaging to children’s health or their physical, mental, intellectual, moral or social development, and interferes with their education.

Included in the worst forms of child labour are all forms of slavery and practices similar to slavery, such as trafficking of children, bonded labour, serfdom and recruitment for armed conflict. Also included are the use of children in prostitution, pornography and illicit activities, such as drug production and drug trafficking, and any work in hazardous conditions, identified at national level according to the criteria in ILO Recommendation 190.
The worst forms of child labour including trafficking, is a topic known for its complexities, yet to a large extent unexplored. It is now a regional priority and imperative necessity to have more reliable information about the worst forms of child labour including trafficking, in order to develop successful actions towards their elimination, following the ratification of ILO Convention 182 by a large number of countries in Asia.

Since 1999, the Regional Working Group on Child Labour (RWG-CL) project to improve action-oriented research on the worst forms of child labour has endeavored to gather knowledge, practical experiences and skills, as well as to stimulate creativity and innovation in order to develop and strengthen the capacities of practitioners and researchers in South and Southeast Asia in conducting action-oriented research.

The publication of this ‘Handbook for action-oriented research on the worst forms of child labour including trafficking’ is timely and is the outcome of four years of RWG-CL work in assessing, in consultation with governments, research individuals and organizations, the gaps in child labour research in Asia, and in collectively devising how these should be best countered.

The Handbook will be particularly relevant and useful in the design and implementation of research exercises to generate accurate data and information to be used as a base in child labour and trafficking programming in Asia; for further national-level training and capacity building in conducting effective children-centred, action-oriented research on the worst forms of child labour (including trafficking); and in the promotion of child-centred action-oriented research on the worst forms of child labour across Asia, with emphasis on inter-agency collaboration, and co-operative efforts.