From child labour to children in charge

A handbook on child-led organisation and advocacy on child labour

By Lotte Ladegaard in collaboration with
Save the Children Sweden-Denmark,
children and partner organisations.

Save the Children
Sweden - Denmark

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1. About this handbook and how it came into being

Participation from first cry
It might be argued that "participation" in society begins from the moment a child enters the world and discovers the extent to which it is able to influence events by crying or moving. It is worth bearing in mind that through these early negotiations children discover how much their own voices influence the course of events in their lives. The degree and nature of their influence varies greatly according to the culture or the particular family.

Adapted from UNICEF Innocenti Essays, No. 4, Children's Participation. From Tokenism to Citizenship by Roger A. Hart

What is a handbook?

According to most dictionaries, a handbook is a reference book or a guide that provides information on a specific subject. Neither Save the Children Sweden-Denmark nor I are going to claim that we have found the way for children to participate all over the world, but the project *Child-led Organisation and Advocacy on Child Labour* has gathered five years of practical experience from various places in Bangladesh. We found these experiences to be very useful and at times thought provoking for our own understanding of the concept "children's participation."

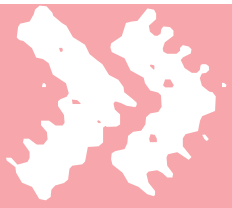
Boys and girls living in slums and industrial areas in Bangladesh, in villages hidden in the hills, in small towns, on beaches and many other places have been experimenting and testing their options for having an influence on their own lives and working conditions. Many of the children are adolescents between 12 and 18 years of age, and the only thing most of them have in common is the fact that they are deeply committed to earning an income. However, some child-led organisations also attract children from more prosperous families – children who go to school and have time to play, but all the same felt that they should "do something for our working brothers and sisters," as some of the children put it.

The project *Child-led Organisation and Advocacy on Child Labour*, which has had its ups and downs, took a while to get going. The project has been experimental in nature because the overall idea from the beginning was to develop and test new methods, and most of the adults involved sorely missed their usual specific guidelines and directions.

The children's achievements prove the value of the project: some of the 17,000 children involved in the project have increased, and at times almost doubled, their income as a result of their advocacy activities. Children who live where they work now have decent beds equipped with mosquito nets. A group of adolescents is about to harvest their first-ever satisfactory crops after having learned about modern agricultural methods. The children have also paved the way for their adult partner organisations into the formal labour market, where child labourers often have been inaccessible to organisations. Then, on a level that is harder to measure, almost all the children have immensely improved their self-esteem and gained much more respect in their local communities.

The many examples and case studies included in this handbook speak their own language.

Hopefully, the handbook also makes up for the lack of guidelines that caused such confusion initially.



The Child-led Organisation and Advocacy on Child Labour project

Child-led Organisation and Advocacy on Child Labour is a multi-partner and multidimensional project targeting children engaged in hazardous work in Bangladesh and focuses on the participation of these children in activities and decisions concerning their own lives.

The development objective of the project is:

Fewer children forced to work under hazardous conditions or conditions that prevent their physical, moral and social development.

The indicators for the development objective are:

1. Reduced number of working hours for children engaged in hazardous labour.
2. Improved safety in workplaces.
3. Enough time for child labourers to attend school and play.
4. Higher wages.
5. Reduction in the amount of abuse and violations.

The immediate objectives of the project are:

1. Children with enhanced capabilities to organise themselves and to engage in advocacy activities.
2. Influence of children's advocacy and awareness raising on the authorities, civil society, the media, political parties and private sector to engage in reducing hazardous labour and improve the living conditions of children.
3. The development, testing, sharing and application of methods for organising child labourers and for ensuring the participation of child labourers in activities concerning their own lives.

How to use the handbook

Although Save the Children Sweden-Denmark and its partner organisations have prior experiences with child-led organisations, it is the first time in Bangladesh that children have used their power and unity to claim better working conditions. Since the project solely targeted advocacy on child labour, the focus of this book is the same topic in order to avoid becoming too broad and superficial.

While most examples stem from the *Child-led Organisation and Advocacy on Child Labour* project, a few examples from other child-led activities are included since they illustrate what children and young people can achieve.

For the sake of ensuring a relevant framework for others to work in and to create further understanding, some background information and quotations from people who have worked with or philosophised extensively about participation have also been included. Many statements are greatly inspired by Roger A. Hart's useful and wise publications *Children's Participation: From Tokenism to Citizenship, UNICEF's Innocenti Essays No. 4,* and *Children's Participation: The Theory and Practice of Involving Young Citizens in Community Development and Environmental Care* issued by UNICEF and Earthscan.

The methods and processes applied by the children are often described in detail to help you understand the basic ideas of child-led advocacy. This should also help you translate the ideas into other contexts to benefit other children dealing with different issues in other parts of the world.

Almost all of the activities and ideas included in the handbook are inexpensive or without cost. The idea is for children and youth to be able to organise and do advocacy without having to be overly dependent on adult organisations or donors.

This book is not to be read linearly. Depending on what you want to do and who you are, combine the suggestions, ideas and knowledge from different chapters.

If you e.g. are a new facilitator start by reading chapter 5, *How adults support children and their child-led organisations*. Then, with the children, you may want to scrutinise the advocacy stages in chapter 10 along with the *Toolbox* to get some ideas about how to get going. Find loads of inspiration in the many case studies presented in chapter 17, *What works and what does not work.*

Hopefully, this handbook will also be used independently by young people. Although it requires a certain level of literacy to read the book, I have tried to include plenty of illustrations and avoid highly academic language compared to other works on children's participation.

As you probably have noticed, we decided to publish the handbook on very solid paper in a ring binder. This allows you to bring the pages you need into the field instead of having to carry the whole lot. You can also easily insert your own pages with ideas, and who knows – maybe Save the Children Sweden-Denmark will update the handbook one day. This way, we won't have to re-print every chapter, but only the ones that have been revised.

The use of names and definitions

The handbook deliberately makes no mention of place names and organisations. The purpose of this book is not to point out which organisations have or have not been successful. This book is the outcome of extended trial and error, as well as numerous courageous experiments. Our

overall wish is to share with you what worked and what did not work in the process of testing different methods in the field. Hopefully this will help you avoid repeating our mistakes and inspire you to find even better ways forward.

In the book I do not distinguish between child-led organisations and children's organisations. I am aware that some professionals are immersed in a discussion about what is what, but my focus has been on what children and young people have achieved and how, instead of entering into theoretical discussions about different types of organisations. Consequently, the term child-led organisation has been used in keeping with the title of the project.

The use of repetitions

The objective was to try and keep repetitions to a minimum.

But, since this is primarily a handbook, I do not expect anyone to read it from start to finish, which is why some essential information is stated more than once.

I have also repeated information if it helps contextualise a certain chapter or works as a link to other chapters.

Thanks

It is with great pleasure that I would like to thank the thousands of children and their adult facilitators, parents, employers, communities and many others who have spent hours sharing their experiences, frank questions, suggestions, requests, problems and successes with me throughout the years.

I also would like to pass my heartfelt thanks on to Danida, which funded the *Child-led Organisation and Advocacy on Child Labour* project and parts of this handbook as well as Solidarity, Nari Maitree, INCIDIN, UDDIPAN, BITA, SEEP, CPD and Save the Children Sweden-Denmark, which turned the project and this handbook into a reality.

The same applies to Save the Children Sweden-Denmark's *Child-led Organisation and Advocacy on Child Labour* team. Atik Anwar Chowdhury, Sabrina Karim Murshed and Masum Ul Alam have spent days away from home to assist and learn from the children and their adult facilitators. They have been stalwart co-researchers and have remained with the project till the very end because, "We wanted to see the results."

Shahida Begum, who took over the responsibility as coordinator, and her colleagues in the *Child Labour Thematic Programme*, helped fine tune the project and have provided invaluable support to the team and me.

We have all shared frustrations, laughter and countless fantastic experiences with the children.

While children have not been directly involved in writing the handbook, some illustrations are made by the children. So is the entire chapter on games and plays. The rest is based on in-depth interviews with different stakeholders and innumerable group sessions with children in many, many areas of Bangladesh. Nothing has been done without informing the children and other stakeholders carefully about the purpose, the process and the time frame.

I, of course, have promised every child-led organisation a copy of the handbook in Bangla so they can gain new inspiration in their amazing fight for a better life.

Lotte Ladegaard

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

Margaret Mead, American cultural anthropologist, 1901-1978

2. Successful projects and powerful children

Why children should participate

Participation is a child's right, according to the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*. What's more, is that experiences with earnest child participation show that the benefits of involving children far outweigh any benefits derived from keeping children away from decisions and actions influencing their own lives.

All over the world children form unions with each other and often without adult interference. Children's spontaneous organisations are usually focused on play, recreation, sports, a shared hobby, or, like the examples in this handbook, because they share similar problems and living conditions.

Just because you are poor or illiterate you should not be cut off from having a say about your own life. Some people argue that child labourers already struggle too much, and if they by

chance have any spare time they ought to study instead of being burdened with time consuming advocacy activities. But many disadvantaged children have access to substandard education only, and this does not take their special needs for practical know-how and income into consideration. For many of these children opportunities to learn about rights while practising them are extremely valuable.

Children are the real experts on their own lives and act as important change makers for their peers and for the community at large. It is increasingly acknowledged that involving children in policy planning and programming affecting their well-being is essential for ensuring the sustainability of the policies.

Yet, child participation is a concept that continues to confuse and puzzle.

Participation – a child's right

In the United Nation's *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, boys and girls are seen as active holders of rights and individuals whose views and opinions should be given serious consideration.

Children's participation rights are set out in Articles 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, and 23 of the convention. These articles cover:

- The right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.
- The right to information.
- The right to express views freely in all matters affecting the child in keeping with the child's age and maturity, and the right to be heard and taken seriously.
- The right to privacy.
- The right to freedom of association.
- The right to self-reliance and active participation for mentally or physically disabled children.

Article 5 is also important. It refers to the parents' role in providing direction and guidance while at the same time respecting their children's evolving capacity to make their own decisions and form their own views.

Recognition of children's right to participation is also part of Articles 9, 16 and 29. They state that children have a right to make their views known about any decision to separate them from their families, and that children have a right to education that promotes respect for human rights and democracy.

Challenging assumptions

Children's participation is a complex issue that varies according to a child's motivation and capacities as well as its particular family and cultural context. In cultures where adults have little opportunity to influence community decisions, young people can become the initiating force for change. Child-led organisations in Bangladesh have proven this.

By suggesting improved working conditions, child-led organisations have become change agents in their own communities. Adults gradually acknowledge this and respond with praise, gratefulness and extended permission to advocate for further changes.

But these children have been participating members of their families long before anyone invented child-led organisations, although no one has ever honoured it as participation.

For example, child labourers make up an important part of the household income. Some children even establish their own business, or they find work because they have independently decided to help their families have three meals a day or to pay for their siblings' school fees. Is this not participation?

And what about the boy who selects a pair of jeans instead of gabardine pants? Or the girl who chooses to buy rice in a different shop, because she has discovered that it is cheaper elsewhere?

A value, not a process

The voices of children who are poor are some of the least likely to be heard in policy and practice; they are doubly silenced both as children and as being poor. Poverty is a stigmatised social position, and many perceive poor children as vulnerable and at risk, or dangerous, out of control and socially threatening, writes Tess Ridge in the book *Children, Young People and Social Inclusion: Participation for What?* published by Policy Press.

But to people who have tried to involve children in projects and activities, it is very clear that when children's opinions are taken into consideration it is far more likely that the project will succeed and achieve its objectives. Children are very capable of analysing how particular decisions or actions will serve their best interests, and their considerations ensure that projects, programmes and services are relevant and sustainable.

There are also many other reasons to involve children in decisions and activities regarding their own lives.

Through participation children become empowered and confident as well as gain insight and understanding. They learn to analyse situations and communicate. Some children get to develop their technical skills or learn about filming, editing, website design, acting, photography, cooperating with printers, writing news articles, minute-taking, presentations, facilitation, adhering to common guidelines and decisions, attending meetings, performing in front of many people and public speaking, media relations, coping with stress, time management etc. Some even learn new languages.

For some children membership of a child-led organisation has even meant salvation. There are examples of Bangladeshi children who were deeply involved in crime and drugs but were rescued by other children who provided their new friend with a meaningful way forward.

Trust is also built through participation, communication and cooperation. An organisation or a child-led organisation is a place to meet, exchange views and opinions, gain access to information, mobility and acceptance by others. Often justice is fought for, and every now and then the children may gain access to resources and public facilities.

By experiencing the power of being united, the children develop team skills and learn to solve problems; they also learn about democratic behaviour and dare to take responsibilities that may lead to better career choices later. Some children even find out that they are good leaders.

Children united in their own organisations grow, mature, and become tolerant, emphatic and independent. Therefore, participation is not a process. It is a value.

Prosperous children and participation

We tend to assume that children in affluent families participate automatically. However, many middle class parents programme their children's days from morning to evening.

For example, a girl goes to school till four in the afternoon. Her school time table is made by teachers, and the school is governed by rigid systems aimed at developing the child into a good adult based on values defined by adults. The girl is told to go to the after-school centre, and she does not have a choice, because her parents have decided that she is too young to be at home alone.

When she finally gets home, she must do her homework to ensure that she gets the marks her parents wish her to have, eat a dinner cooked by her parents and is sent to bed early in order to be as fit as a fiddle for the exact same programme the next day.

How much participation does such a day leave space for?

Practicing democracy

The degree to which children should have a voice continues to be discussed. Some speak of children as though they are the saviours of society, while others say that it is naïve to believe that children have the decision-making power, knowledge and skills of adults. Some feel that children should be protected against undue responsibility and be allowed to have a carefree childhood.

Whatever you believe, you should be aware that it is unrealistic to expect children to grow into responsible, participating adults if they have never before been exposed to the skills and responsibilities involved in a democratic process. You need to practice to understand the true nature of democracy and to develop the competence and confidence that make you dare to participate.

If you want to ensure children's meaningful participation it is important to be clear about why you want to involve them and what you want to achieve by involving them. Some reasons for involving children are value-based, i.e. it is good to empower children and to fulfil their rights. Other reasons are based on achieving specific outcomes; for example, you want their views to shape new services.

Whatever your reason is you should bear in mind that just because an activity is child-led, it does not mean that all problems are solved. As with any other development activity, child-led advocacy has its limitations.

Who is in charge?

There are many types of power, and they all affect the success of child-led initiatives. However, if you are aware of power structures, you can work out strategies to combat obstacles. For example:

- *Gate keeping power* refers broadly to the process of controlling information that has to pass a filter or a gate. The filter or gate is a person. For instance, it may be a newspaper editor who decides that a child-led event is not relevant, so his newspaper will not cover your event. Or it may be your mother, who decides that the family has to eat cauliflower every day, even if you would rather have eggplant. It may also be an academic colleague who refuses to translate his gibberish into a language you understand. Or it may be the politician who finds that children's issues are irrelevant and refuses to deal with them.

Gate keepers are often motivated by personal feelings, or their own moral values and norms.

- *Knowledge power* refers to the fact that power is based on knowledge, but power also produces knowledge. For example, without knowing that children have a right to participate and to be protected against hazardous labour, many disadvantaged children would probably never claim their rights. But when they unite and start fighting for better working conditions, they get exposed to the knowledge other children have, they get ideas and input from their adult facilitator, and they eventually meet politicians, journalists and many others with extensive knowledge. Gradually the children possess more knowledge and therefore become more powerful.

- *Role power* is about the different roles held by different people. An employer, for example has the power to provide money or jobs – and the power to sack you. Your manager has the power to check whether you do your job well.

The more negative your boss is, the harder it will be to change his or her ways of doing things.

Protect the children

Do not expect a child to sort out all problems. There is one reason why we distinguish between adults and children, and why we have universally agreed that persons below eighteen years of age are children with different needs and rights.

This is where adult facilitators come in. They can assist, provide information, iron out problems, bring consensus and ensure that a child is not hurt – physically or emotionally – while participating in a child-led organisation.

Simultaneously, a facilitator is the one to make it clear that it is ok to disagree, and that we sometimes have to agree to disagree.

The facilitators and adult partner organisations also have responsibility for ensuring that no single child is overburdened. When you embark on a child-led project you always have to consider the children's everyday life. Their work, schooling and exams come first at all times.

Child-led activities should be a beautiful and useful addition to the children's lives. It has to be fun, relevant and make sense in the context. It should never create problems for them; neither at home, nor in the community. And if some people are cautious or reluctant about the activities, it has to be dealt with straight away.

Otherwise child participation may do more harm than good.

Definition of children's participation

There is no universally accepted definition of "children's participation." In the broadest sense, boys and girls participate in their families, their communities and their societies in a very wide variety of ways, for example as carers, workers, family and community members, consumers and through their involvement in sports and cultural activities.

More narrowly, participation is used by development organisations to mean children thinking for themselves, expressing their views, and interacting in a positive way with other people. It means involving boys and girls in the decisions that affect their lives, the lives of their families and communities and the larger society in which they live.

For Save the Children the core purpose of children's participation is to empower them as individuals and members of civil society and give them the opportunity to influence the actions and decisions that affect their lives. Children can do this in a number of ways, as individuals or as organised groups by speaking out and asking questions, through involvement in decision making and via practical action.

Of course, the nature of children's participation will vary according to their age and the evolving capacity of the individual child involved. But children's competence to participate, and at increasingly young ages, has been proven over and over again in recent years. Once provided with relevant information, appropriate support and the freedom to express themselves in ways in which they feel comfortable, children are able to demonstrate their competence to engage.

Children show a high degree of responsibility in the way they use such opportunities because they are as concerned as the adults about making a real difference.

Participation valued in the corporate world

Participation is not only an issue in development organisations. It is also becoming interesting for the corporate sector in Europe. An investment bank in Great Britain funded, for example children's participation in decision making in a school.

While the bank wanted to invest in some kind of corporate social responsibility to improve the bank's image, the bank also had a second motive. By supporting children's participation in the

school, the bank was ensuring that it would have access to young workers later on with team skills and the ability to think independently and alternatively so that it would be able to identify new areas for business growth.

This example comes from the book *Building a Culture of Participation*, researched and written by the National Children's Bureau and PK Research Consultancy on behalf of the UK Department for Education and Skills.

The children's own bank

Bangladeshi children cannot open their own bank accounts. So what do working street children do with their money? They open a bank for children, of course.

1. The members of three child-led organisations took a critical look at themselves: "We spend our money on nothing, and even if we want to save, we have nowhere to keep the money. When we are in need, we have nothing."
2. Then they started looking into options but found none: "Banks in Bangladesh will not let us save."
3. One child launched the idea of establishing a children's bank, and the process began.
4. "We discussed the issue and made drawings of how it could be done."
5. "We spoke to Save the Children Sweden-Denmark, and they promised to help us take the idea forward."
6. "We tried to register a children's bank, but after one year we were told by the authorities that it was not allowed. That was very frustrating, but we did not stop."
7. "We decided to call it a Children's Savings Initiative, and we could finally start planning how to run it."
8. "In the beginning we thought we would just need a ledger and a computer for back-up, but we found that this was not enough. We also had to give each account holder a card with a number in order to keep track of each account holder."
9. "We fed all the account holder numbers and accounts into one ledger. Suddenly it was full, and when we continued with another book, the accounts would not match."
10. "Another problem was what to do with the money. We got a strongbox, but we did not feel that it was very safe, so we decided to take the money to the bank."
11. "We went to an international bank, but no one wanted to open an account in the name of the children or our savings initiative."
12. "Then we decided to launch the bank officially, and we invited the manager from the international bank to speak at the launching ceremony."
13. "After the ceremony the manager agreed to open an account in the name of a member who was 18 years old, but Save the Children Sweden-Denmark also had to sign."

14. "We established a bank management committee with four members and a management team with twelve children. In the beginning we had only one manager who could sign forms for deposits and withdrawals, but if he was sick, we had to keep the bank closed. Now we have appointed an assistant manager, and the bank is open two afternoons every week."
15. "In the beginning we thought that children would deposit money only, but soon we realised that they would withdraw money too, so we had to work out rules for how to keep accounts covering how much each child deposits, withdraws and continues to save."
16. "We also considered making rules for how often children have to deposit money. Like, if a child does not deposit anything for three months we thought we should fine him or her, but that made some children very angry. We do issue fines now, but the amounts are put into the child's own account."

17. "Our computer is very old and a bit broken, and we have no printer, and there are frequent power cuts, so things do not always work out easily."
18. "If you want to deposit or withdraw money, you have to fill in a form, which we submit to Save the Children Sweden-Denmark, who monitors the bank. Every form needs two signatures, but not every child has permission to sign. Dealing with money is very tricky."
19. "We do not provide any interest, and you cannot take a loan in our bank. This is our rule, because if a child leaves without paying back, we lose the money."
20. "Now we know how to operate a bank, we are one hundred children who have become motivated to save and we still get new members. Children can pay for their education, businesses and medicine, and we have become very good friends."
21. "We are also helping children in other organisations establish banks in their part of the city. If you live far away from us it is too expensive to come here – then you have to use all your money for transportation instead of saving."
22. "If we could have done this on our own, we would have, but we could not do this without adults. They helped us develop the idea by giving us information about what is good and bad, and Save the Children Sweden-Denmark pays for the room. We also could not have opened an account in a bank alone, and keeping the money here is not that safe."

3. Genuine or token children's participation

Tokenism or citizenship?
A nation is democratic to the extent that its citizens are involved, particularly at the community level. The confidence and competence to be involved must be gradually acquired through practice. It is for this reason that there should be gradually increasing opportunities for children to participate in any aspiring democracy, and particularly in those nations already convinced that they are democratic. With the growth of children's rights we are beginning to see an increasing recognition of children's abilities to speak for themselves. Regrettably, while children's and youth's participation does occur in different degrees around the world, it is often exploitative or frivolous.

UNICEF Innocenti Essays, No. 4, Children's Participation.
From Tokenism to Citizenship by Roger A. Hart

Choosing the neatest children

You have probably come across them: charming, pretty, articulate children who happen to participate in conferences with no or little preparation and no consultation with their peers. These children have been chosen by adults who wrote the speeches that the children learned by heart. The moment the audience claps, the children are removed from the stage. The audience has no clue about how the children were selected or which children they represent.

A cute feature, but it has nothing to do with children's participation.

Some adult organisations prefer sending their favourite children to meetings and conferences to ensure themselves a good reputation that will guarantee further funding, but proper participation means that all children get a chance to participate - especially the most vulnerable, who may not speak out unless they get proper space to be heard.

That said, children and young people can genuinely and effectively be involved in conference panels and meetings with adults. If such events are organised in a participatory manner, and the children are comfortable about being there, their participation can be a valuable experience for everyone.

Honest or pretentious

The kind of children's participation that adults support can range from very poor to extremely meaningful. The former, sometimes described as tokenistic, is more about creating a perception of involving children than in providing real opportunities for children to influence decision making.

Many activities and projects are entirely designed and run by adults, with children merely acting out set roles, and yet they may be positive experiences for adults as well as children. Children dance, sing and perform, and this is completely acceptable as long as everybody understands that the children are doing just that and nothing else. The problem is when children's roles are unclear or even manipulative.

Some adults feel that the end justifies the means, but this may be problematic. When pre-school children participate in a rally against a new law or policy, they rarely understand the issue. In this case, we are talking about manipulation.

Other children are consulted about their opinion but given no feedback. Adults, for example collect drawings and ideas from children, but often the children are not informed about how their input was used.

In contrast, a straightforward drawing competition where the criteria and process are made clear in advance cannot be criticised for being manipulative or tokenistic as it was never pretending to be participatory.

The power of knowledge

True and meaningful participation does not happen automatically. It requires common respect between children and adults, commitment, recognition, sensitivity, time, numerous good ideas, knowledge and the courage to give and take responsibility.

Adults have to be willing to give up power and be aware of giving it up, and often the established power structure has to be changed if children are to have real influence. One of the easiest ways of doing this is by assisting the children in gathering information that broadens their awareness of opportunities they never knew existed. In the beginning the adult facilitator can remain in charge, but when the children gain insight they also gain power.

Meaningful participation for children requires adult organisations to set up child-friendly systems, and some adults sometimes have to be convinced that it makes sense to involve children in the decision-making process.

Processes of change often face resistance, especially if your organisation has no history of learning, experimenting and reflecting. All members and the staff of an organisation play a role when creating space for children's participation. Discussing, listening to each other, trying new things out and repeating the message of participation is necessary if you want to establish lasting changes and space for the voices of children in an organisation without participatory traditions.

Tip: If children really participate, they are free to talk and choose

True participation is:

- *A genuine opportunity to influence decision making based on honest and clear information on the extent and limit of the influence.*
- *Freedom to express opinions and have them respected.*
- *Inclusion of all children, also the disabled, girls, ethnic and religious minorities.*
- *Freedom to influence the selection of ideas and tools.*
- *A process of learning – listening, seeing, doing and discovering.*

- *Sharing of experiences.*
- *Building self-esteem and self-confidence.*
- *Always serving the best interest of the child.*

Token participation is when:

- *Initiatives and decisions are taken and carried out by adults in the name of children.*
- *Adults are deciding what is good and what is bad.*
- *Children are being told what to do and what not to do.*
- *Children are invited to a meeting, but are told in advance what to say.*
- *Children are supposed to influence a decision without being provided with proper information about the consequences and alternatives.*
- *Children are invited to participate in adult activities, loaded up with adult reports in a foreign or academic language and no one explains what is happening.*
- *Children are invited to adult meetings but never given the chance to speak, or only to speak about their case, but not to come up with ideas and solutions.*
- *Children are allowed to speak about their ideas, concerns and solutions, but no one takes them seriously.*
- *Child-led organisations are not allowed to select or elect their own representatives to participate in meetings and consultations.*
- *Adults always select the same child to participate in every activity, because that child is especially good at expressing him or herself.*

Token or genuine?

Registering births in Bangladesh is the responsibility of the local government, and the task is daunting as most people have never been registered. In some areas local governments discovered that child-led organisations could easily handle the task of walking from village to village registering the population.

The issue is whether this activity is genuine or token children's participation.

One could argue that the local government has simply taken advantage of the child-led organisation by allowing members to toil with the task of registering births without pay. If there is nothing in it for the children at all, it is definitely not true participation.

On the other hand, one could argue that helping the local government solve this huge problem could lead to favours the other way round.

The government develop a personal relationship with the children and feel indebted and will thereby be more willing to help the children combat their own problems later on. But if the children are not aware of this, or if they do not exploit their new opportunities, the participatory value is questionable.

Some would also argue that birth registration indeed is an important issue for the children who need birth certificates if they want to begin an education, marry, work abroad – or be protected against child marriage. A birth certificate is also a way of proving that a child is really a child below 18 years of age and has to be protected against hazardous child labour. Last but not least, all children have the right to have a name. But if registering births is to count as genuine, meaningful participation, the children have to participate because they are aware of this and want to use it for their own purposes.

When you ask the children, they say that one of the greatest benefits is the freedom it entails. Even girls are allowed to participate, and together the children walk from village to village and get to know many people who they would not have got to know otherwise. This means a great deal to poor village children in Bangladesh, where travelling for fun is out of the question.

So is registering births in Bangladesh genuine or token children's participation?

4. Creating space and a sense of security

Meeting children on their terms

If a child-led organisation has not been established completely by the children, the space has to be created - figuratively speaking. Children do not participate automatically, especially in the beginning, and particularly not in advocacy, which is a new concept to most children. You need to fashion a safe and child-friendly environment where the children feel welcome, listened to and respected.

The first step is to meet the children in their own surroundings where they feel at home and in power. Come well prepared with lots of time and patience, be honest and straight-forward when they ask questions and remember that play is a very good way of building trust.

You can find tools for getting to know children in the *Toolbox* and games in chapter 16 on *Games and plays.*

Breaking the ice

A baseline study was to be carried out in a project area, and the village children were waiting in front of a house when the adult researchers from Dhaka city turned up. The local facilitators tried their utmost, but not one child uttered a single word till the adult researchers asked the magic question: "What do you want to do?" "We want to play," the children replied in unison.

Thanks to games and play the boys and girls had fun and got a chance to observe the alien visitors. Afterwards, the children were considerably more confident about talking in this unusual set-up. The children volunteered that they really missed going to school, but that they felt ashamed of admitting that they were illiterate to the educated, rich adult researchers.

In small groups the children later identified a whole string of problems and came up with a plan to combat some of these problems.

Getting a green light from the parents

Whatever you do, do not forget that children have parents. Parents, first of all, have to give permission for their children to participate in child-led activities, but even beyond that everyone benefits from having the parents on board.

Parents can help children carry projects forward. When you do advocacy on child labour, parents play a main role since they are responsible for letting their children work. Parental involvement ensures the sustainability of child-led organisations and achievements way beyond the initial activities.

At the emotional level parents are the most important people in a child's life. Children generally love to do things with their parents, and they need their parents' acknowledgement to mature, develop confidence and feel valued.

Tip: Avoid making the children feel insecure

Facilitators' relationships with children may vary depending on the culture and context. In some areas girls do not like to eat with facilitators. Or facilitators may have physical impediments, like a sore leg or back,

that prevent them from sitting on the floor or playing with the children. Nevertheless, it will help you and the children create a pleasant atmosphere if you apply as many as possible of the following tips:

- *If you sit on a chair or stand while the children sit on the floor, you emphasise that you are bigger than they are, and the children may expect you to take the lead.*
- *Sitting behind a big desk with the children lined up in front of you creates physical and emotional distance. Instead, sit in a circle so that everyone can see each other and feel equally important.*
- *Closed body language also creates insecurity. Crossed arms, lack of eye contact, head turned away, a very low voice that is difficult to hear or putting your hands in front of your mouth while talking indicates that you are not confident and the children will respond by becoming insecure, too.*
- *Never force a child to talk if the child does not volunteer to do so. Unwanted exposure makes most people feel uneasy. If a child does not participate, he or she has the right to refrain from doing so. Probably the child is tired, shy, sad or bored. Or he or she feels left out by you and other more domineering children. A game, group work, a break or a discussion about how the meeting could be carried out in a different way often help quiet children to get on board again.*
- *Eating together is a way of creating togetherness.*
- *If the children are unruly, ask them why and find a common solution. Or play a game to get rid of the surplus energy.*
- *Frowning, staring, shouting, arm pulling, bullying, abusive or threatening language, and a hands raised as if to hit are totally unacceptable behaviour.*

Children's spaces

Although some child-led organisations hold open-air meetings, the feeling of having their own place is important to many children. Having a place where the children can hang their own decorations, where they can invite people to come for meetings, and last but not least meet each other, have fun and prepare activities without interference of outsiders is valuable.

Finding a place in Bangladesh is generally easier in the villages. Here, there often is a bit of exhausted land that no one has claimed or uses. Although tin for roofs has to be purchased, most other materials like bamboo and clay are freely or cheaply available.

Some children convince well-off locals to donate the tin roof. Or they work and save or create some income generating activity. One group of children scavenged plastic for recycling in order to generate money for their roof.

In big cities the general scarcity of space and high rents make it hard for child-led organisations to find permanent space. Many will have to do with borrowing their way into other organisations' office premises, or using a corner of the local school or religious institution. Some meet in the home of the member with the biggest house and the most accommodating family.

All child-led organisations in Bangladesh share the problem of registering their land or room. Without registration of ownership or a lease agreement, it is unlikely that the children's property will be respected for long. But in Bangladesh a child cannot legally own land or lease rooms. Often, an adult organisation will have to sign on behalf of the child-led organisation. Or the children will have to rely on a local adult who they trust.

Money matters

While some child-led organisations get support from adult organisations, others get by on their own by keeping their costs at a very low level.

Although many child labourers are underpaid, some of them do spend money on entertainment like going to the cinema, video games and snacks. If the children feel ownership of their child-led organisation, they may want to spend a bit of their own money on child-led activities instead.

Access to information

If children are to take on the responsibility of running a child-led organisation and work for improved working conditions, information is essential. The children need knowledge about their rights, about who can help them achieve their rights, and how this can be done before they can advocate changes convincingly.

Important knowledge includes, for example:

- The *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*, which contains all the rights held by children all over the world.
- Child labour laws and policies in your country, including the minimum wages for specific kinds of work.
- Which institutions and organisations are responsible for ensuring that the children's rights are fulfilled and laws maintained.

If you are an adult facilitator you can help the children translate information into child-friendly language, and together you can analyse the meaning and importance of the laws and articles.

Safety matters

Adult organisations who work with child-led organisations have the overall responsibility for ensuring a healthy and safe environment for the children they support.

If a child has to brave slippery stairs, the risk of falling off a rickety balcony without a handrail, or if the place where the children meet also acts as parking space with all the dangers that this can entail, or there is no access to a decent toilet, then the child-led organisation is not really a child-friendly space.

You also have to ensure that the space where you hold your meetings is accessible to disabled children.

And what is your responsibility if something happens to a child when he or she is carrying out activities in or for the child-led organisation supported by your organisation? For example, if a child is involved in an accident when travelling to participate in training, does your organisation cover the cost of having a broken leg treated at the hospital?

In some developing countries adult staff members are not insured, and reliable insurance companies may not be available. But when you take on the responsibility of facilitating other peoples' children it is a good idea to consider what you would do if an accident happens.

A sense of security also matters

If one or more children are invited to participate in activities outside their own community, safety and a personal sense of security are extremely important.

While most adult organisations have child protection policies that shield children against sexual abuse, e.g. separate sleeping arrangements for boys and adult male facilitators and girls and adult female facilitators, the fact that most children do not like to sleep alone in a new environment has to be taken into consideration. Children who cannot sleep because they are afraid and feel anxious cannot be expected to participate properly the next day.

The solution is to invite at least two child participants of each gender. Also check whether they get along. Like adults, children have their likes and dislikes, and if two children loathe each other you cannot expect them to cooperate or feel at ease.

Adults travelling with children should also be aware of children's imaginations. When a youth trainer team established by Save the Children Sweden-Denmark and its partner organisations in Dhaka was travelling to train other children, rumours of ghosts spread fear amongst the children. Even if you do not believe in ghosts and therefore feel inclined to ignore the rumours, you have to take the situation seriously.

Children have vivid imaginations, and for them their fear is very real. Talk to them and try to find out what kick started the rumour and, if necessary, remove what the children perceived as a threat.

For further inspiration on how to protect children and make them feel safe and secure, the *International Save the Children Alliance Child Protection Policy* is listed in the back of this book.

Dress down

When you work with children you should think about what you wear. Be casual. Clothing that is too fashionable, expensive or formal creates distance.

Casual clothes and footwear are also practical if you are to sit on the floor, walk from village to village, visit factories, or play with the children.

Creating space for advocacy

Advocacy is a creative process, and creativity is the ability to develop original, inventive and imaginative activities. Children are naturally creative, but when we grow up we are taught to be more cautious, what to think and how to behave. Therefore, adult facilitators have a two-fold role: they should be careful not to stop children from being creative, but it is also their responsibility to make the children aware of potential pitfalls and risks.

However, nobody can be creative and implement creative ideas without a certain level of courage.

According to the book *Practical Facilitation: A Toolkit of Techniques* by Christie Hogan we ideally need:

- An open environment in which everyone can contribute
- Supportive friends and facilitators
- Supportive management in adult partner organisations
- A sense of autonomy and empowerment
- A feeling of trust that if things go wrong, creative problem solving will follow rather than blaming or scolding
- To consider risky, silly, adventurous or crazy ideas. They may actually just work!
- Plenty of time
- People who dare to carry out the ideas

Tip: No issue is too difficult to discuss with children

Some adults think that certain issues are too complicated for children, but this is not true. The only barrier to children's understanding is adult language. Therefore, be conscious about the age of the children, their present capacity and your choice of words.

You do not want the children to get bored, or to misunderstand what you mean. On the other hand, we all resent it when people speak down to us. Consider how to balance the two.

Do not forget to …

… involve the parents so they are supportive of their children's activities.

… have an individual relationship with each child so that each and every child feels encouraged and valued.

… help solve problems that occur in the children's lives.

… involve and establish a relationship with local leaders, local government and influential people. Without their support, it is hard for the children to achieve their objectives.

… involve and establish a relationship with the community. If the community does not approve, the children will experience immense problems.

… create awareness about equality so that both girls and boys are allowed to participate.

… include the most vulnerable children – also disabled ones.

… dress appropriately. If you are too dressed up, it creates a distance. If you are too shabby, people may not respect you.

… do not be too strict. Try to solve problems and conflicts by negotiating and not with confrontation.

… provide time to listen to every child.

… be patient.

… use easy-going language – ensure that everyone understands.

… be open and transparent.

… praise and respect the children so they feel important.

… ensure that the children always get to elect their own representatives when an activity takes place.

… clarify your own role – you are just an advisor, not the boss.

… be honest. Do not make promises that you cannot keep.

5. How adults support children and their child-led organisations

A lasting experience
True children's participation fosters a very close relationship between the children and the adults involved in the activities.

While it is taxing and challenging to work closely with disadvantaged children, it is also rewarding; most likely you will never really shake off the experience.

The Super Sisters on the Savage Streets
by Lotte Ladegaard/Save the Children Denmark

The importance of adults

Never underestimate the importance of adult involvement in child-led organisations. Most children claim that they are a whole lot better off with adult support, and they generally cherish adults who help them organise and fight for their rights.

Parents, teachers, development workers and others all have important roles to play in children's lives. Adults may encourage children's involvement, share information, model participatory behaviour, assist the children in developing the skills needed for participation, create safe environments for children and clear the way to important people who have no habit of listening to children. "We cannot always turn to employers or local governments alone. They do not respect children," say many children.

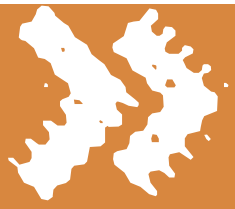
Children state that adults are especially important when problems or fights occur. Adult facilitators can act as intermediaries, or they can suggest solutions the children may never have considered. Adults can also help the children obtain important information and propose alternative options so the children can take their own informed decisions.

Adults may even create child-led organisations on behalf of children. During the research for this handbook all the children made it very clear that they appreciated that adults took the initiative in the first place, because, "We had never heard about child-led organisations, so we could not have got the idea on our own."

In time, children come up with their own ideas and adult facilitators can gradually scale down on their influence and the organisation can become truly child-led.

There are situations where you always should react promptly, though. If an activity can hamper a child's safety or mental and physical development, it is the adults' responsibility to say stop in order to protect the child. After all, adults are adults, and children are children and may therefore lack the overview to fully understand the risks entailed.

Adults also have a critical role to play in making sure that all children have the opportunity to participate irrespective of their gender, disabilities, ethnicity, social class, religion etc.



When adult support may be necessary

- To help children establish their child-led organisation
- To help solve legal issues
- To create access to medical services and formal schools
- To enter other organisations' programmes or projects
- To create access to local government representatives and other decision makers
- To help work out a realistic plan of action. Children may have too many impractical ideas
- Trouble shooting
- To help create good group dynamics
- To ensure the best interest of every child in a group
- To assist in gathering information
- To act as resource persons
- To provide immediate help if a child is in danger
- To summarise ideas developed, or decisions taken and eventually take notes for further reference if the children are not capable of doing this themselves

Participation is positive

Some adults feel threatened by the thought of children's participation. But participation is by nature positive, because it is through participation that children learn tolerance, negotiation skills and the need for compromise, which are all values that will help the children throughout their lives.

By having their views taken seriously children develop respect for adults who are willing to listen and engage with them. When you do participatory work with children you will experience a

unique respect, constructive feedback and few conflicts, because children understand that while they may have a certain view, so do others, and they will quickly recognise the need for finding solutions and building a common understanding.

The importance of the right adult mindset

The very first question you should ask before you embark on facilitating children is, "Am I willing to let go of control?" A facilitator is not just any adult who needs a job, and you should be very aware that you are not going to become a teacher or a supervisor.

The realisation that you are not the one to come up with every idea or make all the decisions may at times be difficult - especially if you disagree with the children. Always keep in mind that if you are too domineering, the children lose ownership of their child-led organisation and that working in a participatory manner pays in the long run.

"Earlier I worked as a teacher. People expected me to be ferocious and I was. Now I respect the children's voices. Day by day my behaviour pattern changes. When I respect the children, they respect me, and that creates self-respect. Now they respect me as a good person, not as a bad person."

Facilitator, Child-led Organisation and Advocacy on Child Labour project

Also remember that children are in a learning process. They are generally very open-minded, and their needs and interests change quickly. While nobody will expect you to be superhumanly perfect, you need to be somewhat flexible, innovative and willing to learn, too.

A facilitator spends a great deal of time listening, working at odd hours when the children are available, and is sent from here to there in search of whatever information is needed by the children. Patience is a key word.

"The biggest thing I learned is endurance. Before I would do something once or twice and then leave it. Now I know that if you stick with something it is possible. I can use this in my personal life, too. I am much more dedicated, remain cool and never become tense. If one way fails, I find another."

Facilitator, Child-led Organisation and Advocacy on Child Labour project

To some extent you also have to let go of your individualism, because if you facilitate a group of children, you become a team member too, not the leader. Your role is to facilitate processes by negotiation and explanations according to the groups' needs and wishes. You also have to help generate fruitful contact between all participants and encourage participation from as many participants as possible, not to mention respect the choice of those who do not wish to participate.

You also have to take on the role of time manager. And of course you have to protect individuals from verbal attacks, ask questions to elicit ideas, opinions and hidden agendas, make sure that ideas and decisions are recorded, encourage ongoing feedback and ensure that the evaluation of activities takes place – always keeping in mind that your own opinion only really matters if the children ask for it, or if the best interest of the child is at risk.

Helping facilitators grow

There are people all over the world who strongly believe that participation is good, and there are even more people who would love to make a difference for children. However, the concept of children's participation may seem overwhelming, very new and confusing if you decide to become a facilitator.

In many developing countries it is hard to find adults who are ready-made for facilitating children, especially in the rural areas. Children's participation has not really spread beyond city borders. Villagers are often somewhat conservative, and the idea of having children in charge may not catch on easily, not even with would-be facilitators and local organisations. This particularly applies to indigenous people and minority communities who are used to fighting hard to maintain their own culture and values.

Access to good schools and universities, the Internet, international news, new books and inspiration from outside is often reserved for city people. Despite this, city people do not always feel any responsibility or attachment to the rural population.

For example, if you are used to rote learning where you seldom ask questions, which is the case in some village schools, you may not easily absorb abstract, academic or experimental knowledge. Workshops and training in your capital city may be fun but at the same time frustrating, because the context is so different and often without any affinity to what you already know.

Many city-based trainers simply assume that a new facilitator understands "advocacy" and "participation" in the same way they do, and they may fail to provide examples stemming from a context known to the new facilitator. In that case, internalising the new knowledge is very difficult, and even more so when it comes to applying it in a village child-led organisation.

City-based organisations and their trainers also sometimes fail to note the fact that when they teach you e.g. to shoot video, it may not be useful if you do not have access to either video cameras or editing equipment and a projector at home.

Therefore, facilitation and training of facilitators-to-be only really makes sense if the trainer is familiar with your context and uses it as the point of departure.

Study trips to similar projects may feed facilitators with new ideas and energy and a sense of wanting to do their job even better. The visits have to be well prepared with a very clear objective, as well as the plans for what the facilitators are supposed to learn and achieve during their visit. Otherwise the facilitators may not understand the value of the study trip.

Posting an experienced facilitator with a new facilitator and vice versa for a week or two may make much more sense than a series of formal training sessions, workshops, briefings, speeches and study trips. When you just visit a project for one day you get a superficial and often glamorous impression of the activities, but when you work with another facilitator for a week or two you gain in-depth knowledge about all the little adjustments that make activities fruitful.

Whether you are a new or experienced facilitator, remember never to talk down to or even "at" people. Rather brainstorm, develop ideas together and take your colleagues by the hand and show the way if they are in doubt.

How to become a facilitator

Participating in courses is an easy way of learning the basics of facilitation. Good training should give you experience in facilitating groups similar to your own, and allow you to learn by observing others in action. Usually, there is some supervision and guidance by an experienced facilitator and you receive feedback from the facilitator and the other participants. However, some new facilitators find it difficult to apply knowledge garnered from courses in their everyday lives.

Learning by doing. You can practice basic facilitation skills at home and with your friends. For example, if you are in a group where a couple of people are dominating the conversation, wait for a pause and then, in a friendly way, invite a quiet group member to talk. For example, "Farida, what do you think about this issue?"

Observing other facilitators at work when you attend workshops may help you become a better facilitator. You have to keep yourself firmly focused on the processes the facilitator applies rather than getting involved in the content of the workshop. You can also try observing different kinds of meetings. Watch the chairperson and the participants. Who speaks and when? What happens when someone speaks and no one takes any notice?

Shadowing or being a trainee with experienced facilitators and co-facilitating teach you the techniques of facilitation.

Reading and researching can provide you with a theoretical background. If you have Internet access, you can find materials on search engines like www.Google.com and www.Yahoo.com. If you also have the funds and a credit card to purchase materials, a search for "facilitation" on, for example the website www.Amazon.com will produce a list of the latest publications. Otherwise, many organisations in your country have reports, toolkits and journals you can borrow or copy.

Networking is a way of sharing experiences with and learning from others. Meet regularly with other facilitators who work with children. Start by letting people explain what they are doing at present, move on to address issues and problems experienced by the participants and then brainstorm about solutions.

Tips for good facilitation

- *Be prepared. Know your children, their context and expectations. Gather a handful of games and plays that you can use as ice breakers and energisers. Some are included in chapter 26, Games and plays, in this handbook.*
- *Explain, explain, and explain again until everybody understands.*
- *Be attentive all the time.*
- *Be flexible. Do not stick to your own plans and ideas if something better comes up.*
- *Trust the children and their capacities.*
- *Honour each child and recognise the whole person; do not use them by taking just what is wanted for the purpose of the activity. Learn about the child's individual strengths through discussions and observations.*
- *Tap into the children's energy – play with them, have fun with them.*
- *Keep intervention to a minimum.*
- *If some children do not participate, do not force them, but keep them informed, ask opinions, provide choices and offer increased responsibility. Try to find out why they do not want to get involved and how the context could be changed to make it more appealing.*
- *Seek agreement.*
- *Use open-ended questions, e.g. "Can you tell me the story so far?" is far less intimidating than, "What is the problem?", "Does this make sense?" or "Have I made myself clear?" Closed-ended questions like this that require a plain yes or no may make people feel awkward about admitting that, "no, it is not clear." A suggestion like, "Please let me know if you want me to clarify something. You may ask any time," is more open and more likely to generate a response. Remember to count to ten and allow the children some time to think before you continue.*
- *Make suggestions.*
- *Use examples, cases and storytelling when you explain things that appear to be difficult to understand.*
- *You need to listen actively to responses. Use your head for issues, and your heart for feelings.*
- *Listen more than you talk.*
- *Do not impose.*
- *Ask the children what issues they are concerned about instead of making assumptions.*
- *Negotiate.*
- *Choose a variety of tools for facilitation since different children think in different ways and therefore need to be stimulated differently.*
- *Be culturally sensitive.*
- *Try to solve conflicts as soon as they arise.*
- *Invite feedback.*
- *Acknowledge ideas and contributions.*
- *Always give feedback on the spot and inform the children how their ideas will be taken into account and why – or why not. An immediate response is important for children.*
- *Encourage dialogue. If one child tends to speak a lot, ask the others what they think about what the child said. You may also tell the child that now it is someone else's turn to talk, but that he or she of course may talk again later. You can find tools to run meetings and dialogues in the Toolbox.*

- *Never discriminate. When you get to know a group of children, you will often feel more attached to one or two of them. Feelings like this are human, but you should never let it show that you like some children more than others. You should also avoid praising one child's beauty or cuteness in front of the rest of the group. Discrimination may at best make the other children feel inferior. At worst, it may create jealousy and cause division among a group of children.*
- *Be realistic – everything takes time, especially while working with children.*
- *Facilitate endings by summing up today's decisions and the way forward.*
- *If you do not know the answer, say so.*
- *When in doubt, check it out.*
- *Be yourself.*
- *A good sense of humour always helps.*
- *Never hit, threaten or use abusive language.*

When emotions break loose

If you are a good facilitator, and the children get to like and trust you, you will at times experience strong feelings coming to the surface. Expressing grief, fear, and anger should be seen as healing, rather than a "breaking down" or "losing control."

A facilitator needs to be skilful in steering group members when things become emotional. Most facilitators are not trained counsellors or able to deal with trauma. The setting may not be suitable, and the other children may not respond in a comforting way. Therefore, the facilitator must be prepared to handle distress with empathy and compassion.

Negative experiences cause distress, which may scar our psyche in the long term. Past experience with distress is "baggage" we carry with us. Sometimes it can trigger us to overreact when we experience a similar situation, hear a certain word or a sound, smell a particular scent, or see a person or behaviour that reminds us about distressing experiences from the past. This is normal.

Likewise, you as a facilitator or some of the other participants may trigger a child's emotions, and the child may cry, get angry or otherwise react to his or her distress.

There is also the possibility that the whole group will react to something, and you may not even be aware of why or what has happened to trigger the reaction.

Many societies are rather oppressive when it comes to showing emotions; even smiles and laughter are used to cover embarrassment. But all emotions are valid. If people are angry, you have to respect that, since this is how they feel, and this makes them suffer. If you respond too abruptly, you may make the problem worse.

In every situation, you have to find out what happened. You could ask, "I am not sure I know what is going on. Can anyone help me finding out what is going on?"

Do not become emotionally involved in the conflict, even if it has to do with you. Breathe deeply, stay cool and count to ten. Listen actively and show the person that you understand. Let the person know that he or she has been heard – summarise and repeat it back. Ask questions for clarification, or give meaningful sounds to let the person or the group know that you are listening. Often all a person wants is to be heard and understood.

If, on the other hand, a child starts crying, you have to show empathy, but you also have to remember that facilitators are not therapists. Find a quiet place and suggest some activity that the rest of the group can get involved in, e.g. drawing or playing, while you take care of the child who is sad. Depending on the cultural appropriateness of touching you may consider putting your hand on the child's shoulder or arm. Being touched lightly is comforting and calming to most and is rarely experienced as intimidating.

Many people feel insecure when someone is sad and they either start babbling suggestions and solutions, or they say, "It'll be ok. Don't cry." Consider how you feel when you are sad. What do you need? Mainly you only want advice if you ask for it, and you do not want to be told to forget about it or to shut up. When you are in the role of comforter, just lending a listening ear does wonders.

Keep an eye on the distressed child afterwards. Is he or she back on track, or is he or she still quiet, or absent? Make it clear with your attention, body language and words that you are there for the child, and that the child is always welcome to share his or her sorrows and problems with you and the other children if it feels right.

If a problem cannot be solved by listening or other means available to you, you can help the child find a solution elsewhere. You may have to talk to the child's parents, teacher or employer, or if a child is in severe distress, he or she may need professional counselling. Some organisations offer this type of support free of charge.

Tip: Always maintain confidentiality

Some child labourers come from broken families; some have no family at all, and many lead a fairly hard life. One of the very rewarding parts of working directly with children is that they will often trust in you and confide in you. This establishes closeness and an affection that you have to maintain carefully. Never share a child's personal story with others unless the child has asked you to do so.

Paper overload

Often, field facilitators are requested to write field reports and concept notes as well as do other paper work while also facilitating a large crowd of children.

While concept notes and field reports are very good tools to help clarify your thoughts and ideas, there is a risk is that paper work will eat up too much of your time, which is annoying and stressful for the facilitator.

6. Children as facilitators and trainers

What children are capable of

Children can facilitate and train other children if they receive proper support. Just like adult facilitators and trainers, children need to learn the necessary skills.

When they have learned the skills, children can also facilitate the mobilisation of other children, meetings and workshops.

Different children – different capacities

Some adults and school-going children believe that child labourers cannot perform as trainers or facilitators. But child labourers generally have better insight into the problems of other child labourers than an outsider and may therefore be better facilitators than an adult or a school-going child.

Child labourers can pass on new knowledge in a way and in a language that make sense to their peers, but especially in the beginning most child labourers need adult support to learn how to act in a situation entirely new to them.

Educated adults and children tend to have a very specific idea about what learning is, and they know what teaching is, but may not be aware of the difference between teaching and facilitation. Therefore, they may need some assistance in translating their traditional ways of learning into something that makes sense for child labourers.

Used to reading and writing, school-going children may also collect new information on behalf of their child-led organisations and act as valuable resource persons.

The average child labourer cannot be expected to read long, complicated and time consuming publications, but all children respond well to pictures, games, music, and the spoken word. Children who cannot read or write are also used to relying on their memories and will continue do so if they become involved in facilitation and training.

This once again underlines the importance of access to relevant and reliable information and child-friendly tools – but while also always keeping the context in mind.

If school-going, non-working children are involved in the same child-led organisations as child labourers, the adult facilitator has to help bridge eventual gaps between the groups.

Personal qualities

Not everyone is cut out to be a facilitator, though. A first-rate facilitator possesses certain personal qualities like a good sense of perspective, listening skills, analytical abilities and a knack for entertaining people. Having these traits makes adapting the Tips for facilitators in chapter 5 much easier. Out of fifty children, for example maybe two of them are capable and interested, and even then they need to be trained, because in addition to personal qualities, facilitation is also a skill that has to be learned, tested and improved continuously.

Adults have a tendency to tell children what they can do - or not do - but children have to learn from their own experiences, and that takes time. Do not expect a child facilitator to ever be able to take on full responsibility, and definitely not after just one or two training sessions.

A good facilitator knows and acknowledges his or her own limitations, but there are examples of domineering child facilitators taking on a leading role and doing everything on behalf of the children instead of assisting children in doing it their way.

This is where adults play a role.

Generally, child facilitators cannot totally substitute adult facilitators when doing advocacy, since advocacy requires lengthy processes that have to penetrate power structures and may create unforeseen risks. But children can take over many of the adult facilitators' responsibilities and act as link between children and adults.

In a situation where children decide to do advocacy without professional adult facilitators, parents, community leaders and other influential persons should be involved from the very beginning to help the children and prevent unforeseen risks.

Tip: Grooming child facilitators takes a lot of time and patience

- *Children have an enormous amount to learn, and the way they learn and perceive the world around them changes all the time. This has to be taken into consideration when you plan to have children facilitate other children.*

- *Children's participation takes time, and so does grooming child facilitators. Although children are fast learners, they need to have things repeated in different ways, try them out jointly with adults and on their own and be supported to continue.*

Child-to-child facilitation

A group of Bangladeshi boys working on the streets met in a park and discovered that they all were deprived of access to essential facilities like education, health services and protection against the police, who merely removed children from the streets without considering that the street was the only place for these children to earn an income. Assisted by an adult from Save the Children Sweden the boys decided to unite to solve their problems and facilitate other children in solving their problems.

A core component of this child-led organisation is street-based education given by older members to younger members. The children have worked out their own colourful education materials, which teach children basic reading, writing, math and survival skills using stories experienced by street children. When the children have learned the basics, the child-led organisation helps them transfer to a suitable educational institution, be it a non-formal school, a non-governmental organisational training centre or formal school.

The child-led organisation also helps its members access health services. To raise awareness, the children do theatre for their communities, parents and friends about the problems working street children have. In addition to collecting clothes from companies to distribute among their members and other children, they also sell goods at fairs to generate money for new activities. The money is placed in an emergency fund, which is used when a child is in urgent trouble e.g. needs hospitalisation due to an accident.

Whenever a street child is detained by the police, the child-led organisation immediately investigates why and tries to negotiate with the police to get the child released. Sometimes a small amount of money may do the trick, but on other occasions the children have to involve their adult facilitator. If that does not work, they ask different organisations with access to legal advisors to take over.

When a child-led organisation provides valuable services to working street children, it is much more than just a service provider. Some children have been members almost all their lives and the other

children play the role of a caring family – something many of the children have never experienced before.

When a child turns eighteen, he or she becomes an advisor. Advisors share their vast experience with the younger generation and help wherever the need arises.

Lessons learned:

- *Although this child-led organisation has existed for almost two decades, the children always have had adult facilitators and close ties to Save the Children Sweden-Denmark. This is in keeping with the children's own wish. As they say, they need adult support to target authorities, and without money many activities would come to a standstill.*

The youth trainer team

As time goes by, more and more children grow out of their child-led organisations. Turning eighteen does not, however, mean that the grown-up children automatically get fed up with their organisations. In fact, for many children, turning eighteen leads to severe withdrawal symptoms on top of all the problems grown-up children have to face when they suddenly have to find a proper adult job and live up to adult responsibilities and expectations.

In the meantime, just letting experienced grown-up children go is a loss for the organisation, since these young people may be the very best ones to pass on valuable knowledge and experience.

Consequently, a group of Bangladeshi youth formed a youth trainer team to work out training modules to help other children possibly enhance their skills. At the same time, the youth felt that becoming professional trainers would enable them to work professionally in the future and earn an income.

Establishing this team was a lengthy process in which many approaches were tested. First, a couple of youth tried out a training module that they had participated in previously. Based on the results of this they were to work out a new training module. For various reasons this never happened, one of them being that they were at a bit of a loss as to how to do it.

Then, the process started all over again, but this time more closely facilitated by adults. The ideas generated were shared with a big group of children and youth, and a concept note was worked out. The children and youth also worked out criteria for future trainers. Based on this, a basic trainers' team was formed, and more children from other *Child-led Organisation and Advocacy on Child Labour* project partner organisations were admitted in order to make the team representative of all the children they were to train.

Working out the training manuals was a huge task. The children decided to include four modules: child rights, facilitation, participation, and life skills. The initial modules were drafted during a seven-day workshop in which the youth shared previous experiences as a

starting point for the development of primary content and tools. Then the youth divided themselves into small teams that were, with the help of a consultant, to design one manual each. However, the consultant never entered into the process of writing the manual, and their adult partner organisation took over the facilitation.

This time, the youth once again formed small groups and organised a two-day workshop in which an adult facilitator helped the children describe the content of the manual and develop tools.

All of the ideas stem from the group of youth who also decided that the manuals were to be based on computer graphics they created. The youth developed the materials and the adults helped arrange the order of the contents and tools and checked whether all of the information was correct.

The youth also participated in a five-day training session for trainers. Small teams were formed to replicate training sessions for trainers in the field. When travelling outside their own areas, the youth were always accompanied by adults – for protection, support and to take the overall responsibility.

A one-day orientation meeting also took place in which each of the youth trainers went through the training plan and otherwise prepared themselves. Finally, the youth tested the draft modules in the field and subsequently incorporated changes resulting from their experiences before doing the final computer graphics and texts.

In total, the process took 167 days or almost six months.

Lessons learned:

- *Involving children and youth in child-to-child training may be time-consuming but it is at the same time very worthwhile. Apart from greatly increasing their self-esteem, the youth trainers learned valuable skills and developed a remarkably strong sense of group belonging. The training participants quickly grasped any new knowledge and appreciated the revitalising input they received from their older, more experienced peers. Exchanging experiences also made it easier for new child-led organisations to believe in their own strength and the value of child-led advocacy.*

- *Involving children, adolescents and youth in building capacity for others makes a great deal of sense, and it is one way of providing youth with access to sustainable and non-hazardous work. However, it may be hard for youth to promote themselves because many of them still lack a wide network, and in adult-led organisations few adults believe that young people are qualified enough to be paid for their work. This is why an organisation that educates children or youth to become trainers must also be prepared to help them find jobs afterwards.*
- *Simply participating in a course does not mean you become a trainer or that you become an expert at designing and writing training manuals.*
- *Not just any consultant can facilitate planning and processes with children and youth. This requires commitment, sensitivity and prior skills.*

7. Different age groups – different capacities

No leadership until adolescence

Your ability to participate depends on how good you are at understanding the thoughts and feelings of others. Thoughts and feelings develop throughout childhood. Very young children are, for example primarily concerned about their own situation, and they are not mature enough to judge or foresee if others will be hurt by their actions. As a result you cannot expect very young children to advocate on the behalf of other children.

Even at the age of eight, a boy may not be able to understand the perspective of others, but this ability is essential if you want to influence others to change their habits and behaviour. If you e.g. want to make a scrap shop owner pay the real market price and treat you well, you have to understand that the shop owner also is frustrated because you do not pay back your loans and advances. Otherwise you will never be able to negotiate a deal that benefits both of you.

Child-led advocacy requires a certain level of maturity

One organisation decided to open its existing child-led organisation to all the children in the area. This was a very popular move, and soon a large group of children of all ages, also preschoolers, met regularly to play, sing, draw and have fun.

Gradually it became apparent that planning and carrying out advocacy was not easy in such a mixed group. Participation by adolescent girls was irregular in the child-led organisation, because their parents were concerned about their daughters' virtue and the adolescent boys were busy working. The youngest children, on the other hand were not mature enough to analyse their shared situation. The actual planning of advocacy subsequently only took place after the adolescents' parents were convinced that the outcome of the child-led organisation's activities would benefit the whole family.

The table at the end of this chapter will help you design activities that involve children of all ages to the greatest possible extent. Instead of thinking about what children cannot do you should consider what they can do.

Although you cannot expect children to lead the field, organise and coordinate until early adolescence, young children are capable of contributing to group activities. A nine-year old girl, for instance can easily understand why children would want to avoid thrashings in their workplaces, and she would be more than happy to participate in Theatre for Development performances. At the same time, she will learn a significant amount from the older children in the group.

However, too great an age difference, for instance between adolescents and pre-schoolers, can yield the same variation in power and knowledge as child-adult relationships. If a child-led organisation consists of many different age groups it makes sense to divide the children into smaller units, each with their own activities.

The adult facilitator will also have to help bridge any power and knowledge gaps by applying child friendly tools, providing explanations and ironing out problems.

Context also plays a role

We all pass through the universal cycle of conception and birth; we grow into a young child, an adolescent, youth and continue into adulthood and middle-age; finally we reach old age and death.

Yet, different cultures, contexts and socio-economic features also play a role in what we are capable of at each stage of our lives.

In Denmark, for example some people find it particularly difficult to believe that a ten-year old boy is able to work without taking any breaks for many hours every day.

Likewise, Bangladeshis always react with disbelief when they hear that many Danes already start living entirely on their own at around the age of eighteen.

The table below is adapted from Roger A. Hart's book, *Children's Participation: The Theory and Practice of Involving Young Citizens in Community Development and Environmental Care*, published by UNIEF and Earthscan.

Keep in mind that the characteristics for the different age groups listed in the table overlap as children mature differently. Girls, for instance mature faster than boys.

How children develop and mature

Age level and ability to coordinate perspectives	*Close friendships*	*Peer groups*	*Leadership*
Ages 3-7 Mainly think about themselves. Do not understand other people's perspectives	At times they interact physically with other children	Normally use touch to interact; like to play games	Understand that there are leaders who tell them what to do, but they do not understand why
Ages 4-9 Have a personal, one-sided perspective, but are able to understand that others may think differently	Capable of helping other children play a game but like it when you play their favourite game with them	Many have one-off interactions with other children, but they do not connect closely with anyone as they still mainly look at what benefits themselves Often interact to please others	Generally obedient unless deeply hurt emotionally by the persons they are supposed to obey
Ages 6-12 Awareness of how others might view their thoughts and feelings develops	Begin to cooperate regarding activities and issues, but relationships tend to end if the children get into an argument	Have friends; one friendship may lead to another	Thoughts and actions are tied to practical results, thus linking children in this age group together
Ages 9-15 Able to understand other people's perspectives	May form close friendships and share intimate thoughts and feelings, although possessiveness and jealousy often occur	Distinguish between certain friends and the group. Groups form based on shared interests and beliefs, and the children expect to agree on everything. Differences in opinion are rare	Joint agreements and team spirit are popular Leadership is defined by personal qualities. The one who takes the lead becomes the leader
Age 12 to adulthood Able to judge what is good for society after the age of twelve. Take legal and moral perspectives into consideration	Become independent Relationships are flexible and change often	Individual differences and opinions are recognised, but able to unite for a common goal Child-led organisations really thrive during this stage	Understand that a leader's role is more than just a matter of taking leadership Understand good and bad leadership; may question their leaders

8. Shaping child-led organisations

An opportunity to practice true democracy

The best opportunities for democratic experiences for children come from continued involvement in a group, writes Roger A. Hart in his book *Children's Participation: The Theory and Practice of Involving Young Citizens in Community Development and Environmental Care* published by UNICEF and Earthscan. This has proven to be true in the *Child-led Organisation and Advocacy on Child Labour* project.

When children attend the same group regularly, adult facilitators can help establish clear processes, roles, and rules. This enables children to develop their ways of understanding democratic principles and participation from their own perspective.

Like adults, children prioritise their time. The main focus of child labourers will always be on their working conditions and income. Therefore, child-led activities aimed at improving these issues will automatically attract child labourers. And when child-led activities make sense to the members they may begin solving their own problems. As they become more powerful than they ever imagined, they often continue on to help others.

Tip: From the very beginning think about how you are going to continue the child-led organisation

- *If children are familiar with the power they have, and if they get used to being listened to, they will expect their adult partner organisation and facilitator to continue the process. They will even expect something to happen as a result.*

- *Never give promises you cannot keep. If you break promises, you shatter expectations and disappoint and hurt children who may lose their trust in others as a consequence. Be very clear about your own and your projects' abilities and limitations, and repeat what you say if you sense that the children have forgotten what you have told them before.*

- *If for some reason you cannot continue supporting a child-led organisation, you must immediately inform every member and other stakeholders once you know this is the case. This leaves everybody time to plan differently and prepare mentally. Waiting till the last moment is unethical and unfair.*

Different organisations, different aims

Child-led activities may pop up for any reason and in any shape imaginable. Some children join forces and initiate their own child-led organisation because they share a hobby. Other children meet informally to play. One group of Bangladeshi boys saved their meagre income, bought a football and met every afternoon to play. Such informal groups may change from day to day and eventually die out when the children turn to new interests, or they run out of spare time.

Other child-led organisations are initiated and shaped by adults, but if the reasons and activities make sense to the children, and if the adults are truly participation-minded, the children may gradually take over responsibility. Thus, an adult initiated organisation can in time become child-led, and the structures may change all together.

Some child-led organisations are open to a certain group of children only, e.g. child labourers, while others are open to everyone. This may cause problems depending on how it is handled. There are examples of school-going children domineering non-school-going children, and non-school-going children who stay away because they feel ashamed and inferior.

But there are also examples of child-led organisations with members with different backgrounds that work very well for a common purpose – where the children say that the child-led organisation actually provides them with their first and only chance to meet children outside their own environment. These children feel extremely empowered by being together for a common cause.

Tip: Play is a part of a child's development

Through play children learn how to get along, and how to solve conflicts. Play often models adult behaviour - through play children learn how to act like an adult. Play also stimulates a child's imagination, strengthens the muscles and helps the body and senses develop.

However, many child labourers rarely have time to play. Even if they do have some spare time, poor parents tend to think that play is a waste of time. Many child labourers therefore advocate their right to recreation and play alongside their claims for better working conditions.

Education for child labourers

An overall problem for child labourers is education. While some child-led organisations in Bangladesh have chosen to establish their own night schools in the villages, morning schools in the staircase of a market or weekend schools in their children's spaces, others have managed to convince the local school and community that they need special classes for child labourers.

Sometimes the children push their adult facilitator into becoming a teacher. Some children teach each other. Some children manage to get affluent people pay a teacher's salary.

Re-cycled schoolbooks are sometimes donated by older children or the local school, and some children save up to buy notebooks and pens.

A group of children established a night school in an open space in the village. They saved part of their income to buy kerosene, since there was no electricity in the village.

Some child-led organisations also manage to get children into the formal school-system free of charge.

Children in disaster prone areas

While children traditionally rely on adults when nature strikes in the shape of floods, cyclones and other disasters, some children in Bangladesh are now the main actors in the distribution of relief.

Listing the most affected persons and essential needs are easy for adolescents living in an area hit by disaster. They know exactly who is in real distress, their eating habits, and the crops, the normal sources of income, the losses and the availability of certain goods in their own

area. This is why they can easily identify the neediest families, select and pack the relief items and distribute them.

That was the philosophy behind involving child-led organisations in relief work in several areas of Bangladesh during the floods in 2007. Adults were mainly involved as buffers between the children and some villagers who wanted extra relief.

The children say that being involved in the relief work was a great experience that helped them enhance their leadership skills and gain more respect in the local community.

Ensuring democracy

There is no universally accepted definition of "democracy," but all definitions include two basic principles: All members of a society have equal access to power, and all members enjoy universally recognised freedoms and liberties.

A child-led organisation is a kind of mini-society and should be shaped on the principles of freedom and liberty for all.

No one is born a democrat. Like most other skills, you have to learn democracy to become a real democrat. Therefore, you should consider the following when establishing your organisation:

- The children should understand the objectives of the child-led organisation, and they should volunteer on the basis of this understanding.
- The organisational structure and power relations should be clear to everyone from the beginning.
- Rules should be established through dialogue.
- Every child must have equal opportunity to participate, if they wish, in all phases of a project.
- Each child should know the history, scope of the child-led organisation and where the organisation currently is in the process.

Most child-led organisations do not have a project document, but a common purpose, values, plans and activities may be worked out in easy-going, fun ways with the help of the *Toolbox* and chapter 13 on advocacy.

Team building is also important. Children fairly quickly have to experience the value of being united if they are to maintain interest in spending valuable time in a child-led organisation.

Tip: Always keep in mind the "what's in it for me?"effect

The feeling of benefitting, belongingness and ownership is very important.

The children have to feel that they are there for each other, that they work for the same issue, that the issue is important for each member and that, in time, the organisation will benefit from what they are doing.

Benefits should not only to be measured in terms of better salaries and improved working conditions; many children mention courage, confidence, increased respect in the local community and very close friendships as the most important outcomes of their child-led organisations.

How to handle possessions

Some child-led organisations get funding for e.g. computers and cameras from their adult partner organisation. While the equipment rightfully belongs to the children, there are examples of adults taking charge of the equipment. Either because they want to use it themselves, which is definitely unacceptable, or because the children have problems administering it.

It is always a fine balance – do you trust the children to be good caretakers of costly equipment?

Always discuss how to deal with shared possessions before they are acquired. This saves the children and the adult facilitators from numerous hassles later on.

The sad fact is that costly and attractive possessions may easily outshine democracy.

A minimum of rules

A minimum of rules help child-led organisations survive.

How are decisions to be taken? By majority vote, or by the leaders of the child-led organisations? And who elects or selects the leaders?

Democratic structures are crucial to any organisation. Some child-led organisations appoint their own leaders, management committees, members' forum and working groups in charge of different activities, while other child-led organisations stick to a shared leadership and collective action. It all depends on what makes sense to the children involved, how big the child-led organisation is and the issues it works for.

Often, the children have to experiment with different solutions, and in time they may even want to refashion the structure, since children grow up, the world around them changes and so does a child-led organisation.

Children also have to decide what action is to be taken when crucial issues or problems arise. Many child-led organisations experience problems if they have not decided what will happen to members who turn eighteen years of age. Other child-led organisations have difficulties integrating new members because old members cling to power.

Access to funding and the use of money are other issues that trigger frustrations.

Even if the children manage to keep their child-led organisation together despite disagreements, infighting is very emotional and it takes a long time to heal hurt feelings and get rid of distrust.

The initial stages

Children working with advocacy generally need adult facilitators to help them develop ideas, plan, create access to other adults and move on when trouble arises. Adult facilitators do not necessarily have to participate in every activity all the time, but in the beginning they probably have to coach the children into acting independently.

Facilitating children is a time consuming task, and there is a limit to how many children and child-led organisations one facilitator can facilitate at a time. Experienced facilitators say that you should draw the line at fifty children.

Groups of more than 12 to 16 people leave hardly any room for everyone to participate. The ideal size is four to eight if each child is to feel involved. When large groups participate at a meeting, it should be brief in order for everyone to feel involved, and major activities ought to be split up and carried out in many smaller groups depending on the children's interests and capacities.

Tip: Select adult facilitators from the local community

Finding educated and experienced facilitators in the local community may be difficult. However, lack of experience is generally surmounted by the acceptance they automatically have in the local community, and the other way round – the ownership and responsibility they feel for creating development in their own community will far outweigh any strangers' involvement, especially in the beginning.

Even if the adult partner organisation or the concept of child-led organisations is new to the community, there will be an automatic acceptance since people already know the facilitator and feel that the adult partner organisation is helping to create jobs in the community.

Another positive factor is that a local facilitator is familiar with the problems and the local context as well as the strengths and weaknesses. In addition, he or she already has a relationship with many people and the children – and may even be there for them beyond the completion of a project.

Last but not least, a local facilitator understands the local language, dialect and jargon.

Involving parents and communities

Parents are the most important people in children's lives, and the community in which the children live plays a major role, too. Early involvement of parents and the local community helps iron out possible problems and resistance; it helps the children achieve what they advocate for, and it makes it easier for the children to sustain the achievements.

There are many ways of involving parents and the local communities. Some children in Bangladesh have helped their parents form parents' committees, where the parents fight alongside the children for better working conditions for everyone in the community. Other children have supported their managers in forming managers' committees, where managers and children join forces to try to approach the company owners for better wages for every employee.

Many children use Theatre for Development and drama in various ways to make people aware of their situations in an entertaining way. This tool is very effective, especially when a child-led organisation is very new and not yet known to the community.

Tip: Involve the local community from the very beginning

Local leaders, the community and parents are essential. If the local community is not involved from the beginning, the children risk:

1. *Being met with suspicion*
2. *Having to fight significantly harder to get employers and the local government to act*
3. *Feeling very alone against a lot of adults*
4. *Having difficulties in maintaining their achievements in the long run*

Child-led but under adult administration

Rules and laws regarding organisations vary from country to country. In Bangladesh no one under the age of eighteen is allowed to register an organisation, open a bank account or receive funding from abroad. Therefore, most Bangladeshi child-led organisations depend on adult organisations.

While the dependency may be a blessing if the child-led organisation receives the adult support they require, it also involves large amounts of paper work and adult rules to follow. Adult administrative procedures may be cumbersome and not at all child-friendly if they are not adapted to suit child-led organisations.

Sustainability

Research based on twenty-nine organisations in Great Britain shows that children's participation is most likely to succeed when organisations work to sustain and embed their participation activities into other programmes, according to the book *Building a Culture of Participation*, researched and written by the British National Children's Bureau and PK Research Consultancy.

Child-led organisations generally should be linked to, or work as, an integrated part of other projects or programmes so that the children are sure to receive sustained support. Experience shows that child-led organisations created as part of time-limited projects suffer heavy withdrawal symptoms and risk falling apart when the children lose their adult facilitators and access to knowledge, support and funding.

Working in areas with existing projects also makes it a whole lot easier to produce lasting results in a shorter time. You do not have to overcome obstacles like distrust, rumours and people working against you. Then, if your organisation remains in the area way beyond the advocacy activities, it puts a certain pressure on employers, local leaders and others to keep their promises.

Fighting for survival

In 2003 a group of children decided to establish their own child-led organisation when their adult partner organisation ran out of funding and stopped supporting a large number of children.

"When we joined the adult organisation, we were deprived of everything. When our adult organisation shut down we even lost their support. But we were always committed to working for child rights, so we decided to start our own child-led organisation," explains one boy.

In 2006 team members of Save the Children Sweden-Denmark's project *Child-led Organisation and Advocacy on Child Labour* found that the children were struggling to keep their child-led organisation alive. The members were somewhat reluctant to make ties with an adult organisation again, still hurt by the loss of support from their old adult partner organisation. On the other hand, the child-led organisation experienced heavy in-fighting and a severe lack of funding, which meant that their main activity, a small school, was falling apart.

The *Child-led Organisation and Advocacy on Child Labour* project initiated discussions with the children, who were given access to space in an office run by other child-led organisations, some level of adult support to solve current problems as well as a token amount of money to help the children get their school back on track.

In the meantime, the children have opened yet another school, and some children are involved in theatre. A member has participated in a web design course and others are active in a youth trainer team established by the *Child-led Organisation and Advocacy on Child Labour* project that teaches facilitation, rights etc. to child-led organisations under the project.

Two children have the overall responsibility for the schools and two other children are responsible for theatre, while another group of children is designated as facilitators. The children in charge normally make decisions about everyday issues.

Because some of the founders are turning eighteen, the children have agreed that anyone over the age of eighteen automatically becomes an advisor to the organisation, their main responsibility being to assist the younger members in running the organisation and to pass on their knowledge.

Still, the child-led organisation is struggling. While the organisation has managed to attract new and younger children, some of the almost adult members are reluctant to leave behind their organisation. For many children, the child-led organisation has been a focal point for years, a place for venting frustrations about injustices, as one boy explained.

According to other members the reluctance to leave concerns money. One international organisation has hired these older children to do theatre performances for cash payment, and some members suspect that it has been too easy for the older children to pocket part of the amount that rightfully belongs to the child-led organisation. The other children also complain that, in reality, a small group of children takes charge of all the responsibilities and then withholds information from the other members.

Lessons learned:

- *Proper adult facilitation probably could have prevented this sort of problem from occurring.*
- *Access to money is tricky and has to be administered carefully by adult organisations.*

9. Overcoming obstacles

Adult hesitation

Children's participation and child-led advocacy are two concepts that are often met with suspicion, reluctance and lack of understanding. Both are academic stock phrases without simple or specific definitions. What do they mean? How are they practiced?

Much theory has been written about children's participation and advocacy. Almost nothing is to be found on child-led advocacy. The lack of practical to-do ideas, tools and perceptions led to Save the Children Sweden-Denmark's project Child-Led Organisations and Advocacy on Child Labour and this handbook. This chapter spells out some of the many hurdles that facilitators and children have to overcome if they want to claim their rights.

One of the main obstacles to conquer when establishing child-led organisations has proven to be adults' lack of belief in children's capacities. Many adults, although unwilling to admit it, do not really believe deep inside that children and adolescents are capable of uniting and carrying out advocacy. And even if they do believe they are capable, they may be reluctant to let go of their power. This probably applies to almost all cultures, and more so in exceedingly hierarchical, patriarchal societies where children normally reside at the bottom of the power structure.

Some child-led organisations take a long time to get into the real issues because they do not get proper adult support. Adults have their own experiences and their own favourite topics, and although they might claim differently, the majority of them feel most confident about those alone. A former drama instructor will naturally feel most inclined to use drama, while a journalist will stick to communication. Having a point of entry is not bad, but a good facilitator does not skip a beat when "his or her" children suggest other tools. If a child-led organisation is really child-led, the children can do what they like most. It is also the children who define the problems, even if the adults disagree.

Still, children's participation does not mean supplanting adults. Rather it means that adults need to learn to listen, support and suggest.

The moment the adults understand the core of child participation, success is just a few steps down the road. When children find that the activities are relevant, and they have attained their first minor achievement, there is no end to what they may achieve.

Do you understand and remember?

There are lots of reports and guidelines for almost everything in adult organisations, but do you read them? And if you read them, do you understand what you read? Sometimes the answer to both questions is no. How, then, can you expect a child to understand? Some course material even seems like pure gobbledygook if you do not have an advanced university degree.

Documentation helps you, your colleagues and child-led organisation members keep track of past events. Documentation also makes it possible for you to check whether you achieve what you want by comparing old documentation with new documentation. And it prevents you from repeating mistakes.

It also makes it tremendously easier to share your knowledge with others so that they may get inspiration from you.

Translating information and knowledge into a language readable by adults and children without an academic background is thus extremely important, especially if the children are to take the knowledge forward and act on it on their own.

Also consider developing new documents in a child-friendly language from the beginning. This makes them a lot easier to read and understand for everyone – also for adult facilitators, parents and community leaders.

Children in some child-led organisations have developed their own child-friendly formats based on drawings, tables and key words.

Forget competition - share your knowledge

Instead of inventing new ideas and ways of doing things you can learn from like-minded organisations – adult as well as child-led.

Ask, get inspiration and alter the knowledge gained to fit your local context.

At the same time, be helpful to others. Child-led initiatives are not a competitive matter. We all work for the best interest of the children.

9.04

Parental reluctance

In very closely knit societies everything new is regarded with suspicion. Rumours may travel that your organisation is involved in trafficking children. Or that you want to change the children's religion. Or that you want to stop the children from working. Or that you waste the children's time.

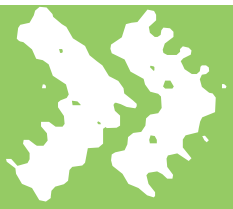
Recruiting adult facilitators from the local community may build some level of trust, but still the children have to overcome their parents' sense of time lost. Here, other children and the adult facilitator play a major role. Door-to-door home visits are often necessary in the initial phase, followed by parent meetings. A general involvement of parents and community representatives will work wonders.

Some parents in Bangladesh do not like it when girls and boys cooperate. In the beginning in very conservative areas it may be necessary to let girls and boys meet separately in order for the girls to be allowed to participate. Invite the parents to the child-led organisation so they can experience first-hand that nothing immoral happens, and encourage the children to share all their experiences with the child-led organisation with their parents.

Parents will gradually understand that the time the children spend in the child-led organisation is not wasted. Rather, it keeps the children away from the streets and thereby from the risks of getting involved in trafficking, gambling, drugs and crime. This is an argument that can be applied to reluctant parents.

Bangladeshis are so accustomed to organisations bringing in direct services in the form of schools, clinics and micro credit that many parents expect similar and immediate results. Consequently, this is what their expectations are like when any new organisation or projects turn up in their area.

The reluctance and demand for direct services will not totally cease until the child-led organisation starts producing results.



Obstacles to participation

There are many obstacles that block genuine participation:

- All the 'isms' – racism, sexism, ageism, paternalism – may silence people.
- Participation requires plentiful resources in terms of time, energy and commitment from power holders and community members who are rarely paid for their contributions.
- Participation requires patience and communication skills: active listening, empathy and understanding on all sides.

- Community leaders often refuse to share power, and some community members only reluctantly take on responsibilities.
- Human beings are creatures of habit. We like things to be the way they have always been, even if they are not good. The general thinking goes like this: "You know what you've got, but you don't know what you're going to get."
- Children may refuse to participate if they feel unsafe. For example, if the children know that an adult belongs to a group that is known to punish children, e.g. a school teacher or a policeman, the children may not be able to let go of their fear.

Involving very young children

One's capacity to truly participate depends on the basic ability to see things from another person's perspective. In a very limited way children can do this by the age of three, but the process of being able to see another person's perspective while maintaining one's own view continues to develop throughout adolescence, writes Roger A. Hart in his essay *Children's Participation: From Tokenism to Citizenship*.

You do not have to leave very young children out of your child-led activities, but you should be aware that their ability to understand and participate in advocacy is very limited. Chapter 7 provides more information on children's ages and capacities.

Time, time, time

Creating a child-led organisation, making space for proper participation and carrying out child-led advocacy requires large quantities of time. Children may feel a need to change their working environments, and they may want to do so right away.

Adult partner organisations may also push for instant results. But advocacy is a long process, and the reality is that child labourers are busy and may spend only a few hours a week doing advocacy, while employers, local leaders and others may have to be worked on for months if they are to change their behaviour.

Being a copycat is not the solution

Believing that projects, tools and achievements can simply be copied from one child-led organisation to another is a misperception. Children and their problems differ from place to place; their jobs are not the same, their ways of living vary, and expectations from family and community are not the same in Bangladesh as they are in Brazil.

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But if you listen carefully to others' experiences and methods you may be able to pick out parts of them and mould them into your own context.

Employers' distrust

Advocacy on child labour has become complicated because some adult and international organisations and trade unions previously have advocated a full ban on child labour. This has created a heavy sense of distrust among employers, especially in the formal sector, which has shut its doors to outsiders.

Only by continuing the contact in an inoffensive way can trust be built and the way paved for discussions that also take the employers' viewpoints into consideration.

Tip: Advocacy takes time, repetition and patience

You cannot jump to the top of a tree. You have to climb branch by branch.

Overcoming obstacles to participation

- Invest large amounts of time to build and maintain empathy, rapport and connectedness with the community, and over a period of time, trust.

- Community meetings have to be prepared well and in advance, and all relevant people have to be invited. When children are involved, it is important to have supportive peers present. Otherwise, the children may feel like the adults are "ganging up" up on them.

- Personal relationships based on respect, transparency and active listening take time to build, but they are worth having since they are essential when it comes to breaking down obstacles to participation.

Tip: Remember that a livelihood is more important than childhood to child labourers

If your child-led organisation activities are not relevant to the members, they will cease to come.

Finding your way out of hazardous jobs

Maybe members of your child-led organisation find that whatever they do, they cannot solve their problems. Their jobs are simply too dangerous, and they have to find another occupation. But there is no other work available in your area, and they cannot figure out who to ask for help.

What do you do then?

Sometimes there is employment that no one has ever thought of before, but you have to get the idea first. Being in a child-led organisation and doing things together is a whole lot easier.

1. Look around your local area. What do people use? Bicycles, trolleys, bamboo walls, tractors?
2. What do people do when these things fall apart?
3. Or what do they grow or raise? Cows, papaya, rice?
4. Where do they go to sell their goods?
5. Maybe you find that people have to walk or pay for expensive transportation to the nearest city to have their bicycles repaired, or to sell their papaya.
6. Could your child-led organisation help them somehow? Could you save enough money for a small bicycle repair kit – rubber, pump, a screwdriver – and repair bicycles on the roadside? Or could you establish a local market for local goods? Have a brainstorming session in your child-led organisation.
7. Speak to others who have established their own businesses to learn about their problems so that you do not have to make the same mistakes.
8. Make a list of the minimum requirements for starting a business together and brainstorm about ideas on how to afford the necessary equipment. Remember that small is beautiful.
9. Make a list of adults who might support you and who you might ask for advice.
10. Do a trial run, and based on that, develop your business further.

Tip: You can use the same tools to analyse your problems and solutions as you do in the advocacy process, including the step-by-step analysis in chapter 10

10. It's all about child-led advocacy

"There's no use trying," said Alice. "One can't believe impossible things."
"I dare say you haven't had much practice," said the Queen. "When I was your age, I always did it for half an hour a day. Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast."

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass by Lewis Carroll.

Why advocacy?

After decades of delivering non-formal education, skills training and micro credits, development organisations have started searching for new ways to improve living conditions in Bangladesh. There is a growing recognition that structural and political problems cannot be solved by "projects" only, since they are expensive, reach few children and may have limited sustainability.

While non-formal education, skills training and micro credits are still an important part of Save the Children Sweden-Denmark and other organisations' strategies for improving living conditions, advocacy helps change policies and practice.

Often, development stalls because not only the children, but also their parents, grandparents and great-grandparents have grown up in illiteracy, have had a subsequent lack of access to information and have been bound by traditions and beliefs. This is why increased knowledge is essential if the vicious circle of ignorance and inhuman practices is to be broken.

The children who suffer from the effects of poverty and exclusion must be at the heart of any activities aimed at changing children's living conditions. Children and young people are still in the process of shaping their lives, and through advocacy they can learn, raise their voices and bring about positive changes for themselves and their communities.

Advocacy is used for a range of activities spanning from policy work to practical changes in everyday life. Child-led advocacy also leads to recognition and respect for the opinions of children and youth, and the knowledge, self-confidence and sense of respect the children obtain will remain with them no matter what else happens.

Definition of advocacy

There is no generally agreed definition of advocacy. Different organisations use different definitions based on their organisational goals and identity.

Save the Children Denmark defines advocacy as "a set of strategically planned activities directed at producing concrete changes in the policies, practices or structures affecting children by targeting duty bearers at different levels."

Save the Children Denmark's objective is to "create lasting structural changes on local, national and global levels to the benefit of children and the fulfilment of their rights according to the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*."

What is advocacy?

Advocacy is a constructive action that brings realistic alternatives to the present situation.

Advocacy is not about being against something, but rather about wanting something better.

Advocacy is about influencing duty bearers and holding them accountable.

Advocacy is a process. It is never a single event, but rather a series of linked events – a long term procedure with concrete goals in the short term and broader goals in the long term.

Advocacy is not just something you stick on to another activity, and it is rarely the ultimate solution to a problem.

Advocacy is a way to reach a goal and permanently change your target groups':

- knowledge and awareness
- attitudes and behaviour
- ways of doing things

Advocacy is also about involving those who have the power to solve the problem. You cannot force or manipulate people to solve the problem, because then the solution will not last.

The most effective advocacy is integrated into wider projects or programmes and builds on experiences from these. For example: Save the Children Sweden-Denmark in Bangladesh and its partner organisations have experimented throughout the years and subsequently developed new models for schooling. Child labourers now participate in relevant education and skills training carried out by the partner organisations and supported by Save the Children Sweden-Denmark. At national level the organisations advocate for relevant education and better working conditions for all child labourers as well as the elimination of hazardous child labour. The advocacy effort based on these experiences has led the government to formulate the country's first Child Labour Eradication Policy.

What can children advocate for?

Opportunities for child-led advocacy are greatest in areas considered as children's domains. This is also where there is the least risk of having conflicting views with other stakeholders. Playgrounds and schools are examples of children's domains. In Bangladesh, where child labour is widespread, children have also proven to be able to influence their working conditions. Children have achieved better salaries, less abuse and a safer working environment thanks to their own advocacy.

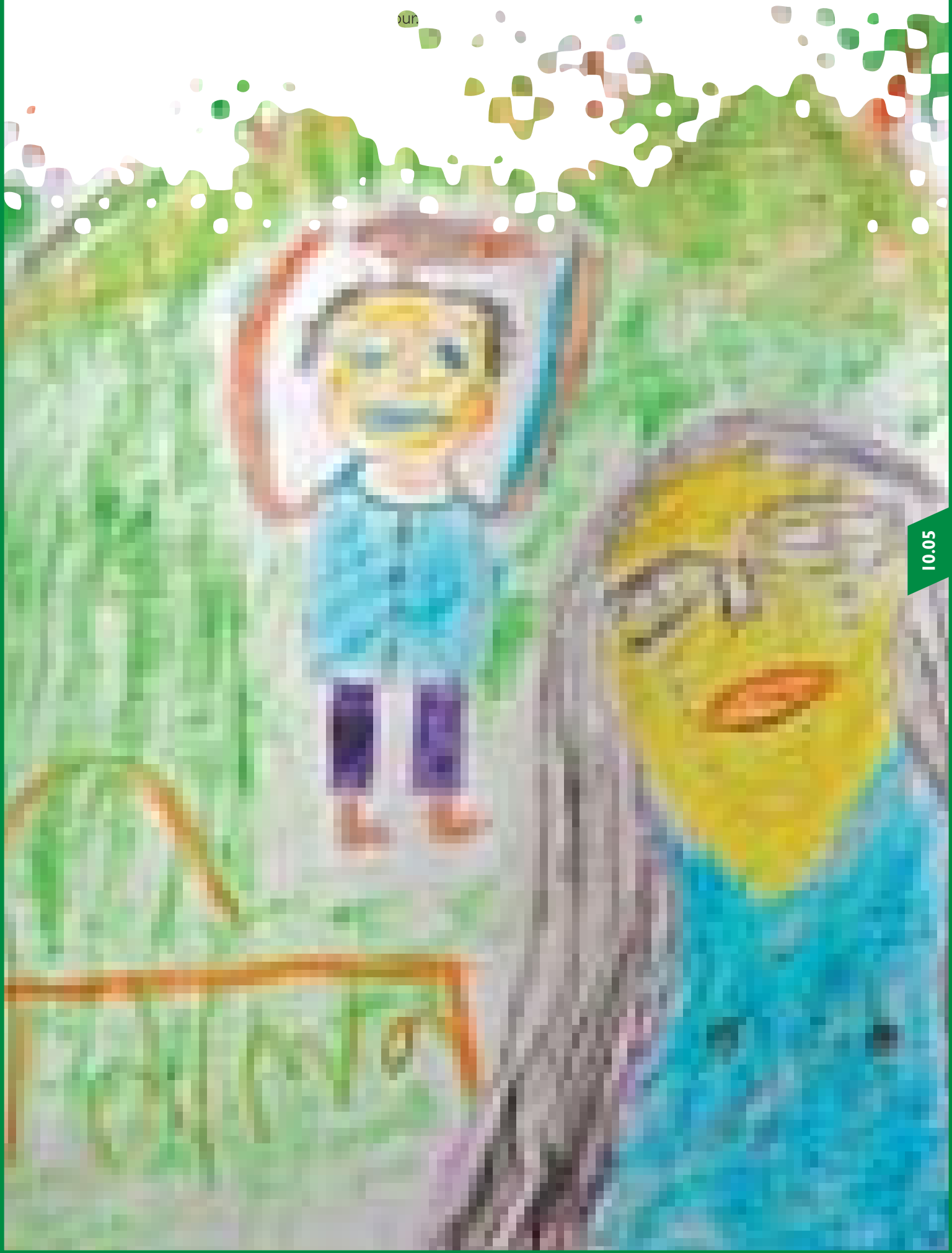
Children may be involved in all sorts of advocacy activities, but of course you have to take their age and maturity into consideration. A nine-year-old girl does not have the same overview, knowledge and understanding as a thirteen-year-old girl does. Since advocacy requires some analytical skills, a certain level of insight and a lot of action and serious talking, it is generally more appropriate for adolescents than for young children.

Some people think that child labourers are too uneducated to understand and run their own advocacy projects. The reality is that child labourers are so used to surviving that when they get a chance to improve their lives, they do so immediately. Experiences from child-led organisations in various parts of Bangladesh show that the moment a group of children gets a relevant idea, they take on the responsibility without hesitation, work hard, achieve their goals and return to find new issues to fight for, or to continue their own lives cherishing the improvements they have achieved.

Who do you target?

Duty bearers are the target of advocacy. Duty bearers represent institutionalised power and have the authority to make changes. The state is the primary duty bearer, but many other groups in society are also duty bearers. They are found at different levels, globally and locally, in formal and informal institutions.

Advocacy normally does not target individuals since the goal is institutional improvements for children. However, individuals can play a positive role in facilitating change. Parents, for example almost always have to be targeted when their children do advocacy on child labour, and individual employers may be approached and persuaded to stop certain practices during a campaign to stop hazardous child labour.



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Governmental and administrative institutions will normally be the target of advocacy concerning policies and laws, whereas advocacy targeted at changing practices which are harmful to children, e.g. hazardous child labour, will often be directed at local leaders and associations.

Target groups include both opponents and supporters. It is important to include both groups in order to build support, provide a route of influence, and to avoid resistance.

If you work at all levels in your own country, you may be heard at the international level, but this requires strong cooperation, good networks, coordination, lots of time and will power.

One definition of a duty bearer

The growing international legal system sets the context for a rights-based approach to development by placing human rights laws at the center of development practice. Under this system, the population or "rights holders" have the right to demand from the "duty-bearer", which is often the state, that it meets its obligations under international law to respect, protect and fulfill people's rights. The duty bearer can also be a private entity such as a corporation, a family, or a local government.

www.unfpa.org

Examples of local target groups

Community leaders

Communities may be large, small, homogenous, or consist of many different types of people. This has to be taken into consideration when you work with community leaders.

Remember to invite community leaders from different parts of the community in order to ensure support from all of them. This prevents people from having the feeling of being left out in the cold and either not supporting you or reacting by working against you.

Generally, community leaders play a major role in Bangladeshi communities, be it elected leaders or more informally recognised spokespersons for different groups.

Court system

Most countries have a court system at local, district and national levels. If you need to use the court system for achieving justice in connection with your problem, you should be aware that different parts of the court system may play different roles.

Using the court system is often a lengthy process; it is costly, and generally you need a lawyer, who must also be paid.

Some organisations offer free legal advice.

Doctors

Many child labourers have no easy access to health facilities, which are either overburdened or costly. If your advocacy issue is health-related, e.g. in the case of work related accidents or diseases, you may find a clinic, hospital or general practitioner to access for services.

Doctors may also be perceived as influential and respected persons in their community, since they are well educated and often earn a good income. Sometimes they may be good supporters of your case.

Employers

If you work in a large company or factory you are likely to meet only the manager or the middleman in your local area, while the owner of the company lives in a bigger city or abroad. Sometimes, the manager or middleman may take decisions, but most often you need to target the owner. This is where you need assistance from adult organisations or national and international networks.

If you work in a small establishment, you often work directly with your employer. It may be difficult to target him directly as he may let his frustrations out on you, and you may risk losing your job. But if your child-led organisation lobbies the local employers' association, he may be less aggressive since he understands that your advocacy is not about him only.

By addressing the association you also avoid running from door to door, and if some employers feel friendly toward you, they will put pressure on the others so they will automatically be nice to you, too.

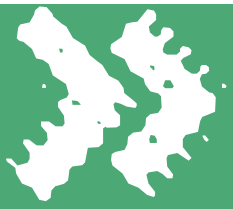
Local councils

In some countries, villagers establish their own council to solve immediate problems in the local community. Bangladeshi villages have what is called a Shalish, where elders call for meetings when a problem occurs.

While adult stakeholders most often are invited to the Shalish, children generally are left out, even if the problem regards them. Depending on what type of problem the children are trying to solve, gaining access to relevant Shalishs may be a good idea.

Local governments
Many countries have local-level authorities. Be it elected bodies or government departments representing the national government, they generally are close to the people and easier to access than a ministry or the parliament in the capital city.

While elected members of local governments are the official decision makers, government officers may also be of help. For example, a group of children working in agriculture convinced the agricultural officer at the local department of agriculture that they should participate in training sessions on modern agricultural techniques.



Working with the local government in Bangladesh

In Bangladesh the Union Parishad is the oldest existing local government institution. Established in 1870, its members are accountable to their immediate constituency since they need people's support if they are to become re-elected. Generally well informed about the local situation, the Union Parishad offices are located in the exact area where the members are elected.

Although children do not have voting power, they make up half of Bangladesh's population and they will eventually become voters. However, since they are not yet direct voters, they often need adults to help them create access to the Union Parishad's elected members. The children's facilitator, especially if he or she belongs to the local community, as well as parents, a teacher, an employer or others possessing voting power, can create the access.

One weakness involved in working with elected members is that they change after elections, and there is no guarantee that the successor will be friendly toward you or concerned about your problems. As a result, it is essential that you try to convince your local government friends to include any agreements in official documents to prevent them from being too easily changed.

To illustrate, take trade licenses issued by the local government. If you want the employers in your area to maintain agreed upon rules and regulations for child labourers – so-called codes of conduct – try to convince the local government to establish a rule that trade licenses will only be issued to employers who maintain a code of conduct for child labourers.

Market associations

Many markets have associations where the shop owners jointly maintain their markets, solve problems and develop new market strategies.

For children working as coolies or hawkers the market associations are important partners.

Media and journalists

The media and journalists are essential if you want to convince somebody to do something for you. When a problem is exposed in the media, most people feel under pressure to do something.

At the same time, people love to see themselves being described as "doing good." For example, elected members of a local government will do anything to come across as a hero in the local media because it increases the likelihood that voters may vote for them again.

You should, however, not abuse the media. Only contact them if you have a highly relevant, interesting message, and do not over do it. Otherwise they may lose interest and get irritated instead of excited.

What is a good story?

Journalists always talk about the "good story." Here, "good" rarely has to be understood literally. The good story is in fact often about a problem or something that went wrong, since news media see their own role as a watch dog.

A newspaper only has a certain number of pages, so editors have to select carefully what they find to be the most important, interesting, unique and "good stories" of the day.

Your weekly meeting may be important for your child-led organisation's members, but your discussions are mainly interesting to you, and there is nothing unique about the meeting, because it happens every week. So this is not a "good story," and there is no need to ask a journalist to cover it.

But if you arrange a Theatre for Development performance about a critical issue such as hazardous child labour and invite the mayor and other important people to speak, your local journalist will probably be happy to cover the event.

Non-governmental organisations

Relevant organisations providing an array of services may be approached for support in the advocacy phase in order, for example to put pressure on other stakeholders, or to ask for direct services for child labourers.

Beware, though, that local branches of national organisations rarely take their own decisions regarding beneficiaries. They have budgets to maintain, and they have specific target groups, and this is hard to change. You may be able, however, to get the local branch to request permission from the organisation's headquarters to assist you.

Parents

Parents are among the most important people for local level advocacy to target. First of all, parents have to give permission for their children to participate in any child-led activities. Then, parents are also the people responsible for letting their children work. Without the parents' consent, nothing changes.

Police

The police are often organised into different units dealing with different problems, e.g. an economic crime, violent crime, or terror department. Most police forces are also divided into national and local forces. Some countries even have village police units.

If your problem is related to the police, you should find out exactly which department and what level is responsible for solving your problem before you start your advocacy.

Religious institutions

In some societies religious institutions play a major role as service providers or as opinion formers. In Bangladesh, for example there are often schools affiliated with the mosques, and the religious leaders also act as community leaders.

School management committees

If, for example, you want to create cheap access to schools in Bangladesh, approach a school management committee.

Teachers

Teachers are important people as they are community members and connected to numerous people through their students. They are normally not decision makers, but they may carry your demands forward and be good supporters.

Trade unions

Although trade unions are inherently meant to support all workers, trade unions generally maintain that child labour must be abolished here and now. Therefore, your local trade union may not work with your best interests in mind.

In Bangladesh children are not allowed to be members, and in some sectors the trade union leaders ironically work as managers and middlemen who exploit children by giving them underpaid jobs.

This means that trade unions do not support you by default. Rather, you may in certain situations have to target your local trade union leaders if you are fighting for e.g. higher wages.

National and international level advocacy target groups

Involving children in political, national and international level advocacy campaigns is particularly risky. When a problem is brought up outside the local area and local employers feel national or international pressure, they are likely to feel threatened and consequently either sack the children or hide them when organisations and authorities act on what has suddenly become common knowledge.

This has to be taken into consideration before you embark on national and international level advocacy. Otherwise you risk making a bad situation for the child labourers worse.

Employers residing outside the local area

While the formal sector typically is clustered in industrial areas outside bigger cities, the actual factory owners may live in the cities or abroad. If you want to target them, you probably need help from an adult organisation or network.

International organisations

The United Nations, the World Trade Organisation, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Asian Development Bank, the European Union, and other international organisations often have branches in developing countries.

These are of course easier to target than the main offices in New York, Geneva and Brussels. Still, you would need support from some adult organisation or network to make an impression on these giants.

International corporations

Many international corporations produce, buy and sell everything from raw materials and ready-made garments to computer hardware and software and other consumer goods. Many of the raw materials and products are produced under poor conditions in developing countries, and if you want to change the working conditions, you may have to create international pressure on the relevant corporations.

To do that, you need international networks and contacts to organisations and media in the countries where the corporations reside.

You also have to consider your ability to follow-up and ensure that they actually respond.

Produced by poor children – used by rich adults

Because the production of leather requires numerous highly pollutant chemicals dangerous to one's health, most tanneries today are situated in developing countries. Making tanneries comply with European or American environmental and safety and health standards is simply too costly.

This does not mean that Europeans and Americans do not wear leather shoes, belts and jackets. Most people are not even aware of how the leather is produced or even consider that workers and child labourers in developing countries get sick in the process.

The same applies to the production of white clay. White clay is the main ingredient in white porcelain, which is often produced in Asia but used in the West.

People have no idea what the working conditions in the Bangladeshi white clay mines are like, where workers are killed by cave-ins and children toil for a pittance pedalling the clay to the boats that transport the clay away.

International trade unions

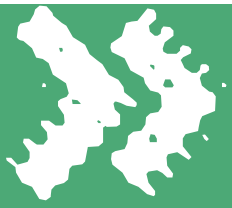
The trade unions in your country have international coalitions and associations, but you have to make sure that you target the one affiliated with your local trade union. A facilitator may help research this by making inquiries at the local trade union and searching the Internet.

National government and ministries

The national government is a target for advocacy on issues concerning laws and policies and their implementation.

Ministers are the official decision makers, while government officials only represent their ministers and have no decision-making power. In reality, government officials are the ones who do all the footwork, with the minister only being briefed at the very last stage. For example, when Bangladesh was working out its Child Labour Eradication Policy, the entire content of the policy was drafted by government officials, and the minister took over only at the final stage.

If you come in contact with positive minded government officials, they may also be inclined to present your issue to the minister.



Child rights from a child's perspective

A group of children related to different development organisations learned from their adult facilitators that the Bangladesh government signed the United Nations' *Convention on the Rights of the Child* in 1990. This endorsement means that the government has to send a report depicting the status of child rights in Bangladesh to the Child Rights Committee every five years.

The children also found out that development organisations working for children's rights are allowed to send their own alternative report to the committee. The children decided to portray the child rights situation from a child's perspective. They collected view points on education, health and protection from more than 12,000 children using consultations, questionnaires and news reports.

While adults tend to use words only, the children's report contained photos, tables with happy and sad smileys, arrows pointing up and down depending on whether a situation had improved or worsened, and drawings.

Advocacy rules of thumb

Before you start planning your own advocacy campaign, there are few rules of thumb to consider if you want to be sure to get the best possible result.

1. First of all you have to build capacity – adult facilitators as well as children have to learn how do to everything.
2. You also have to help the child-led organisations distinguish between adult interests and children's interests. Identify child-led strategies and child-friendly tools.
3. Ensure that none of the children are overburdened by the advocacy activities.
4. Select one specific issue at a time. If you include too many issues in an advocacy campaign, people get overwhelmed and confused and may decide not to help you at all.
5. Try to select very specific counterparts, like an employers association or the local department of agriculture office, to avoid having to follow-up on and contact innumerable people.
6. In general, all the involved parties have to benefit if they are to prioritise your requests and react positively to your advocacy. Market shop owners, for instance might increase their income because the children are organised and behave better; a local elected government representative increases his chances of re-election because he supports a popular issue; or parents feel their quality of life has increased because their children earn more.

By involving the employers and others at an early stage you are more likely to make them feel ownership for your campaign.

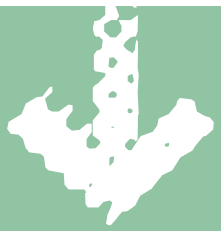
7. As children are part of their communities, early involvement of the community increases the likelihood of achievement, a common community vision and sustainability.
8. If the advocacy is aimed at gaining knowledge as opposed to financial or social values, it is more likely to last beyond the project implementation. Once you have knowledge, no one can take it away from you. A locally elected government official, however may not be re-elected, and the employers' association may run away from their promises the moment you turn your back.
9. While advocacy is likely to mean quick achievement in the informal labour market, it takes longer to penetrate the formal labour market. However, it has also proven to be one of few ways to enter, e.g. the tanneries and steel factories in Bangladesh.
10. Agreements made through advocacy are more sustainable if they are incorporated in formal documents, e.g. trade licenses, policies and association rules. If agreements made with, for example elected leaders are verbal only, everything will have to be done all over again after elections if new leaders are elected.
11. Combine different tools. The more often a message is repeated in different ways, e.g. via drawings, drama and photos, the more likely it is that people will understand, remember and react.

What to advocate for?

Many children like their work life to be governed by set, fair rules for behaviour, which is why they fight for so-called codes of conduct in small workshops, garages, markets and eateries.

The rules that different groups of children have demanded in various situations are e.g.:

- No bad behaviour
- No harassment
- Job security despite illness
- Holidays and weekends off
- Proper payment – on time
- Gradual and automatic wage increases
- Proper food – on time
- Reduced working hours for children
- No beating
- No scolding
- Time for education
- Support in the event of illness – primary treatment
- Access to first aid
- Breaks
- Proper instructions for work procedures
- Clean bedding and mosquito nets
- Toilet access



Stages of the advocacy process

Advocacy must be researched, planned, managed, monitored, and evaluated thoroughly if it is to have any effect. Below, the whole process is listed step by step. Each step is followed by an example.

Often, advocacy is visualised as a circle, but a circle is even too limiting and static to encompass everything, hence a step-by-step exposition has been chosen in order to provide detailed instructions and examples. The examples are only listed in brief to furnish you with a hint of what advocacy includes and what tools you may consider using.

In reality the process takes time, extended discussions and lots of consideration, especially the first time you do it. But it is also a fun and highly instructive experience that equips you with knowledge you can apply every time you want to change something in your own life.

1. Take a critical look at your workplace and discuss:

– What are the problems?
– Why are they problems?
– Also check if other children in your area have similar problems.

Use tools from the *Toolbox* to help children identify and analyse problems, their causes and their extent. Suggested tools include *consultations, drawings, body mapping* and the *problem tree.*

Example:

I work in a tannery. My legs are itchy and the skin falls off because I stand barefoot in water full of chemicals. I also cough a lot, and I saw a boy break his leg because he was in a drum that began spinning when he was fetching the hides inside. When we walk home after work, we are often picked up by the police, who think we are criminals. Thousands of children work in the 360 tanneries in the area, and they all have the same problems.

2. Make:

- A list of all your problems.
- Then select the most important one(s).
- Stick to that problem(s) throughout the process. Fighting for an overall solution is easier if the problems are related.

Use tools from the *Toolbox* to help children identify and analyse problems, their causes and their extent. Suggested tools: *ranking and scoring.*

Example:

1) Police harassment on the way home
2) Hazards like chemicals and drums
3) No letter of employment. Without a letter of employment no proof of prior work experience exists when looking for new jobs
4) Employers behave badly towards child labourers
5) No education
6) No leisure time

You decide to select the first four problems.

3. Next, find the answers to the following questions:

– Why does this problem(s) happen?
– Who or what situations create the problem(s)?
– How does the problem(s) affect the children?
– How many children are affected by the problem(s)?
– Why does the problem(s) continue unabated?

Use tools from the *Toolbox* to help children identify and analyse problems, their causes and their extent. Suggested tools include *key informant interview* and *resource map*.

Example:

1) *Police harassment happens because of the high amount of criminals that are out at night, and if you cannot prove who you are, the police have the right to stop you. Some policemen also stop you because they think they can blackmail you for money.*
2) *Many of the chemicals, like acid, are very dangerous and caustic, but people are not aware of this. Buying safety equipment is also costly for factory owners. Nobody considers how dangerous it is for children to be in a drum. Adult workers just think "I survived, so will they".*
3) *Employers like to be able to get rid of workers without fuss, pay low wages and let children work too many hours. If they issue appointment letters we can prove our right to permanent jobs, proper working conditions and wages, and employers do not like this.*
4) *Adults in Bangladesh never respect children, and employers especially like child labourers because they do not protest. They feel they can do whatever they want, and they never consider our feelings.*

4. Scrutinize:

– Who or what may help you solve the problem(s)?
– Also state why this is the best solution.

Use tools from the *Toolbox* to find people who may be able to help you.

Example:

1) *If we can prove that we have a reason to be out late, this will convince the police to let us go without trouble. An ID card signed by the local government representative will convince the police. Employers might help us pay for the production of the card because they do not want us to be prevented from working because we have been jailed by the police.*
2) *We have to protect ourselves against the chemicals. Normally they affect the front of our bodies, feet and hands, so rubber aprons, boots and gloves can keep the chemicals off our skin. Employers have to pay for this equipment, because if we are sick less often, it benefits them. A mask can protect against the dust and smells that cause coughing. And if an adult holds the drum so that it cannot spin, it is less dangerous to enter it. Or, an adult with long arms can empty the drum from the outside while another adult keeps it still. Adult workers emptied drums when they were children, so they know the dangers.*
3) *We have to talk to employers about a letter of employment, but maybe they will not listen to us as we are children. Maybe our adult facilitator can help us find out what the rules are for legal letters of employment from a local government representative, and then he can also help us, because it is actually his responsibility to ensure that the laws are maintained.*
4) *Almost all employers behave the same way, but if we get them to sit down together and we explain how we feel when they shout at us, they may consider changing their behaviour. They may also understand that if they treat us better, we will also behave better and work better. Our adult facilitator should be with us so that employers are respectful.*

5. Decide:

– Exactly what you want to change.
– And how you want the new situation to be.

Use tools from the *Toolbox* for finding solutions in order to analyse how you want your new situation to be. Suggested tools include the *objective tree* and *brainstorming*.

Example:

1) *The police might stop us on the way home, but showing an ID card means the policemen will let us go without any trouble.*
2) *No skin problems ever again, and if we cough, we should also use a mask.*
3) *Letters of employment must be obligatory from the very beginning, like adult contract labourers. Letters of employment, which we must ensure are up-to-date, must contain rules and regulations for work hours.*
4) *Define what good behaviour is with employers. After determining and agreeing upon what they have to do and what we have to do, a sign visible to everyone listing the requirements must be posted on the wall in the tanneries. Child-led organisation can pay for the signs.*

6. Check:

– If there are any barriers to solving the problem(s), e.g. overcoming obstacles such as people who, for their own benefit, finances and traditions oppose a solution to your problem.
– Solutions for how to overcome these barriers.

Use the tools from the *Toolbox* to help children identify and analyse problems and to find people who can help you analyse the barriers to achieving your aims. Suggested tools include *modelling and visualising*.

Example:

1) The police may not be happy as they cannot extort money from you anymore if we have an ID card. But if the local government is involved, the police cannot oppose the ID cards. If employers are unwilling to pay for the cards, and if the local government cannot pay either, we have to save up five taka every week for two months to pay on our own.

2) *Employers may be unwilling to pay for safety equipment, but if an adult organisation and the local government put pressure on employers, and if we continue to have meetings and tell about the benefits, like being sick less, they will help us.*
3) *Employers will oppose this as they like to keep us on a daily basis. We have to have many meetings with them to overcome this problem.*
4) *Employers may oppose this, but if we meet with them and make them understand how we feel when they shout, they will understand. And if we promise to work regularly and behave well too, they will agree, because it will also benefit them.*

7. Analyse your own organisation and its capacity:

- How much time do you have?
- Which skills do you need to solve this problem(s)?
- Do you have enough adult support?
- Do you have money, or do you have to find free ways of advocating your problem?

Use tools from the *Toolbox* to analyse your child-led organisation's capacity. Suggested tools include making *budgets* and *checking availability.*

Example:

Most of us work at least eight hours a day, so we plan and hold meetings on our weekly day off. We know that it will take some months to carry out all the ideas. But three boys and two girls are very active, and they can afford to take time off a couple of hours two days a week, so they can arrange meetings with employers during working hours. We do not know about printing ID cards and signboards, so our adult facilitator has to help us find out how and where to do it. He also has to help make a budget. We do not have any money, but we can save five taka every week till we have enough money.

8. Are there any risks entailed in doing this advocacy? If yes, how can you avoid getting into trouble?

Use tools from the *Toolbox* to help children identify and analyse problems in order to analyse the risks. Suggested tool: *SWOT analysis.*

Example:

The main risk is that the employers will get angry and sack us and then find other children to work for them instead. But if we talk to all the children in the area first and ensure that we are united, employers will not be able to find new children to work for them.

9. Decide on the message you want to give to the people who you expect to help you solve the problem. You should have only one overall message or slogan. Otherwise people get confused.

Use the brainstorming tool from the *Toolbox* to determine which message to focus on.

Example:

We have lots of ideas: "Happy workers are better workers." or "Would you treat your own child like you treat me?" or, "Be good to children – feel good about yourself." or, "I am a child. You are an adult. Who is responsible?" or, "Children for Children."
We agree to select the last message.

10. Decide which tools you will use to pass the message on to the people you expect to help you solve the problem. You should include different tools to ensure that they really understand the message.

You should also consider whether you have:

- money
- space
- transport
- food
- and everything else that your tools require

If the selected tools are beyond your means, you have to choose other tools.

Use the *advocacy tools* from the *Toolbox*.

Example:

We have one camera from the adult partner organisation, and we have learned how to take photos, so hiring someone to take photos in the tanneries is not necessary. Now we can show people what it is really like in the tanneries. One of our friends has a rickshaw van, so we can make an exhibition on wheels, which makes it possible to show our work conditions to a great deal of people in our area, and this will put pressure on the local government to help us. We need money to print the photos, though. We will ask our adult partner organisation. Otherwise, we have to save money from our own means instead of going to the cinema and eating snacks in the afternoon.

We also want to make signboards with the rules for good behaviour in the tanneries. So we need someone who can paint letters, and we need the board and the paint. One of our child-led organisation members is a good artist, and one of us knows the owner in a paint shop. He may give us some leftover paint. We might be able to find the board in a recycling shop for a very cheap price.

We also want to print posters and leaflets that we can post and distribute all over the tannery area, so that the local government and the police and our employers become aware that everybody knows about our problems. Our adult partner organisation might help us pay for the print, and we can take the photos and make the texts ourselves.

We can also develop a drama that shows what our work life is like. This will make everybody understand how we suffer.

11. Make a plan - decide when you will do what. You also have to list who will do what. Double check once more whether you and your friends actually have the time to carry out the plan.

Example:

Activity	*When*	*Who*
Regular weekly meetings: • *Develop, practice and plan drama* • *Plan meetings with employers* • *Plan meetings with local government*	*Every Friday*	*All children* *Adult facilitator*
Meetings with employers	*April, May, June, July, August*	*Polly, Susan, Peter, Masum, Siddique, Hassan* *Adult facilitator*
Meetings with local government	*June, July, August*	*Masum, Susan, Didar, Emran, Hasina* *Adult facilitator*
Take photos for exhibition, make exhibition and carry out exhibition	*January, February*	*Masud, Hannah, Farzana, Didi, Emran, Mannan* *Adult facilitator*
Perform drama	*March – every Friday at the school playground*	*All children* *Adult facilitator*
Find boards in recycling shops, get paint, paint board	*September*	*Hassan, Ali, Sumon, Shuma*

12. Now you are finally ready to carry out your advocacy campaign, and since you are well prepared, it will be easy.

    Start out by having a look at the plan you made in step 11 again and use all the tools you selected in step 10 to advocate the changes you identified in step 5.

    Remember to involve all the people you identified in steps 4 and 6.

    Always remember to stick to the message you decided upon in step 9.

13. List everything that you have done and check whether you achieved what you wanted to achieve.

    If there is something you have not achieved, find out why.

Use the check list from the *Toolbox* to see whether your advocacy works.

Example:

1) *We have ID cards, and they work, because one boy was taken by the police, who released him immediately.*
2) *We have aprons, boots and gloves in ten tanneries, but not yet masks. And the tannery owner holds the drum when we empty it, so now it does not spin any longer.*
3) *We did not get letters of employment, because many children did not want them. They want the liberty of being able to freely change jobs at any time, so we gave up on this idea.*
4) *We made a list of rules with the employers, and the signboards are hung in ten tanneries. But there are 360 tanneries. The big export tanneries are very difficult to enter, so we could not achieve anything with them yet. This may happen with the help of small tannery owners who now are friendly to us, and can more easily gain access to the big tanneries than we can. The problem is that some adult organisations have tried to take away all child labourers, so now the big tanneries refuse to let outsiders into their tanneries. And if someone finally gets inside, the tannery owners hide the child labourers.*

14. Change the ideas and the plan in keeping with what you learned from the previous process and start all over again from step one to fourteen if you did not achieve what you wanted to achieve.

Advocacy for higher wages – first example

"We work to increase wages for rolling cigarettes," explain a group of children. They would like to share what happens with you in their own words and through a cartoon they have drawn below.

1. "We had a children's meeting where we shared our problems with our adult facilitator."

2. "Then we met with our parents. Our adult facilitator was also there. He is the small figure, because he is behind us."

3. "We developed a drama about our problems, and many people came to see us perform."

4. "Then we met with the middlemen individually, and they promised to increase our salaries if their salaries got increased too."

5. "We also met with all the middlemen in the factory."

6. "We invited the local government to meet us and the middlemen in a local school. We showed them pictures from our work, and they liked it, and they promised to help us. Actually, we invited the local government representative to avoid problems with the middlemen."

7. "Then we met with the middlemen again in the trade union office, because many of the middlemen are also trade union leaders. Here, we wrote down all the problems, gained approval from the middlemen and turned the problems into demands. For example:

- If we are ill, the middlemen are not allowed to transfer our orders to other children.
- The middlemen have to behave well with us.
- The middlemen must behave properly with girls.
- We can have two days off a week only, otherwise we earn too little.
- Factory owners have to provide masks for children working in the factory.
- Payment on time.
- If factory owners increase the salary of the middlemen, they also have to increase our salaries.
- We will establish a committee to solve problems between employers, middlemen and child labourers."

8. "Then we had a children's meeting again in order to discuss how everything worked out."

9. "We also met with the middlemen in the trade union office, and they signed our demands."

The children are still fighting for higher wages. Their real aim is to get a gradual and automatic increase every year. "But we never say this directly, because then they will stop talking to us," explain the children. "Initially we demanded more money directly, and then they stopped giving us work. Only those who remained mum got work. Then we decided to act differently, although it takes a great deal of time."

Advocacy for higher wages – second example

Another group of children do advocacy for higher wages in the cigarette factories in a nearby village, but they chose another process:

1. "First we discussed the problems in our area, and then we decided to work for increased wages for producing cigarettes."
2. "We realised that we could not achieve this on our own, so we invited our parents to a meeting. The managers admitted that the wages were not good, but they also said that they could not increase the wages, and they suggested that we talk to the cigarette factory owners and the elected local government chairman."
3. "We made a list of all the important people who could help us – parents, doctors, teachers, factory owners, managers, religious leader, labour officers, local government elected members and officials – and they asked us, 'Do you know the actual minimum wage that you are supposed to earn?' We realised that we did not know."

4. "Then we invited everybody to a big meeting, and they all came, and we showed them an exhibition of photos of our work and spoke about ourselves and our problems and our demands."
5. "The labour officer informed everybody at the big meeting about what the correct minimum wage is: If you make 1,000 cigarettes in the factory, they have to pay you fourteen taka, but they only pay seven taka now. And if you roll 1,000 cigarettes at home, they have to pay you seven taka, but they only pay three taka."
6. "During that meeting the factory managers also made a commitment to speak to the factory owners about wages."
7. "After that meeting we went to the local government, which issued a letter to the factory managers. The local government officials invited the managers to a meeting where two children also were present. The government official listed the rules that should be maintained in the factories."
8. "After that we began getting ten taka for 1,000 cigarettes in the factory and five taka for rolling 1,000 cigarettes at home."
9. "Then we made a list of demands. We wanted wages paid weekly instead of monthly or bi-monthly. We also wanted a space to play and relax in the factory. We asked for a doctor to visit the factory once a month, and we demanded that children below fourteen years of age should not work in the factory. We wanted the managers to stop beating us, and they had to provide masks twice a year and supervise us if they are used. We sent this message to the factory managers and our adult partner organisation."
10. "There is still no doctor, but our wages are paid weekly so we do not have to take out loans to survive any more. One factory staff member has been fined for beating us, and we have posted our demands outside the factory. We have started cleaning the factory, because we are also responsible for making our work environment better. Because of the increase in wages we work less, but we still fight to get the minimum wage that we ought to have. We are going to go all the way, but gradually, because once when the adults had asked for immediate higher wages, the factory closed down for one month, and they never got the increase."
11. "Almost everyone in our community depends on income from the cigarette factory, so everybody benefits from our efforts. This is why people respect us a great deal now, and we have a lot of freedom to take our own decisions, also at home."

Tip: Knowledge is power

The better prepared you are, and the more information you have, the more likely it is that you will achieve what you want.

Example: A group of children invite the local government representative to a workshop to discuss child labour. But the local government representative claims that there is no child labour in Bangladesh.

If the children had collected information, they would be able to prove that even the Bangladeshi government admits that there are millions of child labourers. The children could have shown the report and supplemented it with, e.g. a photo exhibition of child labour. Then, the local government representative could never again state that child labour does not exist in Bangladesh, and he would have to take a responsibility to help solve the problem.

You must know your arguments to be able to convince others.

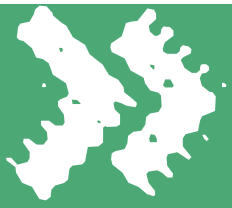
ID cards for hawkers

Many Bangladeshi child labourers sell food, toys and other small items on the pavement. While some people happily buy the cheap stuff, others get irritated and try to get rid of the children by using threats and violence. And while adult hawkers have official hawker cards issued by the government, the children cannot prove that they do honest business.

"People call us bad names, some think we are traffickers and others just do not want to pay the price. The police harass us. But we also have a right to survive, to have an income," explain the children who initiated a campaign to get ID cards.

1. "First, we met in the child-led organisation and discussed and made drawings of our problems. We found that if we had ID cards, people would know that we were not traffickers, and they would know that we have a right to sell our stuff."
2. "We are all very busy and not everyone comes to the child-led organisation regularly, and not all hawkers are child-led organisation members, so some of us went from child to child to inform everybody about the decision."
3. "Then we met in the child-led organisation again to discuss who would give the ID cards to us, and who would sign them."
4. "We also spoke to our parents."
5. "We made a list of all the hawkers."
6. "We also made a Theatre for Development performance about our work and the importance of ID cards and performed for leaders and high officials from the local government."
7. "We took photos of all the hawkers and printed the photos."
8. "We also performed our drama for the mayor, and he agreed to sign our ID cards."
9. "Then we went to the computer shop to prepare the ID cards, print the cards and paste on the photos, and then we went back to the mayor for his signature."
10. "The day we took the photos some of the children were not around, so we still have to make some cards. The ID cards really help us. Now we just show the card, and people let us do our business peacefully."

The mayor put his mobile phone number on the ID cards so people can call him if a child gets sick or faces harassment anyway. The mayor explains: "With this ID card the children can also enter parks without paying fees, and they should be able to get free treatment in the hospital."



What about child-led monitoring and evaluation?

Monitoring and evaluation are key words in organisations working with development issues.

Generally, monitoring and evaluation deal with the circumstances surrounding change and the results of a project or a programme. For example, you may compare a child's situation before, during and after the completion of a project. Or you may measure what you learned while the project was taking place.

You also have to look into the accountability of both adults and children. You want to know whether you achieved what you intended to achieve in a fair, ethically correct and efficient way. When you work with child-led organisations you want to include children in this process:

- Children should be involved in every part of a project - the project planning, strategy development, implementation and documentation. This can be done by disseminating information to the children with the assistance of child-friendly tools and methods. Many of these are to be found in the *Toolbox* part of this book and the *Stages of the advocacy process* above.

Involving children in all phases of the project ensures the quality of the project and at the same time empowers the children.

- Children may easily help clarify what changes happen in their lives thanks to your project, and they may also pinpoint any violations of their rights.

- One of the ways to understand change is by measuring the level of equality and non- discrimination, e.g. check if you have managed to integrate the most vulnerable children into your project or programme.

- Another way of understanding change is to measure whether the children's capacity has increased, e.g. how do the children participate when they are involved with a group, network or movement? If participation has to be meaningful, the children have to know what they are fighting for and how to do it.

- You should also examine if the members of your child-led organisation play an active role as citizens, and if the adults in the community are helping them. If this is not the case, you have to work harder to help the children create space for their participation.

- Rules and regulations, structures, practices and traditions influence children's lives, and so do duty bearers who are supposed to protect children's rights. An important part of monitoring and evaluations is therefore also to scrutinise whether attitudes, practice and implementation are changing in the society or in the community due to your activities.

To involve children in the decision-making process and monitoring also means that you:

- Have to ensure that the children have a say in how the monitoring process will take place.

- Ask the children about what they feel should be monitored.

- Let the children influence how the results of the advocacy are explained to others.

- Understand that monitoring is an academic term that may not be understood straight away by a child. Therefore you need to develop and use child-friendly tools. You can find some of these in the *Toolbox* later in this book and in the *Stages of the advocacy process* above.

- Remember that it may make sense to involve not only children, but also adults from the community in the monitoring and evaluation process. This includes the development of strategies, working out questionnaires and the collection of information, as well as the analysis and the dissemination of the results.

- Also include stakeholders when you write reports. A good report contains lessons learned by everyone; it makes the process transparent to children and community elders, and it forces stakeholders to live up to their promises.

- Recognise that it is an adult responsibility to provide child-led organisations with feedback. It does not matter if an activity is big or small – you still have to help the children and everybody else involved understand their roles and responsibilities, and you have to ensure that all feedback is shared by everyone involved.

Example: After the completion of a Theatre for Development performance you should discuss what worked and what did not, and how to avoid making the same mistakes next time in order to achieve the best possible result. Sometimes feedback can be given by the adults to the children or vice versa. Children can also give feedback to other children.

Feedback is the most important factor when you want to ensure quality. Feedback must be given in a positive way where you look into how you could do it even better instead of pinpointing what went wrong. Plain criticism makes most people sad and unmotivated.

When you give feedback also acknowledge whatever went well in order to encourage the children to continue their advocacy.

11. Creating networks

What is a network?

A network is an interconnected system of things or people. A network is, for example when you communicate with and within a group of people or with specific persons to achieve results of common interest.

A network may consist of two or more people who share or coordinate activities. When children unite in a child-led organisation, they have already created a small network among themselves. When one child helps another child do homework, they have created an even smaller network. But when adult organisations mention networking, they often have broader sets of connections in mind.

The question is what makes sense for children. It all depends on what you want to achieve.

Tip: A network has to benefit everybody involved, and it has to be nursed continuously

You might network with numerous people, but if you are the only one who benefits, the rest of the network will probably stop supporting you at some point. Networks have to be mutually beneficial if they are to endure.

A network is based on personal relations and a common understanding. If you do not keep in touch with your networks, they become inactive and gradually useless.

How children might use networks

Most children's problems are very local. At least at first glance, that is. Local level networks with, for example doctors, community based organisations, local government representatives, police and employers' associations may be able to create access to hospitals and vocational training centres and help improve safety and working conditions.

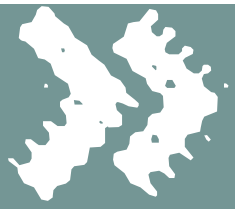
But if you want to target the root of these problems, you may have to establish networks beyond your local collaborators. If e.g. the owner of your factory lives in another city, you will never reach him via local level advocacy. And if your local vocational training centre only offers

training for its current beneficiaries, you may have to convince the decision makers at the training centre's headquarters to allow you to participate even though you do not belong to the present group of beneficiaries.

When you have created a network with employers in your own area, they may claim that there is no law or policy stating that employers must treat their child labourers in a certain way. If they are right, you may have to think about what steps to take to make your national government issue such policies or laws. Connecting with a network of adult organisations that can help you network with national level media and the government is probably necessary.

There are many token networks where children meet once or twice so that their adult organisation can claim that they support a children's network. Often, these adult partner organisations initiate the network to please their donors, but they do not set aside funding and time for continued cooperation.

While a one-go networking visit to other child-led organisations may be fun for the children and a unique chance to travel beyond their own village, this has nothing to do with networking. For children to truly be members of networks, it requires continuous funding, support, shared objectives and joint planning.



Knowledge networks

Explicit knowledge, which is easily transferred, can be stored in books, reports, videos, on computers and many other devices. But the basic source of knowledge is people.

Therefore, any network can act as an invaluable source of knowledge. By gaining tacit knowledge, which is knowledge that is not easily transferred formally, you can learn from others and become even better at what you are doing.

Tip: Child-led organisations can act as learning networks for entire communities

Access to information is limited in villages in Bangladesh, and child-led organisations may become the focal point of the community. While most villagers rarely have been to the nearest big town, child-led organisation members visit other child-led organisations, discuss with the local government, perform their dramas in the capital and are in general more exposed to life outside the village than others.

Especially when the children have managed to advocate initial improvements that benefit entire families, people start to appreciate their knowledge and negotiation skills. Suddenly the children may take on the role of experts who other people like to network with.

Tasks that require networks

A group of children in the north eastern part of Bangladesh works as coolies in the white clay mines. Some of the almost-adult children carry clay out of the mines, while thirteen to sixteen year-old boys pedal the clay out of the area on their bicycle vans.

These jobs are dangerous; weekly, someone slides down the mine walls, sometimes resulting in death. Carrying clay on a bicycle van to the river is also hard labour. The wages do not in any way reflect how demanding the work is, but there are no other job options in the area.

There are government regulations for mining, but most workers are uninformed about them, thus making it is easy for the mine owners to avoid providing proper health, safety and payment to their workers.

A group of children decided to deal with some of the problems. They discovered that this took a tremendous amount of local networking with parents, other child-led organisations, production managers, van pullers, and local leaders.

National networking is also necessary, and the children may end up having to target buyers abroad, which would require international networking with organisations and media abroad.

1. "In our child-led organisation we meet every week to discuss our problems. We also write about our problems and draw them. And we try to solve them."
2. "We have a monitoring team with twelve children who collect information about other child-led organisations in our area and their ideas."
3. "We showed our drawings to our parents and told them that we suffered, and we asked for their help."
4. "In the beginning our parents did not like our ideas, but later they admitted that they were not aware that our problems were so severe. They also did not believe that we could change anything, but when they saw how we distributed relief during the floods, they understood how much we could do together. Then, they formed a children's welfare committee, met with us again, and suggested that we meet with the production managers in the clay mines."

5. "We also joined forces with two other child-led organisations in the area, and I signed a letter to the production managers on behalf of all of us."
6. "Our adult facilitator took the letter to the head of production, and we went to everyone's houses to invite them to the meeting."
7. "Unfortunately, very few production managers came to our meeting, but we told them about our problems, and they promised to share them with others, and they did."
8. "Then we invited the production managers for a new meeting, and they all came. We asked them how they would help us, and they established a child protection committee, because they also suffer from a bad working environment."
9. "The production managers suggested that we meet with the adult van pullers. They have their own Van Pulling Association. We did, and they promised to help us, and they also created a committee."
10. "All three committees sat together, and we asked them to appoint a head to each committee, and we told them about all our problems, and we did group work on what adults believe are children's problems. At the end we had a list of 20-30 problems, and everyone agreed to help solve the problems."
11. "Each of the committees met again to ensure that they were in agreement."
12. "We also suggested that the mine supervisors and the sub-contractors form a committee, but so far they have not done so formally. These groups represent the mine owners."
13. "We also informed the adult committees that we would like to learn to read and write, and we listed one-hundred children who would like to go to school and work simultaneously. But the adults from our area had no ideas about where we could study, so we asked our facilitator instead. He promised to create a network with other organisations and schools in our area."
14. "Then we sat with the adult committee members again, and we came up with a list of central demands: A part time doctor in the mines, health support and medicine, financial compensation for families if someone is killed, daily and correct wages, working hours according to age and ability, no load heavier than 50 kg, leisure time, education, appointment letters with rules for wages and working hours, proper behaviour on the employers' part, no beating, a guard to monitor the risk of collapsing hills and a boundary for the mining area so that it does not spread further. Some of these demands came from the adults too."

15. "Most of the mine owners do not live in this area, but we and the adult committees managed to meet with a few."
16. "Then we had a long break because of the general elections in Bangladesh."
17. "Our next plan is to make the head of the local government sign a letter that we want to send to the mine owners in the capital, but we need assistance from our adult partner organisation and its networks to get this done."
18. "We are much more organised now, and we are very aware. The production managers pay respect to us. They used to use abusive language and harass us to work more. We have yet to solve the main problem as most of the mine owners live in Dhaka city, but adults will help us."

A group of Save the Children Sweden-Denmark's partner organisations working with child labour issues has joined forces in the network *Together with Working Children*. This network can help the children bring up their problems with the mine owners and at government level. If the network takes up an issue, it also has to follow up on it in the local area to ensure that employers do not sack the children instead of improving the working conditions.

The problems faced by children in the white clay mines can also be brought up on an international level since some of the clay ends up as porcelain in Europe and other places.

12. Risks and unwanted consequences

Organised, informed and self-confident children are very powerful. While this is generally what we want, the empowerment carries some risks and unwanted consequences. These consequences can fairly easily be avoided or minimised if you spend a few minutes reading the advice and suggestions below.

Paving the way for children

In some cultures children are not supposed to be heard. Even if the children work, get married and, in most other ways are endowed with adult responsibilities, they only have the authority to influence very few decisions regarding their own lives.

It may seem very provoking to some when children get involved in advocacy, because advocacy takes place in a public and politicised arena where many actors compete over power and space. Advocacy also changes community dynamics, and especially girls may be judged harshly when they start speaking out if the way is not paved for the children ahead of their advocacy.

There are examples of children who have been rejected by their own communities, or who have abandoned their own families and friends because they lost their connection to their roots. These children end up frustrated, lonely and without a clear sense of their own identity. Fortunately, this is relatively rare, yet it is vital to be prepared for adverse reactions, or even better to try to avoid them in the first place.

One rule is to invite local communities and parents on board for any activities undertaken by child-led organisations from the very beginning in order to create acceptance and understanding. The parents and their neighbours should be fully informed about the purpose of the child-led organisations and the benefits the children's activities entail for everyone in the community.

Maintaining total openness towards any kind of question also helps battle the stigmatisation of outspoken children. Let the community visit the child-led organisation and provide them with roles to play. An employer who threatens to sack his child labourers if they do not behave themselves, for example could be invited to speak at a gathering. A sceptical parent could be turned into a guest of honour in the child-led organisation. Most people soften when you pay special attention to them.

The risk of layoff

There are examples of children who have been sacked because they neglect their work in order to participate in child-led activities. Other children have lost their jobs, because the children's demands frightened their employers.

As an adult facilitator you always have to check and double check that the children's jobs and education are not hampered by child-led activities. Hold meetings outside working hours and ask parents and employers for permission if the children have to take leave.

It always helps to tread carefully. Plan thoroughly in keeping with the guidelines in chapter 10, avoid all or nothing demands, and work slowly but surely towards your objectives.

When children are truly united and address employers' associations as a group instead of individual children addressing individual employers, the risk of children being dismissed from their jobs decreases.

Children under pressure

Although most parents only wish the best for their children, there are a few examples of parents who perceive child-led activities as potential income boosts. One girl participated in a wide array of international advocacy activities. She travelled abroad for several months and returned home to her slum equipped with new dresses and unending stories of flights across the world, expensive hotels, and exotic food. As a result, her father began asking for money from the girl every time she returned from an activity. Although she did not get cash from these activities, her dad did not believe her, and she eventually had to hand over her meagre income from her job.

Although this example is not from the *Child-led Organisation and Advocacy on Child Labour* project, it is relevant to have it in the back of your mind when you work with vulnerable children. There is no reason to stay in the most expensive hotels, and it is probably not a good idea to take a girl entirely out of her own environment for several months and send her back with cash and expensive new clothes.

This does not mean that you can never take children out of their own environment for a while, but consider the purpose carefully as well as how you will do it, where you will stay, what you will eat and how you will assist the child, its parents and the community in absorbing the experiences afterwards.

You also should involve the parents from the very beginning so that they understand the aims and limitations of the activities. Otherwise you risk creating false expectations that ultimately affect the child.

12.04

Not allowed to participate

Some children are not allowed to participate in child-led activities. This particularly happens to adolescent girls whose parents worry when their daughters spend time outside the house – especially if they are in the company of boys. Other girls get married at an early age, and some in-laws find that it is inappropriate for their daughter-in-law to participate in child-led activities.

There are also parents who do not understand the value of child-led organisations, and who would rather see their daughters and sons concentrate on earning money or getting high marks in school.

Not being allowed to participate in activities undertaken by friends can be a painful experience. Therefore, the adult facilitators and the other child-led organisation members play a major role in helping to convince reluctant parents.

Often, demonstrating proof of the successes and presenting the obvious benefits for the whole family convince people about the value of child-led organisations. If, for instance the children can show that their activities have led to an increase in income, most parents are willing to give it a try.

Side tracking of non-members

Often, a child-led organisation cannot contain every child in a village. A small amount of available space for children, overburdened adult facilitators and lack of resources set natural boundaries for the number of children that can unite under and belong to one child-led organisation. Disinterest in child labour issues may also keep some children away automatically. But there are examples of child-led organisations that have divided communities in two between those who are child-led organisation members and those who are not.

In one village the children had a cultural child-led organisation where they met to sing and perform. It turned out that all the members were school-going children. Not because they wanted it like this, but because the non-school-going children were ashamed of their poverty, and they felt stupid and dirty, because they were working instead of going to school. Moreover, the meetings always took place when the child labourers were still at work.

Suddenly the village was noticeably openly divided between the rich and the poor children, who felt even more side-tracked than before.

The problem was solved when the child labourers had their own child-led organisation with activities that made sense to them. Gradually the child labourers have gained self-esteem, and now they are not afraid of mingling with the school-going children any longer.

Professional child speakers

There is a danger that some children become "professional" speakers for their organisation. These children end up spending their lives at meetings and workshops while they lose touch with the roots that provide the knowledge that legitimises their contribution.

It is important to rotate the responsibilities in a child-led organisation so that each child gets a chance to represent their organisation while simultaneously keeping in touch with their basic reality.

Children, like adults, are not a homogenous group … what is important is that all the children who have a legitimate interest in a project are encouraged and enabled to participate and that weaker or more isolated children are not marginalised. There is a danger that the only children who get involved are the articulate, better off, able individuals who, while having a valid contribution to make, do not reflect the breadth of children's experience.

Promoting Children's Participation in Democratic Decision Making
by G. Lansdown, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre

Domineering children

Children copy adults and their behaviour. This is a very important part of their learning process. But children also model less adorable adult behaviour like interrupting and a know-it-all attitude. Sometimes, children become domineering because adults have given them too much attention.

It is an adult facilitator's responsibility to ensure that everybody is heard, and that no single child or group of children steal the power. Never give preferential treatment to a child. If for some reason a child dominates, it is your duty to talk to that child and explain what it feels like for the rest of the children to be kept from having influence.

During child-led activities you also have to ensure that everybody who wants to speak gets to speak. Either you can tell the dominating child that you have to hear the others' opinions or you can also use the *microphone* tool from the *Toolbox* if some children do not automatically get a turn.

In time, when all the children are empowered, they will revolt against the domineering children.

Rights and responsibilities

The *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* does not emphasise the responsibilities that go along with rights. However, children need to learn that with rights come responsibilities.

One way of learning about responsibilities is by letting children engage in activities with other people, including those who are older and more experienced than themselves.

One activity at a time

During the *Child-led Organisation and Advocacy on Child Labour* project a group of adolescents learned how to design websites and developed a child-led website for and by children in Bangladesh. The adolescents will also be able to use their new knowledge while searching for jobs later on. Throughout the training period they received an allowance since it was a full-time six-month project.

Most of these adolescents were very active in their own child-led organisation, but when they were selected for training they were told that having chosen the training, they would have to make room for other children to be the focus of other activities.

The web training was considered very attractive by many children, and the process of selecting the children for the training was fairly difficult. Thus, there was a real risk that some children would feel greatly discriminated against and left out if the web group also continued to have a major say in the child-led organisation's other activities.

Rolling membership

An adolescent media group in Bangladesh has decided to have a rolling membership list. Every year new children are admitted into the group and some old members become supporters instead.

This rolling membership of course enables more children to gain knowledge about media, but it also prevents the older, experienced children from becoming too domineering.

Saboteurs

When you are with a group, you may sometimes experience a child who tries to sabotage your activities. He or she may interrupt or not listen to you or the other participants. Or he or she might complain, or leave the room unduly.

Try to talk to the child about whether anything is wrong, and if this does not solve the problem, giving the child some minor responsibilities sometimes does the trick.

Often, saboteurs are insecure, and if they are provided with special responsibilities it makes them feel safe and important. One type of minor responsibility could be to distribute drawing paper to the other children, pick up the coloured pens when the drawing activity is over, take notes for a session, or help you serve snacks and water for the other children and any visitors.

Overburdening

Child labourers' lives are already full of responsibilities, which is why their participation has to be voluntary and freely given.

You also have to take into consideration that generating income is the most important aspect of a child labourer's life. Even if children are eager to participate, you have to ensure that they do not lose too much income. Maybe you have to think about compensating the child's lost income if the child has been heavily involved in advocacy activities. Or you have to involve other children more to release the child a bit from his or her responsibilities in the child-led organisation.

If some of the children go to school, you should plan carefully to avoid time-consuming activities during exam periods.

Keep in mind that participation can be a way for children to share their experiences and to find a way out of some of their more troublesome responsibilities.

Grown-up children and the new generation

One problem affecting all child-led organisations is the fact that children grow up. Still, it often takes members and facilitators by surprise that children turn eighteen. It is important to define the roles these children have far in advance since many of them feel a great amount of frustration about suddenly being kicked out of their child-led organisation, which, for some, has been the focal point of their lives for years.

Experience shows that some grown-up children are reluctant to give up their memberships and subsequent influence, status and power in their child-led organisations; if these risks are not taken into consideration, it may kill the child-led organisation and leave all members feeling profoundly frustrated.

Some child-led organisations decide to make these grown-up children advisors for the new generation of members so they can continue drawing on their experience. These children are also natural facilitators and trainers for trainers for the younger children.

It is equally as important to help the child-led organisation develop the new generation of children. New children need their capacity built, skills have to be transferred from older children to younger children, and the structures of the generational change have to be negotiated and agreed upon.

Children also disagree

In 1997, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Norway organised a conference as part of the preparations for the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention on the worst forms of child labour. Three children were invited to take part in the first part of the conference, but were not invited to participate in the ministerial part of the conference.

The international Save the Children Alliance decided to invite twenty-two working children from different countries to take part in a forum with working children in order to support the children participating in the main conference. Each child was accompanied by an adult who also worked as the child's interpreter. All of the children had participated in regional, and some of them in international, meetings a few months earlier. Each of them belonged to organisations or movements, and they spent three days on preparations, three days at the conference and one-day on follow up.

The decision to organise the forum was taken shortly before the conference and two facilitators were appointed. The preparations of the agenda were done in Norway, but some work was done to contact people for e.g. an interview with the Minister of Development and Human Rights, and to arrange a press conference prior to the trip.

The children used the meeting with the minister to negotiate permission to speak during the ministry's part of the conference. They then prepared the agenda, discussed topics to be presented at the conference and organised the press conference.

Some conflict arose because one group had come with an agenda that differed from the others' and they felt obligated to adhere to the agenda as it had been given to them by children in their own organisation. As a result, they left the forum.

Children, exactly like adults, have different opinions and you should never assume that they will be a homogeneous group just because they are children. If there is a need to maintain consensus, adult facilitators have to be briefed in advance by all the children who are

participating, and they should meet ahead of time to decide how to tackle difficulties that may arise during the conference.

Adapted from UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre's Promoting Children's Participation in Democratic Decision Making by Gerison Lansdown

Dependency on adult organisations

While almost all children state that adult facilitators are a must in child-led organisations, children also experience severe let-downs when adult organisations suddenly have no more funding, or they decide that they want to shift their focus to issues other than the ones covered by child-led organisations.

There are examples of child-led organisations being cut off from support from their adult partner organisation from one day to the next, or child-led organisations that have to stop advocacy in the middle of a campaign because a project stops.

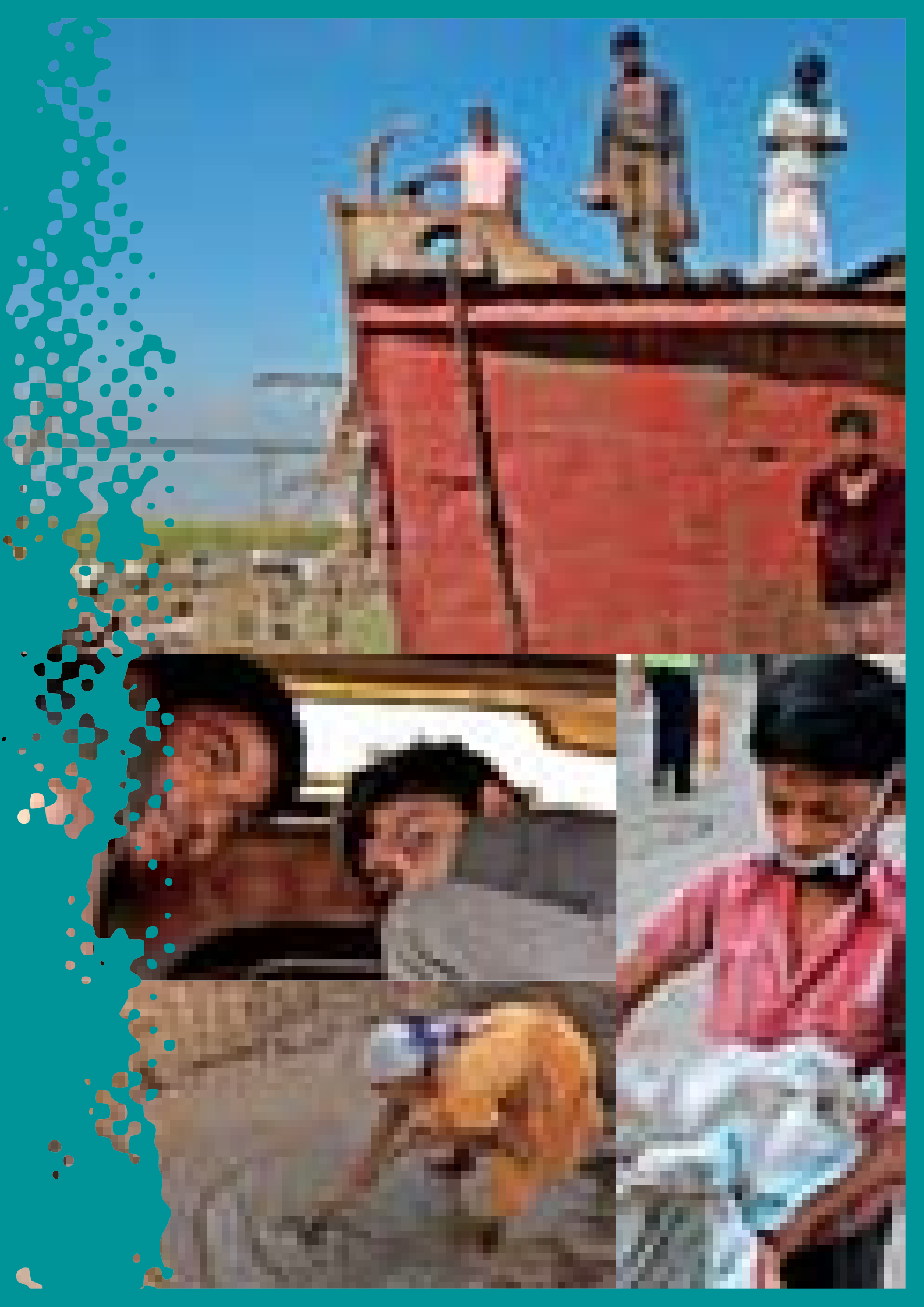
It is important to consider the sustainability of the support from the very beginning. The easiest way to do this is by linking the child-led organisations to existing long-term projects or programmes.

Manipulation and ethics

Children can be manipulated by adult agendas. This can be prevented by agreeing on clear principles for how decisions are to be made from the very beginning.

Manipulation is more likely to happen in a new child-led organisation rather than in a group of experienced children, since children gain confidence through their involvement and increasingly wish to determine their own agenda and challenge attempts by adults to deflect them.

Always ask yourself if the children truly have identified the change objectives they are pursuing, or are they being used for tokenism or manipulation?



13. How to reach hard to reach children

Conditions differ

Some people are born leaders, while others, from the very beginning, are discouraged from letting their voices be heard. It may be against their society's norms, or they are so vulnerable that no one ever considered that they had a voice at all.

Child-rearing and socio-economic conditions differ from country to country, from society to society and from culture to culture, and this has to be taken into consideration when planning child-led advocacy.

Values differ

Adult facilitators often come from the middle class, where independence and autonomy tend to be appreciated. Low-income families often value obedience. Poor families in some countries see compliance as the only way their children can succeed financially.

Adults advocating child participation need to understand that a lack of independence may simply be appropriate socialisation in response to parents who have little freedom themselves in their everyday lives – working in jobs that demand submission and efficiency.

Less affluent parents may also feel that they do not have the time or patience required to support children's spontaneous activities.

Adult facilitators need to work extra hard to liberate the voices of these children, for without the extra effort it is very likely that only middle-class voices will be heard.

Values may also vary in different contexts, cultures and situations, and there may be value gaps between different generations.

The most vulnerable children

Some children live in unstable, abusive, neglectful or broken families, on their own, or are from families so traumatised by disaster and poverty that even the most basic needs of these children are not met. These children find it difficult to develop as competent human beings and to discover a meaningful role in society. That is precisely why these children, more than anyone else, need to be given the opportunity to reflect and act upon their own lives.

For example, street girls are among the most ignored children in Bangladesh. Confidence, trust and continuity are foreign words to most street girls. But they are preconditions for meaningful participation, which was the main principle behind a qualitative research project carried out by a local Bangladeshi organisation in mid-2000.

Throughout the research period the girls were addressed in a participatory way, and the researchers used an array of tools to build on the potential of the girls and to create an open forum where the girls could define their own lives and needs as well as the shape of future interventions.

The researchers initially identified key child informants at street level who helped the researchers pinpoint potential discussion participants. Initial discussions with the girls revealed whether they were open to continuing interaction, and when this was the case, the researchers and the girls jointly agreed on the conditions for further sessions.

In total, the research team members paid 460 field visits planned by the girls and the team. The girls also came to the researchers' office to get to know the organisation and everybody working there.

Through numerous drawings, mappings, games and discussions, the girls gradually determined their present situation, their dreams and visions and what it would take to change their lives.

Definition of patriarchy

1: social organization marked by the supremacy of the father in the clan or family, the legal dependence of wives and children, and the reckoning of descent and inheritance in the male line; broadly : control by men of a disproportionately large share of power.

2: a society or institution organized according to the principles or practices of patriarchy.

http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/patriarchy

Girls' participation

In many countries and especially in patriarchal societies, the socialisation of girls emphasises protection and dependency, not autonomy. Although some Bangladeshi girls are responsible for feeding entire families and looking after younger siblings before they reach the age of ten, they have little influence on decisions regarding their own lives. Many girls are invisible and forgotten, hidden as they are in kitchens and behind domestic chores. Some marry long before the age of eighteen.

In many cultures it is deemed unsuitable for adolescent girls and boys to be friends and share activities. Consequently parents tend to worry about their daughters going out on their own. When girls finally get a chance to ask for equal rights, they may be overheard by boys their own age.

Girls are among the most vulnerable and neglected groups of children, and they benefit tremendously from child-led activities and advocacy. Every time a girl manages to prove her worth by bringing development to her family and community, she gains respect, confidence and a bit more room to influence decisions regarding her own life.

When you want to convince a girl's reluctant parents that she should be allowed to participate in child-led activities you should be prepared to spend plenty of time on it. Be very open about the activities and what they mean to the girl and her family. Invite the parents to visit the child-led organisation to make them see with their own eyes that it is a safe place. And if they are reluctant to let the girl travel to other places, let them join the group as extra adult support. If the parents do not have time, a brother or a sister could come instead.

Separating boys and girls may also be a solution in the beginning. Normally, when the community understands that the child-led organisation is a decent place, pressure on the girls wanes, and the boys and girls can begin cooperating.

Time constraints

Time constraints are another challenge for working children who lose income if they work less in order to participate in child-led activities. At the same time, some employers are reluctant to let the children take part in advocacy activities for fear of losing their young labourers. These problems normally decrease if the project also benefits the employer, and when the children develop a personal relationship beyond the work relation with their employer.

Example: A group of children working in small shops, workshops and eateries in the local market wanted to increase their salaries, improve hygiene and have time off for school. The children invited the local market committee to meetings, and gradually the employers understood that if their market was clean, people would not get sick from eating in the restaurants, and if the children work less and learn more, they provide better and more polite services to the costumers.

Today, the market attracts costumers from a larger catchment area than before, and some employers have decided to grant their child labourers a share of the extra profits.

Shame and doubt

Some working children feel ashamed of their situation and their lack of education, which is why they shy away from situations where they get exposed. Especially children living on the streets and children caught up in crime, drugs, or child sexual exploitation are hard to reach as they fear being judged by other children and adults. But these children badly need the support.

Example: A street boy selling drugs met a group of children from a child-led organisation. The children tried to engage him in their activities, but the boy ran away several times. It took many attempts to convince the boy that he really was accepted by the other children, and that they could help him find another path.

Today, he is one of the leading members in the child-led organisation, he goes to school, and he is the one who drags other children out of crime and into education.

On the move

Working children are often on the move. Boys tend to leave their villages to find jobs in the big cities, and girls work as domestic servants far away from home. Children also change jobs frequently. Few child labour jobs are stable, and children are always on the outlook for better options. In addition, slums are frequently evicted and the children and their families are forced to relocate to new areas.

Some organisations avoid working with child labourers and children living in slums for the same reason. However, these children are among the most deprived and may benefit more than other children from having access to a child-led organisation.

While conventional institutions made of brick and mortar are hard to shift from place to place, child-led organisations can easily be transferred to another area or split up into smaller units depending on how far the children are scattered. One adult organisation supporting a child-led organisation in an evicted slum helped the children relocate their bamboo structure to a nearby area. Child-led organisations can also be established just outside a slum area so the children have easy access within walking distance regardless of where they live.

A high level of unpredictability exists in natural disaster prone areas. Here child-led organisations and their children's spaces can act as centres for emergency preparedness and as child safe zones when disaster strikes. Afterwards when life returns to normal the child-led organisation can go back to playing its original role.

Isolated and discriminated against

Many indigenous groups in Bangladesh live in the most remote areas, cut off from mainstream society by hills, rivers, lack of roads, distrust and bullying. These groups naturally react with suspicion when outsiders approach them. Uniting makes a lot of sense in combating discrimination and isolation. One group of children explains:

"We didn't become familiar with our rights until an adult facilitator came to our area and we gradually began to discuss our problems. Then, we shared our situation with others via drama and songs. Our parents also steadily got involved, because we have had many parent meetings. We invited the Bengali community to meet us, and slowly, very slowly, they came to understand our problems."

The indigenous children do agricultural work and transport goods for the Bengalis, and generally the children are overloaded and underpaid compared to Bengali workers. The point of entry for raising these issues was a Theatre for Development performance worked out by the children depicting how they experience their work life. "After the performance we asked them if it resembled reality. They said 'sometimes.'"

The children also established a community committee. "We went from door to door to get members. This committee, which also has Bengali members, helps us spread the message of non-discrimination, and if our adult facilitator and our adult partner organisation stop supporting us, the committee will take over," say the children.

"We have performed in many places. Our adult facilitator has helped us find out where to go and how to make connections with other people outside our own area. Now other organisations know about us, and one has provided us with instruments."

"People really like the plays, but they have problems understanding our language. We like to perform in our own language because it is easier for us, and because we like to keep our language and culture alive, but maybe we have to make a new play in the Bangla language. We had never performed on a stage before, and we had never spoken to adults about our problems before, but now we are more courageous."

Throughout the years, the indigenous children have been bullied when they walked to work. "This happens less frequently now as we have included the biggest trouble makers in the community committee," explain the children. "But the employers are still overloading and underpaying us, although it is slightly better. When the employers scolded us before, we thought it was natural. It may never totally stop, but at least they behave a bit better now. We have also begun bargaining for more money, and they understand now that we will only work until a certain hour," state the children.

Their parents have also understood the benefits of being united: "When we all cooperate and negotiate, it benefits the whole village. If they pay us less than the Bengalis, none of us will work, and then they have to employ Bengalis. But the Bengalis demand contracts, and we work as day labourers, which is better for employers for seasonal work like agriculture," explain the parents.

Advocating against discrimination is a lengthy process since you have to combat old patterns and prejudices. "We are in the middle of the river, but we will cross at some point," say the children.

14. A little bit about child labour

Child labour in Bangladesh

While childhood ultimately determines the path of the rest of a person's life, the sad fact is that millions of children all over the world are deprived of education, health care, time to play, and the opportunity to be involved in decisions regarding their own lives. With 7.4 million child labourers engaged in over three-hundred types of jobs, forty-nine of which are considered hazardous, child labour is indeed a major problem in Bangladesh.

Due to heart-rending poverty, many families are forced to put their children to work at a very tender age. For many of these children, insufficient pay combined with long hours of work, inadequate rest periods and little or no security of employment are the norm. At the same time, countless children perform unpaid labour for their families.

Even though the law prohibits child labour in the formal sector, there is no legal framework for children working in the informal sector. Intolerable forms of child labour such as domestic service, slavery or near slavery, hazardous occupations, and sexual exploitation are all practiced in Bangladesh.

Extreme poverty, lack of access to quality education, unemployment in rural areas, few opportunities for skill development and practically no awareness of the dangers of child labour are some of the factors that push children into the labour market. The low wages that children command and the fact that they are easier to handle than adults also promote child labour.

The government of Bangladesh has acknowledged the importance of combating the child labour problem for a long time. The country was one of the very first to ratify the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* in 1990 and is in the process of adopting a *National Child Labour Eradication Policy.*

Child labour – good or bad?

The *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* implies that not all work violates children's rights. Work can be both harmful and beneficial, and while children should not be allowed to work unconditionally, a ban on child labour is also not the solution.

Unpaid agricultural work and domestic tasks are often undertaken by children as a part of their families' household chores. Others toil in order to earn money to support themselves and their families. Some earn to pay for their own education, or that of their siblings.
Many people do not consider household chores work, but others argue that it is important to include these activities to ensure that the household duties of girls are recognised.

While children in many developing countries hardly can be banned from working altogether as long as they and their families depend on the income, some jobs are considered harmful. They either endanger the child's health, or they disrupt the child's natural development and education. In the worst case, harmful occupations may kill. Children should of course never be involved in dangerous jobs.

Children often regard work as a necessity or a step forward in their career in countries with inadequate or irrelevant education systems. Some working children are keenly aware of their lack of other opportunities, while others feel proud, valued and appreciated when contributing to their own or their family's survival.

15. Learning how to do it all

Learning comes first

Adults who facilitate children need to be familiar with certain tools and techniques. The same applies to children who try to change their lives.

While child-led organisations often have been used to providing children with access to play and cultural activities, child-led organisations based on advocacy against child labour are new to many organisations and facilitators. Without tools and techniques the advocacy will not succeed, and the children will lose interest.

This handbook can take you part of the way. Arranging to participate in essential courses prior to establishing your child-led advocacy activities is also of great help.

Essential training sessions for adults

Adult organisations should always ensure that their field facilitators are familiar with child rights, participation, facilitation skills, communication and advocacy. Consequently, synopses of existing training manuals on these topics are listed in this chapter. You can order the manuals and use trainers from Save the Children Sweden-Denmark.

Additional issues that require extended training can also be included in order to be fully prepared to work with children.

Many adults in developing countries lack basic knowledge about child development and child psychology. In order to help children carry out their own activities, however you need to know what they are capable of.

Knowledge about occupational health and safety is also practical if you are to powerfully promote advocacy on child labour.

Theatre for Development is a core tool in many advocacy processes, and although it is not essential, it helps facilitators and children get on the advocacy track in a fun, easy-to-do way.

Child rights, child psychology, child development and occupational health and safety training are also relevant for core stakeholders e.g. representatives of employers' associations, local government representatives, parents and relevant community representatives.

Training has to be targeted

Often, training participants complain that knowledge from courses is irrelevant or difficult to apply in their own context. In general, training should be practical and based on specific exercises.

Remember that many inexperienced field facilitators and local stakeholders are not familiar with organisational jargon and academic terms. Always make sure that trainers use a straightforward everyday language and plenty of examples that are relevant to the participants' daily life.

Essential training sessions for children

Courses for children have to be tailor made to specific age groups and contexts. Children and adults do not learn in the same way, and different age groups have different learning patterns.

When children gather to fight for their rights, they primarily need to become familiar with their rights and understand the principles of participation. They also need other training in order to find inspiration, encouragement, tools and methods. Proper communication tools are essential, while training in advocacy and core tools like Theatre for Development help the children get started.

Life skills such as decision making, problem solving, communication, critical thinking, stress management, empathy, creativity and negotiation are vital in an advocacy process.

If children are to facilitate other children, they also need to learn how to do this.

Child-to-child training

While some adults do understand children fairly well, children understand children even better. And children who have been involved in fighting for their rights for many years possess invaluable knowledge and experience that may easily be transferred to other children and new child-led organisations.

However, if children are to be able to train other children, they have to be groomed into becoming good facilitators. They need support to develop proper training materials, and they themselves have to be trained to become trainers.

Just because they are children it does not mean that they can do what adults cannot do. We all need to be equipped with further knowledge before we can facilitate and train others.

For example, if you are only familiar with what is written in your own training manual, then how will you respond to questions beyond the scope of your manual?

Tip: Small groups benefit more than big groups

Carrying out training with small groups of participants is always preferable. Everybody gets a chance to speak, and you get to know everybody. On the other hand, a certain number of participants also ensures good dynamics.

Sixteen participants in a training session are optimal. More than thirty is hopeless.

Training sessions for children and adolescents

Child rights

Title of training session:
Our rights: A Training Manual for Child Trainers

Location:
In any context, indoors or out

Number of participants:
Maximum of 20

Requirements for facilitators:

- 16 years of age and up
- Skilled in facilitation
- Literate
- Child facilitators should work in teams
- Training trainers is vital because child facilitators must learn how to facilitate training and use a manual.

Requirements for participants:

- Targets 12-18 year-olds
- Beginners
- Basic literacy and ability to count are helpful

Training duration:

One day

Paraphernalia:

- Cards
- Flip-chart paper and stand
- Coloured pens
- Four pieces of clean cloth or scarves long enough to used as a blindfold
- A pen
- The *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* in your own language
- 20 small balls (two colours)
- A basket
- Paper
- A whistle

The training module was developed and written by:
The youth trainer team, *Child-led Organisation and Advocacy on Child Labour* project

Description:
The training manual targets children who have no prior experience in child rights. It provides basic knowledge on the definition of a child, child rights, why these rights are essential, children's and adults' responsibilities in protecting child rights and a vision for child rights.

The training manual contains detailed descriptions, drawings and cartoons of all exercises, a toolkit, and manuscripts for the facilitator, questions to be discussed, a summation of lessons learned and explanations of what the participants are supposed to do.

Stories and drawings, homemade cards, games, a flip-chart summary, group work and drama are some of the tools used.

The manual does not contain an overall programme, but estimated schedules are included in most sessions, and the manual has been thoroughly tested by the youth trainer team.

Available in both English and Bangla, the manual has 66 pages.

Participation

Title of training session:
Our Opinion, Our Participation: A Training Manual for Child Trainers

Location:
In any context, indoors or out

Number of participants:
Maximum of 20

Requirements for facilitators:
- 16 years of age and up
- Skilled in facilitation
- In-depth knowledge of child rights
- Literate
- Child facilitators should work in teams
- Training trainers is vital because child facilitators must learn how to facilitate training and use a manual.

Requirements for participants:
- Targets 12-18 year-olds
- Basic knowledge of child rights
- Basic literacy helpful

Training duration:
One day

Paraphernalia:
- Paper
- A whistle
- Board
- Flip chart
- The *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* in your own language

The training module was developed and written by:
The youth trainer team, *Child-led Organisation and Advocacy on Child Labour* project

Description:
This course provides basic knowledge on the significance of child participation, why participation is a must, where and how children can participate and principles for participation.

The manual contains detailed descriptions, drawings and cartoons of all exercises, a toolkit, and manuscripts for the facilitator, questions to be discussed and explanations of what the participants are supposed to do.

Games, drama, drawings, summation and input sessions and discussions are some of the tools used.

The manual does not contain an overall programme, but estimated schedules are included in each session, and the manual has been thoroughly tested by the youth trainer team.

Available in both English and Bangla, the manual has 60 pages.

Life skills

Title of training session:
Our Life, Our Skills: A Training Manual for Child Trainers

Location:
In any context, indoors or out

Number of participants:
Maximum of 20

Requirements for facilitators
- 16 years of age and up
- Skilled in facilitation
- Possess life skills and thoroughly understand them
- Literate
- Child facilitators must work in teams
- Training trainers is vital because child facilitators must learn how to facilitate training and use a manual.

Requirements for participants
- Targets 14-20 year-olds
- Beginners
- Basic literacy helpful

Training duration:
One day

Paraphernalia:

- Black or whiteboard
- Flip-chart paper and stand
- Markers
- Long rope
- Cloth
- Two plates
- Candy
- A mirror
- Black paper
- Candle
- Matchbox

The training module was developed and written by:
The youth trainer team, *Child-led Organisation and Advocacy on Child Labour* project

Description:
This course provides very basic knowledge on decision making, problem solving, effective communication, critical thinking, stress, relationship, empathy, creative thinking, negotiation and self awareness.

The manual contains detailed descriptions, drawings and cartoons of all exercises, a toolkit, and manuscripts for the facilitator, questions to be discussed and explanations of what the participants are supposed to do.

Homemade card games, drama, pictures and cartoons are some of the tools used.
The manual does not contain an overall programme, but estimated schedules are included in most sessions, and the manual has been thoroughly tested by the youth trainer team.

Available in both English and Bangla, the manual is 63 pages long.

Facilitation

Title of training session:
Facilitation: How Can We Facilitate Children? A Training Manual for Child Trainers

Location:
One of the tools mentioned, a cartoon, is based on a Bangladeshi context, but otherwise the manual can be used in any context – indoors as well as out

Number of participants:
Maximum of 20

Requirements for facilitators

- 16 years of age and up
- Skilled in facilitation
- Literate
- Child facilitators should work in teams
- Training trainers is vital because child facilitators must learn how to facilitate training and use a manual.

Requirements for participants:

- Targets participants 14-20 years of age
- Beginners
- Illiterate children can participate

Training duration:

One day

Paraphernalia:

- 20 small coloured balls
- A whistle

The training module was developed and written by:

The youth trainer team, *Child-led Organisation and Advocacy on Child Labour* project

Description:

This course, which provides basic knowledge on facilitation and its tools, targets children who have no prior experience in facilitation.

The manual contains detailed descriptions, drawings and cartoons of all exercises, a toolkit, and manuscripts for the facilitator, questions to be discussed and explanations of what the participants are supposed to do.

Some of the tools used include a story and drawings that exemplify facilitation, a game used to divide the children into groups, dramas to demonstrate the facilitator's roles and responsibilities, a chart depicting the facilitator's responsibilities, an input-session as an introduction to the methods used, examples of methods and discussions.

The manual does not contain an overall programme, but estimated schedules are included in each session, and the manual has been thoroughly tested by the youth trainer team.

Available in both English and Bangla, the manual is 40 pages long.

Communication

Title of training session:
Basic Communication for Adolescents

Location:
Any context, indoors or out. Use of a laptop and projector requires electricity or charged batteries, a projector that runs on batteries and a room.

Number of participants:
15-25

Requirements for facilitators:

- 18 years of age and up
- Skilled in facilitation and communication
- Literate
- Experience with different types of communication and media contact
- One facilitator can carry out the training, but two are preferable
- Although trained trainers are preferable, the facilitators should, prior to using the manual, at least receive thorough instructions about the entire manual from either the authors of the manual or an experienced, skilled adult facilitator.

Requirements for participants:

- Targets 14-18 year-olds
- Beginners
- The group must comprise at least four literate children

Training duration:

Two days

Paraphernalia:

- Notebooks and pens for each participant
- 3-5 small digital cameras (mobile phone cameras are sufficient)
- Small teddy bear
- 30 balloons
- 30 strings to tie balloons to legs
- Flip-chart paper
- Tape
- Markers
- 3-5 local newspapers in your own language
- 3-5 national newspapers in your language
- Prints of 20 photos or, if possible, a laptop with photo software, the ability to download pictures onto laptop and a projector

The training module was developed and written by:

Lotte Ladegaard, *Child-led Organisation and Advocacy on Child Labour* team

Description:

This course targets children who have no prior experience in communication. It provides basic knowledge on the development of ideas, interview techniques, fact finding, lobbying, basic dissemination skills and basic photography skills via games, in-put sessions, learning-by-doing in teams and plenary de-briefings. The skills covered by the training are essential for advocacy.

The manual contains detailed descriptions of all exercises, manuscripts for the facilitator, questions to be discussed and explanations of what the participants are supposed to do.

Group work, interview exercises, news analysis, instructions on using cameras and photography in practice are some of the tools used.

Tested by the *Child-led Organisation and Advocacy on Child Labour* team and the author, this manual contains an overall programme and individual evaluations.

Available in both English and Bangla, the manual is 20 pages long.

Training sessions for adults

Child rights

Title of training session:
Training Manual on Child Rights

Location:
At a venue with sufficient ventilation and lighting and no external interferences as well as:

- space adequate enough to allow participants to sit in a U-shape
- no table in front of the participants
- sufficient space for a flip-chart stand and overhead projector
- 4 tables with 6 chairs each placed at the back of the room or in separate room(s)

Number of participants:
20-24

Requirements for facilitators:
- Adults only
- Possess comprehensive theoretical and practical knowledge about the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*
- Literate, preferably with an advanced academic degree
- One facilitator can carry out the training, but two are preferable
- Although trained trainers are preferable, the facilitators should, prior to using the manual, at least receive thorough instructions about the entire manual from either the authors of the manual or an experienced, skilled adult facilitator.

Requirements for participants:
- Targets adults
- People with little or no prior experience in child rights

Training duration:
Three days

Paraphernalia:
- Flip charts and stand
- Overhead projector
- Cards or coloured paper
- Markers
- Tape

The training module was developed and written by:
The international Save the Children Alliance

Description:
The objective of this training manual is to teach participants to conceptualise the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* and to develop their capacity to analyse the present status of child rights in their country.

The training also makes the participants aware of their personal, social and professional viewpoints and helps them identify their roles and responsibilities in the implementation of the UN Convention.

Based on a participatory approach with a variety of discussions, group work and exercises, the training focuses on the emotional and attitudinal aspects in addition to knowledge and skills.

Available in English and Bangla, this manual is 134 pages long and has very detailed instructions for the facilitator.

Facilitation and participation

Title of training session:
Facilitation and Participation Training Manual

Location:
Indoors

Number of participants:
Maximum of 20

Requirements for facilitators:
- Adults only
- Highly skilled in and experience with facilitation and participation
- Literate, preferably have an advanced academic degree
- Computer literate and familiar with PowerPoint
- One facilitator can carry out the training, but two are preferable
- Although trained trainers are preferable, the facilitators should, prior to using the manual, at least receive thorough instructions about the entire manual from either the authors of the manual or an experienced, skilled adult facilitator.

Requirements for participants:
- Targets adults
- Requires a certain level of analytical skills
- Prior knowledge about child rights

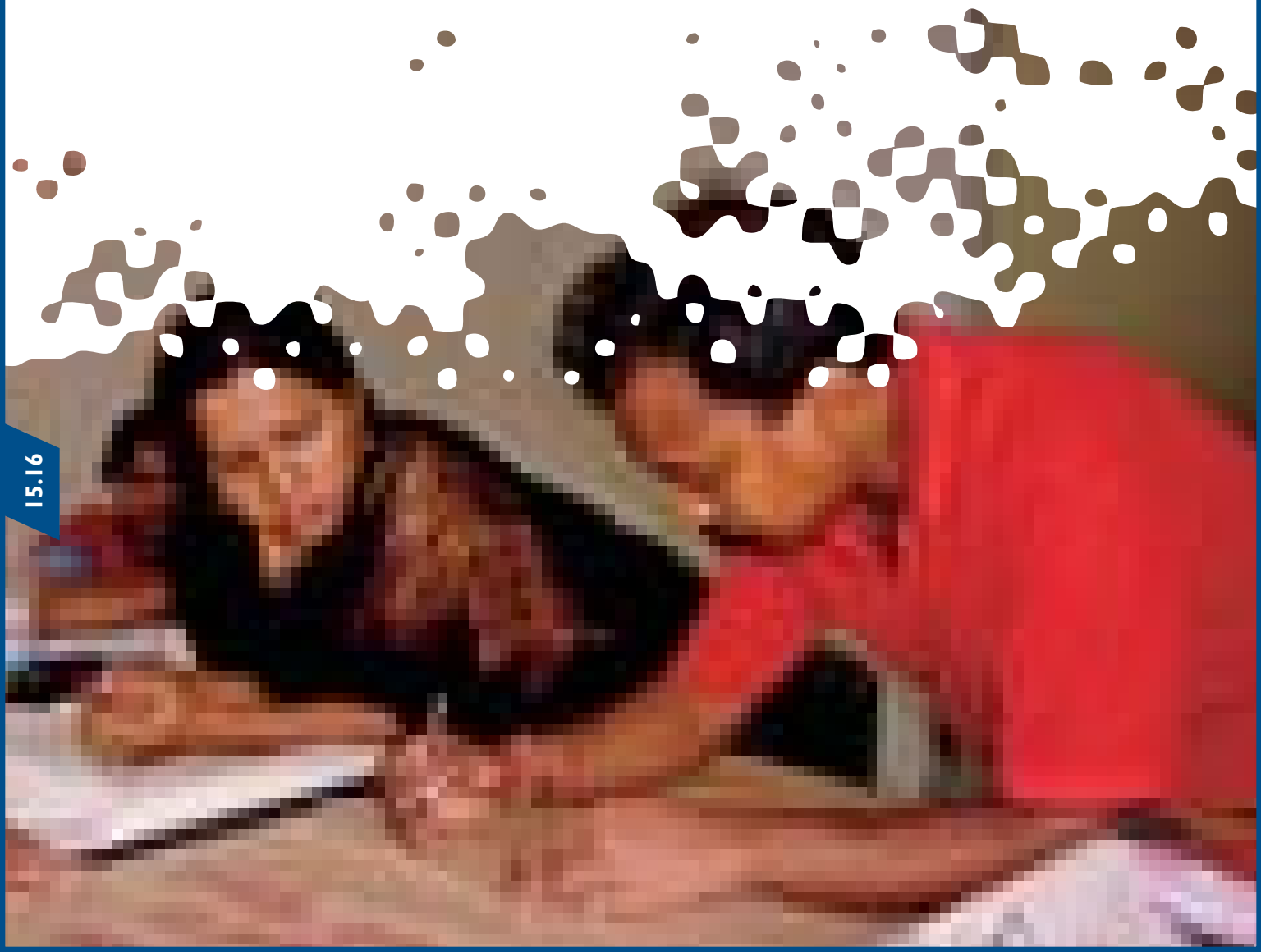
Training duration:
Four days

Paraphernalia:
- Flip chart and stand
- Marker
- Cards
- Poster board
- Computer with PowerPoint software and projector
- *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*

The training module was developed and written by:
Shamsul Alam, Shahida Begum and A.K.M. Masum Ul Alam on behalf of the *Child-led Organisation and Advocacy on Child Labour* team

Description:
This course helps staff members in organisations develop their facilitation and participation skills in theory as well as in practice.

The participants also learn how to facilitate child-led organisations and events.



The manual is based on many straightforward in-put sessions, plenary discussions and group work.

Available in English, the manual is 40 pages long.

Title of training session:
Training manual: A sense of children. Training manual to a one day workshop that helps professionals sense, understand and internalise children´s emotions, needs and rights in order to improve their work with children.

Location:
In any context, indoors or out

Number of participants:
Maximum of 15

Requirements for facilitators:
- Adults only
- Basic facilitation skills

Requirements for participants:
- Targets adults with various levels of participation skills

Training duration:
One day

Paraphernalia:
- Notebooks and pens for each participants
- Flip charts
- Numerous small items – bottle caps, coins, sweets, toys etc.

The training module was developed and written by:
The Danish Children and Youth Network.

Description:
This course helps adults understand and internalise children's emotions, needs and rights. Through an array of exercises they realise the ways in which they can work with children, and they analyse and further develop their own projects in light of these realisations.

The training is mainly based on exercises.

The manual includes an overall programme, verbal evaluation, detailed manuscripts for the facilitator and numerous exercises.

Available in English, the manual is approximately 20 pages long.

Communication

Title of training session:
Creative Communication: Tools to Get Your Message Through

Location:
In any context; the training is partly office based, partly field based

Number of participants:
Maximum of 15

Requirements for facilitators:
- Adults only
- Highly skilled in and experienced with various types of communication
- Literate, preferably with an advanced academic degree
- One facilitator can carry out the training, although two or more facilitators would provide extra support during field exercises and feedback sessions.

Requirements for participants:
- Targets adults with little prior knowledge of communication
- Used to using a computer keyboard

Training duration:
Six days

Paraphernalia:
- Access to a computers for every participant
- Five digital cameras
- Notebooks and pens for each participant
- Flip-chart papers and stand
- Markers
- Computer with photo software and projector
- Ability to download pictures onto computer

The training module was developed and written by:
Lotte Ladegaard

Description:
This course helps adults develop their knowledge about different types of communication and their own communication skills. The manual covers, for example, writing and structuring articles, news and press releases, the development of ideas, interviews as a tool and interview techniques, research, the use of photos and graphics, and alternative ways of communication and campaigning. It also includes media contact.

Each session consists of input, practical exercises and feedback from the entire group as well as the facilitator. Some exercises are partly field based.

All of the skills included in the training are fundamental for advocacy.

The manual includes an overall programme and detailed manuscripts for the facilitator and numerous exercises.

Available in English, the manual is approximately 96 pages but the length varies depending on the context in which the manual is used.

Title of training session:
Creative Communication for Change

Location:
In any context; the training is partly office based and partly field based

Number of participants:
Maximum of 25

Requirements for facilitators:
- Adults only
- Skilled in and experienced with various types of communication
- Literate, preferably have an advanced academic degree
- One facilitator can carry out the training, although two or more facilitators would provide extra support during field exercises and feedback sessions.

Requirements for participants:

- Targets adults with prior knowledge of basic communication

Training duration:

Five days

Paraphernalia:

- Notebooks and pens for each participant
- Flip-chart paper and stand
- Markers
- Laptop with photo software and projector

The training module was developed and written by:

Lotte Ladegaard

Description:

This course helps adults develop and refine their communication tools, their knowledge about target groups, traditional and alternative media and cultural sensitivity. Some of the issues covered in the manual include understanding of how the mind works, target group analysis, the

use of models, designing communication activities, communication tools and designing your own advocacy campaign.

Input sessions, games, drama, practical exercises and feedback from the whole group as well as the facilitator are some of the methods used.

All skills included in the training are essential when you want to do advocacy.

The manual includes an overall programme, written evaluations, and detailed manuscripts for the facilitator and numerous exercises.

Available in English, the manual is 42 pages long.

Title of training session:
Creative Communication for Change: Follow-Up

Location:
In any context, but preferably where participants can stay overnight, for example in a conference centre or hotel, since the course includes work that takes place in the evening.

Number of participants:
Maximum of 25

Requirements for facilitators:
- Adults only
- Highly skilled in and experienced with various types of communication
- Literate, preferably have an advanced academic degree
- One facilitator can carry out the training, but two or more facilitators would provide extra support during field exercises and feedback sessions.

Requirements for participants:
- Targets adults who have already participated in the *Creative Communication for Change* training described in the previous entry.

Training duration:
Three days

Paraphernalia:
- Notebooks and pens for each participant
- Flip-chart paper and stand
- Markers
- Laptop and projector

The training module was developed and written by:
Lotte Ladegaard

Description:
A follow-up to the *Creative Communication for Change* course, this course enables adults to further develop and refine their communication tools, their knowledge about resistance to change, effective listening, the communicator's role, how people internalise messages, planning, strategies and ethical considerations.

Input sessions, games, films, drama, practical exercises and feedback from the entire group as well as the facilitator are some of the methods used.

All of the skills included in the training are essential for advocacy.

The manual includes an overall programme, written evaluations, and detailed manuscripts for the facilitator and numerous exercises.

Available in English, the manual is 25 pages long.

Advocacy

Title of training session:
Training Manual on Child-led Advocacy

Location:
In any context

Number of participants:
25-30

Requirements for facilitators:
- Adults only
- Skilled in child rights, facilitation, participation and advocacy
- Literate, preferably with an advanced academic degree
- One facilitator can carry out the training, but two or more facilitators would provide extra support during sessions.

Requirements for participants:
- Targets adults in the development sector who work with child rights

Training duration:
Five days

Paraphernalia:
- Flip-chart paper and stand
- Poster board
- Markers
- Board markers
- White board
- Bulletin board
- Computer
- Projector
- Notebooks for each participant
- Pens for each participant
- Tape

The training module was developed and written by:
Atik Anwar Chowdhury, *Child-led Organisation and Advocacy on Child Labour* team

Description:
This course provides basic ideas on children's participation and child-led advocacy. It also conceptualises different tools to be used during the implementation of child-led advocacy via group work, plenary discussions, presentations and individual exercises.

The manual includes an overall programme, exercise in making action plans and manuscripts for the facilitator.

Available in English, the manual is 45 pages long.

Theatre for Development

Title of training session:
Manual on Theatre for Development (TfD) Training

Location:
The participants must stay overnight at a training centre in a community where children with different socio-economic backgrounds live.

Number of participants:
Maximum of 25

Requirements for facilitators:
- Adults only
- Skilled in child rights, facilitation, participation, advocacy and Theatre for Development – in theory and practice
- Literate, preferably with an advanced academic degree
- One facilitator can carry out the training, but two or more facilitators would provide extra support during sessions.

Requirements for participants:
- Targets adult field facilitators who work directly with children

Training duration:
Six days

Paraphernalia:
- Poster board
- Markers
- Coloured pencils
- Flip-chart paper and stand
- Tape
- Pens and notebooks for each participant

The training module was developed and written by:
Shamsul Alam Bokul and Sabrina Karim Murshed on behalf of Save the Children Sweden-Denmark

Description:
The aim of this course is to teach adult facilitators about the processes of Theatre for Development as a part of child-led advocacy and dialogues at community level.

The training also helps facilitators develop a platform for dialogue and negotiation with local and national level policy makers.

The manual contains neither an overall programme nor detailed manuscripts for the facilitator.

Available in English, the manual is 16 pages long.

16. Games and plays

About games and plays

All the games and plays in this chapter were collected and described by children from various areas of Bangladesh. Most games require little or no preparations or equipment. Almost all of them are fairly straight forward and easy to understand. Many of them can be altered according to local contexts.

During the research for the handbook, each game was tested by a group of children on a rooftop in Dhaka city. This is also where the photos were taken. In the process we asked the children to explain the benefits and skills they acquired from each game. We only included the games that girls and boys alike found fun.

Based on the test, the games have all been re-written and some refashioned if they were deemed to be dangerous, too difficult to understand or otherwise hard to handle.

Games and plays help children and facilitators develop close relationships, and they can be used as energizers during training sessions, meetings or anywhere else where children need a break.

Have fun!

Shore of the pond

Participants: 10 or more

Age range: From 5 years and up

Where: Outdoors

Duration: 5-10 minutes

Paraphernalia: Chalk if the game is played on solid ground. A stick if the game is played on gravel

Other requirements: No

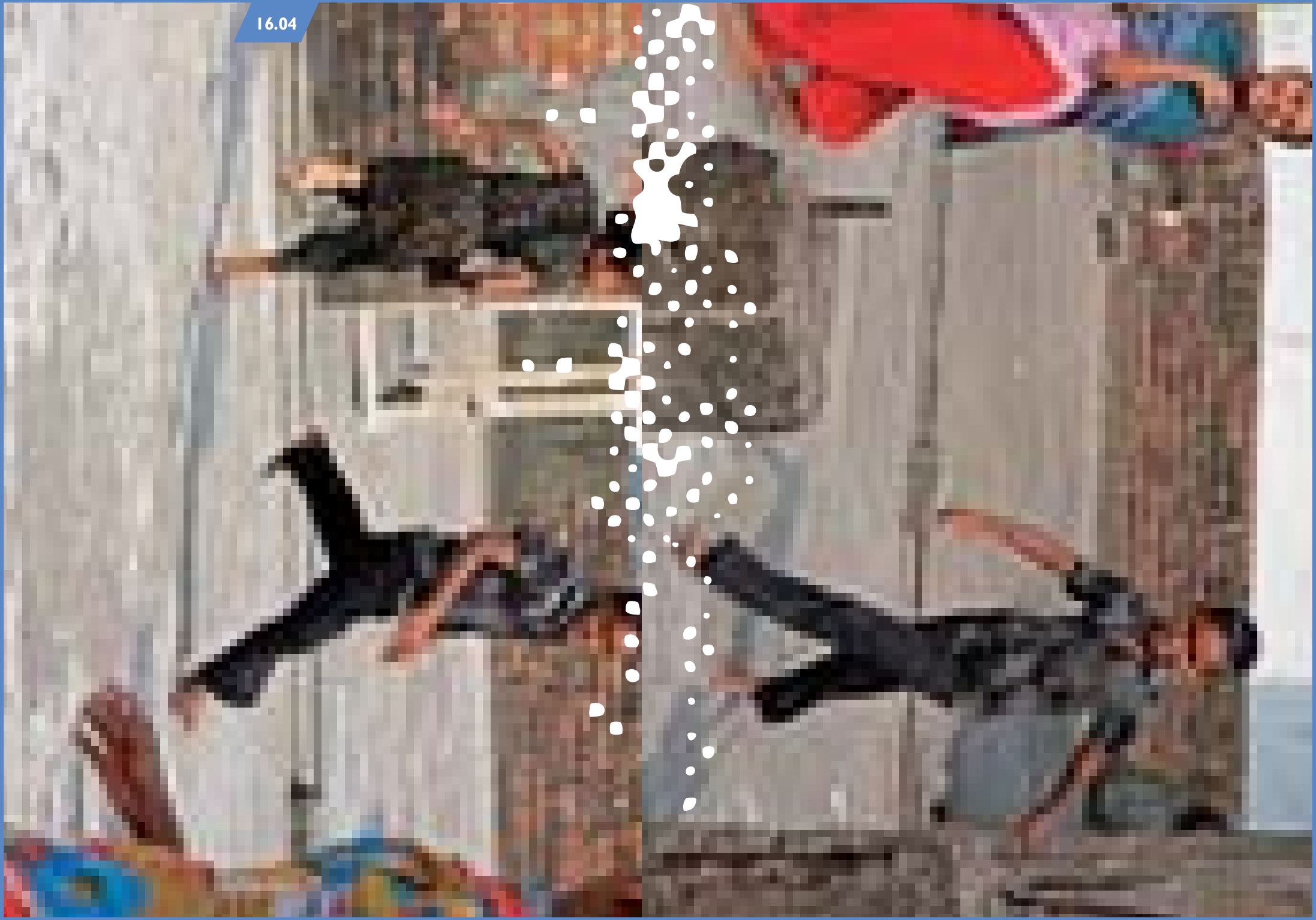
Rules of the game:

1. The children form a wide circle.
2. Draw a circle at the feet of the children.
3. One person is elected or selected to be "it" and must stand in the middle of the circle.
4. When the person who is "it" says "pond", the participants move their right foot into the circle.
5. When the person who is "it" says "shore", the participants move their right foot out of the circle.
6. The person who is "it" says either "pond" or "shore" spontaneously.
7. When a participant fails to shift his or her foot into the right position, he or she is excluded from the game.
8. The last remaining participant is the winner.

Skills and benefits derived from the game:

- Concentration
- Discipline
- Listening skills
- Keeping balance

16.03



Freeze tag

Participants: 10 to 15

Age range: From 8 years and up

Where: Outdoors

Duration: Minimum 5-10 minutes. The game can continue as long as the children want to play.

Paraphernalia: None

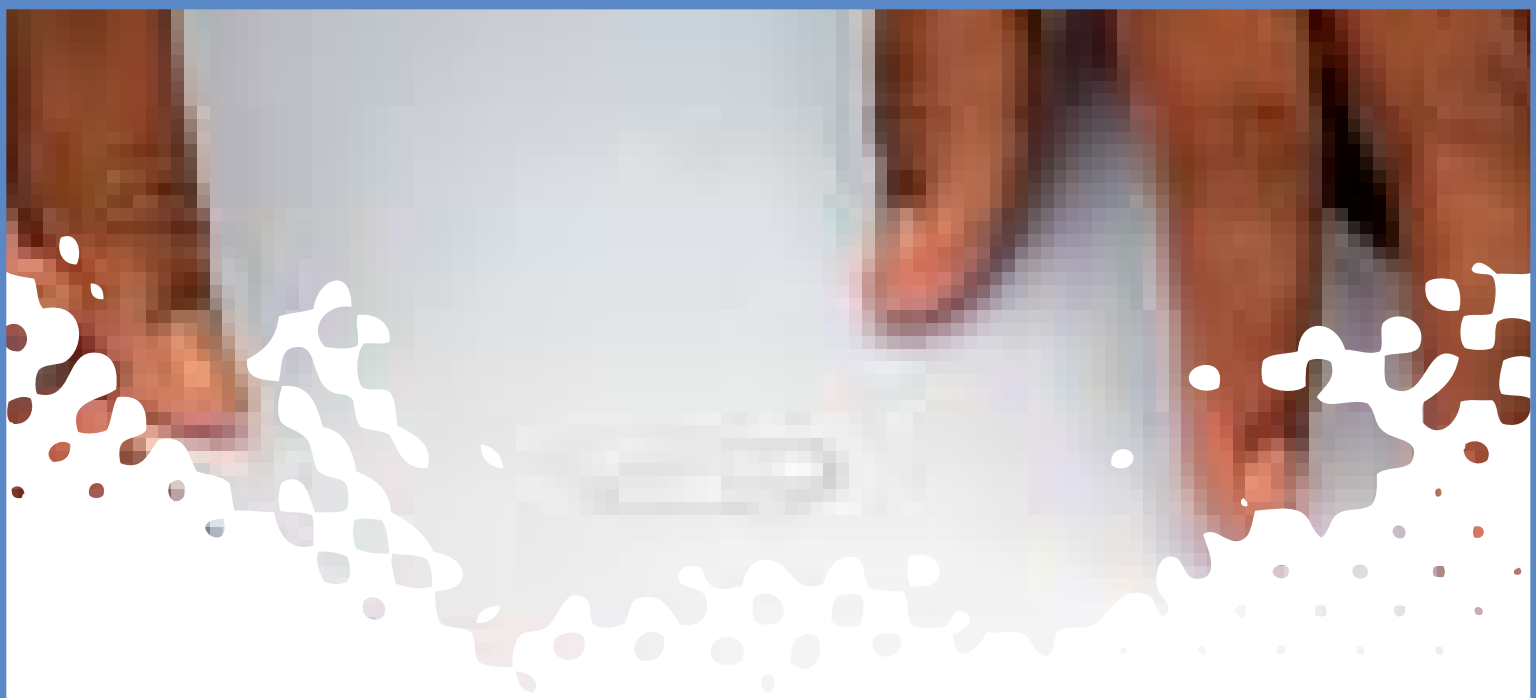
Other requirements: At least one child must be capable of counting

Rules of the game:

1. One person is selected or elected to be "it".
2. The person who is "it" stands in a corner and counts to 30 while the rest of the children run as far away from the person who is "it" as possible.
3. The person who is "it" tries to catch up with the children and touch them while saying "freeze." When a child turns to ice, he or she has to freeze on the spot and not move.
4. If another participant gets away with touching the frozen child while saying "water," the child is no longer frozen and can participate again.
5. When someone has been turned to ice three times it is their turn to be "it".

Skills and benefits derived from the game:

- Fitness
- Strategic planning



Eye

Participants: 5-7 participants in one group. The game takes longer to play if the group is bigger. Several groups may play at the same time

Age range: From 8 years and up

Where: Indoors or out

Duration: 10-15 minutes

Paraphernalia: Paper and pen

Other requirements: At least one child must be capable of writing and counting

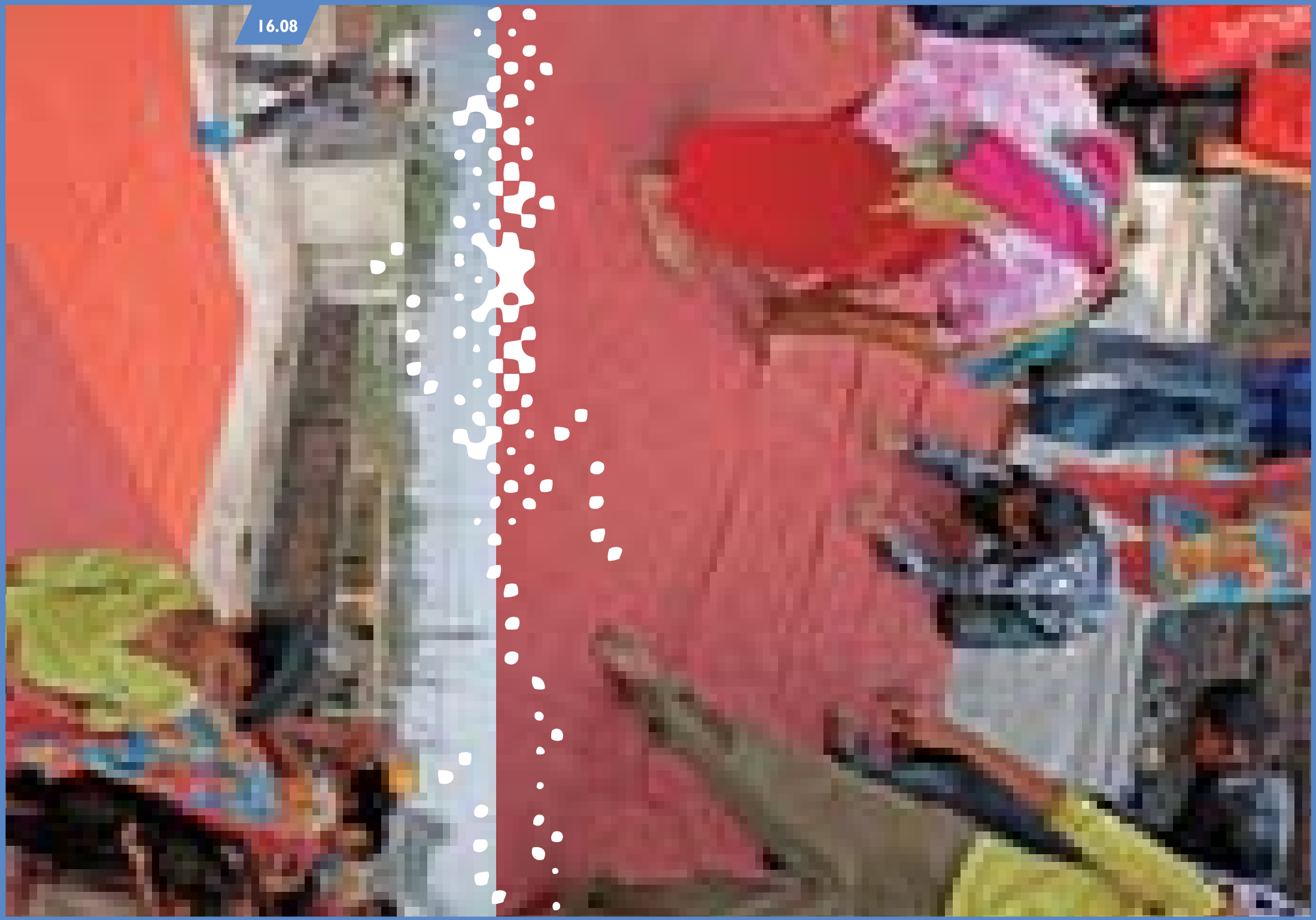
Rules of the game:

1. One child is selected or elected to be "it" and to keep track of the points.
2. The person who is "it" draws a table containing each participant's name.
3. The person who is "it" also makes as many little pieces of paper as there are participants. The person who is "it" draws an eye on one piece of paper and a circle on the rest of the pieces. The person who is "it" folds the papers and mixes them so no one knows where the eye is.
4. Each participant picks a piece of paper and opens it secretly.
5. The participant who gets the eye must wink continuously, but without attracting anyone's attention.
6. The rest of the participants have to guess who has the eye.
7. The child who locates the eye gets 10 points.
8. When someone has 100 points the game is over.

Skills and benefits derived from the game:

- Increased concentration
- Increased attention to other people

16.07



Bucket toss

Participants: 2-15

Age range: From 8 years and up

Where: Outdoors

Duration: 10-15 minutes

Paraphernalia: A bucket and a ball. A rope, stick or chalk, depending on where the game takes place.

Other requirements: No

Rules of the game:

1. Draw a line either with chalk on solid ground, or with a stick in gravel or by using a rope.
2. The bucket is placed five to ten metres in front of the line.
3. All the children must stand behind the line.
4. One by one the children try to throw the ball into the bucket.
5. The child who first manages to throw the ball into the bucket is the winner.
6. The game can continue till all children have managed to throw the ball into the bucket.

Skills and benefits derived from the game:

- Ability to judge distances
- Develops fine motor control
- The art of throwing balls
- Hitting targets
- Concentration

Ring

Participants: 2-15

Age range: From 8 years and up

Where: Outdoors

Duration: 10-15 minutes

Paraphernalia: 5-10 small presents e.g. small juice cartons, bars of soap and packets of biscuits. Plus a rope, a piece of chalk or a stick to draw a line. And three rings made out of e.g. steel wire

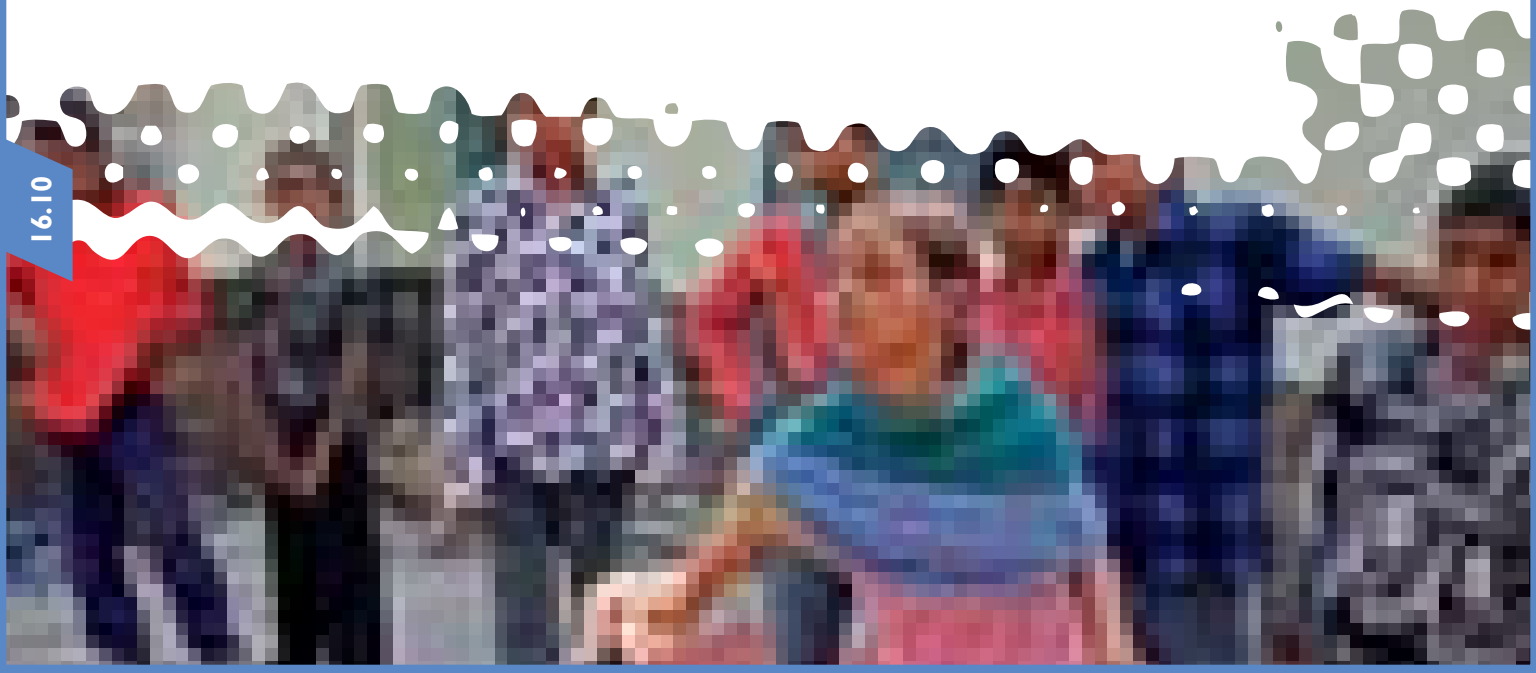
Other requirements: No

Rules of the game:

1. Draw a line either with chalk on solid ground, or with a stick in gravel or by using a rope.
2. The presents are placed five to ten metres in front of the line. There should be around 20 centimetres between each present, depending on how large the rings are. You should only be able to catch one present at a time.
3. All of the children must stand behind the line.
4. One by one the children throw the rings in order to catch the presents. Each child has three tries at a time.
5. When a child catches a present with the ring, the present is handed over to the child.
6. The game continues as long as there are presents available.

Skills and benefits derived from the game:

- Ability to judge distances
- Develops fine motor control
- The art of throwing rings
- Hitting targets
- Concentration



16.11

Leaves - leaves

Participants: 5-10. Twice the number if there are no live plants in the area, which means that a group of children have to act as plants

Age range: From 10 years and up

Where: Outdoors, and preferably in a park or village area where plants grow naturally. The bigger the space, the more demanding the game is

Duration: 20-25 minutes

Paraphernalia: A variety of leaves or plants equalling the number of participants
If the game takes place in a city with no access to leaves, then flowers and leaves can be collected beforehand, or drawn by the children. Then, a group of children can act as plants

Other requirements: No

Rules of the game:

1. A king is selected or elected.
2. The children stand in a circle with the king in the middle.
3. The king says, "Bring me a mango leaf." (Or any other leaf depending on what type of leaves are available).
4. The children search for the leaf requested – either in their natural surroundings, or by finding the child who represents that plant.
5. When one or more children find the requested leaf, he or she starts reciting, "Leaves, leaves, mango leaves," picks the leaf and runs to the circle.
6. If a child who has found the desired leaf fails to continue reciting this phrase, and the king touches him or her, he or she becomes the new king.
7. The game is repeated with the remaining leaves.
8. When all the leaves have been collected, the king has to close his or her eyes while the participants hide the leaves in different places.
9. If the king fails to bring back all the leaves, the child who is responsible for the leaf that is left slaps the king lightly ten times on the back.
10. For each leaf the king finds, he is allowed to slap the child who is responsible for that leaf lightly 10 times on the back.

Skills and benefits derived from the game:

- Knowledge of plants
- Fitness
- Concentration

Breaking the pot

Participants: 5-15

Age range: From 10 years and up

Where: Outdoors

Duration: 15-20 minutes

Paraphernalia: A clay pot, a firm, one meter long stick and a scarf to be used as a blindfold

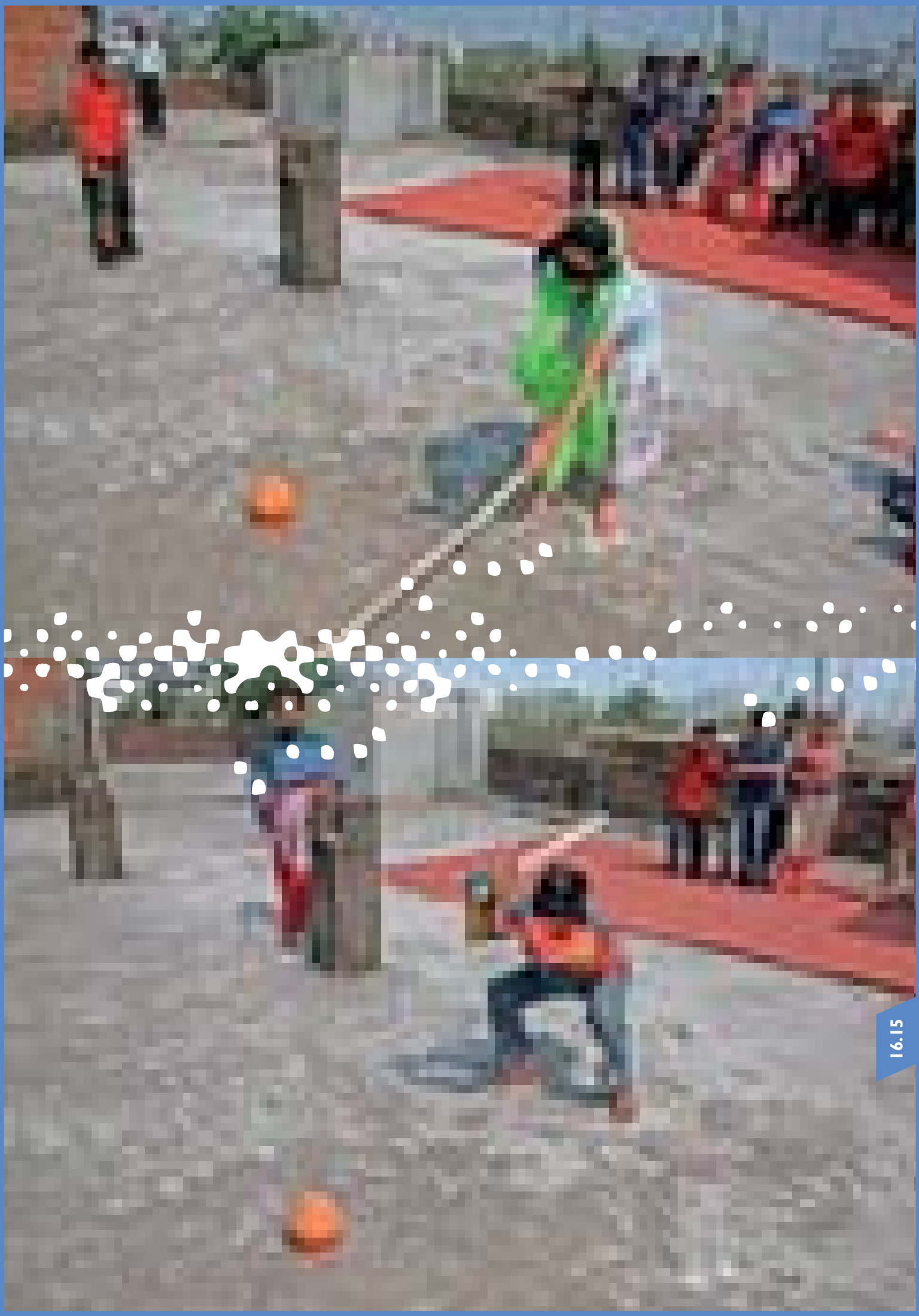
Other requirements: No

Rules of the game:

1. Place the pot ten meters away from the group of children.
2. Blindfold one child and hand over the stick.
3. Turn the child around a few times and turn him or her in the direction of the pot.
4. The blindfolded child with the stick has to hit the pot.
5. The children can decide whether they want to guide the blindfolded child verbally, or they can decide to remain mum.
6. Participants take turns to try and hit the pot blindfolded.
7. When the pot is totally smashed, the game is over.

Skills and benefits derived from the game:

- If the children decide to guide the blindfolded child towards the pot, the game teaches the children team spirit instead of competitiveness
- If the children guide the blindfolded child, he or she develops trust in others
- Concentration
- Strengthens sense of direction



16.15

16.16

Wheat, bread, cake

Participants: Minimum 6

Age range: From 8 years and up

Where: Outdoors

Duration: 10-15 minutes

Paraphernalia: Chalk if played on solid ground, or a stick if played on gravel

Other requirements: No

Rules of the game:

1. The children elect or select a baker.
2. The children form a wide circle and draw one big circle with the perimeter at their feet.
3. The baker stands in the middle of the circle and can move about as much as he or she wants to.
4. Everyone around the circle tries to touch the baker.
5. The first time a child touches the baker, he or she says, "Wheat," second time, "Bread," and third time, "Cake." This continues over and over.
6. If a child crosses into the circle while trying to touch the baker, he or she will have to join the baker in the middle.
7. When everyone is in the circle the game ends.

Skills and benefits derived from the game:

- Team spirit
- Concentration
- Coordination

The crocodile lake – version one

Participants: 10 and up

Age range: From 10 years and up

Where: Outdoors

Duration: 20-25 minutes

Paraphernalia: None, but the children may decide to draw the game layout on the ground using either chalk or a stick if the game is played on gravel

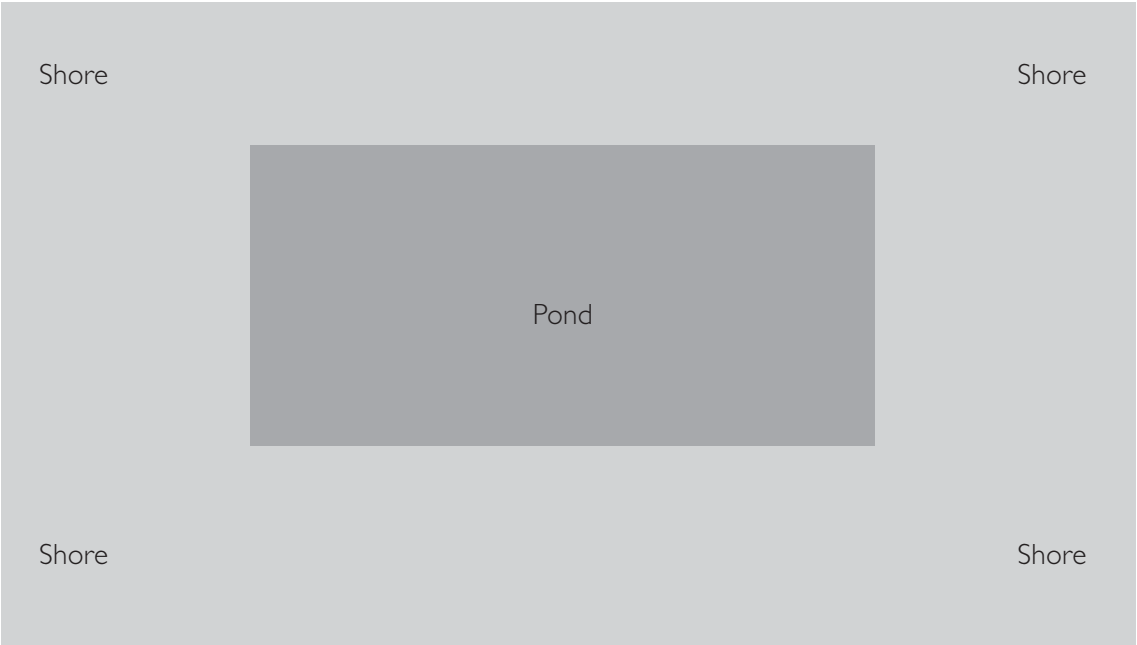
Other requirements: No

16.19

Rules of the game:

1. The children agree on the layout of the game, which may or may not be drawn on the ground.

The pond area looks like this:



2. Two children are elected or selected to go to the pond.
3. One child acts as if it is washing clothes at night.
4. The other child asks, "What are you doing? Are you doing laundry? Please also wash my dishes while I go to the toilet."
5. When the other child returns from the toilet, the first child realises that the other child is a crocodile and starts running away from the pond.
6. The crocodile starts chasing all the children, who then recite, "There is no crocodile, there is no crocodile."
7. The children are confined to the side of the pond where they started, while the crocodile is allowed to cover the entire area.
8. When a child is caught by the crocodile, he or she becomes the new crocodile.
9. No child can cross the pond area on his or her own. This is only possible if the children hold hands to form a bridge. The crocodile cannot eat children who are part of a bridge, but the moment the bridge is broken, the children are again confined to the area they reached when making the bridge, and they again are easy prey for the crocodile.
10. If every child manages to form a bridge and cross the pond area, the game is over.

Skills and benefits derived from the game:

- Fitness
- Concentration
- Learning to avoid danger
- Team work

The crocodile lake – version two

Participants: Minimum ten

Age range: From 8 years and up

Where: Outdoors

Duration: 10-15 minutes

Paraphernalia: Chalk if played on solid ground, stick if played on gravel

Other requirements: The children should be able to count to thirty

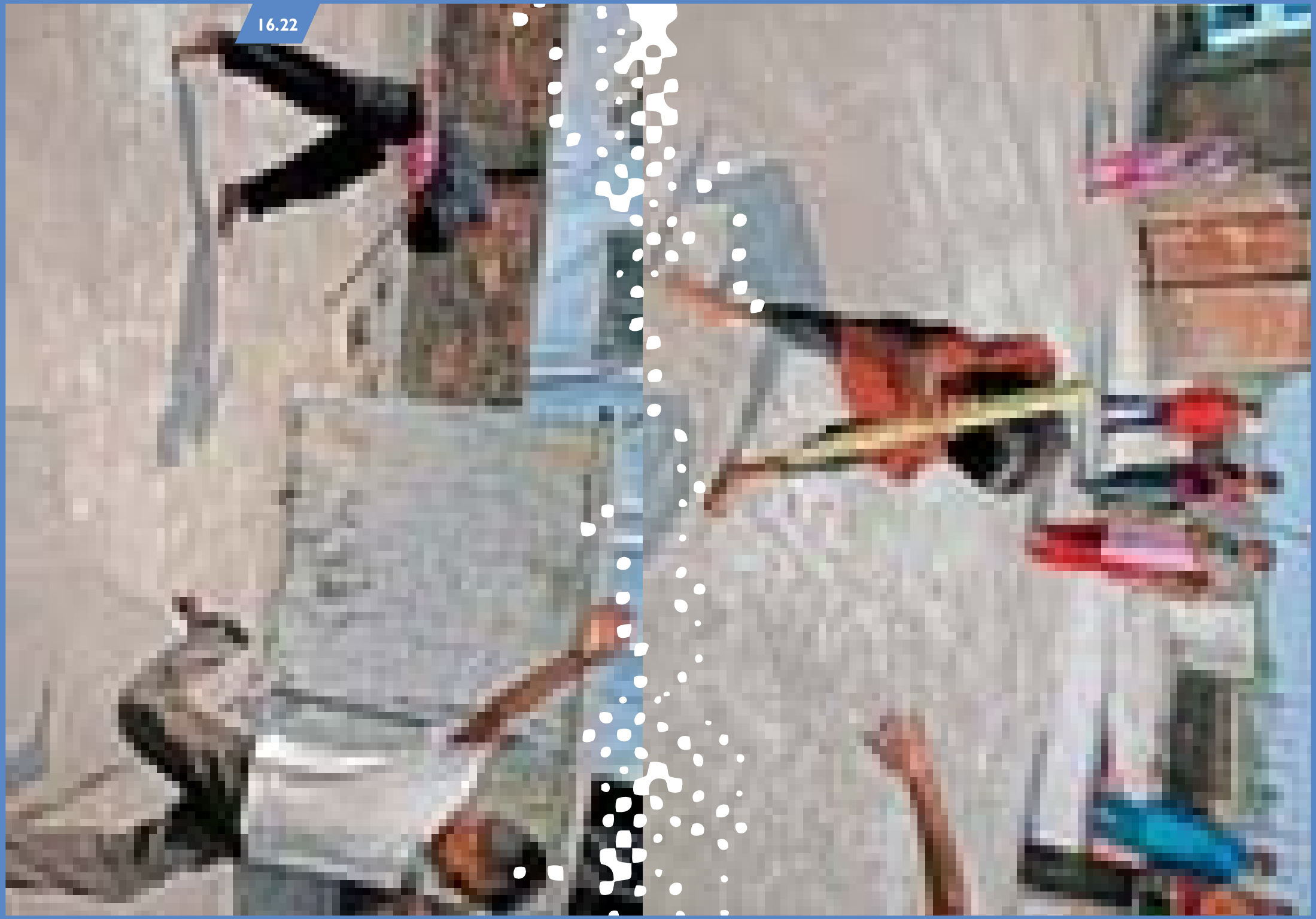
Rules of the game:

1. Draw a number of circles, or "hills," on the ground equalling the number of participants. The circles should be somewhat spread out over the entire area available, and each circle should have a diameter of about one meter.
2. A crocodile is selected or elected.
3. The crocodile counts to 30 while the rest of the children run for safety in the hills.
4. The crocodile has to catch the children while they run from hill to hill.
5. If a child is caught, he or she becomes the crocodile.

Skills and benefits derived from the game:

- Survival skills
- Fitness
- Team spirit

16.22



Tree house

Participants: Minimum 4

Age range: From 7 years and up

Where: Outdoors

Duration: 10-15 minutes

Paraphernalia: A stick if the game is played on gravel and a piece of chalk if the game is played on solid ground

Other requirements: No

Rules of the game:

1. Elect or select someone to be "it". The person who is 'it' must stand about ten metres away from the rest of the children.
2. Draw a circle and put one player with a stick in the circle.
3. Select a spot behind the person who is 'it' and declare this home base.
4. The player bends over and throws the stick between his or her legs in the direction of the person who is 'it'.
5. The person who is 'it' has to get hold of the stick first, and then he or she has to catch one of the other players before they reach home base.
6. If the person who is 'it' catches a player before he or she reaches home base, then this person is 'it'.

Skills and benefits derived from the game:

- Throwing skills
- Aiming skills
- Fitness
- Strategic planning

Leg tag

Participants: Minimum 10

Age range: From 6 years and up

Where: Outdoors

Duration: 10-15 minutes

Paraphernalia: None

Other requirements: The children should be able to count to 30

Rules of the game:

1. Select or elect someone to be the thief.
2. The thief counts to 30 while the other participants scatter.
3. The thief has to catch the other participants. If the thief catches someone by his or her leg, then this person becomes the new thief and has to bend down and hold onto his or her leg while running. If the thief touches someone elsewhere besides on the leg, then he or she is allowed to run upright while being the thief.

Skills and benefits derived from the game:

- Fitness
- Creates empathy for disabled children
- Strategic planning

16.25

Rash, kash, singara, bulbuli, musta

Participants: 4-6

Age range: From 6 years and up

Where: Indoors or out

Duration: 5-10 minutes

Paraphernalia: None

Other requirements: No, but if you think that the Bangladeshi string of words is too hard to pronounce or remember for some of the players substitute with another rhyme

Rules of the game:

1. The children sit in a circle.
2. Everyone places their hands on the floor or table with their fingers spread.
3. One person starts by counting their fingers, "Rash, kash, singara, bulbuli, musta."
4. The players must bend the finger the word "musta" lands on and not count it again.
5. The person with the last unbent finger is the winner.

Skills and benefits derived from the game:

- Improves motor skills
- Concentration

16.27

16.28

Whispering

Participants: 8-18

Age range: From 8 years and up

Where: Indoors or out

Duration: 5-10 minutes

Paraphernalia: None

Other requirements: No

Rules of the game:

1. The children sit in a circle.
2. A captain is selected or elected.
3. The captain silently thinks up a statement.
4. The captain whispers the statement to his or her neighbour.
5. The neighbour whispers what he or she heard to the next person in the circle and so forth till each child has heard the statement.
6. The captain asks the children what they heard.
7. The children who misunderstood what was said are out of the game.
8. The game re-starts with a new statement.
9. The winner is the child who understands what was said all the way through the game.

Skills and benefits derived from the game:

- Attentiveness
- Listening skills
- Dissemination skills
- Understanding the value of passing on correct messages
- If you use e.g. the names of fruits or flowers, the children may build new vocabulary

Four pieces

Participants: 4 children per one group

Age range: From 8 years and up

Where: Indoors or out

Duration: 10-15 minutes

Paraphernalia: Four pieces from a broken clay pot. Alternatively four coins or dice may be used

Other requirements: The children must be able to count

Rules of the game:

1. The children sit in a circle.
2. One child takes the four pieces and drops them on the ground.
3. If the outside part of a piece faces up, it is worth five points. If the inside part faces up, no points are awarded.
4. The children take turns till one child has 50 points.

Skills and benefits derived from the game:

- Counting and calculating
- Concentration

16.31

16.32

The baby

Participants: 10-20

Age range: From 6 years and up

Where: Indoors or out

Duration: 10-15 minutes

Paraphernalia: A doll or an item that can act as a doll e.g. a jug, a bottle or a pillow

Other requirements: No

Rules of the game:

1. The children sit or stand in a circle.
2. Explain to the children that this game shows how a mother takes care of and loves her baby.
3. One by one the children hold the baby and pretend to be the mother.
4. When each child has had a turn, the children unanimously decide who performed the best.

Skills and benefits derived from the game:

- Awareness of how to show love and affection
- How to do role plays
- How to fight shyness

Hide and seek

Participants: 10-20

Age range: From 8 years and up

Where: Outdoors or indoors with a small group of children if the house has more than one room or places to hide

Duration: 10-15 minutes

Paraphernalia: None

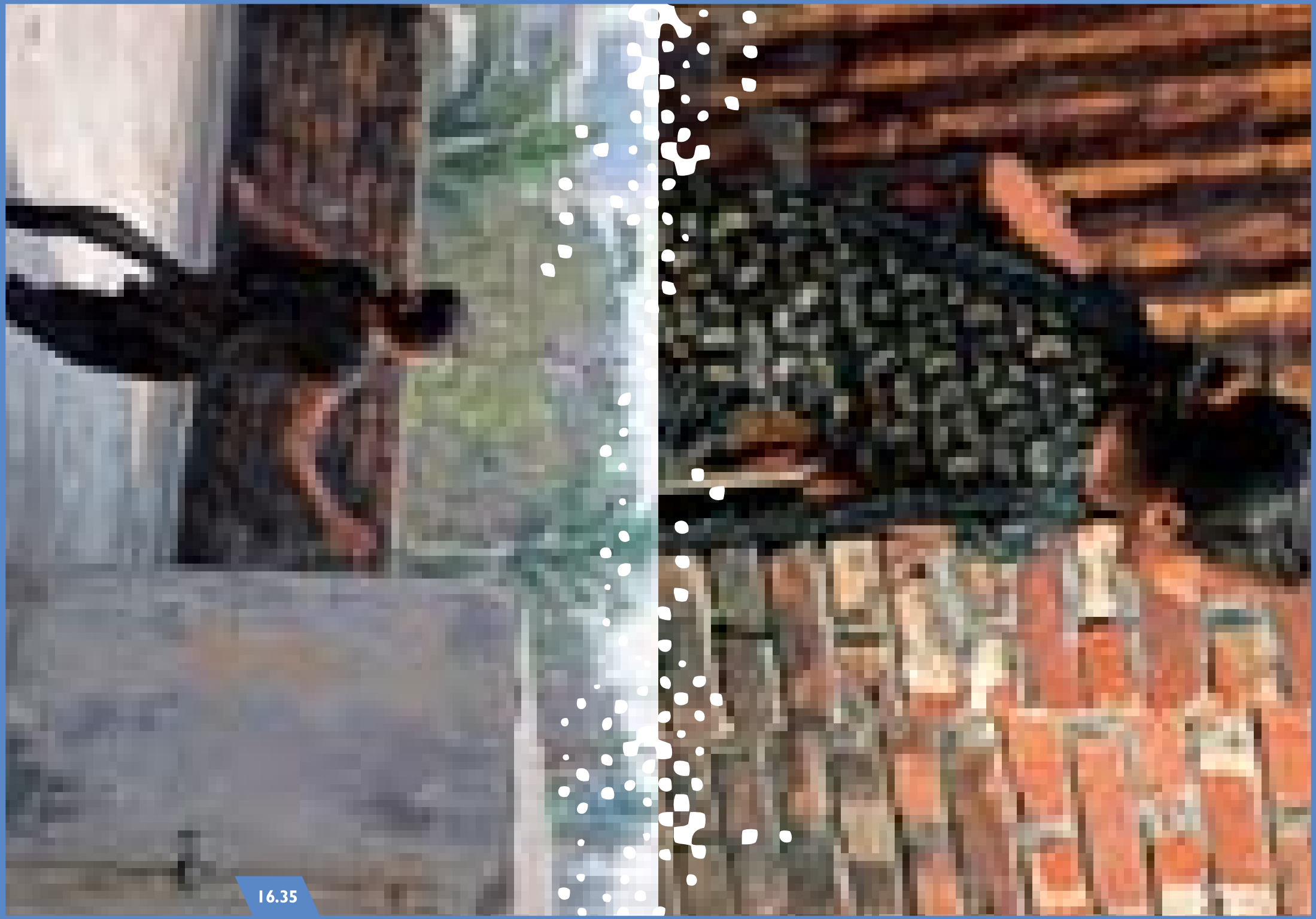
Other requirements: The children should be able to count to 30

Rules of the game:

1. One child is selected or elected to be the policeman. The rest are robbers.
2. The policeman closes his or her eyes and counts to 30 while the robbers hide.
3. The policeman then has to find all the robbers.

Skills and benefits derived from the game:

- The children get to know their area or the house very well
- Courage
- Concentration and silence
- How to hide in an urgent situation



16.35

16.36

Cops and robbers

Participants: 4 but several groups can play at the same time

Age range: From 8 years and up

Where: Indoors or out

Duration: 10-15 minutes

Paraphernalia: Paper and pen

Other requirements: At least one child or an adult facilitator must be able to count

Rules of the game:

1. Write the word 'gentleman', 'police', 'robber' and 'thief' on four separate pieces of paper. If the children cannot read and write, agree on a set of symbols to use instead.
2. Fold the papers, mix them and let them fall to the floor or table.
3. Each child picks one piece of paper and secretly reads his or her role.
4. Only the policeman lets him or herself be known to the other children as the policeman has to guess who is who. The policeman automatically starts with 80 points.
5. If the policeman identifies the gentleman, he gets 90 points. If he identifies the robber, he gets 60 points. If he identifies the thief he gets 40 points. However, if the policeman guesses wrong, he gets zero points, and the gentleman, the robber and the thief get to keep their points.
6. The game can end after one round, or the children can continue till someone has e.g. 1,000 points.

Skills and benefits derived from the game:

- Counting skills
- Concentration
- Ability to pay attention

Necklace - necklace

Participants: 8-16

Age range: From 8 years and up

Where: Outdoors

Duration: 10-15 minutes

Paraphernalia: A thin necklace or any other item small enough fit into a fist and a piece of chalk to draw on solid ground or a stick to draw in gravel

Other requirements: No

Rules of the game:

1. Draw a line on the ground.
2. Divide the children into two teams.
3. Select or elect which team will have the necklace first.
4. The teams stand opposite each other on either side of the line about seven to ten metres away from the line.
5. The team with the necklace stands close together in a circle and hands the necklace secretly to one teammate before turning to face the other team with outstretched arms with their fists closed but visible.
6. The other team has to guess which hand the necklace is in.
7. If the team guesses correctly, one team member gets to jump as far as possible towards the line in the middle. If the guess is incorrect, someone from the team with the necklace gets to jump towards the line.
8. And then vice versa. The opposing team hides the necklace, and the other team gets to guess etc. With each round, the person who jumps will gradually approach the line.
9. The group that reaches the line first wins.

Skills and benefits derived from the game:

- Team spirit
- Increased ability to figure things out
- Concentration
- Jumping skills
- Learn to keep a secret

16.39

16.40

Back to back

Participants: 4-14

Age range: 12 years and up

Where: Outdoors with lots of open space

Duration: 10-15 minutes

Paraphernalia: A tennis ball or any other ball

Other requirements: No

Rules of the game:

1. One player throws the ball into the air while everyone else tries to catch it.
2. The one who catches the ball tries to hit another player in the back with the ball.
3. If the player manages to hit another player's back, he or she is allowed to throw the ball into the air again, and the game starts all over.
4. If the player with the ball does not hit anyone, the player is out of the game.

Skills and benefits derived from the game:

- Fitness
- Throwing and catching skills
- Preparedness
- Attentiveness
- Speed
- Overview of a situation

Stop and go

Participants: 10 and up

Age range: From 8 years and up

Where: Outdoors

Duration: 10-15 minutes

Paraphernalia: None

Other requirements: No

Rules of the game:

1. One person is selected or elected to be 'it'. The person who is 'it' can participate in the game, but some children find that it is easier to play if the person who is 'it' remains outside the circle and also acts as a judge.
2. The participants line up in a circle with their backs to each other and put their hands on the shoulders of the person in front of them.
3. With an arm's distance between them, everyone walks in a circle until the person who is 'it' tells them to let go of the person in front of them, but to continue walking.
4. The person who is 'it' eventually shouts, "stop."
5. Anyone who does not stop or who touches the person in front of them is out.
6. For each "stop" the children must move faster and faster while the circle gradually grows smaller.
7. The last child remaining in the circle is the winner.

Skills and benefits derived from the game:

- Alertness
- Listening skills
- Speed

16.43

16.44

Apple, banana, watermelon

Participants: Minimum 6

Age range: From 6 years and up

Where: Indoors or out

Duration: 10-15 minutes

Paraphernalia: None

Other requirements: No

Rules of the game:

1. The children sit or stand in a circle.
2. The children take turns miming a fruit, or a flower, or whatever category of items the children have chosen to mime.
3. The other children have to guess what the child is miming.

Skills and benefits derived from the game:

- Learn new vocabulary
- Role playing skills
- Concentration
- Using their imaginations

Obey

Participants: Minimum 6

Age range: From 8 years and up

Where: Indoors or out

Duration: 5-10 minutes

Paraphernalia: None

Other requirements: No

Rules of the game:

1. Form a circle.
2. Select or elect someone to be 'it'.
3. The person who is 'it' shows or tells the children what they have to do – clap, jump, sing, dance etc.
4. When an action has been carried out, the person who is 'it' selects a new person to be 'it' and to give the next order.

Skills and benefits derived from the game:

- Ability to understand an instruction
- Listening skills
- Fitness

16.47

17. What works and what does not work

- Advocacy case stories to learn from

Making dirty work clean

Scavengers fight for proper payment, better health and less bullying

Most Bangladeshi scavengers are young children, and many people regard these children as trash. The young scavengers, who suffer tremendously from acute lack of care, struggle to survive work-related diseases they rarely earn enough to treat. To combat some of the problems, a scavengers' child-led organisation asked their adult facilitator to help them address scrap shop owners. The children had already drafted a long list of problems, and if they were to solve any of them, support from the scrap shopkeepers was essential.

Scrap prices are based on the day-to-day demand from recycling plants, but the children complained that the scrap shopkeepers were unwilling to disclose the actual price for plastic, metal and other items. The scrap shopkeepers were also moody, because every so often child scavengers would ask a scrap shopkeeper for advance payment and loans, only to stay away from his shop in the future in order to avoid paying back the money.

The children also suffered regularly from food poisonings: "We were not aware of hygiene, and we didn't have any soap to wash our dirty hands after work. The job is hard, and we normally don't have any money till we finish a day's work, so the moment we'd sold our scraps we'd go straight to a food stall, and we would eat with our filthy fingers. We also cannot afford shoes or boots and gloves, so we either walk barefoot or with flip-flops that easily tear, and we get lots of infected cuts. We also slip sometimes when we wear flip-flops," explain the children, who also suffer from coughs due to the odour, dust and bacteria from the garbage.

During a series of meetings, the children convinced members of the Scrap Shopkeepers' Association to buy soap. The shop owners only hand over the children's payment when the children have washed their hands and feet so no one is tempted to skip the hygiene part. Wounds are also cleansed with antiseptic and bandaged at the scrap shops, and the shop owners have equipped all of the children with masks.

The children have made a deal with the scrap shop owners: If all shop owners post a daily price list, indebted children must sell to the same owner every day till all advances are cleared. Gradually, mutual irritation has developed into a congenial relationship where everybody benefits from the growing respect.

Then, there were all the problems with the local community accusing the children of stealing. Every now and then the children stage a drama about their lives for the community, and with the help of an adult partner organisation the children worked out banners, posters and leaflets informing the community about children's rights and scavengers' living conditions. The children also invited the community leaders to their child-led organisation to let them experience for themselves that the children are nothing but that - children.

The children have yet to get their rubber boots and gloves. The agreement was that the shopkeepers and the children would pay fifty-fifty, but so far the children have not been able to pay their share.

Lessons learned:

- *Children may be able to save and pay smaller amounts, but a pair of rubber boots costs 400 to 500 taka (USD 6-7). Even half is an impossible amount for a child labourer who cannot pay for a piece of soap.*

- *Give and take deals always work better. When the children promise to come regularly to the same shop and pay back loans, the shopkeepers benefit and are therefore more likely to accept demands from the children, too.*

- *Although the prospect of cash benefits almost always is the best motivation for giving into claims made through advocacy campaigns, the scavengers' story shows that it is possible to dig into peoples' hearts and make them feel that scavengers are also children. Today, some scrap shopkeepers just plain enjoy the improved relationship with the children, and over time a sense of responsibility has grown in them for these neglected children.*

Helping the papaya grow

Child farmers have enhanced safety in agriculture and grow better crops

Most indigenous communities are tucked away in remote areas where news from the outside world is rare. While these communities fight hard to maintain their traditions in Bangladesh, some have also begun realising that you do not necessarily lose your language and culture just because you give into modern ways of earning an income. This is why indigenous children, fed up with long hours under dangerous conditions on slippery hillsides and poor crops, joined forces.

"In the beginning we couldn't even meet because we worked from early morning till night every day. We just met briefly during our lunch break to learn about child rights, health, and nutrition, and we realised that everybody's main problem was work," explains one girl.

The children asked their adult partner organisation to help them shape their campaign for better working conditions. They also formed a small committee to take a closer look at what the children liked and

disliked about their work, and what they felt were good and bad cultivation practices.

"Although we worked very hard, our papaya trees were attacked by insects. Other crops were not growing well either, but we had no clue about how to overcome these problems," recounts one boy. "Our adult facilitator suggested that we talk to the Department of Agriculture in the capital. He knew that the department sometimes provides courses in modern farming."

The officials in the department were surprised and admitted that they had never considered that children need training. This led to a two-day course in papaya cultivation. The children learned about the importance of quality seeds, special hybrid plants for hilly areas, the proper distance between plants, sun shades for sprouts, and natural, cheap fertilizers like cow dung and many other things the children had never even heard about.

"Earlier we just put the hillsides on fire before we threw our own seeds from last season on the ground. Very few plants actually sprouted," recalls one girl.

The agricultural officer now pays regular visits to the children's villages to encourage and give advice, and the children have turned a corner of their children's space into a library with books on agriculture. Those who can read do so aloud for the rest of the children. Child-led organisations also have produced a booklet about the most popular crops, their nutritious value and the proper way to cultivate them. The booklet is based on illustrations so every one of the villagers understands the message.

The children planned a puppet show about modern agriculture and what hazards to avoid, and they have printed posters and leaflets about practices that enhance safety in agriculture. One child-led organisation is digging into old, but valuable traditions for bringing clean cloth and antiseptics to clean cuts right away when an accident happens on the hillside. They also bring half a meter of rope to wrap around an arm or leg in the event of snake bites. All remedies are put in a hand-woven bag with a shoulder strap. The bag is big enough to contain a machete, since this is by far safer than hand carrying these big knives. The children have placed a billboard next to the path leading to the hills, "just to remind people about these tips."

The children have also made a pledge to wear caps or bandanas to protect their heads against the sun and sandals to avoid cuts from stones and roots. If the bandanas are clean, they can be used as bandages, too.

In the beginning, the parents were not happy to see their children spending what they thought to be unproductive hours in a child-led organisation. This changed dramatically the moment the little papayas started growing faster than ever. The parents also appreciate that the children who usually communicate in their own indigenous languages have learned to speak fluent Bangla thanks to their interaction with the Department of Agriculture. Although the indigenous communities fear losing their own language, Bangla is essential when they trade with Bengalis, or if they want to leave the indigenous area in search of jobs or education.

"Our next plan is to learn modern ginger and turmeric cultivation," say the elated children. "Later we may even have our own food processing plant and markets in our villages so we don't have to spend time and money bringing our goods to the city."

Lessons learned:

- *Although this advocacy project is carried out by indigenous groups, their experiences may well be transferred into other communities. The problems, conditions and solutions may differ, but many farmers in developing countries often suffer from severe lack of knowledge about modern agricultural techniques.*

- *What may seem like minor changes from the outside in behaviour may have long-term impact. Cheap and readily available bandages and antiseptic mean fewer infections, less sick leave and fewer expenses for doctors and drugs.*

- *Sustainability is almost automatically ensured when an advocacy campaign results in practical knowledge. Even if a child-led organisation ceases to exist, the knowledge remains with the children and their communities.*

- *Child-led activities have to be extremely relevant if a busy child labourer is to be interested. The children hardly paid heed to the child-led organisations till they found out that they were able to upgrade the most important part of their lives - their livelihood - by receiving help from the child-led organisation.*

A school tailor made for working children

Small scale business children claim education on their own terms

While some child-led organisations opt for advocating that government schools admit child labourers free of charge, other children establish their own schools.

Members of a child-led organisation in a village in the north eastern part of Bangladesh were too timid to admit that they could not even spell their own names. However, the children were not eager to join the local government school since long days with many lessons would mean less time to work and a subsequent reduction in income. The school also required exam fees, and children beyond a certain age were not welcome in the first grade. Initially, the children convinced an older friend to teach, but she left after a while and never returned.

"We made a drama to show people our problems, and we drew the school we would like to have. Then we met the headmaster and the School Management Committee and other influential people and told them that "this is the school we would like to have." The headmaster said we could use one of his classrooms in the early morning. The mayor promised to donate school books, but nobody agreed to pay for a teacher."

Later the children had a series of meetings with parents and community representatives. Their parents suggested that they pay 15 taka monthly for each child. This would add up to 450 taka that could be turned into a salary, but the headmaster did not like the poor parents to pay anything. Finally, he himself volunteered to pay 50 taka, and someone else donated money too, and a man, who did not mind the low salary, was hired as a teacher. Then, the government school headmaster donated books, and the children were given access to a room every morning.

The whole process took more than a year. "It was so difficult. We invited the mayor to meetings, but he did not come. He promised to provide books, but he did not. He said he would visit the school, but he did not. The only thing he did was to inaugurate the school when our parents and the community finally established the school," remember the children who almost abandoned their dream of education in the process.

The children agree that their break-through came when they helped their adult partner organisation distribute relief during a flood. "The people in the community imagined they would get special support if they started listening to us."

Now the children go to school from 7.00 to 9.00 in the morning six days a week, and they have established their own Committee for the Working Children's School consisting of one child and twelve adults who have promised to run the school in the future.

The children find their education very useful. "I repair watches. Now I can figure out how much people have to pay me. They cannot cheat me any longer," says one boy. Another boy is working as a butcher, and he appreciates being able to measure how much the meat weighs. One girl has plans: "I have been working as a domestic servant, and I had no time to attend classes. Now I am too old for first grade, so I want to study in this school first and then join a government school."

The only problem remaining is space. "There are so many other child labourers in this area, and they would like to come too, but we cannot accommodate any more children in one classroom," say the children.

Lessons learned:

- *Many organisations advocate that child labourers should have free admission to government schools. This may seem like the easiest, cheapest and most sustainable way of breaking the cycle of illiteracy. However, there is a reason that these children have either opted for work instead of school or have dropped out. The government school system, with its rigid opening hours, rote learning methods and discipline is often disliked by child labourers from illiterate families with no tradition for education. These children will always be at risk of dropping out, and they need close supervision, tuition and money for fees if they are to pass exams. Even then, most child labourers seem to dream about education, but on their own terms and in keeping with their own needs. When the children get to shape their own school, the sense of ownership and belongingness will make them feel like continuing, even when a question is hard to solve or a word refuses to be spelled.*

- *Working with politicians is always tricky. Politicians do not always keep their own promises. While most people may notice what politicians promise, only those who were supposed to benefit from the promises insist that the promises be fulfilled. This is why it is always a good idea to make sure agreements are listed in official documents, or that there is media coverage of the process to ensure that politicians are held responsible towards the whole community.*

Pedalling in more money with less effort

Young rickshaw drivers and their quest for more savings and less suffering

Many Bangladeshi boys pedal rickshaws for a living. Some of these rickshaw boys have left behind their families in the villages, and rickshaw garages have become the focal point of their lives. They live there, they work there, and their only adult contact is the adult rickshaw pullers, the rickshaw and garage owners and their

passengers. Once a month the boys hand over all their money to a trusted bus driver who takes the money back to their families in the villages.

Members of a child-led organisation noticed how hard these boys worked, and together with the young rickshaw pullers they decided to look into how they could improve their quality of life.

As the children had left home to make money, income is the issue. The child-led organisation's aim was thus to reduce the daily rent for a rickshaw from 80 to 70 taka and the half-day lease from 50 to 40 taka. The children found that this amount was realistic, and they argued that children have less strength than adults and tire out faster, so they pedal slower and carry fewer passengers, which means they earn less than adult rickshaw pullers.

The child-led organisation also discovered that the boys struggled to pay the rent for their sleeping arrangement in the workshops and they decided to try to knock off five taka from the 15-20 taka a day the rickshaw owners were demanding.

When the problems and solutions were identified, the child-led organisation asked their adult facilitators and community leaders to help them talk to the rickshaw owners. This was the toughest part, according to the children. "We arranged many meetings, but the owners just stayed away. Then we organised a debate competition in which the owners argued about their side of the issue, and the children argued about theirs. The judge was an influential person from our area. The participants were given bags donated by Save the Children Sweden-Denmark. The rickshaw owners were proud to receive the bags."

The children began drawing and photographing the rickshaw pullers' lives, and they took the exhibition all over Dhaka city on a rickshaw van.

"Initially, the adults paid no heed to us. Then, we ran a big campaign with theatre, meetings and speeches. We also invited people to visit our children's space, and they thought 'wow, they are really doing something.' When we have an activity, we always invite a key guest other people would like to see."

Still, some of the rickshaw owners were reluctant. The children invited them out for a dinner in a nice restaurant and promised to make rules for children's behaviour too, if the owners would agree to treat the children better.

"We have now produced signboards stating some rules that we and the rickshaw owners have agreed to follow. They have to treat us well, but we also have to behave well. The rickshaw owners now realise that others respect them for what they do."

Or, as the rickshaw owners say: "We have definitely changed our behaviour, because before we were not even aware that someone below 18 years of age is considered a child, and yet we never believed that they could do what they have done to improve their working conditions."

According to the employers the agreements have been an altogether profitable experience: "When we treat the children better, they become better workers and pay more attention to their duties. And the children who go to school can help us calculate and maintain accounts."

Lessons learned:

- *Most child labourers quickly grasp the idea of having rules to regulate their relations with adult employers. The tricky part is how to limit the demands so that the employers will eventually accept them too. Unrealistic demands, or too many demands, can derail the process, while a few, well-formulated and fair demands are harder to reject.*

- *Coupling demands with promises often convinces employers.*

Small improvements make a world of difference

Monitoring of small scale businesses has led to better working conditions

What seem to be very small improvements may make a world of difference. This has been proven by teams of children who monitor small businesses like shops, tea stalls, small eateries and tradesmen's workshops in their towns and villages.

"When we formed our child-led organisation, we knew we wanted to do something for working children. We were in doubt whether their employers would listen to us. We realised that we had to involve adults, so we met with the villagers and our parents and shared our thoughts. The villagers suggested involving the elected members and the mayor of the local government. Our adult facilitator also told us to find out what really happens in the small shops, eateries and workshops, so we went there with our camera before we invited local government officials, elected members, influential people and other community representatives. We exhibited the pictures and some drawings, and the local government representatives told us that the employers' misbehaviour had to stop. It was very encouraging," recount members of one child-led organisation.

Then, the children convinced the employers to let the children participate in a meeting. The children told about all their problems in detail. Later, a child-led organisation invited the employers and their young employees for a joint meeting.

"The most supportive employers agreed to convince other employers, and the mayor asked us to specify our demands. We came up with a long list that we presented in front of eighty or ninety employers and all the children, and we suggested that the demands be printed on the back side of the trade licenses. If the employers violated the demands, the mayor would confiscate their licences. But when we checked with the police, we found that this was not legal, so instead we printed the most important demands on laminated paper, and the mayor distributed these to every shop. He also hung a poster with the demands on the wall in his office."

Now, the children visit the shops, workshops, tea stalls and restaurants once a month to see if changes are occurring. Child labourers often sleep in beds covered by mosquito nets now instead of lying on the floor, and many shops show off new first aid kits to be used by their child labourers if they cut themselves. Antiseptics and bandages help the children avoid infections, expensive visits to doctors and heavy expenditures for antibiotics. This also limits the number of days the employers have to do without their child labourers due to illness.

"We invited the employers again to thank them, and we asked for permission to visit their shops three times a month. They agreed."

Lessons learned:

- *It is important to check if the activities you want to carry out are legal. If not, you should not give up but find another way forward.*
- *You do not have to achieve a lot make a big difference.*
- *It is important to institutionalise your demands so they are generally agreed upon, known, visible to all, and subsequently respected.*
- *Most people are willing to cooperate if the demands are fair.*

Safety on wheels

Boys in the transport sector request safety for everyone

The transport sector in Bangladesh attracts a large amount of young boys who work as ticket sellers, stow luggage, help passengers on board, maintain vehicles, hawk their goods on busses, and many other day-to-day tasks. However, the traffic is erratic, and respect for the boys minimal. As a result, the jobs are hazardous, underpaid and often far from home. Some of these children have joined forces to improve their working conditions.

Initially, the children discussed all their problems and listed them along with suggestions in a leaflet which is being distributed to bus drivers, adult transport workers and the police. Five-thousand copies of the leaflet were printed on A4 paper.

The leaflet instructs passengers to follow the bus regulations instead of letting their frustrations about seat distribution out on the children; passengers should pay for their tickets instead of trying to cheat the children who sell the tickets, and instead of scolding the children when they try to help them get on the bus; the passengers should appreciate the help, which is actually not even a part of a child bus helper's responsibilities. If smoking is not allowed, the passengers should not take it out on the children.

The leaflet also addresses the drivers. They are requested to provide the children with allowances and a break during long journeys. Instead of having the children and passengers jump on board when the bus is already moving, the drivers must stop the bus for safety. They must also let child hawkers on board and allow them enough time to sell their goods.

The traffic police are requested to scold drivers when they stop in a non-parking zone, instead of letting the steam out on the children. The same applies when a bus is stuck in traffic jams, where policemen sometimes hit the children instead of telling off the driver.

Damaged roads cause accidents and unforeseen bumps, so the Roads and Highway Department is requested to repair the roads and introduce speed breakers.

The children have printed the traffic rules on the front page of the

leaflet for general awareness and to make the police feel that they benefit from the campaign too, encouraging them to make an extra effort to maintain the traffic rules in the future.

The children admit that their campaign is not an easy one. "Some drivers are good, some are bad, but at least we see some changes," concludes one boy who stresses that the children "plan to meet with the bad drivers again."

"The police are very powerful, and so are some of the rich passengers. It took us two to three months to get to talk to the traffic police. But we are united, and the friendly drivers and our adult partner organisation helped us communicate with other drivers."
It took many parent meetings before they accepted their children's campaign. The parents felt it was a waste of time. "They were influenced by neighbours who do not like what we do, but now we try to involve them too. We perform drama and arrange meetings for them," explain the child-led organisation members.

Although some problems are far from being solved, the children have noticed that some drivers now wait for the hawkers to get their payment before they start the bus, and the passengers behave a bit better. The drivers also make an effort to drive smoothly so the children are not being hurled onto the bus floor. Some children get a break during long journeys, and a few receive higher wages.

Lessons learned:

- *The campaign for improved working conditions and safety for child labourers in the transport sector is based on already existing rules that the children try to have enforced. This is a very good idea, since questioning the enforcement of a law is difficult.*

- *One key issue, however, is the target group. While the drivers may be addressed at the bus stop and on the busses where the children work, and the police and the Roads and Highway Department are units that are easy to address in one go, passengers make up for a huge mass of unconnected people. How do you reach so many unconnected people from so many places? No, it is not an easy task. An advocacy activity is always more likely to succeed if you address people who are somehow connected e.g. through an association, an office, an organisation or an institution.*

Making markets child friendly

Young porters, salesmen and waiters demand mutual respect

Markets in most developing countries attract children on the outlook for an income. This also applies to Bangladesh, where markets often become scenes of desperation and everybody's pitted against each other with groups of children tugging at the arms of customers, shop

keepers shouting and adult porters and customers trying to push the children away. This situation is not at all agreeable to anyone. Therefore, several child-led organisations have developed their own models of child-friendly markets.

In Dhaka, for example, some young porters felt constantly abused by customers who tried to push down the price of carrying goods or who accused the boys of stealing; by shopkeepers who beat them and shouted; and by each other, competing viciously for income. The children found that an ID card would help them prove their attachment to the market and make their role clear to everyone. General information for customers in the form of billboards, posters and stickers about the children's rights to work at the market would make customers and others less aggressive towards them.

The children established a close cooperation with the Shopkeepers Association, which had its own interest in solving problems with the children and thereby make their market more attractive to customers. The children and the association agreed that the association should equip the children with custom made t-shirts and ID cards, and the market with suggestion boxes and huge billboards. The children also had to agree to help make the market a better place for everyone. Now the children regularly clean the entire market, and they have made rules for their own behaviour. The children take turns to address customers, and their adult facilitator provides them with basic literacy and math so they can offer better service to customers.

In other places, groups of children working in shops, eateries and workshops in market areas are in the process of establishing what they call Model Markets. Here, banners and billboards are also used to sensitise customers and communities to the children's rights and feelings. Model Markets also include codes of conduct on how children and adults have to cooperate. The children demand time and space to play, mosquito nets and proper beds for the children who sleep in the market area, protection against verbal and physical violence and punishment, healthcare if they fall sick, weekly days off, time off for education, leave for festivals with bonus and full salary, pure drinking water and fresh food. And to contribute, the children help clean the market on a regular basis, and they promise to put a full effort into their work and treat the customer as king all the time.

"Now we are saving money, and in time we can hire a teacher, because we would all like to have some education, but we only have time to learn during holidays," says one boy.

The children have also learned about hygiene, which especially benefits the owners and customers of eateries. "Now, we always check that glasses and plates are clean, and we only serve purified drinking water," explains one child waiter.

In the beginning, the shop owners would not even let the children go for a meeting in the child-led organisation. Only gradually and over the space of more than a year did the parties manage to enter into agreements supported by the local governments, who appreciate the value of housing the best markets. The Market Committees provide rooms where the children can meet, play, and receive education from their adult facilitator.

These children have also gotten ID cards. "The ID cards and my photo on the sign make me feel worthy and dignified. Now people know me," explains one boy.

As a result of these efforts, the markets have become significantly more popular, and everybody benefits. The guests in the eateries do not have to fear upset stomachs and the shop customers have a far better shopping experience. The shopkeepers and child labourers alike have more clients and thus higher incomes, not to mention a very good relationship that cannot be measured in money.

Still, the children in some of the markets are critical about their achievements. "For example, we still need a toilet if our market is to be categorised as a Model Market," they explain.

Lessons learned:

- *If the outcome of the child-led advocacy benefits all parties, it is much more likely that your advocacy activity will bear fruit.*

Coal controlled by big businessmen from far away

Children collecting coal are trying to find ways to improve working conditions

A group of Bangladeshi children collecting coal from the river bed decided to advocate for better working conditions. Skin diseases from being in the sun and water all day long, aching muscles from hard work and heavy loads and a lack of payment were a part of everyday life.

The children who work freelance and sell the collected coal to middlemen in the villages along the river initiated the process by inviting their parents to several meetings. They told their parents about how diving in water all day long or digging in the sand in the

scorching sun made them sick, and how heavy loads of coal made their bodies ache. "Our parents have to understand first," explain the children. "We never discussed these things with our parents before."

In the beginning, the parents were reluctant. They felt that their children were wasting time, but eventually, the parents formed a committee and elected a president. "We realise that what benefits our children's automatically helps us, too," conclude one group of parents.

The children also formed a Children's Forum, invited their employers, participated in fairs in the local community and began performing their own songs accompanied by drawings of their work situation. "Unfortunately, the coal buyers say they have no money, and they do not want to meet with us again. Basically, they are not interested in our claims. They want to know how they themselves would benefit. So they are still cheating us and threaten to buy their coal from someone else. They are also very scattered and working independently, so even if one or two are friendly to us, the good ones cannot influence the rest," explain the children. The local coal buyers depend on the payment offered by big scale businessmen in Dhaka who control the coal market and therefore can get away with paying next to nothing to the local buyers.

Still, the children feel that something has changed for the better. For example, their parents used to treat the children's eczema with kerosene oil. A painful and useless solution. Now the children's adult facilitator is trying to connect the children with a health organisation in the area so they can get proper treatment. The facilitator is also trying to register fifty children into a non-formal school in the area, but this takes time as both organisations have to get permission from their headquarters in Dhaka.

Some children also have started collecting fire wood from the hills instead. Another hazardous occupation, but according to the children slightly better than collecting coal. And groups of children have initiated their own night schools, where literate children teach illiterate children. They do not meet regularly, since they are dependent upon the literate children's availability and the participants' ability to buy kerosene for the lamps they need to light up where they study in the village.

Despite numerous let downs, the children are ready to continue.

"We are organised now. Before we started our child-led organisation we did not know each other, and we learned a great deal from our adult facilitator. Whatever we learn we share with others. Before we just hung around and wasted our time. Now we spend our time learning. Now we know how to pay respect to other people, and they respect us. We'd never spoken to adults, or in front of an audience before. We perform drama and we discuss our problems and how to solve them. We have understood that long working hours, heavy loads, lack of payment and no school or leisure time are not ok. But many more children work at the river bed, so we want to make them all members. When we are united, we are stronger, and we may be able to establish our own coal cooperative. As it is, everyone, also outsiders, can collect coal, and this means there is a general shortage. We have learned that other coal collecting areas have formed a local committee to keep out strangers. Maybe we could do the same here."

Lessons learned:

- *Without a specific association of employers to target, it is very hard to convince everyone that they have to provide better conditions.*

- *Without access to the real decision makers, advocacy is unlikely to change things fundamentally.*

- *If parents and employers are to support the advocacy demands, they have to benefit too.*

- *Creating networks with other organisations takes a significant amount of time and may not work out. All organisations have their own systems, budgets, and target groups, and it is hard for them to make space for new children.*

- *Child-led schools may work, but often meet irregularly as the teaching children may be busy, easily become bored or grow up.*

- *Activities that entail expenses are not always sustainable. Children's lives change from day to day, and even if the intentions are good, someone in the family may fall sick, or a child loses his or her job and subsequently has no money to pay for e.g. kerosene.*

Steel industries and jute mills are hard to access

Young factory workers want safety equipment

Among the workers in Bangladesh's steel industries are many young men and boys. Often, they handle red hot iron bars bare handed and wear only flip-flops. "When you make a mistake and a bar falls onto your feet, it burns to the bone very swiftly. The bars are way too hot," explains a boy. Therefore, a child-led organisation decided to advocate for proper safety equipment being introduced in the steel industry.

"You cannot imagine how dangerous it is in the steel factories. There is a huge furnace, and the heat is intolerable. Children work eighteen hours at night, and if you try to negotiate with the employers they just tell you to quit the job, or they withhold your salary. When we made posters to show our working conditions, the factory owners threatened us. We are really scared, but we still try to negotiate for safety equipment for child workers through Theatre for Development and rallies. We have been successful in a few places, but most children still work at night without helmets, safety boots and gloves, and the guards won't even let the rest of us through the front gate, so we have no chance of measuring whether there is any progress," explains the child-led organisation members.

While the floor supervisor is generally friendly with the children, the higher level management and the factory owners rarely pay any heed to the dangers in their factories. Although the owners are described as "multimillionaires" by the children, they refuse to spend money for safety equipment. Furthermore, the children rarely meet the owners directly as they normally live in Dhaka. And when the children actually managed to convince the supervisors in a few factories that they should agree to rules for good behaviour and hang a signboard with the rules in the factory, the factory owners demanded that the signboards be removed immediately.

Similar problems were experienced by children who tried to access factories and jute mills in other areas of Bangladesh. "In the jute mills there are manuals and rules for workers' safety, but no one follows them, and it has taken us a very long time just to be allowed inside," explains a group of children that works to introduce safety equipment and codes of conduct in the jute mills in their area.

Lessons learned:

- *The formal sector is a whole lot harder to target than the informal sector. The formal sector works under the blessing of laws and is somewhat supported by the government, even if the factory owners break the laws, since they generate large amounts of money. The owners of these factories are fully aware of the world's dislike of child labourers working under hazardous conditions, so even if you get to enter the factory it is likely that the children are hidden. Having child labourers is good for business. Normally they do not make heavy demands, and they are easier to handle than adults.*

Child-led web by and about, but hardly for, Bangladeshi children

Children learn web design and establish their own website.

While most adult-led organisations are present on the Internet, this is rare for child-led organisations. Or, if they are there, it is often in an adult-led version. This fact inspired some children in Dhaka to recommend that they learn how to initiate and maintain websites. They wanted their own Bangla language website by, for and about Bangladeshi children, and they thought that mastering web design would be a potential source of income.

The children were already organised in their own well-established child-led organisation, and they were cooperating on other issues with an adult-led organisation with knowledge about web programming in Bangla script. Save the Children Sweden-Denmark provided a salary for the web trainer, and the children received allowances to cover their loss of income during the six months the training lasted.

The young web team, consisting of working children with little or no prior access to the Internet, initially participated in a brief introduction to the Internet and they spent a few hours surfing to grasp how the Internet functions. Then, they drafted what they would like their own website to look like, and what the content should be. The children selected some people to be reporters and others to receive the graphic design and programming training.

As most children were very eager to join the latter group, an adult facilitator helped the children look critically into who would in fact be able to participate in the training. The facilitator listed all the interested children's names on the white board and one by one they looked into their availability, and how many other activities the children were involved in. Some basic literacy skills were needed, and the group would have to contain both boys and girls of a certain age. If they were too young, they would not be able to find paid assignments afterwards.

Ultimately, the training was extended to last eight months as the children had problems learning the entire curriculum in six months. Still, the children feel there are many gaps that remain to be filled.

"We had no place to practice after the training ended, so we quickly forgot a great deal. And we did not learn enough, so we are not as specialised and professional as proper web designers and this makes it difficult for us to get jobs. We were also supposed to get certificates, but we never got any, so we cannot prove that we received any training," explain the children.

Today, a couple of the young web designers get freelance assignments, but most of the children have not touched a computer since the training stopped.

The website by, for and about Bangladeshi children has also stalled. Although the children were provided with a computer and Internet access, the computer broke down, was repaired and is now being used for other purposes. "We were quite young, and we did not know how to handle a computer without adult supervision," explain the children.

Last, but not least the child-led website is not easily accessible for the target group. Although more Bangladeshi children have access to the Internet today, most of them belong to a relatively small and affluent group. Furthermore, the website is heavily decorated with many flash components, and it is either a lengthy process to open it on a slow, Bangladeshi net connection, or in some situations altogether impossible.

Still, the children hope to get a chance to use their skills. "Now we are becoming adults, and if we can work out a proper lesson plan and get hold of some old computers, we can teach younger children. We will just charge a small fee, because our training was free."

Lessons learned:

- *Non-formal training is often not of a quality that leads to jobs, and you produce very frustrated children if you do not make this very clear to them from the beginning.*

- *Even if the quality of the training is ok, young people neither have the network nor the self-confidence to convince others to pay them for their work.*

- *You cannot expect children to take care of expensive equipment and regular updates of a website without adult facilitation.*

- *Running a website is time consuming, and working children generally are busy earning money, so if they cannot see immediate benefits, they will move onto something that makes more sense.*

- *Although the children were told that the use of flash and many illustrations would make the web site hard to open outside Dhaka where net connections are slower, they decided to follow their love for lots of colour and all the opportunities the Internet has to offer. However, if the objective is for the website to be used by children other than the web team or in large cities, adults are responsible for making it very clear that there are some rules to follow.*

- *See the children's website at www.ichcheymedia.org*

18. The Toolbox

Never expect children to sit for hours talking and talking and talking. You want to use a large variety of different tools and games to spice up the day.

The same applies to the people you want to target with your advocacy. Experience shows that people are more likely to change their minds and behaviour if they get the message in a variety of ways.

The *Toolbox* contains numerous ideas that you can use when you help children organise themselves, when you enter the advocacy planning process, and last but not least, when you carry out your advocacy.

Some tools might overlap, or they may be used for different purposes. You may also know of other tools that are not included in this handbook. It is all up to you – adding your imagination and your own ideas only make advocacy stronger and the process more fun.

The *Creative Communication for Change* training sessions for adults mentioned in chapter 15 also contain a lot of relevant information that may help you when you start looking into tools and target groups.

The sections below are arranged alphabetically.

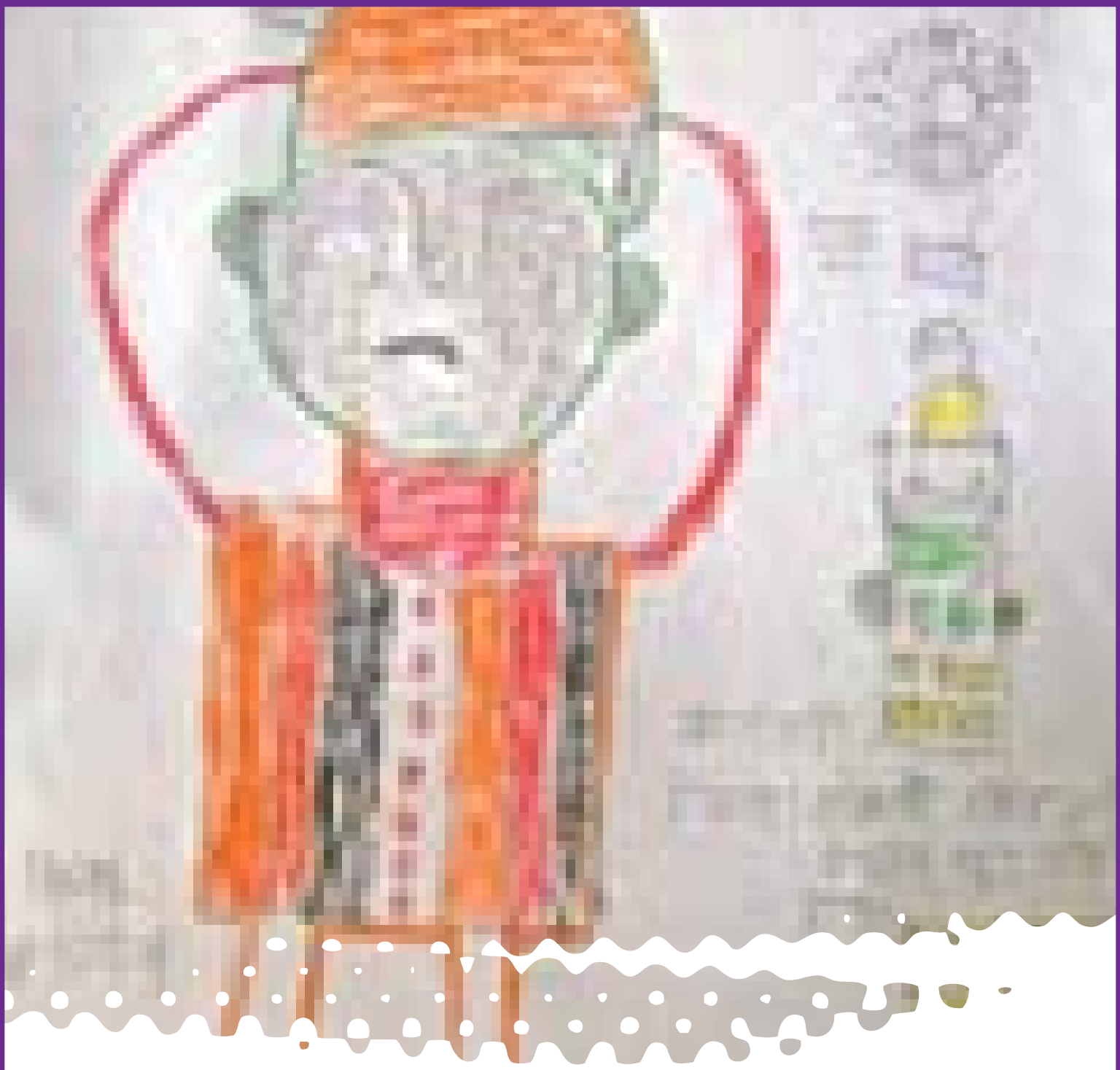
Tools for when you want to get to know everyone and make space for them

These tools help you understand the children's lives and the problems they struggle with. You can also use some of the tools when you want to establish initial contact and create trust with new children.

Clap to show appreciation when someone comes up with a good idea or has done something good. Appreciation makes people feel good, motivates and encourages further participation.

Drawing is liked by many children, although not all. Drawing can be used as a relaxation exercise without a predefined task, or as a way of getting to know the children and their problems. You can ask them to draw about their everyday life, their work space, what makes them happy, and their dreams.

If you use drawings with a purpose, make sure you have enough time to talk about the drawings and to take care of the emotions the drawings may produce. You can read more about this in chapter 5 in the *When emotions break loose section.*



Flip charts and poster board are very good for keeping track of what you need to remember and to ensure that all ideas are included. Most of us cannot retain extensive amounts of detailed information for long. If you have written or drawn essential decisions or ideas on a flip chart and posted them on your children's space wall, everyone can refresh their memory any time.

Games and play are essential when you want to make space for children. Playing comes naturally to children, and while it is fun, it is also a way of making children relax, get to know one another and, at times, come up with new ideas.

Playing is a very important part of a child's development. By playing, children develop their ways of thinking, their imaginations and their physical strength.

Chapter 22 contains numerous suggestions for games.

Group work is a way of providing space for more children's voices than in a plenary session. Some children do not like to speak out in a large group. Or they never get the chance. In a smaller group they may feel safe and valued, and thus come up with brand new ideas.

While children - like adults - often have their favourite mates they prefer to work with, it may make sense to form new groups by drawing lots, or by giving each participant the number 1, 2, 3 or 4 and letting all number ones be in one group, all twos in another and so forth, or by forming groups according what people like, their capacities or other qualities that make sense in the given situation.

Helping children form groups ensures that the children who are new or who do not have close friendships with anyone in the big group are included in an unoffending way.

Home visits are important for motivating children and their parents. Through home visits you establish an informal relationship and gain trust amongst parents and guardians.

You also learn about the children's social status, family life and living conditions.

In-depth interviews may be used for issues that cannot be discussed in a group, or if you want to get to know a child better. In-depth interviews require that you are well prepared. If you do not have much experience as a researcher or facilitator, it may be a good idea to draw or write down the questions you want to ask so that you do not forget anything. You may also want to take notes for later reference, but ask the child for permission first.

Even if you have prepared your questions in advance, you should always be open to new and unforeseen information that you may have to dig deeper into before you return to your prepared questions.

Strict privacy and confidentiality must always be maintained, unless the child gives you permission or requests that you to share some or all of the information with others.

Microphones are one way of giving everyone a chance to talk without interruptions. Introduce an object that is to be your microphone – a pen, a marker or a little stick – and hand it over to the person who is going to talk. No one else is allowed to talk when someone has the microphone. When one person has finished expressing his or her views, the microphone is passed on to the next person who would like to speak.

The microphone should never just be passed around the circle, as this can be intimidating and make some people worry so much about their impending turn that they are unable to listen to what the others are saying. A child should never be forced to take the microphone, but rather independently choose to have the microphone.

The microphone is more about everyone listening than it is about the person talking.

Office visits to the adult partner organisation, apart from ensuring two-way access for children and their adult organisation, also create trust between children and adults. The office visits may be formalised as an invitation, part of a training session or they may happen informally and spontaneously.

Serving a snack or lunch is a way of compensating for eventual loss of income, and if you eat together it creates a sense of closeness.

The children should be allowed to move freely and be introduced to all staff members to let them feel accepted and welcome.

Open discussions are very good when you want to establish contact with children who are not yet part of your child-led organisation. Gestures, eye contact and smiles may act as the initial icebreaker. Plays and games also work well as an icebreaker during open discussions. When the children start asking questions or request something you can introduce yourself. Pay complete attention to the discussion and do not take notes till you come home.

Through informal discussions you can build rapport with the children, and gradually you may get to discuss their life style, problems, livelihood, coping mechanisms, hazards and risks, values, relationships, dreams and visions.

Open discussions also allow room for the children to reflect on how they perceive their own situation, position, expectations, and roles.

Tools to help children identify and analyse problems

Finding the specific problems that you want to solve is of course important when you carry out advocacy. Just talking may take you part of the way, but specialised, child-friendly ways of getting to the core problems may be a good help and make the process more entertaining.

Body mapping is a research tool. By drawing the outline of a body and marking the different diseases that can affect the body, the children can map e.g. work-related diseases.

This exercise can be used to help children analyse the occupational health and safety situation in their workspaces.

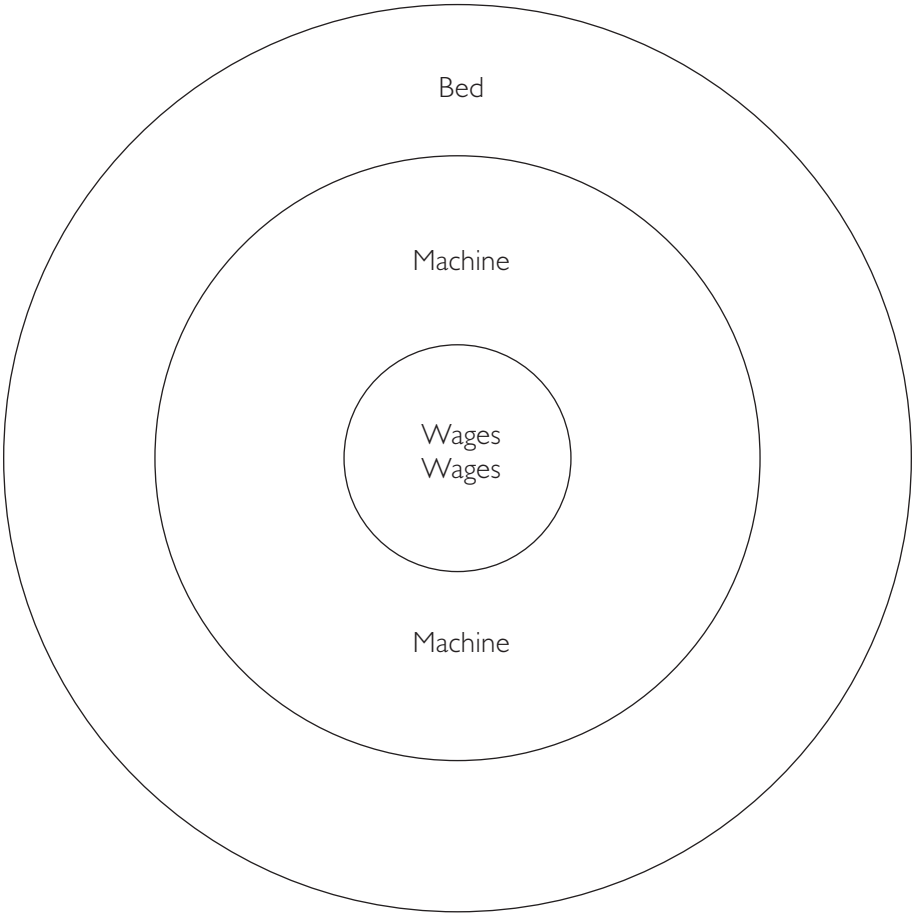
The maps can also be used to check how much the children know about the causes and effects of the diseases and what health measures are needed.

Charts and matrixes can be used to identify activities and create a clear picture of, e.g. migration, the work situation in different seasons and work routines. They can also be used when you want to pick out the most important problems.

You may, for example use a very simple circular chart to rank the importance of your problems. Start out by listing your problems: 1) low wages, 2) dangerous machines, 3) no bed etc.

Draw three circles, one inside the other. You need as many circles as there are problems. The second circle is for the most important problem, and the further out the circle, the less important the problem is.

Each participant is only allowed to put one problem in per circle.



Consultations which take place with a group of child representatives are more formal than open discussions. Consultations are always guided by a facilitator who is well prepared and knows which questions he or she wants to find the answers to.

During consultations the children discuss selected issues, identify problems and their potential solutions. Consultations may be based on talk only, or they may involve the use of other tools from this chapter.

Consultations and meetings with children

- Invite child participants who are interested in the issue you want to discuss and have direct experience or knowledge about it. If the children are part of a child-led organisation, they may be elected or selected by their peers.
- Inform carefully about the purpose and the process of the consultation.
- Make sure that you take literacy level and age group into consideration when you communicate.
- Accept and respect if one or more children decide that they do not want to participate.
- Encourage the children to raise questions and influence the process and outcome of the consultation.
- Be honest, open and fair.
- Everything you do should be with the best interest of the child in mind.

Discussions can take place formally or informally, but if they are to be used for analytical purposes and planning, they normally have to be somewhat facilitated and planned. The children may start out by making an agenda and presenting the good and the bad parts of their lives in order to find out what they want to change – and how to do it.

Drawings can reveal children's perception of their present situation, their feelings, dreams, aspirations and much about their imaginations.

Key informant interviews are especially used during research to gather information on the make-up of a certain area and its children. The key informants may be selected after observing an area or a work space, or after having had open discussions with different groups in the area. Amongst key informants are parents, working children, child labour employers, shopkeepers, factory owners, community people, police, teachers and local leaders.

Interviewing these people also helps building trust and respect towards you in the local community.

The **problem tree** helps you find root problems that have to be addressed if you want to find sustainable solutions.

Discuss and list the answers to the following questions:

1. What are the problems?
2. Which one of these problems is the main problem? Discuss and reach agreement.
3. What causes the main problem?
4. What are the effects of the main problem?

Next, draw a tree in which:
a. The roots are the causes of the main problem
b. The trunk is the main problem
c. The branches and leaves are the effects of the main problem

Post your tree drawing on a wall as a reminder of the problems you want to address.

You may use the *objective tree* in *The tools for finding solutions* section to solve the problems identified in the problem tree.

Ranking and scoring problems is a way of selecting the most important problem to advocate a solution for. When the children have prepared a list of problems on a large piece of brown paper laid out on the ground or on a table, each problem is attached to an easily recognisable symbol, for example a cross, a tick mark, a flower, a bird, or whatever makes sense to the children.

The children may also select or elect an election commissioner from among them to keep track of the voting, as well as one or two policemen to "keep order."

The election commissioner hands out stones or pens to each child and invites them to put their stone or tick mark next to the symbol they find most important.

The election commissioner also asks each child to explain what the preferred symbol means in order to check whether the children actually understand the process. When the first round of voting is over, the election commissioner declares the results while an adult facilitator takes notes.

The symbols that receive no votes in the first round are removed, and the second round starts. The process continues till there are only one to three related problems left.

Resource map or social mapping is a pictorial presentation made by the children of the environment where they live and work. The children draw their slums and villages, the parks and fields, their schools and work spaces, health facilities, religious institutions and the roads where they walk. The children identify the roles all of these places play in their lives and the resources they use or potentially could use. The mapping may also help the children identify who can help them or who may oppose them.

After drawing the map, the children explain everything in their own words.

SWOT analysis normally is used to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in an organisation, but children may also use SWOT to analyse work situations or work spaces, or the risks and potential of an advocacy campaign.

Example: Cigarette production, its advantages and the risks and potential of a campaign for higher wages and better working conditions:

Strengths
- Always enough work
- Can be carried out at home
- Is also available and acceptable for girls
- The factory is nearby

Weakness
- It is hard work – and hazardous – a situation that does not change even if the factory becomes cleaner and the wages higher
- Cough caused by tobacco dust
- No other jobs available this area

Opportunities
- There is a fixed minimum salary that we can achieve if we fight for it
- If we get higher salaries we can work less
- We can make the environment cleaner and healthier
- Everybody is eager to earn more, so if we can also get higher wages for our middlemen, they will help us
- If we get masks, we stop coughing from the tobacco dust

Threats
- The employers move the factory to another place
- Other children are offered our jobs
- The owner makes it impossible for organisations to enter and help child labourers

Visualising helps you understand a work space and its problems. This tool may also be used to analyse an advocacy campaign or an organisation. By visualising processes and the people involved, you can locate key persons to target, and you can take a critical look at the level of children's access to participation.

Collect lots of little stones, bottle caps, pens, paper balls, coins, or anything else on hand and put all the junk in the middle of the floor or a table. Divide the participants into small groups

according to their work spaces and ask them to visualise their work space and the work processes.

The different items symbolise whatever the group wants to illustrate, the only rule being that you must use your hands and always move the items around according to what you say.

For example: You choose a stone the size of your fist and explain that this is your steel factory owner. You put the stone far away and say that he is in Dhaka. Then you put a wad of paper in front of you and explain that this is your factory. You put a number of bottle caps on the paper and explain that they are the machines and furnaces. Then you add little stones and state that these are child labourers. You move one child labourer from one machine to another to demonstrate that this child is responsible for bringing items from one machine to another. You show the other children's responsibilities in the same manner. You also show the dangers each child faces.

Also include the local supervisors and their roles in your work space and the way they behave towards the children.

You show the children's problems – e.g. nowhere to eat lunch, no toilet, no breaks, no space to play, and no place to sleep. And you can even show what the solutions would be by placing e.g. a bottle cap as a toilet, a coin as a bed etc.

When one group is visualising, the other children are free to ask questions and suggest solutions. This exercise is all about inspiring new ideas.

Tools for finding solutions

Brainstorming is a way of getting participants to bombard you with all their ideas, also the wildest and most imaginative ones possible. It is important not to judge or discourage any ideas during a brainstorm; a brainstorm is not about selecting the best ideas. It is about getting all the ideas out. It is about quantity, not quality.

Every time a child suggests something, note it on a flip-chart for everyone to see. Do not discuss the ideas in the process.

The ideas may be narrowed down later by using e.g. the *Ranking and scoring tool* or the *Charts and matrixes* from the previous section

Focus group discussions centre on one selected issue at a time with a group of children who analyse their knowledge and look critically at the different options.

If you want to carry out a focus group discussion, you have to be fairly prepared. What do you want to achieve? What questions should be asked? Write down essential questions and the tools you want to include beforehand to guide you in the process, but be flexible. If something works out differently than expected you should be able to change tools or questions.

Make sure to take notes for later use.

The **objective tree** is a continuation of the *problem tree* in the previous section. This tool helps you find the solutions to the problems you identified with the help of the *problem tree.*

Discuss and write down:

1. Changing your problems into the desired condition.
2. Changing your main problem into the desired condition.
3. What does it take to create the desired condition?
4. How does it change your life if the desired condition is achieved?

Next, draw a tree in which:

a. The roots are what it takes to create the desired condition of your main problem
b. The trunk is the main problem
c. The branches and leaves are the changes in your life if the desired condition is achieved

Post the objective tree on a wall to remind you of what you want to achieve.

Participatory learning workshops bring together children, adult facilitators, community leaders, teachers and other relevant local stakeholders. During the workshop the children may provide information about their problems and seek solutions amongst all participants.

These workshops establish wider ownership of the child-led activities and may eventually lead to solutions acceptable to everyone.

Role play is also a way of analysing problems, developing new ideas and solving problems. By acting out the different roles, the children experience what the different stakeholders are thinking and doing. By experiencing the roles, the children may more easily identify the motivation for why a stakeholder is doing what he or she does.

When you know why someone is doing something, it is much easier to find an acceptable solution where everybody benefits.

Not all children like to act, so role plays should not be overdone.

Finding people who can help you or who may oppose you

When you do advocacy, you want to know and target the people who can help you solve your problem, people who can pave your way, and also those who may oppose you. Especially the latter are often left out of target group analysis, but it is essential to be prepared to handle these people as well to avoid unwanted risks and consequences or plain resistance.

The suggestions below are not organised alphabetically, but step-by-step.

Finding the relevant helpers and opponents like organisations, shelter homes, local government offices, employers who employ children, clubs, religious and educational institutions, police stations, hospitals and others can be done using *Brainstorming or Resource mapping.*

Your facilitator and adult partner organisation can also help.

List all of the potential helpers and opponents and discuss with your friends and adult facilitator which ones are most relevant and whether they can help you, pave the way for you or oppose you.

Find the relevant persons by asking the selected institution which person is responsible for problems like yours.

Ask the responsible person in the institution in question if he or she knows about your sort of problems, and if he or she can and will help – and how. If the person is unwilling, try to figure out why and what it takes to soften him or her up to avoid resistance in the future.

Keeping in touch with the right people is important. Keep telling them about the problem and your progress in solving it. If you do not keep in touch, they will forget you and your issue, and you will have to start all over again.

You may use advocacy tools like *wall papers, newsletters, meetings* and *door-to-door contact to keep in touch.*

How to do your advocacy

Advocacy requires a lot of planning and plenty of work, so it pays off to consider how you want to carry out all the activities.

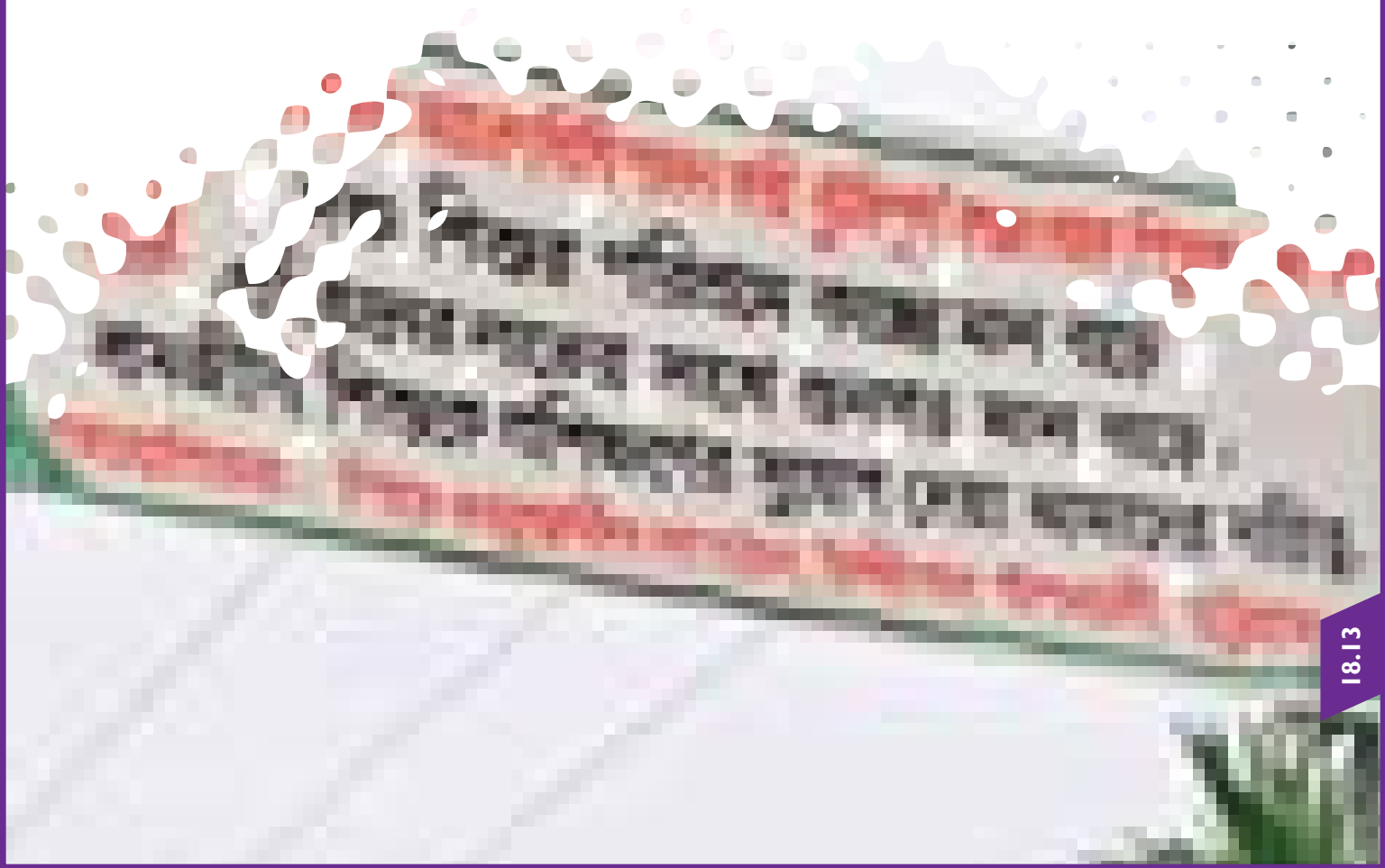
The **availability** of everybody involved in the advocacy campaign has to be checked thoroughly before you embark on any single activity. If the person you want to target is out of town for a meeting, or if all the children are busy harvesting or studying for an exam, the timing is wrong, and you have to plan differently.

Budgets help you figure out how much money you need – and how much you have.

Division of responsibilities is very important. No one can do everything, and everything has to be done if you want to be sure that you achieve better working conditions. You can divide responsibilities according to skills, interests, amount of time available or by drawing lots.

Keep in mind that having children choose what they really like to do normally pays off. Most human beings are driven by interests and likes, not by force and coincidence.

Doing everything together is not feasible beyond your child-led organisation meetings and participation in big events, e.g. rallies and large gatherings. Many offices and workshops do not



have space for twenty or more children who pay an advocacy visit, and it is time consuming if everyone has to participate in everything.

Working alone is scary for most children, and it requires children who have extensive experience and the full support of their organisation if they decide to work on their own. Working in pairs is also a way of brainstorming or carrying out activities. It gives a high level of participation and responsibility for everyone and no one is alone.

Working in smaller groups of four to six people gets things going and it feels safer as more children are together to solve the problems and face potential resistance.

Tools to be used for advocacy

When you know what your problems are, what you want the situation to be like when the problems are solved, and you have identified which people to target to help you solve the problems, you want to find the very best tools to achieve your solution.

The tools below are listed alphabetically and are meant to be chosen with your target group in mind. For example, a journalist or a mayor is unwilling to spend one and a half hours watching an amateur video unless the issue concerns breaking news. Or, an illiterate middleman will not benefit much from a leaflet full of text. But villagers in a remote area may love a Theatre for Development performance, and your mayor will be more than happy to give a public speech prior to elections.

Adverts are costly to produce and place unless you manage to convince your local newspaper or a magazine that they should support your case with free adverts.

Banners are normally made of long, large pieces of cloth or plastic covered with your slogan or message. You can also paint a relevant picture on the banner.

Banners can be hung across the street in your market, or you can bring them along if you hold a rally. Some people also use banners during meetings to inform people about the purpose.

Banners are fairly cheap and easy to produce, and if you are artistic you can produce them yourselves.

Note that in some countries and areas you need permission from the police or the local government or town council if you plan to put a banner in a public place.

Billboards are huge signboards, and they can be costly to produce. Normally you need to pay someone to design and print or paint them.

You also have to consider carefully where to put it for the right people to see it.

Note that you often need permission from the police or the local government or town council if you plan to put a billboard in a public place.

Booklets prepared by the children who are also going to use them are generally a very good means of communication.

For example: Groups of Bangladeshi children working as farmers drew and photographed crops and described their nutritious value, threats from pests and how to grow the crops in the most fruitful manner. The booklet is now being used by all the children and adults in the communities.

Cartoons can be made with photos or drawings, and they do necessarily have to contain any text. Some cartoons consist of only one picture. Others consist of three to five pictures, while some cartoonists draw entire books made up of cartoons.

Making animated cartoons is also possible, but doing so is a very lengthy affair, and you need support from someone who is skilled at making animation films.

Chapter 10 contains an illustration of a cartoon explaining the advocacy process for better working conditions in the cigarette industry.

Collages are posters filled with glued on bits and pieces of photos, drawings, newspaper clippings, cloth, paper etc.

Collages are good fun to make, and apart from the glue, all the materials can be collected for free.

Competitions are a way of attracting people to activities, and they are very predominant in some cultures. For example, a debate competition on child labour may be relevant during a fair or a workshop. The competitions can be one to one or one team against another.

Keep in mind that competitions do not unite everyone, but rather split everyone into smaller units and should only be used in child-led organisations with care and consideration.

Observing special days is popular among many child-led organisations. Most countries celebrate a number of festivals. There are also annual fairs and internationally acknowledged days like International Women's Day on 8 March and International Labour Day on 1 May.

One advantage of these days is that many people are already assembled in specific areas so you do not have to create your own gathering. On the other hand, it is significantly harder to catch people's attention when many groups compete for space and time on the same day.

Keep in mind that if you want to participate in an annual fair or a big event you often have to be invited in advance, or you have to get permission from the organisers.

Door-to-door visits and face-to-face meetings are time consuming but can be very efficient. Human beings generally find it much harder to give promises and break them again if the promise is given to you as a person, especially if you follow up with other door-to-door visits.

Face-to-face meetings are also good if you have problems convincing parents that their children

should be allowed to participate in child-led activities or if your employers have given a general consent to a demand, but you sense that they will not adhere to the promise if they do not feel that you mean it.

Drawings can be done in whatever way you wish. You can draw on small paper, big paper, coloured paper or on old newspapers with pencils, pens, coloured pencils, chalk or crayons. Most of this paraphernalia is cheap, fun and for everybody.

Fashion shows are popular entertainment, but they may also be turned into an advocacy tool. Example: A group of Bangladeshi children dress as child labourers, for instance a scavenger with ragged clothes, bare feet and a big sack on their backs; a farmer with muddy feet, trouser legs pulled up and a shovel in hand; or a porter with a big basket on his head and a torn t-shirt.

The children do the catwalk one by one and as a group – exactly like a real fashion show – during a fair or a big gathering.

Child labour fashion shows provoke food for thought as working children are not expected to partake in activities normally reserved for the rich.

This sort of fashion show is also cheap to do since all the equipment is readily available in your own community.

Festivals, for example a Theatre for Development festival, are a good platform for children to raise issues at national level. By uniting many different groups of children into a festival, it is more likely that the media will cover it and that important people will turn up.

Festivals are also places where children can practice performing in front of a large audience and where they can ask prominent people questions.

Example: Child-led organisations from all over Bangladesh meet once a year in the capital Dhaka to do their Theatre for Development performances. Each year has a theme, e.g. *Stop Violence against Children,* and *History and Culture of Bangladesh.* The latter theme was chosen as the children involved in organising the festival felt that disadvantaged children rarely get to know their own history and culture since they have no access to education or museums.

While the children popularised different cultural forms, the urban audience got a chance to experience forgotten cultures and the world seen through the eyes of children.

Planning a festival requires a multitude of preparations. The children have to come up with a theme and arrange the programme of drama and dialogue, invite a variety of children and adult audiences, including media and high profile guests, find a venue, arrange sound systems and decorations as well as print posters and take security measures. Food and drinks also have to be made available.

Note that while children should be in charge, they will be likely to need adult support. A festival cannot be organised without funding either.

Leaflets are brief publications that inform people about your issue, your demands and your organisation. The cheapest leaflet is just a piece of paper with your message handwritten or drawn on it. This can also be copied by hand, but it is highly time consuming and can be quite tedious, so most children take the leaflet to a copy shop and pay a little bit to have the copies made.

Some children also produce colourful printed leaflets. This requires that either you, or someone else, know how to do graphic design; you also need to find a professional printer. Both of these aspects can be costly, so check the prices before you decide on this option.

Leaflets can be distributed to relevant employers in your area, or they can target the community. It all depends on your issue and your target group. Look at your plan from the advocacy chapter to check if it makes sense to produce leaflets.

Media, including press releases, press conferences and interviews are almost always important when you do advocacy. If a journalist pays attention to your problem, and begins covering it, it puts pressure on your employer or other target groups to find a solution.
Or if your issue is not well-known or culturally sensitive and you want to build wider support for your case, you also need the media.

Keep in mind that you risk trivialising your problems if you invite the media at every given opportunity. You should always consider carefully whether the media make a difference, or not, in a given situation.

Meetings may consist of just two people who have issues to discuss, or it may comprise small groups or large gatherings. Always consider the reason for inviting people to a meeting. Do you have a specific issue to discuss? What do want to achieve? And who are the right people to invite?

Note that if people attend a meeting without a proper agenda just once, or with an agenda that has nothing to do with them, they may get bored and not come next time. This means that you should not invite anyone to a meeting until you are sure about what you want to achieve.

Mobile and monitoring teams are fairly easy to organise, even for a small group of children.

An example of this is provided in chapter 15.

Networks are useful when you want to cooperate with other people, or you want to put pressure on a certain group of, e.g. employers. If you can make community leaders create a network or a committee where they meet regularly and take personal responsibility for helping you solve your problem, it is a great achievement. Parents may also form a network or a committee to help you.

A network can also consist of people from different walks of life, e.g. teachers, local government representatives, local leaders and employers who decide to join forces to help you.

You can also dig into the existing networks of e.g. different organisations. If they accept you as a formal or informal member, and the issues they work with are relevant, this can be of great assistance.

Read more about networks in chapter 11.

Newsletters help you ensure that everybody receives the same information. They are practical if your child-led organisation is big and spread out, or if you network with large amounts of people who you do not get to meet with regularly.

Keep in mind that newsletters take time to prepare, and a certain level of literacy, and that they have to be brief, well written and illustrated. Otherwise people will not bother reading them. However, they do not have to be fashionably printed and full of colours. A photocopied A4-page will do.

You also have to consider how you want to distribute the newsletter. Is hand delivery possible or will you have to post it by regular mail, which is costly?

Some people use e-mail and Internet, but few child labourers have access to computers, and adults outside the big cities or from low income groups rarely use the Internet.

Newspaper clippings require that you have money to buy newspapers or receive second-hand newspapers from someone you know.

Clipping news makes you aware of the present situation regarding your problem, and it is a way of identifying people who work with the problem – people you can target later or ask for help.

You can use your knowledge from the newspaper when you plan your advocacy campaign, and you can collect evidence and proof against your target groups.

Some children also make collections of relevant newspaper clippings to be sent to, e.g. their local government to inform them about the problem in question.

If your newspaper uses by-lines, you can even note down names of journalists who seem to cover child labour issues on a regular basis in your local newspaper, because that journalist may be happy to learn about your activities.

Photos require a minimum of knowledge on how to compose a photo and handle a camera. This can be learned, e.g. via *Basic communication training for adolescents in chapter 15.*

Photos can be exhibited in your children's space, on a wall in your workspace, on wheels, during festivals or anywhere else you are sure that your target group will see them.

Keep in mind that it is costly to print large photos. You also need cameras of a certain quality if you want to print photos, otherwise they do not look nice when they are printed. The cameras in most cheap mobile phones are satisfactory as long as the photos remain on the computer, where they can be used to make a slide show. If printed, however, they look very grainy.

When you print photos, finding the best photo print shop in town pays off, because the quality of the photo paper and the chemicals printers use vary considerably. Cheap photo print shops often recycle the chemicals and use low quality paper. If the quality of the print is too low, no one will want to look at the pictures, and then you will have wasted an appreciable amount of money for nothing.

Puppet shows can be used in the same way as Theatre for Development in connection with advocacy, but the actors are puppets and not people.

A puppet is a doll made to look like a person or an animal.

Controlled by people, some puppets fit over your hand or on your finger, while marionettes have strings attached to the puppets' arms, legs and heads. Strings puppets are controlled from above and rod puppets from below the stage. By moving the strings and rods, the puppets come to life.

Puppet shows of course require that you either have puppets, or that you know how to make puppets, and that you have materials to produce puppets.

Puppets need not be very fancy or expensive. You can, e.g. use old newspapers for clothes and an old tennis ball for the head of a string or rod puppet, old socks for hand puppets, or even old dolls and stuffed animals, which you dress in clothes made with whatever rags you have.

Radio is popular in many developing countries, and producing a proper radio feature is markedly easier than a video.

For example: One child-led organisation in Guatemala made its own children's radio station. They interviewed people and taped it on small, cheap recorders, edited it in their own little studio and broadcast weekly programmes on child rights from a loudspeaker on the roof of a building in the middle of the village.

Note that public broadcasts often require permission from the police or local government. If you want a radio station to broadcast your programme, you have to check in advance if the radio producers are interested. Most radio channels also have specific formats and quality requirements that must be adhered to.

Rallies and demonstrations are cheap to carry out but they require considerable planning. You have to prepare slogans, make a route, ensure that you will have enough participants, that the media will cover the event and that your target group will notice it. You could, for example plan a route that crosses in front of the town hall on a day when the mayor is available if you want to make your local government aware of your problems.

You also have to plan in advance whether you want to bring banners, flags and other paraphernalia. And – you might want to consider wearing the same type of clothes or colours to show people that you are a group.

Always remember that a rally is more impressive if there are many participants. On the other hand, you must never force anyone to participate, and each participant should be fully informed about the issue that you are demonstrating for or against. Paying people to participate is unethical and therefore unacceptable.

Note that many countries require permission from the police prior to a rally.

Signature campaigns targeting, e.g. a government, are easy and cheap to carry out. Apart from developing a very clear statement for people to sign, you must incorporate an appreciable amount of time to collect the desired number of signatures.

To be a success, keep in mind that a signature campaign must generate a considerable number of signatures to make an impression.

Signboards are smaller than billboards and therefore less costly to produce. Normally you need to pay someone to design, print or paint them and you have to consider carefully where to put them so that your target group notices them.

Note that you may need permission from the police, local government or town council if you want to put the signboard in a public area.

Songs and music are great entertainment and a good way of passing on a message. If you are good at composing and writing songs and music, do it. If not, you use relevant songs and music composed by others.

If you have no instruments, you can sing a cappella, or as a choir, or you can invent your own instruments, e.g. make a drum by turning a bucket, bowl or pot over and using the bottom.

If you have fine glassware, wet the tip of your index finger slightly and trace it around the top of the glass, and if you are lucky, it will produce a tone. If you have more than one glass, fill them with different levels of water and you get different tones.

You can also cut off the ends of straws in the shape of a "V". Flattening them out and then blowing hard will produce interesting sounds. Experiment with the different lengths of straws.

Or try rubber band guitars. Use a sturdy box with a lid. Cut a circle in the top for the sound hole. Stretch rubber bands, or elastic, around the box and raise the rubber bands up off the box with a pencil at each end to avoid unwanted vibrations.

You can also tap out sounds on water jars. Find a collection of jars, fill them with different levels of water and experiment until you have the sounds you want.

Experiment by making maracas out of bottles, too. Just fill empty bottles or juice cartons with different objects - pens and pencils, buttons, rice, coins, small stones etc., and shake them to make sounds.

Sounds can act independently or accompany slides, photos, video, drama and other activities. Generally, sounds are powerful. For example, play dramatic music when showing the photo exhibition from your factory, or if you have recording equipment, record noises from your factory.

Keep in mind that sounds have to be recorded and played on proper equipment. If the sounds are too distorted, they will only bother people, not touch them.

Speeches are to be used during meetings and public gatherings. They can also accompany, e.g. a drama or an exhibition. Consider your message carefully and make it brief. No one likes to listen to hours of monologues.

Next, you also have to consider who the best speakers are, because some people simply have a knack for putting words together and hitting the right tone, while others are monotonous and never get to the point.

You can also invite influential people to give a speech during a meeting or public gathering. Note that using a microphone can help in addressing a large gathering, but low quality microphones and sound systems make a bad situation worse.

Stickers with a specific message are practical because they can be used anywhere – on a school book, on your bicycle, on a hammer or a bucket, on the door and anywhere else visible to many people.

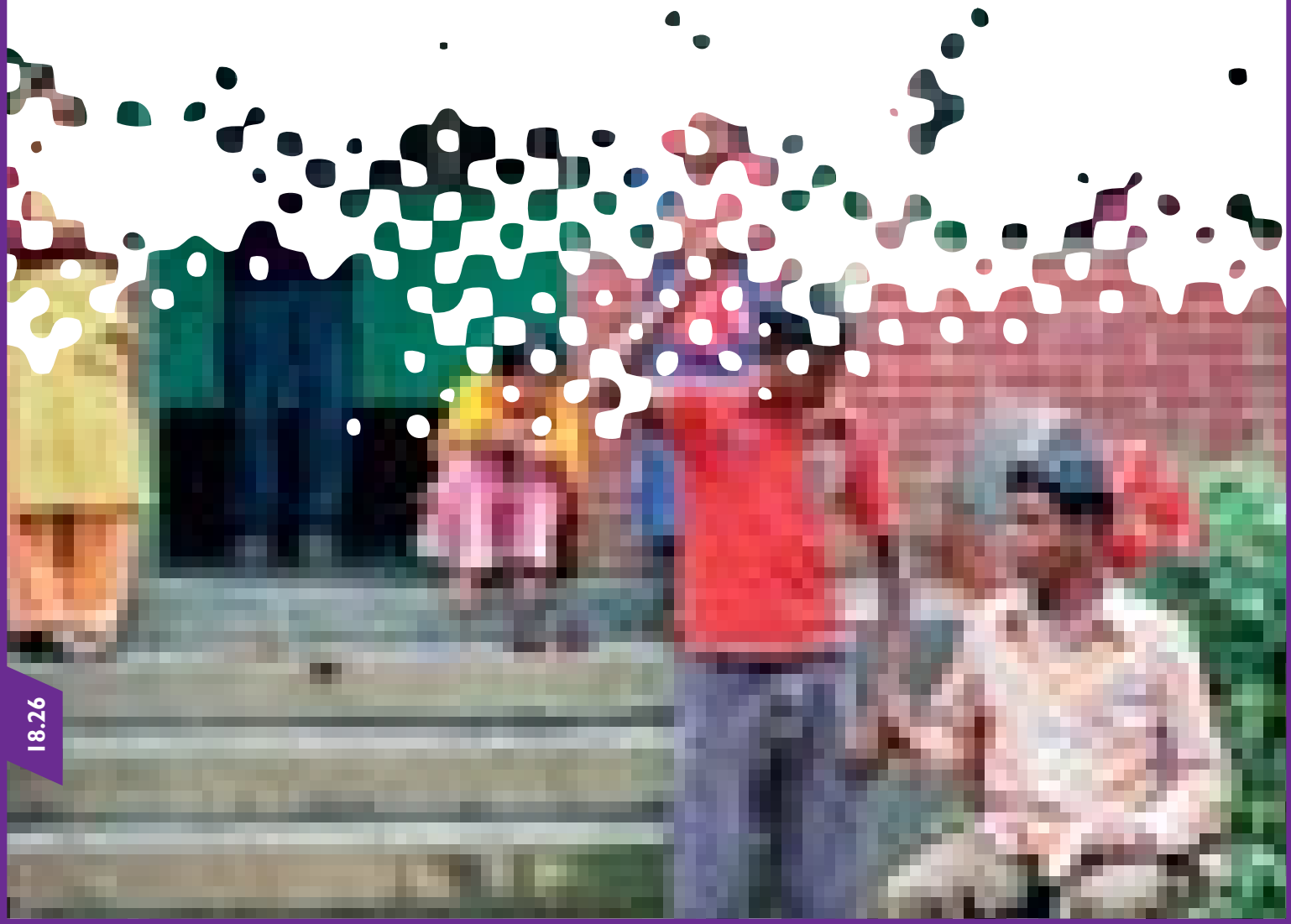
Keep in mind that you need to pay someone to design and print the stickers.

Storytelling, cases and examples are all ways of illustrating what you mean. A story is easy to remember, and most people identify with personal stories rather than with theoretical explanations.

For example: Tell a brief story, an example from your own life, about how you managed to convince your parents that you should be allowed to participate in training with friends which incorporated all the little tricks used for negotiations that the other children in your group would need to convince their own parents that the child-led organisation is a safe and valuable place to spend time.

Throughout this handbook, and especially in chapter 17, there are numerous stories, cases and examples.

Theatre for Development (TfD), has become a popular media for communicating child rights issues among children and various stakeholders.



TfD is a participatory process of performance, analysis and improvisation in which the development needs of a particular community are addressed using theatre and debate. TfD is not role play, or message laden street theatre, but rather experimental by nature.

The children work out their own performances based on their own experiences and preferences; they select the place to perform, invite the stakeholders they would like to address, and ultimately they hold a question & answer session in which the stakeholders have to defend their stand points or come up with promises for betterment.

First of all, the children have to analyse the story they want to perform and consider aspects such as:

- What the problem is
- The story behind the problem
- The main conflict
- Persons related to the problem and the main conflict
- List of people who will help
- List of people who will try to stop the children from making changes
- Roles of both the people who will help and the people who will try to stop the children from making changes

If you have already done your advocacy preparations in keeping with the steps in chapter 10, you will find that this analysis is very similar.

Then, the children must agree on a script – written, drawn or oral. It has to contain the introduction to the story, the conflict, the solution and the conclusion.

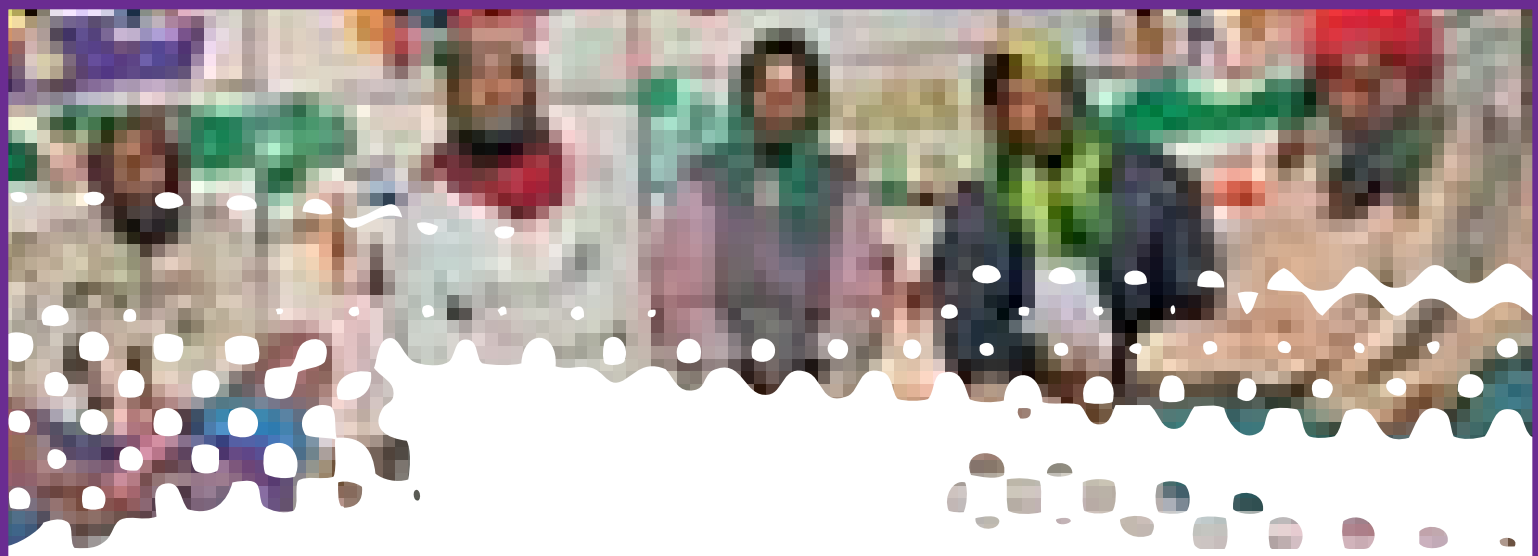
The children also have to agree on the message that the audience should receive. To find the message they could initially discuss the present values and beliefs in society, the present laws and conventions and how life would be if the children could decide everything themselves.

A dialogue has to take place after the theatre performance. The dialogue is a way to continue the interaction between the audience and the actual people playing the characters in the drama, and it helps increase their sense of responsibility. One or more children can address especially invited people who will help the children achieve their demands along with people who will try to stop the children from making changes, e.g. employers, a local government representative, or teachers, depending on the issue being examined.

Finally, the children should develop an action plan to follow up on the commitments given during the dialogue session so that they can continue to advocate on those issues.

The technical part is not difficult to understand and TfD can be performed without cost and no specific skills like literacy are required. TfD can develop spontaneously when and wherever the children have time and energy.

Chapter 15 contains a brief of a training module on TfD.



Video is a whole lot of fun, but of course requires that you have access to a video camera and editing equipment. If you have a fairly new computer it is possible to install editing programmes, but you still need to know how to operate a video camera, a computer and an editing programme.

You also need to analyse your idea and your target group, work out a story line, a manuscript and a list of shots, and you want to know how to shoot your pictures. All this means that preparing a video is very time consuming, and you need someone who is skilled in working with video to help you and teach you what to do.

Generally, quality is the main issue when you consider video for your advocacy campaign. Nobody wants to spend hours watching jumpy pictures accompanied by slurred speech.

An advocacy video should last no longer than 5-10 minutes, depending on your target group. Remember that e.g. local government representatives are very busy people, and they will never invite you again if you bore them with an unending amateur video.

Some organisations hire local video companies to shoot their video, but this is costly, and it is no guarantee that the video will have the quality you want.

Note that many organisation use video, but most often these videos end up collecting dust on a shelf, because no one wants to watch them. So carefully consider whether producing a video is worth the time and money.

Wall papers and wall magazines are a good way of reaching large numbers of people in the same community. Wall papers and wall magazines can contain news, photos, drawings, back ground stories and clippings from other news sources.

Keep in mind that you need permission from the owner of the wall and sometimes from the police or local government before you post a public wall paper.

Wall paintings on big pieces of cloth are normally worked out collectively by a group of children.

The wall paintings can represent a cartoon, a single painting, or separate paintings showing your work situation, lifestyle etc.

Wall paintings make a magnificent decoration during fairs, Theatre for Development, festivals, meetings and in many other situations.

Note that some types of oil paint are poisonous and should not be used by young children. Always paint outside and with good ventilation as paint fumes are often harmful to your health.

Tip: Combinations of at least two and or more tools for advocacy work well

The more often a statement is repeated and the greater the variety of packaging the statement is delivered in, the more likely it is that the message penetrates and makes the target group change viewpoints and behaviour.

Be critical about the quality of your tools

A certain level of quality is required in order to:

- ensure the message is delivered clearly and to avoid causing misunderstandings and unwanted consequences,
- make a serious impression that causes people respect you, and
- prevent people from getting irritated because they do not hear, see or understand your message.

Checking whether your advocacy works

Every time you finish a training session, a study tour, or an advocacy activity you should check whether you achieved what you wanted to achieve.

Only when you have checked the outcome of what you have already done can you move on to the next step in your advocacy plan – or plan new advocacy activities.

Discuss whether what you planned to achieve succeeded and find out why it did or did not. Then, agree on how you can continue your activities without repeating any mistakes.

Emoticons or smileys can be used as symbols instead of words in written evaluations for children. Written evaluations should be used along with verbal evaluations after all training sessions and major workshops.

Written evaluations ensure that each child's opinion counts, and that the children get a chance to give honest feedback anonymously.

An **evaluation game** can be used at the end of an activity or training.

For example: List all the sessions or activities and ask three children to stand five metres apart in a row. Tell the group that the child to the right represents "very good", the one in the middle "ok" and the child to the left "could be better." Then read out each activity or session one by one and ask the rest of the participants to stand near the child who represents the way the participants feel about the activity or session.

You should always ask one or more children from each group to explain why they have chosen to stand where they are standing.

This will help you avoid repeating sessions or activities that do not make sense to the participants.

A **table or a matrix** with four columns and as many rows as the number of problems you wanted to solve can also help you to check what you have achieved.

In the first column state the problem you want to solve.

In the second column write the solution you want to achieve.

In the third column state the activities you carried out to solve the problem.

In the fourth column write whether or not the problem was solved.

In the fifth column write what you are going to do now.

To illustrate:

The problem	The solution	The activities	Achieved	What now?
Low wages	High wages	TfD Photo exhibition Public meetings	Two taka increase, but we aimed at a four taka increase	Go through the advocacy steps in chapter 10 again to plan new activities to achieve our aim

Tip: Read more about monitoring and evaluation in chapter 10

19. International Save the Children Alliance Child Protection Policy

States Parties shall protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse.

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 19

Introduction

Members of the International Save the Children Alliance have a common commitment to the prevention of child abuse and the protection of children. The abuse and exploitation of children happens in all countries and societies across the world.

This policy sets out common values, principles, and beliefs and describes the steps that will be taken in meeting our commitment to protect children.

Our commitment to protect children

1. Our values, principles and beliefs

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

2. What we will do

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

Awareness: we will ensure that all staff and others are aware of the problem of child abuse and the risks to children.
Prevention: we will ensure, through awareness and good practice, that staff and others minimise the risks to children.
Reporting: we will ensure that staff and others are clear what steps to take where concerns arise regarding the safety of children.
Responding: we will ensure that action is taken to support and protect children where concerns arise regarding possible abuse.

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

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

3. How we will ensure our commitments above are met

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

Code of conduct

All Save the Children staff must sign up to and abide by this code of conduct.

Staff and others must never:

- hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children
- develop physical/sexual relationships with children
- develop relationships with children which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive
- act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse.
- use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive
- behave physically in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative
- have a child/children with whom they are working to stay overnight at their home unsupervised
- sleep in the same room or bed as a child with whom they are working
- do things for children of a personal nature that they can do for themselves
- condone, or participate in, behaviour of children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive
- act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse
- discriminate against, show differential treatment, or favour particular children to the exclusion of others.

This is not an exhaustive or exclusive list. The principle is that staff should avoid actions or behaviour which may constitute poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour.

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

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

In general it is inappropriate to:

- spend excessive time alone with children away from others
- take children to your home, especially where they will be alone with you.

Save the Children and child protection

Save the Children fights for children's rights to protection. Save the Children defines child protection as measures and structures to prevent and respond to abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence affecting children.

An Introduction to child protection

The goal of child protection is to promote, protect and fulfil children's rights to protection from abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence as expressed in the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* and other human rights, humanitarian and refugee treaties and conventions, as well as national laws.

Children's rights to protection from abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence

Key child protection articles in the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* are Articles 9 (family separation), 10 (family reunification across borders), 11 (illicit transfer of children), 16 (right to privacy, honour and reputation), 19 (protection from violence, injury, abuse, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation), 20 (alternative care), 21 (adoption), 22 (refugee children), 23 (disabled children), 24 (harmful practices), 25 (periodic review of alternative care), 32 (economic exploitation), 34 (sexual abuse and exploitation), 35 (abduction, sale or trafficking of children) , 36 (other forms of exploitation), 37 (juvenile justice and protection from torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment), 38 (protection in armed conflict), 39 (recovery and reintegration) and 40 (children in conflict with the law).

Articles that are not protection rights but represent important approaches to securing children's protection rights include Articles 5 (support for the parent, extended family and community); 7 (birth registration and protection of identity), 18 (parental responsibility), 26 (social security), 27 (adequate standard of living and social protection), 28 & 29 (education), and 31 (play and leisure). In addition, Articles 2 (non-discrimination), 3 (the best interests of the child), 4 (accountability), 6 (survival and development) and 12 (children's right to be heard) are all essential complements to the above articles.

Child protection work aims to prevent, respond to, and resolve the abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence experienced by children in all settings. It is a specialist sector in its own right but of necessity works very closely with other sectors.

It requires a multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral approach (linking closely, for example, with work in education, health and criminal justice). Increasing the effective protection of children also involves working with a wide range of formal and informal bodies, including governments, multilateral agencies, donors, communities, carers, and families.

Importantly it also requires close partnership with children, including initiatives to strengthen their capacity to protect themselves. Child protection work aims to strengthen the capacity of all these actors to protect children and to develop systems and mechanisms that provide

meaningful protection for all children in the longer term. It seeks to address the root causes of child protection failures such as chronic poverty, insecurity, power imbalances and harmful traditional attitudes and behaviours.

The State has the main responsibility for the fulfilment of children's protection rights and should establish a national and community-based child protection system with a coordinated and holistic approach, integrating the contributions of the different sectors and actors. Such a system should be based on a combination of law and knowledge (in line with human rights standards), and include well-trained staff, children's participation and awareness raising on the nature and response to child protection concerns. The accountability of the State for such a system is essential for its effectiveness and sustainability. In situations of conflict and disaster where the State is unable or unwilling to ensure the protection of children, international bodies need to take on the responsibility for the fulfilment of children's protection rights.

Child protection is an important component of broader protection activities aiming to ensure the care and protection of vulnerable population groups such as elderly persons, disabled persons, and the chronically ill, as well as children. This includes emergency settings where child protection practitioners work with others to provide a specialist component of overall humanitarian protection for displaced and refugee populations.

Child protection should not be confused with the protection of all children's rights, which is the responsibility of everyone working with children. Similarly, child protection is related to – but distinct from - the organisational protocols, policies and procedures aiming to ensure that every child with whom Save the Children and its partners' works is safe while they are in our care.

What does Save the Children mean by……..?

Abuse

A deliberate act of ill treatment that can harm or is likely to cause harm to a child's safety, well-being, dignity and development.

Abuse includes all forms of physical, sexual, psychological or emotional ill treatment.

The term 'abuse' is, in some contexts, used to refer primarily to such acts when committed 'in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust, or power' such as by someone who has the care of the child including parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child even temporarily such as a teacher, a community worker, a babysitter or nanny etc. In most contexts though, 'child abuse' is understood to refer to all such acts of ill treatment including when committed by a stranger.

Child abuse will be committed regardless of any justification or reason that may be provided for the ill treatment including discipline, legal sanction, economic necessity, the child's own consent to it, or in the name of cultural and religious practice.

Examples:
Physical abuse *involves the use of violent physical force so as to cause actual or likely physical injury or suffering, (e.g. hitting, shaking, burning, female genital mutilation, torture.)*

Emotional or psychological abuse *includes humiliating and degrading treatment such as bad name calling, constant criticism, belittling, persistent shaming, solitary confinement and isolation.)*

Sexual abuse *includes all forms of sexual violence including incest, early and forced marriage, rape, involvement in pornography, and sexual slavery. Child sexual abuse may also includes indecent touching or exposure, using sexually explicit language towards a child and showing children pornographic material.*

Neglect

Deliberately, or through carelessness or negligence, failing to provide for, or secure for a child, their rights to physical safety and development.

Neglect is sometimes called the 'passive' form of abuse in that it relates to the failure to carry out some key aspect of the care and protection of children which results in significant impairment of the child's health or development including a failure to thrive emotionally and socially.

Evidence is usually needed of persistent or severe neglect (repeated failures or a failure that is in itself so serious that it severely endangers the child.)

Examples:
Neglect *includes abandonment, the failure to properly supervise and protect children from harm as much as is feasible, the deliberate failure to carry out important aspects of care which results or is likely to result in harm to the child, the deliberate failure to provide medical care or carelessly exposing a child to harm for examples can amount to neglect.*

Exploitation

Child exploitation refers to the use of children for someone else's advantage, gratification or profit often resulting in unjust, cruel and harmful treatment of the child. These activities are to the detriment of the child's physical or mental health, education, moral or social-emotional development.

It covers situations of manipulation, misuse, abuse, victimization, oppression or ill-treatment.

There are two main forms of child exploitation that are recognised:

Sexual exploitation: The abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes; this includes profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the exploitation of another as well as personal sexual gratification.

Examples: Child prostitution, trafficking of children for sexual abuse and exploitation, child pornography, sexual slavery.

Economic exploitation of a child: The use of the child in work or other activities for the benefit of others. This includes, but is not limited to, child labour.

Economic exploitation implies the idea of a certain gain or profit through the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services. This material interest has an impact on the economy of a certain unit, be it the State, the community or the family.

Examples:
Child domestic work, child soldiers and the recruitment and involvement of children in armed conflict, child bondage, the use of children from criminal activities including the sale and distribution of narcotics, the involvement of children in any harmful or hazardous work.

Violence

There are a number of definitions of violence used depending on the focus and approach taken to it. For example, whether it is defined for legal, medical, sociological purposes.

The *UN Study on Violence Against Children (2006)* definition of violence draws on Article 19 of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child:* "all forms of physical or mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse" as well as the definition used by WHO in the *World Report on Violence and Health (2002):* "the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against a child, by an individual or group, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity."

Violence can be committed by individuals or by the State as well as groups and organisations through their members and their policies. It results not only in fear of/ or actual injury but also in fundamental interference with personal freedom.

WHO has identified 3 types of violence:
- Self directed violence
- Interpersonal violence
- Collective violence

Examples:
Self directed violence: *Suicide and self mutilation.*

Interpersonal violence: *All forms of physical, sexual and psychological abuse, neglect and exploitation including domestic violence and other forms of gender based violence.*

Collective violence: *State violence is one of the primary forms of collective violence and is understood as violence committed, condoned or allowed by the State and its representatives. It*

includes violence by the armed forces, law enforcement officers and security forces of all kinds but also violence committed by any other State agent. State violence against children include the use of the death penalty and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment including torture, forced displacement, unlawful imprisonment, extra-judicial killings and executions, enforced disappearances, all forms of violence against children living under the care of the State including children living in institutions and children in detention and penal facilities among other examples.

Other forms of collective violence would include violence resulting from internal and international armed conflicts, terrorism, organised crime, but also collective forms of violence targeting specific groups of people such as child infanticide, honour killings, gang violence,

Corporal or physical punishment (and the threat of it)

This includes hitting the child with the hand or with an object (such as a cane, belt, whip, shoe, etc); kicking, shaking, or throwing the child, pinching or pulling their hair; forcing a child to stay in uncomfortable or undignified positions, or to take excessive physical exercise; and burning or scarring the child.

Humiliating or degrading punishment

This takes various forms such as psychological punishment, verbal abuse, ridicule, isolation, and ignoring the child.

Harm

Harm is the result of the exploitation, violence, abuse and neglect of children and can take many forms, including impacts on children's physical, emotional and behavioural development, their general health, their family and social relationships, their self-esteem, their educational attainment and their aspirations.

In some context, the term 'significant harm' is used within the protection system to determine the threshold of harm required before intervention by protection services can be undertaken. This approach seeks to balance the potential risk posed to the child facing the protection issue with the real risks that may come with the intervention itself.

Emergencies

Situations where the survival, physical or mental well being, or development opportunities for children are threatened as a result of armed conflict, the breakdown of social or legal order or a natural disaster.

In the context of an emergency, pre-existing child protection concerns are likely to persist and possibly be worsened by the emergency situation. At the same time a range of new concerns, some specific to the situation itself and others relating to the response to that crisis will need to

be understood and addressed. This means that an effective child protection response in an emergency should be both informed and based on the pre-existing situation and concerns while also attempting to prevent, reduce and respond to the new issues created by the crisis.

A cautionary note to the reader on definitions

Different languages and different professional fields can use different terminology to refer to all the issues above. Save the Children uses the definitions set out above.

In some contexts the term *child maltreatment* is used to refer to all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation carried out by a parent or carer. In other context, the term child abuse is used as the generic term that includes physical, sexual and psychological abuse as well as neglect and exploitation. For some people violence is the generic term that covers all these forms of harm.

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From child labour to children in charge

A handbook on child-led organisation and advocacy on child labour

From child labour to children in charge provides theoretical and practical knowledge on child-led organisation and advocacy on child labour and is based on five years' experience from various fields in Bangladesh.

Boys and girls living in slums and industrial areas in Bangladesh, in villages hidden in the hills, in small towns, on beaches and many other places have been experimenting and testing their options for influencing their own lives and working conditions. Many of the children are young people between 12 and 18 years of age, and the only thing most of them have in common is the fact that they are deeply committed to earning an income.

The children's achievements prove the value of child-led organisation and advocacy on child labour. Children have increased, and at times almost doubled, their income as a result of their advocacy activities. Children living at their workspaces have got real beds to sleep in with mosquito nets. Adolescents harvest their first-ever proper crops after having learned modern agricultural methods. The children have also paved the way for their adult partner organisations into the formal labour market, where child labourers often have been inaccessible to organisations. Then, on a level that is harder to measure, almost all the children have immensely improved their self-esteem and gained much more respect in their local communities.

The many examples and case studies included in this handbook speak their own language.

The handbook also includes a detailed description of different methods and processes to help you understand the basic idea of child-led advocacy and to help you translate the basic ideas into other contexts to benefit other children dealing with different issues in other parts of the world.

Almost all of the activities and ideas included in the handbook are inexpensive or without cost. The idea is for children to be able to organise and do advocacy without having to be overly dependent on adult organisations or donors.