

Gender-based Violence against Children and Youth with Disabilities: A Toolkit for Child Protection Actors

CHILD- AND YOUTH-LED PARTICIPATORY ASSESSMENT ON GBV AND DISABILITY

TOOL 4: PARTICIPATORY ACTIVITIES WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

Purpose of the tool

This tool provides a description of the steps to undertake the activity, a discussion guide and a "[Communication Toolbox](#)" that staff can use to help children and youth identify protection concerns or risks in the community; how these are different between girls and boys, and those with and without disabilities; as well as their suggestions for ways to mitigate these risks. The activities are designed to provide different options for participation and/or communication on protection concerns, and to foster protective peer networking and agency among children with and without disabilities in the community.

Composition of groups

These activities are designed for children and youth over the age of six (6) years. We recommend having four groups:

- Girls aged 6 – 14 years with and without disabilities

- Young women aged 15 – 24 years with and without disabilities

- Boys aged 6 – 14 years with and without disabilities

- Young men aged 15 – 24 years with and without disabilities

Half of each group should be children and youth with disabilities. Some children and youth with disabilities may attend with siblings or other relatives without disabilities. These individuals should be kept in the same group regardless of age, but ideally they should be of the same gender, so that girls and boys will feel more comfortable to discuss their specific concerns.

Timing of activities

It is recommended that you conduct the activities with girls and young women concurrently on one day, and with boys and young men concurrently on another day. You can introduce the activity to them as a large group of girls and boys, split them up by ages for the activity itself, and then bring them back together to discuss what they learned. This will provide space and opportunity to explore the gender-related concerns of children of different ages, for younger people to share their perspectives with older people and to foster opportunities for peer mentoring from the youth in the community.

The participatory activities should be conducted across two separate days. This will provide time for the groups to document things at different times of the day; for the printing of photos taken by the children to use in discussions; and further planning for any presentations and contributions to the Community Workshop.

Facilitation

Activities with women and girls should be facilitated by women (this includes the person facilitating and the person taking notes) and activities with men and boys should be facilitated by men. Facilitation of groups will require at least one person to introduce the activity to the large group. Ideally there should be two people for each group – one to supervise and assist children who may decide to withdraw from the activity at any point, and one person to observe and take notes.

GROUP ACTIVITIES

- Introduce all facilitators and translators, and the organizations involved.
- Explain that the purpose of the activities today are to understand the different types of safety concerns that girls, boys, young women and young men with disabilities face in the community, how these are different for girls and boys of different ages and ways in which we can reduce these risks.
- Explain that we will use this information to improve the activities that are already running in the community, so that children with disabilities can have more opportunity to participate with other children – together, not separate!
- Participation is voluntary – Ask the group to describe what “voluntary” means to them. Some messages that you may like to use to explain or clarify are:
 - » Everyone here today can choose for themselves whether they want to participate in the activities.
 - » You can also choose which activities you want to participate in – you don’t have to participate in all of them.
 - » You can participate in any way you feel comfortable – even just listening to others and watching is OK.
 - » You stop at any time and go home. For those who need assistance to go home, you can talk to one of the facilitators.
- Explain that participants don’t have to share any personal experiences that might upset them or other people. It is also important that the group doesn’t talk about the personal experiences of other children that they know in your community. Instead, encourage the group to talk more generally about issues in the community for girls, boys, young women and young men with disabilities – where they feel safe, where they don’t feel safe – and the things we can do to change this.
- If participants have personal experiences that they would like to share, we can arrange an individual meeting after this discussion, and provide referrals to other available services and support if they are interested.
- Explain that you will be taking notes throughout the activity and the discussion. We will be writing down your concerns and ideas, but not the names of participants. We will use this information in a report to improve programs for children here, as well as in other countries.

Activity 1: Getting to know each other and valuing difference

Everybody has differences – we are all different ages, sizes and shapes, and we all have different things that we like or dislike. In this group we also have people who move, think or communicate in different ways. But everyone here has different strengths and abilities. Let’s see what we have in common and what is different. Move into groups according to:

- Who has long hair/short hair?
- Who goes to school/doesn’t go to school?
- Who likes sports/doesn’t like sports?
- Who likes music/doesn’t like music?
- Who can speak with hands/who can speak with their voice?
- Who can move with their feet/who can move with other parts of their body?
- Similar ages groups

Note: Signs and symbols can also be used to identify which group someone would like to join. Some children may prefer to raise their hands or indicate with gestures in any way that they feel comfortable about which group they identify with. This activity aims to develop an understanding and appreciation of human diversity, but also what children have in common. You can shape the activity to highlight the skills and capacities of different members of the group. Finish with grouping by similar ages, as this assists with the following activities.

Activity 2: Describe what we will be doing

Explain to the groups that we would like to talk today about the different concerns of girls, boys, young women and young men with disabilities. We want to know about:

- The activities that girls, boys, young women and young men with disabilities are expected to undertake in their households and communities.
- The important places in their community; these might be places where children and young people with and without disabilities spend a lot of time and/or where very important things happen.
- Things that make children and young people with disabilities feel safe or unsafe in their relationships with other people, in their home and in their community.
- Ways we can make children and young people with disabilities safer in their relationships with other people, in their home and in their community.

Activity 3: Introduce the “Communication Toolbox”

There are lots of ways to contribute to this discussion and for children and young people to document or record their concerns and ideas. Let the participants decide what the best way is for the different people in your group. Introduce the “[Communication Toolbox](#)” that they can use. These include:

Drawing and artwork – Groups can make a poster using the pens, paper and other materials. Include stickers of different shapes and textures and/or tactile paint, so that children with vision impairments can recognize different parts of the poster.

The picture library – Images and photographs can be used to facilitate discussion. They can also be sorted into different groups under signs that you place on the wall. These signs can include symbols and facial expressions representing places they like/don’t like or feel safe/unsafe.

The sound library – A collection of short audio recordings of local sounds and interactions between people. They can listen to these recordings and pick ones they would like to use for the discussion.

Photography – The group can borrow a camera and take photos that will help them to share the concerns of girls, boys, young women and young men with disabilities. They can take pictures of places they like/don’t like or feel safe/unsafe. They can also take pictures of people and places that they trust and know that they can help.

A guided tour – The group can also walk around the community, documenting the places that they like/don’t like or feel safe/unsafe. They can take their own photos as they move around the community to help explain this.

Story in a bag – Give the children a bag with familiar objects in it that they can use to tell a story. These should be everyday objects, like a drinking cup, a toy or ball, or a pen and a book. These objects can represent different places and/or activities that children like or don’t like in the community, and can help them to communicate about the topic. Children can also add their own objects to the bag.

Table: Using tools with children with different types of impairments¹

TOOL	PHYSICAL IMPAIRMENT	BLINDNESS AND LOW VISION	DEAF AND HEARING IMPAIRMENT	INTELLECTUAL IMPAIRMENT	COMMENTS
Drawing and artwork	✓	x Not suitable for children who are blind. ✓ May suit some children with low vision.	✓	✓	Tactile paint and colorful stickers may help children who are low vision to navigate a visual map.
The picture library	✓	x Not suitable for children who are blind. ✓ May suit some children with low vision.	✓	✓	This is especially useful with children with hearing disabilities, as well as those with intellectual disabilities.
The sound library	✓	✓	x Not suitable for children who are Deaf. ✓ May suit some children who are hard of hearing, if used with a headset.	✓	This is particularly useful with children who are blind. They may also want to record their own voice and reflections on places where they feel safe/unsafe.
Photography	✓	x Not suitable for children who are blind. ✓ May suit some children with low vision, as photographs can be easily enlarged.	✓	✓	Photography is a great way to capture the lived experiences of children with disabilities, both at home and in the public sphere. It may not be immediately apparent why a child has taken a certain photograph – explore this by looking for themes across photos, and asking questions of peers and siblings.
A guided tour	✓ Length of tour should be adapted to capacity of those in the group.	✓	✓	✓	All children have a right to move around their community – even those who require assistance can be included in this activity, as it will highlight the interaction of individual, relationship and community level factors that affect their access and inclusion.
Story in a bag	✓	✓	✓	✓	This is especially useful with children with more profound communication difficulties and for those with vision impairments who can use objects that they can feel to document their own experiences.

Activity 4: Picking and mixing tools

Ask the group to pick two activities from the *“Communication Toolbox.”* They should think about which tools will help everyone in their group to participate or contribute in some way to the activity. They may want to identify different roles for people in your group based on the different skills that each person has. For example, some people may not feel so confident speaking, but they can take photos; others may need assistance to move their wheelchair around the community, but they can take good notes; maybe there is an object or place that they know makes another person in their group happy – they can collect that and put it in the Story in a Bag or visit that place in the Guided Tour.

Move away and give the group time to discuss, and to engage with the different tools. Let them look at the tools, touch them and talk about them. Then ask them to explain what they have chosen and how they might like to adapt and/or combine the activities.

¹ Adapted from: Elena Jenkin, Erin Wilson, Kevin Murfitt, Matthew Clarke, Robert Champain & Laine Stockman, *Inclusive practice for research with children with disability: A guide* (Melbourne: Deakin University, 2015). <http://www.voicesofchildrenwithdisability.com/>

Activity 5: Support the groups information and to document their ideas

Remind each group that today's activity is meant to document the different concerns of girls, boys, young women and young men with disabilities. We want to know about:

- The activities that girls, boys, young women and young men with disabilities are expected to undertake in their households and communities.
- The important places in their community: these might be places where girls, boys, young women and young men with and without disabilities spend a lot of time and/or where very important things happen.
- Things that make girls, boys, young women and young men with disabilities feel safe or unsafe in their relationships with other people, in their home and in their community.
- Ways we can make girls, boys, young women and young men with disabilities safer in their relationships with other people, in their home and in their community.

Start the activity using the tools chosen by the group. The following Discussion Guide can help you gather more information during the activity and facilitate the group to identify their main concerns and ideas for change.

Activity 6: Sharing with others and formulating recommendations

Each group can then decide on how they want to share their concerns and ideas with others. You should bring the children and youth groups (e.g., the girls and young women's groups) back together to share with each other what they have learned. Ask each group to then:

- Identify one activity that children and youth with and without disabilities can do together in the future.
- Make one suggestion of how we can improve the activities that are already running in the community for children and youth with disabilities.

Ask each group to identify two representatives that will come to the Community Workshop to share the opinions and ideas of the group.

Activity 7: Contributing to program planning

Children and youth with and without disabilities should be invited to attend a Community Workshop where they can share what they learned through the assessment, their recommendations and ideas for activities that can be conducted and/or adapted. This is a critical step in the participatory action research cycle and over time strengthens both the capacity and agency of children. Children should be supported to participate in any way they feel comfortable – they may just want to listen, appoint an adult or a peer to speak for them, and/or make formal presentations and contributions. Create the space, and then support them to fill it!



Adolescent girls with and without disabilities share poems about their experiences at a Community Workshop. © WRC/Emma Pearce

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Prompting questions for discussion both during and after activities should include:

- The activities that girls, boys, young women and young men are expected to undertake in their households and communities:
 - » Are girls, boys, young women and young men with disabilities expected to undertake these activities? Why/why not?
 - » Does their responsibility change as children and youth with disabilities grow older? If so, how?
 - » Is it different for children and youth with different types of disabilities (e.g., intellectual disabilities)? If so, how?
 - » Do girls, boys, young women and young men with disabilities experience any concerns for their safety and security when undertaking these activities? If so, how?
- For important places in the community:
 - » What activities happen in these places?
 - » Who attends these activities – girls, boys, young women or young men with and without disabilities?
 - » What types of disabilities do children and youth have who attend these activities?
 - » What are some of the things that prevent girls, boys, young women and young men from being a part of these activities?
 - » What are some of the things that might help girls, boys, young women and young men with disabilities to be part of these activities?
- Things that make girls, boys, young women and young men with disabilities feel safe or unsafe in their relationships with other people, in their home and in their community:
 - » How do people treat children and youth with disabilities? Ask about their parents, their peers, and then other community members. Is it different for girls and boys, and for those with intellectual disabilities? If so, how?
 - » How do children and youth with disabilities learn about safety and violence? What about sex and healthy relationships? Is it different for girls and boys, and for those with intellectual disabilities? If so, how?
 - » What does a safe and healthy relationship look like for girls, boys, young women and young men with disabilities?
 - » Where can girls, boys, young women and young men with disabilities go if they have experienced violence? Who do girls, boys, young women and young men with disabilities trust the most to talk to about personal issues?
- Ways we can make children and young people with disabilities safer in their relationships with other people, in their home and in their community:
 - » How can we make these places in the community safer for girls, boys, young women and young men with disabilities?
 - » What can we do to prevent violence against girls, boys, young women and young men with disabilities in their relationships with others, in their families and in the community?



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