

# **GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES**

**A Toolkit for Child Protection Actors**

## **COMMUNICATION TOOLBOX**





## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Communication Toolbox is taken from *Gender-based Violence and Children and Youth with Disabilities: A Toolkit for Child Protection Actors*. The full toolkit, which includes Principles and Guidelines; Capacity Development Tools on Disability Inclusion in GBV Programming; Child- and Youth-Led Participatory Assessment, is available at <http://wrc.ms/GBV-disab-youth-children-toolkit>

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# COMMUNICATION TOOLBOX

## 1. DRAWING AND ARTWORK

### Summary

Children can choose to use drawing and artwork to communicate the protection concerns of children and youth with disabilities, and their ideas for the future. They can draw places and situations that children and youth with disabilities like/don't like and/or situations where this group might feel safe/unsafe. They can also use drawing or artwork to document their recommendations and vision for the future.

### Combining tools and approaches

This approach can be easily integrated with other tools, such as the Picture Library for individuals who feel less confident with drawing. Sometimes it might be useful to write descriptors on picture that individuals have drawn to help capture the discussion around a topic.

### Materials needed

Flipchart paper, pencils and markers of different colors, and any other art materials that may be available.

### Process

1. Split the children into three groups or into pairs. Give each group flipchart paper and markers and ask them to draw the pictures that reflect the three questions under discussion:
  - » 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.
2. Once complete, ask them to share their pictures with each other.
3. Ask them as a large group to make recommendations about:
  - » 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.
4. Ask the children to then document their ideas and suggestions through one more picture that can be shared in the Community Workshop.

### Practice example

Young women with and without disabilities, including women who are Deaf and use sign language, chose a combination of artwork and photos to share their concerns: these included access to sexual and reproductive health information, which is important for women with disabilities who are entering into relationships. They recommended further awareness-raising among families and the community to ensure that women and girls with disabilities have access to counseling and life skill trainings.



Artwork and picture library. © WRC/Emma Pearce

## 2. THE PICTURE LIBRARY

### Summary

In this tool, the child and/or children select photos or images from the Picture Library to help them explain their answers to the discussion questions. This tool is useful to prompt children and youth, including those with intellectual disabilities, about different aspects of their lives, “including those that they have not yet experienced (or may desire to experience) or may have difficulty articulating.”<sup>1</sup> The photos and images are a prompt to help the child talk or communicate about the topic.

It is important that the facilitator or staff member look for different ways in which the child might communicate, including facial expressions, emotions and gestures, and to document these. Some children may be unable to articulate in detail why they chose a certain photo or image, but their siblings and friends may be able to elaborate based on their familiarity with the individual.

### Combining tools and approaches

This approach can also be integrated with other tools and approaches, including adding selected photos and images to a visual map of the community. Photos and images 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. Children and youth with disabilities can also take their own photos in the community, adding to the library, and they can write or tell a story using the selected photos.



*Girls with and without disabilities sort photographs from the Picture Library. © ChildFund Ethiopia*

### Materials needed

A camera, photo printer (or a place you can get the photos printed), marker pens, flipchart paper and tape.

### Preparation – Making a picture library

1. Travel around the local area and take clear and colorful photos of important places in the community, locations where children with and without disabilities spend time and where activities with children are being conducted. Consider the different roles that girls and boys assume at different ages in the community. Ensure that you have different locations and activities that will be relevant to girls and boys, as well as children of different ages and with different types of disabilities (e.g., some Deaf children may attend a school for the Deaf).
2. Collect images of girls, boys, women and men with different types of disabilities undertaking different roles in their households and communities. Include images of healthy and unhealthy relationships which may provide an opportunity to explore topics relating to sex and GBV. See Annex 4: Example Picture Library Images.<sup>2</sup>
3. Print each photo or image and give each one an identification number and descriptor. This is the photo library.

<sup>1</sup> *Inclusive practice for research with children with disability: A guide.* <http://www.voicesofchildrenwithdisability.com/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/disabilities/resources/1293-youth-disabilities-toolkit-library>

## Process

1. Lay out the photos and images in front of the children and young people – let them touch and look at the photos and talk about them with each other.
2. Go through each of the three key topics, asking the children to select a picture that applies to each one:
  - » 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.
3. Use the Discussion Guide (p. 69) to further explore the pictures chosen by each child – ask them to tell you about each picture they have chosen, what it means to them and why they have chosen it.
4. Ask the children to then select a picture that makes them happy. Explore why they chose this picture and discuss what it might mean for programming on GBV prevention. Ask them as a large group to make recommendations about:
  - » 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.

**Do no harm:** Images of violence may trigger additional emotional distress for survivors of GBV. Hence, it is important to always start with more general images of exclusion and marginalization, monitoring how individuals are interacting with these pictures, and watching for any signs of distress or withdrawal that may indicate that they are not ready to move onto more sensitive topics or discussions.

## Practice example

Zeina is an adolescent girl with intellectual disabilities. Facilitators conducted an activity where she drew and used pictures to discuss what she likes and doesn't like. She picked out pictures reflecting basic needs and rights – like education and access to food – to go on the "like" side. I asked her about a picture depicting verbal violence between a man and a woman: She doesn't like this, and says that the girl can go to her mother or friends for help. She also said that we should try to speak to women like this and visit her, and help her to meet new people who will be her friends. Zeina didn't like a picture of young people interacting (normally a positive picture) because the girl with one leg reminded her of a friend in Iraq. The others used to look at her with shock and surprise, and this made her feel bad. Zeina also drew a picture of a plane and two people. She wants to see her siblings who are living in another country.



Images sorted under a happy face/sad face. © WRC/Emma Pearce

## 3. THE SOUND LIBRARY<sup>3</sup>

### Summary

In this tool, we use short audio recordings of local sounds to help the child communicate about the topic. The child listens to the sounds and selects sounds that they would like to use to help explain their perspectives. This is a similar tool to the Photo Library; however, it provides audio prompts rather than visual prompts. There is no one right way to do this process — you can be creative. The sounds are just a prompt to help the child talk or communicate about the questions.

<sup>3</sup> 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>

## Combining tools and approaches

The children may choose to use the sound library in conjunction with drawing or writing about the topics of the sounds. Children can also record their own sounds when undertaking activities such as the Guided Tour, adding to the visual information that is being gathered through other activities. Children can be instructed on how to use the sound recording equipment and/or accompanied by a staff member or peer with these skills.

### Materials needed

Audio recorder/player (with spare batteries) and headphones.

### Preparation – Making a Sound Library

1. Travel around the local area and make short (e.g., 20 – 30 second recordings) of sounds that relate to GBV. Think about all the areas of a child's life that are relevant to the topic of GBV, such as health, housing, play, social life (friends), family life, food and drink, education, safety, transport, work, communication, culture, spiritual life and religion. Pay particular attention to getting sounds that will be relevant to girls and boys at different life stages.
2. Organize the sounds onto an audio file (e.g., a CD, a digital audio file on a computer or iPad, or a tape).
3. Make a list of all the sounds in order. Give each sound a number and a title (e.g., Cooking at home).

**Note:** Children or adults with vision impairments may be able to help you identify the most appropriate sounds to record. It may also be possible to find sounds similar to local sounds on the Internet. Usually, sounds recorded professionally and available on the Internet are of a higher recording quality and have less disruptive background noise. For an example of a sound library, please see: <http://www.voicesofchildrenwithdisability.com/vanuatu-sound-library/>.

**Do no harm:** Detailed audio descriptions of violence may trigger additional emotional distress for survivors of GBV. Hence, it may be more appropriate to work with children and youth to develop their own Sound Library that will document their responses which are important to them.

### Process

1. Explain that you are going to ask some questions and that the child might like to listen to the sounds to help answer them. Show them how the audio recorder/player works and demonstrate the headphones. Help them become comfortable with wearing headphones. Practice use of the audio player and headphones with clearly recognizable sounds or music.
2. Go through each of the three key topics, asking the children to select a sound that applies to each one:
  - » 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.
3. Use the Discussion Guide (p. 69) to further explore the sounds chosen by each child – ask them to tell you about each sound they have chosen, what it means to them and why they have chosen it.
4. Ask the children to then select a sound that makes them happy. Explore why they chose this sound, and discuss what it might mean for programming on GBV prevention. Ask them as a large group to make recommendations about:
  - » 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.

## 4. PHOTOGRAPHY

### Summary

Photo elicitation techniques, such as Photovoice, can be used with members of marginalized groups in the community. The method encourages participants to tell his or her own story and their community point of view through photographic images of their community and lives.<sup>4</sup> Such techniques have been successfully in participatory action research with persons with disabilities, including those with intellectual disabilities, to document barriers and facilitators to inclusion and formulate recommendations on decisions that affect them.<sup>5,6,7</sup>

### Combining tools and approaches

Photography is a very effective way of documenting risks or hazards in a community and provides visual evidence for children and youth with and without disabilities to share with programmers and decision-makers. As such, it can be effectively combined with the Guided Tour as detailed below (p. 80), or cameras can be sent away with individuals and groups to document important places and activities in their lives outside of this activity. In addition, photography has been an effective tool to girls and young women who are Deaf to document social activities that they enjoy, and develop actions for strengthening peer networks.<sup>8</sup>

### Materials needed

A digital camera, preferably with a screen on the back; memory card and spare batteries; and photo printer (or a place you can get the photos printed).



Photo taken by a boy with intellectual disabilities.



Girls took photos of the toilets. This is a place where girls with and without disabilities feel unsafe and may experience sexual violence. They are also not accessible for girls with movement difficulties



Girls with disabilities share with older girls their photos that they took.  
© WRC/Emma Pearce

- 4 S. Lorenz, & B. Kolb, "Involving the public through participatory visual research methods," *Health Expectations*, 12 (2009): pp. 262-274.
- 5 J.M. Jurkowski, "Photovoice as a participatory action research tool for engaging people with intellectual disabilities in research and program development," *Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*, vol. 46 no. 1 (2008): pp. 1-11. [http://www.researchgate.net/publication/5579735\\_Photovoice\\_as\\_participatory\\_action\\_research\\_tool\\_for\\_engaging\\_people\\_with\\_intellectual\\_disabilities\\_in\\_research\\_and\\_program\\_development](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/5579735_Photovoice_as_participatory_action_research_tool_for_engaging_people_with_intellectual_disabilities_in_research_and_program_development) (accessed 12 August 2014).
- 6 M. Tijn, H. Cornielje, & A.K. Edusei, "Welcome to my life! Photovoice: Needs assessment of, and by, persons with physical disabilities in the Kumasi metropolis, Ghana," *Disability, CBR and Inclusive Development*, vol. 22, no. 1 (2011): pp. 55-72. <http://dcidj.org/article/view/12/28> (accessed 12 August 2014).
- 7 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/>
- 8 For an example, please see the WRC photo-essay at: <https://womensrefugeecommission.org/resources/photo-essays/87-creating-safe-spaces-and-strengthening-girls-social-assets-through-disability-inclusion>

## Process

1. Show the children how to use the camera and give them a chance to practice with an example question, such as “take a photo that describes one thing you like about this location” and “take a photo that describes one thing you don’t like about this location.”
2. Discuss the importance of only taking pictures of people who give their permission. Get them to practice this with the staff and other children or young people in the current location.
3. Remind participants that we want to collect photos that describe three key topics:
  - » 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.
4. Invite the group to split up into pairs or smaller groups to work together in collecting photographs around each of these topics.
5. Let the children take the cameras away to work on this project. This can be done independently by older children, or with adult supervision for younger children.
6. Collect the cameras and print the photos so that they are ready for your next session with the group.
7. Lay out the photos in front of the children and young people – let them touch and look at the photos and talk about them with each other.
8. Go through each of the three key topics, asking the children to select a photo that applies to each one.
9. Use the Discussion Guide (p. 69) to further explore the photos taken by each child – ask them to tell you about each photo they have chosen, what it means to them and why they have chosen it.
10. Ask the children to then select a photo that makes them happy. Explore why they chose this photo, and discuss what it might mean for programming on GBV prevention. Ask them as a large group to make recommendations about:
  - » 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.

## 5. THE GUIDED TOUR<sup>9</sup>

### Summary

This activity involves children and youth taking staff on a tour of their community, showing them the places where they spend most of their time, the places that they like/feel safe or dislike/feel unsafe. It is suitable for children with all kinds of disabilities, especially those with physical disabilities, as it provides a valuable opportunity for children to identify environmental barriers that may prevent participation, and to make recommendations on how to address these. It also allows exploration of safety issues that children with and without disabilities may experience when moving from one place to another.

It is critical to let children with disabilities and their peers identify the most important places and barriers to them. This will also vary by age and gender. For example, younger children with disabilities may feel comfortable to have friends carry them up the stairs to the classroom, but want a better path to get to the playground where they are able to socialize with other children and strengthen these valuable peer networks. For adolescent girls with disabilities, however, an accessible toilet or latrine and the stairs to the classroom may be more important.

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<sup>9</sup> 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/>

## Combining tools and approaches

Children and youth can be given cameras to take photos of relevant locations, people and activities in the community as they undertake the tour. They can then use these pictures to document the map of their community that they will share with others.

### Materials needed

Cameras; flipchart paper; pens and markers; and water and refreshments. Children with disabilities should attend with any aids and devices that they might use on a daily basis to move around their community.

### Process

Establish a meeting location to start and end the activity. Give the children time to discuss the places that they want to visit to build their map.

Ask them 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.

Ask the children to start the tour, walking at a pace that suits all of the group. They may wish to visit homes, schools and community meeting places.

Probing questions to ask at each place: Why is this place important to you? What activities happen here? Are there any children or youth who can't come to these activities? If so, why? What makes this place safe/unsafe? Is it different for girls and boys? What would you recommend that we do to make this place safer? What pictures could you take to describe this problem to others?

Once the tour is finished, you can collect the cameras and print the photos.

Meet on another occasion with the photos. Participants can use these photos to make a poster or a presentation about their community and their recommendations.

### An adaptation to strengthen collective action

When working with pre-existing groups of children and youth, you can expand this activity to foster peer networking with isolated children and youth, such as those with disabilities who may be unable to leave their home. Ask the group to think about other children and youth they know who can't move as well around the community. Probing questions could be: Where do they spend most of their time? Could we go and visit them on the tour to collect information from them and their family? What information would they like to collect from them? How can we keep them updated on activities that are happening in the community?



Boys with and without disabilities take photos during a Guided Tour. © ChildFund Ethiopia



Young men with and without disabilities conducting a Guided Tour. © WRC/Emma Pearce

### Practice example

Young men with and without disabilities chose to undertake a Guided Tour. They reported that most men their age meet at the sports field. This is where they socialize with each other, and often exchange information about different issues. Through the guided tour, they were able to document some of the barriers to participation by men with disabilities. Through this process, they were able to establish and articulate recommendations on improving the accessibility of the built environment, particularly roads, schools and safe spaces for youth.

## 6. STORY IN A BAG<sup>10</sup>

### Summary

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 roles and experiences that girls, boys, young women and young men with and without disabilities assume at different life stages. They can also be objects that represent places or activities that they like or dislike.

The objects are a prompt to help the child talk or communicate about the topic. It is important that the facilitator or staff member look for different ways in which the child might communicate, including facial expressions, emotions and gestures, and to document these. Some children may be unable to articulate in detail why they chose a certain object from the bag, but their siblings and friends may be able to elaborate based on their familiarity with the individual. It is also important to ask these individual who know the child well:

How does [state the name of the person] tell you that she/he is unhappy or uncomfortable with something? What makes her/him happy or sad?

You can use this information to facilitate participation if verbal communication is not possible, and respect any indications that the participant is not comfortable or willing to continue.

### Combining tools and approaches

Children can also be given the bag to take home and fill with their own objects, bringing them to the group activity with other children. Alternatively, objects can be collected throughout the Guided Tour, providing a different way for children and youth with vision impairments to remember and discuss locations visited. Lastly, we found the Story in a Bag was very useful for individual interviews with children and youth with more severe communication limitations, as it provided an individualized activity around which to base discussions with caregivers.

### Materials needed

A bag and a variety of everyday objects collected by staff and/or children (e.g., a soccer ball; a sanitary pad; a piece of fruit; clothing; or a notebook and a pen)

### Preparation – Making the Story in a Bag

1. Think about all the places and activities that may be relevant to safety and inclusion of children and young people in the community. Consider the different roles that girls and boys assume at different ages in the community, and have objects relating to these gender roles in the bag.
2. Travel around the local area and collect objects that relate to this (considering a broad range of areas of the child's life) and that are likely to be familiar to the child. Usually these will be everyday objects. For example, a pen and book, which might mean "school" or education to the child.
3. Find or make a bag to put the objects in and place the objects in the bag. Make a list of all the objects. Give each object a number and a title (e.g., 1. Pen). Include around 10 – 15 items for each exercise, taking care to consider the age, circumstances and abilities of the child to be interviewed.

<sup>10</sup> 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/>

## Process

1. Let the child explore the bag, pull out the objects and feel them, and talk about them with others before you start asking questions.
2. The child removes objects from the bag, identifies them and selects any that will help them to tell their story. There is no one right way to do this process, you can be creative.
3. You can go through the bag slowly, looking for objects that the child is most interested in. For example, if there is a shoe in the bag, they might want to try it on.
4. The child may want to identify each object (e.g., "This is a coconut"), and you should agree and affirm this or correct them gently if they are wrong. The child might want to comment on or describe the object (e.g., "It's hard with hair on the outside, I think this one is ripe."). You should affirm their description and perhaps add a little bit more (e.g., you might say, "Yes, I think it is a juicy one, if you shake it you can hear the coconut water inside.>").
5. Ask the child if there are other objects they would like to include in the bag. For example: "If this was a bag of things that told people what was important to you in life, what else would be in the bag?" Or "Is anything important missing from the bag?"

## An adaptation to strengthen peer-to-peer communication

This can be a good activity to conduct in pairs – children with disabilities paired with a child without disabilities. Try to identify someone who is around the same age and with whom the child with disabilities feels comfortable. This may be a sister or a brother with whom they spend time. Explain that you would like them to tell us a story about what is important to them in terms of safety and inclusion in the community. Let them take the bag home with them to collect objects that will help them to tell the story when you meet on another day. Collecting objects and planning the story together can foster reflection of different types of communication and contributions to activities.



*Using Story in a Bag to explain gender roles. © WRC/Emma Pearce*

## Practice example

Young women with and without disabilities in Ethiopia chose the Story in a Bag as a method of communicating their experiences relating to gender roles. After being introduced to the methodology during the first session, the young women went home, and returned the next day with their own objects. One participant described the significance of a football that she brought for the activity – When girls get to a certain age, they are told by others that they should not play sports with the boys. This is usually in adolescence, when they are expected to take on more traditional "women's roles" in the household.



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