Children and Participation:

Research, monitoring and evaluation with children and young people

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> ‘Participatory research is not just about improved research methods. It is also about achieving democratic participation and social justice for children and young people. By influencing what is researched, and how their lives are represented, they participate in institutional decision-making processes. The more young people become actively engaged in research, the more they personally gain, and the more they may expect – and demand – that changes come out of the findings’
> Kirby, P., 1999, **Involving Young Researchers**, Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

This publication is about participatory information gathering in the process of research, monitoring and evaluation with children and young people. Its purpose is to guide the reader toward sources of information rather than provide detailed descriptions of participatory project work or involving children in advocacy or policy work. Key sources are therefore highlighted either after each piece of text, or at the end in the bibliography.

1 Good practice and ethics

1.1 Introduction

Researchers working with children have generally focused their research on children, rather than planning and carrying out research in partnership with children and young people, or allowing children themselves to plan and carry out research. This relates to views of children in many societies as[1]:

- Ignorant – to be taught
- Irresponsible – to be disciplined
- Immature – to be 'brought up'
- Incapable – to be protected
- A nuisance – to be seen and not heard
- A resource – to be made use of.

Participatory research with children can present special challenges. In particular[2]:

- Adults in all societies have power over children, which allows children to become vulnerable to exploitation during research.
- Understanding and interpreting children's concepts, languages and cultures developed away from the adult world.
- Adults must take care that children's participation is truly voluntary and not coerced.
- Participation is based on equality. Children's opinions do not have more weight or validity than anyone else's, but they should have the same weight provided they are based on equal access to information and resources.

1.2 Why involve children in research and evaluation?

- **Participation is a right:** The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child places in law the right of young people to have their opinions on matters that affect them taken into account in accordance with their maturity.

[1] Scott-Villiers, P., 1999, **IDS Participation Group Newsletter No. 3**, IDS, UK.
[2] Boyden, J. and Ennew, J., 1997, **Children in Focus-a Manual for participatory research with children**, Radda Barnen, Stockholm.

- **Better knowledge of their views and priorities:** Research is a way of finding out about the lives of young people, their priorities and perspectives, as well as finding out how policies and programmes affect them. Involving children and young people more centrally helps illuminate key issues and concerns. Thus it can lead to better information.
- **More effective action:** Where children and young people have been centrally involved in a research or monitoring and evaluation process, they can be more effectively involved in decision-making and follow up action.
- **To measure properly how effective we are:** Bringing about meaningful change in children and young people's lives involves asking them about the impact we are having. Without the involvement of children and young people in every stage of this process we cannot know how effective and successful we have been. This means getting children and young people involved in the process of deciding how to monitor, what information to collect, and how to interpret it.
- **Empowering children and young people:** By simply asking questions of children, adults may consider answers as a teacher, parent or judge would. We set a scene where we are in control. The alternative is to invite children or young people to describe some aspect of their experience in drawing, spoken or written words or through action. This increases their skills and by having their opinions taken into account, provides a sense of empowerment. By letting children decide what is important to them we have the basis for a joint analysis based on a more equal power relationship between adults and children.

A study of children's perspectives in projects in South and South East Asia, Africa and Latin America on child-centred approaches to child work summarised why it is important to take into account children's perspectives. It concluded that listening to children acts as an antidote to making sweeping generalisations about them and their views on life. Also they learnt that children are capable of expressing feelings, concerns and aspirations within contexts that respect their feelings and are adapted to their ways of communicating.
See: Woodhead, M., 1998, **Children's perspectives on their working lives**, Radda Barnen, Sweden.

1.3 When is children and young people's participation appropriate?

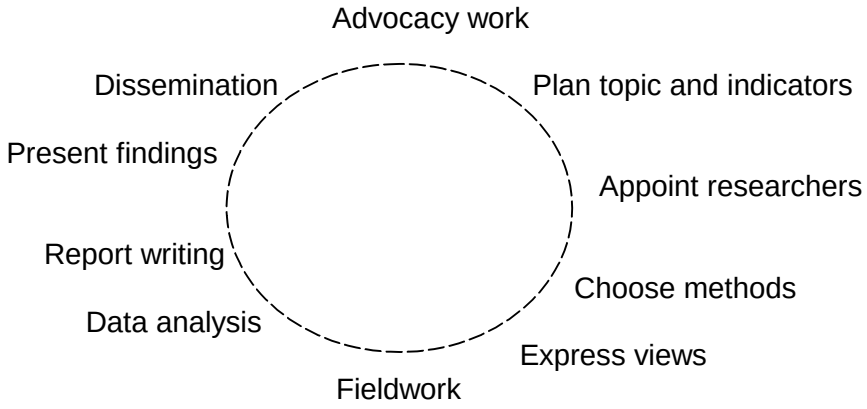
It may not always be appropriate to involve children and young people in research. The following points should be considered when you decide whether the participation of children and young people is appropriate or whether it is possible:

- Is the research really necessary?
- Why do I want young people to participate? How important is participation for people living in extreme poverty? Are there other more important priorities such as securing food or livelihoods?
- Participation can be preached with too much ideological fervour without enough attention to securing actual tangible benefits for people. It is important to ask how the research will produce benefits for children.
- Does the researcher have the skill and the ability to conduct participatory research and evaluation?
- Participation costs time and money. Are the necessary resources available? Is there sufficient time and resources available to tackle diversity issues properly?
- Do I have access to young people?
- Do those taking part have the required skills to participate fully?
- Will encouraging participation be too disruptive? Participation can be a de-stabilising influence and can unbalance existing socio-political relationships at micro-and macro-levels. Can my organisation or others provide necessary support and follow up?

1.4 Participation in different stages of research, monitoring and evaluation

There are many stages to any piece of research or the monitoring and evaluation process and children and young people may be involved in some or all of those stages. It may be helpful to think of a wheel as representing the piece of work being undertaken. The wheel shows how research, monitoring or evaluation involves moving through a number of different stages. In this

model participation is also a means to an end, i.e., an effective and useful piece of research – and not the end in itself.



Laws, S., 2000, **Manual on research for development practitioners**, SC UK, (forthcoming).

Children and young people's participation does not mean that adults cease to be involved in the research, or give up their share of responsibility. Nor does it mean that whatever young people say will be taken on board and acted upon immediately. Participation is a process of partnership between young people and adults, whereby they share ideas and come to common solutions.

Hart's ladder of participation[3], and models derived from it, focus more on the degree of control stakeholders have in the process. A simplified ladder orientated towards children and/or communities is shown below:

Children/community control research (identify questions, carry out and analyse research)
Children/community carry out research in partnership (involvement is shared at all stages)
Outsiders plan research and do analysis but involve children/ community through participatory methods/approaches
Outsiders plan and analyse research and do not use participatory methods/approaches

[3] See Hart, R., 1997, **Children's participation**, UNICEF, New York.

However, ladder models tend to imply that whatever the circumstances, full autonomy is the ultimate goal. This may be unrealistic where stakeholders only want to participate in one or two aspects of a process.

The SC UK research manual for development practitioners gives three examples of projects where participation is at a high level, but which would not score very highly on a ladder:

- Where a community group requests a piece of research, but doesn't want to take much role in the details of the process.
- Where researchers use strongly qualitative methods which enable respondents to consider fully their responses and get their own questions answered.
- Where community members are researchers using simple self-completion questionnaires. They engage the broader community in actively investigating an issue and building their confidence.

Laws, S., 2000, **Manual on research for development practitioners**, SC UK, (forthcoming).

1.5 Ethics[4]

The professional associations for different types of researchers, including the Social Research Association, the Association of Social Anthropologists of the Commonwealth, the British Sociological Association, and the British Psychological Association have produced a variety of statements of ethical practice[5]. These give a very general introduction to ethics, and are useful as an overview. However, every piece of research is context specific, and ethical considerations must bear this in mind.

There are some underlying principles that should inform all work with young people. Ethical decisions occur at all levels of research – in the selection of the topic, area or population, source of funding, negotiating access to young people, and in actually conducting the research and publishing the findings. The expectations of the researchers and the support available to the young people must also be considered. Any researcher who does not give due consideration to ethics is potentially damaging the people researched and those carrying out the research.

[4] See: Laws, S., 2000, **Manual on research for development practitioners**, SC UK, (forthcoming) for a good introduction to ethical considerations.
[5] See Appendix 1 for details.

The majority of ethical issues that apply to adults also apply to children, though there are some additional specific concerns that need addressing. The following are some general issues that should be considered in all research with young people[6].

- **Participation and protection:** Ensure that work with children is in their best interests and does them no harm. It is important to bear in mind that there is an automatic power imbalance between the adult and the child and that the duty to protect a child is fundamental. Assess any possible dangers at an early stage.
- **Conflicting agendas:** Adults are happy to accept children's views, but often only if they fit in with their own ideas. Adults, children and organisations come to research with their own agendas. It is important to be honest about these and to negotiate differences.
- **Informed consent:** Ensure that the child knows what they are being asked to do, and that they have the right to say no to anything. Be aware that the inherent power relationship between the adult and the child means that the child may feel nervous saying no to anything. Also ensure that young researchers gain the necessary consent from the parents of the young people they are interviewing.
- **Purposes of research:** It is important to be sure that the child knows the purpose of what they are undertaking and what the activity they undertake contributes towards.
- **Confidentiality and trust:** Be honest with the researchers and respondents, so that they know if confidentiality will ever be broken and what the parameters are.
- **Clarity:** Be clear about how much time the process is likely to take up, and what the likely outcomes will be.
- **Payment:** It is important to consider how much to pay young researchers and whether also to pay respondents, compensating them for the time that they give up.

[6] Ivan-Smith, E., 1999, **Child Focus Development Manual**, SC UK, (draft, unpublished).

Save the Children UK research on domestic labour and children in institutions in the Middle East and North Africa

This piece of research highlights the complex ethical considerations of many pieces of work with children, especially where powerful people have vested interests:

- Children are the weakest members of powerful institutions (family, orphanages), which have an interest in maintaining themselves
- The managers of institutions have a strong interest in maintaining the reputation of the institution. This might make intervention difficult
- Many institutions are closely linked with people of political or religious prestige, who also have an interest in maintaining the institution's prestige
- Abuses often take place in the private sphere, so that SC UK cannot take for granted access to these children.

Laws, S., 2000, **Manual on research for development practitioners**, SC UK.

1.6 Child protection

In any piece of research, child protection is of paramount importance. It is vital that at an early stage researchers working with children consider understandings and local expressions of child abuse, how these impact on programme work and the kind of responses SC UK might make in dealing with such situations.

SC UK has a child protection policy that sets out its position on working with children. This contains a strong commitment to safeguard children wherever SC UK works with them[7]. The policy contains a statement of commitment, a code of conduct and a framework for action as well as a mandatory internal reporting requirement, which means that all concerns must be raised through the line management chain as described in the policy.

There may be particular pieces of research where the children involved are especially vulnerable, such as when working with child sex workers. In these cases, given that sex workers are by definition abused and in order to be sure that the research can progress, it may be necessary to consider drawing up special procedures. However, even in these cases it is important to be sure that all those concerned with the process, and especially the children

[7] This can be found on the SC UK Intranet, or contact SC UK's Child Protection Development Manager, Paul Nolan, on P.Nolan@scfuk.org.uk.

themselves, are clear about the limits of confidentiality that will apply to the interviews in question.

1.7 Tackling diversity sensitively

> 'It is important to recognise that children, like women, don't form a homogenous social category. Childhood and the personal history of each child is defined by the material, historical, socio-cultural circumstances of their life, including the social systems, cultural beliefs and practices, political and legal environment… gender, age, disability, ethnicity, class, caste, religion, are some of the factors which produce different conditions, and hence realities and experiences for different types of childhood.'
> Faruqi, F., 1997:3, Putting Children First! Child Rights, Participation and Development, in **South and Central Asia's Children**, No. 8, SC UK.

All research aims to generalise to some extent. However, unless differences within and between groups are studied, there is a danger that real differences will be masked and marginalised groups further marginalised. It is important that attention to diversity does not lead to particular children being victimised for their difference, or that patterns of inequality, where for example boys dominate or low caste children are excluded, are reinforced.

In order for the diversity of children to be considered, and for policy to reflect difference, there needs to be greater disaggregation within research to reflect these real differences that exist[8].

There are a number of ways that researchers can confront the challenges of working with a diverse group of people and can be creative in their research:

- Aim for extended contact with members of different groups, to gain a fuller understanding of their perspectives.
- Be aware of the method of questioning being used. Open-ended questions are difficult for some young people to understand though they can enable some people to express their opinions and show what is important to them, which more formal techniques may not.

[8] See: Qvortrup, J., 1997, A Voice for Children in Statistical and Social Accounting: A Plea for Children's Rights to be Heard, in James, A. and Prout, A., 1997, **Constructing and reconstructing childhood**, Falmer Press, UK pp. 85-106.

- For children with learning or communication difficulties, for those of minority language groups or for young children, there may be a need to reduce demand on verbal abilities and to find methods of non-verbal communication, such as symbol boards or pictures and photographs.
- It is also worth considering using interpreters. This would enable those of minority language groups to participate fully in discussions.
- Do research when and where it is most convenient for people. Researchers are more likely to be able to involve marginalised children if the research is carried out near their home, school or workplace.
- Enable less confident and marginalized children to participate fully in all stages of the research, for example by separating groups of boys, girls, or older/younger children. However, it is vital that processes such as this do not reinforce difference and divisions.
- Discuss with young people the use of language, particularly where there may be a danger of sexist or racist attitudes or behaviour towards one another. Set some ground rules.
- Adults need to facilitate ways of working that are accessible to younger children so that they can make significant contributions, and not simply to expect them to participate in adult discussions.

1.8 Working with disabled children and young people

Researchers need to challenge their own traditional ideas and methods of doing research, particularly when they work with young disabled people who have communication difficulties and who may not be able to communicate in what researchers may see as 'conventional' ways.

> 'The dependence of the qualitative researcher on language and the image of the ideal informant as an articulate person, may call for some creative tactics in the face of an informant who cannot verbally inform'.[9]

[9] Bilken, S.K. and Moseley, C.R., 1988, 'Are you retarded? No I'm Catholic': qualitative methods in the study of people with severe handicaps, in, **Journal of the Association for persons with severe handicaps**, 13, pp.155-162.

Research with disabled young people

Research on childhood disability has rarely sought the views of the children themselves. While children as a whole are often ignored in research, children with disabilities are especially invisible. It is important to note too, that children with disabilities are a very diverse group and generalisations should be avoided where possible. Existing quantitative research tends to align itself with the medical model of disability. That is, that disability is seen as a 'problem' located within the individual and researchers often concentrate on the prevalence or the severity of the 'problem'. Qualitative researchers look more upon disability as a social construct. The 'problem' lies with society and its inability to adapt to the requirements of people with disabilities. Disability is a series of experiences waiting to be described. For this the young people with disabilities have to be involved. In order for this to be successful the research process itself needs to be given over to disabled people on a more regular basis.

See: Beresford, B., 1997, **Personal Accounts: Involving disabled children in research**, SPRU, UK.

Child centred participatory research with visually impaired children

This piece of research used participatory techniques with school children, parents and teachers to get their views on integrated education for the disabled. A research group of pupils including those with a visual impairment used informal and formal discussions and interviews, writing work, drawing, role-play, focus group discussions and daily activity profiles to gather the information. In the drawing session the research group was asked to draw the classroom as it was on the day of the research, and then an idealised version including what *should* be in it and where these items should be placed. The written exercise aimed to find out whether there were any differences in the way that people with a visual impairment learn at school. It asked the question 'I learn best when my teacher...' The sighted children were also asked to write about 'their first few days experience of being with two children who cannot see in my class', while the disabled children were asked to write on 'the first few days experience of being in a class with children who can see.' The experience had mixed results. The role-plays, interviews and focus groups were not a great success mainly through a lack of preparation with the children. However, the drawing and written exercises were a success and enabled recommendations to be made about how the school can work better to integrate the children with visual impairments. This included teacher training, the need for more Braille materials and an increased awareness that some teaching methods (such as maps, diagrams and ball games) hinder their participation.

From: Nair, Deepika, 1996, **Integrated education for the visually impaired – some insights**, SC UK, London.

Researchers at the University of Stirling, in the UK, have been using innovative techniques in their work with young people with learning disabilities who are making choices as they move from childhood to becoming adults.

Talking Mats

The researchers identified six key areas in the young adult's lives (accommodation, day activity, indoor leisure activity, outdoor leisure activity, people and transport). A CD-ROM has been produced with thousands of pictorial representations of everyday activities and situations. A large number of these were printed and mounted on card with Velcro attached to the back. Six mats (one for each of the key areas) were divided using a three-point scale of happiness. The scale was represented by symbols (a happy face, a pair of hands representing 'so-so' and a cross with an unhappy face). Each pictorial representation was then shown to the young person and, after discussion, placed on the mat in one of the three sections to represent the level of happiness with this aspect of life (e.g. family, youth club, minibus transport, etc.). This method helped to involve young people in making positive choices about their futures and to allow those with communication difficulties to get across their priorities. The method is simple and non-threatening and provided the basis for fuller discussions about the future. Significant issues that came out of the research were mainly around transport and, in particular, a dislike of travelling alone on buses as well as some concern about making new friends. Murphy, J., 1998, **Talking Mats: Speech and language research in practice**. Speech and Language Therapy in Practice, Autumn 1998, 11-14. To find out more visit the Website http://www.aacscotland.com.

Save the Children has undertaken a comprehensive review of their Community-Based Rehabilitation programmes (a way of working with disabled children involving the whole community). One of the outcomes of this review was a paper on accessible communication[10]. It highlighted ways in which pieces of work must take into account the diverse needs of children and young people in communication. Some of the key learning points were:

- Use an appropriate form of language (e.g. simple and culturally relevant, phrases with common usage locally, and words that translate in an understandable manner to the local setting).
- Remember that sign language is a language in its own right and that there may be particular national differences.
- Remember that language is more than just words and that body language can say a great deal.
- When communicating in print use legible fonts and font sizes.
- Think about the benefits of audio and video presentations and whom they exclude.
- Maintain minimum standards for all visual aids, based on what is helpful to participants. For example, type overhead transparencies, use black or blue

[10] Lewis, I., 2000, **Accessibility and Participation** (working title), SC UK, London.

ink on flipcharts, use simple diagrams and use a font size of at least 18 points.

- Use clear speech, face the people you're talking to, do not speak too quickly, and keep background noise to a minimum.

1.9 Including the perspectives of very young children

Researchers also need to challenge themselves when it comes to undertaking research with very young children. It is often assumed that children of this age will have little to say about their lived experience. However, by using innovative research methods and concentrating less on written and spoken techniques and more on visual, it is possible to work effectively with them. The University of Stirling in the UK has been working with this age group to consider the provision of all-day care. They have worked with the children themselves to determine their views on current provision.

Including the perspectives of three-and four-year-olds.

The researchers used observation work and conversations with the children to establish what they consider to be successful, satisfactory or good all day care as well as less successful provision. They wanted ultimately to be able to put together a series of indicators of satisfaction based on the children's views. They undertook two days of observations in the classroom where they recorded activities, the context of the play (for example free play or structured play), and the reaction of the children to these different sessions. In order to work directly with the children they tried five different techniques. These were:

1. Using books depicting different play situations and asking the children about whether each looked fun.
2. Using felt boards to draw pictures.
3. Using play people to simulate play situations.
4. Using telephones to develop conversations.
5. Using faces with different expressions (happy, sad, etc.), and asking the children which part of the day each face corresponded to.

The researchers found that using the expressive faces was the only really effective way of engaging the children and through this they were able to build up a good understanding of which area of the day was most satisfactory. The felt boards and the telephones were too complex, while the children wanted to play their own games with the play people. The researchers also worked with the parents, managers of provision and practitioners to gain a fuller understanding.

Stephen, C., and Wilkinson, J., 1999, **Rhetoric and Reality in Developing Language and Mathematical Skills: Plans and Playroom Experiences**, Early Years Vol. 19, No. 2, p. 62-73.

Key Texts

- Beresford, B., 1997, **Personal Accounts: Involving disabled children in research**, SPRU, UK
- Boyden, J. and Ennew, J., 1997, **Children in Focus – A manual for participatory research with children**, Radda Barnen
- Johnson, V. et al., 1998, **Stepping Forward: Children and young people's participation in the development process**, IT Publications
- Laws, S., 2000, **Manual on research for development practitioners**, SC UK (forthcoming)
- Lewis, I., 2000, **Accessibility and Participation**, SC UK, (working title, forthcoming)
- Ward, L., 1997, **Seen and Heard: Involving disabled children and young people in research and development projects**, Joseph Rowntree Foundation

2 Methods and Tools

There are a range of research methods that can be used with children and young people. However, in themselves they do not guarantee participation. Much depends on how decisions are taken and who has control over the research process. A participatory process enables powerless people to express and analyse the realities of their lives and conditions, to plan what action to take and to monitor and evaluate the results.

2.1 Different research methods available

Many of the methods commonly used in participatory research are visual techniques that derive from Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) or Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) as it is now widely called[11]. The following are some of the principal participatory methods that are used with children in research:

2.1.1 Visual techniques[12], with groups or individuals, such as drawings, diagrams and maps.

Visual techniques are very common in participatory research. Children, including those that who not literate, can use these techniques to describe their environments, life situations, preferences and past histories. Mapping is a very commonly used visual technique. Maps can give information about a local environment or a child's own place in a community. Maps can be small-scale models or even a full size simulation and they are commonly used as a stimulus for the respondents' interpretations and explanations.

In his study of child work, Woodhead (1998) uses what he calls 'The Children's Perspective Protocol'. This involves using a core set of activities

[11] To find out more about the theory and practice of PLA read Chambers, R., 1997, **Whose Reality Counts? Putting the first last**, IT Publications. See also the IDS Policy Briefing Issue 7, 1996, **The Power of participation**, IDS, Sussex.
[12] There are good examples of all of these in Hart, R., 1997, **Children's Participation**, UNICEF, New York.

based around some of these participatory techniques to understand all aspects of the children's lives.

The Children's Perspectives Protocol

Activity 1: **'My day'** invited young people to describe their daily lives. The information was collected orally and by using daily timetable charts showing work, school, domestic chores and play, and individual, weekly and seasonal variation charts.

Activity 2: **'My work'** was an open-ended exploration of the details of children's working lives. Information was collected through mapping, drawings, flow charts, role-play and group discussions. Notes were also made of body language and emotions that children expressed.

Activity 3: **'Who matters?'** asked about young people's social networks, the quality of key relationships, as well as their own self-evaluation. Information was gathered using a chart with themselves at the centre and other important people in a circle around it. This was used as the basis for discussion.

Activity 4: **'Work and school'** asked participants what they considered to be the good things about their work, and then repeated the exercise for school before establishing their preferences. Information was gathered using cards of school children with their profession on them, along with a card with a happy face to represent good things and a sad card to represent bad things. This was used as a basis for asking the good and bad things about school and work.

Activity 5: **'Which work is best?'** asked participants to rank children's occupations (including their own) in terms of relative desirability/undesirability, and explored the criteria on which young people base these judgements. The cards were used to explore whether different occupations are better or worse than the children's own type of employment.

Activity 6: **'What is a child?'** examined young people's own views on child development. They were asked to chart a wide range of work activities in terms of age appropriateness. The information was gathered using time lines, on which sets of cards with different domestic chores and occupations were placed. Discussions took place about working laws and regulations.

Activity 7: **'What if?'** presented young people with common dilemmas facing working children and invited them to comment about what is likely to happen next and what could be done to help. The dilemmas were presented using role-play, words or pictures. The sort of things they included were coping with exploitation and abuse, family pressures and breaking rules.

Activity 8: **'Life-Stories'** provided fieldworkers with an opportunity to explore the issues in Activities 1-7 with a particular child, in order to enrich the level of detail from group work. Information was gathered using any means that the child felt comfortable with.

Woodhead, M., 1998, **Children's Perspectives on their Working Lives**, Radda Barnen, Sweden.

An advantage of 'The Protocol' is that it does not assume that the children are literate. The young people are asked to represent their lives in ways that are meaningful to them, rather than to adults.

Study of children's clubs in Nepal

Children's clubs have emerged in Nepal as important institutions over the past decade. Three hundred or so clubs have received development support from SC Norway and SC US. This study arose from a desire to learn more about the clubs and how they function as well as make some recommendations for the future. The research was carried out with children from a number of case study clubs. Research methods included:

- Mapping: Used to look at household and village composition.
- Charts: Used to find out what the children gain from different community settings (e.g. home life, school, free time).
- Role-plays and scenario skits: Used to find out which club activities the children valued.
- Matrix ranking: Used to rank the activity preferences discovered above.

There were also a number of individual interviews. As a number of the children were illiterate visual research tools were used as extensively as possible. The findings were presented at a four-day workshop to which representatives of the clubs were invited to attend and make comments on the recommendations the authors had made.

See: Rajbhandary, J., Hart, R. and Khatiwada, C., 1999**, The Children's Clubs of Nepal: A Democratic Experiment**, SC Norway.

However, it is important to note that while PLA facilitators tend to encourage the use of visual techniques, this is not always the most appropriate or 'best' technique to use. Where there is a strong oral tradition people, including children, may be more comfortable discussing verbally issues of importance to them. These techniques may also exclude children with visual impairments. What usually works well is a mix of many different visual, verbal and written techniques.

2.1.2 Role-play, drama and songs, usually improvised by children.

Many children find it easier to communicate through drama than by answering direct questions in interviews. Role-play includes individual or group mimes or improvisations, as well as plays written for performance by the children themselves, by others, or using puppets. One good way of using these methods in research is through asking children to portray life histories or particular events in their lives through a role-play. For example, this was used

successfully in Nepal, where young girls performed skits about problems in their lives on the video 'Voices of Girls'[13].

One danger with this type of research is that it can be difficult to include everyone. Unconfident children may feel uncomfortable performing in front of an audience and their voices can be missed. Similarly, older children may feel very self conscious about performing and they, too, could shy away from taking part in such research. The following examples primarily show children advocating about their life situations, rather than being discrete pieces of research. However, they do show the type of performance that can be adapted for use in research.

The Children's Theatre Collective (CTC) of the Philippine Educational Theatre Association

The CTC is a group of artists and teachers who specialise in children's theatre geared towards the development of Filipino children. In 1988, the CTC began a partnership with a local alliance of children's organisations. Through this they have been able to organise creative workshops, training for child advocates, teachers and children, and production of community-based plays. One of these plays was produced with children from Smokey Mountain, a huge rubbish dump where hundreds of families live and collect rubbish for a living. They took the play around refugee centres and ran workshops for displaced people. Through this sort of work children have tapped into their creative energies and opened their minds to exciting alternative solutions to their problems. Children have become resourceful so that they can lead and participate in change.

Cloma, E., The Children's Theatre Collective, in, Johnson, V., et al, 1998, **Stepping Forward**, IT publications.

Experiences of the Human Rights Education Programme in Pakistan

To celebrate Universal Children's day in 1995, eighty students from ten schools in Karachi performed poetry and prose readings, skits, short plays, singing and dancing, and video and slide shows in front of 350 people in Karachi's best auditorium. They covered a wide variety of issues depicting violations of human rights. The medium of communication proved far more effective than traditional methods of interaction, and provided the participants with the opportunity to explore further some of the issues they had visualised. Key to its success was the new opportunity for the children to think, conceive and manage the programme for the first time, giving them a feeling of ownership from the outset.

Ali, Z., 1997, When Children Become In-Charge! The experiences of HREP from Pakistan, in, **South and Central Asia's Children** (No.8) p.33-35, SC UK.

Asking children to improvise in role-plays and skits also requires careful explanation and coaching. There is a danger that without this they may simply repeat songs, stories or drama that they may have seen elsewhere.

[13] For further information about these videos, contact Ranjan Poudyal, Regional Advisor, South and Central Asia, SC UK. His email address is ranjan@scfoscar.org.np.

2.1.3 Photo appraisals and video making

These offer further alternatives to the dominance of the written word in conventional research methods. The most common form of this research allows children, equipped with cameras, to go out and document their lives over a period of time. This is a powerful way of allowing children to express their views and priorities.

Participatory video-making in a project in Brazil

Participatory video-making involves young people in documentation of, and communication about, their realities. It can challenge traditional knowledge, values and stereotypes. Here, children were able to represent their own lives by re-creating scenes from popular soap operas about the wealthy. The children became reporters, giving them the power to decide who speaks and what is heard. Through this experience young people were able to produce, direct, film, act, and edit their own film, while the adults became resources for them to use as they thought best.

Faulkner, J., 1999, Participatory video-making in Brazil in Johnson, V. et al, **Stepping Forward**, IT pubs.

Visions of children who can't hear, Vietnam

Communicating through photography gave deaf children the opportunity to express themselves and communicate with a wider audience. Eight deaf children took part in this SC UK programme, from training in the use of cameras to discussion and learning. The children chose their own subjects for the weekly shoot, which included work, play, holiday, family, travel, flowers or chickens. Many of the 4000 images taken were thoughtful and provoking, though verbally communicating what they had taken was difficult. The pictures provide a glimpse of the lives that the young people lead and allow the viewer to see the world through the children's eyes. When the pictures were exhibited they had a big impact on everyone, from teachers and pupils to parents.

Theis, J. et al, 1999, **Visions of Children Who Can't Hear**, SC UK, Vietnam.

SC UK Eye to Eye project, Palestine

Young Palestinian refugees have taken photos and written stories about their lives and produced a website from where they exchange information with young people from around the world. It gives young people an insight into the lives of people they wouldn't normally meet and an understanding of what it is like to be a young refugee.

The website is at www.savethechildren.org.uk/eyetoeye.

2.1.4 Group techniques, which can reduce the adult-child power relationship.

Focus groups bring together similar people to look at a limited number of topics in some depth. The discussion takes place between respondents and there is usually a researcher present, who acts as a facilitator. The

discussions can be completely unstructured or may be prompted by a small number of questions that are introduced appropriately.

There are three particular concerns with focused group work. First, that a false consensus can be reached, which may be due to the dominance of a few people within the group. Secondly, that there may be subjects which are not discussed as they are not deemed suitable for public airing. These may be particularly important issues. Finally there may not be a culture of free discussion: each individual may speak in turn at length with their opinion, without engaging with anyone else. This does not lead to 'real' discussion.

However, if focus groups are undertaken carefully, they can be a good way of breaking down the power relations between the researcher and children, as there tend to be more child respondents in these groups than adult researchers[14].

Focus group discussion – special needs

Disabled Bhutanese children were identified as being one of the most vulnerable groups living in Nepalese refugee camps and requiring special attention. Focus group discussions were held with the children to highlight the particular needs that they faced. Each group consisted of 5 - 6 children aged 6 – 14 with physical disabilities along with their respective parents/carers. Before discussions took place the children were introduced to each other through a variety of games and puppetry. Pre-determined issues were selected and asked in turn to the children and their carers. These included perceptions on the causes of disability, effects of disabilities, workload of family members, isolation and need for support. The groups were also asked if they had any issues of concern they wanted to raise. The outcome was a series of policy recommendations for the project.

Giri, Gauri, 1995, **Focus Group Discussion – Special needs,** SC UK, Nepal.

2.1.5 Children's writings, including essays, diaries, recall and observations.

Many of the participatory methods involve visual techniques, ensuring that illiterate children can still express themselves. Where children are literate it is useful to take advantage of these young people's skills in writing. Children do not have to be expert writers to form lists, fill in forms or complete a questionnaire. Essays provide a huge amount of information in a short space of time. Poetry is also a very powerful way of getting a message across.

[14] For more examples and discussion see Boyden, J. and Ennew J., 1997, **Children in Focus – A Manual for participatory research with children**, p. 129, Radda Barnen, Sweden.

2.1.6 Storyboards.

Most children are familiar with comics. Using a series of annotated drawings can help young people to describe scripts of common events in their lives.

2.1.7 Individual or collective drawing.

Individual drawings can be useful as a warm up exercise or as a stimulus for further discussions.

Body mapping

A community-mapping project by Sustain, looking at social exclusion and food poverty in the UK, asked children to draw body maps as part of a participatory appraisal. The aim was to get children to think about the impact of food on different parts of their body. For instance, that sweets rot their teeth, or that chips make you fat. This could either be used as an icebreaker or as an introduction to health education research.

Sustain, 2000, **Reaching the parts. Community-mapping: Working together to tackle social exclusion and food poverty**, Sustain in association with Oxfam's UK poverty programme.

However, there can be problems with using drawing in research:

- Not all young people have had experience of drawing and they may not know how to respond.
- Older children may resent being asked to take part in what they see as a childish activity.
- Children who draw frequently may produce stereotyped images, based on past teaching and discussion rather than their own current perceptions.
- Adults must pay close attention to what is being drawn because there is a real danger of misinterpretation.

A picture drawn by a 12 year-old street child in Addis Ababa showed the boy wearing a hat and eating some fruit. Without the child's interpretation, what he was trying to portray would not have been clear. In fact, he explained that he was wearing a hat as he was ashamed to be seen by other people eating the fruit, which he explained was rotten.

Boyden, J. and Ennew J., 1997, **Children in Focus – A Manual for participatory research with children**, (p. 118), Radda Barnen, Sweden.

2.1.8 Semi-structured or unstructured interviews.

One of the best ways to build up an understanding of children's lives, their interests and needs is to interview them. Interviewing is one of the most fundamental approaches to research and both semi-structured and unstructured interviews are vital to any participatory work. If done sensitively,

they can elicit a great deal of qualitative information. Children, too, can have a reasonable amount of control over the process and the issues covered. Adults can carry out the interviews with children, or children themselves can interview one another. These interviews can cover life stories, testimonies of an event or specific topics.

Where the topic being discussed is particularly sensitive, there are a number of ethical considerations.

Collecting information from child domestic workers

Child domestic workers are often very isolated inside their employer's homes, and interviewing them there may make them fearful of the consequences of upsetting their employers. Interviews should therefore be conducted in a neutral setting, where the child feels comfortable. It is also necessary to build up the child's confidence by interviewing over a period of time, and not asking difficult questions straight away. Interviewing can be very stressful for the child, and interviewers should be aware that a child might become upset or depressed about a particular subject. Researchers should therefore only conduct interviews if they are prepared to provide follow-up help to the child.

Blagbrough, J., 1998, p.34, Collecting information from child domestic workers: some ethical issues, in, Johnson, V., et al, 1998, **Stepping Forward**, IT publications.

The participatory techniques described above are designed to be flexible and should be used in that way. The above examples offer only a snapshot of the innovative methods being used, and those involved in each piece of research should decide for themselves what is the most appropriate level and type of participation.

Key Texts

- Boyden, J. and Ennew, J., 1997, **Children in Focus – A manual for participatory research with children**, Radda Barnen
- IDS Policy Briefing Issue 7, 1996, **The Power of Participation**, IDS, Sussex
- Johnson, V. et al., 1998, **Stepping Forward: Children and young people's participation in the development process**, IT Publications
- Worrall, Steve, 2000, **Young People as Researchers, a Learning Resource Pack**, SC UK and Joseph Rowntree Foundation
- Woodhead, M., 1998, **Children's Perspectives on their Working Lives**, Radda Barnen, Sweden

3 Involving children and young people in different parts of the research process

SC UK carried out a piece of work with street children in Bangladesh who had spent time in jail and correction centres. The young people acted as the researchers. The aim was to gather information about their experiences of incarceration to generate debate among policy makers and NGOs, in view of the common abuse that these children suffered. Involving children in the research project in this way taught the workers some new lessons:

- The young people brought fresh categories and perceptions to the research
- The data gathered was of high quality and the findings compare well with similar research carried out by adults
- The young interviewees enjoyed being interviewed by their peers
- The young researchers were clearly able to raise issues and ask questions in a way adults could not
- The power inherent in the conclusions is enhanced when the research is done by those actually affected

Of course some problems were encountered, including:

- Difficulty in contacting the young people
- Getting the right incentives for the young people to take part
- Discussions of sensitive issues
- Harassment by adults while carrying out the research

See: Khan, S., in, Ivan Smith, E., 1999, **Child Focus Development Manual**, SC UK (draft, unpublished).

3.1 Training young people as researchers

Training children and young people themselves to undertake interviews is a vital and complex component of this process. Taking time to do this is vital, as children may not necessarily undertake interviewing in the way that the researcher is expecting, for instance in a non-participatory way. The aim of training young people as interviewers is that it will give greater access to them and their views. Children and young people may feel more at ease talking to their peers about sensitive issues. They can also be empowered by the process, as it gives the researchers responsibility, which can mean their peers and their families treat them with greater respect.

Research is a skill and, like adults, children and young people need to be trained and need to gain experience to do it well. However, training young people as researchers is not a straightforward process. There are potential limits if children are left to do the research on their own rather than in partnership with adults:

- Concern from parents that children are not able to do their household chores or paid work as a result of the time that is taken by the process.
- Children require a long time to be trained properly and may not quickly understand some of what is being asked.
- Children, like adults, may not be very good at interviewing. For instance, they may move too quickly through the interview process, ask questions very rigidly and inflexibly, and not listen sufficiently to respondents.
- As in the adult world, different young individuals hold and exert different amounts of power. Some children may find it difficult to give over power to the person they are interviewing.
- Children and young people may have a limited understanding of the world and the influences upon it. Asking them to draw conclusions from policy research may be asking too much.
- The need for clarity about what should happen if an interviewee tells a young and inexperienced researcher about abuse that has been happening to them in their home.

Some of the lessons learned from training young people include[15]:

- Both child researchers and respondents need the opportunity to ask questions.
- The longer the project the more confidence young researchers will gain.
- Feed the children before an interview session, as they will be more responsive!
- Adult co-ordinators must be patient with the children.
- Language needs to be adapted to the children's capability level.
- Confidentiality must be stressed.
- It is useful to establish ground rules on behaviour that children can be reminded of.

[15] Mary Chinyenze-Daniel in Ivan Smith, E. 1999, **Child Focus Development Manual**, SC UK (draft, unpublished).

Children citizenship and environment conference training

In 1999, SC UK held a conference in Karakalpakstan in Central Asia, on children's responses to the Aral Sea crisis. The aim of the project was to engage children in the debate about environmental degradation and the increasing poverty gap, as well as to get their views on the future. The organisers held a series of three-day workshops about child participatory tools for the children from the six Central Asian republics involved. The aim was to help them use the participatory methods with other children and, therefore, enhance children's ownership and representation of the environment. They were taught about card exercises, miming, role-play, mapping and time lines. The result was that the children were then in a position to conduct training for other children and adults. They also noted, however, that there was some difficulty with communication between children from different social groups (e.g. from town and village, large city and small town). In order to resolve this, the facilitator ran a session on consensus and compromise. Using these methods in the conference the children identified many environmental issues and possible solutions.

Irina Kan, 2000, **Children's Response to the Aral Sea Crisis**, Conference Report, SC UK.

The SC UK programme in Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam has produced a guide for young researchers working with children. It offers a set of participatory approaches for them to use once they have been trained properly. The guide clearly sets out objectives and examples of how to carry out a Needs Assessment in a community. The tools include information about mapping, diagramming, card games, time lines, role-plays, group discussions and drawing[16].

Getting children's priorities in Bangladesh

A group of young people was involved in planning and carrying out a piece of research that aimed to identify issues of importance in the lives of local children. At a preliminary four-day meeting the children decided what they wanted to do, identified a set of issues, decided who they wanted to interview, decided to whom they wanted to communicate their views, and arranged to carry out the interviews. The core group of 16 children conducted 42 interviews with 9 to 16 year olds. There were also four adult team members. Regular assessment and planning meetings were held by the team to help them to reflect on the process they were undertaking. As a result of the interviews the children identified a long list of issues and prioritised them into a top five of education, good behaviour (including that of parents, teachers, doctors, boys and girls), play, food and health. One aim of the research was to produce a book, to be produced by the adults. This book would then be taken back to the children for their approval and revised with their comments. The children were also to agree how to launch their publication (e.g. a press conference).

West, Andy, 1997, **Some Examples of Participation Work with Children and Examples from Bangladesh**, SC UK.

[16] SC UK, Ho Chi Minh City Programme, 1998, **A guide for young researchers working with children for Needs Assessment in the community**, SC UK, Vietnam.

3.2 Dissemination

It may strengthen the impact of the research project if the young people themselves are involved in the dissemination. Children and young people can be involved in this process in the following ways[17].

- If there is a report, identifying to whom it should be sent.
- Writing accompanying letters.
- Distributing leaflets and posters.
- Writing a press release.
- Undertaking media interviews.
- Doing presentations and speaking at pubic meetings concerning the project and its findings.
- Thinking of innovative and accessible ways to present the findings, such as drama, video, plays, poetry or photography.

Disseminating the results of a regional study

Children who had been involved in SC UK's South Asian regional study on children and citizenship were included in a final presentation of the results. The presentation was attended by a wide variety of people from SC UK, UN agencies, and members of other NGOs. Children's representatives presented their own findings and feelings. Once the presentation had taken place separate groups of children and adults were formed to discuss the recommendations. Their comments and ideas were then fed back into the final report. According to those at the presentation the exercise was very eye opening as the children showed such confidence and competence when they interacted with the audience.

De Mel, Glenfrey, 1999, **Children and Citizenship: Regional Study in South Asia**, SC UK, Sri Lanka.

3.3 Evaluating the research

Before drawing your research to a close, it is important to reflect on the work you have done and there are a variety of ways that children can be involved in this reflection process. The aim is to see whether the objectives you set at the start of the project have been achieved. Some of these methods are discussed in further detail in the section on participatory monitoring and evaluation.

[17] See: Kirby, P., 1999**, Involving Young Researchers,** Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Reflecting on experience: Bangladesh

SC UK has been giving high priority in Bangladesh to children's participation. Reflecting on their experience has taught them:

- Children are capable of expressing their views and perceptions
- Children's research can provide rare and original perspectives on an issue. It is clear, though, that ensuring children's participation is not an easy task
- Parents do not trust outsiders to keep their adolescent daughters, and are fearful of child and women trafficking, which is a growing problem in Bangladesh
- Parents do not see any benefit from this kind of participatory research
- Time is an important factor for both facilitator and children. Adults are sometimes too inflexible in matching working children's available time

Khan, S., 1999, Children's Participatory Research on Child Labour: Recent SC UK experience in Bangladesh, in, **South and Central Asia's Children**, No.9, SC UK.

Key Texts

- Ivan-Smith, E., 1999, **Child Focus Development Manual**, SC UK, (draft, unpublished)
- Kirby, P., 1999, **Involving Young Researchers**, Joseph Rowntree Foundation
- Laws, S., 2000, **Manual on Research for Development Practitioners**, SC UK (forthcoming)
- West, A., 1997, **Some examples of participation work with children and examples from Bangladesh**, SC UK

4 Carrying out participatory monitoring and evaluation with children and young people

If you want to know the secrets of a house, ask a child
Tajik proverb, taken from: An evaluation, primarily by children evaluators, on the SC UK female headed households project in Tajikistan, 1998.

Participatory monitoring and evaluation (PME) is a process shaped primarily by stakeholders – in this instance children and young people – who are asked to analyse a project or programme that effects them and to seek points of action. In PME, children and young people are asked to describe some aspect of their experience in drawing, words or actions using art, story telling or drama.

As with all participatory research, children's participation in PME starts with negotiating with those who control children's time, their freedom to travel, to have information, and have and express opinions. The key to negotiating children's freedom to participate is clarity about what is expected from their participation. It is vital to stress that participation is based on equality and not on privilege. Children and young people's opinions do not have more weight or validity than anyone else's, but they should have the same weight. It means asking them to play their part and adding the experience and viewpoint that can only come from them. Their input should be given equal weight with inputs from other adult stakeholders, and provide a basis for joint action[18].

Key features of participatory monitoring and evaluation with children and young people are[19]:

- Children are fully involved in the process.
- Children identify their own indicators of success.
- Methods are simple and open with immediate sharing of results.
- PME is built in from the start of a project.

[18] For a brief introduction to children and young people's participation in PME from the perspective of SC UK see Bailey, M. **Participation of children and young people in planning, monitoring and evaluation of SC UK's work**, available from J.Wilkinson@scfuk.org.uk.
[19] Jobes, K., 1997, **Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines: Experiences in the field**, Social Development Division, Dissemination note no.1, DfID, London.

- PME is flexible to fit the local context.
- Children are primary stakeholders.

Differences between conventional evaluation and participatory evaluation

	Conventional	**Participatory**
Who	External Experts	Community members, project staff, facilitator
What	Pre-determined indicators of success, principally cost and production output	People identify their own indicators of success
How	Focus on 'scientific objectivity' distancing of evaluators from other participants; uniform, complex procedures; delayed limited access to results	Self evaluation; simple methods adapted to local culture; open, immediate sharing of results through local involvement in evaluation processes
When	Usually upon completion; sometimes also mid-term	Merging of monitoring and evaluation, hence frequent small evaluations
Why	Accountability, usually a summary, to determine if funding continues	To empower local people to initiate, control and take corrective action

From: Jobes, K., 1997, **Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines: Experiences in the field**, Social Development Division, DfID, London.

There are four simple stages to participatory monitoring and evaluation with children and young people:

1. Set long-term indicators of success that take into account what children say
2. Create a framework for participatory monitoring of progress
3. Carry out the participatory evaluation
4. Disseminate the results in ways that children understand

4.1 Planning and setting indicators

Before any project begins it is very important to carry out a situation analysis, which is also known as a needs assessment. Central to this process should be the participation of children and young people, as well as other stakeholders. These analyses should focus on the change the project is aiming for and the main barriers to reaching change. Setting indicators for a project in this way is central to any participatory monitoring and evaluation process. The resultant indicators can be qualitative or quantitative, and provide a way of spotting underlying trends.

Selecting the best indicators is not always easy. It can be a balancing act between choosing locally relevant factors and those that can be applied more widely; it can be time consuming and can bring up intangible indicators that could be difficult to measure[20].

One useful way of looking at the aims and barriers of a project is to use a problem tree. This process allows participants to focus in on a central problem, identify its causes and impacts, rank these factors, and formulate objectives for implementation.

Using a problem tree to develop indicators in Jamaica

A focus group was conducted with young people and teachers at the Children First project in Spanish Town, Jamaica. The focus group drew a problem tree around the issue of 'risky sex'. To begin with they were asked to identify what causes young people to have 'risky sex'. The causes identified included low self-esteem, not using a condom, peer pressure, ignorance, poverty, lack of education, not feeling at risk, and alcohol and drugs use. They were then asked to identify the results of 'risky sex'. These were unwanted pregnancy, STDs, abortions, HIV/AIDS, and physical deformity among others. From this tree the project was then able to work out its impact indicators, based on the causes and the unwelcome results. To reach this objective they had to ask what behaviour the project was trying to encourage and prevent. They grouped the resultant indicators into four categories:

- Contextual changes: Such as a reduction in poverty of the target group
- Intermediate impacts: Increase in knowledge of condom use
- Behavioural outcomes: Increase in condom use
- Long term impacts: Reduction in unwanted pregnancies

Webb, D., 2000, **Learning to Live: Monitoring and evaluating HIV/AIDS programmes for young people**, SC UK.

[20] For a good introduction to PME see: IDS Policy Briefing Issue 12, November 1998, **Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation: Learning from change**. This is available at http://www.ids.ac.uk/ids/bookshop/briefs/brief12.html.

In Nepal, Save the Children staff worked with children to identify indicators of change in a child-to-child health and hygiene programme.

Child Participation in Impact Indicator Setting

SC UK adult staff had traditionally identified impact indicators themselves for their Nepalese programmes. In this case children from selected schools, using participatory methodologies, were asked to identify the indicators. Having spent time with the children talking through the process, the children were invited to draw pictures or write stories representing the differences in their hygiene before and after the implementation of the hygiene project. From this, and focus groups they were able to identify differences in practice and attitude, and therefore the indicators of change. The children identified a greater number of indicators than the adults and had a greater focus on effectiveness than previously. For example, the staff indicators were for such things as personal hygiene and school environmental hygiene, while the children suggested punctuality in class, use and condition of the toilet and the quality and location of the drinking water. Their indicators will allow a more effective monitoring of the impact of future child-to-child projects.

Poudyal, U., 1997, Child Participation in Impact Indicator Setting, in **South and Central Asia's Children** No. 8 p. 42-44, SC UK.

4.2 Choosing methods

'Discussions on evaluation methodology are often limited to a discussion of 'methods' – tools to be used for data collection. But methodology is much more than methods, it is about human behaviour, attitudes, principles, beliefs about knowledge, power relationships, and ultimately it depends on our own deep seated beliefs about why we are involved in an evaluation.'

Stubbs, Sue, 1996, **Engaging with difference: Methodology in evaluation**, SC UK, London.

Many of the participatory tools used for monitoring and evaluation are similar to those described in the research methods section. These include maps, Venn diagrams, flow diagrams, diaries, photos, matrix scoring and network diagrams. The examples below show how these can be adapted for PME.

Evaluation of female headed households project, Tajikistan

One of the aims of this evaluation, which used 15 children aged between 12 and 16 as evaluators, was to help the participants identify changes that had taken place in their lives as a result of the project. Before the interview process began the children's evaluators drew three pictures, the first depicting the scene in a village in 1996, the second the inputs that SC UK had given to the various categories of female headed households, and thirdly the hoped for impact on the village by December 1997. The pictures were used as dialoguing tools, as a way of attracting the interviewee's attention and as prompts for the semi-structured focus group questioning. They acted as the stage set for the semi-structured interview process. It took the children some time to use the pictures they had drawn in the interviews they carried out, but when they did so, they reported that they had been very successful. The evaluation also notes that this is only one of many methods that young people can use in PME.

Parry-Williams, J., 1998, **Evaluation, Primarily by Children Evaluators on the SC UK Female Headed Households Project, Tajikistan**, SC UK.

A Swiss NGO, Enfants du Monde (EDM) decided to ask young people from rural and urban areas of Bangladesh to assess its programmes. They wanted the children's views about the future development of the community, as well as their essential needs. They found that the children had very different views from their parents.

EDM participatory assessments

The methods they used were mainly visual Participatory Rural Appraisal techniques. This included icebreakers, activity profiles, mapping, matrix ranking and group discussion work. The children were asked to express their opinions and then to visualise their futures based on the priorities they had identified. For some of the exercises the girls and boys were split up into separate groups, in order to allow the girls the chance to express themselves. It was also quickly realised that the children would be more open when their parents were not in the same group. The results showed that the children had a very clear picture of what they wanted to gain from the development process, though priorities varied between the boys and the girls, and between the urban and rural areas. The priorities included electricity, security, education, marriage without dowry, and clean water supplies.

Huda, E., 1997, Include Our Ideas While Planning for Our Development, in **South and Central Asia's Children**, (No. 8), p.36-39, SC UK.

A SC UK project in Pakistan sought to measure the impact of a child-focused health education project on the levels of children self-esteem and status within the family. In order to do this they used a participatory *Draw and Write Technique*.

Draw and write technique

This technique engages children in a creative capacity. The children were asked to draw a picture of themselves and their homes as they saw them before attending the health education project. After completing the before pictures, they were asked to repeat the exercise drawing the same pictures, but as they saw them after the completion of the project. There were problems in getting the teachers not to tell the children what to draw and in the need to explain very patiently to the children what was expected of them. However, the before pictures clearly showed the children with dirty clothes, hands and faces and the homes in a similar state, while the after pictures showed them and the broader environment ordered, clean, washed and tidy. They also illustrated a change in self-esteem with the after pictures showing the children to be a lot happier and the majority with broad smiles. This research technique is valuable in its ability to gain information on both knowledge and attitudes.

Dr. Omidian, P., 2000, **Impact of SC UK Child Focused Health Education Project: Effects on children's self-esteem and status in the family**, SC UK, Afghanistan Office, Peshawar, Pakistan.

4.3 Training the evaluators

In order to set the stage for children's participation in monitoring, review and evaluation we need to train the young people. As with other types of participatory research, there are a number of factors to consider here, which have been explored in more depth earlier in this pack. For example, we must guard against wanting young researchers simply to become quasi adults. It is also important to consider the level of interest from children and young people, what the issue is that you want to investigate, ethical considerations, and the time and resources you have available.

Child evaluators in Tajikistan

An evaluation carried out in Tajikistan used children as the main evaluators. They were trained in the necessary tools and techniques including interviewing by local field workers. However, when the child evaluators set out with their interviewing, it was noted that they were unsympathetic towards the children they were interviewing and their manner was a bit aggressive. The field workers had imagined that the children would be empathetic towards young people in the same circumstances as themselves. In reality they misused the techniques, dominated discussions and rushed through the sessions. To overcome the problem field workers used role-plays to discuss with the child evaluators the issue of empathy. This proved to be the turning point of the week and the next interviews were done with far greater sensitivity. The children grew in stature as interviewers and felt increasingly confident in their roles.

Parry-Williams, J., 1998, **An Evaluation, Primarily by Children Evaluators, on the SC UK Female Headed Households Project in Tajikistan**, SC UK, London.

4.4 Documentation and sharing

PME findings need to be documented and disseminated in the same way as research does. It is important to keep asking throughout the process who the documentation is useful for. Where children and young people have been involved this must be done in a format that is understandable to them. Where not all participants are literate particular consideration needs to be given to documentation. The process can be disempowering when efforts are not made to share and use the data actively.

Where the children and young people are literate one way that they can be involved in report planning is by using post-it notes.

Participatory report planning

Chapters, themes and issues can be written or drawn on post-it notes and then clustered to plan a report. This can clarify the report outline and content, as well as ensure that different people's ideas are included. Different groups can be assigned different responsibilities.

Sustain, 2000, **Reaching the Parts. Community Mapping: Working together to tackle social exclusion and food poverty**, Sustain in association with Oxfam's UK poverty programme.

4.5 Reflecting on the process

In order to further the learning that has occurred through PME, the final important stage is to reflect on the experience. This will help to increase the quality of the process in future PME.

Evaluating the process

A Sustain community-mapping project used four methods of evaluation in the different areas in which they were working:

- Evaluation wheels: Draw a wheel and divide it up into sections to help identify the sectors that need evaluating. Within each section write the positive and negative aspects of the project.
- Evaluation matrices: Each person scores certain aspects of the project.
- Margolis wheel: Seat the children in concentric circles facing one another in pairs. People on the inner circle suggest solutions to those on the outer circle. By moving around the circle one person at a time, maximum discussion can be had about any aspect of the piece of research.
- Basket: This worked by drawing a person and asking the following questions: 'What have I learned' (drawn in a think bubble), 'what will I take with me' (written in a shopping basket), 'what I loved' (drawn on the person) and 'what will I throw away' (drawn in a bin).

Sustain, 2000, **Reaching the parts. Community Mapping: Working together to tackle social exclusion and food poverty**, Sustain in association with Oxfam's UK poverty programme.

Key Texts

- Estrella, M., 2000, **Learning from Change: Issues and experiences in participatory monitoring and evaluation**, IT Publications. Chapter 15 (p. 201) is particularly useful
- Parry-Williams, J., 1998, **Evaluation, Primarily by Children Evaluators on the SC UK Female Headed Households Project, Tajikistan**, SC UK
- Roche, C., 1999, **Impact Assessment for Development Agencies**, Oxfam/NOVIB publications
- Stubbs, S., 1996, **Engaging with Difference: Soul searching for a methodology in disability and development research**, SC UK
- Sustain, 2000, **Reaching the Parts. Community Mapping: Working together to tackle social exclusion and food poverty**, Sustain in association with Oxfam's UK poverty programme

5 Sources of information

Most of the publications mentioned below include information on where to obtain a copy of the text. Where there are no details please contact John Wilkinson in the Research and Development Unit via email on j.wilkinson@scfuk.org.uk for further information.

5.1 Core texts on participatory research with children

- Beresford, B., 1997, **Personal Accounts: Involving disabled children in research**, SPRU, UK

A small book covering research with young people with disabilities. The book provides an overview of research with children in general, and goes on to explore the specific factors that are involved in doing research with young people with disabilities. There is also a look at research that exists in this field. There is a section on adapting research methods to specific needs, in particular around communication, as well as arguing for young people to be given more control over the process itself.
Contact: The Stationary Office, 51 Nine Elms Lane, London SW8 5DR Tel: +44 (0) 870 242 2345. Email: customer.service@ukstate.com
Internet: http://www.itsofficial.net/portal.asp

- Boyden, J. and Ennew, J. (eds.), 1997, **Children in Focus: A manual for participatory research with children**, Radda Barnen

This is a training manual on child-centred research for programme and project staff in children-orientated NGOs and academic institutions. There are discussion chapters on participation, childhood, and 'conventional' research methods, child-focused research methods and PRA. The manual includes numerous examples of participatory research undertaken around the world including mapping, matrices, visual aids, transects, Venn diagrams and time lines. It has further chapters on how to use field learning. The manual can be used as the starting point for anyone wanting to carry out research with children and it contains many practical pointers and examples from practice.
Contact: Radda Barnen, Torsgatan 4, 107 88 Stockholm, Sweden. Fax: +46 (0) 8 698 9014. Internet: http://www.childrightsbookshop.org/

- Ho Chi Minh City Programme, 1998, **A Guide for Young Researchers Working with Children for Needs Assessment in the Community**, SC UK, Vietnam

A simple guide for young researchers carrying out research with other young people (though adults may also find it useful as well). Clearly set out examples covering a broad variety of methodologies. 18 pages.

- Ivan-Smith, E., 1999, **Child Focus Development Manual**, SC UK (draft, unpublished)

This manual is for development workers and managers to help them analyse, prepare and monitor child-focused approaches to work. It provides examples of tools and gives a clear understanding to meeting the needs of children and young people. It is mainly based around the experience of Save the Children UK. The manual is divided into three main parts. Section 1 is an introduction to child focus; Section 2 offers some background thinking and context for issues such as participation and child rights; Section 3 addresses practical programme issues with guidance on tools and approaches and training. 144 pages.

- Johnson V., Ivan Smith E., Gordon G., Pridmore P., and Scott P.**,** 1998, **Stepping Forward: Children and young people's participation in the development process.** IT Publications, UK

This book evolved from an international workshop on children and young people's participation held by the Institute of Development Studies, The Institute of Education and SC UK. The book covers the concept and ethics of participation, case studies from around the world using a variety of participatory methodologies and highlights possible future implications and directions. It has as many case studies as anyone could want, and is a good starting point for background information on participatory research with children. 332 pages.
Contact: IT Publications: 103-105 Southampton Row, London, WC1B 4HL, UK Fax: +44 (0) 20 7436 9761 Email itpubs@itpubs.org.uk,
Internet: http://www.oneworld.org/itdg/publications/index.html

- Kirby, P., 1999, **Involving Young Researchers: How to enable young people to design and conduct research**, Joseph Rowntree Foundation

A very clearly set out step-by-step guide for practitioners who want to carry out, or commission, research involving young researchers (those aged between about 14 and 25). The focus is on the young people as researchers, rather than research being done on young people. The author hopes that by influencing the way that research is done, and what is researched, young people can be empowered. The book uses a lot of case studies from Save the Children UK. The layout covers when and why researchers work with young people, ways that participation can take place, setting up a project, doing the research, the analysis and write up, ethics and dissemination and development. This is a simple step-by-step guide to making the right decisions. 137 pages.
Contact: Save the Children Publications, c/o Plymbridge Distributors Ltd, Estover Road, Plymouth, PL6 7PY. Fax: +44 (0) 1752 202333.
Email orders@plymbridge.com
Internet: http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/functions/indx_pubs.html

- Lewis, Ingrid, 2000, **Accessibility and Participation**, SC UK, London *(working title, forthcoming)*

Produced as a result of the Global Review of Community-Based Rehabilitation work in Save the Children, these are a set of recommendations and guidelines on accessible communications. They show how accessibility in communications and the physical environment can be beneficial to everyone. Though disabled people are an obvious target for the publication, the guidelines argue strongly for equality for other language speakers and children. The aim is to take the reader beyond simply equating accessibility issues with disability.
Contact: l.Lewis@scfuk.org.uk

- Nair, Deepika, 1996, **Child-Centred Participatory Research. Integrated education for the visually impaired – some insights**, SC UK

A very useful example of a piece of research with a group of visually impaired children. It includes good descriptions of participatory methodologies as well as some ethical dilemmas. 29 pages

- Ward, Linda, 1997, **Seen and Heard: Involving disabled children and young people in research and development projects**, Joseph Rowntree Foundation

A well designed introduction to the key issues in working with disabled children, including some good guidelines on ethics. Easy to read. 46 pages
Contact: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, The Homestead, 40 Water End, York, North Yorkshire, YO30 6WP. Tel: +44 (0) 1904 629241. Fax +44(0) 1904 620072. Email publications@jrf.org.uk
Internet: http://www.jrf.org.uk/bookshop/

- West, Andy, 1997, **Some Principles of Participation Work with Children and Examples from Bangladesh**, SC UK

Background principles, theory and practice including examples from two participatory pieces of work from Bangladesh. This is a good concise paper, which offers a clear overview of some of the key ideas of participatory work. 22 pages

- Worrall, Steve, 2000, **Young People as Researchers, a Learning Resource Pack**, SC UK and Joseph Rowntree Foundation

This is a companion to Involving Young Researchers (see above) and provides adaptable training exercises and handouts for workers training young people to undertake social research. Topics covered include choosing and designing research methods, ethical issues, taking part in analysis and report writing, learner needs, support and evaluation. 110 pages.
Contact: Save the Children Publications, c/o Plymbridge Distributors Ltd, Estover Road, Plymouth, PL6 7PY. Fax: +44 (0) 1752 202333.
Email orders@plymbridge.com
Internet: http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/functions/indx_pubs.html

5.2 Core texts on participatory monitoring and evaluation

- Estrella, M (eds.), 2000, **Learning from Change, Issues and Experiences in Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation**, IT Publications

This book brings together a broad range of case studies and discussions between practitioners, academics, donors and policy makers about PME from around the world. 274 pages.
Contact: IT Publications: 103-105 Southampton Row, London, WC1B 4HL, UK. Fax: +44 (0) 20 7436 9761
Email: itpubs@itpubs.org.uk,
Internet: http://www.oneworld.org/itdg/publications/index.html

- Dr. Omidian, P., 2000, **Impact of SC UK Child-Focused Health Education Project: Effects on children's self-esteem and status in the family**, SC UK, Afghanistan Office, Peshawar, Pakistan

An impact assessment of the changes in the self-esteem and status of children in the family as a result of the SC UK child-focused health education project in refugee camps in Pakistan. Uses an innovative *write and draw technique* with the children. 33 pages.

- Roche, C., 1999, **Impact Assessment for Development Agencies: Learning to value change**, Oxfam/NOVIB publications

A book produced by Oxfam considering the process of impact assessment, showing how and why it needs to be integrated into all stages of development programmes from planning to evaluation. There is a significant section that covers participatory methodologies, which, though not focused on children, offers a useful outline to approaches taken. A very user-friendly guide. 308 pages.
Contact: Oxfam Publishing, 274 Banbury Road, Oxford, OX2 7DZ, UK. Tel: +44 (0) 1865 311311 Fax: +44 (0) 1865 312600 Email publish@oxfam.org.uk
Internet: http://www.oxfam.org.uk/publish/resourcat.htm

- Save the Children, 1995, **Toolkits: A practical guide to assessment, monitoring, review and evaluation**, Development Manual 5, SC UK, London

Practical information about a variety of data collection tools. First published in 1988, but still a best seller!
Contact: Save the Children Publications, c/o Plymbridge Distributors Ltd, Estover Road, Plymouth, PL6 7PY. Fax: +44 (0) 1752 202333.
Email orders@plymbridge.com
Internet: http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/functions/indx_pubs.html

- Stubbs, Sue, 1996, **Engaging with Difference: Soul-searching for a methodology in disability and development research**, SC UK, London

Personal reflections on evaluation work at a Community-Based Rehabilitation project in Lesotho.

- Webb, D., 2000, **Monitoring and Evaluating HIV/AIDS Programmes for Young People**, SC UK (forthcoming)

An SC UK handbook that provides an introduction to the concepts that underline project monitoring and evaluation and how they are applied in projects addressing HIV/AIDS. The handbook also offers an overview of existing good practice along with examples and methods from HIV/AIDS projects. 220 pages.

5.3 General texts on participatory work with children

- De Mel, Glenfrey, 1999, **Children and Citizenship: Regional study in South Asia**, SC UK, Sri Lanka

A good example of the way the children can be involved in a piece of research from early stages of planning through to the final presentation of results.

- Hart, R., 1997, **Children's Participation**, UNICEF, New York

This book is written by an environmentalist, but has broader relevance. The book introduces the theory and practice of children's participation and has many useful examples of different types of research along with detailed case studies and shorter anecdotes. It is written with a conviction that children have a central role to play in sustainable development. The author is known for his use of the ladder of participation, which measures the extent to which young people are involved in the research or development programme. This book describes his theories.

- Jones, H., 1999, **Including Disabled People in Everyday Life: A practical approach**, SC UK, London

This guidebook and accompanying video developed from Save the Children's care in the community work in Vietnam. It offers a series of materials designed to help facilitate the participation of disabled children in the community. It is divided into four sections. They cover a general introduction to disability as a social participation issue, disabled children's participation in daily life, and additional activities, which focus in more detail on certain issues and how to organise a workshop. 70 pages.

- Kan, I., 2000, **Children's Response to the Aral Sea Crisis. Children, citizenship and environment conference**, Conference report, SC UK

Report describing a conference held in Karakalpakstan for 62 young people and 26 adults from the six central Asian republics. The report describes the

process of training the children in participatory techniques and the outcomes of the conference. 55 pages.

- Rajbhandary, J., Hart, R. and Khatiwada, C., 1999, **The Children's Clubs of Nepal: A democratic experiment**, SC Norway and SC US

Summary and recommendations from a study of children's clubs in Nepal which used children in the research. This is a good example, and has many clear illustrations of the use of PRA methodologies with young people.
Contact: SC Norway, PO Box 3394, Ekantakuna, Jawalakhel, Kathmandu, Nepal. Fax: 977 1 538495. Email: post@reddbarna-nepal.org

- Singh, N. and Trivedy, R., 1996, **Approaches to Child Participation**. SARO Briefing Paper No 5, SC UK

A small, but useful briefing pamphlet, which looks at why child participation is important using a human rights perspective. It compares the participatory approaches of four South Asian SC UK partners who are working with children with other approaches to work. It also has useful sections on the lessons learnt from the projects.

- South and Central Asia's Children, spring 1997, No. 8, **Working for Children's Right to Participation**, SC UK, Kathmandu

A valuable source of information with articles from around the South and Central Asia region covering children's participation in all aspects of development. This includes articles on the theory of participation, children as managers, children's involvement in research, peer education and children monitoring and evaluating on-going programmes. This excellent publication includes many case studies and contact information.
Contact: Regional Information Assistant, SC UK, South and Central Asia regional office, Pulchowk, Lalitpur, GPO Box 5850, Kathmandu, Nepal
Email: karna@scfoscar.org.np

- Sustain, 2000, **Reaching the Parts. Community Mapping: Working together to tackle social exclusion and food poverty**, Sustain in association with Oxfam's UK poverty programme

A community mapping exercise carried out in Brighton, Coventry and Leicester. Includes good descriptions of a variety of participatory methods undertaken with the community, and including children. 86 pages
Contact: Sustain, 94 White Lion Street, London, N1 9FP. Tel: +44 (0) 20 7837 1228. Email: sustain@sustainweb.org

- Theis, J., Pickup, K., Hoa, T. and Lan, M., 1999, **Visions of Children Who Can't Hear**, SC UK, Vietnam

A report on a photography project by young people with visual impairments. This is a valuable look at how young people can still participate in research even though they have a disability. Clearly laid out and with many of the photographs that the young people took illustrating the book.

- Wellard, S. (eds.), 1997, **All Together Now. Community Participation for Children and Young People**, SC UK

A general text about the participation of young people in community life and ways to ensure that their voices are heard. Argues for children to be treated as equal partners in society.
Contact: Save the Children Publications, c/o Plymbridge Distributors Ltd, Estover Road, Plymouth, PL6 7PY. Fax: +44 (0) 1752 202333.
Email orders@plymbridge.com
Internet: http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/functions/indx_pubs.html

- Whittles, S., 1998, **Can You Hear Us? Including the views of disabled children and young people in decision-making** SC UK

This piece of research highlights the life experiences and views of young disabled people in Bolton in the UK. It identifies key issues that local authorities, health authorities and other agencies are facing nationally to ensure that disabled children and young people's voices are heard. 93 pages.
Contact: Save the Children Publications, c/o Plymbridge Distributors Ltd, Estover Road, Plymouth, PL6 7PY. Fax: +44 (0) 1752 202333.
Email orders@plymbridge.com
Internet: http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/functions/indx_pubs.html

- Woodhead, M., 1998, **Children's Perspectives on their Working Lives. A participatory study in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, The Philippines, Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua**. Radda Barnen

This is a study of over 300 10-to 14-year old working children from both urban and rural settings. Through the development of a Children's Perspectives Protocol comprising 8 activities it explores all aspects of their lives. The Protocol uses semi-structured interviews, drawing, mapping, role-play and group discussions. The study aimed to inform policy making at national and international level to provide a basis for effective projects for working with young working children based on children's own perspectives. This is a very thorough example of using visual methods in practice and the way that the results are set out shows the benefit of 'The Protocol'. It contains many useful quotes from young people.

5.4 General texts on participation

- Chambers, R., 1997, **Whose Reality Counts? Putting the first last**, IT Publications

This is the PRA practitioner's theoretical bible, from one of its pioneers. Though not specifically about children's participation, it is a guide to why we use PRA, and places participation in historical context, by deconstructing development and offering a new paradigm based on the expertise of the 'lowers' in society, who have lost out in development practice to the 'uppers'. Gives examples of PRA practice from around the world, and a guide to the methodologies this includes. A bit heavy.

Contact: IT Publications: 103-105 Southampton Row, London, WC1B 4HL, UK Fax: +44 (0) 20 7436 9761
Email itpubs@itpubs.org.uk,
Internet: http://www.oneworld.org/itdg/publications/index.html

- Laws, S., 2000, **Research Manual**, SC UK, (forthcoming)

This is a comprehensive, easy to use research manual. The first section concentrates on managing research – giving practical advice on all issues that arise in planning and overseeing research. The second section gives guidance on actually carrying out the research itself. The final section covers analysis of the research and presentation of the results.

5.5 Other texts on research with children

- Graue, M. and Walsh, D., 1998, **Studying Children in Context. Theories, Methods and Ethics.** Sage Publications

Studies qualitative research, emphasising the special challenges presented by work with children. They focus on the concepts of research, the fieldwork itself and interpreting and reporting the research, using case studies from their own and other people's experience.

- Greig, A. and Taylor, J., 1999, **Doing Research with Children**, Sage Publications

Provides an academic overview of the concepts of doing research with younger children. It is fairly based on psychoanalysis and psychiatry, and doesn't discuss participation as a concept. The authors do not resolve the extent to which they believe children themselves should be involved in the actual research. The book covers the main approaches to research, techniques for conducting the research and an understanding of some of the ethical issues involved.

- Milner, P. and Carolin, B., 1999, **Time to listen to children: Personal and professional communication.** Routledge Publications

Views of how adults respond to children's voices. Different professionals from the fields of education, art and play therapy, child protection, social services and the law present their accounts of listening to children. The authors argue that professionals need to listen to children as people with rights, opinions and ideas equal to, but different from, those of adults.

5.6 Internet sites

- Child Rights Information Network (CRIN)
http://www.crin.org

- ELDIS development guide and participation sources
http://www.ids.ac.uk/eldis/eldis.html

- FAO Sustainable Development department web pages.
http://www.fao.org/waicent/faoinfo/sustdev/Ppdirect/PPhomepg.htm
News, summary and full text materials on FAO progress and policies on participation.

- Institute of Development Studies (IDS) Participation Group.
http://www.ids.ac.uk/ids/particip/index.html

- International Institute for Environment and Development.
http://www.iied.org/resource/
Resource Centre for Participatory Learning and Action (PLA)

- National Children's Bureau
http://www.ncb.org.uk/projects/projpart.htm
Information on participatory projects they are running involving young people, with highlights of each project's aims, objectives, plans and contacts for further information.

- Resource Centres for Participatory Learning and Action network (RCPLA).
http://www.nur.edu/rcpla/
Network of 14 organisations committed to information sharing and networking on participatory methodologies.

- Save the Children UK Development Website
http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/development/index.html

- World Bank Participation Web pages
http://Wbln0018.worldbank.org/essd/essd.nsf/Participation/Overview

6 Appendix 1: Ethical codes of conduct

1. The Social Research Association

The aim of these guidelines is to enable the researcher to be informed by shared values and experience. They document widely held principles of research and identify factors that obstruct their implementation. They do recognise however that there will often be competing obligations and that choices between principles sometimes have to be made. Despite this the guidelines try to offer a framework within which they believe researchers can work comfortably. They are therefore descriptive and informative, rather than authoritarian or prescriptive.

The Association publishes its guidelines annually and they can be seen at: http://www.the-sra.org.uk/index2.htm

2. The Association of Social Anthropologists of the Commonwealth

These guidelines have developed from a recognition that anthropologists, like other social researchers, are faced with competing duties, obligations and conflicts of interest. They have to make choices between values and between the interests of different individuals and groups. These dilemmas occur at all stages of research – in the selection of topic, area or population, choice of sponsor and source of funding, in negotiating access, carrying out the fieldwork, in the interpretation and analysis of results and in the publication of findings. Their guidelines offer a framework to make informed decisions about behaviour and involvement.

Their ethical guidelines for good practice are available at their website at: http://www.asa.anthropology.ac.uk/ethics2.html

John Wilkinson
November 2000