Violence against children – Looking beyond experience

Introduction to the Participatory Assessment Tool

A simple easy to use Tool Kit to research and document violence against children in Protective Environments

Foreword

Introduction

1. The larger picture – The United Nations Secretary General's Study on Violence Against Children

The UN Secretary General's Study on Violence against Children is a global initiative mandated by the General Assembly in 2001 (resolution 56/138) following a recommendation from the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. The recommendation called for an in-depth international study on violence against children that, "should lead to the development of strategies aimed at effectively preventing and combating all forms of violence against children, (and) outlining steps to be taken at the international level and by States to provide effective prevention, protection, intervention, treatment, recovery and reintegration". The Study will focus on violence related to:

"the intentional use of physical force or other forms of power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal development or deprivation".

The Secretary-General of the United Nations appointed an Independent Expert, Professor Paulo Sergio Pinheiro to lead the Study, with direct support from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the World Health Organisation (WHO). The Study will also rely on the broad participation of a range of other United Nations organisations, regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, and other parts of civil society, including national human rights institutions and others. **The active involvement of children and young people is a key feature of the process[1].**

<u>Objectives of the UN Study</u>

The UN Secretary General's Study aims **to provide an in-depth global picture of violence against children** and **propose clear recommendations for the improvement of legislation, policy and programmes** relating to the prevention of and responses to violence against children. It will **document the magnitude, incidence and consequences of various types of violence against children** according to locations including **in the home and family, in the streets, in schools, in child institutions, and in the work place.** For each type of violence against children addressed, the study will also review what is known about **the causes and associated risk and protective factors.** Gender and discrimination issues of will be considered as overarching concerns.

Its **focus will be on prevention strategies,** in particular **through the identification of best practices in prevention, including those designed by children.** It will also survey **legal responses to violence** and **services for children who have been its victims,** again including interventions designed by children; furthermore, the study will describe the evidence demonstrating **which interventions work,** which are promising, and which have been shown to be ineffective. The study will also seek to generate sharing approaches to the issue, in particular from a South-to-South perspective. (Introduction to Child Participation in the UN Secretary General's Study on Violence Against Children)

---

[1] The material under this section is taken from the document – 'Introduction to Child Participation in the UN Secretary General's Study on Violence Against Children.' - UNVAC

2. Children and Young People's Participation in the UN Study on Violence against children[2]

"Child participation means children and young people (0-18) thinking for themselves, expressing effectively, and interacting in a positive way with other people. It means involving boys and girls in the responding/decisions that affect their lives, the lives of their family and community and the larger society in which they live in."

Children's right to participation and their active part in decisions that affect them are embedded in the UN CRC. Many local, national, regional and global processes in the last few years have demonstrated the added value in including children in programme and project cycles. Children have participated as individuals and as collectives. They have participated in assessing child rights situations, in planning and designing initiatives/ projects. They have also participated as active implementing partners and partners in monitoring and evaluations. Furthermore, children are increasingly recognised as social actors and citizens, as advocates of their own rights.

The UN study and the national/regional consultations provide a platform for including effective and meaningful participation of girls and boys acting on the voices/concerns and recommendations and recognising children's action against violence. Organisations working with children should strive towards ensuring that all citizens, including children, have the right and the opportunity to participate and be involved in decision-making that impact their lives. Conscious action must be ensured to include girls and boys in programmes and events to ensure that issues important to them do not get subsumed. These children and young people have a right to be partners and their experience and resources should be utilized. It is in this spirit that the Europe and Central Asia Working Group on Child Participation in the UN Study on Violence against Children supports meaningful, good quality children's participation that gives children a genuine opportunity to express their views, be involved in decisions or take action.

> **Meaningful children's participation is characterised by:**
> - An ethical approach and a commitment to transparency, honesty and accountability (impact on decision-making).
> - A safe approach in which children's protection rights are safeguarded.
> - A non-discriminatory approach that ensures that all children (regardless of their class, gender, ability, language, ethnicity, sexual preference, religion, etc.) have an equal opportunity to be involved.
> - A 'child-friendly' approach, which enables children to contribute to the best of their abilities (good information, availability of venues, procedures and support that encourage rather than hinder children's involvement).
>
> *The OBJECTIVES of the Girls and Boys' Participation in the Regional Consultation for the UN Study on Violence against Children:*
> - To ensure that girls and boys actively share their voices and more importantly their actions, tools and processes against violence
> - To ensure that girls and boys actively advocate their recommendations and actions against Violence with government, planners and policy makers
> - To ensure that boys and girls are voices and recommendations are incorporated regional thematic contributions to the UN Study.

---

[2] 2 The material under this section is taken from the document – 'Introduction to Child Participation in the UN Secretary General's Study on Violence Against Children.' – UNVAC

3. Lack of sufficient data to understand the prevailing situation on violence against children

A key objective of the UNVAC study is to understand the prevailing situation of abuse, the forms, scale and contexts of violence against children in various protective environments, prevailing intervention strategies and information that would support recommendations for future programmes to prevent, address and combat violence against children. UNICEF as a key partner began this process by reviewing literature and research on the issue and found that very little data was available that could provide such information. Especially in developing countries and higher population zones, the number of studies conducted are far too few and scattered. Even in terms of children who had accessed rescue or support services in situations of abuse, there is a lack of organised information recording systems which results in very little information that could provide a mapping of children's experience of violence and the contexts. In the case of children who have not accessed institutional services, such as rescue or rehabilitation, data availability is almost non existent. Since violence within the protective environments of home, school and street is not a priority for schools and educational institutions, there is little effort to discuss experience of violence in such settings and no attempt to record such data either.

4. Varied research methods & approaches

In terms of researching violence, prevailing studies use different qualitative and quantitative methods of research. While each method and technique has its own set of advantages and disadvantages, the data obtained differs in terms of the kind and extent of information it provides on the issue. The tools used to collect data are several and unique in terms of their ability to obtain relevant data, their involvement of children in processes and ethical and logistical processes enabling use. It became evident that there is a growing need for a Tool that enables a snapshot of the prevailing situation on violence against children in all protective environments such as home, school, institution, street and work, that is based in ethical and sensitive processes, but yet simple enough to be used by institutions working with children in the educational context as well as in the context of rescue, support and rehabilitative services. Thus two separate programmes were initiated, one to design a household quantitative method Tool and the other to design a Participative Assessment Tool grounded in qualitative processes to evolve rapid assessment and process oriented tools, for institutions working with children. It is for the latter initiative that this Participatory Assessment Tool has been designed.

5. Qualitative Participatory Assessment as a solution

Qualitative methods are efficient to allow a deeper exploration of a particular issue. While Quantitative methods are more efficient for quicker assessments of larger population groups, due to the structured approach the data they yield can miss out on the broader dimensions to the issue. Qualitative tools are of immense use to understanding the wider aspects of a particular issue, but are largely process driven and demand high facilitation skills for those using them.

The second most vital aspect that has to be a key component of the Tool is the aspect of 'Participation', which is one of the key objectives of the larger UNVAC Study. This aspect of participation can be ensured only in qualitative processes, as quantitative processes involve a question and answer process that allows little involvement of the 'Researched' in the research process, limited to choosing a particular answer that is predetermined. Participation again can be reflected in the method used to obtain data, for example through story building, role playing or such other activities, that get children involved in the process, but more importantly has to be reflected in terms of the ownership of the research itself. Children ideally can be involved in all aspects of the research, in deciding what information needs to be obtained and for what purposes, in designing the instrument and drafting the Tool, in the use of the Tool, the analysis of the data that the Tool originates and the use of the information in campaigning for reforms or beneficial programmes. While an ideal situation would be to involve children in all these processes, a Tool that can strike a balance at enabling participation in processes as far as possible without making the Tool too cumbersome for use by field staff, has great potential in terms of being accessible to larger populations of children as against a cumbersome Tool that requires the services of highly experienced researchers with a limited and almost exclusive accessibility by a small number of children. Thus while participation is a key component, the Tool must also ensure that it does not become an obstacle to wider use.

6. A comprehensive snapshot of violence

It was felt that the Tool should be able to provide a comprehensive mapping of violence – a snapshot of information, that could be used to understand the forms of violence, scale thereof, the contexts of violence, perpetrators of abuse, the protective environment in which it is perpetrated and self protection and intervention strategies used by children to protect themselves. This array of information provides a 360 degree view of the issue, and will strengthen and enable campaigns to improve support and aid for children in need. A Tool that provides this comprehensive snapshot that can be used by minimally skilled field staff, will be of great use to various stakeholders such as Non Governmental Organisations providing services to children, National Governments and International organisations working to eliminate violence against children. A simple Tool that enables such information can also be used in institutions and organisations apart from those providing rescue or support services. This will enable a wider outreach to children in schools or such other educational institutions, and will provide data on normative general populations of children apart from those seeking services or accessing help.

7. The 2005 multi country effort to create Participatory Assessment Tools

Teams from India, Egypt, Dominica, Montenegro and Africa, were then assigned the task of creating and testing qualitative participatory assessment Tools to research violence against children. These teams designed and created participatory instruments with varied levels of participatory processes in terms of methods used and the conduct of the research itself and these experiences were shared in November 2005 in a meeting in Delhi, India. The results were a wide array of rich experiences and

feedback on participatory research methods, processes and formats, the lessons of which could be used to structure one common Tool, that could apply to different cultural and regional contexts.

A brief synopsis of these different experiences are as follows –
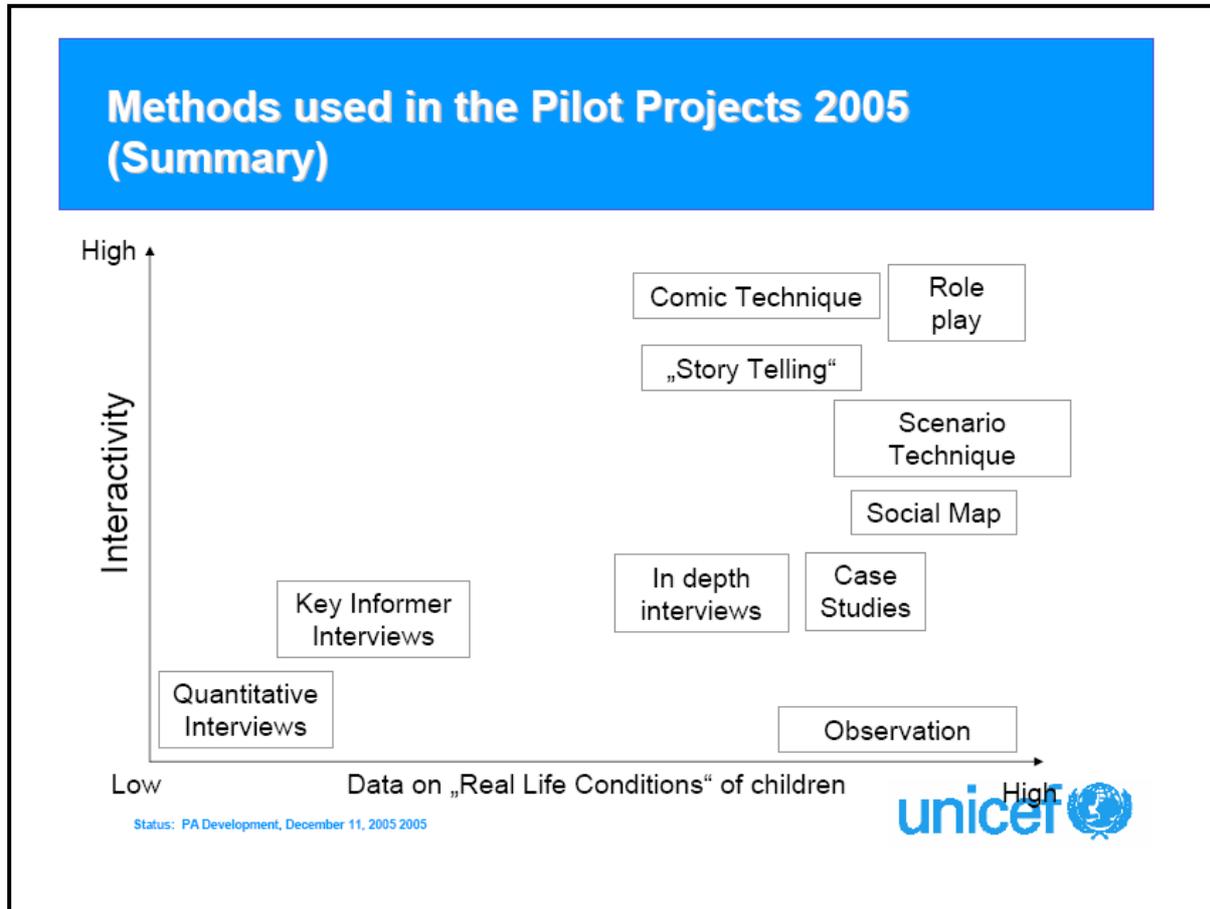
a. **Dominica –** Two phases were conducted in Dominica, with the first phase report examined in November 2005, exploring methods such as role playing, drawings or picture construction, mappings and ranking of responses. These methods helped in obtaining data on increased tolerance levels to violence and the use of violence by children against adults and other children was a key finding of this pilot. The second phase of this pilot was reported in January 2006 in which the use of stories featuring local folk characters was reported to engage children prior to obtaining responses on experiences with pictorial representations for younger children.

b. **Egypt –** A wholly participative 'Brainstorming' approach was tested with great success, involving children in designing the instrument, suggesting changes to the instrument and inputting into the data gathered. This approach was unstructured and wholly guided by children's perceptions of their own responses and reactions to research. The benefits of this Tool was that it enabled an

understanding that was not limited to oral responses, through use of observation to understand and decipher body language and further probing. A problem solving approach was also used to enable responses on what the children perceive as solutions to the violence in their lives. This method was extremely rich in terms of the quality of data obtained and the high levels of participation it enabled. This method requires the services of trained and experienced researchers with high facilitation and interaction skills.

c. **India –** A story telling approach was used in this experience in a qualitative process that was structured and designed so as to enable ease of use of the Tool. This pilot was the largest pilot with over 861 children being interviewed in focus group discussions by organisations in Bangalore, Varanasi, Lucknow and Kolkatta. The strengths of this approach was that it adopted a very simple method of story telling that required minimal facilitation skills and adopted a patterned formatting of the Tool, that enabled its use by minimally skilled field staff. Using the story telling as an opening point, this method motivated children to use reflective thinking, which helped tackle under reporting and false reporting. This was used with success by NGO field staff and teachers, with little or no training in qualitative research, who reported many benefits of the Tool such as – enabling of more supportive and non violent relationships with children, enabling of personal change in attitudes towards punishment at home, etc.

d. **Montenegro –** Brain storming, comics, free writing and group discussions were methods that were tested in this study in focus group discussions. The most effective methodology in terms of enabling opening up was the discussions. In terms of writing, people preferred to provide oral answers instead of writing about their experience. This was tested on two schools one from an elite urban school and the other a local school in a rural setting. The focus in this research as well was that of violence in the Protective Environment. These methods were effective in obtaining information on attitudes about violence in schools, types of violence prevalent in schools and people against whom violence was perpetrated in school.

8. Creating a Tool based on past experiences

The 2005 multi country effort resulted in rich experiences of methods that clearly demonstrated what worked on the field and what did not. It became clear that what was needed for the purpose of the larger UN Study was a Tool that captured basic information on the types of violence experienced by children in various protective environments such as home, school/institution and workplace, a Tool that was so simple and easy to use that even children with some basic training and guidance could use it with other children under adult supervision, and finally a Tool that would open up safe spaces for children to discuss violence and obtain support. The task forward was to compile these rich experiences and transform them into a simple and easy to use Tool at the field level. To support the Tool effectively, it was also decided that supporting material, such as the introduction, handbooks, guides, forms and formats, to guide not only the use of the Tool, but also data analysis and report writing would be created. While the methods in the Tool were agreed to be drawn from the methods

and experiences of the various participating countries, the format and structure of the India Tool was sought to be retained and improved for the benefit of a large array of minimally skilled researchers.

9. Benefits to Governmental and Non Governmental Institutions working with children

What also became evident through the India study that used minimally skilled field staff as against trained or experienced researchers was the benefits of the use of the Tool by organisations working directly with children. From the India study which recorded feedback from staff on the ease of use of the Tool, their personal benefits from using the Tool, professional benefits of using the Tool, etc, staff stated that the Tool worked as a sensitisation of sorts to how badly children are affected by violence within the so called 'protective environments'. Staff stated to having experienced a change in their perceptions of use of corporal punishment against their own children and also claimed to having changed their professional approach while dealing with children in their institutions. Children's own statements after the sessions evidenced a feeling of relief and happiness at being able to discuss violence in their protective environments. This information revealed the further benefits of the Tool as an instrument that can be used to break the silence barrier against violence masquerading as disciplining or punishment within protective environments. The India study also resulted in a few organisations using the Tool to deal other issues within institutions, to enable violence free, tolerant environments. Some organisations expressed an interest in using the Tool to document the background of children accessing services, a task that is often conducted by organisations using direct questioning which is highly tedious and often insensitive to the child involved. With the use of the story telling approach in they found that children, even those who were normally shy, easily opened up and shared factual information about their background and experiences without feeling embarrassed or fearful of consequences.

10. The several envisaged benefits of the Participatory Assessment Tool

Thus the several benefits of the Participatory Assessment Tool backed the design of this instrument, as a Tool that opens the forum for discussion of violence amongst children, provides comprehensive data, enables staff to develop more child sensitive approaches to the children they work with and live with, empowers children and aids the process of healing and supplements institutional documentation of children accessing services. With the several benefits of the Tool which were evident from the multi country effort, the India Team went on to draft the Tool. While the methods used in the Tool and several approaches adopted within the Tool are a result of several experiences in the participating countries, the remaining documents supporting the Tool and enabling easy use have been drafted independently by the India Team to support the use of the Tool and analysis of data obtained therefrom.

11. The International Participatory Assessment Tool (IPAT)

The International Participatory Assessment Tool which is published herein, is a result of the experiences of 5 countries – Barbados, Egypt, India, Montenegro, and Tanzania, that tested qualitative Participative Assessment Tools using various participatory methods and involving varying degrees of child participation in the design and implementation of the Tool. The principal elements taken from the these experiences are the story telling method – reported by India as an efficient method that could be used by staff with minimal research or facilitation skills; the discussion method used by Egypt - asking children about the different aspects of their protective environments - which has been used as the second method to explore violence in neighbourhoods of the home, school/institution and workplaces and also to discuss violence from other children in the Rapid Assessment Version; the picture drawing method – used in Montenegro (Podgorica) as the Comic method and the role playing method used in Dominica (Barbados). The body mapping method introduced by the Tanzania experience, where children were given large pieces of cloth to map their bodies after which they were asked to point out body parts where they experienced violence, was modified to make it less cumbersome and is used within the Tool to help younger children identify body parts where they were abused. The richness of the various experiences of the different participating regions is evident from the Tool itself.

Information tapped by the PAT – In terms of the types of violence, the Tool seeks to capture, non physical violence such as verbal abuse and emotional abuse, physical violence and sexual violence. In terms of perpetrators, the Stand Alone Tool which examines each chosen Protective Environment in Detail looking at perpetrated within and in the neighbourhood of each Environment. For example Section II of the Stand Alone Tool (Violence at School/Institution) captures information on perpetrators within the School/ Institutional environment, such as teachers/supervisors, other staff, other children in school/institution and also captures information on adults and child perpetrators of violence on the way to school/institution and in the neighbour where the school/institution is located. The Tool captures details of injury, the frequency of occurrence of violence, emotional responses of children to violence in different environments, methods used by children to deal with violence and methods used to maintain their own emotional balance.

Ethical concerns and data reliability – Ethical concerns were a principal concern while drafting the Tool and the guidelines suggested by **Save The Children (STC)** and the **International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN)** have largely been relied on to ensure high ethical standards. Given that the Tool is designed for use in Focus Group Discussions, a sequenced approach, using activity breaks, relaxation techniques and ethical closures are designed to ensure minimal emotional stress to child participants, Apart from this, several sensitive and child friendly approaches have been suggested for use to ensure that children are treated with sensitivity and understanding during the use of the Tool. Instructions and guidelines on maintaining confidentiality and referring children to support services incorporate and child oriented approach, keeping foremost the

best interests of the child. Needless to mention, the Tool is not recommended for use in countries requiring mandatory reporting of child abuse.

In terms of ethical questioning methods, the approach used in the Tool is wholly qualitative, with key focus on difficulties that a child faces in his/her dealings with adults and other children. This method has been strategically used to deal with data reliability issues of false reporting and suggestibility, as also to deal with ethical concerns in terms of dealing with experiences of **child sexual abuse**. It was clear that foraying into direct questioning on child sexual abuse, would result in several ethical issues, not only with respect to the method of eliciting factual answers and data credibility but also with respect to ethical frameworks such as ethical closures and follow up action. Thus using the method of asking about difficulties that a child faces at home, school/institution or workplace, would result in spontaneous and not elicited responses, thus evading some of the several ethical constraints of researching child sexual abuse. A clear and precise method has been suggested within the Handbook to deal with emotional responses and difficult situations, which can be adopted with ease to deal with responses of sexual violence.

Qualitative approaches and quantitative recording processes – While the principal approach of the Tool is Qualitative with a flexible structure, sequencing and format, a quantitative data recording process has been adopted in the Tool, based on the success of this new approach that was first tested in the India 2005 pilot. While the Tool is wholly qualitative, providing for responses of various kinds, expected responses are pre-coded based on broad existing patterns of responses, drawing largely from the responses obtained India, to enable simple data recording (using tick marks or numbers) and thus allowing for some basic numbers on prevalence, perpetrators of abuse, contexts of violence and such other basic data sets. However in order not to restrict answers to pre coded responses, blank columns have also been provided to record responses that either cannot be marked under the pre-coded options or which the Note Taker is unclear about.

A brief Guide to the components of the IPAT -

a. **The Handbook –** As most of the 2005 Pilots were conducted mainly by experienced researchers [3] and with limited time and resources on hand, there were no Training Manuals or Handbooks created. However it was clear that a Handbook would be of utmost importance, if the Tool was finally to be given to Agencies without any provision of training for staff using the Tool. Thus the Handbook was essentially designed from scratch using guidelines and information published by organisations such as **Save The Children (STC)** and the **International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN)**. The format of the Handbook with the pictures and layout was thus also created from scratch, so as to support the Tool and provide a user with the guidance that would otherwise have been provided through staff training workshops.

---

[3] Only the India study was conducted with untrained field staff conducting sessions and these staff were provided a one day training and a follow up half a day debriefing session.

The language used in this document is simple and easy to understand and the content has been arranged in a simple and easy to refer manner.

The Handbook provides details of all matters pertaining to planning and preparation and the execution of the Tool. It details a method for selection of staff within an institution to conduct the session with children, providing detailed guidelines on the several issues that could arise in selecting staff, briefing staff and supporting the use of the Tool. It provides detailed instructions to Facilitators and Note Takers, detailing material that they should keep ready and pointers on how to deal with difficult children and emotional situations. It is a complete guide with detailed instructions to the Note Taker on how to mark responses in the Tool, how to coordinate with the Facilitator so that all responses are noted down, etc. It also details how data sets can be entered and collated. It is generic, and does not provide detailed question by question instruction, as specific instructions on a particular question or possible reactions to a particular issue and ways to handle them, have already been provided in the Tool itself. The Handbook must be read prior to the use of the Tool. This has been designed to enable a basic training and orientation of the staff and institutional heads, keeping in mind that the Tool may often be used by individuals who may have no background in research. It provides a step by step approach which can be used with minimal training.

b. **Two types of the PAT – The Stand Alone Tool (consisting of independent comprehensive Tools for capturing data on each protective environment) and the Rapid Assessment Version (both versions including components to help modify scripts, storylines, activity and relaxation sessions to suit the varied age groups, cultural and contextual backgrounds of the children concerned) –** The independent Stand Alone Tool and the Rapid Assessment Version have a common Preparatory Session that is recommended to be used before conducting any of the sessions in the different versions. The Independent Tool has 3 sections –

i) **Section I –** to study violence at home and in the neighbourhood;
ii) **Section II –** to study violence in school/ institution or on the way to the school/ institution;
iii) **Section III –** to study violence in and around the workplace.

The Stand Alone Tool has been designed in a manner so that each Section is conducted separately and can be conducted independently of the other Sections. For example, one may decide to only focus on the home and neighbourhood and conduct only Session I.

The Rapid Assessment Tool covers violence faced by children in all the three chosen Protective Environments in one single session. The difference between the Stand Alone Tool and the Rapid Assessment Version is that, the Stand Alone Tool provides data on the various perpetrators of abuse within each protective environment, distinguishing also between child and adult perpetrators, and within child and adults sections, those who are related, and those who are not. For example, the Stand

Alone Tool provides information on children's experience of violence from adults in their neighbourhood in addition to adults within the home, while the Rapid Assessment Version will only provide information on violence from adults within the home.

c. **Methods used** – Three kinds of methods have been proposed for use in the Tool, i.e., **Story Telling, Role Playing and Picture Drawing.** These three methods were obtained from the experiences of the multi country pilot experience in 2005 (mentioned above in paragraph No. 7) as methods that could be used internationally with a little flexibility and modification. Methods such as the use of songs for example may or may not apply to varied cultures and backgrounds as different songs would have to be proposed for use in different cultures, while a story, a drawing and a drama with a basic script line could be suitably modified and used across different countries. The three methods were selected keeping in mind the level and type of participation expected from children and the ease in facilitating such methods on the filed with minimum material requirement. The Tool contains detailed instructions on how each of these methods can be used and some pointers and hints on enabling higher participation of children. Another method used to obtain information on injury resulting from abuse is the body mapping method, to enable small children to communicate where they were injured.

The Story Telling method has been used as a base on which other methods such as picture drawing and drama or role playing have been built, as the story could provide a theme for a drawing as well as for a drama or for role play. Building a story first, also proved highly successful in the 2005 India Pilot as it helped children in recalling their experiences and using their own experiences in the stories they made up.

d. **Process used** – The process used is the **Simple Seven Step Method**.

1. **Setting the mood - using a story to capture imagination** – The Tool maintains a key focus on group activities and group sharing as participative processes. Focus Group Discussions have been chosen to conduct the research, given its ability to enable quick data collection and possibilities of triggering child based support systems within groups. The first activity is that of Story Telling, which provides a basis for other participative activities such as adding or creating new stories, picture drawing and role playing. The Facilitator tells the group of children a story on difficulties that a child faces from adults in a particular protective environment. Two sets of information are introduced through the story, i.e., the particular type of protective environment and the particular types of problems that children normally face from adults or other children within that protective environment. The story thus takes the place of an introduction and the activity that is supported on the basis of the story such as motivating children to make up their own stories, to draw pictures based on the story or to enact a drama based on the story, allows children to draw on their own experiences of violence, either directly subjected to or having influenced violence on other children, and this is reflected in their

contributions to the activity. This Story Telling thus enables children to take the first step to reflection and recalling of their own experiences.

2. **Using creative activities – motivating children to build on the story using creative methods to enable reflective thought processes –** The activity stage where children are motivated to be creative and use their imagination or their own recalling of experiences, gives children the space to tell their own stories and express their feelings in terms of their own responses and reactions to the difficulties they face in their own lives. Building on a story line or creating an independent story line, allows children the space and time to reflect on their own situations and also initiates a process of questioning on how they could have responded or handled their situation and the difficulties they faced. The creative aspect of the Tool is the most important as it allows children to test and use their experiences in a way that reflects the true feelings and reactions of children to violence in their lives.

3. **Obtaining basic information – on the situation and circumstances of each child –** This is to collect basic information on family systems in which the child lives. This information enables a better understanding of the support systems of the children within the group, thus lending to a better understanding of the difficulties they face and their responses to the problems they face.

4. **Data collection - question session to obtain responses on experiences –** The questions posed are not direct questions such as those used in quantitative methods of research. There are two reasons why this method has not been used, one is to tackle criticism of leading questioning or suggestibility, that quantitative direct questioning methods are often subjected to. The second is that indirect questioning methods that focus on an issue rather than on eliciting responses on a single subset of information has a great advantage of eliciting a range of answers to a single question. Thus questioning such as 'What are the difficulties you face at home, that make you feel sad or afraid?' would elicit responses on all forms of abuse, physical, non physical and sexual, and would due to the broad nature of the suggestion allow children the space to share experiences and feelings. This form of questioning does away with the need to pose a dozen different questions to elicit responses on a single issue, thus reducing the chances of children feeling harassed or overwhelmed with long, tedious and often embarrassing direct questioning methods.

5. **Sharing - Debate and discussions on impact, self protection and prevention –** After the questionnaire session, a discussion session on how children respond and react to difficulties in various protective environments is thoroughly discussed. Immediate responses such as anger, pain or hurt are explored as well as long term consequences such as substance abuse, suicidal ideation, etc are also recorded. The range of pre coded responses provides for the recording of both immediate and long term responses and reactions. The sharing of

strategies to construct emotionally stable responses to violence, has been provided to help children begin thinking about their own reactions to difficulties they face. The focus of this session is on responding so that minimal damage or hurt is caused to self, thus focusing on self protective strategies. This sharing session is intended to enable the creation of support groups within each focus group, thus creating an environment of mutual support and trust between children. In institutions and organisations that house children, such sessions have proven (in the India study) to have enabled cooperation amongst child groups, discipline and peaceful cohabitation.

6. **Activity/game or relaxation techniques – during data collection for tension reduction and to help focus –** The transition from discussions on experiences of violence in a particular environment and from a particular perpetrator (adult or child) to another environment or to another perpetrator, has been eased through the use of games or activities. For example, in Session I of the Stand Alone Tool, which looks at violence in the home and neighbourhood, after the first session of questions on experiences of violence at home, before the children are asked about violence in the neighbourhood, a game has been introduced to help break monotony as also to help children de-stress and later realign to talking about experiences of violence in the neighbourhood. In the Rapid Assessment Version, the first part of the session deal with difficulties experienced from adults and a game allows children to transit to discussions on experiences of violence from other children. Group games have thus been introduced to help children develop bonds with other children. Thus the experience of taking part in the session is far more than just data collection, it is an activity that enables children to develop bonding with other children and provide avenues for sharing of difficulties, thus building a foundation on which children can develop support groups. Relaxation techniques such as image building exercises (where children are asked to close their eyes and imagine a beautiful scene or a landscape) and stress reduction techniques (where children are asked to relax their body and mind) have also been provided at various junctures in the sessions. These relaxation techniques have been used after discussions on violence have been completed, just before discussions on positive experiences and positive feelings. This allows a smoother transition from negative experiences and emotions to more positive experiences and emotions.

7. **Ethical closures – using positive experiences to stabilise and enable children to feel in control of their situation –** Positive experiences and plans for the future mark the end of the session. This has been strategically provided to ensure that children are brought to a more positive and more in control state of mind before the session ends and they part ways. Most violence research is often criticised as focussing solely on data and less on the emotional state of mind of the respondent. While intervention based research studies manage to overcome such criticism, this study has no planned component of direct intervention to the respondents. What is envisaged though is the provision of information of service providers in case children need immediate help or support. In the case of organisations that are involved in providing direct

help to children in need, a recommendation has been made in the Handbook to let children know of the nature of help provided. However it is the decision of the organisation, whether or not to follow up this research by providing direct intervention to children in need. The UNICEF does not recommend nor does it take responsibility to provide direct intervention for those children with whom this Tool is used. The Tool is only a suggested method of qualitative research. Given this possible lack of direct intervention, ethical closures become a highly important element of conducting violence research. Especially in the case of children, discussion often painful and traumatic experiences can leave a child feeling vulnerable and hurt. It is this eventuality that the positive closures provided in the session, help in dealing with. Through the relaxation method, children are put in a more calm and peaceful state and with discussions on positive experiences, the transition from difficult experiences to happier times is smoother. The finally the discussion on future plans is meant to help children feel in control of their situation and look forward to the future, as against focus on the past. Thus the session closes on a positive frame of mind.

e. **Formatting and structure of the Tool –** Pictures and diagrams have been used to make the Tool easy to view and use. The Tool contains detained facilitation instructions and also provides space for recording of responses in the manner of ticks or numbers, representing the number of children who respond in a similar manner. Broad based response options have been provided, alongwith blank spaces for those responses that are not provided. Call out Boxes have been used in the Tool to provide suggested scripts or suggested dialogues that the staff can use while addressing children. Scroll banners have been used for providing instructions and Text boxes have been used for questions posed during the session and also for some handy hints in between. It has been constructed as a single Tool with specific instructions worked into the Tool and general instructions provided in the Handbook. The design and formatting of the Tool was largely inspired by the material published by the International Programme for Elimination of Child Labour in its material SCREAM, Stop Child Labour, Supporting Children's Rights through Education, the Arts and the Media. While the SCREAM material has largely used animated pictures and text boxes to illustrate text and draw attention to key parts of the material, the use of images which served to illustrate the Handbook, was thus continued in the Tool itself, to make it more interesting and efficient for facilitators to use.

f. **The logistical benefits of the Tool kit –**

a) **Ready to use -** The Tool Kit that has been designed as a pack in a ready to use form that can be disseminated for immediate use;

b) **Complete with an accompanying handbook -** The Kit consists of a concept note for NGOs/ school managements or such other head of the institution, a facilitator's instruction sheet and the Questionnaire itself with a specific set of instructions as well as space for recording responses of all children in the group in a single form itself;

c) **Easy to carry, disseminate and use in remote areas -** This Kit can be easily carried, disseminated through electronic methods or copied in the paper form for further use in the field. As it is not heavy in props or other material (picture drawing is the only part of the Tool that would require children to have pencils or colouring material if possible) this can be used at the most basic level at village schools, remote areas, etc with little preparation or logistical arrangements by field staff;

g. **Simple coding and analysis of data -** Data can be easily coded as required since pre coded options have already been provided in the questionnaire. This coding can be undertaken by the concerned institution with some guidance from the **Guide to Data Analysis that forms a part of the Handbook** if they have the facility for data entry and if not, it can be done by other agencies with which there are ongoing collaborations.

Conclusion – This Tool is now ready to be field tested before finalisation. The lessons and experiences in the use of this Tool will help make it more easier to use and more comprehensive in terms of the information gathered in its use. Feedback of both children as well as staff using the Tool has been sought by providing Feedback Forms (provided as Annexures to the Preparatory Session, that has to mandatorily precede both the Stand Alone and the Rapid Assessment Versions of the Tool). It is this feedback from both children and staff members that will help finalise the Tool.