

# WORKING TOGETHER

## DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE PEACEBUILDING STRATEGIES

Effective peacebuilding responds to needs and opportunities inside a particular conflict situation. It contributes to conflict transformation and the restoration of communities that have been hurt by war. We maintain that the size of your project doesn't matter nearly as much as your intentions and objectives. You must know why you are doing something and understand how this will support the rights of war affected young people. The first step in doing this is to acquire a deep knowledge of your community.

### **WHAT DOES THIS INVESTIGATION INVOLVE?**

Our investigations begin with young people's experiences and the assumption that war affects girls and boys differently. While this information is our main reference point, we also realize that it is important to understand the overall context of the conflicts in our countries, their history and power dynamics. We must build trust and connections with other community groups, to identify those who will support us as well as those who are likely to be opposed to youth involvement in peacebuilding work. We need to develop strategies to include the first and find ways to work around the second. All of this can be described as a "mapping" of the world in which we want to work and effect change.

### **HOW DO WE DO THIS INVESTIGATION? DO YOUTH HAVE DIFFERENT WAYS OF WORKING THAN ADULTS?**

We know we can learn a lot from working with adults and using the many resources they have developed on participatory research techniques and the analysis of conflicts. However, we also believe that our experiences and skills can be different than those of adults and so require special considerations.

As young people, we have distinct ways of seeing, understanding, representing and interacting with our world. We think with our hearts as well as our minds. Our lives are very much at 'ground level' and so we participate in activities that are often not part of adults' lives. We like to laugh and have fun, to find ways of enjoying our lives even in situations that deny us happiness. As young people we have potential for certain kinds of actions and limitations with others.

### **CAN WE USE RESEARCH METHODS USED IN OTHER SITUATIONS?**

Yes, of course. However there are special needs. Wars are worlds apart from any kind of normal living. We know the misery and pain that conflict inflicts. We have seen how it contorts relationships within families and community groups. We have lived inside its power to breed distrust and suspicion amongst former friends. Several of us have lived with the hyper reality caused by the presence of military and international agencies. To work effectively for peace means that all these special variables and their consequences must be taken into account.

In the following pages we provide strategies and methods for doing this work.

# **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

## **COMMUNITY RESEARCH**

### **GUIDELINE # 1:**

#### **YOUR MAIN REFERENCE POINT ARE THE VIEWS OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

This seems like a self-evident truth; one that is easy to follow. However, you will probably experience pressure to move away from this position:

- As your investigation develops, you will acquire official information that may be at odds with young people's experiences and views.
- Adults and experts may urge you to incorporate the needs of young people inside a "large vision" one that pushes children and youth to the margins of the map.
- The complex dimensions of a conflict can dwarf children's needs in ways that can undermine your focus on their concerns.

All these views have some merit. But they are not the point. There are many ways to understand a situation and even more approaches to rectify wrongs. Your job is to represent young people – this is the reference by which you should examine and categorize information and develop your action plan. No other group is likely to do it with your level of commitment or understanding.

### **GUIDELINE #2:**

#### **LESS CAN BE MORE**

Groups can become so fixated on information gathering that they are exhausted by the time they are ready to begin their community work. It is not necessary to do a detailed analysis of every issue. Yes, you want to have a good understanding of your situation. Yes, you need to know the main facets of your conflict and the opportunities and restraints this presents. But limit this to factors that directly relate to your plans for peacebuilding work.

### **GUIDELINE # 3:**

#### **RESPECT DIFFERENT WAYS OF KNOWING AND UNDERSTANDING A SITUATION**

It is a good idea to use a variety of methods in your research. It is also important to acquire different types of information. Feelings are as important as facts; a person's understanding of an event matters as much as independent accounts. For example, a child might tell you that 2,000 soldiers marched through his village. This number might not be a verifiable fact. However, the more important truth is that he feels overwhelmed and threatened by the presence of the military.

### **GUIDELINE # 4:**

#### **INFORMATION GATHERING IS ALSO PARTNER DEVELOPMENT**

In consulting with different groups you will begin to identify organizations that share your vision and ways of working. This may include opportunities for collaboration in unexpected places. For example, you might assume that large international NGOs or UN agencies do not share your concerns, only to find that work with young people is a new priority for them.

### **GUIDELINE # 5:**

#### **SECURITY IS ALWAYS A PRIMARY CONCERN**

Respect the anonymity of all your informants. We suggest that you do not include names on any report because you cannot be certain of how this information might be used. In workshops we normally tell participants not to write their names on any drawing or writing. When you are working in a new situation always consult with others about any security measures that should be respected. It is better to be safe than sorry.

## **GUIDELINE # 6:**

### **STRENGTHS ARE AS IMPORTANT AS NEEDS**

There can be a tendency to focus on vulnerabilities and problems. While war has an immense influence on young people's lives, not every aspect of their being is determined by it. We want to build young people's capacity to overcome the limitations posed by conflict. So it is important to identify strengths as well as needs.

## **GUIDELINE # 7:**

### **THINGS ARE MORE COMPLICATED AND SIMPLER THAN THEY SEEM**

When you begin this investigation you may think that you already know the answers. Before too long you will feel the opposite – that you don't understand anything and everything seems immensely complicated. Don't give up. In our experience you will overcome these doubts and be enriched by the experience. You will confirm some of your original ideas and reject others. But even more you will develop a confidence on how to proceed, one based on the knowledge that you have listened and learned from the young people you want to assist.



*Listening to children in the displaced people's camp outside Gulu, Uganda*

# COMMUNITY RESEARCH

## AN OVERVIEW & STEP BY STEP OUTLINE

### **What do you mean by “research”?**

We mean an investigation of all the components of your situation.

### **Where do we fit in this picture?**

At the centre. This process requires that you are both the researchers and the objects of the research. The usual rules of objectivity do not apply – we are all in this together. We begin with our lives and use this as a reference point in the collection of information and the development of our analysis. We ask you to “study” yourselves with as much attention as you give to an analysis of the political context of your conflict; listen to the opinions of elders or consult with other children and youth.

### **Who and what else is involved?**

Our research involves consultations with many different community members. We are all limited by our experiences and views of situations. It is important to broaden your perspective to include opinions from others who may have information that is not available to young people.

### **How do we do this investigation?**

We have developed a five-step plan. This combines the techniques and approaches used by the six CAP groups so it includes many different ideas. We don't expect that you will use all of them – please choose those that best suit your group's needs and interests.

## STEP # 1: PUT YOURSELF IN THE PICTURE

### **What happens first?**

The first step is to take a close look at your lives. Here are some questions to guide this investigation:

1. What does the word “war” mean in your life?
2. What impact has the war had on your family?
3. What are your earliest memories of the conflict?
4. When and how did you first notice the fact of the war?
5. How do you understand this conflict? Does it feel close or distant? In what ways has it been part of your life and affected your life?
6. In what ways do you think your life might be different if there was no conflict?
7. What are your greatest needs? What needs can't be realized because of the war?
8. In what way are your needs different than those of your parents and elders?

### **How do we do it?**

In the next few pages a variety of different exercises are outlined. All focus on individual memories and experiences. Many use drawing and painting to explore and represent thoughts and feelings. We suggest that you conduct this session as if it were a formal workshop. If someone in your group facilitates the session it can double as a training workshop. If you do it this way, include an evaluation session at the end.

### **Why is this important?**

As several CAP youth have noted, peace and peacebuilding is something that begins inside a person. A well-grounded self-awareness is necessary before we can be of assistance to others. Answers to these questions provide a good starting point for your consultations with other young people. It confirms that everyone is part of the same situation and suffers from similar, if not identical problems.

## **STEP # 2: CREATING THE FRAMEWORK// BEGINNING THE ANALYSIS**

### ***What happens next?***

The next step is to frame your experiences inside an overall analysis. This is crucial if your group is to move from individual to collective action, from the recognition of the impact war has on your lives towards the identification of ways to change these dynamics. Questions to guide these discussions are listed below. They are divided into two parts.

### ***Part 1:***

1. What do we cherish in our lives? What do we hold most dear? What is particularly important to us?
2. What are some of the problems or concerns that are repeatedly identified?
3. What are some of the ways that we cope with these difficulties?
4. What factors are contributing to these problems? Who is most responsible for them? Is there anything that could reduce their effect?
5. How are our lives different than those of adults?
6. What are some issues and concerns that only girls identified? Only boys? What are the differences? Why do those differences exist?

### ***Part 2:***

1. Is it possible to identify three main issues?
2. What information is missing? What else do we need to know about the experiences and position of young people in this conflict?
3. How would we rate our overall knowledge of the conflict – its origins, history and current status?
4. Looking at this picture, can we begin to create a definition of what youth peacebuilding might be in our community?
5. How can we use our strength and skills to work for change?

### ***How do we do it?***

Tools for doing this thematic analysis are provided. Remember the main goals of this exercise are to identify common experiences, needs, strengths and issues; information gaps and possible action plans. This is interesting but demanding work. Please respect the different experiences and opinions of males and females in your group.

### ***Why is this important?***

Community research can provide a lot of information. To make this information useful, we need to have a framework for categorizing and analysing data.

## **STEP # 3: LISTENING TO OTHERS: CONSULTING WITH OTHER CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

### ***What happens next?***

The next step is to consult with other young people in your community. This involves going through the same process with them that you just did with your group – the individual exercises followed by a group analysis. This will probably confirm many of your group's ideas as well as add new perspectives and possibilities for peacebuilding work.

### ***How do we do it?***

Organize a two or three hour workshop with children/youth in your community. Try to make contact with some young people outside your age group. In organizing the workshop it is important to explain its overall goal (i.e. to conduct a thorough assessment of the situation of young people as the basis on which to develop useful peacebuilding strategies). This encourages participants to think seriously.

For ideas on conducting a workshop please consult the human rights training plan as it includes this information. As well, the manual for NGOs contains guidelines for doing this work. We suggest that you use the techniques that your group has already done as the type of information will be similar and thus easier to compare and analyze.

**Why is this important?**

Your understanding is limited by the experiences of your members. You may be missing key pieces of information. Discussions with children/youth in other situations will broaden your views and analysis of the conflict. These consultations can serve as an informal recruiting session as workshop participants may become excited at the idea of working for positive changes in their situations. Every group needs new members – this is a great time to include other children and youth in your plans.

**STEP # 4:  
A MAP DESCRIBING HOW AND WHY  
YOUNG PEOPLE ARE BEING AFFECTED BY  
THE WAR**

**What happens next?**

At this point your group should have a good idea of the impact of war on the lives of young people in your community. You may have already identified ideas for peacebuilding work. Before you go further, it is important to look at the larger context, to understand how and why the conflict is affecting young people in these ways. This involves consultations with elders, leaders, and officials who can provide some answers to your questions.

**How do we do it?**

This step involves two main parts. The first is the identification of your questions and information gaps. A technique for this is included. The second involves consultations with community representatives.

While it is not necessary to consult every elder, official, schoolteacher or community leader; please try to meet with representatives from all sectors of the community. It is a good idea to consult with people known to have political influence as they can help or hinder your efforts. In doing this you show respect and also a desire to collaborate with others. This may be useful in the future if you need their support.

When you consult with officials and representatives from organizations remember that you also have something to offer. Your research gives you a certain authority and a perspective that you can include in your discussions with these people.

In Africa there is a saying, “ An old man is like a

library.” Think of your elders as a group of wonderful old books, each with a personality and knowledge of life. Their perspectives will enrich your understanding of your culture, its ways of being and its sources of strength. They can provide an historical overview and information from the past that will enlarge your understanding of current situations.

**Why is this important?**

Peacebuilding involves all aspects of a community. Everything interconnects. An understanding of these dynamics – their origins, history and current status – is critical for any community work for social change as it allows you to create a strategy that takes these variables into account at the planning stage.

**STEP # 5:  
CREATING A PLAN**

**What happens next?**

You are ready to create your action plan. There are just two decisions left to make:  
1) the issues you will work on and  
2) your peacebuilding strategies.

**How do we do it?**

A method for guiding the development of your plans is provided in the following pages. As well the last section of this manual contains descriptions of CAP’s peacebuilding work.

As peacebuilders we know that the heart as well as the mind are at work during these decisions. Sometimes an instinctive response is the best one. You have done your research and listened attentively to other young people as they describe their situations. While it is always useful to consider all the points, your feelings or instincts of what should be done can be just important, even if it seems like a less practical option. We need to fly as well as walk towards peace!

## **RESOURCES AND TECHNIQUES**

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In the following pages we are providing a range of activities and resources for your work. Please choose those which are most appropriate for your situation and group.

### **A. Activities at the Individual Level**

Guided Writing  
Treasure Boxes  
Wish Stones  
Life Journeys and Mobiles  
(also can be used in group analysis)  
My Body Remembers  
Paired Interviews

### **B. Activities for Group Discussions & Community Research**

Interview Skills: Practice Games  
Role Plays  
Walking Around My Village  
Girls Life/Boys Life  
Out My Door

### **C. Activities for Group Analysis**

An Evaluation/Analysis Tool  
Delphi Technique  
Web Chart  
Setting Priorities

### **D. Workshop Resources**

Group Games and Exercises





**ACTIVITIES AT THE  
INDIVIDUAL LEVEL**

## WRITING EXERCISES

*These writing exercises provide personal information about how young people's lives have been affected by war. While they lack the scientific accuracy of a formal survey, the participants' responses are very informative.*

**MATERIALS: PAPER AND PENCIL**

**DIRECTIONS:**

**Method A: Questions**

Participants are asked to answer a series of questions. These are presented as unfinished sentences that they complete. Suggested questions are listed below. In the CAP workshops we normally use 8 - 10 questions.

**QUESTIONS:**

- My favourite animal is \_\_\_\_\_.
- My favourite drink is \_\_\_\_\_.
- I like to \_\_\_\_\_.
- One thing that really scares me \_\_\_\_\_.
- My favourite time of day is \_\_\_\_\_.
- The thing I like to do most with my friends is \_\_\_\_\_.
- One thing that makes me really angry is \_\_\_\_\_.
- The most important thing in my life is \_\_\_\_\_.
- When I am nervous I do this to make me feel better  
\_\_\_\_\_.
- The best thing happening in my life right now is \_\_\_\_\_.
- The worst thing happening in my life right now is \_\_\_\_\_.
- My biggest wish for myself is \_\_\_\_\_.
- My biggest wish for my family is \_\_\_\_\_.
- My biggest wish for my community is \_\_\_\_\_.
- If I could do anything it would be \_\_\_\_\_.
- One day I hope to \_\_\_\_\_.
- If I could be any animal it would be \_\_\_\_\_.
- For me the most beautiful thing is \_\_\_\_\_.



## MORE WRITING EXERCISES

### ACTIVITIES AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

#### **Method B:**

*In this activity participants are asked to write five or more responses to a particular phrase. Participants are asked to create magical and funny responses as well as serious ones.*

### **PHRASES & WARM-UPS:**

#### **1. I remember, I remember...**

*Warm-up:* Ask them to think back to when they were little. Who was their first friend? Do they remember the first day they went to school? What was one of the funniest things that ever happened to them? Do they remember any times when they were very nervous/scared/embarrassed?

#### **2. I wish, I wish...**

*Warm-up:* Ask them to make some magical, crazy wishes. If they could be any animal, what would it be? Give some examples of unusual wishes. Ask them to remember what they wished for when they were young.

#### **3. I worry, I fear...**

*Warm-up:* Begin by acknowledging that everyone is scared or worries about something. Some people are especially frightened of snakes; others fear spiders or rats. When we are young most of us have special fears. As this discussion moves along, the facilitator should look for an opportunity to ask them what special or new fears they have as a result of the conflict.

#### **4. I hope, I dream...**

*Warm-up:* Begin by stressing that everyone has hopes and dreams. Some dreams we keep to ourselves, others we share with our friends and family. For people living inside conflicts these dreams are important, they keep us going in difficult times. Dreams don't always come true – this doesn't matter. What matters is that we have hopes for our families, our communities and ourselves. Ask the group to think back to their dreams when they were little. How have they changed?

*Notes:* This can also be done as a group exercise.



## TREASURE BOXES

### ACTIVITIES AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL



*This method provides information about what participants treasure or hold most dear. This can be tangible things or dreams, memories and hopes for the future.*

**MATERIALS:** **SMALL CARDBOARD BOXES  
DECORATING MATERIALS,  
PAINT AND PAINTBRUSHES**

#### **DIRECTIONS:**

1. Each participant is given a small cardboard box. The leader explains that this is a treasure box to keep things important to them. Paint and decorating materials are provided.
2. As each person completes her box, the leader has a short interview with her to ask what precious things she will keep in her box. This can include abstract ideas as well as concrete objects.

*Notes:* Young people seem to really love these boxes and take great care over them. If small boxes are unavailable, large storage boxes can be broken down to make these treasure boxes. If this is impossible, then consider making boxes from paper mache – (flour paste and newspaper strips).



## WISH STONES

### ACTIVITIES AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

*This activity provides information on young people's immediate needs and hopes. While it can be done with all ages, it is most effective with younger children.*

### **MATERIALS:** STONES AND PAINT

### **DIRECTIONS:**

1. The leader begins by asking the group if they know about the Aladdin's Lamp Legend. (It helps to have a lamp as a prop). If not she explains it to them, as dramatically as possible.
2. The leader asks the group if they know of any stories or legends about objects that can grant wishes.
3. The leader explains that in this activity the group is going to create their own pretend wish giving stones.
4. Participants are asked to choose a stone or other natural object whose size and shape appeals to them.
5. The group puts their stones/objects in a pile and then takes turns trying to find it only through touch (eyes closed or blindfolded)
6. *Painting:* Where possible it is good to paint or decorate the stones.
7. *Sculpture Making:* The group can create a large sculpture incorporating everyone's stones, sticks or whatever they have used. If this option is chosen it is a good idea to create a "work in progress" so that other children/youth can add their objects later.
8. The "wishing" ceremony. While the participants may not want to reveal their wishes to others, it is still a good idea to end this activity with a formal ceremony of some sort. In our experience young people really enjoy these rituals.



## ACTIVITIES AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

# EXPLORING OUR LIVES

## LIFE JOURNEYS & MOBILES

*These two art activities provide information on young people's perception of their lives: their strengths and interests and the difficulties and limitations created by war. Because they have similar objectives they are grouped together with an introductory activity.*

### **MATERIALS:** NOTED WITH EACH ACTIVITY

### **WARM-UPS**

All artists need activities to spark their imagination. Ideas for doing this:

#### **1. This reminds me of...**

The group sits in a circle. The workshop leader has a bag filled with common objects. This bag is passed around the group. Participants are asked to choose an object that sparks a memory of an important event or experience. They are asked to share this story with the group.

#### **2. Word Association Game**

This exercise begins with some stretches and simple relaxation exercises. Participants are asked to close their eyes, relax and let their thoughts wander. As the workshop leader says different words, they should quickly think of the first thought or word that comes into their mind.

*Suggested Words:*

HOME, MOTHER, HAPPINESS, SADNESS, VIOLENCE, SCHOOL,  
FIGHTING, BIRTHDAY PARTY, WAR, ACCIDENT, FRIENDS, GUNS,  
FEAR, GARDEN, HOUSE, PEACE, FIELDS, GUNFIRE, HURT, FATHER  
ETC.

*Note:* This activity can also be done as a group activity. To begin, the group does rhythmic clapping, tapping or clicking of their hands. Once this gets going, the leader starts the exercise by saying a word. The person next to her responds with the first word that comes into her head. This continues around the circle. It can be lots of fun.



## LIFE JOURNEYS

### ACTIVITIES AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

*In this activity participants create the path of their life and identify the ways war has affected it. It also asks participants to think of the road ahead and their hopes for the future.*

**MATERIALS:**      **LARGE PAPER**  
                              **COLOURED DRAWING PENCILS**

### **DIRECTIONS:**

#### **Step #1: Guided Thinking Exercise**

In this exercise the leader asks questions and “guides” the participants thinking.

*A sample text: (Based on the idea of a path)*

“Think of some of the paths near your home. Sometimes they are rough, other times smooth and easy. In some parts a path is windy; in others it is straight. At some points it goes uphill; other times down. There are always surprises on a walking path. There can be sudden dangers but you can also see funny and beautiful things.

The path of our life is much like that.

*Let’s start with the early days of your life:* What are some of your first memories? What was going on in your family? What do you remember most from that time? Do you have any memories of war? If so, how did it affect your life or the life of your family?

*As you move along this path of your life, think about other moments:* Think about your friends, what you did together. If there were times when you were so happy, what happened? If there were times when you were sad or scared, what happened? What do you remember about your first day at school?

*Now you are a little older.* What are the most important things going on in your life at this time? What gives you support, what makes your life difficult? Think of the important times with your family and friends. Think of special boys or girls in your life. How is your life shaping – what is the path your life is taking?

*Now you are getting closer to the present.* What is going on in your life at this moment? What are the good things, what is difficult for you? What would you change if you could?

*Finally, think about your life five years from now.* What do you think you will be doing? Are you happy about this or would you like it to be different? How do you want your life to be? What resources do you have inside yourself to accomplish this? What help do you need from others?”



## LIFE JOURNEYS ( CONTINUED )

### ACTIVITIES AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

#### ***Step # 2: Drawing the Life Journey Maps***

Participants can use drawing, writing and painting to represent the path or journey of their life to date. Encourage them to think about all aspects of their lives, not just those associated with the war. If possible, provide art supplies (coloured drawing pencils).

*Notes:* If art materials are not available, just use natural resources. The ground can be the canvas; a stick the paintbrush and various objects from the environment can represent different ideas. For example, large stones can be used to indicate obstacles; leaves in a pathway can symbolize a smooth and easy time.

The life journey can be done in whatever way is most appropriate. For instance in Rwanda the participants did them as graphs while in Angola they drew roads to simulate the “path of life”.



## MOBILES

### ACTIVITIES AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

*In this art activity participants create mobiles to represent the positive and negative forces in their lives. This activity can be done on an individual or group basis.*

**MATERIALS:**      **SMALL STICKS, GLUE,  
STRING OR WOOL,  
CARDS AND COLOURED PAPER**

### DIRECTIONS:

1. The leader introduces this activity by using a volunteer. She talks about the principles of a mobile – that it is a balance of different forces. (It is a good idea to exaggerate this description by showing what happens if the forces on one side are too strong – the mobile becomes lopsided and falls over.)
2. Participants are asked to create mobiles to represent the positive and negative forces in their lives. The leader emphasizes that everyone in the group is a “balanced” mobile – they are not falling over, they are contending with the difficulties in their lives. How do they do it?
3. The leader demonstrates how to make a simple mobile.
4. The group is encouraged to use their imagination in representing their ideas. In addition to the materials provided in the workshop they should go outside and find sticks, flowers, stones, leaves and other objects that can be incorporated into their mobiles.
5. When everyone is finished each group or individual gives a presentation.





## MY BODY REMEMBERS

### ACTIVITIES AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

*This activity focuses mostly on feelings as participants are asked to think about the different ways that war has had a direct impact on their lives.*

**MATERIALS:**      **ONE LARGE SHEET OF PAPER**  
**PENCILS OR PENS**  
**PAPER**  
**COLOURED PENCILS AND PAINTS (OPTIONAL)**

### **DIRECTIONS:**

1. Using the large paper the workshop leader makes an outline of a girl or boy. The leader explains that the purpose of this activity is to think about their experiences of war – what they have seen, heard, done and felt. To guide this they are asked to think about their experiences in terms of different parts of their bodies: eyes, ears, hands, feet, heart, mind.

2. The leader asks the participants to quietly listen to the following phrases and to complete silently to themselves:

**My eyes have seen...**

**My ears have heard...**

**My heart has felt...**

**My mind remembers...**

**My body has experienced**

**My hands have done...**

3. Each participant is given a smaller sheet of paper and asked to make an outline and to write the statements relating to the different categories/statements provided. (The leader should write these on the large paper.)

4. After the writing and pictures are completed, participants can read out what they have written or the pictures can be put up on the wall as in a gallery and the group can examine them.

5. The leader asks the group to identify some of the common themes in the accounts.



**ACTIVITIES AT THE  
INDIVIDUAL LEVEL**

## **PAIRED INTERVIEWS**

*In this technique youth interview each other to obtain personal information and opinions.*

**MATERIALS: PEN AND PAPER**

**DIRECTIONS:**

1. Divide the group into pairs.
2. Members of the pair take turns interviewing each other. They should conduct these interviews as a role-play where they pretend they don't know each other. Allow approximately 30 minutes for these discussions. Some questions are listed below but these should be adapted to suit your particular situations.

**Where do you live? How many people are in your family?**

**What are your favourite activities and interests?**

**Do you attend school? If so, how are doing with your studies. If not, why not.**

**What do you enjoy about your life as it is right now?  
What is difficult?**

**What are your plans for the future?**

**If you were to think back over your life, what are the good moments, what are the hard ones?**

**Have you or any of your family had any contact with the government troops and/or the rebel armies?**

**Have any members of your family been affected by the war? If so, in what ways. Who in your family do you think the war has been the hardest on?**

**In what ways is the impact of the war/the fighting different for girls than boys? How are things different for young people and adults?**

**Do you and your friends talk about the war amongst yourselves? If so, what do they worry about?**

**What makes you feel more scared? What do you do to feel calm and reduce your worries about the war?**

**Is there anything young people can do to protect themselves?**

3. Reconvene the group. Each pair describes what they have learned from each other. When the presentations are completed, the leader asks the group to identify common themes and issues.



## **INTERVIEWING: PRACTICE SESSIONS**

### **GROUP ANALYSIS AND COMMUNITY RESEARCH**

**MATERIALS:** NONE

**DESCRIPTION:**

These exercises are divided into two categories:

- A) Development of good questions
- B) Development of listening skills.

### **A. EFFECTIVE QUESTIONS**

1. Ask the group to listen the information they need to acquire on a particular issue.
2. Ask for volunteers to role play an interview session. (Note: These volunteers should be fun actors willing to play out different types of scenarios.)
3. The group watches the role play interview. (These interviews should be based on real agencies that the group will be visiting.) In these role plays the actors should exaggerate the situations and problems that people might encounter.

Examples:

Poor introductions or explanations for the reason for the visit.

Unfocussed, general questions

Respondents that are uncooperative or provide one-word answers.

Condescending respondents.

4. After each role play the group discusses what they saw and suggests changes.



## **INTERVIEWING (CONTINUED)**

### **GROUP ANALYSIS AND COMMUNITY RESEARCH**

#### **B. EFFECTIVE LISTENING**

1. The group creates two or three questions on different issues.
2. A volunteer writes short responses (several sentences) to these questions.
3. The group is divided into three sub-groups. Everyone leaves the room.
4. One representative from each of the three groups comes into the room. They are given a copy of the description to read.
5. Each team members calls in one member from their group and quietly gives the description to them. (away from the hearing of the other groups)
6. This person then calls in the next member of the team and does the same. This process continues until everyone has been called in.
7. The leader asks the last team member of each group to repeat what they were told. The leader then reads the original message.
9. Inevitably there are mistakes and new information added. Each group should try to determine where and how this occurred.



## ROLE PLAYS & STOP THEATRE

### GROUP ANALYSIS AND COMMUNITY RESEARCH



*Drama is a fun way for young people to represent and analyze issues.*

#### **DIRECTIONS:**

1. Divide the participants into small groups of about 5/6 per group.
2. Each group is asked to prepare a skit on something that is particularly important to young people in their community.
3. After the role-plays have been shown, the leader asks them to identify the issues that were depicted in these skits as well as suggestions of things that should be added.
4. Stop Theatre: In stop theatre members of the audience are invited to intervene and change the direction taken in the role-play. This is done after the play has been shown once without interruption.



## WALKING AROUND MY VILLAGE

### GROUP ANALYSIS AND COMMUNITY RESEARCH

*The purpose of this activity is for young people to identify the strengths and difficulties in their communities from their point of view.*

**MATERIALS:**      **LARGE PAPER (POSTER SIZE),  
CARDS/SMALL PIECES OF PAPER, MARKERS,  
PENCILS AND GLUE OR TAPE.**

#### **DIRECTIONS:**

1. The group creates a large map of their community.
2. Each participant is given two cards or pieces of paper and a pencil.
3. Each participant is asked to walk around the community and to identify two things:
  - a. A place that is significant to them. They should explain why this place is important.
  - b. Something that they see in their community that needs to be changed.
4. As each person returns they attach their cards to the appropriate place on the map. When everyone has completed the assignment the group reads over the cards on the map and makes a tentative list of important issues for young people in their community.



## **GIRLS' LIVES// BOYS' LIVES**

### **GROUP ANALYSIS AND COMMUNITY RESEARCH**

*The purpose of this activity is to identify the similarities and differences in the experiences and needs of girls and boys in conflict situations.*

**MATERIALS:      LARGE PAPER (YOU CAN USED TAPED TOGETHER NEWSPAPERS), MARKERS**

#### **DIRECTIONS:**

1. Using volunteers from the group, create four body outlines on the paper. (two female outlines, two male.)
2. Divide the group into one male only group, one female only group.
3. Each group is asked to identify the main aspects of the life of boys and girls living inside conflict. Each group does one for each sex. (e.g.. boys do one for girls and one for boys). The group is encouraged to use symbols to represent different ideas and to make these symbols larger or smaller depending on their importance. Also, they should place the symbol close or far from the outline depending on how important this factor is in their lives.
4. The large group reconvenes for presentations. The group is encouraged to discuss and debate differences in perceptions and experiences.
5. The leader asks the group to identify projects to meet the needs of boys or girls in their community. The group categorizes these ideas according to which group would be best equipped to do this work. (i.e. youth groups, NGOS, military, church etc.)



## OUT MY DOOR

### GROUP ANALYSIS AND COMMUNITY RESEARCH

*The goal of this activity is to see how war “looks” to children. This activity is probably best done with younger children.*

#### **MATERIALS:** PAPER, COLOURED PENCILS

#### **DIRECTIONS:**

1. The leader explains that the purpose of this activity is to learn about what is going on in the community.
2. The participants are asked to close their eyes and to think about waking up that day. Were they sleepy? What woke them up? What did they do after they woke up? Next the leader asks them to think about what they saw when they left their home. The group is asked to open their eyes and describe the different things that they saw. The leader writes these things down.
3. The leader then introduces the art activity: “Looking Out My Door”. Participants are asked to create a picture of the door of their home with them standing in front of it. What do they see when they look around? Ask them to create a picture of things that they might see on a typical day.
4. As each participant finishes his picture, one of the workshop organizers should interview him to obtain a complete description of the picture. The interviewer should also ask him to describe other things going on in the community that are affecting children’s lives.
5. When the pictures are completed, the group can do a large overview map or drawing of their community. Their individual drawings can be taped on to the appropriate part of the map.



## A TOOL FOR ANALYSIS

### GROUP ANALYSIS AND COMMUNITY RESEARCH

*The objective of this technique is to provide a structure for categorizing information.*

**MATERIALS:** **LARGE POSTER SIZED PAPER (OLD NEWSPAPERS), PAINT, MARKERS, COLOUR CARD PAPER, TAPE OR GLUE**

#### **DIRECTIONS:**

In this exercise the group creates a mural of a body of water to visually represent and categorize ideas and issues. A body of water was chosen as the backdrop because it shows that we are all inside the same world but it is a fluid environment filled with movement and possibilities for change.

1. Using the newsprint, the group paints a large blue mural.
2. The leader explains that they will be creating an underwater world, one that represents the different aspects of their life. They will use creatures and objects in the sea to symbolize these different things. To get you started, here are some suggestions:

**THE WATER** represents the overall atmosphere in which you are living. Like all bodies of water, it has smooth and rough patches – high or low waves are positioned to represent the current situation, past experiences and projections for the future.

**FISH** represent young people – each person should create a fish to represent him/herself.

**SHARKS, STINGERS, CRABS AND GARBAGE** are used to represent problems and threats.

**SEA HORSES, ANGELFISH, MERMAIDS AND DOLPHINS** represent young people's strengths.

**SHIPS, BOATS, BRIDGES** can represent the different institutions and organizations in the community's life.

3. Everyone should participate in the creation of the mural. Once it is completed, outsiders can be invited to view it and comment.

*Notes:* While creating an “underwater world” makes this exercise more fun, it is not necessary. It can easily be done on the ground using stones and other materials from the natural world to symbolize different ideas.



## DELPHI TECHNIQUE

### GROUP ANALYSIS AND COMMUNITY RESEARCH

*The purpose of this activity is to generate ideas, issues and questions and then to sort and rank them.*

**MATERIALS:** COLOURED PAPER OR CARDS  
GLUE OR TAPE

#### **DIRECTIONS:**

1. The participants are given several cards. They are asked to write down all the topics or questions they think relate to young people in their community. (one idea per card)
2. Once the cards are completed, they are handed into the leader. He/she then leads the group in an exercise to group these ideas according to the categories the group thinks are most appropriate.
3. After the grouping is completed, small teams can be assigned one of the topics to review and discuss.

*Notes:* This method is quite flexible and can be used for a variety of purposes, including developing and revising an interview checklist, comparing the strengths and weaknesses of various methods, preparing a team contracts/action plan and so on.

Information on the Delphi Technique was provided by:

*Participatory Learning & Action: A Trainer's Guide*, authors: Jules N. Pretty, Irene Guijt, John Thompson and Ian Scoones. Publisher; International Institute for Environment and Development, London, 1995.



## WEB CHART

### GROUP ANALYSIS AND COMMUNITY RESEARCH

*The purpose of this activity is to do a joint analysis of factors affecting young people's lives and the connection between these different factors.*

#### **MATERIALS:      LARGE PAPER AND MARKERS**

#### **DIRECTIONS**

This technique is very popular with social justice groups as it shows the connections between different issues.

/girl in the middle of the paper.

1. The leader begins the activity by making the symbol of a boy
2. The group is asked to identify the main components of a young person's life. The leader writes these on the chart, using symbols to show them as positive or negative forces. He may also group these on opposite sides of the chart.
3. The group discusses these different factors, adding more information and making connections amongst them. The leader adds this information, creating a 'web' or analysis of how these elements interconnect.



## SETTING PRIORITIES

### GROUP ANALYSIS AND COMMUNITY RESEARCH

*The purpose of this exercise is to set priorities.*

**MATERIALS:** COLOURED CARDS OR SMALL PIECES OF PAPER,  
LARGE PAPER,  
MARKERS, PENCILS AND TAPE.

#### **DIRECTIONS:**

This is a combination grouping and ranking exercise.

1. The group is asked to identify their main issues. The leader lists each of these issues in the order they are given.

2. Each issue is discussed by the group according to the following criteria:

**Why is this issue important to us?**

**What do we know about this issue?**

**What don't we know/what do we need to learn?**

**What needs to be changed? What could we contribute to this objective?**

**What actions or methods would be most effective?**

**What might change as a result of this action?**

**What skills do we have to realize this action?**

**What kind of assistance would we need to do this work?**

3. A recorder should write down the main points of the discussion.

4. When the group has completed its discussion, it should rank each issue according to its priority for the group. This should be in three main categories:

**Knowledge/relevance of the issue**

**Skills that the group has to carry out this work.**

**Group's interest in the method or issue**