THE ALLIANCE
FOR CHILD PROTECTION
IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION

ANNEX 1:

Conducting Ethical Participatory Research with Children in Humanitarian Contexts: Annotated Resource List

© UNICEF_Mohamdeen

November 2024

Overview

The **Resource List** is divided into three sections:

1. **Foundational guidance on ethical research with children in any context**

   This section provides resources that outline the foundational ethical frameworks for research with children, regardless of the context. These principles, such as informed consent, do no harm, benefit, respect, fairness, accountability, and integrity, form the bedrock of any ethical research involving children, including in humanitarian settings. Anyone seeking to conduct research with children must know these foundations. Individuals who are new to participatory research should start here.

2. **Guidance on research with children in emergencies and conflicts and on sensitive topics**

   This section builds on the previous section. It includes resources for conducting research in high-risk settings, on sensitive topics related to child safeguarding and protection, and with hard-to-reach populations. It highlights the ethical issues unique to these environments and provides examples of how various organisations have approached these challenges.

3. **Research Reports and Case Studies**

   This section focuses on specific research projects and case studies, demonstrating the application of ethical principles in participatory research with children. These practical examples show how researchers have implemented ethical frameworks in real-world contexts.

For every resource, the following information has been compiled to help readers quickly identify key takeaways and assess which resources would be helpful to explore more:

Description	Participatory Methods and Approaches	Ethical Principles Used, Addressed or Identified
Summarizes core content and aim of each resource.	Highlights type and level of children's participation in research approach and methods.	Details how different ethical issues related to children's participation in the research process were addressed

Section 1: Foundational guidance on ethical research with children in any context

Tip: For additional resources, explore these websites which contain repositories and frequently updated materials:

- Ethical Research with Children (ERIC): *https://childethics.com/*
- Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI): *https://www.svri.org/*
- UNICEF: *https://www.unicef.org/innocenti/approach/ethical-evidence-generation/*

Description	Participatory Methods and Approaches	Ethical Principles Used, Addressed or Identified
1. International Charter for Ethical Research Involving Children (2013)		
This is the formal statement, developed collaboratively with experts in child research ethics, that aims to advocate for meaningful participation of children in research design and implementation by establishing seven key commitments of what ethical research with children and adolescents entails.	See the ERIC Compendium for different participatory methods.	Ethical research involving children: • Is everyone's responsibility and everyone participating should be aware of their duty of care. • Must centre on respecting the dignity of children, which requires researchers to recognize children's evolving capacities and value their diverse contributions. • Must be just and equitable ensuring that the ability to participate, and the burdens and benefits of doing so are distributed fairly. • Must benefit children. The researcher bears the primary responsibility to ensure this through continuous assessments. • Should never harm children for their participation; research must always obtain children's informed and ongoing consent. • Requires ongoing reflection through attention to assumptions, values, beliefs, and practices that influence the research process and impact children.

Description	Participatory Methods and Approaches	Ethical Principles Used, Addressed or Identified
2. Ethical Research Involving Children: Compendium (2013)		
A compendium containing various case studies and researcher reports that can be used as a guide for participatory research with children and adolescents (defined here as 10 to 19 years old).	Case studies discuss children's participation in: • interviews • data analysis • dissemination • program development • focus groups	Key ways to respect children's rights during research include: • Ensure informed consent is known to be negotiable and revocable and accommodates for disabilities; Determine if consent must be obtained from community leaders as well as individuals, and that all participants are fully informed. • Plan for potential harms and create harm reduction plans for children in dangerous situations. Conduct local consultations to create support structures for children during and after research. • Ensure privacy and confidentiality by securely storing, protecting, and disposing of sensitive information, considering the risks involved in online versus offline data storage, and being realistic about the limits of your ability to provide confidentiality. • Consider payments and compensation only if local consultations have been conducted and it is determined not to unduly bribe, coerce, or pressure children into participation and does not set unrealistic standards for quality of life during or after the research is completed. Other forms of culturally appropriate reciprocity should be considered.
3.The Nine Basic Requirements for Meaningful and Ethical Children's Participation (2021)		
Outlines basic requirements for children's participation to be meaningful and ethical and fulfill children's right to be heard and to participate as established in Article 12 in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).	The document outlines principles that must be upheld across all participatory methods, but does not specify or suggest types of methods.	For participation to be ethical and meaningful, it must be: • Transparent and informative: Open, honest, culturally sensitive, age-appropriate communication. • Voluntary: Children can choose to participate without pressure. • Respectful: Children are heard, valued, and supported. • Relevant: Address real and tangible issues that matter to children. • Child-friendly: Activities centre around welcoming children and making them feel safe. • Inclusive: Accommodate children's diverse identities and abilities. • Supported by training: Facilitators and children receive and participate in necessary training.

Description	Participatory Methods and Approaches	Ethical Principles Used, Addressed or Identified
		• Safe and sensitive to risk: Minimize risks and ensure support structures. • Accountable: Provide feedback on how children's contributions influenced outcomes.
4. Ethical Considerations for Research and Evaluation on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (2018)		
Provides ethical guidance for researchers and evaluators working on projects related to ending violence against women and girls.	This report discusses how to behave ethically while maximizing children's participation, not the specific types of participation. This includes thinking through potential consequences, creating protections, and supporting autonomy.	• It is the researchers' responsibility to ensure the safety and well-being of participants. • Helpful safety protocols include using verbal consent when signed consent may prove prohibitive due to literacy or confidentiality concerns, providing alternative or vague descriptions of an interview or focus group discussion in order to ensure girls' satefy, and ensuring privacy by having dummy questions ready in case anyone enters an area unexpectedly during an interview or focus group discussion. • Researchers must assess whether the benefits of participation outweigh the risks and that those involved in the research are the ones that benefit.
5. Ethical Guidelines for Ethical, Meaningful and Inclusive Children's Participation Practice (2008)		
Developed in collaboration with children, experts, and practitioners, this framework emphasizes the importance of respecting children's rights and prioritizing their well-being and safety while remaining flexible enough to adapt to a changing environment or new information. It offers ethical guidelines to support participation of children in research and decision-making processes.	Children involved at every part of research process, including: • planning of research and programmes • training for researchers and participants • execution of research and programs • data analysis, collation, and interpretation	• Children should be prepared for the potential consequences of actions, both their own and those of researchers/their community, including the potential risks and benefits of choosing to engage or not engage in research. • Approaches such as discussing children's rights, acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, and what children can do if there is a problem can empower children as active agents in research and the decision-making processes.

Description	Participatory Methods and Approaches	Ethical Principles Used, Addressed or Identified
6. So You Want to Involve Children in Research? A Toolkit Supporting Children's Meaningful and Ethical Participation in Research Relating to Violence Against Children (2004)		

Based on research conducted with children ages six through 16 and then developed in consultation with children, practitioners, and researchers, and based on participatory research principles and child rights frameworks, this toolkit supports ethical and meaningful participation of children in research related to violence against children.	Type of participation should depend on the project and child. This could include children being involved in:
	
	• gathering information
	• analysing information
	• reporting results
		• Confidentiality, the child's willingness to participate, and the child's situation vis a vis their parents and community must be considered to ensure safe and meaningful participation.
		• Legal obligations, such as the requirement to report abuse, must be considered and participants should be made aware.
		• Research staff should be told that their own safety is always to be placed above the completion of research tasks.
		• Key safety protocols to support researcher safety include:
		   ○ working in pairs and small groups when possible
		   ○ never going to an unknown address alone
		   ○ ensuring other staff know exactly where fieldwork staff will be during their working day
		   ○ conducting fieldwork in more public settings when possible
		   ○ carrying documentation to establish staff's identity as a researcher
		• Practical ways to ethically engage with children in research include:
		   ○ not making promises that may not be kept
		   ○ consulting children about how they would like to participate
		   ○ discussing the direction of the research and clarifying aims and objectives with children
		   ○ including 2+ children in researcher hiring interviews and having them assess applicants on 1-2 criteria
		   ○ involving children in choosing methods to use in investigating a particular topic
		   ○ involving children in writing questions for research instruments and designing materials such as fliers to recruit participants
		   ○ consulting with children about appropriate ways to approach participants about the research and the use of incentives for respondents, as well as ideas about where to locate relevant documentary sources otherwise unknown to adult researchers
		   ○ asking for their interpretations of materials that may differ from those of adult researchers

Description	Participatory Methods and Approaches	Ethical Principles Used, Addressed or Identified
7. Participatory Research on Child Maltreatment with Children and Adult Survivors: Concepts, Ethics, and Methods (2023)		
A comprehensive outline of how children's right to express their opinions on the violence affecting them can be effectively gathered and utilised. Explores ethical considerations and research methods to collaborate with children and adult survivors of child maltreatment and violence.	Proposes involving children in all core aspects of the research process, including identifying research questions, designing and testing instruments, collecting data, identifying conclusions, disseminating findings, and developing action plans. A few suggested ways to incorporate children include: • Encouraging children to construct meaning, share decisions and play a useful role in their community. • Using a method called "play and talk," targeted at 6–11-year-olds or 12–17-year-olds, which creates a game out of the interview questions to help give children autonomy in deciding which questions to answer. • Using mapping techniques - visual and spatial activities where children create maps of their environments, social interactions, and daily activities - can empower children to express their perspectives.	• For children who have experienced abuse, neglect, or violence, a strong ethical framework is necessary to avoid re-traumatizing them during potentially sensitive activities, such as discussing victimization or feelings of betrayal. • In these cases, gatekeepers, such as parents, should be involved to support children and assess the risk-benefit balance of their participation. • Unless there are clear risks and a strong case against their involvement, children should participate in research at a developmentally appropriate level, with gatekeeper consent.

Description	Participatory Methods and Approaches	Ethical Principles Used, Addressed or Identified
8. How to Research the Physical and Emotional Punishment of Children (2004)		
Developed by child protection experts based on research, evidence, and best practices in child rights, provides guidance for conducting research on the physical and emotional punishment of children.	• children were involved in defining the research questions • children participated in both collecting and analysing the data	• Ethical considerations that need to be discussed when researching sensitive topics such as punishment include necessity, planning, implications, informed consent confidentiality, information dissemination, compensation, and risks involved, and the physical and psychosocial well-being of children. • Cross-checking information from various sources (triangulation) is a practical way to design participatory research design, develop data collection methods, and ensure ethical decision-making.
9. Conceptual Framework for Measuring Outcomes of Adolescent Participation (2018)		
Presents a conceptual framework for measuring the outcomes of adolescent participation, highlighting the potential outcomes of meaningful participation, such as increased self-efficacy, empowerment, and civic engagement, while recognizing the various barriers to achieving full participation in different settings. The document also explores the relationship between participation, protection, and evolving capacities, stressing the need for careful monitoring and measurement of these outcomes to ensure that participation is meaningful and effective.	Collaborative Decision-Making: Adolescents are actively engaged in co-designing and implementing projects alongside adults. Adolescent-Led Participation: Allows adolescents to lead campaigns, organize programs, and address issues they identify as important. Adults act as facilitators. Measuring Outcomes: The framework provides tools and indicators to measure the effectiveness of participation, assessing outcomes such as increased decision-making power, civic engagement, and changes in self-worth.	• Adolescents must be given clear explanations about the research or project, its goals, and their role, allowing them to opt out if they do not wish to participate. • As adolescents' capacities for decision-making and responsibility evolve, adults should gradually transfer decision-making authority to them as they demonstrate readiness, providing appropriate support and guidance along the way. • Participation opportunities should be accessible to all adolescents, regardless of background, with tailored support where necessary. • Adults and institutions must be held accountable for ensuring adolescents' participation is meaningful and not tokenistic. This involves monitoring and evaluating participation outcomes using a rights-based approach and adjusting strategies based on adolescent feedback.

Description	Participatory Methods and Approaches	Ethical Principles Used, Addressed or Identified
	It encourages the use of surveys, interviews, and participatory assessments to collect data on how participation impacts adolescents at the personal, communal, and institutional levels.	
10. International Guidelines for Ethical Review of Epidemiological Studies (1991)		
Developed by experts in bioethics and research ethics through consultation and consensus-building processes. Presents ethical guidelines for conducting biomedical research involving human subjects, including children.	n/a	• Protecting the rights, safety, and well-being of research participants must be the number one priority and focus of all ethical reviews through the concept of respect for persons including their autonomy, beneficence, and distributive justice. • Use age standards for obtaining informed consent: anyone under 12-13 years of age cannot give any consent; 14–18-year olds' ability to give consent must be evaluated given local cultural and legal norms. • Review by a competent expert body, such as an ethical review committee or oversight mechanism, can help minimize risks, and ensure fairness and transparency in research.

Section 2: Guidance on Research with Children in Emergencies, Conflicts, and Other Humanitarian Crises

Description	Participatory Methods and Approaches	Ethical Principles Used, Addressed or Identified
11. What We Know about Ethical Research Involving Children in Humanitarian Settings (2016)		
Serves as a foundational resource, offering a comprehensive framework to navigate the complexities of engaging children ethically in research within volatile, crisis-prone environments. Synthesizes existing literature, presents case studies, and explores universal and specific ethical issues in this field.	A range of participatory methods are highlighted, with emphasis on flexibility and context sensitivity. Key tips for certain approaches include: • FGD: use interactive tools, such as drawing or body mapping to help children express their views. • Children who take an active role in research, such as designing studies, collecting data, and analysing findings should be provided with capacity-building workshops to equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge. • Observational methods and informal dialogues can provide a way for children to participate at their own comfort level. • Involving children, caregivers, and community members in collaboratively designing research activities can ensure the research is grounded in the children's lived experiences and cultural context.	• Engage children in risk assessment by involving them in identifying potential harms and mitigation strategies. • Establish child protection protocols that include access to psychosocial support services for participants. • Implement safety measures such as discreet entry points for interviews to avoid drawing unwanted attention to participating children. • Use a flexible consent process: Secure parental consent while emphasizing child assent and ongoing consent throughout the research. • Train researchers to be sensitive to power dynamics between adults and children, recognizing that adult authority may influence participation. Equip researchers to work respectfully, emphasizing neutrality, transparency, and trust-building. • Employ child-led decision-making when possible, allowing children to decide on topics, methods, and dissemination. • Ensure researchers are trained in confidentiality, especially when using information and communication technologies. • Implement data security protocols including anonymizing data, secure storage, and restricted access to sensitive information. • Use creative methods (for example, storytelling and participatory videos) to communicate results back to children, ensuring they understand and feel included. • Plan for follow-up actions like advocacy and policy changes based on research findings to benefit the involved children and communities.

Description	Participatory Methods and Approaches	Ethical Principles Used, Addressed or Identified
12. Children's Consultations in Humanitarian Contexts (2023)		
Based on global best practices and real-world applications, this provides sound but realistic procedures for effectively consulting children (ages eight to 17) in humanitarian situations to ensure their perspectives and views are known. Details how to consult children during all steps of research and how to translate findings.	Defines three categories of child participation: • Consultative participation: gather children's perspectives on various topics, including policy changes and planning, or conduct research on their play, learning preferences, and daily challenges. • Collaborative participation: Children help define research questions, methodology, and data collection, and assist in writing reports and disseminating findings. They also help shape advocacy and campaigns. • Child-led participation: Children control and direct the process, with adults acting as facilitators, resource-providers, or assistants.	For participation to be meaningful and ethical it must: • Follow the nine requirements (see Resource #3 above) • Include an ethics review process, a risk assessment (and subsequent mitigation plan and referral processes), and informed consent and assent. • Turn insights from participation into action–not simply a final report (even if child-friendly). • Include staff 'closing the loop' with children on what their feedback has informed to assure their participation is respected and not performative. • Consider if there is adequate budget and staffing available to conduct a high quality, meaningful, gender sensitive and ethical assessment.
13. Contextualizing and Measuring Child Well-Being in Humanitarian Action (2021)		
Provides a framework for defining and measuring child well-being in humanitarian settings and outlines key steps to adapt these to specific contexts. Additional materials include a PowerPoint presentation, a trainer's guide, sample tools for data collection, and measurement questionnaires.	The guide provides detailed instructions for involving children in the research process, including: • Conducting Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with children and relevant stakeholders.	• Obtain informed consent from caregivers and assent from children using child-friendly, age-appropriate language. Include clear explanations of what participation will entail and assurances that children can withdraw at any point. Visual aids can facilitate understanding among younger children. • Conduct risk assessments to ensure children's participation is voluntary, safe, and inclusive. This can involve establishing a network of support and referral mechanisms for children in distress and esnuring staff members ready to intervene if sensitive issues arise during data collection activities.

Description	Participatory Methods and Approaches	Ethical Principles Used, Addressed or Identified
	• Engaging children in participatory activities, such as mapping exercises, to identify factors contributing to their well-being. • Involving children in contextualization workshops to modify and adapt well-being indicators.	• Anonymize data during collection and storage, use secure digital platforms to store sensitive information, and limit access to authorized personnel only. • Give children opportunities to voice their preferences in how they participate in research, including selecting activities that make them comfortable.
14. _Ethical Considerations for Children's Participation in Data Collection Activities During Humanitarian Emergencies: A Delphi Review (2017)_		
Used a methodology to understand 52 child protection experts' views on children's participation in emergency-related data collection, balancing their right to participate with the principle of 'do no harm.' Focusing on children 5-12 years old, it found some agreement that children should be involved, though considerations like capacity, context, and caregiver presence are crucial.	The research discusses different modes of participation more generally such as involvement in data collections, analysis, and dissemination, but focuses on how and under what circumstance different methods are appropriate.	• Children have the right to take part in data collection after emergencies, but this needs to be balanced with ethical concerns and the risk of harm. • Organizations need to have the right level of resources, understand different cultures, and provide ongoing staff training. • Use methods that are suitable for children's age, abilities, cultures, and languages. • Consent needs to be an ongoing process. • It's important to create a safe environment and talk to local leaders before discussing sensitive topics. • Avoid talking about things that could cause harm unless trained professionals are involved. • Clearly explaining what to expect before, during, and after assessments is important, as is providing feedback to children on what the research finds.
15. _Child-Centered Multi-Risk Assessments: A Field Guide and Toolkit (2018)_		
A toolkit that provides comprehensive guidance on conducting risk assessments centered around children (eight to 16 years old) and young adults (18 to 24 years old) during disasters.	• Conducted qualitative interviews with children. • Organized child participants to observe the assessment activities and give constructive feedback.	• Identify a child protection focal point for any safety concerns that may develop. • Ensure children can participate without pressure or fear of losing services, and that children can leave anytime without repercussions. • Clearly explain the purpose, tasks, and outcomes of any activity involving children and be attentive to power dynamics by sitting at children's eye level.

Description	Participatory Methods and Approaches	Ethical Principles Used, Addressed or Identified
	• Led the participatory assessment activities and the creation of dialogue and discussion that promote inclusion and the active sharing of perspectives, opinions, and learning documentation.	• These concrete child-friendly activities can be used to help illicit meaningful child perspectives: ○ Body mapping exercises allow children to express how conflicts and hazards affect their lives, experiences, views, and feelings. ○ Risk and resource mapping with puppets and masks around the community help to identify safe and unsafe spaces. ○ Seasonal calendar to support visualising patterns related to natural and man-made hazards.
16. No Research About Us Without Us. (2019).		
A policy memo that describes a participatory research approach that was developed to treat children and youth as partners, focusing on the needs and goals of children exiting armed groups and reintegrating into society. Provides recommendations for youth ages 15-24 years.	Children participated by: • participating in workshops • contributing to creation of instrument questions • analysing problems in their society and speaking up for solutions • informing the pre-programme assessment, design, implementation, and impact assessment	• In societies affected by conflict, often people do not feel comfortable sharing their sensitive experiences, especially with outsiders. Creating a safe space for young people to discuss their concerns, learn to analyse societal issues, and advocate for solutions is crucial for meaningful involvement. • To prevent further harm, research on children formerly involved with armed forces or groups must be done carefully to avoid making them feel stigmatized. They also must be able to maintain their anonymity if participating in the research. • Research should be conducted in their preferred language and according to their schedule using design workshops. • Sensitive questions should be asked in an indirect manner to allow individuals to speak freely without identifying an experience as personal.
17. A Practitioner's Guide to the Ethical Conduct of Research on Child Marriage in Humanitarian Settings (2021)		
Provides a comprehensive framework for conducting ethical research on child marriage in humanitarian settings, addresses key ethical considerations, and offers detailed explanations and practical strategies for ethical decision-making in complex contexts.	Encourages and suggests: • Consultations with community members to understand local norms and identify appropriate research approaches. • Carefully designed interviews and focus group discussions	• Obtain dual consent for children under 18, requiring both parental permission and the child's assent. If parents are not available (for example, in child-headed households), adapt consent procedures to reflect the child's status. • For married children, treat them as "emancipated minors" in some contexts and develop tailored consent processes that respect their legal status while ensuring their informed participation.

Description	Participatory Methods and Approaches	Ethical Principles Used, Addressed or Identified
Also includes practical checklists for researchers in pre-research, interview, and post-research phases.	(FGDs) to avoid direct inquiry about personal experiences and instead focus on community perspectives. • Community engagement and capacity-building to ensure the research is relevant and reflective of local realities.	• Conduct interviews in private places and use matched-gender interviewers to protect privacy in crowded or communal living environments such as refugee camps. • Recruit participants through word-of-mouth rather than public postings to avoid stigmatisation and preserve confidentiality. • Provide training on managing personal risks in conflict zones, navigating power dynamics, and responding to distressing disclosures. • Implement risk assessments to ensure children's participation is voluntary and inclusive. Establish a network of support and referral mechanisms for children experiencing distress during the research process. • When required by law to report child abuse or forced marriage, inform participants during the consent process that disclosures may need to be reported to authorities. Include plans for managing these situations in research protocols. • Engage local Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) early to adapt research protocols that meet both local ethical standards and international guidelines, considering the specific risks and sensitivities in humanitarian contexts.
18. Young People's Participation and Mental Health: A Protocol for Practitioners (2022)		
Provides a detailed guide for safeguarding the mental health of young people (ages 10–24) involved in participatory processes. The guide introduces a series of "Stepping Stones" to help practitioners design, implement, and monitor safe and meaningful participation, accounting for mental health risks and benefits. Appendices offer additional resources, such as interactive activities, workshop	• Build young people's capacity through training sessions on leadership, advocacy, and communication skills, fostering a sense of agency and influence over their participation. • Include icebreaker activities to establish trust and a sense of community among participants, emphasizing their right to express opinions freely and respectfully.	• Provide young people with accessible information about the participation process, including its purpose, scope, risks, and benefits, so they can make informed decisions about their involvement. • Share clear details on compensation options (including financial or non-financial) to ensure transparency and respect for young people's contributions. • Establish support systems, such as referral mechanisms and capacity-building workshops for young people and facilitators, to strengthen protections against identified risks.

Description	Participatory Methods and Approaches	Ethical Principles Used, Addressed or Identified
plans, self-care guides, risk assessment tools, and templates for service mapping and referrals.	• Engage young people in assessing potential risks to their mental health and psychosocial well-being, utilizing a structured risk assessment format to identify and address harms.	• Conduct interviews and discussions in neutral, private spaces to protect confidentiality, and involve young people in choosing safe methods for participation (such as separate gender groups, if preferred). • Use matched-gender facilitators where relevant and employ digital safety protocols for online activities to protect young people's identities. • Implement monitoring tools to follow up on the outcomes of participation, involving young people in evaluating the impact on their well-being and addressing unintended negative effects. • Develop self-care activities and support networks that young people can rely on if they experience stress, burnout, or distress because of their participation.
19. Voicemore The Handbook: War Child's Participatory Youth Advocacy Methodology (2023)		
Outlines the VoiceMore program, which empowers youth to identify key issues, conduct research, and undertake advocacy actions at local, national, and international levels. The Handbook guides practitioners through program preparation, recruitment, training, and risk management to ensure safe, meaningful participation. The advocacy program is grounded in humanitarian standards and child rights principles, aiming to enable youth to become effective spokespeople for change.	• Structured training for participants, including spokesperson training, advocacy skills, and research methods. Sessions are designed to build confidence, develop communication skills, and prepare youth for active roles in advocacy. • Young people are trained to collect data, conduct interviews, and analyze findings to inform their advocacy work. • Participants develop and implement advocacy strategies. They are supported to carry out various activities, such as community	• Risk assessments need to evaluate the local context, security situation, and unique risks faced by participants and be regularly updated. • Informed consent needs to involve participants and their caregivers, use clear language tailored to the participants' age and cultural background, and ensure participants fully understand the program's scope and their role in it. • Safeguarding measures should include dedicated staff training, monitoring of participant well-being, and the use of neutral, safe meeting spaces, ensuring privacy during sessions and interactions with stakeholders. • Identify and remove barriers to participation, focusing on gender, disability, and other factors that can marginalise young people. • Manage young people's expectations about advocacy outcomes to prevent frustration and disengagement. Have honest discussions about the potential impact of children's actions. • Establish ongoing support and supervision mechanisms, allowing young people to reflect on their experiences and seek guidance; this includes facilitating exit strategies that celebrate achievements and explore further pathways for continued engagement or support.

Description	Participatory Methods and Approaches	Ethical Principles Used, Addressed or Identified
	sensitsation, meetings with stakeholders, and national-level campaigns. • Encourages collaborative decision-making where young people select the themes they wish to tackle, ensuring the program aligns with their interests and lived experiences. • Offers flexibility in terms of age range (15-25) and group size (10-20 participants) to fit the local context, advocating for inclusivity and representation of marginalized youth, including girls and young people with disabilities.	
20. Child Protection Practices in UNHCR 2014-2022.		
Outlines child protection practices and guidelines for UNHCR staff working with refugee and displaced children and provides practical guidance on preventing and responding to child abuse, exploitation, and neglect using various case studies.	• Created a 'Children's Parliament' which allows children to discuss issues amongst themselves as well as engage directly with decision makers and local authorities. • Involves unaccompanied and separated children in the training courses for voluntary guardians. • Uses photography workshops to help children to document their concerns	• Child protection concerns in humanitarian settings can be identified and responded to by clearly identifying the issue, identifying and listing previous solutions and results, and allowing the community to direct and choose the solution and how they want to participate. • Removing barriers to access to children, strengthening the capacity of teachers and adults, intersectoral referrals, and feedback mechanisms that allow children to share their thoughts are practical ways to improve the safety and wellbeing of children.

Description	Participatory Methods and Approaches	Ethical Principles Used, Addressed or Identified
21. Using Focus Group Discussions with Children and Adolescents: A Practical Guide for Maximising their Effectiveness (2019)		
Offers technical guidance on how to ethically and practically conduct Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and to gather detailed, qualitative information.	Covers how to: • determine FGD topics • lead FGD • participate in FGD • gather and analyse FGD data	• Ensure FGDs are inclusive, safe, and voluntary by avoiding overly formal or intimidating settings. • Recognize that children may not be accustomed to sharing their views, and prior consultations may have been negative experiences. • Conduct preparatory work to build children's self-confidence and awareness of rights and issues. • Consult with community leaders and children to decide group divisions, considering age or gender, as some topics may be sensitive in mixed groups. • For younger children (under 10 years), limit FGDs to 4-6 participants. For older children, groups of 4-6 allow for full participation, while 6-10 enables more to participate.
22. Ethical Considerations when Conducting Research on Children in the Worst Forms of Child Labour. (2005)		
Developed by experts in child labour and research ethics, and based on international standards and best practices, this manual provides ethical guidance for those conducting research with children engaged in child labor.	• Set up mechanisms to receive feedback from children at every step of research process. • Children helped conduct interviews and were interviewed directly.	• Create and conduct targeted training for both researchers and children to address complexities of the research topic. • Obtain informed consent through collaborative discussion of "pros and cons" and the explicit option to opt out. • Employ a safety technique of consistently offering children the option to 'opt out' in response to changing circumstances. • Create check-lists for researchers to help minimize risk and ensure the well-being of child participants.

C: Research Reports and Case Studies

Description	Participatory Methods and Approaches	Ethical Principles Used, Addressed or Identified
23. A Review of Approaches, Strategies, and Ethical Considerations in Participatory Research with Children (2021)		
Reviews 57 studies on participatory research involving children, emphasizing their role as active research partners rather than mere subjects. Highlights the importance of engaging children in designing, conducting, and interpreting research, viewing participatory research as more than just data collection. While it can empower children and enhance research outcomes, the authors note that unclear approaches may lead to inconsistent practices and ethical challenges Age Focus: 12 and younger	In the studies under review, the most common methods employed include: • Group discussions or advisory groups to identify key research topics, refine research questions, or help make decisions on methodologies. • Training sessions to equip children with research skills such as interviewing techniques, data analysis, and presenting results. • Photography and film for data collection and analysis • Strategies like the Mosaic approach, which combine visual, verbal, and observational techniques to capture children's voices and perspectives.	• Ensure children's voices are central by placing decision-making power in children's hands when designing research questions, choosing methods, and interpreting results. • Provide child-friendly tools that enable children to contribute meaningfully, such as drawing or photography. • Avoid tokenistic participation by engaging children early in the research process, involving them in key decisions regarding the study design and goals, and documenting their participation throughout the project. Incorporate children's feedback throughout the project and adjust methodologies based on their insights. • Provide clear, age-appropriate information about the research process to children and their caregivers, ensuring they understand their roles. • Allow children to choose how they wish to participate and offer multiple methods of engagement (such as verbal, visual, or creative approaches). • When using visual methods such as photography or filming, anonymize data and avoid identifiable images without consent. • Encourage researchers to engage in continuous self-reflection on how their actions, biases, and decisions impact children's participation.
24. The Value of Child Participation in Research: A Qualitative Child-Centered Approach to the Early Development of an Empowerment Inventory for Children (2021)		
Investigates the value of child participation in research and applies a child-centered approach to develop the Sense of Empowerment Inventory for Children (SEIC). The research explores how children's involvement in research contributes to the quality	• Children were engaged as co-researchers in the development and validation of the SEIC. • Over a series of workshops, they provided input on the tool's structure, language, and content, leading to significant	• Provide tailored, age-appropriate information to children and their caregivers, ensuring they understand their role in the research. Allow them to withdraw at any point. • Define children as co-researchers rather than subjects. Involve them in decision-making processes regarding the research tool's structure and content. Provide opportunities for open discussions where children can share their thoughts freely without feeling constrained by adult authority.

Description	Participatory Methods and Approaches	Ethical Principles Used, Addressed or Identified
and relevance of the empowerment tool, providing insights into the specific changes children proposed and how this impacted the tool's design. The study supports the notion that involving children as co-researchers can significantly enhance research outcomes by ensuring the tools reflect children's perspectives.	revisions that improved its usability and relevance. • The co-creation process was adaptive, with children and researchers working together to revise and simplify the tool in real-time. The children contributed to content validation by testing both the paper and electronic formats, providing insights into how different formats affect user experience and engagement.	• Maintain children's confidentiality by anonymizing their contributions to the research, especially in cases where sensitive or personal feedback is provided. • Make the tool accessible by offering both electronic and paper versions and reducing the length of questionnaires based on children's feedback to avoid fatigue. • Incorporate the children's insights into future steps by developing follow-up processes that acknowledge their contribution and explore future involvement in related projects.
25. The Ethics of Social Research with Children and Families in Young Lives: Practical Experiences (2009)		

This report is based on reflections and insights from Young Lives project researchers. The report discusses ethical challenges and practical experiences in conducting social research with children and families.
 	
Age focus: 7-18 years.
	• Included interviews, group work and case studies with the children, their parents, teachers, community representatives, and others, which the children were involved in planning and executing.	• Understanding local contexts and dynamic environments is an imperative.
		• When seeking informed consent, fieldworkers:
		   ○ Must ensure that respondents are not pressured by other family or community members.
		   ○ Should be careful about making or implying any promises.
		   ○ Should give respondents at least 24 hours to consider giving consent in addition to making it clear they can withdraw at any time.
		• Compensation should not be provided as an incentive but instead can be provided to:
		   ○ reimburse expenses
		   ○ compensate for time, inconvenience and possible discomfort
		   ○ show appreciation for participants' help
		   ○ pay for people's help
		   ○ an ethical and reflexive approach allows researchers and the community to get children's feedback about the research itself; this creates a structure that prioritizes the rights and well-being of children and families while continuously updating confidentiality and safety procedures, as needed.

Description	Participatory Methods and Approaches	Ethical Principles Used, Addressed or Identified
26. Learning from Life Story Collection and Analysis with Children who Work in the Leather Sector in Bangladesh (2022)		
This qualitative case study examines the experiences of children working in Bangladesh's leather sector. Age focus: 11-17 years	• Storytelling by children: children narrated their own experiences and stories. • Child-led life story collection: children helped gather their and their peers own personal stories. • Life story analysis: children reviewed stories to identify patterns and themes.	• Ensure that all participants, especially children, fully understand the purpose, risks, and benefits of participating in the research. Respect their autonomy and right to withdraw at any time. • Safeguard the privacy of participants by anonymizing their stories and ensuring that their identities are protected throughout the project. • Prioritizing the well-being of participants by minimizing any potential harm that may arise from their involvement. Take proactive measures to provide support and assistance if needed, both during and after the project.
27. Research with Children Living in Situations of Armed Conflict: Concepts, Ethics and Methods (2006)		
Literature review and synthesis of research findings that used participatory research principles and child rights frameworks to highlight challenges and ethical considerations of conducting research with children living in situations of armed conflict. Age focus: 0-18 years. Several studies discussed focus exclusively on those 5-16 years old or 8-16 years old.	• Children were treated as "co-researchers" and "collaborators" • Involved children at every step of the research, though not every child must be involved in every step or to the same extent. • Use "externalization" methods and audio-visual tools such as videos, story-telling, drama, songs and photographs, drawings, role play, and the use of puppets instead of asking direct questions. • Generally used group-focused activities. • Children were involved in deciding what questions to ask in interviews, how and when to administer the questionnaire and in the analysis of findings.	• Children and researchers in conflict-affected environments might face risks such as sexual exploitation, conscription into conflict, forced labour in and out of the home, and forced marriage. • Limited use of physical documentation can help protect confidentiality and anonymity. • Researchers should not interact with children alone or in a "private" context such as the researcher's home. • In armed conflict settings, researchers should consider adult-child power relations, child-child power relations, rewards, informed consent and confidentiality, identity politics in conducting research, and cultural acceptance of "speaking out" or "criticizing" adults.

Description	Participatory Methods and Approaches	Ethical Principles Used, Addressed or Identified
	• Participatory rural appraisal/ participatory rapid assessment (PRA) which allow research priorities to be defined by participants using social maps, timelines, seasonal calendars, daily activity profiles and Venn diagrams.	
28. Children Participating in Research (2006)		

Discusses the importance of children's participation in research and innovative methods for involving children as collaborators in the research process.
 	
Age focus: Unspecified.
	Ideally, children can be involved in any or all stages of the research process—from the defining and refining of the key research question to the dissemination of results.	• A tailored research protocol can help researchers adhere to ethical principles by requiring them to:
		  ○ proactively plan for and monitor participant selection and potential repercussions of the research method.
		  ○ provide a rationale for the selected methods and analysis tool.
		• Researchers should carefully consider the purpose and impact of the research on children, evaluating the benefit of participation versus The possible risks. They should also consider the clarity of the research question, funding, and dissemination plans, as well as involve children in the process.
		• Ensure research does not become exploitative by rewarding child researchers proportionally to their efforts.

29. Implementing Community-Based Participatory Research with Communities Affected by Humanitarian Crises: The Potential to Recalibrate Equity and Power in Vulnerable Contexts. (2020)		
Explores the application of community-based participatory research (CBPR) in humanitarian settings and its potential to address equity and power imbalances. Age focus: 11–14 years, 17–25 years.	• CBPR utilizes 10 core principles based around community and identity inclusion and is an effective approach for ethically engaging communities affected by humanitarian crises in research and promoting equity and power-sharing. • Qualitative key informant interviews	• Build on strengths and resources within the community. • Facilitate collaborative, equitable partnership in all research phases. • Emphasize public health problems of local relevance and ecological perspectives that attend to the multiple determinants of health and disease. • Disseminate findings and knowledge gained to all partners and involve all partners in the dissemination process. • Require a long-term process and commitment to sustainability. • Social justice and outcomes for vulnerable populations in humanitarian settings can be improved by setting and meeting benchmarks in collaborative partnerships.

Description	Participatory Methods and Approaches	Ethical Principles Used, Addressed or Identified

30. Pushing the Limits of Child Participation in Research: Reflections from a Youth-Driven Participatory Action Research (YPAR) Initiative in Uganda (2020)		
Describes a youth-driven participatory action research (YPAR) initiative in Uganda and reflects on the principles, challenges, and opportunities of involving children in research. Age focus: 0-24 years.	A YPAR team including four Ugandan street-connected youth between the ages of 16–25 and two Ugandan university-trained youth researchers, led all data collection, analysis and dissemination activities for research that focused on street-connected children, sexually exploited children and domestic workers in Kampala.	• Use the principle of researching with the children as opposed to doing research on children. • Adult "gatekeepers" may attempt to bar or limit children's involvement in deeper areas of research due to budgetary or time constraints. "Gatekeeping" degrades the value of participation in research and can turn it into unethical tokenism. • Using non-invasive and non-confrontational methods can help address possible ethical concerns. • Allowing children to determine the questions asked, analysis used, and information disseminated empowers them to dictate what stories can and should be told about their lives.

31. Researching Sensitive Topics with Children and Young People: Ethical Practice and Blurry Boundaries. (2023)		
Analyses three separate qualitative studies on child sexual exploitation and then discusses, compares, and shares themes from the methodologies and ethical frameworks used. Age focus: 13-25 years.	• Participatory photography • Series of workshops to engage children in creative activities, including image making and poetry. • Ethnographic methods including participant observation. • Life history interviews conducted by researchers. • In-depth qualitative interviews that children participated in, directed questions asked of them, and could choose from "question cards" laid on the table.	• Many ethical dilemmas that arise 'in the moment' have been encountered previously but rarely documented or accounted for in institutional ethical processes. • Procedural ethics such as 'checklists' are helpful in encouraging researchers to consider potential harms but they are not exhaustive and must be paired with adaptive, flexible ethical frameworks that can be utilized when unexpected ethical dilemmas occur. • Having a "tick box method" can be helpful in assuring accountability, but it does not entirely sufficient as it does not account for the fluid, dynamic nature of participation as shown when verbal consent to share information is given and later revoked or originally denied and later granted. • When designing research techniques, researchers should strive to be 'participant friendly' not 'child friendly' to better view the children as active participants and help eliminate bias against children from the outset.

Description	Participatory Methods and Approaches	Ethical Principles Used, Addressed or Identified
32. Child Participation and Accountability in Save the Children Colombia's Programming (2019)		
Explores how Save the Children Colombia can ethically cultivate meaningful participation of children and adolescents in all stages of their programming, and how this can be operationalised. Age focus: 0-18 years.	• Formal: Phone hotline, e-mail, a formal feedback tool (called Opinómetro), satisfaction surveys, case management. • Informal: community-based participation, focus groups/community mobilization, youth committees, face-to-face interaction.	• Prioritize children's perspectives and involvement in all project phases. • Empower children as self-advocates in decision-making processes. • Implement child-friendly feedback and complaint mechanisms. • Align child participation with program accountability to ensure their input influences decisions. • Ensure safety and confidentiality in reporting harm or abuse and train staff comprehensively on safeguarding procedures. • Respect cultural contexts and adapt strategies to local security and socio-political contexts. • Encourage donor flexibility to foster meaningful participation from the outset. • Allocate budget specifically for child participation activities to ensure they are prioritized.
33. Seeing Things From Both Sides: A Comic to Help Young People and Professionals Understand Each Other's Views About Young Survivors' Participation in Efforts to Address Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation		
Explores the complexities and nuances of young survivors' participation in efforts to address child sexual abuse and exploitation. Draws insights from a panel of 58 experts from 18 countries, including young survivors and professionals. The comic seeks to facilitate dialogue between young people and practitioners by highlighting key concerns, benefits, and tensions in participation. The comic is part of a broader set of materials available from the Safer Young Lives Research Centre designed to support both young people and professionals	• Engage youth advisory groups to provide input at different stages of project planning, ensuring that young survivors' voices inform decisions and promote safety. • Involves young people in co-creating resources, such as research tools and educational content, giving them a meaningful role in addressing issues that affect them. • Utilize peer-led activities like mentorship and support groups to foster a supportive	• Involve young people in discussions about potential risks and emotional triggers to make informed participation decisions. Create contingency plans for managing triggering events, ensuring support is available during group activities. • Help young people consider the implications of using their voices, names, or images publicly, discussing the long-term impact of being identified as a survivor. Support anonymity if desired. • Prepare participants for public interactions (such as conferences) by role-playing responses to inappropriate questions, equipping them with strategies to maintain their boundaries. • Conduct readiness assessments to evaluate both the young person's and the organization's capacity for safe participation. Recognize that recovery is dynamic, and that readiness may change. Train professionals to balance young people's right to participate with the duty to protect them, addressing emotional challenges and maximizing positive outcomes like individual and collective healing.

Description	Participatory Methods and Approaches	Ethical Principles Used, Addressed or Identified
in navigating the complexities of participation in the context of sexual abuse and exploitation.	environment for young survivors to connect over shared experiences. • Actively involves young people in identifying potential risks and triggers, allowing them to suggest management strategies during participatory activities.	• Offer flexible roles in activities, allowing young people to choose their level of involvement and withdraw at any time. Use shared decision-making to create collaborative spaces, ensuring their voices shape the project's direction and implementation.
34.Life Under Coronavirus: Children's Views on their Experiences of their Human Rights (2021)		

This survey captured the experiences of over 26,000 children in 137 countries through a survey about the realization of their human rights during the first six months of the Covid-19 pandemic.
 	
Age focus: 8-18 years.
	• Children's rights-based research (CRBA) methodology, which emphasizes children as non-passive human beings who should not be acted on as objects.
	
	• Co-produced and ran an online survey in 28 languages
	
	• Created an easy-read version for children with disabilities
	
	• Created and ran a skill camp– a short-term program designed to teach or enhance specific skills through focused, hands-on activities and expert instruction involved children in interpreting and quantitative and qualitative.
	
	• Linked children directly with stakeholders across governments and civil societies to give them opportunities to share their views.
		• Adopt CRBA from the outset to help mitigate possible economic and social harms.
		
		• Prioritise four human rights: non-discrimination; best interests of the child; life, survival and development; and the right to be heard
		
		• Use a three-dimensional view of participation:
		
		  ◦ give children a platform to make them feel empowered, included, and respected.
		
		  ◦ link children across various communities in an inclusive and child-friendly space.
		
		• Give children and youth responsibilities and opportunities to be involved with causes they care about,ensuring that their perspectives are heard by relevant stakeholders.