

Section 2: Note to Users

Effective training of facilitators is best done by or with people who have first-hand experience in using community-led approaches.

This section makes extensive use of participatory role-plays, with group reflection on the process and how to improve the facilitator's skills.

A useful approach, however, is to intermix these activities with the reflective activities promoted in Section 1. For example, if a person who is learning how to facilitate a community-led process shows during a role-play a need for additional practice regarding empathy or asking probing questions, one could have the participant complete that evening the relevant tools on empathy (FAC 4) and asking probing questions (FAC 6).

TRN 1. Role-play: Limits of a Top-Down, Expert-Driven Approach to Child Protection

Note: This role-play works best with 10–25 people. If the role-play were done as part of a small training workshop, it could be useful to bring in other people (including local social workers, child protection workers, etc.) to play the roles of community members.

A. Background

Purpose: Top-down approaches have their value and place in humanitarian and development work on child protection. Yet they also have limits, which may not be readily apparent. The best way to understand and appreciate the impact of the limits is to experience them through the perspective of community people. The purpose of this role-play is to enable practitioners and others to understand and explore the limits or problems associated with a top-down, expert-driven approach to child protection.

Time: 60–90 mins.

No. of participants: 10–25 people, ideally.

Materials needed:

- 2 copies of the role sheets for “the NGO” (attached)
- 2 copies of the role sheets for the “community members”
- 2 scissors
- ideally, 2 separate spaces

B. Workshop Facilitator’s Notes

In this workshop, you will organize a role-play that simulates an interaction between a national, child-focused NGO and a local community. The NGO uses an expert-driven approach in which it seeks to partner with the community to address child-beating (corporal punishment). The role-play is designed to bring out the limits of this approach, enable empathy with local community views, and increase openness to a different way of working with community people.

Your activities will include five steps (time frames are approximate):

1. Describe the setting and divide the participants into two groups: NGO child protection workers and community people (10 mins).

2. Role-play preparation: Ask each group to divide people up according to the different roles for each group (see instructions and handouts on the following pages). Allow the groups time to understand and prepare for their roles in the role-play (10–15 mins).
3. Enable the two groups to conduct the role-play in which the NGO workers visit the community, asking them to partner on a project to reduce child-beating (20 mins).
4. Facilitate a discussion with both groups present and in the same roles they had played during the role-play (20 mins).
5. Facilitate reflection and discussion with participants back in their regular seats, no longer playing the roles that had been assigned (30 mins).

Step 1: Read the setting and divide the participants into two groups afterwards

Setting: In a small town [or, alternately, an urban neighborhood or a rural village] a team of three child protection workers from a hypothetical, national children’s agency, The Healthy Children’s Foundation (HCF), had previously visited with a team of data collectors to conduct a rapid assessment regarding child protection issues. They are now returning to share with the community their main findings—the primary child protection issues are corporal punishment (a form of violence against children) by parents and teachers; early marriage (families marry their daughters at 12–13 years of age to older men who can offer economic support); and child labor (girls are often out of school to do domestic work, and boys are out of school to do heavy mining). The Healthy Children’s Foundation has a one-year external grant to support the development of a community-based child protection program. During the visit, the HCF team will have an open discussion with the community members to ask them to partner with HCF in addressing the problem of violence against children (corporal punishment).

Divide into two teams: The Healthy Children’s Foundation team (3 people who have some child protection expertise) and the community (12 or more people). The roles are outlined for each below:

- A. NGO team: have 3 members be hypothetical child protection workers for the Healthy Children’s Foundation (HCF).
- B. Community members: this group consists of members from the same town who include a chief, elders, imam, pastor, ordinary parents (women and men), and teenage girls and boys.

Step 2: Role-play preparation

Have each group go to different spaces where they can talk without being overheard by the other group. The facilitator gives each group the appropriate role and activity sheets (see following pages, which include cut-outs to hand to each participant), and reminds them that each person is to act not as themselves but according to the role that has been handed out. Each team will

organize itself according to the instructions. Do not allow the teams to see, hear, or read about the roles of the other team. The teams have 10–15 mins to prepare themselves for the role-play before the facilitator calls them to return and begin the role-play. As they prepare, visit each group to make sure they are on track and answer any questions.

Step 3: Conduct the role-play

Announce to each group that in the role-play, the community people will be seated in their town, and the HCF team is coming to visit them again. The chief and the townspeople know HCF is coming. Give the community people time to arrange themselves, and then the HCF team enters, beginning the role-play. Let the role-play run for at least 15–20 minutes and more likely longer, giving everyone a chance to act out their roles. Announce that you may be saying “Time out” or “Cut” to pause the role-play.

[Note: If there is a problem or when the time is up, you can act as a film director might by saying “Cut!” or “Time out,” announcing then that we will end the role-play there and now reflect on what has happened.]

Step 4: Facilitate discussion, with participants staying in their assigned roles

Having interrupted or ended the role-play, tell participants that you would like them to remain seated where they are and to now have a discussion, with them continuing in their assigned roles. Thus, they are not to interject their own personal views but to stay as close to their roles as possible.

Enable discussion by asking the questions below (it is not necessary to ask each question, and improvisation can be very helpful). It is natural that in discussion, some questions will have been answered by previous discussion. Hence, it is essential for you, the facilitator, to be flexible. For each question that you do ask, ask first the community members and then the HCF team, reminding them to stay in role. Notes following each question indicate key points that hopefully will come out of the discussion. If they do not, you could suggest them, possibly by reframing them into questions. As in work with actual communities, it is important to have the key ideas coming not from you but from the group.

Questions for discussion:

1. Did you feel free to say how you really felt during this scenario? What thoughts or feelings did not get expressed? Why were they not expressed?

Sometimes feelings do not get expressed in such settings because of norms of diplomacy or hospitality, which caution against giving offense. However, it’s also possible that the community members were “playing the game” of trying to get the HCF involved because they needed money and help, not because they thought that child-beating needed to change. Or, low levels of trust may have led community people not to speak very openly about their views. Also, community people may not have spoken very openly about their feelings about child rights for fear of

offending and chasing off the NGO workers. Overall, a key point is that the exchange during the role-play did not allow people to express themselves in an authentic manner. Nor did it stimulate deep empathy with the situation of community people.

Similarly, the HCF workers may not have felt free to say how they really felt about the community. They may, for example, have seen child-beating as being more deplorable than they had expressed, and they may see local social norms of child-beating as “harmful traditional practices.”

2. What was it that you really wanted out of the discussions with the other group? Did you get it? Why or why not?

The role-play is structured in a way that ensures that the HCF gets what it wants—community agreement to partner on a program to address child-beating. It is less clear that the community got what it wanted. The community did succeed in engaging the NGO, which they wanted since they were very poor and wanted help addressing issues such as poverty. At the same time, though, most community members wanted to continue child-beating, and they did not get any support on that, nor did they get support in addressing poverty or child labor, the issues they seemed most concerned about.

3. Are there other things that need to be discussed here?

Perceptive participants may note that the full community was not present, recommending caution in describing this as a “community discussion” or “community agreement.”

Step 5: Reflection and discussion outside of assigned roles

Now ask participants to return to their normal seats and to be themselves again. Note how important it is for busy NGO workers to take time out from their complex work, step back, and reflect more deeply on typical practices. Note that this time, the discussion will focus on broader questions, which for the most part do not admit simple answers. Emphasize the importance of each person sharing her or his views and that there are no right or wrong answers.

Questions for discussion:

- Did this role-play reflect things that happen in reality?
- In this role-play, was there good agreement between the values and views of the HCF team and the community?
- In this role-play, who holds the power and makes the main decisions about which harm to children to address and how to intervene?
- Was this an empowering exchange and situation for the community members? Why or why not? Could that be a problem and why? [Note: “Community empowerment” entails a sense of collective agency and activation by the community members. If community

members are not making key decisions or are being led in a particular direction, they will not be likely to experience a sense of empowerment.]

- Is this NGO approach likely to be highly sustainable? Why or why not?
- Will this approach likely create dependency of the community on the NGO? Why or why not?
- Reflecting on what occurred in the role-play, how do you feel about your experience in the role-play? How do you feel now that the role-play is over? [Note: These questions are for purposes of debriefing and dealing with any emotional after-effects of the role-play experience. Debriefing questions are contextual, so please feel free to adapt debriefing questions to your context.]

End by thanking participants for their insights and inputs. Wrap up by summarizing key points made that bring home the limits of the expert-driven approach.

Instructions for The Healthy Children’s Foundation Team

You are experienced national NGO workers and passionate supporters of child protection and child rights. Your aim in the meeting with the community members is twofold:

- (1) to briefly summarize the assessment findings for the community members, and
- (2) to encourage and ask the community members to partner with you on a program that is designed to reduce violence against children, particularly corporal punishment.

You have a one-year grant to reduce corporal punishment, and you know you will have to get a quick start and produce immediate results if you are to keep your donor happy. Also, you are genuinely concerned that corporal punishment is harming children.

Your job is to “sell” the community on the value of partnering on the program, which will address corporal punishment. The details of the partnership do not have to be worked out or explained in great depth today—today, your goal is to get them to say, “Yes, we will partner with you.” Broadly, your team will bring the child protection experts who know how to address the problem, and the community will be the beneficiaries (children and parents) and volunteers who implement the program.

Below are your specific roles which you can assign to members of your team (these can be cut out and handed to each of the three team members).

For each set of roles, you will need to improvise and plan what you will say to the community members. Please take a few moments now to think through what you will say. At the start of the role-play, you might want to have the Team Leader greet the community, explain the purpose of your visit, and say that Team member 2 (name) will present the findings of the assessment, and Team member 3 (name) will outline some brief ideas about a program for addressing violence against children.

Team member 1 (Team leader): You are a seasoned child protection expert who speaks with great passion about child rights and their importance for children’s healthy development and well-being. You are quick to point out that violence against children (including child-beating) violates child rights and causes psychological harm such as trauma and fear. You see it as your duty to inspire and convince the community to join together to address the problem of child-beating and other forms of violence against children. Your urgent goal is to ask the community to partner with your agency, which has the expertise to address violence against children, and to get the community to agree to partner with you. You will begin and end the dialogue with the community on behalf of The Healthy Children’s Foundation.

Team member 2 (Assessment specialist): You, too, are an experienced child protection expert. Your job is to (1) summarize the overall findings (below), and (2) focus on the specific findings (below) related to violence against children.

(1) Overall findings: The primary child protection issues are corporal punishment (a form of violence against children) by parents and teachers; early marriage (families marry their daughters at 12–13 years of age to older men who can offer economic support); and child labor (girls are often out of school to do domestic work, and boys are out of school to do heaving mining).

(2) Here are the main findings related to violence against children:

- 92% of children (6–18 years) reported that in the previous year they had been hit, kicked, punched, or beaten by an adult;
- 37% of children reported that they were beaten at least once a week;
- parents saw child-beating as normal;
- boys were beaten more frequently and more severely than were girls, but girls reported greater fear of being beaten;
- boys reported being bullied at school, where older boys hit them and took their food and books;
- parents, teachers, and, to a lesser extent, elders were the main people who beat children;
- children did not like being beaten, and 7% of children said they stayed home from school sometimes to avoid being beaten.

Team member 3 (Program specialist): Having worked on violence against children in multiple countries, you want to outline how violence could be addressed. Pointing out that science has learned a lot about how violence affects children and how it can be prevented, you suggest that it would be useful to have a community-based program with these elements:

- child rights education;
 - training on nonviolent forms of disciplining children (time-outs or withdrawing privileges);
 - school adoption and enforcement of “no child-beating” policies;
 - workshop on improved parent-child communications and relationships.
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Instructions for the Community Members

The community members who are present for this meeting with the Healthy Children’s Foundation include the chief, two elders, multiple parents, a teacher, an imam, a pastor, and teenage girls and boys. Not all the community members are present because this meeting is taking place in the middle of the day, when many people are out working, selling things, tending farms, etc. Still, the community members are happy to see and talk with members of the Healthy Children’s Foundation and want to partner with them. They should say this specifically during the role-play.

Below and on the following page are the individual roles to be assigned to different people who will be “community members.” You may cut these out at the dotted lines so that each participant has one. The roles may be decided by the group (preferred), or by the facilitator (if little time is available). Each participant should take five or so minutes to think through what he or she will do and/or say in accordance with their role during the meeting with the representatives from the Healthy Children’s Foundation.

When the workshop facilitator calls you, you should make sure you are all gathered and sitting, awaiting the arrival of the HCF team.

Here are your specific roles which you can assign to members of your team (these can be cut out and handed to each of the three team members):

Chief (male): As the community leader, you and the elders will welcome the team from the Healthy Children’s Foundation. To do this, you will need to ask before the role-play begins who in the group are the elders and organize yourselves. As Chief, you know that your town has many needs, so you are very happy HCF is back, and you want to partner with them. You are not so sure that the focus should be on child-beating, and you personally prefer traditional practices over child rights, but you are willing to “play along” in hopes that much needed money will come from the NGO into the town.

Elder man: You are happy that HCF is here but tired of how in the past, NGOs have come, made promises, and done little. You are a bit challenging and ask with some frustration what will the NGO do for us, the community.

Elder man: You are a kind, gentle person and welcome HCF and want to partner with them. However, you believe that a well child is one who is obedient and respects the elders. You believe that punishing the child by beating is appropriate when the child has been disobedient, as it teaches good behavior.

Elder woman: You are outspoken and view poverty as the greatest problem facing the community. What HCF found about child labor is an example—children are out of school because they have to work to earn money to support their families. You are a great supporter of education and think children should be in school, but you think poverty has to be addressed to make that happen.

Teacher: Articulate and outspoken, you are regarded as a key authority on children in the community. You believe strongly that children learn good behavior and become good people by being punished (beaten) when they misbehave. You recognize the difference between “moderate beating” and “cruelty” (e.g., beating until a child bleeds, or beating that breaks bones).

Imam (male): As a revered religious leader, you support the use of corporal punishment when children misbehave. Yet you also see the value of talking more with children and making sure they understand their responsibilities.

Christian pastor: You are a highly respected leader but are also a strong supporter of corporal punishment for purposes of teaching children to be obedient and have good values. You like the saying: “Spare the rod, spoil the child.”

Parent: You are an outspoken advocate for children and oppose child-beating (and say so). However, you see poverty as the primary issue that undermines children’s health and well-being.

Parent: You are a traditionalist who believes that disciplining the child for bad behavior is one of the most important parental responsibilities. To be a good parent is to discipline the child, helping him or her become a good member of the family and community. You are suspicious of “child rights.”

Parent: You are a child rights skeptic and are very outspoken on this point. You heard from relatives in other communities in which NGOs worked that “child rights education” had taught children to be unruly and disobedient since parents could not beat them any more for misbehavior. You see this situation as having undermined parental authority.

Teenage boy: You have been beaten repeatedly and harshly by the teacher at school. This has caused you to sometimes stay home from school to avoid beating. You think beating children is bad. Yet you do not state it very forcefully because you know that parents, elders, and teachers favor child-beating, and you don't want to appear disrespectful.

Teenage girl: You are more concerned about children being out of school than about child-beating, yet you are opposed to child-beating. For you, being in school means having hope and a positive future.

(Other, additional roles may be improvised—make the process FUN!)