

Section 3: Note to Users

Although there are many different ways of learning about communities, this section features ethnographic methods since they enable learning about children's lived experiences, bring forward the views of local people, and build the deeper levels of trust and respect that are needed for community-led work on child protection.

The tools were developed and used in Sierra Leone (with some modifications) but can be adapted to many different contexts. The Sierra Leone emphasis is presented here in order to show a contextually specific adaptation of learning tools.

Although this section focuses specifically on the early phase of learning about (and with) the community, the tools from previous sections are relevant as well. It can be useful to think through how the people who will be collecting information in communities might benefit from first using several tools related to empathy (FAC 4), asking probing questions (FAC 6), and enabling inclusive dialogue (TRN 7), among others.

LNG 3. Ethnographic Principles

- Build trust and learn in a slower, respectful manner about views of children, harms, pathways of response, prevention strategies, and connections with the formal system that does not judge local people.
- Using local language and idioms (avoiding imposition of international terms such as “child labor”), ask elicitive, open-ended questions that assume “we don’t know” and that invite learning about local categories and practices.
- Learn through direct observation about the risks to children and the ways in which families and communities seek to protect children.
- Learn from different subgroups, contrasting their views by gender and age (developmental stage), about their views of harms to children, the main responses to them, and how to prevent them.
- Learn about the power dynamics of the community and which people or groups are marginalized, and develop a way of learning from marginalized people that does not stigmatize them.
- Avoid ethical problems by managing expectations, protecting confidentiality, respecting informed consent. Etc.