

## Section 2: Note to Users

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*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 2. Facilitation as “Facipulation”

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### A. Background

**Purpose:** Most NGOs and child protection workers use and recognize the value of facilitation processes. However, the term “facilitation” can have different meanings, and there are different approaches to facilitation.

In addressing urgent issues of child protection, child protection workers frequently try to facilitate work on an issue such as violence against children by raising awareness of the problem and then encouraging local people to join in addressing the problem. In this approach, facilitation is quite directive as it aims to manipulate or move people in a particular direction.

While this approach has its value, it has significant limits, particularly in regard to community-led work. The purpose of this role-play is to stimulate awareness and discussion of the limits of manipulative, directive approaches to facilitation (i.e., “facipulation”).

**Time:** 60 mins.

**No. of participants:** Over 25 people, ideally.

**Materials needed:**

- 1 role sheet for the facilitator
- 2 copies of the role sheets for the community members (attached)
- relatively large space, with room for 15 people to sit in a circle, with the rest of the people arranged in a wider circle so that everyone can observe what is happening in the inner circle (the “fish bowl”)

### B. Workshop Facilitator’s Notes

This is part of an ongoing process in which the community will decide which harm(s) to children it wants to address. In this session, you will organize a role-play that simulates an interaction between a facilitator from the Healthy Children’s Foundation (HCF, a national NGO) and members of an urban neighborhood/community who have low rates of literacy.

The setting is a community meeting convened to discuss how to enable community planning in which each person has a voice in regard to which harm(s) to children the community will select for purposes of subsequent community-led action. The role-play is designed to bring out the limits of facilitation in which the facilitator acts like he is inviting the community to take a decision when in fact he is leading or guiding the community to a particular course of action.

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

1. Rearrange the space (5 mins).
2. Select people to play the role of HCF facilitator (1) and community members (14) (5 mins).
3. Role-play preparation: Ask the group of 14 people to divide people up according to the different roles (see instructions and handouts on the following pages). Allow the group time to understand and prepare for the role-play (5 mins).
4. Enable the facilitator and the group to conduct the role-play in which the facilitator works with community members to decide how to create an inclusive planning process in which girls, boys, women, and men each have a voice and participate freely (15 mins).
5. Facilitate reflection and discussion with participants, no longer playing the roles that had been assigned (30 mins).

### **Step 1: Rearrange the space**

Organize the space into two concentric circles. In the inner circle, 15 people sit or gather for “community discussion.” The other participants gather (standing or sitting) outside this inner circle (the “fish bowl”), enabling them to observe what is happening.

### **Step 2: Role assignment**

Select participants to play the role of HCF facilitator (1), and community members (14). The rest of the participants are observers/reflectors.

### **Step 3: Preparation**

A. Read the Setting aloud, so everyone will know what the role-play is about.

**Setting:** A facilitator from a national children’s agency (the HCF) is working over a period of months to help a community decide which harm to children it wants to address. Previously, the HCF had conducted grounded ethnographic research in this community, and community members had indicated the following top three harms to children. Listed in order of “greatest concern” to local people, they are: early marriage (for girls—the traditional marriage age had been 15 years but it has dropped to 11 years of age), heavy work (boys working in nearby mines), and drug use (marijuana and glue sniffing, mostly by boys).

The facilitator had also had a discussion with the community about how to enable all community members to have a voice in the planning discussions, which will likely extend over several months. At that discussion, community members concluded that large community meetings are not necessarily an effective way of enabling everyone to have a voice since children are very reluctant to speak in community meetings, and women typically stay relatively quiet.

Today the HCF facilitator is visiting the community again, this time to discuss how to enable different subgroups in a community to have a voice in the community decision about which harm to children to address. Twenty-four community members understand that a facilitator from HCF will come and help them to develop a good way of enabling the voices and views of everyone in the community. The Chief is not present, but an Elder is and will welcome the facilitator.

B. Then ask the Elder and community members to stay in the room by themselves to prepare for their roles, without being overheard by others. Meanwhile, the facilitator goes to a separate area to prepare himself or herself, while the other workshop participants stretch their legs outside for several minutes.

C. Distribute the role sheets (see following pages), not letting the community members or the HCF facilitator see each others' role sheets.

D. Give several minutes so the participants can decide how to best play their respective roles. The HCF facilitator can do this on his or her own (and ask questions of you).

#### **Step 4: Enable the role-play**

A. Before bringing the facilitator in, have the Elder and community members take their seats in the inner circle. Invite others (observers) to sit in the seats around or to stand around the inner circle and to pay attention to the group process.

B. Invite the facilitator in—they are just arriving in the village and will be greeted by the Elder, thus beginning the role-play.

C. Let the role-play continue for about 15 mins before you step in to say “Cut!” and begin the discussion.

#### **Step 5: Facilitate a reflection and discussion**

A. Open with a few questions for observers:

- Did some community members speak but not others? Why do you think this might have occurred?
- What positive things did the facilitator do to enable participation?
- Thinking about what happened in the inner circle, how would you describe the group process during this discussion? Did the facilitator seem to favor some people or views over others? (Please give an example).

B. Then ask questions for everyone:

- This hypothetical discussion was conducted as part of the preparation for community-led action. Was the facilitation approach well suited for community-led decision-making and action?
- Who seemed to make the decisions—was it the community, the facilitator, or both?
- In terms of building community ownership, do you think this is a useful facilitation process or a problematic process? Why?
- What could the facilitator have done to enable a more community-led approach?
- Was it really an either–or decision to make decisions by large community meetings or small group discussion? Aside from small group discussions, are there other ways of enabling the voices of children and marginalized people to be heard?
- Why is it so important that everyone have a voice in the decision-making?

## Facilitator's Role

You are working as part of a longer-term process of community decision-making about which harm(s) to children it wants to address through community action. The harms to children in this community were previously identified through ethnographic study. You now aim to help the community members move toward a planning process that includes a mix of full community discussions and small group discussions.

In the previous community meeting, community members agreed on two things:

- (1) in a good community decision-making process, different people have a voice, and
- (2) in full community discussions, not everyone can speak up.

You believe that full community meetings are not the best venues for communities making decisions.

Following custom, the Elder will open the meeting and then hand off to you. To begin the discussion, you should thank the Elder for having called the meeting and thank the community members for coming. You should thank the community for having helped to identify three main harms to children: early marriage, heavy work, and drug use. Then, you should state that your main task today is to work with the community members who are present to decide how to create a planning process in which everyone in the village has a voice.

You will invite the views of the people who are present about how to include the views of different members in the community. Yet you feel strongly (based on your prior experience) that the best way forward is to have a mixture of large group meetings and small group meetings. In small groups, women are more likely to speak openly about the harms to children. Girls, too, will speak more openly than they would if they were in a group discussion with boys and men present. Thus you favor a mix of large community discussions and smaller, subgroup discussions among groups of 10–12 teenage girls, teenage boys, women, or men, respectively.

Initially, you ask people how they would help different people have a voice in deciding which harm(s) to children to address. However, if there is some disagreement, it could take months to resolve.

If this happens (it very likely will), you should decide quietly to move the group toward a mixture of full village meetings and small group discussions by subgroup (teenage girls, teenage boys, women, men). For example, in one week, there could be an open village meeting to discuss which harm to children to address. Then in the following two weeks, there could be small group discussions among each of the subgroups.

The key ideas from each subgroup could be fed back by having each subgroup elect a reporter who will give a summary of the key points discussed in the subgroup but without revealing who said what. You need to make the case for the use of subgroups, inspiring people when you need to.

With these points in mind, you should remind the community that the last time you visited, several community members said that some people in the community could not take part in community meetings, and others were present but did not usually speak up. However, the community also said that the view of every person is important. Our task today is to decide how to make it possible for people to speak openly and for different subgroups to have a voice in the discussions about which harm to children the community should address.

You should wrap up the discussion by leaning strongly toward the mixed model of all community discussions coupled with small, subgroup discussions.

## Community Members' Roles

You will be playing the role of community member. Please feel free to improvise your role a bit yet follow the outlines of the role instructions for each person.

**Elder:** You open the meeting by speaking first, welcoming back the HCF facilitator, who has visited before, and inviting them to speak. After they speak for a bit, you are the first community member to respond to what the facilitator says. You like the traditional means of community decision-making in which the community meets, discusses the issue, and takes a decision. You think people can participate if they are encouraged to speak. You do not think subgroup discussions are necessary, and you do not waiver from this view, and argue back a bit with people who think there should be a combination of small group discussions and open community discussions.

**Teacher:** You are highly respected by the community. You speak just after the Elder, who favors full community meetings. You state early on and repeatedly that you have learned as a teacher that children frequently have different views than adults and that children—particularly girls—need their own space and small groups to feel safe and talk among themselves.

**Outspoken woman:** You have strong feelings about this and speak with passion for the value of having small group discussions. You know that girls will not confront men directly or say what their experiences are unless they are in a safe environment talking among themselves. You speak repeatedly and try to move other community members to your side.

**Teenage girl:** You are respectful and so do not speak up.

**Teenage boy:** You are respectful and are shy to speak. But you feel strongly that children and young people are in the best position to understand harms to children as they really are. Adults are sometimes too removed from children to know what difficulties children actually face, or adults have their own ideas which differ from those of children. You see having small group discussion among teenage boys as crucial for learning their views and hearing their voices.

**Community man:** You speak a lot. You like the traditional approach of having the community meet as a whole and take a decision. Yet you also understand that children may not speak very openly in community meetings, and they may have the best information about harms to children that the community needs to address. Ultimately, you favor the small group discussions.

**Community woman:** You favor having small group discussions among teenage girls for two reasons—they face problems and harms such as sexual exploitation and violence that others do not face, and they will not feel comfortable discussing the problems in open meetings with men and boys present. You speak repeatedly and try to move other community members to your side.

**Community man:** You agree with the Elder and say that children's role is to be obedient to and respectful of adults. It is not their position to have so much voice in community decisions since they are young and inexperienced. You favor traditional community meetings and think everyone can learn to speak up in them.



**Community woman:** You point out that when a community takes a decision, it is important for people to speak in front of the whole community, or as many people who can be present as possible. You do not like subgroup discussions since they could imply that the community has secrets and cannot have trustful, open discussion.

**Imam:** You think that children are wonderful resources but that, at the end of the day, adults should make the key community decisions. You favor the traditional approach of having the full community meet and take a decision. You do not waiver from this position.

**Others:** Count yourselves up. Assign half of yourselves to adult roles that hold that community meetings are the way of your village, and you should not deviate from that. The other half assign yourself to be supporters of the idea of having some full community meetings coupled with smaller subgroup discussions.