



TOOLKIT FOR RESEARCH AND TRAINING ON GENDER NORMS AND SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE OF BOYS



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INTRODUCTION

This toolkit was developed within the framework of **Project ENSEMBLE**, a 3-year (2022-2025) joint initiative of ECPAT International, ECPAT France, ECPAT Luxembourg, and national partners: SOS Violence Sexuelles (Côte d'Ivoire), Communauté Abel (Côte d'Ivoire), Keoogo (Burkina Faso), ABSE (Burkina Faso), ANTD (Niger), and MDE (Guinea). ECPAT France Regional Office in Burkina Faso is a technical partner.

In its final year, the project focuses on improving understanding of the sexual exploitation and abuse of boys in four countries: *Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, Burkina Faso and Guinea*. Findings from the planned research have been consolidated in brief situational analysis papers and will inform the follow-up advocacy actions and interventions delineated in the project.

In October 2024, ECPAT International – in collaboration with its members in these four countries – designed and conducted a regional training for research teams from each country. The training took place in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, and followed a participatory methodology to ensure that participants could:

- » Reflect on personal, societal, and community biases and stereotypes related to boys' victimisation, gender, and sexuality;

- » Strengthen their capacity to collect data and engage communities on these issues;
- » Jointly identify strategies and messages for community engagement, and design culturally sensitive approaches to data collection.

Following the workshop, **lessons learned** on the methodology and tools (including questionnaires and other materials) were integrated to finalise this package.

While based on the training, this toolkit has been adapted for broader **external use**. It brings together the key materials, approaches, and tools into one consolidated, practical resource.

PURPOSE OF THE TOOLKIT

This toolkit is designed for practitioners, researchers, and civil society organisations working with communities on sensitive issues related to gender, masculinities, and the sexual exploitation and abuse of boys. It aims to guide safe, ethical, and meaningful research and engagement, grounded in **gender-aware and child-protection principles**.

STRUCTURE OF THE TOOLKIT

- 1. Methodology for Initial Training** – a structured, interactive multi-day workshop designed to support civil society organisations and frontline practitioners. The curriculum helps participants unpack gender bias, masculinity norms, power dynamics, and community attitudes towards boys and sexual exploitation and abuse.
- 2. Field Research Methodology** – methodology and tools for interviews with frontline workers, community consultations, and participatory consultations with boys.
- The toolkit also includes a set of **appendices** with practical tools and supporting materials:
 - » **Appendix A:** Suggested pre-training questionnaire to better understand participants' initial level of knowledge
 - » **Appendix B:** Suggested scenarios to stimulate discussions on child sexual exploitation and abuse
 - » **Appendix C:** Scoping mapping of existing services for boys victims of sexual abuse and exploitation
 - » **Appendix D:** Consultations with communities. Suggested note-taking and reporting template
 - » **Appendix E:** Suggested oral consent script for key Informant interviews and consultations with communities

- » **Appendix F:** Suggested researcher record of oral consent for key Informant interviews and consultations with communities
- » **Appendix G:** Suggested written consent form for key Informant interviews and consultations with communities
- » **Appendix H:** Suggested child-friendly code of conduct
- » **Appendix I:** Consultations with boys. Note-taking and reporting template
- » **Appendix J:** Consultations with boys. Suggested safeguarding risk assessment template
- » **Appendix K:** Consultations with boys. Suggested referral protocol template
- » **Appendix L:** Consultations with boys. Suggested informed consent form for caregivers
- » **Appendix M:** Consultations with boys. Suggested informed consent form for children

Each appendix can be adapted to the local context. Where applicable, editable templates or links are included for direct use.

HOW TO USE THE TOOLKIT

This toolkit is intended to be flexible. Sessions and tools can be:

- » **Used as a full package** for multi-day trainings and research preparation;
- » **Integrated selectively** into existing programmes or workshops;
- » **Adapted** to fit different cultural, linguistic, and logistical realities.

To use this toolkit effectively, facilitators and researchers should have:

- » A basic understanding of gender related issues, child rights, and power dynamics;
- » Familiarity with the cultural context and sensitivities around boys and sexual exploitation/abuse;
- » A plan for managing informed consent, data confidentiality, and emotional safety.

RECOMMENDED REFERENCE MATERIALS

Where relevant, we encourage facilitators to refer to **existing research and global guidance**, including, but not limited to:

- » [Guidelines for Ethical Research on Sexual Exploitation involving Children](#)
- » [Disrupting Harm. Conversations with Young Survivors about Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse](#)
- » [Research on the Sexual Exploitation of Boys: Findings, ethical considerations and methodological challenges](#)
- » [Global Boys Initiative: A global review of existing literature on the sexual exploitation of boys](#)

- » [Terminology Guidelines for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse](#)
- » [Country Reports based on National Research](#)

Some of the following materials also serve as **general guidance on gender-based violence, masculinities, and gender-related issues**, and have informed the development of the facilitation approach and training exercises in this toolkit:

- » [Oxfam Gender Training Manual](#)
- » [Oxfam Gender Training Manual - Getting Started](#)
- » [Oxfam Gender Training Manual - Gender Awareness](#)
- » [Oxfam Gender Training Manual - Gender Roles and Needs](#)
- » [CARE Gender, Equity, and Diversity Training Materials - Module 4: Gender Training](#)
- » [Tearfund - Transformer les masculinités. Manuel de formation pour les champions de genre \(French\)](#)

The approach and model for the consultations with boys have been informed by the following materials:

- » [ECPAT International Child Safeguarding Policy](#)
- » [ECPAT International Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct](#)
- » [ECPAT International Safeguarding Risk Assessment Guidance](#)
- » [ECPAT International. \(2025\) Toolkit for Participatory Assessment with Children. Forthcoming publication.](#)
- » [Warrington, C. \(2020\) Creating a safe space: Ideas for the development of participatory group work to address sexual violence with young people. Luton: University of Bedfordshire.](#)

TRAINING ON GENDER BIAS, MASCULINITIES, AND SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE OF BOYS

SUGGESTED METHODOLOGY FOR INITIAL TRAINING

This document outlines a methodology for facilitating initial training sessions for civil society organisations, research teams, and other child protection professionals. The focus is on gender bias, masculinities, and the specific challenges related to the sexual exploitation and abuse of boys.

Before delivering the training, it is recommended to conduct a **pre-training evaluation questionnaire**. It can help facilitators understand participants' existing knowledge, biases, or concerns, and shape the discussion accordingly. A sample pre-survey is provided in the Appendix A.

Note: This is a suggested order and division of sessions across three days. It can be adapted depending on the format (online or in-person), time available, and participants' needs. However, a minimum of three full days is recommended to ensure adequate time for reflection, discussion, and practice.

Where possible, facilitators should aim for a gender-balanced group of participants.

DAY 1

SESSION 1: WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Suggested timing: 30-40 minutes

Facilitation: Appoint a facilitator

Materials needed: flipcharts, markers, sticky notes, tape or other materials to affix papers to the wall.

OBJECTIVES

1. Introduce participants to each other
2. Jointly define the rules of the workshop
3. Present the agenda and answer participants' questions

PREPARATION AND PROCEDURE

1. Choose an **ice-breaking activity**, appropriate to the group and context (to be defined by facilitators)
2. Conduct a **round of introductions**: names, organisational affiliation, what brings them to the workshop
3. Share a general **overview of the workshop**: what the focus will be, what participants can expect over the next days, and how the sessions are structured
4. Create a **space of trust**:

In order to create a space where participants feel safe discussing sensitive issues, ask participants to:

- » Close their eyes and reflect individually on moments when they felt safe enough to share sensitive information with others.
- » After a few minutes, invite them to open their eyes and share the **key characteristics** that made that space feel safe (e.g. respect, listening, no judgment).

These characteristics will serve as the ground rules of the workshop. Write their answers on a flip chart and then summarise them, acknowledging that these are difficult issues to discuss. Explain that agreeing on a few key principles will make the discussion easier and more comfortable. Let the participants know that the group agreement can always be reviewed and, if necessary, additional points can be added.

Adaptation for online settings:

If delivered online, tools like **Miro** or **Microsoft Whiteboard** can be used instead of physical materials. The trust reflection exercise can be guided verbally, with participants sharing characteristics via a whiteboard tool or in the main chat.

SESSION 2: INTERACTIVE EXERCISE ON GENDER BIAS AND IDEAS OF MASCULINITY

Suggested timing: 2-2.5 hours

Facilitation: Appoint a facilitator

Materials needed: flipcharts, markers, sticky notes, tape or other materials to affix papers to the wall.

OBJECTIVES

1. Understand individual and collective biases about gender and masculinity
2. Understand gender-based power dynamics affecting boys and girls



ACTIVITY 1

PREPARATION AND PROCEDURE

1. Read aloud this short story:

“A couple are having trouble conceiving a child. They go to a soothsayer who tells them that they will have a child, but only after they have decided on the sex of the child”¹

2. Give each participant a sheet of paper and ask them to imagine themselves in this situation.
3. Ask them to write down the sex they would choose for their child. Ask them to also write down their reasons for choosing this sex.
4. Give them a few minutes then collect the sheets. Write the results on a flipchart: “Number of those who chose girls” and “Number of those who chose boys”. List the reasons provided under each as well.
5. Facilitate a discussion around:
 - a) How many chose boys versus girls?
 - b) Why did people choose one over the other?
 - c) What assumptions underlie those choices?
 - d) Discuss the implications of the way in which boys and girls are socialised and treated in order to prepare them for the roles they will play in society.



Adaptation for online settings:

To adapt this activity for an online setting, read the short story aloud during a live video call, then use a simple anonymous survey tool (like **Google Forms**, **Slido** or **Mentimeter**) to have participants submit whether they would choose a boy or a girl and why. Share the aggregated results on a shared screen using a **digital whiteboard** (e.g. **Miro**) or **Google Doc**, listing the number of participants picking each choice and why.

ACTIVITY 2

PREPARATION AND PROCEDURE

- » If a pre-training questionnaire was used and it included a question on the difference between “gender” and “sex” as per the example provided in Appendix A, review and discuss the responses.
- » If no questionnaire was used and/or such a question was not included, ask participants: “*What do you think is the difference between sex and gender?*” Take a few responses to hear their initial thoughts.
- » Explain the difference quickly and simply. (*Sex refers to the biological differences between males and females, such as chromosomes, hormones, and reproductive organs. Gender refers to the social and cultural roles, behaviors, and identities that society considers appropriate for men, women, and people of other gender identities*).

¹ Adapted from the Oxfam Gender Training Manual: Gender Awareness (1994).

- » Give each participant a blank sheet and ask them to write the numbers 1–14 in a column.
- » Read the list of numbered statements in the handout and ask participants to write “**G**” for those they think refer to gender, and “**S**” for those they think refer to sex.

1. Women give birth to babies, men don't.	(S)
2. Little girls are soft, boys are hard.	(G)
3. Among Indian farm workers, women are paid 40% to 60% of the male wage.	(G)
4. Women can breastfeed babies, men can bottle-feed them.	(S)
5. In ancient Egypt, the men stayed at home and did the weaving. Women looked after family affairs. Women inherited property, while men did not.	(G)
6. In a study of 224 cultures, there were 5 where the men did all the cooking and the women built the houses.	(G)
7. Women are responsible for caring for babies because they can breastfeed them.	(G)
8. Women cannot carry heavy loads.	(G)
9. Women are afraid to work outside the home at night.	(G)
10. Men's voices break at puberty, women's do not.	(S)
11. Women are emotional and men rational.	(G)
12. Most women have long hair and men have short hair.	(G)
13. Most scientists are men.	(G)
14. Cooking is a natural art for women.	(G)

- » After participants have completed the list, review the correct answers as a group.

Ask:

- » Were there any statements that were difficult to categorise?
- » Which ones sparked disagreement or surprise?
- » What does this tell us about how deeply gender norms are embedded in everyday thinking?

Use this discussion to clarify remaining confusion and deepen understanding.

ACTIVITY 3

PREPARATION

1. Create two concentric circles of chairs - men in the inner circle, women in the outer circle. Move your seats to sit in two circles, inside for the men and outside for the women;

Note for facilitators: If the group is not mixed (e.g., all men, all women, or significantly imbalanced), divide participants randomly into two groups for the inner and outer circles. You can still use the same questions, or adapt them slightly to reflect general experiences of gender roles and expectations. The goal remains the same: encourage deep personal reflection and attentive listening.

2. Each person in the outer circle should be paired with someone in the inner circle, facing them directly.

3. Discuss the aquarium questions (the circles):
 - » Only the **inner circle speaks** while the outer circle listens silently.
 - » Use the discussion questions (see below) to guide the conversation.
 - » **Swap roles:** women move to the inner circle, men to the outer circle, and the same process is repeated with a different set of questions.

Depending on how much time you have allocated for this activity, ensure that the time is evenly distributed among the two circles and that enough time is reserved for the plenary.

QUESTIONS FOR THE MEN'S GROUP

1. What do you think is the most difficult thing about being a man in your country?
2. What are your childhood memories of your home country or community?
3. What did you like about being a boy? What did you dislike?
4. What was difficult about being a teenage boy?
5. What do you wish women better understood about men?
6. Name one thing you never want to hear about boys again.

QUESTIONS FOR THE WOMEN'S GROUP

1. What do you think is the most difficult thing about being a woman in your country?
2. What do you remember about growing up as a girl in your home country or community?
3. What did you like about being a girl? What did you dislike?

4. What was difficult about being a teenage girl?
5. What are the most difficult rights for women to obtain in your country?
6. What do you wish men better understood about women?
7. Name one thing you never want to hear about girls again.

QUESTIONS FOR PLENARY DISCUSSION

1. What surprised you about this activity?
2. How did it feel to talk about these things with other people listening to you?
3. What has changed over the course of your lives in terms of gender roles and identities?
4. What hasn't changed (much)?



Adaptation for online settings:

To run this activity online, keep all participants in the main room. Assign them to two groups (e.g., Group A and Group B), and let them know which group will begin by speaking. While one group is speaking, the other group should remain on mute and focus on listening without responding. After a set amount of time, switch roles so that the listeners become the speakers. You can use visual aids, such as name labels or a shared slide, to help clarify which group is speaking at any given time.

— Break (20 minutes) —

SESSION 2 (CONTINUED):

INTERACTIVE EXERCISE ON GENDER BIAS AND IDEAS OF MASCULINITY

Suggested timing: 1.5-2 hours

Facilitation: Appoint a facilitator

Materials needed: flipcharts, markers, sticky notes

OBJECTIVES

1. Understand individual and collective biases about gender and masculinity
2. Understand gender-based power dynamics affecting boys and girls

ACTIVITY 4 - GENDER SOCIALIZATION

PREPARATION AND PROCEDURE

This is a reflective group discussion designed to help participants unpack how gender roles are shaped and reinforced through personal experience, culture, and social norms. The facilitator should guide an open plenary discussion using the questions below, ensuring everyone has a chance to speak.

- » “When we think of our fathers, uncles, older brothers, grandfathers and other male relatives and friends who have influenced the way we think about being men (or still do), what kinds of attitudes, values and behaviours do we associate with them?”
- » “During our childhood, what role did religion, traditions, and cultural values play in shaping our attitudes, values, and behaviours as human beings?”

» “How do these traditions and practices constitute forms of violence against women, girls, boys and men? How can we transform these traditions and cultural practices to break the cycle of violence?”

» “Based on these discussions, how do you think these factors could impact the way we conduct research or engage with communities on sensitive issues, such as sexual exploitation of boys?”



Adaptation for online settings:

This activity can be easily adapted for online use. Use the main group or breakout rooms for discussion, and invite participants to share reflections verbally or in the chat. A shared document or whiteboard (e.g. **Miro** or **Microsoft Whiteboard**) can be used to note key points.

— Break (1 hour and 30 minutes) —



SESSION 3: UNDERSTANDING POWER DYNAMICS AND HOW TO SHIFT THEM

Suggested timing: 1-1.5 hours

Facilitation: Appoint a facilitator

Materials needed: Flipcharts, markers, pre-written statement cards

Ask the groups to share their thoughts with all the participants and then reflect on:

- » What do these statements reflect about the status of men and women?
- » What role do the various institutions play in perpetuating these practices and beliefs?
- » Who ultimately benefits from such a gender-based hierarchy?

OBJECTIVES

1. Explore the roles of boys and girls in the communities where participants work
2. Explore strategies to protect boys from harm, while understanding the power dynamics that affect girls and women.

ACTIVITY 1

PREPARATION AND PROCEDURE

Divide everyone into small groups (maximum 5 or 6 people). Each group discusses **two** of the following statements written on cards beforehand:

- » “Sons look after their parents in their old age”
- » “A child bears his father’s surname”
- » “A woman’s place is in the home”
- » “Boys don’t cry”
- » “A woman leaves her parents’ house after marriage”
- » “A woman is another woman’s worst enemy”
- » “It is a man’s duty to earn a living for his family”



Adaptation for online settings:

To run this activity online, use breakout rooms for small group discussions and display the statements using slides or in the chat. You can also use a collaborative tool like **Miro** to distribute and discuss the statement cards. Groups can then return to plenary to share insights.

Break (20 minutes)



SESSION 4: IDENTIFYING THE MANIFESTATIONS OF THE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF BOYS IN EACH CONTEXT

Suggested timing: 1 hour and 10 minutes - 1 hour and 40 minutes

Facilitation: Appoint a facilitator

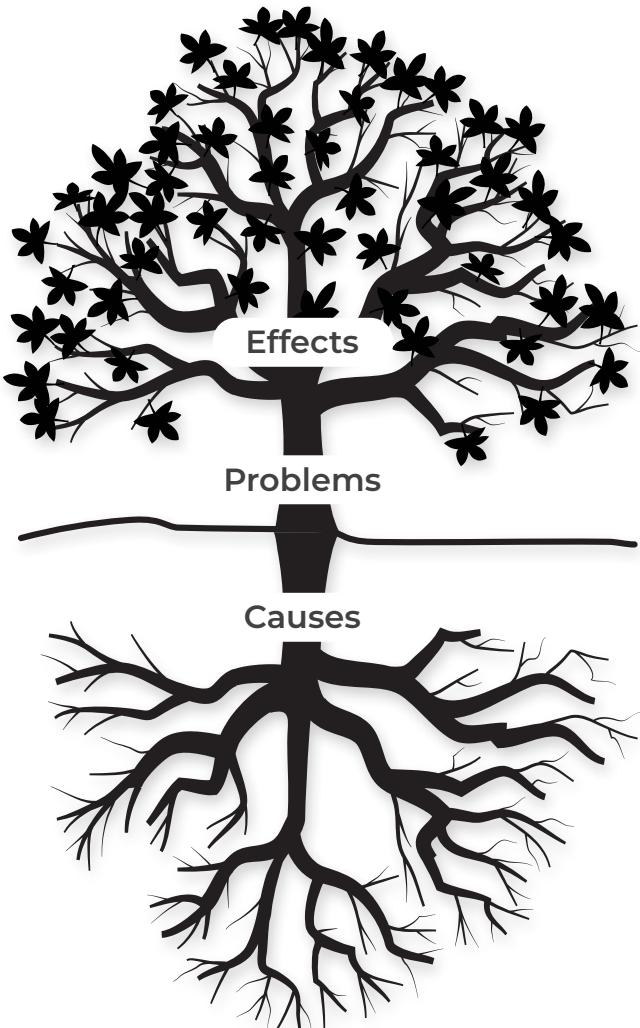
Materials needed: Flipcharts or large sheets of paper, markers, sticky notes, tape

OBJECTIVES

1. Jointly identify how sexual exploitation of boys manifests in each local or regional context
2. Understand the root causes and consequences of these forms of exploitation
3. Begin defining key research areas and challenges for community-based interventions

PREPARATION AND PROCEDURE

- » Divide the participants into groups (depending on the composition of the participants, they can be divided by country, region, or randomly).
- » Ask each group to draw a tree (see image below), with the following structure:
 - › **Roots:** Underlying causes of sexual exploitation of boys in their communities
 - › **Trunk:** The core issue or main manifestation (e.g., exploitation in exchange for money, good, protection, etc., sexual abuse by authority figures, exploitation linked to migration or displacement)
- » **Branches:** Consequences and impacts on boys and their communities
- » Encourage participants to brainstorm based on **real examples, existing research, and community knowledge**. Prompts might include:
 - › What puts boys at risk in this context?
 - › What types of exploitation are most common - and which are hidden?
 - › Who is affected, and how?
- » At the end of the exercise, participants look at each other's trees and take note of the points identified, which may be different from their own.
- » In plenary, participants discuss common and different points, while facilitators take note of key themes for further research, as well as the challenges identified for the development of messages for communities.
- » After reviewing the trees, ask participants to draw "**clouds**" around the tree representing **local stakeholders** who should be involved in research and community mobilisation (e.g., religious leaders, teachers, health workers, police, youth leaders, families), and how they should be involved.



Adaptation for online settings:

For virtual sessions, collaborative whiteboard tools such as **Miro**, or **Microsoft Whiteboard** work well for the tree-building exercise. Assign groups to breakout rooms, provide a shared digital board for each, and reconvene in plenary to present findings. Cloud elements can be added using post-it features or text boxes.

SESSION 5: FINAL THOUGHTS AND CONCLUSION OF DAY 1

Suggested timing: 15-20 minutes

Facilitation: Appoint a facilitator

Materials needed: Sticky notes, flipcharts, markers

OBJECTIVES

1. Identify questions or themes to explore further on Day 2
2. Invite participants to reflect on how communities communicate about boys, masculinity, and the taboos surrounding the subject

PREPARATION AND PROCEDURE

- » Ask the participants what the main learning points of the day were. Write down key responses on a flipchart as participants share.
- » Ask participants to write on post-its ONE or TWO biases or prejudices that they realised they had about the gender issues discussed on the first day—that they want to let go of.
- » Ask participants to:
 1. Share (orally or in writing on a flip chart) the points discussed on Day 1 (or other questions) that they would like to explore further on Day 2.
 2. Begin to reflect individually on possible community engagement strategies around the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse of boys in their respective countries.



Adaptation for online settings:

In virtual settings, participants can share reflections in the chat or through collaborative tools like **Miro**, or **Microsoft Whiteboard**. Alternatively, use response-gathering tools like **Padlet**, **Mentimeter**, or **Slido** to anonymously collect inputs for the reflection on biases or questions to explore further.

DAY 2

SESSION 6: INTERACTIVE ACTIVITY TO SUMMARISE AND SHARE THOUGHTS ON DAY 1

Suggested timing: 30-40 minutes

Facilitation: Appoint a facilitator

OBJECTIVES

1. Share key insights, doubts, and learnings from Day 1

PREPARATION AND PROCEDURE

- » If participants have identified questions and learning points that need to be explored in greater depth at the end of Day 1, take the time to discuss them with the group, asking other participants to share their thoughts too.
- » If there are no questions from the previous day, ask the participants to share one point or idea each on the approaches to be used to engage communities around the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse of boys.

SESSION 7: SHARING RESEARCH EXPERIENCES – ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES

Suggested timing: 1 hour – 1 hour 15 minutes

Facilitation: Appoint a facilitator

OBJECTIVES

1. Encourage participants to reflect on and share insights from past research experiences
2. Identify common achievements and recurring or anticipated challenges
3. Begin building a shared understanding of what may be challenging in the current research context

PREPARATION AND PROCEDURE

- » Ask each participant to share **one achievement** and **one challenge** from a previous research project they were involved in.
- » Invite discussion around common themes: Were there similarities in challenges faced? How were they addressed?
- » Facilitate a group discussion on anticipated challenges for the current or upcoming research, particularly in relation to engaging communities on sensitive issues such as the sexual exploitation and abuse of boys.

SESSION 8: OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Suggested timing: 30-40 minutes

Facilitation: Appoint a facilitator

OBJECTIVES

1. Present participants with an overview of how research into the sexual exploitation of boys can be structured and conducted, including research objectives, research questions, proposed methodology, key activities, sample, results, and timetable.
2. Provide participants with basic information on the methodology and

research questions for consultations with communities in preparation for the following session.

Note: The content in this session draws on a methodology originally developed for Project Ensemble (2022–2025), a multi-country initiative in West Africa focused on the sexual exploitation of boys. While this research was specific to that context, the structure and approach can be adapted and applied more broadly. This session introduces a sample basic framework, which participants may wish to replicate, tailor, or build upon in their own communities or organisations.

OVERVIEW OF SUGGESTED METHODOLOGY

POTENTIAL RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. Provide an overview of the sexual exploitation involving boys, focusing on:
 - » Community and local actors' perceptions
 - » Factors contributing to boys' vulnerability and risk
 - » Needs in terms of prevention, protection, and support services
2. Document:
 - » Gender biases, social and cultural attitudes, perceptions, beliefs, and norms shaping understanding of the sexual exploitation of boys
 - » Community awareness of risk and harm
 - » Organic protective mechanisms and responses

SAMPLE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- » What are the current trends in the sexual exploitation and abuse of boys in the target location/country/region?
- » Is existing legislation gender-neutral and providing full protection to boys?
- » Are boys included in current policies, initiatives, and collaborations aimed at protecting children? If yes, how?
- » What is missing in the target countries to better protect boys?
- » Who is supporting boys at risk or victims of sexual exploitation?
- » What is the community's understanding of masculinity? (e.g., perceptions of "ideal" boys/men; links between masculinity and sexuality)

- » How do communities perceive boys' roles and needs compared to girls?
- » How do gender norms influence perceptions of the sexual exploitation of children—especially boys?
- » What do communities know about the sexual exploitation of boys?

SUGGESTED RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Note: The activities outlined below represent a flexible and simple set of research components. While they can be combined to form a comprehensive study, they may also be selected individually based on the specific context, research objectives, ethical considerations, available time, and financial resources.

1. Brief Literature Review

- » Review existing research on sexual exploitation of boys in target location/country/region
- » Identify influencing factors, relevant policies, programmes, and interventions
- » Collect legal information on how child sexual exploitation is criminalised
- » Assess whether existing legal frameworks are gender-neutral and protective of boys
- » Review media content, including newspaper articles, blogs, and videos from major local TV stations, to understand how the issue is represented in public discourse

2. Scoping and Mapping of Services

- » Identify and map existing services for boys affected by sexual abuse/exploitation
- » Document service location, type, target group, and access mechanisms

3. In-depth Interviews with Service Providers

- » Conduct 8–12 (in-person or online) qualitative interviews per country/location
- » Focus on service context, quality of care, gaps, and opportunities to support boys

4. Consultations with Communities

- » One or two group consultations per country
- » Engage caregivers of boys
- » Explore gender biases, perceptions, beliefs, and cultural norms related to masculinity and the sexual exploitation of boys

5. Consultations with Boys

- » Face-to-face consultations with boys aged 12–18, from the general population
- » Dependent on existing relationships and ethical feasibility through local partners

NATIONAL CONSULTATIONS

Once data has been analysed and compiled into one report, it should ideally be validated through a consultation with relevant national stakeholders. This consultation offers an opportunity to present and validate key findings and jointly reflect on gaps, promising practices and recommendations for action.

— Break (15 minutes) —

SESSION 9: DESIGNING CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT THE RESEARCH

Suggested timing: 2.5 hours

Facilitation: Appoint a facilitator

OBJECTIVES

1. Identify culturally sensitive strategies and approaches for communicating with communities about gender, sexuality, sexual exploitation and abuse, particularly in relation to boys.
2. Support participants in developing tailored consultation tools, including key questions and engagement methods, to better understand and mobilise communities around these issues.
3. Identify tools, materials, and channels needed for effective community engagement.
4. Pinpoint technical or informational support needed for the next stages of work.

PREPARATION AND PROCEDURE

- » Gather information on community attitudes towards boys in terms of gender, sexuality, sexual exploitation and abuse, based on the communication objectives, as well as their knowledge, behaviour and practices in relation to the issues to be addressed.
- » Ask participants to work in small groups. These can be

organised by **shared geography, language, cultural knowledge, or community experience** — depending on the context of your training. Each group creates a **profile of a typical community member** they may need to engage. This should include socio-demographic characteristics, values, access to services, and relevant local dynamics. Optionally, they can give this person a name and describe their lifestyle or worldview to make the profile relatable.

- » Within the themes of gender, sexuality, sexual exploitation and abuse, participants identify **sub-themes** which will form the basis of communication approaches with members of the community (e.g., perception of boys, taboos linked to sexuality, perception of the role of boys in society, etc.). These sub-themes should be easily identifiable from what the needs assessment identifies as necessary and/or appropriate (also using the problem tree from Day 1).
- » Groups brainstorm and document **guiding questions** they could ask during consultations with community members for consultations with each typical profile on the various sub-themes identified.
- » Each group then completes a **consultation planning template** - a simple document to help structure and plan consultations. It should include key details such as the proposed discussion topics, guiding questions, activities, whether the activities will be conducted in groups or individually, participant profile,

duration, location, and any practical or ethical considerations.

- » Briefly summarise the ideas developed in plenary. Following the feedback from each country group, the participants will have to jointly agree on the messages and approaches that are common across the groups and then identify those that are specific to their respective contexts.
- » Using the results of this brainstorming, participants are asked to further discuss:
 - › Communication tools and media that could be developed during the research process to raise community awareness of issues relating to sexual exploitation and abuse against boys, masculinity and taboos surrounding sexuality;
 - › The main learning points that could be collected during the implementation of the research and which could then be used to develop a technical tool to help civil society organisations break down these taboos and initiate community awareness-raising interventions on these subjects.



Adaptation for online settings:

In virtual settings, group work can be conducted in breakout rooms, with collaborative tools like **Google Docs** or **Miro** used to co-develop community profiles, consultation plans and key messages. Groups present their outputs in plenary using screen-sharing or live document walkthroughs.

SESSION 10: PRACTICAL EXERCISE IN INTERVIEWING AND NOTE-TAKING

Suggested timing: 1 hour - 1 hour and 15 minutes

Facilitation: Appoint a facilitator

OBJECTIVES

1. Identify simple key questions based on the themes covered in previous sessions and practise asking them in respectful and appropriate ways.
2. Strengthen participants' note-taking techniques in a research context.

PREPARATION AND PROCEDURE

- » Have participants work in pairs. Where possible, pair people from **different backgrounds, organisations, or regions**, depending on the group composition. Based on previous sessions of the workshop, participants have 10 minutes to draw up a list of 3 questions and interview each other in turn. The questions should be about gender bias and could, for example, refer to how gender norms have influenced their childhood or their lives.

Sample questions:

- › *How did it feel to grow up as a man in your community?*
- › *Do you think a girl would have had a different experience? Why or why not?*

- » Each interview will last 10 minutes, with the interviewer asking questions and taking notes, after which participants will switch roles.
- » At the end of the exercise, invite participants to share what they learned about their colleagues. Then, guide a short reflection on the process itself. You can ask questions such as:
 - › *What did you notice about how your partner asked questions?*
 - › *What made you feel heard, or not heard?*
 - › *What was challenging about taking notes?*
- » Encourage participants to discuss both what worked well and what could be improved. This helps build awareness of effective communication and interviewing techniques, which are relevant for upcoming research activities.



Adaptation for online settings:

In virtual settings, pair participants in breakout rooms for the interview exercise. They can take notes individually or co-edit a shared **Google Doc**. For the plenary debrief, participants can share reflections orally while the facilitator captures key points on a shared document or visual board (e.g. **Miro** or **Microsoft Whiteboard**). During the reflection, include a discussion on the **added complexities of conducting interviews online** - such as building rapport, managing technical interruptions, and reading non-verbal cues - and how these may differ from in-person interviews.

DAY 3

SESSION 11: SERVICE MAPPING AND INTERVIEWS WITH SERVICE PROVIDERS

Suggested timing: 1.5-2 hours

Facilitation: Appoint a facilitator

OBJECTIVES

1. Confirm the approaches and scope of service mapping.
2. Draw up a preliminary list of questions for service providers.

PREPARATION AND PROCEDURE

- » Present an overview of service mapping, including the different stages and the elements to be included in the mapping tool. A suggested simple methodology for service mapping is outlined in Appendix C. Participants discuss the geographical scope of mapping in their areas.
- » Introduce methods, tools and steps for key informant interviews, as detailed in the toolkit section “Interviews with Frontline Workers – Suggested Methodology and Process”.
- » Participants are then divided into groups by country and given 20 minutes to draw up a list of 5 to 8 questions for the interviews. Focus areas include: perceptions of sexual exploitation and abuse against boys, barriers to disclosure

or support, service gaps and challenges, recommendations for improving response.

- » A rapporteur from each group to present the questions in plenary for feedback and discussion.



Adaptation for online settings:

In online settings, present the service mapping methodology and tools using a shared screen or slide deck. Use **breakout rooms** for group work, with shared **Google Docs** or visual board (e.g. **Miro** or **Microsoft Whiteboard**) to co-develop interview questions. Rapporteurs can present back in plenary via screen share or by reading directly from the group document.

SESSION 12: WHAT TO CONSIDER DURING THE TRAINING TO DECIDE WHETHER TO INVOLVE BOYS IN THE RESEARCH

This section is designed to guide participants in a reflective and critical discussion during the training on whether involving boys in consultations is appropriate, feasible, and ethical within their specific contexts.

Suggested timing: 1.5 hours

Facilitation: Appoint a facilitator

OBJECTIVES

1. Assess the feasibility of conducting consultations with boys in the participants' own contexts
2. Co-develop a context-sensitive and safe model for engaging boys

PREPARATION AND PROCEDURE

- » Start with a brief presentation or overview of key considerations for consultations with boys. For this overview, you may refer to the section **Consultations with Boys** of the toolkit, which includes the [Suggested Methodology and Process](#) and the [Facilitator's Guide](#).

Key considerations to discuss include:

- » The requirement for **voluntary participation and informed consent** from both children and their caregivers
- » The presence of strong **child safeguarding measures**, including risk assessments, referral protocols, and a designated safeguarding focal point
- » The availability of **trained facilitators and note-takers** who are sensitised to working with children on sensitive topics
- » **Feasibility and access** – whether boys can be safely reached and engaged in a way that is contextually appropriate

- » The ability to provide a **safe, respectful, and inclusive space** where boys can speak freely, with the option to opt out at any time
- » The capacity to ensure **confidentiality and secure data management**, without relying on recording or identifiable information
- » Participants then break into groups (ideally by country or region). They are given 30 minutes to work on a model for consultations with boys for their country/region (this may include age range, number of consultations, type of activities proposed, areas of intervention, questions, duration and other details).
- » Each group then shares a brief summary of their key ideas in plenary for collective reflection. The facilitator encourages open discussion about common challenges, contextual differences, and what support might be

needed to proceed safely and ethically.

Note: This is intended as an **exploratory** discussion to support decision-making. If the initiative proceeds beyond this exploratory stage, follow-up sessions (could be organised online) may also be needed to provide deeper training and ensure safe, ethical, and high-quality consultation processes.

The materials required to carry out safe and ethical consultations with boys are included in the toolkit. These include the *Suggested Methodology and Process*, the *Facilitator's Guide*, and supporting appendices such as consent forms, a child-friendly code of conduct, safeguarding and referral templates, and a note-taking template. These resources can be adapted to fit local contexts.

For further technical support or questions, you may contact: researchteam@ecpat.org



SUGGESTED FIELD RESEARCH PRACTICE ACTIVITY

This session presents a recommended approach to organising a practical field research activity, designed to help participants apply learning from earlier sessions in a real-world context. This example is based on an in-person workshop format, where participants visit community settings in small groups to test out consultation questions and practice informal interviewing and observation. If the workshop is delivered online or in a hybrid format, alternative approaches can be used, for example, holding a preparatory meeting online, having participants conduct interviews locally, and organising a debriefing session the following day via video conference.

Suggested timing: half day

Objectives:

1. Test out in the field the lessons learned from previous sessions, and in particular the guiding questions the participants have developed for consultations with communities.

Preparation (to be done in advance):

Before the session, facilitators must:

1. Identify appropriate research locations. Locations should be selected based on safety, accessibility, availability of community members or local stakeholders, and suitability for informal engagement.
2. Organise transport/logistics. Ensure each group has clear directions, local contacts (if needed), and any safety protocols.

Activity:

- » Divide participants into small groups (up to 5 people). Each group will travel to a different location identified in advance.
- » Within the group, the researchers should divide up the roles of interviewer, note-taker and researcher in charge of observations. After a while, they will swap roles to ensure that everyone can play a different role.
- » In each location, the researchers will focus on two main activities:
 - » **Informal interviews** with local stakeholders/community members. The informal interviews will be based on the questions developed during the previous session for the community consultations. The focus will not be on the sexual exploitation of boys, as this can be a very sensitive issue, but on local stakeholders' perceptions of whether and what risks local boys face, their need for protection and the main differences between boys and girls in terms of risk and protection.

Note: Although these interviews are informal, standard rules on informed consent still apply. Researchers should introduce themselves, explain the purpose of the conversation, and ensure that participants give verbal consent freely. Participation should be voluntary, and individuals should not feel pressured to take part or to answer any specific questions.

- » **Observations** to understand the role of boys within these specific communities and to find out whether they had observed any obvious risks or vulnerabilities for them.
- » Researchers should take notes throughout the fieldwork, then share a summary with the rest of the team the following day.
- » Each group appoints a rapporteur to present findings during the debriefing session.

DEBRIEFING AFTER THE FIELD RESEARCH PRACTICE

Suggested timing: 1.5-2 hours

Facilitation: Appoint a facilitator

Objectives:

1. Jointly reflect on what worked and what could be improved during fieldwork interactions with local communities.

Preparation and Procedure:

- » Each group's rapporteur has 15-20 minutes to share with all the participants the main conclusions of the fieldwork, the challenges encountered and the reactions of local stakeholders to their questions.
- » Once each group has presented, the facilitator leads a discussion around the most common or most difficult challenges.
- » Invite participants to discuss approaches and solutions to address the top 2 or 3 challenges that were mentioned most often, including, for example, how to ask the questions in a different way or how to make the question more nuanced.
- » The lessons learned from this session will be incorporated into the consultation model developed by the participants on the second day.

FIELD RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

INTERVIEWS WITH FRONTLINE WORKERS

SUGGESTED METHODOLOGY AND PROCESS

This tool outlines a suggested process for conducting interviews with frontline workers as part of a broader research initiative on the sexual exploitation of boys. The methodology is designed to be flexible and adaptable to different country contexts, and can be implemented by researchers and civil society organisations working in child protection.

SAMPLE

A sample of 8-12 frontline workers may be selected in each location. The frontline workers to be interviewed will be identified based on the preliminary service mapping conducted by the local researchers. A service mapping template and methodology are provided in the appendices.

It is recommended that frontline workers are professionals who are part of teams in charge of providing direct care to child (**especially boys**) survivors of sexual exploitation. Frontline workers can be identified from different sectors of the protection system in each country, such as:

- » Health and mental health services
- » Socio-economic support (e.g. food, financial aid, basic needs)
- » Shelter and accommodation
- » Formal education or vocational training
- » Legal assistance or case management

PROCEDURE

Tool

Semi-structured interviews are recommended, as they allow for consistency in key areas of inquiry while enabling flexibility based on the participant's role and experience. The interviews will seek to understand the context, existing responses to the exploitation of boys, and the challenges and opportunities for providing quality care to boy survivors.

A sample list of guiding questions is provided in this toolkit and can be adapted as needed.

Informed consent approach

Given the professional nature of the participants, **oral informed consent** may be appropriate for this activity, depending on specific contextual factors including legislation. Interviewers should ensure each participant is fully informed about:

- » The purpose of the research
- » The voluntary nature of participation
- » Confidentiality and anonymity

- » The right to pause or stop at any time
- » Whether the interview will be recorded
- » Who to contact in case of questions or concerns

A sample oral consent script (Appendix E) and a researcher record of consent (Appendix F) template are included in this toolkit. While oral consent is recommended, a sample written consent form is also included in this toolkit for situations where written consent is appropriate or required.

Data collection

Depending on the **participant's consent**, interviews may be either:

- » Recorded (audio only), or
- » Documented through detailed notes

Notes should follow the structure of the interview questions. A minimum of **5 pages of notes per interview** is suggested to ensure sufficient detail.

Data management and confidentiality

Researchers must take steps to protect participant confidentiality and securely manage data throughout the process. These include:

- » Avoiding the use of full names or identifiable information
- » Labeling files only by sector or role (e.g. "Health Worker #1")
- » Storing notes, recordings, and consent forms securely (password-protected devices or encrypted folders)
- » Deleting local files once they have been safely transferred or stored
- » Ensuring that audio recordings and consent forms are never stored in the same location as interview notes.

It is recommended that all data be deleted no later than **six months after the project's completion**, unless otherwise justified by local protocols.

SUGGESTED INTERVIEW GUIDE

This interview guide is designed to support local researchers and civil society organisations in conducting interviews with frontline professionals who work directly with children. The objective is to gather insights on perceptions, experiences, and responses related to sexual exploitation and abuse against boys. This guide may be used in various country contexts. Language and examples should be adapted to reflect the local situation and terminology.

INTRODUCTION

Begin the interview with a short discussion to explain how *sexual exploitation and abuse against boys* is defined for the study. Ensure the interviewee understands this and allow time for clarification before moving forward.

Note for interviewers: The following is a suggested introduction. You may adapt the wording to make it sound natural in your language and cultural context.

Thank you for taking the time to meet today and to take part in our study.

I'm a researcher with [name of local organization]. We are conducting a study to better understand how boys are affected by sexual exploitation and abuse, and how professionals and support services respond to these situations.

For the purposes of this study, sexual exploitation and abuse against boys refers to any form of sexual act committed against a boy, whether by adults or by other children who hold power over him. This includes physical acts, as well as non-physical acts such as online sexual abuse, coercion, verbal harassment, or exposing the child to sexual content.

We are speaking with a wide range of professionals who support children and boys to better understand their experiences and to identify existing practices and responses.

The interview is expected to last approximately one hour. As previously discussed, I will be recording our conversation today to support the note-taking process [if they have provided consent]. You are free to pause or stop the interview at any point, and you may withdraw any information shared.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

If you are ready, I will start recording now.

QUESTIONS

The questions below are optional prompts. You could choose those most appropriate to the interviewee's role and experience. Not all questions need to be asked. Feel free to adapt the language to better fit the local terminology and cultural context.

Perspectives and trends on sexual exploitation and abuse against boys

Note for interviewers: Use the following questions selectively, based on the interviewee's area of work and experience. You may rephrase the questions to fit your own style or the local context. The goal is to understand how sexual exploitation and abuse against boys is perceived and discussed in the interviewee's community or professional setting.

- 1.** In your opinion, are boys at risk of sexual exploitation and abuse in [country]?
- 2.** What are the most common forms in which sexual exploitation and abuse against boys occurs in [country], based on your experience or observations?
 - a)** What are the most common spaces/contexts (e.g., family environment, school, sports settings, online platforms) where sexual exploitation and abuse against boys takes place?
 - b)** Have you ever come across situations where such incidents occurred between boys themselves (of more or less the same age)? Can you provide some insights into this?
 - c)** Are there different motivations among offenders, for example, sexual motivation versus financial motivation?

d) Have you heard of offenders using technology/the Internet/ apps to contact boys online and then exploit them in person, for example, through trafficking or exploitation in prostitution? *(Researchers may mention specific apps known to be used in their country, but should also ask whether the interviewee is aware of other technologies or platforms being used.)*

3. What do you think families or caregivers know about the risks of sexual abuse and exploitation of boys? Does their perception vary across regions or communities - for example, between urban and rural areas - and if so, why?

4. What do you think society/family/ communities expect from boys? What does the society think "it takes" to be respected as a boy/man?

a) Do you think these expectations around the role of men/boys in society have an impact on the way communities/families understand and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse against boys? If so, how?

5. In [country], is there a perception that boys may expose themselves to, or facilitate situations of sexual exploitation and abuse? What do you think about this?

6. In [country], is there a perception that boys are stronger than girls and therefore need less support - or none at all? What do you think about this?

7. In [country], is there a perception that boys require less supervision and are capable of protecting themselves? What do you think about this?

8. Do you think some of your colleagues share these perceptions? If so, how do you think this might influence the way they handle such cases?

9. Based on your experience, if a boy chooses to disclose a situation of sexual exploitation and abuse, what key barriers might he face? And what role would his family play in this situation?

Support services for boy survivors of sexual exploitation and abuse

Note for interviewers: These questions explore how services respond to the needs of boy survivors. You can adapt the wording and choose the questions depending on whether the interviewee works in direct service provision, referral, case management, education, or another field.

10. Among the children you support in cases of sexual exploitation and abuse, approximately what proportion are boys?

a) What is their profile? (age range, cultural background, boys with disabilities, boys on the move, etc.)

11. How would you assess the quality of existing services in [country] for boy survivors of sexual exploitation and abuse?

12. In your opinion, how effective are these services in identifying and responding to cases of sexual exploitation and abuse against boys?

13. How would you describe the availability of resources within your organisation (e.g. number of staff, financial resources, but also specific training and competences within the team) to support boy survivors of sexual exploitation and abuse?

14. What are the main challenges your organisation faces in providing

support to boy survivors of sexual exploitation and abuse (e.g. including lack of internal awareness on the issue)?

- 15.** Are there specific measures in place in [country] aimed at protecting boys from sexual exploitation and abuse? If so, what are these measures?
- 16.** Are there any interventions specifically designed for boys, not strictly related to issues of violence? If so, how are boys involved in these activities?
- 17.** Do you work with families/communities to raise their awareness about the risks of sexual exploitation and abuse against boys?
- 18.** Have you had experience in dealing with cases where information and communication technologies were used to facilitate situations of sexual exploitation and abuse against boys?

Challenges and opportunities in relation to the quality, accessibility and effectiveness of services for boy survivors of sexual exploitation and abuse

Note for interviewers: This section explores structural and practical barriers to supporting boys, as well as possible ways to strengthen service delivery. Tailor the questions to the role of the interviewee and the type of organisation they represent.

- 19.** What are the main barriers to providing appropriate and comprehensive care to boy survivors of sexual exploitation and abuse

in your community? (For example: stigma, lack of training, limited funding, unclear procedures, social norms, etc.)

- 20.** Do you feel that your organisation/sector is prepared to support boy survivors of sexual exploitation and abuse? What resources would you need to be prepared/strengthen your existing capacities?
- 21.** What kind of support (e.g. training, supervision, funding, partnerships, clear procedures) would be most useful to improve how services respond to boys?

Recommendations

Note for interviewers: This section invites the interviewee to reflect on changes that could improve prevention and response to sexual exploitation and abuse against boys. Use this part to gather practical suggestions that may inform future programming, advocacy, or policy development.

- 22.** What do you think needs to change within your organisation to better address sexual exploitation and abuse against boys and provide them with appropriate support?
- 23.** What measures do you consider most effective in preventing sexual exploitation and abuse against boys?
- 24.** In your opinion, what is missing in [country] to better protect boys from sexual exploitation and abuse?
- 25.** Could you share your recommendations for policymakers, donors, or other stakeholders?

CONSULTATIONS WITH COMMUNITIES

SUGGESTED METHODOLOGY AND PROCESS

This section outlines a participatory approach to conducting consultations with community members on social norms, gender biases, and perceptions related to the sexual exploitation of boys. It is designed for civil society organizations and local researchers working with communities to better understand risks faced by boys, as well as local protective practices and responses to harm.

OVERVIEW OF ROLES AND TASKS

A total of two people are needed to successfully carry out the data collection during the consultation:

1. **Facilitator**, who will lead the consultation using the [facilitation guide](#).
2. **Note-taker**, who will take notes and capture participants' quotes using the [note-taking and reporting template](#).

Selection of participants

The recommended **selection criteria** for participation in these consultations is that participants are adults who, due to their role within the community or their families, come into contact with boys. These may include **caregivers of boys**,² as well as **teachers, sports trainers**, and **skilled** craftspersons (for example, those who have boys as apprentices). Participant selection can be guided by existing relationships within the community, ideally through trusted community-based organisations, schools, or local mechanisms. When this is not possible, other outreach channels may be used.

The following elements are recommended to be taken into account while selecting participants:

- » Participants should be aged 18 or above.
- » They should be in contact with boys, either within their families or due to their role within the community.
- » When possible, a gender balance should be ensured.

Local researchers should retain and report basic information on the diversity of community members, for example, their gender, age range, and type of profile.

Informed consent

Due to the nature of the activity and profile of participants, **verbal consent** is recommended. A sample [oral consent script](#) and [recording template](#) are included in this toolkit. A sample [written consent form](#) is also included in this toolkit for situations where written consent is appropriate or required.

² With the term "caregiver" we refer to any person with whom a child lives and who provides daily care to a boy. Traditionally, "caregivers" are a child's parents or legal guardians. However, a caregiver could be any other person who is primarily responsible for ensuring that a boy's basic needs are met. "Caregivers" could therefore be a grandparent, a relative or other trustworthy adult.

Participants should be informed, in accessible language, about:

- » The purpose of the consultation
- » That their contributions will remain anonymous and confidential
- » That the discussion will **not** be recorded
- » Whether compensation is provided
- » How they can raise concerns or complaints

Researchers should complete a record of oral consent for each participant, which should be stored securely and separately from other data.

Conducting the consultations

Each group consultation may last approximately **1.5 to 2 hours** and include **8–12 participants**. If needed, the session can be split into two shorter sessions (e.g. one hour each on different days).

Key reminders prior to the commencement of the consultations:

- » Ensure oral consent has been obtained and recorded
- » Identify and ensure an appropriate space is secured and properly set up

It is recommended to take notes only and do not record the consultations, in order to ensure participants' anonymity. Additionally, recording group discussions is often unreliable due to multiple overlapping voices and may create extra work to extract the relevant

information. During the consultation, both the facilitator and the note-taker should be present. The facilitator should follow the flow of discussion outlined in the facilitation guide.

AFTER THE CONSULTATION: DATA USE AND PROTECTION

Reporting

Following each consultation, the local research team should complete a summary report, using the note-taking template (Appendix D) provided. Reports should reflect participants' views in their own words where possible, and highlight any recurring themes, disagreements, or particularly illustrative points.

Researchers are also encouraged to photograph flipcharts or other visual materials generated during the session.

Data management and confidentiality

All data should be handled in accordance with good data protection practices. This includes:

- » Password protection on all devices used to store notes or reports
- » Secure storage of consent records, separately from other data
- » Deletion of data from researchers' devices once it has been securely transferred
- » Anonymising all reports: no names or identifiable details should appear

SUGGESTED FACILITATORS' GUIDE

This guide offers practical tools and step-by-step facilitation guidance for conducting community consultations focused on boys' experiences, needs, and risks. It includes recommended activities and suggested questions for each section/topic. Consultations can be held in **group settings** over one or two days, and are structured to encourage open discussion, creative mapping, and critical reflection in a safe, participatory space.

This is a flexible framework. Facilitators are encouraged to adapt the language, examples, and approach to fit **the cultural, linguistic, and social dynamics** of the communities they work with.

HOUSEKEEPING AND INTRODUCTIONS (10 MINUTES)

Objective: *To set the tone for the session, build trust, clarify expectations, and ensure that all participants feel comfortable and informed about the process.*

The facilitator welcomes the participants as they arrive and invites them, if they want, to make a name tag with their name or initials.

Consent and Voluntary Participation

- » Ensure all participants have understood the purpose of the consultation.
- » Confirm that **verbal or written consent** has been received, based on what is most appropriate for your context.
- » Clearly explain that participation is **voluntary** and that participants can choose not to answer any question or leave at any time, without consequences.

Introductions

- » The facilitator, the notetaker, and the participants from the communities to briefly introduce themselves.

Housekeeping rules

- » The facilitator shares basic housekeeping rules for the consultations: for example, "one person talking at the time", "no cell phones", etc.

Purpose of the Consultation

- » Explain the focus of the consultation, for example

"We're here today to talk about what it's like to grow up as a boy in [community/country] — the challenges boys face, the things they need to thrive, and how families or communities can support them. The purpose of this study is to use the information collected to inform activities and interventions aimed at supporting boys in their needs and addressing the risks they may encounter in their lives."

Timing and structure

- » Explain how long the session(s) will last and the planned schedule. The full consultation typically takes around 2 hours, including two short breaks. Alternatively, it can be adjusted based on the group's preferences: 1 hour and 40 minutes without breaks; 1 hour

and 30 minutes if conducted with two separate groups (e.g., men and women); or 1 hour if the group prefers to split the consultation into two separate 1-hour sessions.

Researchers should assess which option the group prefers and decide whether to complete the consultation in one day or spread it over two days.

Confidentiality

- » Clarify that while notes will be taken, they will **not include names or any identifying details.**

BEING A BOY IN [COUNTRY] (20 MINUTES)

Objective: Examine individual attitudes about gender differences, roles, etc. with regards to children.

Materials Needed:

- » List of pre-written statements (see below)

ACTIVITY 1

Procedure and tips for facilitators:

1. Read a statement about boys aloud, one at a time.
2. Ask participants to **stand up if they agree** and stay **seated if they disagree.**
 - » Alternative for accessibility: Ask participants to **raise their hand** if they agree, or hold up a colored card.
3. After each statement you can:
 - » Ask if one person from those who agreed and one person from those who disagreed would like to share with the group **why** they feel that

way (voluntary only – if no one wants to speak, that is perfectly fine).

- » Encourage participants to pose questions to those who have opposing views.
- » If all the participants share the same view about a statement, ask, “*Why would someone disagree/agree?*”
- » Some participants may say that they don’t know whether they agree or disagree. If this happens, facilitators can invite them to share more about their reactions to the statement.

Suggested statements:

- » It is easier to raise a girl than a boy.
- » Boys are tough and strong, and should not cry.
- » Boys should be brave when confronted with danger.
- » Boys are not as emotional as girls.
- » Boys are rebellious and violent.
- » Boys will be the breadwinners of the family.
- » Boys will ensure the family name is passed on and so need to maintain their good honor.
- » Boys should be dominant in relationships and make decisions for their girlfriends.
- » Boys can take care of themselves.
- » Adolescent boys can be dangerous sometimes.

ACTIVITY 2

- » In plenary, facilitators can ask participants to share any reflections on the activity:
 - » “*Was there anything that surprised you during this*

activity? For example, how others had different opinions on something you thought was very straightforward?"

- » "Do you think your friends/family would have shared the same opinions as you?"
- » "Do you think these ideas about boys are the same as when you were a child, or have they changed? If they've changed, in what ways?"

Break (10 minutes)

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A BOY IN [COUNTRY] (30 MINUTES)

Objective: Examine participant's attitudes towards the needs of boys

Materials needed:

- » Large sheets of paper or flipcharts
- » Markers
- » Sticky notes or small pieces of paper
- » Tape (if needed)

Procedure:

- » Divide participants into mixed-gender groups, with a maximum of five people per group.
- » Give each group a large sheet of paper, markers, and sticky notes.
- » Ask the groups to think about the following question:
 - » *Where do boys spend their time?*

- » Ask them to draw a **simple map** showing where boys in their community spend their time during a typical day.
- » If groups need help getting started, suggest they **begin at the boy's home**, then draw places he might go throughout the day (e.g., school, market, football field, water source, street corner, mosque/church, friend's house, workplace, etc.).
- » After 10 minutes, give each group sticky notes and ask them to reflect on the following questions. Encourage them to think beyond basic needs like food or shelter, and to consider needs related to boys' well-being - such as **love, friendship, etc.**:
 - » *In your opinion, what are the main needs for a boy to have a happy and safe childhood?*
 - » *And what do you think he needs in order to grow up to be a good man?*
- » Each group then has 10 minutes to place their sticky notes - each representing a "need" - next to the location where that need should be met.
- » Each group has 3-5 minutes to present their "Day in the life of a boy" to the others and explain the reasoning behind their choices.
- » Depending on the time available, facilitators can lead a brief plenary discussion:
 - » *"Do you think there are any additional or different needs you would have included if this exercise was about girls?"*

RISKS FOR BOYS (30-40 MINUTES)

Objective: Understand participants' understanding and awareness of risks boys may encounter in their lives.

This session builds on the previous activity, encouraging participants to think critically about what makes boys vulnerable, where they are most at risk, and what contributes to those risks — from social norms to specific actors (e.g., peers, adults, strangers, institutions).

Materials Needed:

- » Flipchart paper or large sheets
- » Markers or pens
- » Sticky notes (preferably in different colors)
- » Colored stickers: red, yellow/orange, green

Procedure and tips for facilitators:

- » Keep participants in the **same small groups** used in the previous activity.
- » Ask participants to use sticky notes and/or markers of different colors to identify the risks that they think boys encounter in their daily lives in each location
 - » Ask:
 - “What dangers or challenges might boys face here?”
 - “Why do these risks exist?”
 - “Are others involved in creating or increasing this risk — like peers, strangers, employers, or even family members?”.

- » Give groups about 15 minutes for this discussion and mapping.
- » Once risks are identified, provide each group with **colored stickers or pens** to classify each risk by **how likely** it is to happen in real life:
 - » Red = Very likely
 - » Yellow/Orange = Likely
 - » Green = Not likely

Each group has 5 minutes to identify the likelihood/frequency for boys to encounter each risk in their opinion.

- » Each group then has 3-5 minutes to present to the others the risks they identified and explain their choices in terms of the level of danger.
- » Depending on the time available, facilitators can then ask in plenary discussion for participants to reflect on:
 - » *“Do you think some of the risks you identified would not be applicable to girls?”*
 - » *“Are there any additional risks you would have included if the exercise was about girls?”*

CLOSING THE CONSULTATION

- » Thank participants for their time. Remind them how the information shared will be used. Emphasize that notes taken during the session will not include names or identifying information.
- » If possible, provide participants with a small handout or leaflet on tips to engage/parent boys.

CONSULTATIONS WITH BOYS

SUGGESTED METHODOLOGY AND PROCESS

This section outlines a suggested process for preparing and carrying out consultations with boys. These consultations aim to better understand boys' experiences, the challenges they face, and how gender norms shape their lives and the way they are treated by their family and community. The guidance provided here may be adapted to fit your local context, priorities, and organisational needs.

OVERVIEW OF TEAM ROLES AND PREPARATION

To carry out a consultation, three key roles are recommended:

- 1. Facilitator:** Leads the discussion using the facilitation guide. They are responsible for informing both caregivers and children about the consultation and obtaining informed consent. The facilitator also oversees the consultation process, contributes to the reporting as needed, and ensures everything runs smoothly.
- 2. Note taker:** Collects signed consent forms, takes detailed notes using the provided template, and captures as many direct quotes as possible (using nicknames to protect identities). They are also responsible for drafting the final report.
- 3. Child safeguarding focal point:** Does not need to be in the room but must remain available at all times. They are responsible for responding to any safeguarding concerns or disclosures and for following up with affected children. Any concerns should be documented, including how the situation was addressed.

Before the consultations, all team members should participate in a briefing or training session on child safeguarding, consent procedures, and the facilitation guide.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

It is generally recommended that **each consultation group includes 8–12 boys, aged 12–18 years old**.

To ensure diverse perspectives, it is encouraged to include:

- » Boys from **marginalised or underserved backgrounds**;
- » Boys from a mix of **urban and rural areas**;
- » Boys in **varied circumstances**, including those who may be working, on the move, or living in institutional settings (charitable or state-run);
- » Any other **locally relevant factors**, such as ethnic or linguistic minority status, disability, or socio-economic background.

The method of recruitment will vary depending on the context. It may involve existing child or youth networks, or partner organisations such as non-governmental organisations, schools, or community centres.

ENSURING SAFE AND VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Before the consultation, facilitators must explain the purpose of the session in clear, age-appropriate language. Go through the consent form for children, explaining the consultation process and encouraging them to agree only if they fully understand the project, how their data will be collected, and for what purpose it will be used. Each child should provide informed consent, and consent should also be obtained from a parent or legal guardian.

Here are some things to remind the boys of when discussing their consent:

- » It's entirely their choice whether or not to take part in any activity.
- » They do not have to answer questions or participate in every part of the workshop if they do not wish to.
- » It is okay if they need to take a break outside.
- » They can change their mind about taking part at any time or ask for anything they've shared not to be included in the write-up (although in group discussions, it may be difficult to remember who said what).

CHILD SAFEGUARDING AND RISK MANAGEMENT

Before the session, facilitators should ensure that:

- » A child safeguarding risk assessment has been carried out
- » A referral protocol is in place for handling any disclosures or concerns
- » All staff are familiar with and follow a child protection code of conduct

- » Children are informed of how and where they can raise any concerns

It is recommended to display or share a printed, child-friendly Code of Conduct and information on how to raise concerns at the start of the session. This helps to create a safe, respectful, and inclusive space where children feel heard. A suggested version of the Code of Conduct is available in the Appendix H and can be adapted to fit the local context.

DATA MANAGEMENT AND CONFIDENTIALITY

To ensure children's anonymity and safety:

- » Children's identities must remain **anonymous** at all times. Consent forms should be stored **securely and separately** from other data. All devices used to store data (such as laptops or desktops) should be **password-protected**.
- » Local researchers should delete consent forms from their devices within **three months** of completion.

Audio or video recording is not recommended. Data handling should comply with your organisation's data protection standards and child safeguarding policies.

THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

Before starting the consultation, ensure that:

- » All team members have been trained and briefed.
- » Consent forms are signed by parents/caregivers and the boys.

- » The space for the consultation is safe, allowing the boys to take a break, withdraw from the consultation, choose not to answer questions, and speak to a designated focal point if anything upsets them.
- » The session is not being recorded to ensure anonymity of the participants. Only **written notes** should be taken.

NOTE-TAKING AND REPORTING

It is recommended that each consultation be documented using a consistent note-taking and reporting template. This helps ensure that information is captured in a clear, structured, and comparable way across sessions.

Reports may include:

- » A brief summary of the discussion
- » Key themes that emerged, along with direct quotes (use quotation marks and attribute to a nickname or initials)
- » Relevant observations from the facilitator or note taker

A sample note-taking and reporting template is provided in [Appendix I](#).

Make sure that all reporting is anonymised and does not include any personal details or information that could reveal a child's identity. If in doubt, consult your organisation's safeguarding or research lead. It's important to keep in mind that participation should always be voluntary. Children should never be pressured to take part, and an opt-out option should always be offered.

SUGGESTED FACILITATORS' GUIDE

This section offers practical tools and step-by-step facilitation guidance for facilitating group consultations with boys aged 12–18, aiming to create a safe space for meaningful discussions around identity, gender norms, risks, and protective factors. It includes easy-to-follow instructions for each activity, along with suggested tips to help guide the conversation.

This is a flexible framework. Facilitators are encouraged to adapt the language, examples, and approach to fit **the cultural, linguistic, and social dynamics** of the communities they work with.

! If you notice any instances of abuse or concerns about harm involving a participating boy or someone they refer to (e.g., a friend, a family

member), please inform the local safeguarding point and let children know they can speak to them if needed.

HOUSEKEEPING AND INTRODUCTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Materials needed:

1. Printed child-friendly Code of Conduct
2. Copies of the referral protocol (ideally one per participant)
3. Extra consent forms (in case any are missing)

Procedure:

- » **Welcome** the children and invite them to sit around. When everyone is in, thank them for their participation.
- » Encourage each child to choose a **nickname**, and share their **favourite colour** and **favourite online app**.
- » **Explain the focus of the consultation:** their experiences of being boys in their communities, and how this shapes their lives.
- » Emphasise that the space is intended to be **respectful** and **safe**.
- » Reassure participants that:
 - » They do not have to answer any question they are uncomfortable with
 - » Their participation is entirely voluntary and can be stopped at any time
 - » They can take a break at any time
 - » No one will be recorded; only **written notes** will be taken, and their identity will remain confidential
- » Introduce the note-taker and safeguarding focal point. Explain how to contact the focal point if children feel uncomfortable or need support.

- » Sum up to make it very clear to children.

The facilitator may choose to ask a few simple questions to confirm that participants feel informed and comfortable:

- » *What do you do if you feel uncomfortable sharing something?*
- » *What can you do if you feel upset or uncomfortable and you feel like you need a break?*
- » *What can you do if you do not want to take part in the activity anymore?*
- » *Who can you contact if there is something that makes you uncomfortable?*

GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER (10 MINUTES)

This activity may be particularly useful if the participants do not know each other. It aims to break the ice, create a relaxed atmosphere, and help participants remember names.

Materials needed:

A ball, flipchart

Activity:

- » Participants stand in a circle and throw the ball to each other.
- » When someone catches the ball, they say their nickname/pseudonym using alliteration – a word that starts with the same letter as their name – for example: “*Hungry Henri*”.
- » *Hungry Henri* then throws the ball to someone else.

- » The next person must first repeat the alliterative name of the person who threw the ball (“*Hungry Henri*”) and then say their own alliterative name.
- » This continues until the circle is complete. This exercise is good for remembering each other’s names – and it creates some laughs!

Finalise by writing the alliterations on the blackboard or flipchart and leave it there for the rest of the day.

GROUP RULES AND CONFIDENTIALITY (10 MINUTES)

Objectives:

- » To agree on common rules for the discussion
- » To support understanding of the boundaries of confidentiality in a group setting.
- » To help children make informed choices about what they share.

Procedure:

1. Agree on the common rules:

- » Share the printed, child-friendly Code of Conduct.
- » Invite children to ask questions or suggest additional rules.
- » Confirm together that these rules will be followed throughout the session.

2. Discuss confidentiality

To introduce the topic, a symbolic activity may be used:

- » Ask a participant (A) to pretend to squeeze toothpaste from a tube onto the hand of another participant (B).

- » When (A) has pretended to empty the toothpaste, ask (B) how they would put all the toothpaste back into the tube.
- » Let some participants join (B) to think of ways to do it
- » The group will soon come to the conclusion that it is impossible to put all the toothpaste back.

Ask the group to reflect on what this exercise represents in relation to confidentiality and disclosure of personal information. **Use this as a way to prompt discussion about how some things, once shared, cannot be “taken back,” especially in a group.**

Key Points to Emphasise:

- » **In group work you can never guarantee confidentiality.** Children should be mindful of what personal information they choose to share.
- » **Facilitators may have a duty to report information** if a child appears to be at risk of serious harm.
- » Children **can always speak to the facilitator privately** if they have concerns or want to share something one-on-one.

GUIDED DISCUSSION (85 MINUTES)

ACTIVITY 1 - WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A BOY AND A GIRL IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

Suggested timing: 40 minutes

Materials needed: Pens, paper, flipchart, post-its (red, blue, green), and markers.

Objective: To reflect on differences in gender norms that boys and girls experience, and the effects that these gender norms and the pressure to comply with gender roles have on the vulnerability to sexual exploitation and abuse.

Preparation:

You will need two flipchart sheets and markers for each group. On two flipcharts, draw large boxes labelled “Boy” and “Girl”. Write the task and instructions on a flipchart or prepare a printed handout for each group.

Procedure:

1. Divide children into small groups (if appropriate), or conduct the activity in one large group depending on the context.
2. Ask participants to reflect in groups on the following questions using coloured post-its:

Blue post-its:

- » What is appropriate for a boy/girl to say?
- » What is appropriate for a boy/girl to do?
- » What is appropriate for a boy/girl to feel?

Red post-its:

- » What would be considered *unacceptable* for a boy/girl to say, do, or feel?

Green post-its (outside the boxes):

- » How do boys/girls really *feel inside but don't show*? and/or:
- » What do they *wish* the boys/girls could express or do?

3. Gather all children together. Ask each group to present their main findings (4 minutes per group). Then, lead a discussion around the following questions:
 - » Were there any surprises? Why?
 - » Do boys and girls face different types of risks?
 - » How might gender expectations affect their ability to seek help?
 - » What forms of exploitation or abuse might boys or girls face more often?
 - » What support might boys, in particular, struggle to access?

Remind participants that they may skip any part of the activity and can speak privately to the safeguarding focal point at any time.

ACTIVITY 2 – BOYS IN CONTEXT: PROTECTIVE AND RISK FACTORS FOR EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE OF BOYS

Suggested timing: 45 minutes

Materials needed: Flipchart paper, Visual of “Boys in Context” diagram, an onion, definition of risk/protective factors on a flipchart, flipchart markers, post-it notes (two colours: e.g. yellow and pink)

Objective: To explore protective and risk factors that influence boys’ vulnerability to exploitation and abuse, using an ecological framework

Procedure

1. Introduce the “children in context” ecological framework:
This session focuses on “boys in context.”

“This is a bit like peeling an onion, where there are different layers upon layers. We will explore factors at different levels that influence boy’s risks to, and/or protection from, different forms of exploitation and abuse.”

Note to facilitator: You can peel an onion in front of participants and show them the layers. Alternatively, you can ask participants if they have peeled an onion and what they saw and felt when they peeled an onion? Acknowledge that peeling an onion can make you cry – and that some of the topics we’ll discuss today might also bring up strong feelings. Explain that this is okay, and that the group is here to support one another.

Using the visual of the diagram (provided below), explain:

- » At the centre is the **boy child**.
- » Boys are often part of families and peer groups. They have interpersonal relationships and close interactions with relatives, siblings and friends. Boys are also influenced by wider peers in their schools and communities – in-person and online.
- » Boys are also part of communities, and their choices and opportunities are shaped by the social and gender norms promoted

within them. These norms can be influenced by religious or traditional leaders, as well as other community figures, both online and offline. In addition, local groups, resources, and services available in the community can also impact boys’ decisions and behaviours.

- » At the broader level, there are a range of institutions (schools, hospitals, local and national governance structures), as well as laws, policies, and budget allocations that influence the lives of boys and their families.
- » In the outer circle, there are broader structural factors at the national, regional, and international levels – for example, the economy, politics, historical inequalities, and discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, race, or age.



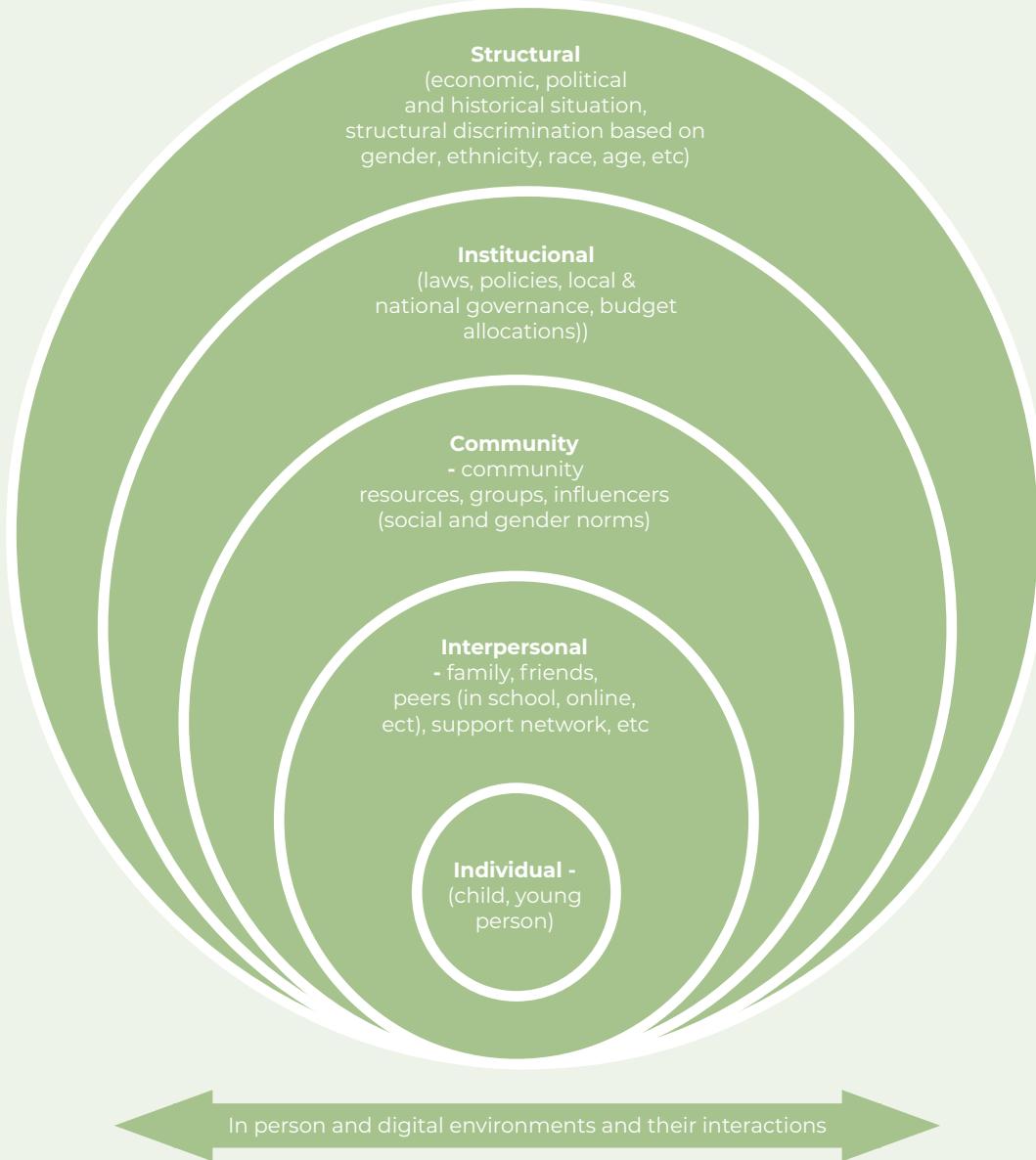


Figure 1: Boys in Context - Ecological Framework

2. Protective and risk factors

Explain that at each level of the framework there are:

a) Protective factors: characteristics or actions that reduce the likelihood of boys being exposed to exploitation and abuse or that increase prevention and protection of boys from abuse (online and/or in-person). For example, *when boys grow up in families where parents or caregivers are consistently caring, meet their needs, and avoid being judgmental, it becomes easier for them to communicate openly. This*

strong connection helps children make healthier choices.

b) Risk factors: characteristics or actions that increase the likelihood of boys being exposed to exploitation and abuse or that reduce protection (online and/or in-person). *For example, when boys are expected to hide their emotions and avoid showing vulnerability, they become more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse because perpetrators know these boys are less likely to speak out or seek help.*

Note: Keep the definitions visible during group work.

3. Group work on protective and risk factors

Divide the participants into **four groups**, each working on a different layer of the framework. Give each group flipchart paper, yellow and pink post-it notes to explore protective factors and risk factors to exploitation and abuse at a specific level.

Group focus areas

» **Group 1) Interpersonal level**

Interactions with family, close friends, teachers, and relatives.

» **Group 2) Community level**

Community resources, norms, and influencers (e.g. religious/ traditional leaders).

For example, in cultures where boys are expected to appear strong and discouraged from sharing their problems or asking for help, they may be more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

» **Group 3) Institutional level**

Laws, policies, local and national governance, budget allocations for children's protection services, quality education, etc.

For example, at the institutional level, strong laws and policies on child protection, including online safety, can serve as important protective factors.

» **Group 4) Structural level**

Economic, political and historical contexts, discrimination, poverty, inequality.

For example, at the structural level, historical inequalities

and discrimination against certain ethnic groups can lead to higher levels of poverty and unemployment. This, in turn, increases the risk of children being pushed into harmful work and exposed to exploitation and abuse in the workplace.

Task:

For the level assigned to your group spend 25 minutes to discuss and identify:

» **Protective factors**, characteristics or actions **at this level** that reduce the likelihood of boys being exposed to exploitation and abuse.

What forms of exploitation and abuse are these?

» **Risk factors**, characteristics or actions **at this level** that increase the likelihood of boys being exposed to exploitation and abuse.

What forms of exploitation and abuse are these? What should be done and by who to address it?

After 25 minutes, invite all groups to present their work in plenary.

Reflection and closing:

Thank each group for the presentations that help us "peel the onion" and understand boys' realities. Like peeling an onion, understanding and witnessing some of the risk factors and the types of exploitation and abuse that boys are exposed to may make us want to cry. On the other side, there are protective factors, strengths, and positive actions at each level that we can build upon and that give us hope. It is important to draw upon our own support networks and other protective factors to increase prevention and protection from all forms of exploitation and abuse.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

- » Thank children for their time, ideas, and for sharing their thoughts.
- » Invite them to reflect and ask:
“Is there anything you shared that you would prefer to take out of the notes?”
- » Remind them they can still share this after the session if they prefer.
- » Explain the next steps in simple terms:
 - › The information shared today will help shape national and regional reports.
 - › These findings will be shared with people working in child protection, to help improve support for boys.
 - › A summary of the findings will be shared with participants once all reports are finalised.
- » Ask if anyone has questions.
- » Remind participants how to contact the safeguarding focal point if they want to talk or share something privately later.



APPENDIX A: SUGGESTED PRE-TRAINING EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is designed to help us understand participants' current knowledge and training needs related to **gender, masculinities, and the sexual exploitation of boys**. Your responses will support the development of a relevant and responsive training program.

First Name and Last Name: *(optional)*

Organization:

Country:

1. How would you assess your understanding of gender-based biases and masculinities?

- » I have **no knowledge** of the topic
- » I have **limited** knowledge of the topic
- » I have **good** knowledge of the topic
- » I have **excellent** knowledge of the topic

2. How would you describe the difference between "sex" and "gender"?

3. How would you assess your understanding of the sexual exploitation and abuse of boys?

- » I have **no knowledge** of the topic
- » I have **limited** knowledge of the topic
- » I have **good** knowledge of the topic
- » I have **excellent** knowledge of the topic

4. Could you please share some examples of the types of sexual exploitation of boys in your country?

5. As part of this study, who should we consult (individuals, services, agencies, institutions, departments, professional bodies) because they have knowledge of or expertise on the issue of the sexual exploitation of boys?

6. In your opinion, what are the main challenges to conducting research on the sexual exploitation of boys in your country?

7. Among the following skills that are useful for conducting your research effectively, which do you think are important for you in the upcoming training?

- » Understanding key research safeguards
- » Research ethics
- » Data management
- » Participatory methods
- » Research design
- » Sampling techniques
- » Recording, interviewing, transcription, and note-taking
- » Conducting interviews
- » Communicating research findings
- » Advocacy and engagement strategies

8. Does your organisation work with or implement projects in communities? If yes, please provide more details.

9. Does your organisation work with boys, boys' groups, or groups of young men? If yes, please provide more details.

APPENDIX B: SUGGESTED SCENARIOS TO STIMULATE DISCUSSIONS ON CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE

The following scenarios are designed to provoke thought and stimulate discussion on the complex dynamics of child sexual exploitation and abuse, particularly in relation to gender and masculinity. They can be used in group activities to encourage participants to challenge assumptions, question biases, and deepen their understanding of child sexual exploitation and abuse in real-world contexts.

SCENARIO 1

Amadou is 19 years old. He pays his 17-year-old cousin, Seydou, to undress while filming. Seydou agrees to do it without concerns.

» ***Do you think that Seydou is a victim of child sexual exploitation?***

Amadou later posts this video to his online social media accounts that are publicly visible (no payment is needed to access them).

» ***Do you think that Amadou has committed child sexual exploitation?***

Ibrahim, who does not know Amadou nor Seydou, finds and watches the video online from his home in Abidjan.

» ***Do you think that Ibrahim has committed child sexual exploitation?***

SCENARIO 2

Siaka is a 7-year-old boy whose mother struggles to make ends meet in their rural village. His uncle, Yaya, has a good government job and has always given money to help the family out. Recently, during a visit to Siaka's family home, Uncle Yaya asked Siaka to sit on his lap.

» ***Do you believe that Siaka is a victim of child sexual exploitation?***

While Siaka was sitting on Yaya's lap, Yaya began to touch his private parts. Siaka's mother walked into the room and realised that something was happening. Yaya reminded her of how happy he was to be able to visit today and provide her with some money.

» ***Do you think that Yaya has committed child sexual exploitation?***

Siaka's mother nodded, closed the door and went out of the house.

» ***Do you believe that Siaka's mother has committed child sexual exploitation?***

SCENARIO 3

Traore is a 16-year-old boy, who prides himself on being a hard worker. When his adult neighbour, Fatima, asked if he could help work on her farm for payment, he was happy to help. While Traore was working around the farm, Fatima invited him into the house for lunch. She sat very close to Traore and touched his arm often while chatting. Traore felt very uncomfortable with this.

» ***Do you believe that Traore is a victim of child sexual exploitation?***

The next time Traore helped at the farm, the same thing happened at lunch. This time, Fatima touched his thigh. This also made Traore very uncomfortable.

» ***Do you believe that Fatima has committed sexual exploitation?***

SCENARIO 4

Drissa is 15-years-old, although he looks older. He self-identifies as gay. On the weekends, Drissa meets men, who he describes as his 'boyfriends'. He has sex with them and accepts money and gifts.

» ***Do you believe that Drissa is a victim of child sexual exploitation?***

When asked about these encounters, Drissa says that it is his choice and that other people should mind their own business.

» ***Do you believe that the men who Drissa has sex with have committed sexual exploitation?***

For additional scenarios on myths and stereotypes surrounding child sexual exploitation, please refer to the [dedicated webpage](#) on ECPAT's website.

APPENDIX C: SCOPING MAPPING OF EXISTING SERVICES FOR BOYS VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION

SUGGESTED METHODOLOGY AND PROCESS

The aim of this activity is to map existing services for boys who have been subjected to sexual abuse and exploitation and to document information about the availability and accessibility of such services.

Suggested steps

- 1. Start by creating a template**, in Excel or another spreadsheet format, for the scoping mapping. Key elements that can be included in the template include:
 - » Basic details: name of the organisation, type of entity, address, and contact information
 - » Target groups: including age, gender, characteristics (e.g. unaccompanied, migrant, street-connected), and type of concern
 - » Service types: such as health care, accommodation/shelter, education and vocational training, legal aid, livelihood support, etc.
 - » Service details: including working hours, how to access the service (e.g. referral, walk-in), and whether services are specifically for boys or open to broader groups
 - » Reach and focus: estimated number of boys served annually, and how many of those are victims of sexual abuse and exploitation
- 2. Define the geographical area for mapping.** Clearly determine the region, district, community, or country where services will be mapped. This can be based on areas of high risk, operational presence, or strategic priority.
- 3. Compile a list** of all the services, organisations and groups in the selected area that provide care, protection, or support to boys, including those who may have been subjected to sexual abuse or exploitation.

- 4. Collect detailed information on services.** Gather information by conducting an online search and/or directly contacting service providers via phone, email, or in-person visits.
- 5. Identify additional entities through referrals.** Ask each organisation whether they are aware of other formal or informal entities or professionals providing relevant services, including youth-led, survivor-led, or women-led community groups.
- 6. Complete the service mapping template.** Include service details, access modalities, working hours, referral requirements, and whether services specifically target boys or survivors of abuse.
- 7. Summarise key findings.** Once the data is collected, develop a short summary highlighting key observations: What types of services are most/least available? Are there any geographic gaps? Do services respond specifically to the needs of boys or survivors of sexual exploitation?

APPENDIX D: CONSULTATIONS WITH COMMUNITIES - SUGGESTED NOTE-TAKING AND REPORTING TEMPLATE

This template is designed to help facilitators and notetakers **capture key insights and direct quotes** from community consultations in a consistent and useful way.

Note-Taking Instructions

During the consultations, the note takers should focus on:

- » Quotes for use in future analysis (marked with quotation marks “...”)
- » Topics and concepts that come up regularly.
- » Common trends shared by multiple caregivers and discording opinions that generate discussion around the topic.

General information

Consultation number: Consultation No.1
Consultation No.2

Facilitator(s) name(s):

Note taker(s) name(s):

Country/location:

Date when the consultation took place (DD/MM/YYYY):

Number of participants:

Participants information:

- » How participants were recruited (how did you reach out to them, etc.)
- » Profile of participants (gender, age-range, type of profile, etc.)

Notes from the consultation following the structure of the sections outlined above

SESSION 1. BEING A BOY

Activity 1: try to record how many participants agree and disagree with each statement and what reasons they give. Record if specific groups of participants tend to answer one way and other participants another (especially different responses by women or men as well as older and/or younger participants).

Activity 2: make sure to record the main discussions on the different points/questions.

SESSION 2. A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A BOY

Make sure to take photos of the flipchart produced by all groups. Write down what each group shares as their summary. Pay particular attention to discussion during the plenary at the end and anything participants mention with regards to differences they see between girls and boys.

SESSION 3. RISKS FOR BOYS

Make sure to take photos of the flipchart produced by all groups. Write down what each group shares as their summary. Pay particular attention to discussion during the plenary at the end and anything participants mention with regards to differences they see between girls and boys when it comes to risks they encounter in their daily lives.

APPENDIX E: SUGGESTED ORAL CONSENT SCRIPT FOR KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS AND CONSULTATIONS WITH COMMUNITIES

Note for interviewers: the text below presents important information to share with participants. The content of the text below should be shared with all participants; however, the wording is not fixed and should not be repeated verbatim. Wording can be adapted by interviewers to be closer to spoken language.

Introduction: Hello, my name is [your name]. I'm currently working with [local organisation name] as part of a study that aims to understand the lives of boys, the risks they face, and improve how services respond to boys who have been subjected to sexual exploitation or abuse.

About the project: We are speaking with people like yourself [for interviews: frontline professionals who work directly with children/for consultations: members of the community] to better understand the current situation, the services that exist, and any challenges or opportunities in providing quality support to boys. Your participation will help inform future improvements in protection and care systems.

If you decide to take part in this project, here's what to expect:

» **Interviews/ consultations/ tasks description:**

- » [For interviews] I'll have a 45-minute to one-hour conversation with you (depending on your preference), during which I'll ask a range of questions to better understand your perspective on the context, the current response to the exploitation of boys, and the challenges and opportunities in providing quality care for boy survivors.
- » [For group consultations] You will join a meeting with other community members, where we will discuss your opinions about boys' lives in your community.

» **Data sharing/ access/ confidentiality:** The answers you give will be used in the research we are conducting but nobody will know the information comes from you. We will only refer to your role - for example, "frontline worker in the health sector" or "community member" - without naming you personally. In group discussions, other participants will hear what you say, but we aim to create a

safe environment and will ask everyone to keep what is shared in the meeting confidential. We kindly ask you not to share specific information—such as names or locations—about any children. If you are concerned about the safety of a specific child, please speak privately with the facilitator at the end of the meeting or call the helpline at [xxx].

- » **Recording/notes:** With your permission, I would like to make an audio recording of our discussion to make sure I'm getting an accurate record of the interview. I will also take some notes in my notebook.
- » **Compensation:** Unfortunately, the study is not able to provide any compensation for your time.
- » **Risks:** Some parts of this interview may be difficult, as I'll be asking for your views on the sexual exploitation of children. You are free to skip any questions you're not comfortable answering, take a break at any time, or stop the interview altogether.
- » **Rights:** You are under no obligation to take part. You can ask me any questions you want before or throughout; you can also withdraw at any stage of the interview without giving a reason or up to two weeks after the interview has taken place.
- » **Complaints/ concerns procedure:** If you have any complaints or concerns, please feel free to contact the organization I work for at *[contact details of the local organisation]*.
- » **Questions/concerns:** Do you have any questions?
- » If not, and if you're comfortable, we can start now. Thank you.

APPENDIX F: SUGGESTED RESEARCHER RECORD OF ORAL CONSENT FOR KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS AND CONSULTATIONS WITH COMMUNITIES

Interviewee/Participant Number (please note all participants for this activity will remain anonymous):

Date: _____

Location (City/Country): _____

Project explained: Yes No

Confidentiality/
anonymity explained: Yes No

Consent received: Yes No

Notes taken: Yes No

[For interviews:]
Participant agreed to
recording?: Yes No

[For interviews:]
Interview Recorded: Yes No

APPENDIX G: SUGGESTED WRITTEN CONSENT FORM FOR KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS AND CONSULTATIONS WITH COMMUNITIES

If you choose to obtain written consent, the following form offers a sample that you can use. The wording is not fixed and can be adapted to suit your context, the participants you are working with, and your preferred way of communicating. Above all, it is important that participants clearly understand the purpose of the project, what their participation involves, and their rights - and that their agreement is informed and voluntary.

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

We are carrying out a study to better understand the lives of boys, the risks they face, and how services and systems can better support boys who have been subjected to sexual exploitation or abuse. As part of this, we are speaking with people like you — professionals and community members who know the situation on the ground — to learn from your experiences, insights, and observations. Your participation will help improve how boys are protected and how survivors are supported in the future.

Given your expertise in this field, you are cordially invited to participate in a meeting with us. Your views will help us understand the current state of sexual exploitation and abuse of boys in [location/country/region], what is working, what the challenges are, and where improvements are needed.

If you decide to take part in this project, here's what to expect:

- » **For interviews:** You will take part in a 45-minute to one-hour conversation (depending on your preference). The discussion will include a range of questions to better understand your perspective on the context, the current response to the exploitation of boys, and the challenges and opportunities in providing quality care for boy survivors.
- » **For group consultations:** You will join a meeting with other community members, where you will be invited to share your views on boys' lives in your community.

ANONYMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

- » The answers you provide will be used in the research we are conducting, but nobody will know the information comes from you.
- » We will only refer to your role, for example, “frontline worker in the health sector” or “community member”, without naming you personally.
- » In group discussions, other participants will hear what you say. We aim to create a safe and respectful space, and all participants will be asked to keep what is shared confidential.
- » Please do not share specific identifying information, such as names or locations, about any children. If you are concerned about the safety of a specific child, please speak privately with the facilitator at the end of the meeting or call the helpline at [xxx].

COMPENSATION

The project is unable to provide any financial benefit for the participants. However, we will ensure that the meeting is conducted at a time and place of your convenience.

RISKS

Some parts of the discussion may be difficult, as we will ask for your views on the sexual exploitation of children. You are free to skip any questions you are not comfortable answering, take a break at any time, or stop participating altogether.

YOUR RIGHTS

You are under no obligation to take part.

You can ask any questions you wish before or during the discussion.

You can also withdraw from the project at any time, or ask to have your responses withdrawn up to two weeks after your participation.

CONCERNS OR COMPLAINTS

If you have any questions about taking part in the meeting, please contact [local organisation name] at [contact details of the local organisation].

ID Number: _____ (to be completed by interviewer, if no consent provided to share name)

CONSENT: KEY INFORMANTS INTERVIEWS

Please read the below statements to make sure you are clear about the project and please circle your response to indicate related consent to participate.

I have been clearly informed about the project	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Any questions that I have were answered by the interviewer	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
I understand how data I provide will be used by the project	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
I agree that my name will be identified in the final report	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
I understand how to contact <i>[local organisation name]</i> with concerns or complaints	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
I agree for this meeting to be recorded	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

I hereby give my consent to participate in the interview.

Name _____

Title _____

Signature _____

Date _____

APPENDIX H: SUGGESTED CHILD-FRIENDLY CODE OF CONDUCT (TO DISPLAY IN THE ROOM)

This is a suggested set of simple and friendly group agreements that can help create a respectful and safe space during consultations with children. It is recommended that facilitators print and display this code in the room and review it together with participants at the start of the consultation. Children may be invited to adapt or add their own rules.

We want to make sure that everyone's well-being and safety are taken into consideration during this discussion. To help us all ensure this, here are a few rules we should keep in mind at all times:

- 1. Treat others as you would like to be treated:** Do not shout, discriminate, tease, bully, or use any kind of bad language. Be mindful when making jokes, as they could hurt others' feelings.
- 2. Respect everyone:** We are all equal, no matter our race, gender, age, religion, education, cultural background, or anything else.
- 3. Listen and give space for everyone to speak:** We want to hear what all participants have to say. Let's not interrupt and make sure everyone has a chance to share their thoughts. If you are not sure when is the right time to speak – the facilitator will help organise this.
- 4. Respect each other's confidentiality:** Personal stories or experiences shared in the group should stay in the group. Personal don't repeat them outside the room.
- 5. Be yourself!** You have been invited to participate because we want to hear what you have to say. There are no wrong answers, and it's great if we have different opinions.

Would you like to add anything to these rules?

If anyone (child or an adult) treats you in a way that feels wrong, or if you notice someone behaving badly towards another person, or going against the Code of Conduct in any way, please share that information with [Safeguarding Focal Point Name]. They are available to support you.

APPENDIX I: NOTE-TAKING AND REPORTING TEMPLATE FOR CONSULTATIONS WITH BOYS

This template offers a suggested format for capturing key points, quotes, and insights during consultations with boys. It can be used by note-takers during the session and/or to prepare a summary report afterwards. Facilitators and note-takers are encouraged to adapt it as needed to fit their reporting requirements.

Consultation number:	
Facilitator(s) name(s)	
Note taker(s) name(s):	
Location (City/Country):	
Date when the focus group took place (DD/MM/YYYY):	
Number of participants:	
Participants information: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How were participants recruited? (e.g. Were they already part of ongoing programmes or networks?)• Did the session involve outreach to specific groups (e.g. working children, children on the move, boys in institutions, etc.)?• Were any community partners involved in recruitment?	
Record all key themes, reflections, group responses, and participant quotes here. Use section headers or timestamps if helpful.	

APPENDIX J: SUGGESTED SAFEGUARDING RISK ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE FOR CONSULTATIONS WITH BOYS

This template is designed to help organisations identify and address potential safeguarding risks before engaging in consultations with children. It should be carefully reviewed and adapted to the local context and relevant national legislation before implementation.

Main risks	Probability (High/ Medium/Low)	Impact (High/ Medium/Low)	Risk mitigation measures
The venue/location of the activity does not adapt to the participants' needs (including travel feasibility)			
Insufficient safeguarding information is provided to the children participating in the consultations.			
Background information about the activity is difficult for child participants to understand.			
The environment feels unsafe for children to share their opinions and experiences freely.			

Main risks	Probability (High/ Medium/Low)	Impact (High/ Medium/Low)	Risk mitigation measures
Direct experiences of child sexual abuse are raised during the consultations (triggering conversations).			
Insufficient attention is paid to children's vulnerabilities causing children to be exposed to sensitive issues in an uncontrolled manner.			
Inappropriate behaviour occurs between children, or between adults and children within the group.			
The identities of the participating children are insufficiently protected.			
Consultations might take too long for the children to be engaged			
Individuals engaging with children are not trained to manage, identify, or respond to safeguarding concerns.			
The consultants facilitating the consultations do not have adequate child safeguarding measures in place			
<i>[Add any additional risks]</i>			

APPENDIX K: SUGGESTED REFERRAL PROTOCOL TEMPLATE FOR CONSULTATIONS WITH BOYS

Please adapt this referral protocol to your specific context prior to the delivery of the consultation.

If you become aware that a child may be at risk of harm, **please report the concern (orally or in writing) directly to the safeguarding focal point within the same working day.**

Always inform the child of their options for seeking help or support. This includes providing them with the contact details for the most appropriate local hotline or child protection services.

Safeguarding focal point: _____

Local hotline contact details: _____

APPENDIX L: SUGGESTED INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR CAREGIVERS FOR CONSULTATIONS WITH BOYS

The text below contains important information to share with participants' parents or caregivers. While the content should be communicated to all caregivers, the exact wording is flexible and should not be repeated verbatim. Wording can be adapted by interviewers to be closer to spoken language.

Introduction: Hello, my name is *[your name]*. I'm currently working with *[name of local organisation]*. We are planning to organise face-to-face consultations with boys aged 12-18 to talk about their experiences, positives and challenges of being a boy in their country, and how they think being a boy impacts their life and the way they are treated by their families and communities.

Based on what they share with us, we will develop messages for relevant people in their country – for example, in the government – to help ensure they understand boys' perceptions and points of view when designing activities and programmes.

A safeguarding focal point will be available throughout the entire activity to ensure the children's well-being. The consultations are intended to take place in person and will last approximately **2 hours**. Participation will always remain voluntary, and children are welcome to step out at any point if they feel uncomfortable.

Please read the information in this form carefully and only sign if you understand it well and are happy to give your consent. You have the opportunity to ask questions and discuss the information with your child. If you agree to your child participating, this form will be used to record your permission.

Your child's input will be anonymised and included in a report that will be presented to the governments, civil society organizations and other stakeholders to promote better protection of boys from sexual exploitation. We assure you that no personal details that can identify the child under your care will be shared. Your child's privacy and choices are our top priority. If you decide to withdraw your consent, even after signing this form, this is okay. Please contact *[insert contact point email]*.

Agreement

I understand that by signing this consent form, I grant permission for my child to participate in the upcoming consultations.

I agree that the child under my care is invited to provide input during these consultations.

I understand that the consultations will involve taking notes of the children's conversations and the use of anonymised quotes.

Having read and understood the above details, and having had the opportunity to ask questions, I _____,

- Allow the child under my care to participate in the consultations, if they wish to
- Do not allow the child under my care to participate in the consultations

I understand that I will not be paid or compensated for giving my permission.

I confirm that this consent form has been explained to me in a language I understand, and I have had the chance to ask questions and receive adequate answers.

I have been informed about the voluntary nature of participation and anonymity of the consultations, and that the participating child can refuse to take part at any time without consequences. I understand that I have the right to withdraw my consent at any time, even after signing this form. I can do this by contacting *[insert contact point email]* to withdraw consent.

I know that I can report anything that made me or the child under my care feel uncomfortable, disrespected, or harmed to *[insert safeguarding focal point contact details]*.

I, _____ understand all of the information in this Consent Form and freely and voluntarily agree to allow the child under my care, _____ born on _____, to participate.

Signature of parent, caregiver or legal guardian

Date

Email address we can contact you at: _____

To be filled by Person Obtaining Informed Consent

I have fully explained this research to the child participant. I have discussed the purpose and procedures, the possible risks and benefits, and that participation in the consultations is completely voluntary.

Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent

Date

APPENDIX M: SUGGESTED INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR CHILDREN

The text below presents important information to share with participants. The content of the text below should be shared with all participants; however, the wording is not fixed and should not be repeated verbatim. Wording can be adapted by interviewers to be closer to spoken language.

Introduction: Hello, my name is *[your name]* and I work with *[local organisation]*. We are planning to organise face-to-face consultations with boys aged 12-18 to talk about their experiences, positives and challenges of being a boy in their *[location/country/region]*. We also want to understand how they think being a boy affects their life and the way they are treated by their families and communities.

Based on what participants tell us, we will create messages for relevant people in their country - for example, government officials, to help them better understand the views and experiences of boys when designing activities and programmes.

We are very happy that you are interested in joining our consultations. The consultation will last about **2 hours**. At the beginning of the activity, we'll explain what we are going to do and why, and you can ask as many questions as you like. It's really important that you understand everything and that you feel comfortable joining the discussion.

If you choose to take part, we will ask you how you what name you'd like to use during the activity. We suggest choosing a nickname, but if you prefer to use your real first name, that is okay too. Your personal information will never be used in our report. You can also always ask us to remove anything you said during the discussion, although sometimes it can be hard to know who said what if many people are talking at the same time.

If anything during the activity makes you feel uncomfortable, or you're not happy with how things went, just tell *[name of the facilitator or child safeguarding focal point]* or you can send a message by email to *[insert contact]*.

Please take your time to understand this information and ask any questions you have. We want to make sure that you are happy with joining this discussion! Your ideas, along with other children's ideas, are important to us.

It is important for you to know that:

- » It's your choice whether or not to join. You will not get in trouble for saying no!
- » We also asked your parents/caregivers if they are okay with you joining. But even if they say yes, your choice is the most important and you can still say no.
- » You can ask as many questions as you want now or later.
- » If you change your mind later on and want to stop, that's totally okay. You can refuse to participate whenever you want, even after the activity has started. Just let us know!
- » We created a simple **Code of Conduct** to help everyone feel safe and respected during the session.
- » You can **leave at any time** or skip any part of the activity.
- » You can always talk to *[Safeguarding Focal Point's contact details]* if you have any questions or need help.

Please let us know:

1. Do you feel like you have all the information you need to decide if you want to join the consultation? Yes No
2. Do you feel like you had the chance to ask questions, and that your questions were answered well enough? Yes No
3. Do you feel okay with us gathering your experiences, positives and challenges of being a boy in your country, and how you think being a boy impacts your life and the way you are treated by your family and community, and bring your ideas to the attention of people that have the responsibility to ensure boys are protected? Yes No
4. Are you aware that you can choose to not participate in any part of the activity if you don't feel like it? Yes No
5. Do you feel okay about joining the activity? Yes No
6. Do you have any needs for additional support that we should know about? (mobility, etc.) Yes No
7. Do you understand that your personal information will remain confidential, and you can make a complaint in case you felt unsafe or uncomfortable during the activity? Yes No

If you answered yes to all of the questions, please confirm below that you understand everything and are okay with joining.

I, _____, confirm that I understood everything in this form and that I would like to join and participate in this activity.

To be filled by Person Obtaining Informed Consent

I have fully explained this research to the child participant. I have discussed the purpose and procedures, the possible risks and benefits, and that participation in the consultations is completely voluntary.

Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent

Date



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For more information:

