



## DECISION TREE

# When and How to Consult with Adolescents

This tool is intended for use by the client's gender/social/GBV specialists to determine if direct consultation with adolescents (10-18 years of age) is necessary and can be safely conducted. It should be used in conjunction with the tool titled: Session Plan for Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Consultation with Adolescents<sup>3</sup>

In general, we discourage direct consultation with adolescents on sexual exploitation and abuse due to the potential harms. If it is absolutely essential that adolescents be consulted, it is important to arrange adequate staffing, safety and services.

**1**

### Staffing<sup>1</sup>

☐ Is there someone with child participation expertise in the team?

**If not:**

☐ Can you hire someone with child participation expertise, or partner with a community-level organization with child participation experience?

☐ Have all team members completed background checks and signed codes of conduct?

☐ Have all team members received training on codes of conduct and safeguarding?

☐ Have all staff who will be interacting or working with children received training on child-friendly communication and discussing sensitive topics with children?

**2**

### Safety

During stakeholder engagement, were adults who have direct contact with children (e.g. teachers, parents, social workers, child focused organizations) asked to identify risks associated child participation in this context?

- ☐ What risks were identified?
- ☐ Are there measures that can be taken to address these risks (mitigation strategies)?

Have mitigation strategies been identified for the most common risks?

- ☐ Has a safe space for consultations with children been identified where discussions can be confidential?
- ☐ Is safe transportation available for children who need it to participate in a consultation? (e.g. roadworthy vehicle, driver background checks/training)?

☐ Can you minimize potential risks of stigmatization for children participating? (e.g. ensuring that child consultations are not publicized; protecting confidentiality and anonymity of participants; possibly integrating consultations with existing social or sporting activities)

**3**

### Services<sup>2</sup>

☐ Has a focal point been appointed to receive reports or feedback from children participating in stakeholder consultations?

☐ Has a referral pathway been established identifying child friendly service providers, in case a child discloses incidents of abuse or exploitation?

### IF YOU ANSWER NO TO ANY OF THE ABOVE

It is not appropriate to engage directly with children, including adolescents. You should still take into account the unique needs and risks for children in your project. For example,

- » Engage with adults, particularly young adults, who have direct contact with children (teachers, parents, social workers, child-focused organizations) and can represent the views and needs of diverse children.
- » Ensure that child representatives can safely be engaged in the process of informing the project about risks of child sexual exploitation and abuse.
- » Integrate questions about risks to children and strategies for mitigating these risks in stakeholder consultations.

### IF YOU ANSWER YES TO ALL OF THE ABOVE

Consultations with children can proceed in accordance with World Bank policies and procedures. Refer to the linked tools and resources.

#### NEXT STEPS:

- » Develop a clear plan for safe, ethical, and meaningful adolescent participation.
- » Present information in a child-friendly way
- » Include diverse adolescents, keeping in mind gender, age, disability status, migrant status, ethnicity and socio-economic status. Ensure that

consultation schedules, sites and activities are accessible to diverse children (e.g. accommodating school-aged children's schedules, identifying locations that are physically accessible for children with disabilities).

#### TOOLS RELATED TO CHILD-FRIENDLY CONSULTATIONS

- » Plan for child participation: [PLANNING EVENTS WITH CHILDREN: A Nine Basic Requirements Mini Guide](#) + [Roger Hart's ladder of participation](#)
- » [World Vision's involving marginalized children in consultations and involving persons with disabilities](#)
- » Content: [Moderating events with children](#)

## Risks to children should be considered and addressed by all World Bank funded projects<sup>4</sup>

Consultations with adolescents can provide valuable information to the project, including identifying specific risks to children and appropriate mitigation strategies. Adolescents, defined by the UN as those between the ages of 10 and 19, may be engaged in consultation processes more easily than younger children.<sup>5</sup> We do not propose that World Bank projects engage in consultation activities with children under the age of 10. However, consultations with adolescents are different to those involving adults and carry unique risks of harm. For this reason, **consultations with adolescents should only take place when considerations for staffing, safety and services can be addressed**, as described above. Where direct consultations with adolescents are not safe or possible, there are alternative ways to gather information about the risks children face, as described in the box “If you answer no to any of the above”.

1



### Tools around STAFFING

#### Terms of Reference for a local consultant need to ensure experience in Child Protection, and Safeguarding, in particular.

- » Solid experience embedding child safeguarding practices into programs, developing policies, conducting investigations, and handling highly sensitive materials confidentially.
- » Strong skills in identifying, mitigating risks associated with CSEA.
- » Ability to communicate with survivors of abuse in a culturally sensitive way.
- » See UNICEF and IRC, [Caring for Child Survivors of Sexual Abuse Guidelines](#),

Chapter 2: Core Knowledge Areas, page 26- 50, and the [Knowledge assessment tool](#), page 51-57.

#### Codes of Conduct need to contain the following language<sup>6</sup>:

“The World Bank considers children as anyone under the age of 18—even if national law may have a lower age.”<sup>7</sup>  
“Any sexual activity between an adult and an individual below the age of 18 is considered child sexual abuse, except in cases of pre-existing marriage.”<sup>8</sup>  
“Mistaken belief regarding the age of a child is not a defense.”

#### Staff training:

- » A useful half day overview on training [Save the Children \(2016\) Save the Children FUN, SAFE, INCLUSIVE](#)
- » A helpful set of tools and guidance on consultation with children on VAC is available here: [Working together: Including children in research on violence against children – A Resource Pack for Research Practitioners](#)
- » Save the Children, Children’s Consultations in Humanitarian Contexts, especially sections 9.1, 9.2 and 9.3 about selecting and training data collection team members.

2



### Tools around SAFETY

#### Overview:

[UNICEF’s ENGAGED AND HEARD! Guidelines on Adolescent Participation and Civic Engagement](#) has a number of useful sections and tools:

- » p.14 for meaningful participation
- » Risk assessment table p.62

Example of risk assessment tools: [Brave Movement Child Safeguarding Policy](#), Annex 4: Child Participation Risk Assessment (Based on Child Participation Risk Assessment of World Vision International)

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### Tools related to CHILD-FRIENDLY SERVICES

#### Tools to establish a child-friendly referral pathway:

- » UNICEF Adolescent Kit [guide](#) to recognize child protection concerns “TOOL: Responding to child protection concerns”
- » [World Vision](#) guidance to develop/adapt referral pathways for children, Guidance for Developing Level 1 Child Protection Incident Preparedness Plans

This tool was developed by child protection experts from the Care and Protection of Children (CPC) Learning Network working with the World Bank to address child sexual exploitation and abuse. For more information and additional CSEA tools to support your work, visit: <https://www.cpcn.org/resources/six-actions-to-keep-children-safe-from-sea>



*This tool is a product of the CPC Learning Network. It includes lessons learned while supporting the executing agencies of transport projects in Nepal and Bolivia to address risks of child sexual exploitation and abuse. These projects were financed by the World Bank. The content of this tool does not necessarily reflect the views of the World Bank, its Boards of Executive Directors, or the governments they represent.*

<sup>1</sup> World Bank. (2020). [Good Practice Note: Addressing sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment \(SEA/SH\) in investment project financing involving major civil works](#). World Bank Group. Paragraph 49: “If any consultations are to take place with children, they must be carried out by a person trained in child consultations, with an understanding of local culture and customs.”

<sup>2</sup> World Bank. (2020). [Good Practice Note: Addressing sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment \(SEA/SH\) in investment project financing involving major civil works](#). World Bank Group. Paragraph 49: “Before commencing with consultation, teams should be prepared with information related to those providing services to survivors in a community so anyone who discloses violence can be immediately referred.”

<sup>3</sup> In consultation with the Bank, the Borrower’s E&S, GBV and gender specialist may consider engaging children and/or youth in their Stakeholder Engagement Plan. Consultation with children may be considered when (i) projects have been assessed as presenting high or substantial risk of sexual exploitation and abuse; and (ii) when children are the primary project beneficiaries or

clearly affected by the project. [1] Paragraphs 44, 45, and 48 of Addressing sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment (SEA/SH) in investment project financing involving major civil works: Good practice note (3rd ed.)

<sup>4</sup> World Bank. (2020). [Good Practice Note: Addressing sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment \(SEA/SH\) in investment project financing involving major civil works](#). World Bank Group Paragraph 104. “...consultations with people in the communities adjoining the project need to occur throughout the life cycle of the project. These regular consultations should provide opportunities to share information with communities on project-related risks and reporting and response measures, and to identify any issues that may be arising with regard to SEA/SH. This means the consultations should have a particular focus on women, children and other at-risk groups—each of which may require different approaches to enable age- and gender-appropriate content and a safe space for discussion.”

<sup>5</sup> Adolescents, defined by the [UN](#) as those between the ages of 10 and 19, may be engaged in consultation processes more easily than younger children.

<sup>6</sup> World Bank. (2020). [Good Practice Note: Addressing sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment \(SEA/SH\) in investment project financing involving major civil works](#). World Bank Group

<sup>7</sup> 16 Articles 1 of the UN “Convention on the Rights of the Child” defines children as those under the age of 18. The UN Secretary General’s Bulletin on Special Measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, October 9, 2003 ST/SGB/2003/13 also defines children as anyone under the age of 18 and explicitly prohibits sexual activity with a child regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally (para 3.2 b).

<sup>8</sup> Children are considered unable to provide consent because they do not have the ability and/or experience to anticipate the implications of an action, and they may not understand or be empowered to exercise their right to refuse. Conduct shall prohibit workers from engaging in sexual intercourse with anyone under the age of 18. If a worker engages in sexual intercourse with anyone under the age of 18 while employed under the project, a range of employment sanctions shall apply, as set out in the Code of Conduct, following a full and fair review.