

VII. CHILD PROTECTION PROTOCOL & REPORTING MECHANISM

This section of the survey guide outlines the special focus on child rights and protection. Terre des Hommes (TDH) is an organization for international child relief; and is one of the funders in the HTV survey. Fighting child trafficking, abuse and exploitation and promoting child protection is one of major focus areas of TDH. Thus, being a part of this survey, enumerators must also internalize this child protection protocol. Also enumerators will be reporting the incidences of child abuse through the reporting mechanism given here.

a. Code of Conduct for the Research Team

The HTV research team members must ensure the highest level of protection and safety for children under 18, with (and for) whom they work, by operationalizing the following code of conduct:

Always:

1. Maintain a positive and considerate outlook towards children, and respect their culture and individuality.
2. Create an open and safe environment where children can raise their concerns.
3. Listen to the views of children.
4. Aim to increase awareness of child rights among children, so as to enhance their capacity and capability to make the decisions that affect their lives. Please follow the scripts provided by the research team with regards to the delivering of information campaign materials and survey questions, as those were created with this aim in mind. Avoid deviations from the script.
5. Recognize and avoid compromising situations that might lead to child abuse or be construed as abuse. For example, avoid being in a completely isolated situation and be aware that physically handling a child, perhaps to offer comfort, can be misconstrued. For instance, if you are in a room with a child alone, keep the door and/or windows open to ensure you or the child do not feel uncomfortable.
6. When working with children, follow the consent process and keep in mind visibility while working with children. That is, the interview should be in a private area where disruptions will be minimal and the child feels comfortable to share his/her thoughts. However, please be in an area where enumerator and respondents are visible to parents/guardians.
7. Obtain guardian consent (for children under 18 years) when possible, and obtaining child consent with the child consent form when it is not.

Never:

1. Engage in practices or put children in situations that can inflict physical harm, exploitation, or punishment.
2. Capture a picture/video of naked or semi-clothed children, or use images that can detrimentally affect children and undermine their dignity.
3. Engage in sexual or inappropriate physical behavior such as, kissing, hugging or touching a child.
4. Stay overnight, in the same room, with any child, or invite a child to their place of residence.

5. Do things for children of a personal nature, which they are capable of doing for themselves.
6. Use language and/or behavior towards children that can be construed as inappropriate.
7. Shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or engage in any form of emotional/psychological abuse.
8. Discriminate between children, or provide preferential treatment to some over others.

b. Steps for Child Protection

The members of this research project should commit to child protection through:

1. The prevention of child abuse. Raise awareness against the ignorance and harmful practices that inflict harm on children. The use of treatment materials and group discussions is a key aspect of this project. Thus through different media formats (novels, radio, audio-visual, poster), we will aim to raise awareness of and prevent the trafficking of children.

2. The protection of child rights. Prevent abuse of children in the form of neglect, sexual abuse, physical injury and emotional abuse. Enumerators are expected to protect children on these grounds and to stay alert regarding such violations in the local context. The enumerators can support children (or potential victims of trafficking) by encouraging them to report suspected human trafficking via the trafficking hotlines and SMS services advertised in the HTV postcard. However, please do not deviate from the script of the study when sharing the hotline information.

3. Take action to support the rehabilitation and reintegration of children who are abused or are victims/survivors of human trafficking. Any cases of abuse encountered during the course of the survey must be reported to the appropriate authorities, including TDH and the HTV team. Please refer to the reporting mechanism below for details on what you can do to take action to support children facing abuse.

c. Reporting Mechanism

New Era enumerator/supervisors and HTV member should internalize the following steps for reporting cases of child abuse. If a child in a given community is found facing any abuse or being under a high risk situation (that is, when their life is in danger or they are facing sexual abuse or physical injury), the survey team should take action towards protecting the child.

1. Receive the information

- i. This means knowing how to identify child abuse beforehand and comprehending the situation first. We need to be alert, and not jump to conclusions. We are NOT being pro active in seeking child abuse. For example, we do not respond to parents who are yelling at their children.
- ii. Focus on receiving more information if the respondents share their history of trafficking and abuse. Keep their information confidential. Do not raise expectations of relief from the study. Get information about their current situation on whether they are currently facing abuse or are under any threat.

2. Respond

- i. When responding to the scene of child abuse, proceed in a manner that does not put the child and the enumerator in more trouble.
- ii. If a child shares he/she is abused currently, the enumerators should try to get the consent of the child to report the incident. But proceed with reporting also without the consent if the child is at high risk (that is, when his/her life is in danger, or is likely to get physical injury or facing sexual abuse).
- iii. With children who have a history of trafficking, do not probe to get information regarding their past experiences. Ask only if they share that they continue to face abuse currently by someone in the community. But if the child is not facing abuse currently and is in process of reintegration and rehabilitation, do not probe further.

3. Report the incident of abuse

- i. The research team should contact and inform the district “child right’s officer” (under Chief District Office in each working districts) in advance at the beginning of the survey. That way they will be prepared to receive and to act on the child abuse report.
- ii. Enumerators should inform the New ERA supervisors.
- iii. Supervisors should then inform the HTV team and send SMS to 6040 and call CWIN hotline 1098.
- iv. HTV team should also inform TDH about the case. HTV will follow up with other relevant authorities regarding the complaint.

Similarly, if the enumerators witness a colleague engaging in activities that go against the code of conduct as mentioned above, it should be reported directly to the New ERA management. However, the management must know the person reporting the incident, as acting on an anonymous complaint can be baseless. Management will, however, keep the identity of the person reporting confidential, as the person filing the complaint should be protected.