PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

A 'how to' guide for use with adolescents in humanitarian contexts

BASED ON EXPERIENCE GAINED FROM WORK WITH ADOLESCENTS AFFECTED BY THE SYRIA CRISIS IN EGYPT AND LEBANON

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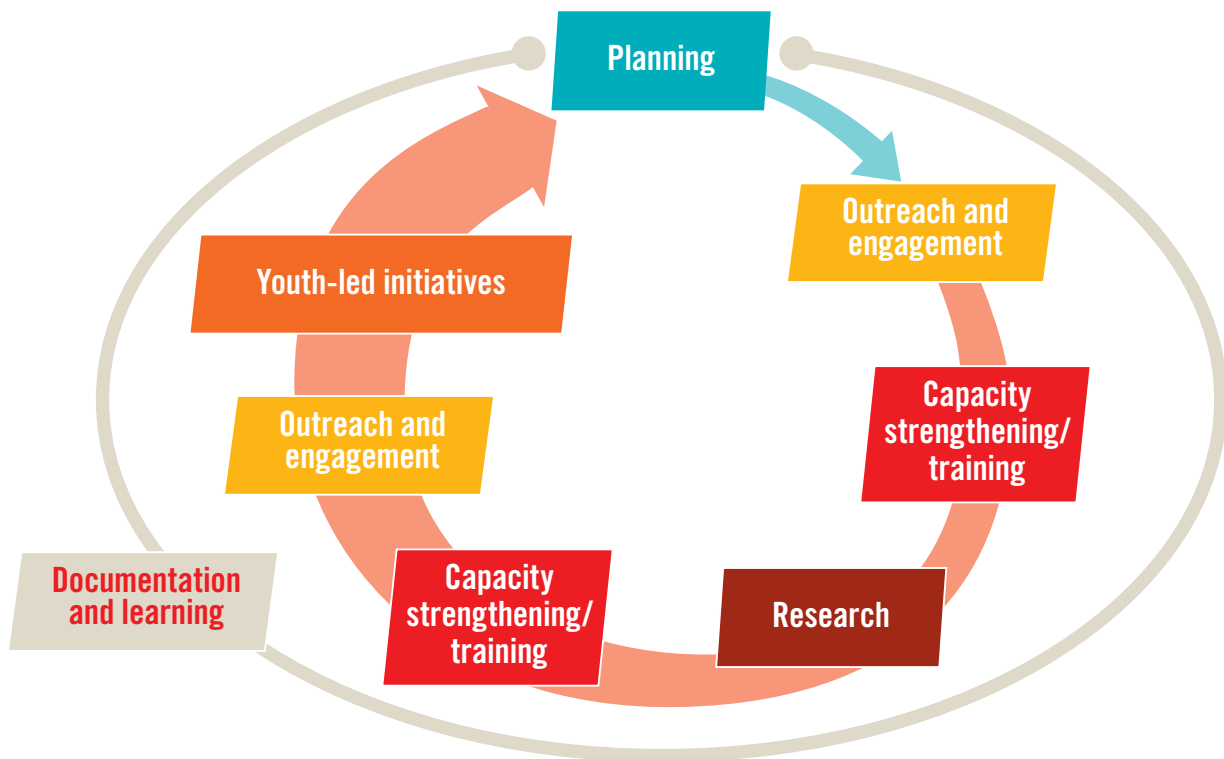THE SYRIA CRISIS IN EGYPT AND LEBANON

Contents

Introduction

This 'how to' guide draws upon the learning gained through practical experience in Youth Voices, Save the Children's participatory action research (PAR) project in Egypt and Lebanon. It provides practical advice that is relevant for anyone considering introducing the PAR approach in their work with adolescents and youth in a humanitarian context.

It is organised according to recommended key phases of a PAR project, with checklists and important considerations for each phase to support project design, planning, implementation and evaluation. For more background information regarding the tasks outlined in each project phase, you can refer to the lessons learned summaries in the full report, *Youth Voices: Participatory Action Research with adolescents affected by the Syria crisis in Egypt and Lebanon*. Key questions are raised for you to consider about whether the PAR approach is appropriate for work with adolescents and youth in your context. The annexes describe a range of tools and resources developed during the pilot project that can be adapted and used to suit different project objectives and contexts.

Core PAR project phases

- Planning
- Outreach and engagement
- Capacity strengthening/training
- Research
- Capacity strengthening/training
- Outreach and engagement
- Youth-led initiatives
- Documentation and learning

Identifying funding sources

☐ When identifying the funding sources for a PAR project, it is important to consider the need for flexibility and adaptability to be able to create a successful project that is genuinely adolescent- and youth-led. Therefore, this should be clearly communicated in the funding bids and the philosophy of any donor should complement the approach and principles of PAR.

Knowing your context

☐ Before initiating a PAR project in any community or country, a risk assessment must be conducted by the Country Office to identify and mitigate any risk of harm for participants, staff and the organisation.[1]

CASE STUDY

For example, in Lebanon and Egypt, specific PAR tools such as Photovoice[2] were identified as unsuitable for use in public due to security and privacy concerns. Having assessed the situation in Cairo, it was decided that Photovoice could be used but only in domestic settings.

☐ The implementation plan for a pilot PAR project should be clear and focused. Ideally, it should focus on just one or two locations to make it more manageable.

Who should be involved?

☐ The project team should hold a planning workshop to determine outcomes, select target groups and identify locations. See Annex 4 for a sample agenda.

Age group selection

- The age groups within the broad age range of the project should be determined before outreach and recruitment commences to ensure clear communication of roles and responsibilities for each group and to set clear expectations.

CASE STUDY

In Cairo, it became clear that the initial age range of 13–21 was too broad to create one group, given the different developmental stages and life experiences within that range. Consequently, the team decided to divide the group into three, consisting of 12–14, 15–16, and 18–21-year-olds. The older age group took on the role of Youth Facilitators who helped in training and leadership, and the two younger age groups took on the role of research partners who received the training, conducted the research and implemented the youth-led projects.

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[1] O'Kane, C. (2013). *Guidelines for Children's Participation in Humanitarian Programming*. London: The Save the Children Fund. See pp. 16–18 for an example of a risk assessment tool to support safe participation. https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Children_Participation_Humanitarian_Guidelines.pdf

[2] 'Photovoice is a participatory action research strategy which can contribute to youth mobilization for community change'. http://www.marissabellino.com/uploads/7/6/6/1/7661682/wang_2006.pdf

Location selection

- Where possible, PAR should be implemented in areas where the organisation already operates or is familiar with the context, to simplify set-up and implementation, and to avoid issues arising from a lack of local knowledge.
- An initial mapping exercise should focus on the surrounding community,[3] and the adolescents and youth themselves, to identify relevant resources that could assist the PAR project.[4]
- A mapping exercise can identify facilities, materials, skills, knowledge, experience or networks.

☐ To introduce PAR as a methodology and to encourage integrated working and facilitate more efficient decision making, a PAR project should be initiated with planning meetings for the Programme Development and Quality team's Technical Advisers and the Operations team. The Advocacy and MEAL teams should also take part if feasible. See Annex 4 for sample agendas.

CASE STUDY

Despite a successful kick-off meeting in Lebanon, the number of people engaged with the project decreased over time as other work commitments took priority and immediate input was not required. This indicates that more integrated cross-sector working requires active nurturing and maintenance throughout the project cycle.

☐ At this stage, at least one follow-up review meeting should be scheduled with the Senior Management Team and, if possible, other sectors. Whether quarterly or mid-term, this will provide a forum/s to share information, identify gaps in resources and potential links between teams, and inform the development of future proposals.

- Management and coordination arrangements should be decided upon in this phase, and relevant staff engaged or recruited. Resources should be allocated, and cross-sector/team support needs identified.

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[3] As well as identifying practical resources, from a conflict-sensitivity perspective, it is also "critical to recognise and understand the various divisions and relationships in a community and how this affects access to, and distribution of, resources". Conflict Sensitivity Consortium. (2012). *How to guide to Conflict Sensitivity*. UKaid, p. 18.

[4] Resource mapping can be a simple extension of a community mapping session and promotes the 'strength-based approach' in our work with young people as it avoids simply focusing on the challenges and problems that young people face in their communities. Many resources are available online to support this process, for example, the FHI 360 guide to 'Community Youth Mapping'. http://www.seepnetwork.org/community-youth-mapping-resources-1119.php

- Young people and representatives of the local community should be included in the planning phase to encourage dialogue and sustained engagement in the project.
  - Selection criteria should be determined in consultation with representatives of the local community, to guide and support the project team in their recruitment and outreach activities.[5]
  - Feedback and accountability mechanisms should be established, or utilised if already in place, to facilitate an open relationship with the community throughout the project.
- Establishing a 'reference group' of professionals (internal and external) with relevant skills and experience can provide valuable support and guidance for a pilot PAR project. But it is crucial that a realistic and relevant format is decided upon and employed to ensure that the group is fully utilised by those staff who most need it.

Recruitment and staff engagement

☐ A dedicated staff member(s) with the relevant skills and knowledge should be exclusively assigned to the project.

CASE STUDY

For a pilot programme, it was challenging for the Lebanon team to coordinate two areas, but even more so because the coordinator was not exclusively assigned to the PAR project. As one of the team noted, "This project needs follow up of 100% … We need a team that is not dividing its attention between other projects."

☐ In a humanitarian context, staff changes are highly likely, and therefore need to be planned for to reduce the negative effects of turnover on the project, young people and other staff.

CASE STUDY

In Lebanon, there was high staff turnover in one location, which created frustration for participants, who needed time to build trust and rapport with each member of staff. As the new staff had not received the PAR induction training, there were also knowledge gaps. This diminished the quality and accuracy of the support and guidance that staff could provide to participants.

☐ Job and role descriptions for key project staff, including Youth Facilitators, should be prepared, and Human Resources briefed on the requirements.

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[5] Engaging the community in this way is crucial for accountability, transparency and positive community relations. It will also increase diversity in the application and selection process.

☐ Through the lessons learned workshop, specific skills and knowledge were identified as important for staff and therefore should be prioritised during recruitment and when planning capacity-strengthening activities. The specific skills and knowledge identified included:

- experience working with young people, with strong motivational skills, participatory approaches, and team-building skills
- social work and child protection background was particularly important in the context of Youth Voices
- ability to manage expectations
- understanding of gender equality and conflict management/ conflict sensitivity
- familiarity with context and local dynamics
- critical analysis skills
- documentation skills
- research methods.

☐ If PAR and/or action research expertise is not available internally, a local professional research organisation with PAR experience, and experience of working with adolescents and youth, should be identified and engaged to develop the methodology and materials, deliver training and provide ongoing coaching and support. Key roles identified include:

- support in the design of the participatory action research framework/ guidance document with suggested steps and tools
- support analysis of data collected from the participatory action research: guidance on process tools and coaching for the team on data analysis
- provide training on participatory action research methodologies to adolescent participants and Save the Children staff
- contribute to the drafting of the project documentation plan and development of documentation tools
- be a member of country-level and regional-level reference groups
- provide ongoing mentoring support to the project
- partner on policy-level actions that may derive from the project, as relevant and appropriate, such as drafting advocacy or policy notes
- participate and contribute to the regional learning event.

Communications

☐ Clear communication channels must be established in the planning phase to ensure that support is readily available, and that the information flow is not interrupted.

☐ Communication mechanisms should be chosen that can be easily utilised by all levels, including Youth Facilitators, field teams, documentation officer/s and management.

Sustainability

☐ Preparing for the close of the project and planning for sustainability should begin in the planning phase, and should be considered at every stage of the project.

Community engagement

☐ In coordination with your communications team, a communications strategy should be prepared before any community engagement commences, utilising the findings of the risk assessment and any context or conflict analysis.

- Community sensitisation: Using the communications strategy, create awareness of the PAR project and build community support.

- Use the knowledge of Youth Facilitators and local staff for community outreach.

- Engage parents/caregivers, along with other key family members, and familiarise them with the PAR principles and approach to support engagement and retention of youth and adolescents.[6]
  - These identified 'gatekeepers' or decision makers should be kept informed and involved in the planning and implementation phases of a PAR project.

CASE STUDY

In Cairo, social media was identified as an effective tool to maintain positive relations with family members, which would help to retain participants. Consequently, a WhatsApp group was created to keep parents updated on the proceedings of the project and to provide them with a mechanism to ask questions, share opinions and raise concerns.

Engaging adolescents and youth

☐ In a humanitarian context, stipends for participants should be included in a PAR budget, to enable the most vulnerable adolescents and youth to participate in the project.

- The amount of the stipend must be determined based on each individual project context and in consultation with other sectors.

- A stipend should be combined with a written and signed 'Volunteer' or 'Participation' agreement to create a structured and professional relationship between staff and participants.[7]

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[6] Engaging and retaining adolescents and youth on a PAR project will be supported by identifying and understanding the key 'gatekeepers' or decision makers in each community, ie, those who have the authority to enable or block attendance. This might include mothers, fathers, brothers or other key community members.

[7] Save the Children staff can find a sample Volunteer/Participation agreement on Save the Children OneNet in the following extension: Where We Work > Middle East & Eastern Europe > MEERegionalThematicCoordination > Adolescent and Youth Initiatives > PAR

In Lebanon, some participants had to turn down work opportunities to attend the PAR sessions, and therefore their attendance and ongoing commitment was dependent on a financial incentive. Also, in Cairo, the term 'volunteer' was found to be negatively affecting attendance of vulnerable young people who have many competing priorities and prefer to use their time for structured activities with tangible outcomes.

☐ Identify and select Youth Facilitators from the community based on the target groups and profiles identified in the planning phase.

☐ Select adolescent research partners based on the target groups and profiles identified in the planning phase.

☐ Ensure diverse recruitment channels. In new locations, and to engage more vulnerable/hard-to-reach adolescents and youth, a range of recruitment channels should be utilised – for example, social media platforms or forums, former adolescent or youth participants and their networks, community leaders and CBOs.

3 Capacity strengthening/training

☐ To inform the training component of PAR, a preliminary community assessment of the proposed study area should include data collection on adolescent and youth socio-demographics, including numbers of youth, their education and their occupations.

☐ A comprehensive profile of the adolescents and youth recruited for the project must be reviewed by the training team to ensure that appropriate tools and approaches are designed/selected for each training workshop.

☐ Within a PAR project, learning should always be viewed as an ongoing process, and therefore training and coaching should be designed to flow through a PAR project. It is not simply a task to be completed in the early stages.

☐ The time needed to cover PAR principles, approaches and tools may vary between groups and individuals and therefore flexibility and a tailored training approach is crucial.

☐ For Youth Facilitators and project staff, it is as important for them to understand the concept of facilitation, participation and coaching as it is for them to understand how PAR works.

Protection and safeguarding

☐ All external trainers and research professionals must receive training in child safeguarding before they have any contact with participants aged under 18 years.

☐ Training for staff and participants must include referral mechanisms to ensure there is an understanding of who to contact if protection issues are identified.

☐ From a protection and 'do-no-harm' perspective, psychosocial content should be embedded in the PAR training curriculum for staff and participants. This is essential to support them to safely and effectively manage protection concerns, conflict, expressions of emotion, and other sensitive issues that might be raised.

Staff

☐ Staff and consultants should be inducted to understand all the phases of PAR before engaging in outreach and recruitment of adolescents and youth.

☐ Training should be organised for Youth Facilitators and project staff on the PAR tools and processes.[8]

- All project team members who will be working directly in the field should attend all the training sessions and workshops as active participants, to ensure they can provide support and recommendations to the youth during the implementation phase of the project.

☐ Capacity building for staff should include coaching and mentoring skills for the provision of ongoing support throughout the PAR project.

☐ Ongoing training and coaching opportunities for internal staff on PAR principles and approaches should be planned and made available throughout the project based on specific needs and capacities.

- Tracking and responding to these needs should be incorporated within the documentation plan and monitored closely.

Youth Facilitators

☐ Within the Youth Facilitators' training, there must be a focus on the skills and attitudes required to facilitate the active engagement and participation of younger research partners, to avoid Youth Facilitators dominating the younger participants.

☐ Project staff should discuss with Youth Facilitators what training they need to support them and better involve them as decision makers and leaders within PAR.

Adolescents and youth

☐ PAR training and meetings should take a strengths-based approach, with a focus on participants' resources and capacities rather than just the challenges they face and needs not being met.

- This is crucial for promoting well-being and fostering sustainable outcomes and more self-sufficient adolescents and youth.[9]

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[8] Save the Children staff can find a comprehensive training manual on Save the Children OneNet in the following extension: Where We Work > Middle East & Eastern Europe > MEERegionalThematicCoordination > Adolescent and Youth Initiatives > PAR

[9] "Many youth development programs recognize that problem-based approaches to young people do not work. These programs are refocusing on assets, strengths, and competencies of young people rather than their problems. Participation is a key mechanism to achieving successful youth development." Family Health International. (2008). *Youth Participation Guide: Assessment, Planning and Implementation.* USA: FHI. Conceptual Overview, Section 1, p. 1.

☐ The dates and times of training sessions and meetings should be discussed with participants and scheduled around their availability.[10]

☐ Team-building activities and life skills training should be organised for Youth Facilitators and research partners prior to receiving technical training in the PAR methodology and tools. This will contribute to creating a more cohesive group who are more confident in their participation and more able to absorb the large amount of new information.

☐ Sufficient time should be allocated to the introductory training workshops to ensure that all foundational content can be covered effectively.

☐ Training for research partners on PAR methodology and tools should be led by Youth Facilitators with the support of project staff.

☐ Further skills training and team-building activities should be spread throughout the timeline of the project, with the flexibility to respond to the group's needs and requests.

- For participants to be able to internalise their learning and practise their new skills, it is crucial that all the PAR training is not given only at the start of the project.

☐ Organising discussions or exchanges with other adolescents and youth participating in PAR, in the same country or region, can greatly benefit implementation.

- In person or over Skype, adolescents and youth can learn from each other, offer support and create a network that will contribute to sustainability after the close of the project.

Top tips for running sessions with young people

- Use games and 'energiser' activities to keep energy levels high and to create some space for fun.
- Introduce ground rules or a group contract to create a safe and comfortable space, which adolescents and youth should shape for themselves.
- Make space for social and informal time so that participants can get to know each other, eg, over shared food or cultural activities.
- Where possible, a range of facilitation methods should be used to keep the sessions interesting and dynamic and to support different educational levels and learning and expression styles. For example, use large and small group discussions, music, art and drama, as well as more traditional written or discussion-based activities.
- Remember that the principles of PAR must be applied in all phases of PAR, including during training, so seek opportunities for adolescents and youth to take the lead as much as possible.
- Rather than focusing only on what skills or knowledge young people lack/need to gain, be sure to identify and showcase the skills, talents and knowledge they already have.[11]

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[10] In a complex humanitarian context, maintaining attendance can be challenging, but implementing this youth-led approach to scheduling should have a positive effect on attendance.

[11] As well as being conducive to the adolescent- and youth-led PAR principles of adolescents and youth as the experts, the 'strength-based approach' is also a core component of Save the Children MEEE's core approaches to working with adolescents and youth in humanitarian contexts. From a protection and 'do-no-harm' perspective, it cannot be 'one size fits all', especially in fragile contexts of displacement and humanitarian crisis.

4 Selecting a research topic

☐ For research partners to select their research topics, it must be clarified at the start of the project whether the intent is to consider and address issues that affect the whole community or issues that affect adolescents and youth specifically. This is to be decided by the adolescents themselves.

☐ As an organisation, you need to decide in advance if you are initiating a PAR project to focus a specific topic or sector, eg, education or livelihoods, or whether you are open to the participants selecting the topic or sector according to their own priorities.

Identifying a research question and geographical focus: key questions to consider[12]

- What is the specific problem/issue?
- What are the research questions you would like to answer?
- What do you want to know? What hypothesis do you want to test? What do you want to highlight or draw attention to that is not already known, or if known, not sufficiently demonstrated?
- What can you feasibly act upon?
- What are the rough geographic boundaries where you would like to take action?

☐ Community mapping is a recommended tool in the process of identifying research topics[13] as it is an effective, visual way to consolidate and record participants' knowledge of, and attitudes towards, their communities.

Participants preparing community maps in Egypt

☐ Regardless of who selects the question, project teams should have a specific research question for every research topic they select so that their study is focused on clear objectives.

- Remember! This question will form the basis of the participants' research plan.

☐ Different methods can be used to help participants select their topics, but ranking methodologies are recommended – for example, diamond ranking or participatory ranking methodology.

Diamond ranking ☼

- An interactive tool that can be utilised with children and adults to facilitate the collective prioritisation of an issue.[14]

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[12] https://www.labor.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/A-Short-Guide-to-Community-Based-Participatory-Action-Research.pdf

[13] See Annex 1 for more information about community mapping.

[14] A facilitation plan for diamond ranking is available from the Save the Children online Resource Centre: https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/sites/default/files/documents/arc-modf4-4-e7-2009.pdf

> ### Participatory ranking methodology ☀
>
> - "A 'mixed methods' approach to data collection, in which the participants are guided in generating responses to a specific question or set of questions… This methodology promotes an engaged and participatory process, which rapidly highlights key findings while providing the opportunity for deeper analysis as resources permit. Collected in a structured manner, results can be swiftly consolidated and used to develop action plans addressing identified priorities."[15]

Selecting research tools

☐ Staff and trainers should decide in advance what approach for tool selection suits the context, and which tools would be appropriate and feasible.[16]

> **'It is important to note that the concept of young people having power over key decisions and processes in youth-led PAR does not mean in practice that all ideas, methods, or data interpretations generated by the youth researchers should be supported uncritically by the adult facilitators or peers'.**[17]
>
> For example, adult staff and Youth Facilitators must be mindful of deadlines, conflicts, protection concerns and the principles of 'do no harm'.[18]

☐ Research tools should only be introduced as an option if the resources they require are available and affordable, eg, Smartphones or cameras and photography training for the Photovoice tool.

☐ Staff, Youth Facilitators and research partners must have a good understanding of research ethics. As well as featuring in the training on research, this will need to be monitored as the project progresses.[19]

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[15] Ager, A., Stark, L., Potts, A. (2010). *Participative Ranking Methodology: A Brief Guide*. Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University, New York, USA. Available from the CPC Learning Network website: http://www.cpcnetwork.org/resource/prm-a-brief-guide/

[16] See Annex 1 for examples of PAR research tools.

[17] Ozer, E. J. (2016). *Youth-Led Participatory Action Research*. University of California, Berkeley, School of Public Health. In: L. A. Jason and D. S. Glenwick (Eds.). *Handbook of methodological approaches to community-based research: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. ch. 26, p. 4

[18] "The Do No Harm 'Analytical Framework' was developed from the programming experience of many assistance workers. It provides a tool for mapping the interactions of assistance and conflict and can be used to plan, monitor and evaluate both humanitarian and development assistance programmes." http://www.donoharm.info/downloads/level000/Seven_Steps_English.pdf

[19] Research ethics are the principles and rules that guide how people should be treated when they are participants in a research process or project. See Annex 3 for an overview of PAR research ethics.

☐ The selection of PAR tools by research partners is critical to this phase of the project and it is important to allow enough time for a truly youth-led process, with space for young people to make their own decisions.

- For the selection of research topics and tools, the suggestions of staff and Youth Facilitators should be kept to a minimum, except for guidance and support.
- Support the development of a simple research plan – ie, including the group, topic, tool, location and study sample/target group.

CASE STUDY

In Egypt and Lebanon, due to their limited experience, Youth Facilitators were often unable to withhold their opinions during the community mapping exercises. This had an impact on the reliability of the findings, as they may have influenced the participants.

CASE STUDY

The following research and analysis tools were selected for use in Egypt and Lebanon:

Location	Research tools used	Analysis tools used
Egypt	Community walks, Photovoice, community mapping	SHOWED, reflective learning journals
Lebanon	Interviews, observation, exploration, FGDs	Thematic analysis

5 Conducting the research

☐ Provide refresher training, if needed, on the selected PAR tools.

☐ Ideally, the analysis skills training sessions should be conducted after data collection has commenced, when there are real-life examples to use during the practical sections of the training.

☐ Staff with the right skill set and experience must be assigned to/recruited for PAR projects to help the participants analyse their findings effectively and identify the root causes of their issues.

☐ As well as ensuring an understanding of the PAR tools, training and ongoing coaching provides participants with the skills and support they need to discuss sensitive topics, ask probing questions, set realistic expectations and manage challenging conversations.

☐ Ensure that research partners have access to all the necessary materials required for tool implementation, eg, stationery, templates or copies of key forms, and technology such as a camera or phone, etc.

☐ Allow time for all tools to be pilot tested before being used in the community.

> **CASE STUDY** ✏
>
> In Lebanon, participants often struggled to explain the scope of their PAR projects to community members during interviews, which put them in a vulnerable position. This emphasised the importance of practice and thorough preparation before using the research tools in the community.

☐ If the research is targeting under-18s, introduce standard simple consent forms to be signed by parents/guardians agreeing to the participation of under-18s as research subjects.[20]

☐ Monitor progress as the research is conducted to ensure that the data collected is suitable for analysis.

☐ Staff or Youth Facilitators should facilitate reflection sessions with research partners, for example through discussions or with a learning journal.[21]

- In PAR, every step of the research involves "some type of planning, action, and evaluation".[22] All data collected is reflected upon. Even the research questions serve as a springboard for additional questions that serve to 'inform' the research process.[23]

6 Analysing the findings

☐ Analysis and interpretation of the information gathered is directly linked back to the research question, and should be led by the adolescent research partners.

☐ Provide coaching or refresher training, if needed, on the selected PAR analysis tools.[24]

☐ At this stage, adolescent researchers may benefit from bringing together an advisory board of key stakeholders, such as policymakers and/or community leaders to share their findings, get feedback and create relationships that could support the sustainability of their initiatives.[25]

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[20] Save the Children staff can find a sample consent form on Save the Children OneNet in the following extension: Where We Work > Middle East & Eastern Europe > MEERegionalThematicCoordination > Adolescent and Youth Initiatives > PAR

[21] See Annex 1 for more information on reflective learning journals.

[22] Berg, B. L. and Lune, H. (2004). Action research. In B. L. Berg (Ed.), *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences* (Vol. 5). Boston, MA: Pearson

[23] McIntyre, A. (2007). *Participatory action research* (Vol. 52). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

[24] See Annex 2 for more information on PAR analysis tools.

[25] Wang, C. C. (2006). Youth participation in Photovoice as a strategy for community change. *Journal of Community Practice*, 14(1–2), 147–161

In analysing the findings, research partners must consider potential 'solutions' to the questions and problems raised through their research,[26] which is the way in which PAR leads to actions that are appropriate for the community being studied.

- The youth-led initiatives phase of PAR is critical for participants and their communities to see the tangible outcomes of their training and research. No youth-led research should be undertaken without the possibility of utilising the findings through action.[27]

Managing expectations

- As in the research phase, it is essential to be realistic with participants about the scope and potential outcomes of PAR initiatives from the start, especially given the complexity of humanitarian contexts.
- Small and meaningful changes are possible and should be acknowledged and valued.

Capacity building

- With the support of staff, Youth Facilitators need to be prepared to train and coach research partners in project planning skills in this phase. Therefore, they will need a technical understanding of how to run a PAR initiative and also a refresher in facilitation skills.
- Research partners will need to receive their practical training in project planning in order to start designing their initiatives.
- If budget and time allow, additional training and coaching should be provided on budgeting and financial literacy.[28]

Project planning

- Internal or external staff with experience of PAR should be available to guide participants as they make their selections and begin project planning.
- Community members and other relevant stakeholders with decision-making power should continue their involvement at this stage, to ensure initiatives are suitable in the context and can be sustained beyond the life of the PAR project.
- Through discussion, prioritisation and ranking, research partners should review the outcomes of their research and analysis and decide on the focus of their initiative.

  The final selection of projects must be based on feasibility, ie, dependent on resources, timing and potential conflict in the community, etc.

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[26] Berg, B. L. and Lune, H. (2004). Action research. In B. L. Berg (Ed.), *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences* (Vol. 5). Boston, MA: Pearson

[27] "As the name 'Participatory Action Research' suggests, taking action as a result of the learning in the Research phase is crucial to PAR. This is the part that really makes PAR different from other types of research. It means that as a result of the adolescents' exploring, researching and discussing, 'the information is not just recorded', but rather something actually happens, and they are responsible for that." UNICEF Jamaica. (2004). *PAR Guide: Promoting the Participation, Learning and Action of Young People.* p. 8

[28] This is necessary to give more responsibility to young people as they plan and implement their project and to provide skills that will contribute to sustainability after the end of the PAR project.

- Topics selected for youth-led initiatives during the pilot PAR project:

> ### Egypt ✎
>
> Sexual harassment in Cairo, personal safety, parent–child disempowering communication, adapting to the Cairoian context, awareness raising about knowing and exploring one's self
>
> ### Lebanon
>
> School, infrastructure, environment, shelter, hygiene, education.

Project implementation

- The following are examples of youth-led initiatives.

> ### Egypt ✎
>
> The group in 6th October designed an intervention to address the problem of 'low self-confidence' which Youth Facilitators and research partners had identified as an issue they could work on and change in order to change 'bigger problems'. Two of the main 'bigger problems' identified were sexual harassment and home-related issues such as forced marriage and early marriage. The initiative contained 16–20 practical sessions including interactive theatre, singing, writing and different forms of art to create a performance to express the challenges faced by youth and adolescents. This performance took place in front of parents, Syrian community leaders and Cairoian neighbours.
>
> ### Lebanon
>
> A group in Tripoli, focused on public safety, chose to run an awareness campaign for people to take care of their environment.
>
> A group in Qab Elias, focused on education, chose to give educational sessions to illiterate young people in the camps and provide them with stationery. Furthermore, they spoke with the education department in Save the Children to lobby for the provision of experienced teachers to teach the Lebanese curriculum for the Syrian refugees.

Evaluation

- In accordance with the documentation plan, participants should be supported to evaluate their projects in terms of outputs, outcomes and impact.

8 Documentation

☐ Information capture needs to be ongoing throughout a PAR project, and should be led by young people as much as possible.

☐ Refer to Annex 5 for a sample documentation plan to guide the creation of a context-specific plan.

Preparation

☐ A documentation plan, to systematically capture each step of the project in terms of **content** and **process**, should be created that is realistic in the context and monitored so that any difficulties can be addressed:

- In a humanitarian context, the plan should be adaptable and feedback from participants should be actively encouraged.

- A minimum requirement for documentation should be determined, so that the field teams are clear what is optional, what is obligatory, and what they can tailor to their context.

☐ The MEAL team should be involved in designing the plan and the tools, so as to provide ongoing support.

☐ Age-sensitive tools should be developed to ensure that they suit the different age groups involved. They should also be adaptable to the education and literacy levels of the participants.

☐ Selecting indicators that are SMART[29] is crucial to demonstrating the efficacy and viability of PAR, and similar participatory methods.

☐ Suitable 'pre' and 'post' tools should be developed with participating adolescents and youth.[30]

Coordination

☐ A documentation officer, or someone equivalent to a lead researcher, should be recruited at the beginning of the project to ensure that all relevant information for the project is captured in a timely and systematic manner.

- The officer should have experience of working with adolescents and youth.

Induction

☐ All staff responsible for documentation must be thoroughly inducted to understand their role and responsibilities to ensure consistent and complete documentation.

☐ Youth Facilitators and research partners should receive a formal induction in the documentation process, and their consent/the consent of parents/guardians for under-18s should be obtained.

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[29] SMART = Specific, Measurable, Accepted, Relevant and Time bound

[30] To measure the changes experienced by participants, to understand the impact of PAR, to support evaluation, and to contribute to future proposals

Reflection

☐ Regular reflection sessions must be maintained during the implementation of PAR, even when time is limited. Reflective journals are an example of tools for structured reflection time.

> ### It is not enough to just plan and carry out the activities within PAR
>
> "Somebody (or several 'somebodies') must take notes, make observations, and keep track of what is going on. If you do not make this a part of the PAR activity, you may lose a lot of the important information. PAR really needs to be a team activity, with observers playing as important a role as the facilitators. These observations need to be recorded in some way. They can be written, audio-recorded, video-taped, or they can be in the form of photographs. However you record them, take the time to review them after the activity is finished so that all the information can be studied and put to good use. Whatever action takes place from PAR, you will find it helpful to have this back-up material to refer to."[31]

9 Working with adolescent girls

☐ It should be discussed and decided in the planning phase whether mixed groups would lead to the exclusion of girls.

> ### CASE STUDY
>
> In Cairo, it was determined that girls needed to work in single-sex groups for most of the PAR project activities. But a few boys were introduced at the community projects stage as it was considered that the girls were more able to adapt as they were settled and confident within PAR and their group. This was identified as a pivotal moment for the girls, as they gained a new understanding of boys and what their relationship with them could be, ie, boys could be friends rather than only potential spouses.

☐ If mixing is not possible, ensure that funding allows for single-sex groups of girls and boys so both groups can participate in PAR.

☐ When the participation or retention of girls presents a challenge, PAR project teams should consider ways to work with the community, and specifically with 'gatekeepers', to enable and increase girls' participation.[32]

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[31] UNICEF Jamaica. (2004). *PAR Guide: Promoting the Participation, Learning and Action of Young People*. p. 16

[32] Many resources are available that provide useful tips about engaging parents and caregivers, for example, https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/9923/pdf/facilitator_handbook_parents_and_caregivers_meetings_may_2016_web.pdf and https://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/populations/adolescent-girls/research-and-resources/1538-engaging-male-caregivers-to-end-early-marriage-in-lebanon

10 Implementation – key questions to consider

- What is the current level of young people's participation in the organisation?

- Is the organisation ready and willing to explore new models of working?

- Is PAR a realistic and safe option in the context, for example, from a security and cultural perspective?

- Is enough time available to implement a PAR project?[33]

- Are staff available for the duration of the project and with the appropriate skill set to manage and deliver PAR?

- In a context of displacement, can the adolescents and youth commit to the project over an extended period?

- Can a PAR project be sustainable in the context? That is, are there systems or networks in place that would facilitate participants continuing their work and developing their ideas further after the life of the project?

When children's participation may not be appropriate in humanitarian programming

"While we seek to apply the principle of children's participation to enable children's voices to be heard and to influence decisions that affect them, other child rights and humanitarian principles, including the principle of the child's best interests and the principle of 'do no harm', may override the principle of children's participation in some contexts. Every context is unique. Thus, a good understanding of the local context (socio-political, cultural, religious, geographic situation, etc) and risk assessments and risk mitigation in relation to different types of children's participation is required in order to inform decision-making about when and how children's participation may or may not be appropriate."[34]

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[33] From the experience of the pilot PAR project, it is recommended that a minimum of six months is needed and that the optimum time would be a minimum of one year.

[34] O'Kane, C. (2013). *Guidelines for Children's Participation in Humanitarian Programming*. London: The Save the Children Fund, p. 7.

Conclusion

It is hoped that this 'how to' guide has provided useful advice about when and where to use PAR and practical tools to help you set up and run a PAR project.

When the Syrian refugee and host community adolescents and youth who took part in Save the Children's PAR project in Egypt and Lebanon were given the space to take risks and practise what they had learned, and when they were provided with the necessary support (ie, tools, information and opportunities to experiment) and guidance to reflect, an environment was created for:

Growth and development

- promotion of critical thinking among young people
- young people were empowered to make decisions
- young people felt more empathy with their communities.

Building relationships

- there was greater cohesion between young people of different ages and backgrounds, which led to a visible shift in group dynamics
- greater connections were formed with their communities.

Civic engagement and feeling of greater responsibility

- there was a shift from young people feeling helpless and disillusioned to demonstrating commitment and great hope for their project
- young people demonstrated increased commitment as the project progressed
- learning in the research phase made young people want to make a difference in their communities.

Annexes

Annex 1: PAR research tools

The following table outlines a sample of PAR tools introduced by IFI in the pilot project.[35]

Tool	Outline
Community mapping	As the target population of their research, participants engage in creating participatory and collective community maps of a particular location in groups of seven participants maximum. They are given the freedom to draw what they want by giving just a simple instruction, eg, 'draw everything you can think of, and always from your own perspective'. After the groups share their maps, they are given time to add anything they would like, and then they respond to a series of questions which help them to create a more nuanced map, for example, with details related to safety, spare time, work, resources, the different experiences of boys and girls, or refugees and host community, etc.
Semi-structured interviews	Semi-structured interviews are considered one of the most important tools for PAR. In contrast to group discussions, interviews allow us to obtain a personal opinion from the participant. An interview is very likely to reveal conflicts within the community because responders may feel that they are able to speak more freely than if they were in the presence of their colleagues. It is important that an appropriate sample of participants, who are able to give input about the chosen topic of interest, is selected for interviewing. A range of participants should be included to obtain a variety of opinions and trends, and it is important to avoid biasing the answers. Questions are asked about participants' own opinions and behaviours and not about their opinions on the behaviours of other. Key stakeholders should be included who may be involved in or who know about the topic of interest. For personal information about a subject, establishing rapport and building trust are crucial. The interview is recorded, if permission is obtained from the participant, or notes must be taken. Interviews are analysed by coding the resulting notes or transcripts, all the while looking for themes. Try and include a range of people, such as from other communities, and not only people who are directly concerned with the topic of interest, because they may be at the same level of importance as key stakeholders, and can have valuable input about your community and the community members.
Focus group discussions	Focus groups are used to collect information on the level of groups and society in a guided manner. They are led by a facilitator, and if conducted correctly, may have many positive results, including that they allow us to obtain large amounts of information. Focus groups also allow direct confirmation of information, as data will be gathered from other people in the group.

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[35] Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs. (2015). *Training Manual on Participatory Action Research Tools: A Guide for Youth Facilitators' and Research Partner's Training.* pp. 18–43

Tool	Outline
Exploration (community walks)	'Exploration' as a PAR tool is collecting information and data related to a topic from the direct environment or context.
	There are multiple ways in which this activity can be conducted, but in all ways, the research partners are divided into groups, and each group takes charge to discover an aspect of the community, including the environment, the physical structure, the people, etc. By people here, we mean diverse members of the community, or the location being explored. Young people can interview members of the host community as well as refugees. They may also interview shop owners and shop employees. In short, they must interview everyone whose opinion they deem important when trying to answer their research question. As for the environment and physical structure of the community, it must be explored using all senses, ie, young people must listen, look, smell, touch, etc. What they look for in the environment and in the physical structure of their community will also depend on the research question. If, for instance, they are interested in public safety (as part of the environment and physical structure of the community), then they may look for items such as defective street lights, rubbish dumps or damaged electrical wires, etc.
Direct observation	In PAR, the researcher is especially prone to believing misleading information based on false beliefs. These beliefs may be based on what they hear, rumours, and gossip. People usually believe in values and activities that are incompatible with real life, and it is common to be told about a certain habit, then realise after checking, that this habit has disappeared or has perhaps not been exercised at all. As a result, there must be direct observation of important indicators within the community to support the researcher's findings. These indicators can be used in the preparation of immediate questions to be asked to members of the community without having to process and prepare a survey form.
	A direct observation, or what a research partner chooses to observe, is dependent on the research question they have chosen.
Photovoice	Photovoice is a PAR tool that allows research partners to capture, either through photography or video, different aspects of their community and their everyday lives. Photovoice uses the power of photographs to help people identify, represent, and analyse issues within their communities, and thus we can understand a community's strengths and weaknesses, and identify its issues.
	We get to understand different aspects of a community through the participant's eyes, because each photograph is accompanied by a story shared by the photographer.
Reflective journals	Journal entries may be used as a PAR tool, to reflect on lived experiences within the community, or as a means to reflect on other PAR tools such as semi-structured interviews, FGDs, observation and exploration.
	If journal entries are used as a PAR tool in their own right, it is crucial that questions are prepared to help guide the adolescents and youth as they write in their journals. The question can be related to the overall research objectives of the project, and it must be as comprehensive as possible, for example, covering both positive and negative aspects, both strengths and weaknesses.

Annex 2: PAR data analysis tools

The following table outlines a sample of PAR tools that were introduced by IFI in the pilot project.[36]

Tool	Outline
Comparative analysis table of motives, aspirations, expectations and fears	After having collected the data (regardless of the method used to collect the data), team members meet to classify their findings in a table. For example, if their research topic was 'girls not attending school', the group would consider and write down the motives, aspirations, expectations and fears connected to that situation.
Problem tree	A visual tool that facilitates exploration of root causes (the roots of the tree). Starting with the main problem or issue, the group would brainstorm the main causes of the problem or issue, and then consider the secondary causes of the main causes in order to understand them better and to identify further areas for research. This tool can also be used to identify the effects of a problem or issue (the branches and leaves of the tree).
Identifying the themes: table for organising the data	After discussing each topic separately, the group can organise the data related to each theme in a table or grid under these three aspects: • the financial concerns behind this issue • control over the decision regarding this issue • prevailing values and beliefs related to this issue. This way of categorising data can improve participants' critical thinking and awareness, which will help them realise that the issues are related and that finances influence values, politics, etc. This will lead to a change in the way participants look at the issues at hand. Their initial perspective of considering these issues as unrelated will shift: they will see them as interdependent and interrelated.
The 'Why?' method	The 'Why? method is useful for identifying the root causes of a problem. It helps in defining problems within the context of a project. The facilitator guides the participants in changing the problem or issue into a 'Why?' question. The facilitator then guides the group as they brainstorm together and come up with five potential answers (or causes) to the question. It is very important that these answers are based on critical reflection, and on the lived experiences of the participants within the greater context of the project and their community. The most probable answer is then selected from these and then turned into a 'Why?' question. This cycle is repeated five times, or until the root cause of the problem has been identified.

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[36] Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs. (2015). *Training Manual on Participatory Action Research Tools: A Guide for Youth Facilitators' and Research Partner's Training.* pp. 48–59

Tool	Outline
Thematic analysis[37]	Thematic analysis is a way to systematically condense a large amount of information into a set of important themes, helping the research team describe the phenomenon under study. Thematic analysis involves looking at the data and creating codes that reflect the data, recognising recurring patterns (or themes) among the codes, and then using those themes as categories for further analysis of the data, resulting in detailed, rich descriptions.
	There are six phases or steps to thematic analysis: (1) familiarisation with data; (2) generating initial codes; (3) identifying themes that reflect collections of codes; (4) reviewing data to understand and explain the meaning and dynamics of themes; (5) maintaining rigour through inter-coder agreement; and (6) producing the final report.
	Themes provide an understanding of the 'big picture'. They are patterns seen across data sets that help describe a phenomenon, or answer a research question.
	Codes are ways of organising data. They can best be thought of as labels or identifiers attached to the segments of data they represent. Understanding the connections between codes helps us to develop themes.

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[37] Liebenberg, L., Jamal, A. and Ikeda, J. *Analysing Data with Youth: A Guide to Conducting Thematic Analysis.* Spaces and Places, Dalhousie University, Canada. pp.5–6 http://youthspacesandplaces.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Spaces-and-Places-Data-Analysis-Manual.pdf

Annex 3: Principles of research ethics

During the pilot project, IFI shared the following information with participants.[38] As with all concepts and principles, it is critical that they are adapted to the target group, bearing in mind the age, experience, education level, etc of members of that group.

Research ethics

Ethics are moral principles or values that guide our lives, and in research involving people, it is crucial that we let ethics guide us. There are some basic ethical principles that must guide our research, as follows:

Care

We must care for individuals and focus on maintaining a healthy relationship with them and within our community.

Respect for people

We must respect individuals and their autonomy (self-governance). Individuals are autonomous agents, and those who have diminished autonomy (ie, those who cannot make decisions on their own, such as young children) should be protected. Obtaining oral or written *consent* from participants is one way of ensuring that their autonomy is respected. Participants must be able to choose whether they want to be part of a study or not, and they must be given this choice. It is crucial that information is presented to participants in a way that they can understand it, so that they can make an *informed* decision. It is unethical to force anyone to take part in a study.

Beneficence/non-maleficence

An obligation to do no harm to participants (non-maleficence), and to maximise benefits, or do good-beneficence for them. To achieve this, it is important to assess the risks and benefits of the research being undertaken – in all cases, the benefits must outweigh the risks.

Justice

There must be a fair distribution of people who receive the benefits of the research and those who bear its burdens. This principle of justice is important when selecting participants for the study – they must be chosen equitably. In other words, when recruiting, one must consider why one particular participant or group of participants was chosen over another. Special consideration must be given to vulnerable populations, who include prisoners and refugees.

Privacy and confidentiality

Organisations must ensure that the privacy of participants is protected; this is known as maintaining the participant's *confidentiality*. This includes protecting their personal information and the data they share with you. Protecting data is key to reducing the harm and risks that may befall a participant. Confidentiality is key to 'respect for people' and 'beneficence'.

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[38] Belmont report: US Department of Health and Human Services. (1978). *The Belmont report: Ethical principles and guidelines for the protection of human subjects of research.* Bethesda, Md.: The Commission and Chowning, J. and Fraser, P. (2005). *An ethics primer: Lesson ideas and ethics background.* Seattle, WA: Northwest Association for Biomedical Research. Retrieved from www.nwabr.org/education/primer. Retrieved from: Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs. (2015). *Training Manual on Participatory Action Research Tools: A Guide for Youth Facilitators' and Research Partner's Training.* p. 16

Annex 4: Sample planning meeting agenda

This sample two-day agenda, based on planning meetings conducted during the PAR pilot, provides an overview of content and suggested timings, to be adapted to your schedule and specific contextual requirements.

Attendees: As well as the core project team, it is crucial to involve partners, technical advisers and the operations team.

Planning meeting objectives

- recap/review previous and current work with adolescents in the Country Office and the wider region, including research

- recap the objectives of the action research project

- define key approaches and methodologies, and familiarise the team with PAR

- set the parameters for the project, eg, locations and target groups

- determine project timings and allocate key roles and responsibilities

- plan next steps and set deadlines

Day 1: Context and PAR Introduction		
Time	**Session**	**Content**
9:30 – 10.30	Session 1: Background	Overview of MEEE Adolescents and Youth Framework and core approaches (30 mins)
		Overview and objectives of the PAR project (30 mins)
10:30 – 10.45	Break	
10:45 – 12.45	Session 2: Country Office experience with adolescents and research	**Country Office current programming** (60 mins total): • Map where we are contributing to the different levels of the MEEE Adolescents and Youth Framework (30 mins) • Exercise: work in pairs, and review current programming, write key components on sticky notes, and place under each level of the framework (on flipchart paper on walls) (15 mins) • Review what we do and do not have in place in terms of our programming with young people – Where are our strengths? Where are our gaps? (15 mins)
		Evidence (60 mins total): What are key issues we are facing in our adolescent programming? What evidence do we have? What would we like to know more about? Break into groups by location to consider the following points (20 mins): • Outreach • Relevance of programmes: Are they attractive to young people? Do they respond to adolescents' needs? • Do we see an outcome to what we do? • Gaps in our information, approaches Back to plenary and share key points. Discussion linked to the Adolescents and Youth Framework (20 mins) Gaps – What would we like to know? Based on current programming and evidence gaps, list initial ideas for action research focus (20 mins)
12:45 – 1.30	Lunch break	
1.30 – 4:00 (including break)	Session 3: Action research	**Ensuring shared understanding of PAR approach/ methodology** – tools and structure • Reminder of the objectives of the project: inform our programming, collect evidence for future programming • How can we use this project to help us fill some of the gaps? • Action research. What is it? Key components and some methodologies we can use • Examples of tools and case studies from pilot

Day 2: Detailed planning		
Time	**Session**	**Content**
9:30 – 4:00	Session 1: Parameters	Identify locations, key stakeholders, target groups, potential challenges in the context * Prior to this meeting, it is crucial that potential locations are identified and researched, so that the evidence can be reviewed together at the meeting.
	Session 2: Project strategies	Top-line decisions, project phasing, roles and responsibilities
	Session 3: Work plan	Detailed planning
	Session 4: Budget	Top-line budget

Annex 5: Sample documentation plan – recommended content and structure

Design your plan with the MEAL and project teams to be sure that the opportunity for learning is fully utilised and donor requirements are met.

The introduction to your plan should include:

- background to the PAR project
- purpose of the documentation plan
- scope of the documentation plan.

Background

This section should include a brief:

- description of how PAR has been used in Save the Children MEEE previously
- summary of the target groups and location of the project
- explanation of the aims of the project, the learning it is seeking and how it will contribute to learning at national and regional level.

Purpose of the documentation plan

Example:

This documentation plan will guide project participants and teams to systematically capture each step of the project and any lessons learned. The purpose is to capture:

- any change in the adolescent participants (agency, relations)
- any change in their community
- issues facing adolescents
- good practice in working with adolescents affected by a humanitarian crisis.

Scope of the documentation plan

Example:

The documentation plan will provide guidance and tools to systematically capture:

What	Why
Process: how the project is set up, how it is being implemented, how adolescents were selected, how groups were established, who was involved, how research topic(s) were selected by participants, how community projects were selected, etc	As PAR is quite a new approach for Save the Children in the region • to learn what did and did not work for future interventions • to identify good practice in working with adolescents • to inform the design of youth-led interventions that address the needs of adolescents affected by the Syria crisis
Content: Key issues adolescents discussed, information collected in their communities, analysis of the information by the adolescents themselves, etc	• to support adolescents in reflecting on their own issues • to gain a better understanding of the issues facing adolescents through their own eyes, to improve our current and future programming with adolescents in Egypt and Lebanon • to collect credible evidence on the issues facing adolescents affected by the Syria crisis
Impact/changes in the participants and their community	• to identify how/if a PAR project has any positive impact on adolescents and their communities, for future replication • to gain credible evidence on how/if participatory approaches have a positive impact on participants

Details to be included:

- Target audience
- Existing documentation – eg, any desk reviews or reports that were considered
- Description of the 'documents' to be collected – Emphasise that they will be diverse in purpose and format, depending on what they plan to capture and on what participants decide

  Examples may include:
  - Work plans
  - Short description of a process and the lessons learned
  - Agendas and meeting notes
  - Photos linked to stories
  - Sound bites and quotes
  - Reflective journals or excerpts from journals
  - Maps
  - Data analysis
  - Diagrams

Schedule and process / Outputs

Identify the appropriate milestones, the planned documentation deliverables for each milestone, and who is responsible for collecting the documentation.

A table like this could be useful and tailored to your project.

Milestone	Planned documentation deliverables	Responsible
ONE: **Setup process**	**Planning workshop agenda, minutes and outcomes** eg, why specific target groups and sites were selected	
	Management and coordination arrangements and staff engagement, including resource allocation • FGD with CO staff • Notes from FGD and key lessons learned • Effectiveness and efficiency review • How teams worked together – coordination across sectors and units • End of project, during review/ learning event • Develop harmonised guiding questions	
	Internal Save the Children staff learning – understanding PAR and the process • Project team learning • Include perspectives of external research organisation if engaging external trainers/coaches • Include perspectives of staff from other sectors who were present at the initial planning meeting and any methodology training. Explain their role in the project	
	Community sensitisation – building community support • How facilitators were selected • Agenda/plan and notes from meeting with stakeholders in the community • Community resource mapping – diagrams and notes • What information, if any, was gathered from the community before approaching it? • Meeting notes – was there one standardised format? What different approaches were tried? What worked? How were meetings organised?	
	Selection of facilitators • Describe different approaches taken to select the facilitators • What were the selection criteria – eg, age, sex, nationality, previous experience, etc? • Who was involved in the selection process and why? • How was the project presented to potential facilitators? What was their reaction? Did they raise any concerns? • What were their expectations? • Any work with parents / families?	
	Development of documentation plan – process and outcomes • Who was involved? • What was the process? • Include workshop notes	

Milestone	Planned documentation deliverables	Responsible
TWO: **Initial work with facilitators and research partners**	**Key definitions** eg, research partners, Youth Facilitators, PAR, etc	
	Selection of adolescent research partners • What were the selection criteria – eg, age, sex, nationality, previous experience, etc? • How were they selected? • Who from the project team was involved in the selection process and why? • How was the project presented to the adolescent research partners? What was their reaction – eg, did they raise any concerns? • Did we capture their expectations? • Any work with parents and/or families? • Which advertising techniques were used – eg, flyers, social media, word of mouth, etc?	
	Team building and life skills for Youth Facilitators and adolescent research partners • What topics were selected and why? • What tools/curricula were used and why? • Who facilitated the sessions? • Issues raised by participants, requests made by participants • 'Pre' and 'post' tests and results	

THREE: **PAR part one – process**	**Research methodology**
	Process:
	• How was it designed and who was involved?
	• Include methodology meeting minutes and presentations
	Methodology:
	• Introductory methodology document (from methodology meeting)
	• Training curriculum/programme
	• Sessions' curricula/guidance
	• Training report
	• Record reflections on the methodology at 3 levels:
	  i. Facilitators – using transcripts from analysis meetings and observation notes
	  ii. Research partners – using transcripts from analysis meetings and observation notes
	  iii. Research team – as part of mid-term review/reflection	

Milestone	Planned documentation deliverables	Responsible

PAR part one – process
 continued
	Reflection sessions with research partners and Youth Facilitators
	 • Each research partner group will decide how they will report on and document the process and the content (eg, video, written notes)
	 • Draw up a list of questions for each group to answer when they report:
	   ○ How topics are decided (eg, participatory ranking mechanism methodology)
	   ○ Process description – How were issues/findings identified? How were priorities for action chosen?
	   ○ Tools used, and how they worked
	   ○ Documentation methods used by staff and facilitators	

	PAR process: research plans How will the group research the topic – including meeting notes or facilitators' transcripts • Engagement with the community – How? With whom? What is their feedback? Who facilitates? Include meeting transcripts that capture how young people are reacting, participating and engaging throughout the process/project	
PAR part two – content	**Content of discussions** (regardless of what platforms or methods of engagement have been used) Synthesise findings and outcomes • Session notes • Issues and priorities • List of priorities and actions to be taken • Process documentation: sharing findings and interacting with community • Solutions and way forward – eg, were any projects identified, how do they want to move forward? • Adolescents and youth personal diaries	
FOUR: Youth-led initiatives	**Youth-led initiatives** • Process of how they are decided • Participants • Roles • Documenting projects by adolescents, reactions by community	
FIVE: Changes in adolescent participants	**Monitoring changes in the adolescents** – pre- and post-participation in the PAR • Personal level • Relational level (families, community) • Changes in the families/community (post)	

Milestone	Planned documentation deliverables	Responsible

SIX: Learning	**Learning**
	1. Documentation output – final report
	2. Process of synthesising the adolescents' discussions and decisions
	3. Reference group:
	  a. participants
	  b. discussion notes
	4. Mid-term review – management and coordination, process, methodology, findings to date
	5. Regional learning (if applicable)
	6. Partnership with external research organisation
	7. Life skills training – was it useful for participants? End of project review
	8. MEAL review
	9. Methodology report: tools selected, guidance for the tools (at end of project)	

	Data analysis How data will be analysed – Who by? How often? • Initial compilation of data collected • Continuous process: collect data, discuss/analyse, collect more data • Compare locations, approaches and issues • Mid-term review • Reference group – include agenda item on content	
SEVEN: Dissemination	**Dissemination** Decide how you will share the project's learning and outcomes – eg, a report, a policy brief, an advocacy tool?	

Annex 6: Sample media release form

This media release form was created by the Egypt team during the PAR pilot, and can be adapted to your specific contextual requirements, always in consultation with the child protection and communications teams. Make sure that the person signing the media release form fully understands it and its implications. Translate it if necessary and read it aloud if the person cannot read.

Photo consent and media release

In support of Save the Children's mission to achieve immediate and lasting change in children's lives, I hereby give my consent:

(a) to Save the Children, and its affiliates and their agents to film, photograph, tape or otherwise make a video reproduction of me and/or my child/children and/or record our voice(s); and,

(b) to Save the Children to use my name or my child/children's name and such film, photography or reproduction of us and/or recording of our voice(s), in part or in whole, in newspapers, magazines and other print media, on television, radio and electronic media (including the internet), in theatrical media and/or in mailings for educational and awareness-raising campaigns by Save the Children, in connection with the promotion of Save the Children products and/or to help raise funds for Save the Children.

Consent to such use is given in perpetuity, and does not require prior approval by me. I further disclaim any right to receive compensation or economic benefit that has or could have become due in connection with the use of the film, photograph, tape or reproduction of me, my child/children and/or the recording of our voice(s).

Signature: _____

Print name: _____

Address: _____

Date: _____

The below-signed parent or legal guardian of the above-named child hereby consents to and gives permission to the above on behalf of such child.

Signature of parent or legal guardian: _____

Print name: _____

Address: _____

Date: _____

The following is required if the consent and release form has to be read to the individual or parent/legal guardian of a minor:

I certify that I have read this consent form in full to the individual or parent/legal guardian whose signature appears above.

Translator/Reader _____

Every child has the right to a future. Save the Children works around the world to give children a healthy start in life, and the chance to learn and to be safe. We do whatever it takes to get children the things they need – every day and in times of crisis.

PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

A 'how to' guide for use with adolescents in humanitarian contexts

This 'how to' guide provides practical advice for anyone considering using participatory action research (PAR) in their work with adolescents in a humanitarian context. It draws upon the learning gained through a PAR project conducted by Save the Children with Syrian refugee and host community adolescent girls and boys in Egypt and Lebanon. Organised according to recommended key phases of a PAR project, the guide provides checklists and important considerations to support project design, planning, implementation and evaluation. Practical tools and resources that can be adapted for use in different PAR projects are provided in the annexes.

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