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Refugee Studies Centre

Piloting Methods for the Evaluation of Psychosocial Programme Impact in Eastern Sri Lanka

Final Report for USAID

by

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1. Introduction and Background

1.1. Aims, Objectives and Personnel

This document is based upon a study conducted in eastern Sri Lanka by a small team of researchers over the nine month period between April 2003 and January 2004. The project was intended to pilot a range of participatory tools and methods with children in Batticaloa, a part of the island that has experienced years of conflict and displacement, with the aim of establishing their utility and appropriateness for monitoring and evaluating psychosocial programmes. Although the research took place in a particular locality, the findings are intended to address a general need for the enhancement of monitoring and evaluation of psychosocial interventions with children. The specific objectives and aims of the project were as follows:

Objectives
- Increase accountability and effectiveness in psychosocial interventions with children.
- Enable agencies to demonstrate the impact and outcome of interventions and empower them in their relationship with donors.
- Enhance the profile of psychosocial programming through the introduction of effective Monitoring & Evaluation and reporting mechanisms.
- Feed findings into an international network of academics & practitioners involved in development of Monitoring and Evaluation practice for psychosocial interventions with children.

Aims
- Develop tools, methods and principles for evaluation of psychosocial interventions with war-affected and displaced children. These tools, methods and principles should be:
    - Child participatory.
    - Usable by local practitioners
    - Valid across cultures and contexts

- Pilot tools and methods, and clarify principles through working within a psychosocial project in a conflict-affected area of eastern Sri Lanka.

The research team comprised:

- **Miranda Armstrong**: former delegate for Terre des hommes (Tdh) Lausanne in Sri Lanka, experienced in child-focused programming in both the north and east of Sri Lanka.

- **Jo Boyden**: a social anthropologist based at the Refugee Studies Centre, University of Oxford, whose work over the past 20 years has focused on children living in situations of adversity.

- **Ananda Galappatti**: a freelance consultant based in Colombo / London with an academic background in psychology; involved in training, research and psychosocial programme development.

- **Jason Hart**: a social anthropologist based at the Refugee Studies Centre, where his work focuses on war-affected and refugee children and adolescents.

1.2. Context of Research

Programmatic Context of Research

The research process was principally conducted within the project activities of Koinonia, a local NGO based in Batticaloa. This organisation has developed an extensive network of after school play centres in which the agency's animators provide a programme that addresses children's psychosocial wellbeing through games, sports, nutritional supplements, and informal education.

This work of Koinonia's forms part of the programme of Terre des hommes, Lausanne. Terre des hommes (Tdh) in Sri Lanka has over 20 years of experience implementing projects focused on vulnerable children and their families. The agency's psychosocial activities in the war-affected areas of the Batticaloa District grew out of a study undertaken in 1993. This study identified that a large number of children were suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. The manifestations of this included somatic symptoms, fear, anxiety, sleep disturbances and a lack of concentration and motivation at school. Tdh responded to these findings by developing a Community Based Rehabilitation Programme in Batticaloa in partnership with Koinonia and another local organisation, Batticaloa Befrienders. This programme has been running for the last 10 years.

Local Context of Research

Batticaloa is one of the regions of Sri Lanka that has been most profoundly affected by the drawn out ethnic conflict between Tamil separatists and Sinhala-dominated state. The conflict in this part of the island dates back to 1983, sparked by riots and inter-community violence. Aside from short periods of ceasefire, violent confrontation between the forces deployed by the Government of Sri Lanka and those of Tamil rebel groups, most notably the LTTE, has continued since then. This has led to the death and injury of countless civilians and to numerous human rights abuses including disappearances, arbitrary arrests, rape and torture. The population of Batticaloa District is almost exclusively composed of Tamils and Muslims, although there is an unrecorded minority of people of Sinhala origin who have married into these two ethnic groups. On the whole, the members of these two groups tend to live apart, either in ethnically homogeneous villages or in distinct neighbourhoods within the bigger towns. Over the past two decades episodes of violence between the two communities have occurred at regular intervals, most notably in the early 1990s when a number of inter-communal attacks and massacres took place.

Today Batticaloa is a patchwork of government and LTTE-controlled enclaves. Civilians residing in the LTTE areas have suffered particularly from the lack of infrastructure, paucity of economic opportunities and difficulties of mobility. Furthermore, they have been put

under pressure to support the military efforts of the LTTE. At times this has reportedly included the widespread recruitment of children, often by force. A ceasefire between the Sri Lankan Government and the LTTE in February 2002 has led to a significant reduction in military activity and in tension amongst the local population. Movement between SLA and LTTE-controlled areas is generally far easier, and investment in infrastructural development has led to some improvements in the quality of life of ordinary civilians. Nevertheless, a secure peace settlement remains elusive. Reports of the conscription of children by the LTTE continue and inter-communal relations, particularly between the local Tamil and Muslim populations, are still fragile.

At the community and family level, ceasefire has not necessarily eased many of the social and economic problems created or exacerbated by the conflict. Acute poverty is still endemic, especially in areas controlled by the LTTE. This in itself has led to the widespread outmigration of individual family members. A large number of these are women - including many mothers – who pursue work as domestic servants in the Middle East. Within villages and towns the social fabric is often severely weakened by suspicion and animosity arising from the different ways in which individual families have engaged in the conflict, particularly in their relationship with the LTTE. Furthermore, alcoholism and suicide are rife. In the view of many commentators these have been fuelled by feelings of despondency and despair amongst ordinary people. In such an environment children may often lack adequate care and attention from parents or other caregivers.

Following the ceasefire agreement, Koinonia decided to take advantage of the increased access to areas in Batticaloa controlled by the LTTE and requested Tdh to assist with the funding of seven new psychosocial play activity centers. These centers are run by animators, most of whom are in their late teens or early to mid-twenties and come from the villages in which the centers are located.

The seven centers were established in communities situated on or near the Badulla Road, which runs from the coast to central Sri Lanka. The area was originally forested and only comparatively recently cleared for occupation and agricultural use. Until the ceasefire this area was subject to major security and mobility restrictions and embargoes on a range of key commodities. Agricultural production had declined, services such as health and education were severely curtailed and the infrastructure, especially roads and irrigation systems, had fallen into disrepair. The inhabitants of the Badulla Road villages are mainly displaced first and second generation 'upcountry' Tamils who were forced to move to the area because of ethnic unrest and violence in the central highlands. Only a small proportion of the population owns land, and the majority relies on daily labour on farms, in quarries and similar enterprises. Some families have government documentation awarding them ownership of land, but in quite a few cases lack the means to cultivate it profitably.

1.3. Conceptual Framework

Background

A monitoring and evaluation process is usually built upon the objectives of the project in question. The nature of the outcomes and impact that the project seeks to achieve should provide the basis for M & E. In practice, however, most projects focused on qualitative change, including psychosocial projects, lack clearly articulated and precise objectives with associated outcomes and impacts. Even where objectives are more clearly stated and used to orient an intervention, these may still be inadequate or misleading when it comes to M&E practice. There are several reasons for this, amongst them:

- The objectives for psychosocial projects are commonly set through processes that do not systematically link the analysis of problems with the definition of objectives and the choice of intervention strategy.

- In the conditions created by conflict and displacement psychosocial interventions often diverge from their stated objectives and planned activities in order to respond to emerging needs.

- In practice the impact of the intervention upon the lives of children may be greater or different to that which is predicted during the design phase of the intervention.

The project with which we worked in Batticaloa District was in certain respects fairly typical in that the objectives of the work were broad and vague. Furthermore, the conceptualisation of 'psychosocial' remained largely implicit. At the time of our field visits, no activities had been undertaken to assess the wellbeing or psychosocial needs of children. Thus, no form of baseline was available against which to gauge progress.

The benefit of this situation for our study was that it allowed the freedom to start by establishing a baseline through a broad conceptual framework that reflected the multiple dimensions of children's psychosocial wellbeing. The manner in which we understood 'psychosocial' inevitably shaped the different aspects of our work, most importantly the methods used, the way that we worked with children and the analysis of data.

Key Features

The conceptual framework chosen for this project builds upon a model developed for use in complex emergencies by the Psychosocial Working Group (PWG), a collaborative partnership between five academic and five humanitarian institutions (Strang & Ager, 2001; Psychosocial Working Group, 2003a; Strang & Ager, 2003). The key features of this framework can be described as follows:

i.   Psychosocial wellbeing as the focus of intervention
A broad notion of 'Psychosocial wellbeing' was chosen deliberately as an alternative to narrow conceptualisations related to psychopathology and the identification of trauma. It was not that we denied the possible existence of trauma but felt that the employment of this concept and the possible psycho-medical approach that goes with it would raise conceptual,

ethical and practical challenges that were beyond our scope to address satisfactorily. In particular, we were concerned to avoid cross-cultural application of the diagnostic category of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), about which a growing number of psychologists, psychiatrists and anthropologists have expressed serious reservations.[1] It was our intention to focus upon the elements that constitute and determine wellbeing, as well as the factors that threaten and enhance it. The term 'psychosocial' was useful since it brought into view the wider social influences on wellbeing, thereby taking us beyond the location of problems (and healing) solely within the mind or emotions of individual children. Furthermore, as explained below, our understanding of 'social' embraces also the material realm of children's lives.

ii.   A contextualised approach to understanding psychosocial wellbeing

It is our contention that psychosocial wellbeing must be understood within the social and cultural context where the intervention is taking place. The employment of notions and categories taken directly from current psycho-medical ideas developed in the countries of the North did not seem appropriate to us.

We did, however, bring with us very consciously a notion of wellbeing as constituted by positive condition in three distinct domains – 'human capacity', 'social ecology' and 'material environment'. We confirmed the relevance of these three domains for the context of our fieldwork during an initial workshop held in Colombo with a number of Sri Lankan experts in the psychosocial field. Each of these domains is a broad category within which we sought to identify specific factors that contribute to or detract from children's psychosocial wellbeing. Below is a pictorial representation of our conceptual framework. This illustrates the necessarily overlapping nature of the three domains since factors which are important aspects of one domain may well have direct relevance for others as well, often through causal relationships. For example, the ability to get along well with others ('human capacity') has obvious bearing upon the networks of friendship and support that an individual child may enjoy ('social ecology').

In the original schema of the Psychosocial Working Group 'culture and values' are taken as a distinct realm. Our own belief was that we cannot consider 'culture and values' as separable in this way. Rather, 'culture and value's shape the content of the three domains of 'human capacity', 'social ecology' and 'material environment': for example, the particular qualities and competencies that a child is expected to possess in order to be considered as capable ('human capacity'). While 'creativity' and 'expressiveness', for instance, may be qualities that middle class British parents currently look for in their children, in the location where we conducted our fieldwork neither of these were alluded to. Instead, much mention was made of characteristics such as 'obedience' and 'cleanliness'. While the notion of 'human capacity' seems to have relevance in these two very different settings the *manner* in which it is conceived will thus be understood differently in accordance with local culture and values.

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[1] For a summary explanation of the debates and concerns about PTSD see Appendix 1.
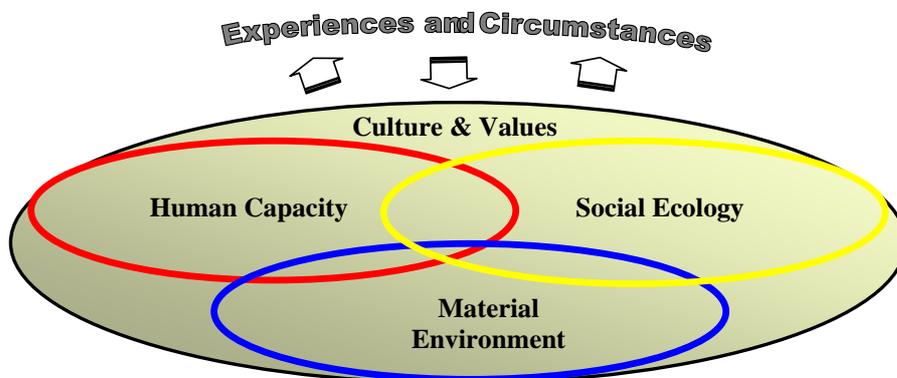
Our understanding of each of these three domains is discussed below.

iii.   A primary focus on the group rather than upon individual children

Our insistence on focusing on the psychosocial wellbeing of groups of children rather than upon individuals is motivated by the following issues:

- The lack of resources (both our own and those of the implementing agency) to identify and offer a response to individual cases of need.
- The emerging trend within psychosocial programming, particularly in Sri Lanka, away from treatment of individual children and towards the support for and enhancement of community-based healing and support.[2]
- Concerns about compromising the safety of individual children by encouraging them to articulate specific information of a potentially political nature (e.g. stories of abuse by certain parties to the conflict). By working as a group, general trends may be identified without focusing on the particularities of any one case.
- Our conviction in the greater sustainability and social acceptability of approaches that do not single out particular children but instead look at processes that may contribute to the wellbeing of children in general.

iv.   Children seen as instrumental in development of their own wellbeing

We do not intend in any way to ignore or underplay the devastating impact of conflict upon children. At the same time, however, we maintain that children are and should be seen not only as victims but also as social actors with an important role to play in the enhancement of their own wellbeing and that of their peers. Indeed, it is our belief that the engagement of children in efforts to enhance their own psychosocial wellbeing can itself yield positive benefits, particularly in the domains of human capacity and social ecology noted above and described further below.

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[2] This may be a pragmatic response to limited human and financial resources for services, or in other cases due to an understanding that individually-oriented interventions may often not be culturally meaningful or appropriate.

iv.   A focus on resources as well as upon risks

All of our activities with children were designed with a view to the identification not only of factors that impact negatively upon them but also resources that might be drawn upon to positive effect. Within the domain of 'human capacity', for example, this concern led us to consider personal resilience as well as suffering. The identification of resources alongside risks was not only important in terms of our understanding of psychosocial wellbeing but a solid basis from which to work with children and supporting agencies in the development of local-level interventions.

v.   Understanding experiences

The interest in resources and risks derives from our understanding of the relationship between experiences and circumstances, on one hand, and psychosocial wellbeing, on the other (see diagram above). Experiences may be positive and negative. In addition, they can relate to actual incidents and processes undergone as well as to the fear or anticipation of these. Thus, for example, the *fear* of forced recruitment may be an extremely negative experience (and therefore a risk), as well as actual recruitment itself. Similarly, the *anticipation* of support or salvation by a deity may be an important resource helping to strengthen a child's resilience. From this perspective, it is clear that an outsider cannot pre-determine what will constitute positive and negative experiences in the lives of any particular group of children. The purpose of participatory research is to learn from and with children about those experiences that are important for them and why.

vi.   Holistic approach that does not privilege conflict and the past

There has been a common tendency for agencies working with conflict-affected children to assume in advance that the greatest causes of suffering and risk relate to past experiences of extreme violence. We were concerned to avoid making such assumptions. Instead, we sought to identify the biggest problems for children within their lives as a whole. In other words, we adopted an holistic approach, seeking to see children's lives broadly and not simply in relation to the conflict. Whilst we certainly do not seek to avoid or ignore factors directly related to the conflict and its associated violence, we did not make such things an inevitable priority.

Furthermore, we were concerned to avoid privileging the past, seeing it in discrete and static terms. Instead, we proceeded on the assumption that the past and present interact dynamically. In other words, past experiences, both negative and positive, are subject to constant reworking in light of ongoing experience of life in the present. This process takes place not only at the level of the individual child, but also within his or her family, community and wider society. The meaning of particular events and experiences and their consequences for children cannot be ascertained in advance, based upon standardised notions about 'stressors' and 'sequalae'.

The core domains of psychosocial wellbeing.

The PWG's framework suggests that the psychosocial realm can be viewed in terms of three core domains – human capacity, social ecology and culture and values (PWG, 2003). The framework used by the research team, on the basis of discussions held at a workshop with psychosocial practitioners in Sri Lanka, involved a two-step alteration of the basic structure

suggested by the PWG. On one hand we introduced the domain of 'material environment' which was understood by us to combine the categories of economic, environmental and physical factors and conditions The other change was to consider 'culture and values' not as a distinct domain but rather as a lens through which the other domains should all be understood.

- **Social ecology**. This refers to the circumstances of children's social worlds, including their relationships with peers, kin, neighbours and others (extent and quality), the degree and nature of social support, care, mentoring and services available to them, and the implications of their social identity (gender, class, location, ethnicity, religion) for life experiences and events.

- **Human capacity**. This refers to the status of children's individual resources in relation to cognitive capacity, social competence, personal identity and valuation emotional well-being, skills and knowledge – as is necessary for good functioning and interaction within their social, cultural and material environment.

- **Material environment**. This refers to the material conditions of children's lives, including those pertaining to physical environment and infrastructure, status of food and livelihood security, and degree of physical safety and comfort.

2. Monitoring and Evaluation

In this section we explain in further detail the aims of the project in relation to the development of monitoring and evaluation practice. Our motivation for undertaking this work arises from concern about the inadequacy of commonly-used approaches to M &E, specifically in relation to psychosocial programming with children. In order to make clear the particular approach to M&E that we seek to promote, we shall first briefly describe current practice and why we see this as unsatisfactory. First of all, however, we begin with a brief overview of the purposes of M&E in general.

2.1. Why Monitor & Evaluate? [3]

Broadly speaking, there are four main reasons for undertaking monitoring and evaluation activities:

i. Accountability
This has generally been the most common reason for the integration of M&E activities into programming. It is through monitoring progress and impact that an implementing agency demonstrates the appropriate and effective use of funds. Conventionally, this has been done for the sole or principal benefit of the donor. However, there is a growing sense within the field of development that accountability should also extend to the population who are the supposed beneficiaries of the intervention.

ii. Improve Programming / Performance
Through an effective system of M&E it should be possible to identify shortcomings or inefficiency in programming. This, in turn, should lead to a process of reflection and improvement.

iii. Learning
Properly documented M&E activities can provide valuable information not only for that specific project or programme but also for the work of others. Lessons learned can thus be shared widely. The documentation may in addition prove valuable in terms of enhancing institutional memory.

iv. Communication
Depending on how they are conducted, M&E activities can provide an opportunity for greater dialogue to take place between the different stakeholders involved in a particular intervention. The donors, implementing agency and the intended beneficiaries may have the opportunity to learn about each others' perspectives on the intervention in more detail.

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[3] This section draws heavily on a recent publication: Bakewell, O. with J. Adams and B. Pratt *Sharpening the Development Process: A practical guide to Monitoring and Evaluation* INTRAC Praxis Guide No.1 pp. 4-6

2.2. The Conventional Approach to M & E

In recent years approaches to monitoring and evaluation have become gradually more sophisticated and diverse reflecting new values and ideas within the aid and development field. Our description here of the 'conventional approach' is therefore intended to give only a broad picture rather than explain in detail the changes and differences as these have emerged.

In general, the concern of M&E systems has conventionally been with 'activities' and 'outputs' for which a quantitative approach is employed. Thus, for example, those responsible for M&E might accumulate data about the number of counsellors trained or the numbers of children passing through a particular psychosocial project. With such a narrow and objective focus there is little role or even apparent need for the involvement of the assumed beneficiaries of the intervention. This approach tells us little about the effects of the project. These effects may be viewed from the perspective of immediate change ('outcomes') or in terms of longer-term change ('impact'). Inevitably this shift from 'activities' / 'outputs' to 'outcomes' / 'impact' also requires us to think in *qualitative* terms. We need to think about the *quality* of change that is taking place and only when the dimensions of this are understood can we begin to quantify, measuring the incidence of any positive qualitative changes. In addition, the lack of involvement of the intended beneficiaries in the design and development of M&E procedures may mean that the indicators employed and the problems to which they relate remain abstract and of questionable relevance to the local context.

2.3. A participatory approach to M&E

The opportunity and need for beneficiary participation in the assessment of qualitative change is obvious. Here are some of the principal reasons for adopting a participatory approach:

1. To ensure that the changes which the project is creating fully reflect the concerns and aspirations of the intended beneficiaries.

2. To enhance accountability to the intended beneficiaries.

3. To provide an opportunity for learning and reflection, encouraging the confidence of intended beneficiaries and their sense of ownership and self-efficacy.

4. To promote communication between all involved in the project.

5. To identify new and emerging needs, including capacity-building needs.

Whilst a participatory approach to monitoring and evaluation has become increasingly common amongst agencies working with adults, it has been pursued less consistently with children. This is starting to change with many of the largest child-focused agencies now making serious efforts to develop their M&E strategies to ensure children's participation, often with explicit reference to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. However, such efforts are generally confined to the field of development. Children's participation in humanitarian interventions is far less common and, in relation to all aspects of psychosocial programming, including M&E, it is particularly rare. It is our contention, nonetheless, that

well-supported participation by children in assessing the intervention and reviewing project aims and objectives can not only enhance the work itself but yield direct benefits in terms of building their confidence and capacity and improving their relationships with peers and others.

2.4. Operational Principles to Guide M &E

This project grew out of a series of consultations and workshops with an informal network of practitioners and scholars concerned about programmatic responses to children living in situations of conflict and displacement. From an initial conference in the UK in 2000 and through the subsequent gatherings in 2002 (in South Africa and the USA), a specific interest very clearly emerged in the development of tools for use in the evaluation of psychosocial interventions. In the most recent meeting, hosted by Jon Hubbard and the Center for Victims of Torture and held in Minneapolis in November 2002, participants identified a need to produce a set of principles that might be used to guide M&E processes with conflict-affected children. Since the projects to be reviewed might be anywhere in the world it was important that these principles should be of a fundamental nature and have relevance in very different social and cultural contexts. Here are some of the key principles that emerged from this discussion:

Monitoring and Evaluation processes should:

- Be based on local understanding, in full accordance with local culture and values and current political circumstances.

- Involve children fully as participants based upon the recognition that their perspectives are liable to differ from those of adults.

- Provide a valuable and enjoyable experience for children, enhancing their psychosocial wellbeing and promoting peer group relationships.

- Anticipate differences of power and perspective between adults and children and between children themselves.

- Encourage the identification of solutions as well as problems and challenges.

- In no way compromise the wellbeing, social standing and safety of child participants and local agency staff.

- Enable the direct enhancement of programmes.

3. Methods

In this section we describe the methods piloted, the factors that influenced the choice of methods, some of the challenges encountered during the piloting and how these affected the process.

3.1. Selection of methods

The rationale underlying the pilot project is that monitoring should aid the assessment of programme progress and impact as well as the planning of future measures. Hence, the choice of tools and methods had to reflect these two needs, in the sense that different methods produce data on different aspects of children's lives and psychosocial wellbeing. Clearly the data needs will also be influenced by the aims, objectives, strategies and activities of the programme that is under review. Ideally, psychosocial initiatives should aim at the very least to positively influence children's well-being, coping and resilience. There may be other more specific objectives, such as the prevention of suicide, depression or enlistment in the military. Projects that are rooted in an ecological and interactive approach will hopefully also try and influence the environment in which children live, to both reduce the level of risk and increase the opportunities, resources, and systems of support and protection that they have access to. Koinonia's and Tdh's Community Based Rehabilitation Programme fits into this latter category, in that it supports children within their own communities and families through collective activities such as play and home visits. Community and family based measures will need to collect a broad spectrum of monitoring data beyond the psychological states of children that also encompass family and community functioning, service provision and other context-related information. Accordingly, the choice of methods for participatory monitoring and evaluation in the pilot was determined by their effectiveness in capturing children's perspectives in three broad areas:

- functioning (emotional states, feelings, aspirations, actions, social and cognitive competencies and the like);

- project role and impact;

- environmental opportunities and constraints (especially risks and resources related to family, community, institutions and material environment);

In addition, it was vital that the methods should:

- be amenable to use by children in as broad an age range as possible and with limited or no literacy;

- yield data that can be employed in monitoring and evaluation;

- yield data that relate to all three of the domains outlined in the conceptual framework – 'social ecology', 'material environment' and 'human capacity';

The piloting did not involve assessments of the mental health of individual children. This was partly due to the fact that the staff of Koinonia have no psychotherapeutic training and the play centres are not in a position to offer individual counselling or support to children suffering from serious mental health conditions. It also reflected the stated objective of the pilot to develop participatory methods for use with children involved in the programme.

One critical assumption underlying the pilot was that if applied systematically at the outset of an intervention and at regular intervals subsequently, the methods should reveal trends over time in children's well-being, resilience and coping, as well as in local child protection and support systems. In addition, if the methods are to be effective for monitoring purposes, they should also reveal the extent and ways in which these trends are influenced by the programme. In other words, negative and positive factors in children's well-being and coping, and environmental constraints and opportunities highlighted during baseline assessment can be noted for their presence or absence, increase or reduction, in follow-up monitoring exercises. Positive impacts of projects can be measured through a shift in child functioning towards greater competence and resilience, the emergence of more effective risk reduction strategies and so on. Impacts on children's environment may be recorded through the disappearance or more effective management of previously noted risks, greater social support, increased service access and other similar factors.

3.2. Employment of Methods: Conceptual issues

Defining the focus of enquiry
Clearly, it is important to be able to distinguish between changes that have occurred as a result of intervention and changes that are due to extraneous factors, such as improvements in security or the local economy. In order to elicit information about programme impact, decisions need to be made as to how explicit this line of enquiry is to be. During the pilot, a conscious decision was made *not* to address the question of project impact directly with the children, partly because the Koinonia programme is quite new and the pilot was in effect serving as a baseline assessment so there would not have been a great deal to report on. Another consideration was to see whether Koinonia and indeed other NGOs working locally would emerge spontaneously in children's discussions of their lives and worlds. This strategy is possibly the most neutral, in that it minimises the extent to which children are influenced by adult monitors in their reporting of the effects of interventions. Children can, of course, be asked to give specific feedback on how the programme has influenced their well-being and their lives: these questions to be posed alongside ones on the role of the family, schools etc. This is certainly a valid approach.

Relating methods to domains
While few of the tools focus exclusively or exhaustively on a particular domain, there is a correlation between individual methods and the types of information they tend to provide. Since cultural norms, values and practices pervade all aspects of children's lives, information on this topic emerges throughout the monitoring activities rather than by administering a specific tool. In other words, methods that focus specifically on one of the three domains will at the same time provide information on cultural issues. For example, concepts of wellbeing and illbeing, which refer specifically to human capacity or human functioning, are very much bound up in cultural views of what are 'normal' and 'undesirable' states of being. The two

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methods that focused most closely on 'human capacity' were the body maps and the wellbeing exercise. Information on social ecology was obtained largely through social maps, problem trees, spider diagrams and 'What if?' and 'Who matters?' and the 'Social Network Sorting Activity', while the material environment was addressed mainly through the risk and resources and timeline exercises. However, it was apparent that information generated in relation to one domain would often be linked to issues in another domain. For example, a cut on a foot drawn by mothers during a body map was described as being linked to being preoccupied with or "thinking too much" [*human capacity*] about their situation of financial insecurity [*material environment*] whilst clearing forest as labourers – a form of work now necessary since the loss of the support from spouses [*social ecology*] who have been murdered or disappeared.

Throughout the piloting process the greatest challenge was obtaining information on children's social ecology. As indicated, we implemented several methods for this purpose, continuously trying to improve the quality and quantity of findings. In the case of the 'What if?' & 'Who matters?' exercise we also administered an adapted version called 'Who do I visit?'. In the final period of fieldwork a further exercise was developed which involved a series of cumulative stages intended to yield a range of different information about social networks. This is referred to as the 'Social Network Sorting Activity'. In each instance, the information on children's networks of social support was sparse as compared to the amount of data on other domains. Initially we saw this as a methodological problem reflecting the inadequacy of the tools. However, through trial and error and by cross-referencing with focus groups held with adults, we realised that the scarcity of social resources in the lives of these children was not a reflection of methodology but a substantive finding in itself. That is to say, years of conflict and displacement have resulted in the loss of many lives, family separation, a marked diminution in social trust and a range of other circumstances that have seriously eroded children's social ecology to the point that they now have very few people to turn to for affection and support.

It was particularly interesting to note the differences when we conducted some of these exercises with children in more urbanised areas under SLA control. Although there were evidently many material and social problems, these seemed a good deal less extreme. Overall, the children described broader and more coherent networks which may partly be accounted for by the fact that they were a little older than the children we met on the Badulla Road. However, it was our impression that the greater opportunity for the development of communication skills, for the building up of social networks (due to greater mobility, a wider range of leisure and educational opportunities, etc) and the better material conditions were also significant factors.

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3.3. Employment of Methods: Practical Issues

Aside from effectiveness in research with children and in producing information covering all the domains, a number of other practical and ethical criteria were important in guiding the selection of methods. It was vital that all methods employed should be:

- productive of data that could be analysed conceptually and/or statistically;

- child participatory;

- easy to implement and, therefore, suitable for local agency staff with limited training in psychosocial work.

- in accordance with strict ethical standards;[4]

It was decided in advance that individual sessions with the children be restricted in length to about two hours, so as not to tire or bore them. Plenty of time was given also to games, especially those involving physical activity, and drinks and biscuits were provided on some occasions. Extensive use was made of drawing and group discussion, as opposed to interviews and writing, the latter two media generally being more intimidating or difficult and the former more attractive to children. Commitment to a participatory approach involved the development of methods that reduce power imbalances between adult monitors and child project participants, encourage children to feel comfortable with the process and, as far as possible, contribute their own views and perspectives. It also resulted in use of methods that are primarily collective rather than individual, with groups of children generating data through discussion and consensus rather than children working on their own. This choice entails both opportunities and constraints, in that while children in groups may feel constrained in what they discuss in front of others, they may, on the other hand, find solace in sharing their experiences and concerns with peers. Similarly, whereas collective methods enable wider coverage of respondents in a shorter period of time, individual methods can better facilitate the building of trust between the adult monitor and the child respondent.

Possibly the greatest advantage of collective methods, though, is their potential as a vehicle for building interactive, problem-solving, planning and other competencies in children. This is because interacting with peers, working collaboratively as a group, reaching a consensus and so on, are all critical processes in children's social development. In this sense, collective participatory methods can, in themselves, contribute to psychosocial well-being, coping and resilience.

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[4] The ethical standards employed to guide our work were those developed at the workshop in Minneapolis. See Section 2.4.

3.4. Implementation

3.4.1. Mixing and sequencing of methods

It was evident from the outset that more than one method would be required for effective monitoring and evaluation. This is partly in light of the holistic nature of our conceptual framework and partly because of the importance of verifying findings. The aim of piloting, therefore, was not simply to test individual methods in isolation from each other but to consider how effective each one would be as part of a broader sequence of methods. At the same time, it was recognised that there are tremendous constraints to programming in areas of conflict and hence that this sequence should not be too long or complex. A balance of qualitative and quantitative information was also sought, so while some of the methods chosen are purely qualitative, others produce findings that can be quantified through a process of repetition and aggregation. We note that the intention of the project was to propose a small selection of possible methods that can be used in various combinations in monitoring and evaluation rather than to prescribe a fixed sequence of methods.

3.4.2. Use of focus group discussion

It is also worth highlighting that information obtained from these methods can generally be enhanced through a semi-structured focus group or more informal discussion held immediately afterwards while the subject of enquiry is still fresh in children's minds. This applies to all the methods piloted during the study. Focus group discussion can be extremely helpful in cross-checking information obtained from the pilot method and probing key issues, or exploring central concepts that emerged from it in greater detail. It offers the children a chance to contextualise the information they have given and cite examples of experiences they have undergone by way of illustration. Above all, however, it provides an opportunity to bring closure on issues the children raise during the main session that may be continuing to cause them anxiety or distress.

3.4.3. Age issues

The original aim was to work with children aged between approximately 5 and 16. However, it soon became apparent that younger children (those under age 10 or so) were not responding well to the exercises. There were several different problems. Sometimes the younger children were unable to understand what the task entailed. Sometimes they were able to provide very little information that could be used or were simply too shy to engage in an activity. Often, they preferred to play. We established that the problem was not primarily one of limited literacy skills, since even with other children or ourselves acting as recorders this did not make a significant difference to their engagement with the activities. In the end, given the limited time available to us, rather than developing methods more suited to younger children we were forced to abandon working with this age group.

That said, we would not wish to imply that these methods are not suitable for young children, rather that the younger children in this particular area were unable to respond to them. This was evidenced by the fact that when we conducted a session with children in another more urbanised and more secure part of Batticaloa, the younger ones did not have any difficulties with the methods. We concluded that the low level of response in the Badulla Road children is most likely due to years of impaired health and nutritional intake, limited opportunity to

express their views and extremely restricted access to and very poor quality of education. Furthermore, curtailed mobility due to curfews and checkpoints has long limited these children's exposure to urban settlements and other learning environments and processes outside their immediate communities. In summary, it appears that cognitive capacity and prior experiences of participation and articulation of personal viewpoints may function as key factors in determining the efficacy of these methods in work with young children.

3.4.4. Working with adults
Aside from working with children, a consistent effort was made to gather data from a range of adults—Koinonia staff, parents and other local residents—during the piloting. We sought information from them about recent events connected with the conflict, the local economic, social and political situation, service provision, children's lives and other related topics. The intention was to cross check data gathered from the children with those collected from adults, compare adults' and children's perspectives and generally enrich our understanding of the environment in which children live. Much of the information from adults was obtained through focus group discussions, although in some cases we also employed the same methods as those piloted with the children, seeking to further the piloting and methodological development.

3.4.5. Facilitation and recording
Use of collective methods implies careful facilitation and recording and hence requires a minimum of two people, each with a distinct and clearly defined role. The aim of participatory monitoring should not simply be to produce maps, diagrams or other outputs, but also to encourage and carefully record open discussion of issues that arise. This kind of discussion is essential for the generation of qualitative data, probing of key issues and provision of important background information.

Facilitation
The facilitator is responsible for:

- explaining the exercise to the participants:

- obtaining their consent to take part;

- guiding them through the exercise;

- putting the children at their ease;

- helping them generate information;

- providing opportunities for discussion and reflection.

Ideally, the facilitator should be someone known and trusted by the children. In this respect the pilot team was seriously disadvantaged since we were not only strangers to the children but three of us are foreigners. Our presence in the Badulla Road villages caused much curiosity and excitement among the children and undoubtedly proved a distraction in many instances. More seriously, only one of us had any familiarity with the Tamil language, which meant that we were heavily dependent on translators throughout. Although we were lucky enough to work with excellent translators, given the numbers of children involved and the

fact that often several conversations were being conducted at the same time, it is evident that we only captured a fraction of the total information that was conveyed to us.

Recording

Ideally, the recorder should not be involved in the process but remain apart, observing and taking detailed notes on all that happens, how the children respond to the exercise and what is said. Together with the actual products of the tools and methods (maps, drawings or whatever) these notes provide a vital record of the exercise and should be used in the analysis of findings. It is extremely important that these records be exact rather than summaries and that children's actual words be recorded since using children's own terms and concepts whilst planning and reflecting on programmatic initiatives with them will aid mutual understanding and respect. Also, the crucial meanings conveyed through children's terms and concepts may be lost when transformed into adult language or development jargon. The children need to agree to having their discussions recorded and use being made of their materials. In addition to noting the findings, the recorder needs to observe the actual process of group interaction and discussion closely, since this can reveal vital clues as to children's views and feelings. For example, during the pilot when one group of children was asked to reflect on what another group had told us about the risks they confront, mention of abduction and forced recruitment by the military produced an instant, very strong and unanimous response. More than just indicating verbally that this was by far their greatest anxiety, the children nodded their heads vigorously and the fear showed very clearly in their expressions.

Practical Challenges

In terms of facilitation, one of the main difficulties we had was the size of some of the groups of children and the fact that the age range was so broad that at times it was impossible to direct and control the process. Sometimes upward of 30 or 50 children aged between 5 and 15 would be present, all wanting to be involved and make a contribution. Given that the pilot team was small and that it was impossible to achieve our goal by working with large numbers of children, this meant that in practice Koinonia staff were frequently deployed elsewhere to entertain the younger ones, which prevented both the staff and the children from taking part in all the sessions. This was an unfortunate situation and clearly proper provision for numbers needs to be organised well in advance.

Another challenge was how, as far as possible, to avoid different groups of children copying from each other, since this is particularly likely when using collective methods and given the informality of the process. Some methods were more prone to this problem than others. One obvious way of reducing this possibility is to locate the groups at some distance from each other, although in many cases this was not an option for us because the premises we were using were too small. Also, because of the limited size of the team, we were often forced to facilitate more than one group at a time, in itself a constraint against spreading the groups out.

Creating the right mood

As outsiders to the area dealing with issues that were at times very sensitive, we felt it was appropriate to adopt a non-directive approach to facilitation. This meant that sometimes children worked more as a collection of individuals than as a cohesive group. This was apparent, for example, in some of the mapping exercises. In a sense this is a less participatory approach than one in which the facilitator works hard and consistently to involve all members in a group activity, but has the advantage of allowing children to conduct themselves in the manner they feel most comfortable with.

Given that the Koinonia programme focuses on play activities, it was hardly surprising to find that the children's expectations of the monitoring exercises were that they would be fun and involve some kind of recreational element. As noted, we tried to select methods that the children would enjoy. However, most of the methods do involve an element of concentration and, because of the use of pencils, paper and so on, do resemble schoolwork to some extent. Therefore, it was often quite difficult to settle everyone down at the start. Sometimes there was a lot of noise and distraction throughout as the younger children came in to watch and comment on what was going on. We would assume that these kinds of conditions are by no means unique to the Badulla Road programme and that similar exercises conducted elsewhere would face similar challenges. That said, we noticed a marked change in the children over time as they became more familiar with us and with the nature of the activities. For example, in one village there was a small group of very active and disruptive 12 to 15 year old boys who during our first session found it particularly difficult to settle down and concentrate. They quickly became restless and at one point started squabbling and hitting one another. A follow-up session using a method (the problem tree) that they did not respond well to had to be abandoned altogether. Yet, subsequent sessions were far more successful as the boys began to understand and become more interested in the whole process. As they conducted different exercises in a sequence they started to make analytical connections between findings from each one and to suggest ways in which intervention could make a difference to their situation.

3.4.6. Grouping respondents

With methods based on collective knowledge and experience, it is important to pay careful attention to gathering child respondents into appropriate groupings. In some cases the methods involve an initial and follow up stage and often children can remain together in one large group for the first stage. However, it is seldom possible to work effectively with large groups of children during the more detailed information gathering stage. In order to minimise possible tension or discomfort among the children, facilitate consensus and consolidation of knowledge built upon common experience and understanding, it is normally desirable to group individuals with similar social and personal characteristics together. In other words, the aim should be to group the children as far as possible by sex, age, socio-cultural or religious background.

Because of an occasional imbalance in the number of boys and girls, it was not always possible during the piloting to separate the children by sex. This had noticeable effect on the girls in particular since in the presence of boys they were often shy and withdrawn. There are no wealthy people in the Badulla Road communities that we visited and very few who are

educated beyond a fairly basic level, and all adhere to the Hindu faith, so there was no need to take other social considerations into account in this case.

Since most of the villages in the area are quite small and each session was confined to one village at a time, the children in the pilot were all very familiar with each other. This was an advantage in the sense that the children appeared to be at ease working in groups with their friends and neighbours. Nevertheless, it is important to highlight that familiarity is not always an advantage, especially in areas of armed conflict where neighbours can spy on or betray each other. Moreover, there is a risk that collective monitoring activities may result in exacerbating prior arguments or bullying between children. It is essential that the recorder identifies and the facilitator works to address, reduce or resolve, such tensions and disputes as far as possible.

3.5. Individual methods

The methods piloted in this project fall into several broad groups in terms of the way in which information is generated. Because our pilot population consisted of children with limited literacy, there was quite a heavy emphasis on drawing, focus group discussion and theatre, with limited use of written methods. Also, as noted, because the Koinonia/Tdh programme focuses on support to groups of children rather than to individuals and because of time constraints and a desire to emphasise participatory approaches, there was far less emphasis on individual interviews than methods applied with groups of children. The first broad group of methods is made up of mapping exercises and diagrams, which entail the production of visual data through the depiction of actual objects and people or metaphorical representation. The second group entails the listing of issues and categories, identifying the criteria or characteristics of these categories and sorting and ranking them to arrive at distributions or priorities within a population. The third group involves representation of fictional situations or events which can be taken to be a proxy, or typical, of the real experiences and lives of children.

3.5.1. Risk & Resource Maps

Description of aim and use

The Risk & Resource map is an adaptation of one of the methods typically used in Participatory Rural Appraisals (Jones, 1997). For a description of how to do this exercise, refer to Appendix 2. Essentially, it involves children drawing a map of their immediate surroundings, their home, community and other areas they frequently visit. Aside from depicting the natural and man-made environment as children view it, this method can be employed to identify the things that children find threatening and the things/people/institutions they recognise as sources of support and protection in their daily lives and/or during a crisis. Importantly, children were able to use this method to highlight how some things (for example lakes or the sea) constitute both a hazard and a resource for them. The method is not intended to yield information specific to a particular domain, but in practice tends to provide more insight about children's material environment than the other two domains. It can be used very effectively in conjunction with a time line exercise (see below).

The Risk/Resource map was the first tool to be piloted and generally makes a good starting point for any baseline enquiry. It was tested initially through role-play with adults during an early workshop in Colombo and capacity building exercises in Batticaloa with Koinonia staff and then administered with children in six Badulla Road villages. Use of Risk/Resource maps enabled us to compare the circumstances of children in different communities, allowing the identification of both the crosscutting issues that affect all children in the region as well as those that are village specific. For example, snakebites featured as a major source of fear in all of the villages, whereas traffic accidents were only mentioned in one. In this way, the maps indicate the extent of an issue, problem or resource, although not necessarily its severity. For information on the latter other tools are needed in which children can rank their problems and concerns in order of priority.

This was a popular method that was easily understood by the great majority of the children, including the younger ones, and generated a lot of very useful information and discussion. Most groups began drawing fairly quickly once the activity had been explained. Some were able to draw a map of their community or area, whereas others produced drawings that depicted the risks and resources randomly as items that had no particular spatial relation to each other or to a defined territory. Both forms of reproduction are appropriate since the main objective is to yield information about children's worlds and life experiences rather than produce 'perfect' maps. Some groups worked co-operatively and generated a complete map through discussion and agreement, whereas in others some of the children tended to work more individually. In some cases one or two older and more confident children were chosen by the group to do all the drawing, while in others everyone took part.
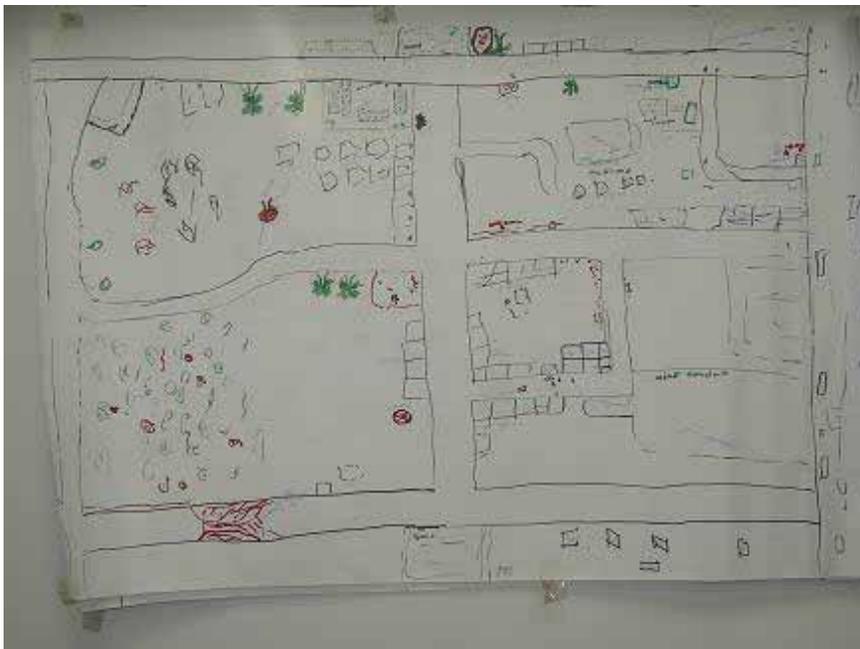
A risk and resource map created by a group of boys

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Data yielded

The method provided information on a range of issues that the children are worried about, as well as on a series of resources that they value. Table 1 outlines the key risks and resources illustrated by children in one village and gives some of their explanations as to why these particular items were included.

Table 1: Risks and Resources identified by children in one village on the Badulla Road

Risks	Resources
Tank [man-made irrigation lake] (drowning)	Coconut/Mango trees (Food and firewood)
Snakes (bites)	Flowers (to take to the temple/put in front of religious pictures)
Dogs (attacks) [possibly rabid]	School (for studying)
Liquor (drunken in excess by adults)	Post Office (to receive letters of support from far away)
Forest (which may contain lions and elephants)	Road (to travel to get medicine and see relatives)
Ghosts/spirits (present near/in graveyards, cause fear especially when walking home from school)	Houses (for protection from the elements)
Bulls (attack people)	Sunlight
Rain (leading to flooding)	Pre-school
Army (shooting/stopping people at checkpoints)	Well (for water, this can sometimes be a risk as children can fall inside the well)
Thieves (burglary & theft of livestock)	Cows (for milk)
Sea (drowning)	Buses and bikes (for mobility)
Traffic (accidents)	Kovil (Hindu Temple)
Planes (dropping bombs)	Church (for hiding in during the war)
Policemen with guns (both the LTTE and the Sri Lankan army)	Paddy fields (staple)
	Market (for selling and buying goods)
	Korlum (white powder used for religious ceremonies)
	Karate classes

In this village a group of girls represented trees, chilies, flowers and a tortoise as resources. They told us that the trees are useful because they provide coconuts and wood. The chilies can be eaten or sold, while flowers are used as temple offerings. They cited dogs, snakes and *pey* (ghosts/spirits) as risks. Dogs, they explained, sometimes bite people; one boy in the village had been bitten that morning. However, the girls stated, they do not worry too much about dogs. Snakes, on the other hand, were a major source of anxiety because they also bite children quite frequently and are highly dangerous. They told us that a snake bite makes them faint and that they have to go to hospital at Chenkalady (nearest town) for treatment (only some of the villages have access to a traditional healer, these people being highly skilled in the cure of snake bites). The group also talked about *pey*[5] and indicated that they are very

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[5] Adults from several villages also stated that they are frightened of ghosts, although a few noted that they do not believe in them and indeed said that they spread fear among children about ghosts as a disciplinary measure and a means of keeping them from roaming around in the dark.

scared of them. *Pey* live in a cemetery that is close by and come out in the afternoon between 12 and 1pm. Even though most children have not seen a ghost, they indicated, they are still very frightened of them. The girls explained that one boy in the village had seen one a while ago but it disappeared when he got close to it. Protection against ghosts, we were told, entails frying seeds and scattering them around the house. Other children said that there was no way to protect oneself, but suggested that travelling or staying in a group could help.

Another group (boys and girls) in this village did very well and drew a fairly accurate map showing the Badulla Road and surrounding houses. One older boy dominated this group and it was his idea to draw the road. A well was described as useful because you can get water from it, although it was noted that wells can sometimes be dangerous. The school is useful as it enables children to study. The church was an asset during the war particularly because people would seek refuge in it. The group commented, however, that no-one goes there anymore. There was also a picture of a bus stand and a bird. The local lake was cited as a risk because people might drown in it, but it was also regarded as a resource for bathing. Foxes were noted as a problem since they catch fowl and goats and eat them. Elephants are sometimes useful as they can carry heavy goods like logs, but they can also be very destructive. There were also pictures of several checkpoints that are located along the Badulla Road, one of which is new and was constructed by the LTTE, the rest belonging to the Sri Lankan army. The children drew a soldier with a gun and explained that armed military personnel make people get down from their vehicles and check their papers. This was the first time that children in this village had identified both the LTTE and the army as a risk.

Reflections on use
While the method proved very effective in many ways, it can be seen from the above that it does have one characteristic that could pose a limitation from a planning point of view. Thus, the resources children identify tend not to have a particular bearing on the risks they highlight. This could mean that the children are not able to make an analytical connection between the particular risks and the resources they have to hand in their communities. Alternatively, it could reflect the fact that the resources that they have access to are not really appropriate or sufficient for the particular risks and threats they confront. It may also be that children have no real practice in mobilising resources to serve their needs because children have little authority or power within their families and communities and are generally ignored in planning and decision-making. Clearly it is easier to reduce risks if the resources children turn to can be harnessed to address those specific risks. Although there was no opportunity to do this during the piloting, it might be helpful to hold a focus group discussion following this exercise in which the efficacy of particular resources are analysed and possible links between risks and resources explored with the children.

A second challenge with this method that can pose certain ethical dilemmas has to do with the fact that the mapping may yield information about problems for children that are not amenable to change through intervention. This may be especially likely in situations of armed conflict where violations are commonplace, many normal civic processes are suspended and local governance is dominated by military interests. For example, during the pilot children identified the checkpoints as a major source of concern. Obviously it may be

possible to work with the children, local leaders and the armed forces themselves to find ways of reducing contact between children and armed personnel or putting a stop to intimidation, extortion and other violations by these forces. However, removal of a checkpoint, the ideal solution, is unlikely to be a feasible option within the scope of a humanitarian intervention.

A third consideration relates to how children may have to negotiate politically sensitive issues. Whilst the Sri Lanka Army was often identified as a risk through images of a soldier with a gun, children were more circumspect about representing the LTTE on their maps. Although in discussion, children mentioned the LTTE in relation to both risks (i.e. forced recruitment) and resources (i.e. resolving disputes in the village), they seemed reluctant to identify it in visual form. Also, the children always avoided mentioning the LTTE directly, preferring the vague, euphemistic termed 'the Movement'[6]. It is necessary to be attuned to children's judgement of the political climate and respect this, whilst seeking to provide them with safe ways of articulating important but sensitive issues.

3.5.2. Timelines

Description of aim and use
Timelines also form part of the Rapid Rural Appraisal repertoire. For a description of how to implement a time line see Appendix 2. This tool is an effective way of recording the history of either a project or a community or social group, as it highlights events and trends over time that have been of collective significance to participants or members. In many cases these events and trends have marked impact--positive or negative--on children's wellbeing and so provide critical contextual information that can be used to frame questions posed to children during the implementation of other methods and more generally in programme planning. Timelines are not domain specific and in terms of contextual data can be particularly useful when introduced during the initial stage of baseline assessment, allowing monitors to learn about historical developments at a communal level that may have influenced children's wellbeing. When implemented during a project cycle, they aid the tracking of activities undertaken and their effects and of significant changes or developments in the programme overall.

This method was piloted in one village with adults and in another with two groups of children, one consisting of boys and the other, girls. It was quickly understood by all participants and proved very successful as a means of reflecting on the past. The central activity involves drawing a line along which key dates and events are etched. Interestingly, in the Badulla Road communities, and in the case of adults particularly, the process of discussing the past--and especially talking about the many violations and deprivations associated with the conflict--proved so powerful and stimulating for participants that the drawings were in effect superfluous. Application of this method emphasised the profound sense of grievance, injustice and anger people in this area feel after years of armed violence and the importance of being able to give testimony to the many abuses and losses after long years of enforced silence.

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[6] This term is used throughout the area to refer to the LTTE

Unsurprisingly, the adult's timeline was far longer than the children's, which began in 2000 and the ended at the time of piloting. In both cases, though, war was a focal topic. We asked the children to draw all the important events or changes that had taken place in their village in recent times. Both groups took a while to get started on the exercise and were initially quite worried about where to draw their line. However, once they grasped what was entailed, they began drawing with ease. The boys remembered events from different years and drew them in random order, whereas the girls went through the years systematically in chronological order.

Data yielded

The boys' group started by depicting an episode of fighting that broke out in 2001. They explained that the army had come to their village to attack the LTTE. In 2000 elephants had come to their village and destroyed houses and trees. In that same year, someone from the village had drowned in the sea. In 2002 a new school was built in the village and this had helped them in their studies. They reported many changes for 2003 (following the Ceasefire agreement between the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE, cessation of fighting and increased mobility and access to good and services). Their houses were connected to the electricity supply, saving money on the purchase of kerosene. They also acquired telephones in the village, which meant that they no longer needed to travel great distances when they needed to be in contact with someone. They noted that the 'Movement' uses the telephones and has also constructed a number of new buildings in their village. The boys reported on the re-opening of the Badulla Road following the Ceasefire agreement, which had been closed throughout the conflict. They noted that some people in the village had died due to diseases of various kinds and that one person has HIV/AIDS.

The girls group also started their timeline with the fighting in 2001. They remarked that the army came to the area and started firing their weapons and destroying houses; some people were hurt. Also in this year there was a picture of a bull who "pricked" a person. In 2002 the main event was the construction of a new school building. In 2003 a new communications centre was built and two people, one a priest, drowned in the sea. Finally they drew a big helicopter. We asked, "who came in the helicopter?" And they told us that Mr. Thamilchelvan[7] came to the village to give a speech about the movement. The girls were happy that they had seen him.

Reflections on use

It can be seen from the kinds of data described above that, together with the Risk/Resource maps, Timelines provide extremely useful information about the historical and environmental forces that have an impact on children's lives. The advantage of using a Timeline over recording children's individual life histories is that it is a less invasive and threatening way of gathering potentially sensitive information. This is because even while Timelines bring up events or situations that are of great significance to the children, they do not focus directly on personal experiences and circumstances. Moreover, a focus on collective as opposed to individual experience is more appropriate in this kind of context and with this kind of project since intervention at the collective level is a greater priority and likelihood.

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[7] Head of the Political Wing of the LTTE, an extremely senior and important figure in the movement.

3.5.3. Spider Diagrams

Description of aim and use

Another tool adapted from PRA methodology, Spider Diagrams, provide information on difficulties children confront, factors underlying these difficulties and people who children turn to for support and assistance when they need it. The intention behind use of this method in the piloting process was to reveal children's problems and the extent and efficacy of children's social networks and systems of social support. In this sense, it can be employed in conjunction with the 'What if?' and 'Who matters?' exercise and/or the social maps (see below) with the aim of providing a fairly comprehensive overview of children's social ecologies. Clearly this is a very important domain for psychosocial interventions with children in that collaboration with and support from family members, peers and other individuals and groups that play a significant role in children's lives can be crucial to a positive outcome. Particularly in areas affected by conflict and displacement it cannot be assumed that children are living with relatives or have access to effective social networks more generally. Hence, if through application of spider diagrams and other methods it becomes apparent that children have few people to turn to, it may be that development of these social resources, forging links with existing networks and the like, will be an appropriate programme objective. For a description of how to apply this method refer to Appendix 2.

Unlike the other tools we piloted, the Spider Diagrams were employed with children individually rather than in groups, with a view of enabling children to identify issues and support mechanisms that are of importance to them personally. This tool was also chosen at the workshop in Colombo and pre-tested with the Koinonia animators in Batticaloa before being employed with children in 3 villages and changed a number of times in order to try and enhance the quality and amount of data it generated. The first time we administered the diagram we used larger/smaller circles to show the greater/lesser importance of different people in children's lives. As it turned out, this was not necessarily a useful approach because the children did not fully grasp this concept and some simply ran out of space on their paper. We therefore decided that information on who is more or less important could be more usefully gained through individual discussions with children about their pictures following the drawing.

In the second round of piloting this method we were able to split the group by sex. In the girls' group we started off slowly and the children took time to begin drawing. We then went round individually to try and help some of the younger children. However, even with the extra input, there were 3 girls, aged 8-9, who were very shy and unable to grasp the activity, so in the end we encouraged them to forget the exercise and draw freely. The others did well and after about 20 minutes we began discussing with the children individually what they had drawn. In the third village we tried another tactic and asked the children to write the problems they faced on the legs of the spider and then the people they went to, with these specific problems as the feet. This exercise revealed many problems, but the children told us that there was no one they could turn to for help with their difficulties.

Data yielded

Table 2 illustrates the key problems identified by the children from all three villages and who they would go to for advice or support in each instance. It is immediately apparent from this table how few people the children were able to highlight as a social resource.

Table 2: Problems identified by children and the people they go to for help

Problems	Who they go to for help
Material Problems	
Lack of food	Mother, Aunt
Lack of school books/bags	Father, Uncle, Brother
Lack of money	Father, Brother
Lack of clothes	
Lack of pencils	
Water	
Land	
Housing	
Travel	
Poverty	
Personal Problems	
Feeling sad	Aunt
Problems at home	Aunt
Fighting with friends/siblings	Mother, Aunt, Grandmother

The first village was the only one in which the children drew a lot of family members on their diagrams. Mothers were usually represented by the largest circle, followed by fathers, uncles, brothers and sisters. The children told us that mothers are associated with giving food, whilst fathers work to earn money for the family. They noted that both mothers and fathers sometimes help with studies. Interestingly, in response to the question "who do you go to if you are worried or sad?" whether is it was a father or uncle, the children's responses were confined to material assistance, such as "giving money to buy food" or "giving money for school books".

In the second village it became clear that many of the children were following the lead set by one older boy. The drawings were mainly of fathers (who earn for the family), mothers (who feed the family), siblings, aunts and uncles. One girl drew a picture of her father, although two other children immediately pointed out that she does not have a father. This created an awkward moment, and the facilitator did not feel it was appropriate to enquire further about the father character that she had depicted. Most of the children drew enthusiastically and wanted to show us their pictures, but seemed very unconfident about expressing their thoughts or ideas about who they turn to when they need help. They also seemed reticent to share details about the people they had drawn in the presence of the other children.

There were lots of children in the third village and we split them into two groups. The girls' group started by drawing the problems they faced on the legs of the spider. Almost all of the problems were material: Lack of clothes, pencils, exercise books, food, school bags, water, housing and land. They told us that there was very little food in their homes and that they had

to go out at 5am each day to fetch water, explaining that it is difficult to travel as there are no vehicles. They talked about their poverty and the fact that their parents find it hard to get work, pointing out that some of the girls in the group work to help their parents out. They also said that it is difficult to go to school without having eaten a meal beforehand. The diagrams only depicted problems and none of the girls indicated people who they would or could seek assistance from. We tried to probe this issue further in a group discussion after the drawings were completed. One girl said "I can ask my uncle, but he won't help." The general observation made by the children was that relatives and friends are in no position to offer assistance since they face very similar difficulties and constraints.

Reflections on use

We would note here that we got the impression that this last group might have been expecting us to give them something, and therefore are not sure how valid these results are. On the other hand, if indeed these children's systems of social support are as diminished as they indicated, this poses an ethical difficulty, for it is troubling to be in a position of eliciting information on problems without being able to identify potential means of resolving those problems. Since one of the stated objectives of the pilot project was to work with methods that enhance children's psychosocial wellbeing, it must be a concern that this process was in a way quite disempowering for the children. It was also clear that the spider diagram is a rather abstract tool that the children did not comprehend well. It did not readily generate discussion, presented recording difficulties, and problems in following up on issues raised for each child. Certainly the most interesting and useful information gathered during these sessions came from subsequent Focus Group Discussions rather than from the diagrams themselves. Finally, while the diagrams offered an opportunity to the animators to learn about the children's personal difficulties, there is the concern that a project that aims largely to support children in groups may not be able to adequately tailor its responses to cater to individual need.

3.5.4. Problem Trees

Description of aim and use

Problem Tree diagrams are used within the PRA repertoire to reveal the challenges and difficulties confronted by a particular population, as well as their causes and consequences and possible solutions, and hence are very similar to the Spider Diagram. Children are asked to identify the issues that worry them most, depicting them on cards, then to highlight causes and consequences, also noted down on cards (of different colours), possible solutions being identified in subsequent discussion. During the pilot, the information was represented figuratively through a metaphor, a tree, the problems forming the trunk, the causes the tips of the roots and the consequences, the leaves. The relationships and causal linkages between the different phenomena were identified by drawing lines connecting them. For information on how to conduct this method see Appendix 2.

The Problem Tree exercise was piloted in one village only, with 15 children aged between 12 and 14, 3 of whom were girls and the rest boys. There were too many children to work with as a whole so we divided them into two groups, the girls all joining the same group. Dividing the group was probably a mistake because there was only one facilitator on this occasion and it was not possible to provide the required level of facilitation to two groups who were in any

case restless. Indeed, this was a very difficult session all round with lots of interruptions from other children and a high level of noise and activity in the general vicinity. The main challenge of this exercise was to help the children conceptualise an analytical link between a problem, its cause and effect. We told the children that we wanted to talk about the things that worry them and then about what causes these worrying things to happen. Finally we asked them to think about the consequences and possible solutions.

Repeated attempts to explain the exercise and encourage children to think about their lives did not bring about much information. Even though the children were able to identify a few problems, they could not make the conceptual link between causal circumstances or events and their problems and worries. Similarly, they found it hard to conceptualise the outcomes or consequences of these problems. Neither of the groups functioned as 'a group' and the few worries/problems that were mentioned were raised by individual children and not discussed with/by the others. Since we deliberately chose not to give any examples of worries/problems, children may have found it difficult to think about these given the fairly abstract nature of the exercise.

After trying several approaches to the exercise, we made the mistake of mentioning that the relationship between an event and the problems it causes could be thought about as if it were a tree, with the leaves growing from the branches and the branches from the trunk and the trunk from the roots. This proved a serious distraction since it led both groups to think of a particular tree (mango in the case of the boys and coconut palm, the mixed group) and to focus much of their attention on doing a good drawing of a tree rather than on identifying their problems. The mixed group was particularly uncomfortable with the exercise and the girls focused almost exclusively on drawing. When the girls were asked whether they had any worries to note on the diagram they stated, 'children don't have worries, only adults do'.

Efforts to identify further worries and make a link between worries and consequences were fruitless so after 25 minutes we gave up and regrouped everyone together and held an unstructured and informal FGD. This went far better, especially in terms of participation by boys, who were very vocal, sometimes speaking very loudly and with much excitement and often all at once.

Reflections on use
It is not clear whether the difficulty with this tool was in the instructions, the facilitation, the fact of working in a group, the disruptive environment we were working in, or that the metaphor of a tree did not work for the children. Certainly, the children did not seem very comfortable with trying to identify the causes and consequences of problems they confront. This may be because the problems (for example abductions) they came up with are too overwhelming and complex for children to address and therefore not amenable to causal analysis by them. It could be that the metaphor used was inappropriate. Obviously, there is no particular reason why children living along the Badulla Road should associate a tree with problems. On the contrary, trees are an important resource in the area. In this case, working on problems in a group may not have been very effective since the group dynamics definitely did interfere with the process and the children may have been unwilling to open up in front of others.

Even though this was not a very successful exercise, the issues that did come out are very crucial ones and have emerged in all the other sessions so far as the most urgent for children, so in this sense the tool did not 'fail' completely. For example, in the boys group, after much discussion and facilitation and once the exercise had been understood, one boy immediately said that he worries about being abducted by the movement. He wrote this into the diagram and then, following more discussion, the lack of funds to go to school was noted by another boy. Similarly, in the mixed group, one girl said that her worry was being waylaid and hit by the movement when coming home from school, although the other two girls in the group emphasised that they have no problems.

3.5.5. "What if" and "Who Matters?"

Description of aim and use
This exercise has been adapted from two separate methods devised and implemented by Martin Woodhead in a multi-country study of children's perspectives on the psychosocial effects of their work and schooling (1996). It is intended to follow and build on the risks/resources map and/or other problem identification exercises, since it uses information obtained from these methods as a basis for learning about the individuals who are important to children and who they would turn to in time of need or during an emergency. In this sense "What if" and "Who Matters?" relates most specifically to the social ecology domain. For a description of how to implement this method refer to Appendix 2.

The method was piloted in 3 villages with 6 groups of children. Rather than work from a hypothetical question like, 'Who would you turn to for help/advice if you had a problem? we decided to build this exercise around children's concrete experiences, drawing from the issues and concerns that children throughout the area had raised with us. Thus, in the first village where this method was implemented we gathered the whole group into a circle and listed the issues off one by one. We gave the children time to respond to each issue and to indicate whether they were also worried about this problem. We did not spend much time on this stage of the exercise because the focus was to be on 'who matters?'

Once it had become clear which issues concerned the children, we broke the group into two, separating boys and girls. Two people worked with the boys and two with the girls. In the girls' group the second stage of the exercise was initiated with a story, the aim being to try and illustrate what the task was about and what kind of responses were sought. The story was about a 12-year-old girl, Saroja, who was collecting firewood in the bush and was bitten by a snake. The children were asked to suggest what might have happened next and who might have helped Saroja out. In the end it proved unnecessary to use a story since the children were happy to discuss the issues they were concerned about without too much prompting.

Data yielded
The children confirmed that many of the problems and concerns that had been raised by other children throughout the Badulla Road area were a source of anxiety for them also. They indicated abduction and forced recruitment as the gravest problem. Table 3 provides a more detailed list of the children's worries.

Table 3: Concerns identified by children

1. Drowning in a lake: we bathe, wash clothes and fetch water in the tanks and the crocodiles scare us. We go with our mothers and they keep us safe.
2. Snake bites: we are afraid of snakes. There are lots of snakes in this area. One boy in the group was bitten recently.
3. Elephant attacks: there are no elephants, so we don't worry about them. Actually, they come sometimes but they aren't a problem
4. Beatings by parents: our parents don't scold us. Sometimes out mothers beat us when we are naughty.
5. Abductions by the movement: we are afraid of abductions [very strong response to this issue – all children affirming yes loudly and clearly].
6. Falling behind with school work: we study well, so this isn't a problem
7. Burglary and theft: thieves often take our animals, but this isn't a big worry for many of the children
8. Thinking too much about a loved one who has died: death of loved ones is a big worry [strong agreement with this point].
9. Insufficient funds for school utensils: this isn't a problem for us since we all go to school
10. Military checkpoints: this isn't a problem since there aren't any checkpoints nearby [at first they misunderstood this point, thinking we were referring to medical check ups, which they all hate. However, we clarified that we were referring to military checkpoints].
11. Ghosts: we are very afraid of ghosts that come out in the dark
12. Parents who drink too much liquor and fight: our parents don't drink much alcohol (nor do the neighbours) so we aren't particularly worried about this
13. Traffic accidents: not a problem [the village is near a track running off the Badulla Road which is quite quiet, although lots of LTTE vehicles from nearby camp were passing by].

> **Comment [MSOffice1]:** I agree that this was a big worry for the children

Focusing on who matters most to them and who would help in situations of difficulty, the girls' group explained that in a case like Saroja's they would take her to a traditional healer in the village who puts small stones on snakebites to suck out the poison. We then moved on to discuss the other issues they had raised. We talked briefly about the issue of abduction. In 2000 children were taken from this village. No one could help them with this problem. We talked about the problem of thieves who the children explained are handed over to the movement when they are caught, where they are beaten and made to work. The next issue of concern was ghosts. One girl said that she had been chased by a ghost wearing white clothes. She fainted and fell down near the river. We were told that when a child has seen a ghost the priest takes her to a tree and recites prayers for 3 days. Failure to do this will result in the child dying. The girls also talked about losing a loved one. Their mothers, the priest and local healer are the people who help them confront these kinds of difficulties.

One interesting point came out from the girls' group when they talked about arguments and conflicts. When there is an argument or fight they go to their friends and hold up their hands

with two fingers sticking out. One finger signifies 'stop talking to each other' and other, 'talking to each other'. The friend must choose one of the fingers and the two who have been in dispute are expected to follow her instruction, either resuming their friendship or remaining in animosity. This exercise is repeated a week later. There seemed to be a lot of fighting in the village and the girls told us that sometimes people do not speak to each other for years.

Reflections on use
Essentially, this method was more effective than the Spider Diagram at yielding information on children's social world and certainly appeared far more enjoyable for the children. That said, some children were not able to imagine who would assist them in situations of which they had no direct experience. However, there was quite a bit of discussion over strategies the children would use for eliciting support in a range of difficult situations and clear consensus on many of the points, the mother being the person children would normally turn to when they are in trouble. Also, identification of what to do and who would help was far more straightforward in certain situations, for example being bitten by a snake, than others, such as thinking too much about a loved one who has died. Even though this was an effective tool, information about who children turn to for support and assistance was still quite sparse and for this reason we decided to adapt and change the exercise to see if we could produce more effective data.

3.5.6. Who matters? (revised version)

Description of aim and use
The aim of adapting the Who Matters? exercise was to learn more about children's social ecology, since this is the domain that proved most difficult to obtain information on throughout. We did not devise a specific tool/method for this exercise, but decided to use a semi-structured Focus Group Discussion format that did not concentrate, as we had previously, on the concrete problems children face, but on who matters in general. The method was implemented in two villages with four groups of children, two consisting of boys and two of girls.

The intention was to see if a more positive, less problem orientated, approach would yield more information. We explained that we had discovered that children in the Badulla Road area have lots of friends, neighbours, relatives and others who are important to them, who they like to be with, or turn to for help and advice when they need it. We said that we wanted to learn a little more about who they like to be with and who they do not like to be with and would be asking some questions to help us understand these matters better. Following this introduction, we posed a number of key questions to two groups of children, one consisting of boys and the other girls (additional follow up questions were also asked to obtain more detailed information). These questions were:

Who matters?:

1) Who do you like to be with?
2) Who makes you feel happy?
3) Who gives you advice when there's something you need to know?

4) Who helps you when you're in trouble?
5) Who do you tell your secrets to?
6) If you've had an argument, who would help you sort it out?
7) Who don't you like?
8) Who are you afraid of?

The questions were thought up without prior reflection and consideration, so possibly could be changed, improved or added to. Some of the questions overlap with others intentionally, as a test of validity. It was felt that about eight questions is the maximum feasible number given the children's concentration span and the aim to have the children discuss each question in turn rather than simply identify the people who matter to them in general.

Data yielded
This exercise yielded quite a bit of information on people who are of importance to the children. Table 4 indicates who the boys considered to be most significant in their lives and who they dislike and fear most.

Table 4: Findings from the boys' group

Q 1) *Ama* [mother], spends a lot of time with us. Helps us.
She looks after us, buys us clothes, gives us food in time, helps us a lot.
Q. Who else do you like spending time with?
Uncle, brother, elder sister, younger brother

Q2) Brothers, sisters, mothers, uncles. They teach us lessons and play with us

Q3) *Ama*, elder sister who has studied well. They teach us how to study. *Ama* tells us stories about birds and animals.

Q4) Mother, uncles, elder brothers.
- If we have a fight with other children our mother beats the other child.
- If the movement takes one of us our mother will go and get him or her back.
- If we are playing and fall down, *Ama* or other children who are near by will help us.

[During this discussion it arose that two months previously 2 children had joined the movement 'for fun'. They went to a military camp and stayed there for a week. They were asked if they wanted to return home and the children stated that they did and so left the camp. 'We wouldn't go again. If the movement takes us, we will have to go but we won't go alone.' One boy told a joke about another boy: 'He's been 5 years in the movement, that's why he's dark'.]

Q5) Secrets are told to friends and mothers. We all have a best friend. We have many secrets, for instance we don't tell anyone if we do something naughty

Q6) *Ama*, other friends. If we have a fight we buy something for our friend and say we are sorry.

Q6) We don't like our fathers. Some fathers beat us if we do something wrong. This is not often. Our mothers beat us sometimes too.

We like God. He helps to cure disease. God is everything for us.

Q8) Ghosts, crocodiles, elephants, thieves, dogs, police (may arrest them), bears, lions/tigers, the army (because they shoot when they are fighting the movement), brothers/fathers (because they beat us), movement (may catch us and take us away or beat us if we have no clothes).

The girls also made it clear that their mothers are the most important figures in their lives, pointing out that their fathers are often absent due to work. Mothers are the people who they most enjoy being with and who help them most. One girl explained that her mother sings to her and tells her stories at night and advises her about studying hard and attending school regularly. Another said that she helps her mother in the evenings, drawing water from the well, cooking and sweeping the house. Yet, it was also clear that mothers are the key figures in terms of disciplining children and often mete out severe punishments. The girls agreed that their mothers are far harsher with them than they are with their brothers. Siblings were also cited as people who make the children happy, both because they are good playmates but also because they assist with studies. In terms of advice, fathers were mentioned because they give children money when needed and grandfathers were cited as assisting them with learning Hindu songs and hymns and taking them to the temple. Grandmothers are good at telling stories. Teachers help when they are bullied or teased at school. They are most afraid of their fathers, who beat them if they do not go to school or are naughty. They also said that they are scared of the army, the movement (which abducts children, they explained), ghosts and snakes.

Reflections on use
The children were quite shy at the outset of this exercise, although were clearly very interested in it and concentrated well throughout. Essentially, even though they were quiet and a bit slow to respond, the quality of information yielded by this exercise was better than that produced by the Spider Diagram and 'What if?' and 'Who matters?' exercises combined. As the discussion progressed the responses became less detailed and confident, although the children's' attention did not seem to diminish. Possibly the decline in responses was connected to the fact that the first two questions were more straightforward and required less thought than the subsequent ones. Possibly the children became more shy as they realised that ideally we sought answers not just naming an individual but with some additional explanation. In general, this was a successful exercise, possibly because the questions were open ended and did not require the children to refer to specific events or situations but reflect more generally on their lives.

3.5.7. Social Map Exercise: 'Who Do I Visit?'

Description of aim and use
This activity was designed to replace the "Who Helps Me / Who Matters" activity, which had not provided adequate detailed information about the social networks of children. The "Who Do I Visit" activity proved quite effective, with children seeming to find the exercise more

concrete and accessible to them, thereby generating relevant and specific information on their social networks. Whilst the "Who Helps Me /Who Matters" activity seemed to produce more abstract lists of archetypal "helpers" (i.e. most children seemed to either produce largely generic lists or struggled to articulate anything), the "Who Do I Visit" activity elicited information at the level of specific households, providing a map of more differentiated social networks for each child. This method was piloted in 2 villages with 4 groups of children.

This activity can be used effectively with children across a wide range of ages. It may be carried out as a group or individual activity. Here the exercise is described as a group activity. Each group should ideally not be larger than 5-6 persons.

Data yielded
In the Badulla Road area where the population is Hindu houses are often given to the bridegroom as a dowry and hence the tradition is that he will move to his wife's village at marriage. As a consequence, in many villages you can find groups of married women and their partners living in close proximity to each other. Sometimes the parents move away from a village once they have passed their property on to their offspring. This pattern was reflected very powerfully in the children's maps. In one village, a small group of younger boys generated information related to quite a limited social network. Their drawings revealed that their closest links were to kin, usually on their mothers' side of the family. Maternal aunts, uncles and cousins frequently appeared as major figures in their lives, and as sources of enjoyable relationships. The mapping exercise also showed that families are often separated by significant geographical distance, with grandparents and aunts sometimes residing in villages across the Sri Lanka government-LTTE line of control. Nevertheless, the role played by grandparents, in terms like chasing them around the house to make them take a bath or telling stories of the past seemed to enrich the children's lives and given them much enjoyment.

The girls' group in this same village very much enjoyed the exercise. They also noted the very frequent visits made to maternal cousins and stressed how important these friendships are to them. They described how they would sometimes ask uncles or aunts for money if they needed it to pay for school utensils. They like visiting grandparents because they tell stories about the past and sing songs. One girl said that her grandparents live far away and that she is not able to see them often, only during festivals or the new year. Another said that her mother's mother is affectionate but her father's mother is far less so.

When asked in a supplementary question whether they visit friends in the evening after school the girls explained that they have to do homework at this time. If they do not complete their homework they will be beaten by an older brother or father. They also have to undertake chores like fetching water or washing up at this time and fail to do so often results in further punishment. They went on to describe the kinds of punishments they are given for different infractions, noting that low marks is treated as the most serious offence leading to deprivation of food, or being forced to weed the garden. One girl said that when her father is drunk her parents often end up by fighting. This makes her feel bad and she tries to find somewhere to hide. Her mother's older sister is married and lives nearby and when the situation is really serious her mother goes to stay with her, leaving the children behind with

their father. She noted that when her elder brother is at home her father tends not to attack her mother. The girls' also said that there is a coconut seller in the village who threatens and frightens children and pointed out that they try to avoid him when visiting their friends or cousins.

Reflections on use
By virtue of being related to a map, the activity allowed for a relatively concrete discussion of issues such as proximity, accessibility, context, motive and frequency of interaction. Acquiring this type of information from children through the more abstract 'Who Matters?' and 'What if?' activity was more difficult. For instance, with the 'Who Do I Visit?' exercise, it was possible to generate information about the role played by grandmothers and grandfathers in the children's lives. For example, it was revealed that they are often responsible for bathing and caring for children, disciplining them and taking them on journeys to the nearby town. As well, this exercise conveyed a sense of the quality of children's relationships. With the 'Who Matters?' and 'What if?' activity it was very difficult to obtain information about grandparents.

It should be born in mind that the method may not elicit information on individuals in the children's social networks whom they meet in circumstances other than a 'visit'. This limitation might be overcome by adding supplementary questions, possibly enquiring about 'people whom you don't visit in their houses, but whom you meet in other places'.

3.5.8. Social Network Sorting Activity

Description of aim and use
This exercise was developed through experimentation over the course of five days in the final period of fieldwork. It was intended as a further means to explore children's social networks both in terms of range of relationships and the nature of these with different types or categories of people (e.g. mothers, teachers, friends, etc) within everyday life. In the beginning this exercise involved only a couple of stages but further exercises were added on subsequent days, building on ideas expressed by participants. By the fifth and final day the whole activity took the best part of two hours and could, in theory, have been taken further, possibly in a separate session a day or two later. The different stages of this method may be summarised as follows:

1. Identifying the people encountered in everyday life, both within and outside the home.

2. Revealing which types or categories of people are not encountered or not considered important.

3. Exploring the nature of relationships with some of the people encountered in everyday life.

4. Considering the main problems that children face in their daily lives.

5. Making connections between these problems and the people encountered in everyday life both as possible sources of support in dealing with the problems or as causes of these problems.

For detailed description of the implementation of this activity see Appendix 2.

Data yielded
This exercise had the potential to yield a lot of information, not only about the people that are important (positively and negatively) but also the nature of exchange that children have with them. The first time it was attempted, for example, it generated a powerful discussion about the relationship that girls tend to have with their mothers. As with subsequent uses of this exercise, participants spoke about mothers combing their daughters' hair. Older sisters and grandmothers might undertake this task in the mother's absence but were seen by all as a poor substitute. In this setting one girl with short hair (unique amongst the participants) explained that she had had her hair cut because her mother was working in the Middle East and she had no older sister or other suitable female relative to comb her hair instead. This was evidently a source of some sadness and evoked much sympathy from other participants.

While the absence or loss of mothers came up in all settings where this exercise was undertaken it was revealing to note that in some locations participants had various ideas about how to overcome or compensate for this. These discussions emerged in our meetings with participants in projects other than those in the Badulla Road.[8] The projects themselves had been running for several years. This exercise clearly revealed the strength of relationships that had been built with the animators who served an important and appreciated supportive role to the children.

On the final occasion when this exercise was utilised - in a project for separated children- it prompted a heartfelt discussion about the loss or absence of mothers. One girl revealed to the group that her own mother and sister had gone to work in the Middle East several years earlier and she had not heard from them since. This appeared to encourage others to reveal similar stories of separation and loss of mothers and other female relatives. Apparently, the participants had never shared this information with each other so openly before and thereby come to learn how many of their peers were in the same situation. It seemed that fear of ridicule based partly on the low caste status of the families of many participants was a factor in their previous reticence to discuss this subject. This depth of discussion was not anticipated and it was a cause of concern for us that some participants might become distressed by the painful nature of the subject. However, it appeared that this was a positive and encouraging experience. Afterwards the animators, who had been sitting silently in the corner observing events, confirmed that the children had shared this information with them individually and in private but had never before had such a discussion with each other. They considered this a very positive development.

In the final stage of this activity a matrix of problems and of persons who might help with those problems was produced. Table 5 below contains some of the contents from this matrix.

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[8] At the very end of our fieldwork in January 2004 we held sessions with groups of children involved in two projects away from the Badulla Road. One was a project run by ESCO (Eastern Self-Reliant and Community Awakening Organisation) for separated children in the town of Valaichchenai, the other a club run by the YMCA in the town of Manchanthoduvai, near to Batticaloa Town. Both of these are in areas officially under the control of the SLA but, in practice, it seems that the LTTE are an important presence. Thus, for example, the recruitment – forcible and voluntary – of children was also an issue of concern.

The numbers in each box indicates the number of participants who believed that the people identified in the vertical column to the left could play a role in addressing the problems indicated in the row at the top. It is interesting to note that the project animators are seen to have a potentially large role to play in relation to three of the six problems. From the perspective of project monitoring this is an important finding in itself, suggesting that the relationship between participants and those adults who work with them is a significant one and that the animators represent a valued resource.

Table 5: Key problems and the people who can help with them

	Absence of eternal peace	Absence of freedom	Lack of school-related materials	Economic problems	Ignorance of parents	Absence of facilities for higher education
Mother		02				01
Elder brother		01				01
Elder sister						01
Younger brother						02
Aunty (wife of uncle/father's sister)						02
Elders in the village					01	01
Friends						01
Aunty (mother's elder sister)						01
Guardians	03	01				01
Grand mother (mother's mother)	01					01
Uncle (younger brother of father)	01					01
Project animators			20		10	05
L.T.T.E	05	02	05	01		03
G.S. (local gov't officer)	02			15		01
Police	03	01		01		
Teachers	10				01	04

Reflection on use

This is unquestionably a time-consuming method that could easily take 2 hours or more to complete. Since each stage elicits useful information it need not be conducted in its entirety, however. This is particularly important when working with younger children for whom it may prove too long and intensive. On the other hand, the initial exercise can seem over-simplistic to an older group, so it should perhaps be done at a brisk pace as a kind of 'warm-up' exercise. Certainly, the use of brightly coloured notes ('Post-It Notes') added to the initial attraction of the exercise for younger children.

This activity starts with the familiar and descriptive ('Who are the people you meet in daily life?') and builds towards more analytical exercises. This seems an ideal way to work with children who are not used to reflecting together on their lives and, in particular, to making conceptual linkages between people (as resources) and the problems they encounter in daily life – a challenge noted in the discussion of Risk and Resource Maps above. It also offers the opportunity to explore the character or quality of relationships: why certain types of people

are especially valued in relation to certain situations, why others may be unhelpful or even obstructive, and so on. At several points in the activity there are opportunities for discussion that tended, in our experience, to be well focused and meaningful.

As in the session with separated children described above, it may prompt discussion of a personal and painful nature that needs to be anticipated. On the other hand, in the same meeting the compilation of the matrix led into a fruitful discussion about who else might be a useful resource in relation to the problems identified. In this case, the beginnings of a group strategy to approach particular authorities who might help with school-related issues emerged. Although it was not pursued, the matrix developed in this session could, in theory, have led to a fruitful discussion of the LTTE. As the matrix itself shows, the LTTE emerged as having a relationship to more of the children's problems than any other single category of people. Comments made in passing suggested that participants saw the LTTE as having both a positive and obstructive role in relation to their lives and the discussion that might have been developed could have explored this further.

3.5.9. Body Maps

Description of aim and use

Body maps are intended to reveal children's understandings of wellbeing and illbeing. They highlight children's criteria for physical and mental health, their ideas about the causal factors in death, disease and injury, which parts of the body (including internal organs) are affected by pathology and the means and methods of staying healthy and of healing and cure. Given its focus on individual functioning, this method complements and can be used in conjunction with the Wellbeing Exercise (see below). Because most health systems throughout the world embody holistic understandings of health and wellbeing, and also tend to have a very broad view of causal factors in illhealth, this method has the potential to capture information from all three of the key domains. For details on how to administer the method see Appendix 2.

The Body Mapping exercise was implemented with the Koinonia animators during capacity building and piloted with 6 groups of children in three villages. This is a very concrete activity that was greatly enjoyed by all the children involved, including younger ones, and revealed a substantial amount of information. It was notable in one village that a group of boys who the day before had been rowdy and uninterested in the problem tree diagram concentrated hard on this exercise, contributed a lot and did not leave until it was completed.

In the first phase of piloting the children were asked to identify the sicknesses they get, both *mental* and *physical*. Although the first pilot of this method went well, we decided that the mind and mental health are concepts that may not have a great deal of meaning for children and subsequently used a different phrase, 'Things that make you feel bad/sick', to elicit responses. The translator agreed that this worked better in Tamil, especially for the age group in question.

A child of medium height in each group was asked to volunteer. Two others from each group who like drawing were also asked to volunteer. The first volunteer was then asked to lie on the paper while the other two were asked to draw around his / her body. This part of the exercise caused much surprise and amusement among all concerned and was an excellent

way to capture everyone's attention. In both cases the volunteers were of the same sex, reducing the difficulty of asking children of one sex to draw around the body of a child of the other sex.

The children were then asked to think of an illness that is common in their area, draw the organ it affects and write the condition out near that organ. We did not ask the children to specify whether children or adults suffer from this condition initially, but questioned them on this later. Since the children were all in their early teens, we asked each one who came up with an idea to do their own drawing and write out the condition themselves. This worked well in most cases, although some children sought the help of others with the drawing especially.

When ideas about illnesses had dried up, we asked the children to return to their two separate groups. We asked which conditions are most common, the causes, how to stay healthy and so on. These questions were posed in Focus Group Discussion format with verbal responses because the children were getting tired of drawing.

Data yielded
During the pilot the children focused largely on physical health. However, discussion of causality in particular raised many psychosocial issues and highlighted a very holistic understanding of health that incorporates both the physical and the mental and emphasised the way in which psychosocial ill-being can cause physical ill-health. For example, a group of boys in one of the villages stated that illnesses of the heart can be caused by 'worrying too much' [atheka kavalai] about something that makes you sad. They argued that people who are worrying too much can be identified by the fact that they generally refuse to talk to others and prefer to be alone. Both adults and children worry too much, we were told, and some of the children in the play centre and at school suffer from this condition

Physical punishment emerged as a major health concern for the children, with psychological/emotional and physical consequences: 'Children worry when they get a beating. They sit alone. All of us get beatings.' When the boys were asked during the body map exercise 'What makes you feel sad?', they noted that they are sad when their parents scold them (leg injuries from beatings were indicated on the map). They explained that when they get a beating they cry and refuse to eat (although it was admitted that sometimes they pretend not to eat, but sneak food when their parents are not watching). They admitted that occasionally, out of anger and revenge, they rob their parents when they are beaten. Girls in the same village commented: 'Children shouldn't have worries. Some children get sick from having worries. This sickness makes people lazy. When someone is lazy we know they have worries.' On the other hand, the girls stated that sadness is not a disease.
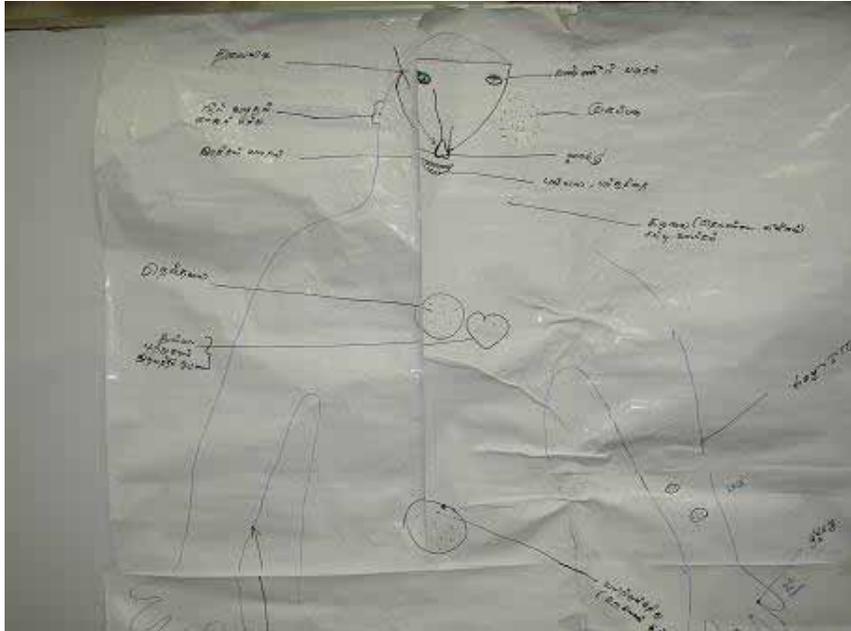
Section of a body map created by a group of parents and girls

Table 6: Findings from one group of girls

Q: What causes sickness?

A: Cracked feet
    Heat causes aches in legs, as do injuries during play
    Bad water gives knee ache
    Beating in legs causes legs to swell
    Stomach ache is caused by eating food that's open and got flies on it.
    Fever is caused by mosquitoes
    Diarrhoea: drinking un-boiled water
    Headache: heat, working too hard
    Cracks in skin: dirt in finger nails
    Ear ache: water
    Toothache: too many sweets
    Hole in the heart: smoking
    Joint ache: too much work
    Nose ache: a cold
    Eye ache: too much sun/not bathing
    Hole in the heart is the most serious illness and lots of people have died from it
    Cold, stomach ache and fever are most common in children
  Asthma – wheezing is another problem

Q: How do you stay healthy?

A: Clean yourself, the house and the surrounding area
    Close drains up (to prevent mosquitoes)
    Bury coconut shells so they can't collect water (to prevent mosquitoes)
    Boil water.

Reflections on use

This was an extremely successful tool in many ways. The children were fascinated by the suggestion that someone should lie on the ground while others draw around him/her. They were amused by the rather misshapen outlines that resulted from this and enjoyed thinking and talking about and depicting the various illnesses and conditions that are prevalent in their communities. There was quite a lot of uncertainty about where internal organs are located within the human body and some children preferred to defer to others when it came to drawing these. However, there was continuous discussion and a great deal of consensus about the key conditions people suffer and their causes, physical and psychological. All in all, this method makes an excellent complement to the wellbeing exercise, since it produces important information on how individual functioning --physical and psychological-- is affected by certain specific problems and conditions. It also reveals critical connections between psychological and physical states -- for example, worrying too much about abductions or a loved one who has died produces clear somatic symptoms, specifically head and heart ache. Finally, discussion of the possible cures and solutions to various diseases and conditions is very helpful in revealing local ideas about healing and treatment and can be used as a basis for health education and related interventions.

3.5.9. Wellbeing Exercise

Description of aims and use

This exercise was adapted from one developed by Jon Hubbard of the Center for Victims of Torture in Minneapolis. For explanation of its use, see Appendix 2. Its aim is to identify the criteria by which wellbeing is understood in a particular culture or community. Participants are asked to think of a child they know who, in their view, is doing well in life. They should then think of the things about this child that indicate to them that he or she is doing well. The characteristics that emerge from this process can then be used as indicators of wellbeing. By combining the indicators provided by all the children and clustering together those that are the same or very similar, it becomes possible to obtain a view of normative ideas about wellbeing and illbeing for the community in question.

The exercise was implemented with relative ease amongst groups of both parents and children in 5 villages. The concept of "wellbeing" was found to correspond very well with the Tamil phrase "*nallam irukka*", and this was a meaningful everyday concept for both children and adults along the Badulla Road. In order to successfully implement the exercise, it was necessary that instructions and questions were phrased very precisely. For instance, it was not possible to ask for "reasons why you think this person is doing well", since this was likely to generate information about causal factors leading to well-being, rather than the characteristics or features that allowed for the identification of well-being. Therefore, the more long-winded question, "what is it about the person that tells you that they are doing well?" had to be used to elicit the appropriate type of response. Equally, it was important that the activity be implemented to elicit both written and verbal responses, to determine whether there were significant differences in the form or content of written and vernacular communication in that language / culture. In this case, none were found. For work with persons who are illiterate or uncomfortable with reading and writing, it may be necessary to amend the activity at step 3 by having a scribe enter individuals' responses directly onto the

group's sheet. The disadvantage with this method is that individuals in the same group may influence one another – an effect noticed during field-testing.

The fact that the activity related directly to real children who are known to the participants meant that the characteristics/concepts of wellbeing accessed through the activity were attainable and realistic, rather than being abstract ideals. Both children and adults seemed to enjoy the exercise. The characteristics and concepts used by adults and children to denote wellbeing seemed to be consistent across all the villages where the tool was tested.

Data yielded

This exercise always generated a good level of data that were thematically consistent throughout the many villages in which it was piloted. Criteria of wellbeing related to key themes, such as socially valued behaviours (studying well, helping with housework, etc.), good interpersonal qualities (moving well with others, being loving, etc.), cognitive competencies (getting good grades, doing well at school etc,) and health, hygiene and fitness (keeping clean, washing often, playing games etc). Overall, considerable attention was given to accomplishments in relation to school, sociability and kindness towards others and paying attention to manners and personal care.

There was some contrast between children's and parents' responses. Whilst parents appeared to focus on sociability in terms of "moving around with others", children appeared to place greater emphasis on the quality of relationships (i.e. "being loving or kind (*anbu*)"). The idea of being 'loving or kind' seemed extremely important for children. Exploration of what a child with this quality might do in different social situations through small FGDs allowed children to explain that a child who showed "anbu" in school might share pencils with others who do not have them, or might share her/his lunch with "anyone". It seemed that this quality was seen mostly in the context of peer relations, although it was also desired from mothers towards their children. Interestingly, obedience was much more important to adults than to children, who tended to focus instead on 'good habits'.

The table overleaf shows a selection of responses from children in four villages along the Badulla Road. The age and gender distinctions indicated refer to the ideals of wellbeing that the participants have about, for example, 5-10 year old girls or 10-15 year old boys. This table contains only those responses which were repeated more than 10 times. Many other responses were offered only between one and nine times.

Table 7: Responses of children in four villages

	Girls 5-10	Boys 5-10	Girls 10-15	Boys 10-15	Total
Studies well	8	14	17	18	57
Clever in studies	8	3	4	1	16
Goes to school regularly	8	8	10	8	34
Good habits	5	5	9	11	30
Moves well with others	6	1	5	6	18
Good friends/meets regularly	3	6	3	3	15
Plays with me	2	3	5	1	11
Plays well	7	11	11	10	39
Affectionate	7	3	10	8	28
Kind/Loving (*anbu*)	18	14	17	19	68
Is very good	4	3	2	6	15
Healthy	10	4	7	11	32
Clean	7	6	8	8	29
Gets good nourishment	5	4	5	4	18
Active/Does exercises	2	3	2	3	10
Drinks boiled/clean water	4	2	1	3	10

Reflections on use

The data generated by this exercise proved very useful in various respects. First, they are very amenable to quantification (see Section 5 below). Second, they allow monitoring of groups or individual children against age and gender-appropriate indicators of wellbeing (and by default indicators for illbeing also) that are highly responsive to cultural norms and values and hence have very direct and significant meaning for the population concerned. It should be highlighted that the pilot did not carry this exercise through to completion as originally intended and provided for by the Center for Victims of Torture. In other words, while we generated children's indicators for wellbeing and clustered these into broad areas of competence (cognitive, social etc.), we did not attempt to assess the performance of the Badulla Road children in relation to these indicators and competencies. This was for ethical reasons, on the grounds that the project could not provide therapeutic support for individual children identified through the exercise as having problems and would need further capacity building in order to cater properly to groups of children highlighted as being in difficulty.

In general this was a highly productive exercise which seemed to capture the interest of both adult and child participants. With one group of parents, however, it proved difficult to move discussion away from the consideration of causes for why some children appear to be doing better than others. A good deal of frustration was expressed by some mothers in the group at the obstacles to providing the care and support necessary to ensure that children in the village would do well or enjoy wellbeing. In any event, by seeking to draw out participants' ideas of a child who is doing well, the reality of their own lives or that of their children may seem highly inadequate. From this point of view, the exercise may prove discouraging to some people.

On the positive side, the method provides an immediate picture of ideals of behaviour, attitude and competency that has direct relevance for programme development. For example, within the context of the play centres, information yielded by this method could be used by animators and participants to develop a code of behaviour to guide all interactions aimed at promoting a more co-operative and harmonious atmosphere in activities.

3.5.9. Image Theatre Exercise on "Children's Problems"

Description of aims and use

This exercise was adapted from Augusto Boal's 'Games for Actors and Non-Actors' (1992) and designed to explore both problems faced by children and their responses to these in a non-interrogative way. It was implemented with one group of children in one village. Children are involved in creating dramatic 'still images' (by forming a still tableau) of problems facing a character not unlike themselves, and through examining this image and 'reading' (narrating) the story that they see in the image, explore that character's feelings, thoughts, problems, responses and resources. Use of fictional characters is intended to free children up from the constraints of embarrassment, invasion of privacy and so on, that are associated with methods that focus on real life situations. Asking the children to interpret the scene that is depicted by their peers through the tableaux they create allows full scope to creativity and imagination. See Appendix 2 for a description of how to implement this method.

Data yielded

This method was used on only one occasion with a group of children who had already met with the researchers and engaged in other activities and exercises. The information generated by this method brought to light situations of a difficult or conflictual nature that resonated very closely with data provided by other tools in other villages. Of the four tableaux created by participants the first related to a domestic dispute (between a mother and daughter), the second to a fight with neighbours and the manner in which mothers may resolve such fights. The third directly addressed the violent actions of the LTTE and the Sri Lankan Army towards parents, and the discussion it generated focussed on the causes for the LTTE and SLA to mistreat people. The final scenario concerned a boy who was caught thieving within his village and elicited comments about justice and appropriate retribution.

Reflections on use

This activity is effective for generating dialogue with and amongst children about problems relevant to them. The dramatic immediacy of the images meant that children were quickly caught up in the stories being "read" from them. The image theatre exercise facilitates the exploration of problems or concerns through the projection of these onto a "theatrical image" rather than through the interrogation of children themselves. In this way, children are protected from being "put on the spot" or embarrassed in front of adults or peers. The sort of data this method produced was useful to develop a richer contextual understanding of children's lives and to identify issues of special importance to them. It seemed a good way to explore in further detail issues already identified through the Risks and Resources map, but by the nature of the medium of theatre, may provide greater emphasis on interpersonal problems and conflict. The exercise also can provide insight into the nature of relationships

within the community and social ecology, supplementing data generated by the specific social ecology exercises.

In the one village where this method was piloted, the children were clearly engaged and many participated enthusiastically. However, the voluntary and verbal nature of participation in the exercise meant that some more confident children (often boys) dominated the "reading". As a result there was less access to the perspectives of children who were not as vocal or forthcoming. This problem, however, could have been overcome by splitting the over-large group (approx. 20-30 children) into two or more smaller groups by age, gender or levels of confidence. Given the numbers involved, it was often unwieldy trying to manage the group and allow each child to be heard, as the dynamic nature of the activity lent itself to children shouting above one another and moving about to get a different perspective on the image. The medium of image theatre has limitations in that it is time-consuming and affords opportunities for the exploration of only a limited number of issues and situations, if facilitators are to keep the attention of the participating children. On the other hand, it requires no materials and seemed to be easily understood by participants.

On an ethical level, it is extremely important to maintain the theatrical 'distance'. Since the problems faced by the characters in a tableau might be similar to those of the children who are playing them, the facilitator must make the distinction between actor and character clear at all times. Ascribing the character a fictitious name and asking for applause are two methods by which this distance can be maintained. It is important, also, to monitor the actor (and audience) and check if any child might feel overwhelmed or vulnerable because of the emotions evoked by the dramatisation of a particular problem or story.

4. Capacity Building

The participatory monitoring and evaluation approach adopted in this project highlighted important issues relating to the capacity of the institution implementing a psychosocial intervention. These were associated with the organisation's capacity to:

- implement the M&E tools

- respond to the outputs from the M&E tools.

4.1. Capacity to Implement

The objective of this project was to develop M&E tools and methods that could be used by fieldworkers with limited training and education. Therefore, most of the tools chosen for piloting with Koinonia were relatively unsophisticated and easy to implement, with one or two complex tools being included for use by senior staff or external resource-persons. However, during the initial phase of piloting, it became apparent to the research team that the village animators were struggling to comprehend (let alone implement) the tools that were introduced to them. Considering that most of the animators had been taken up their posts only six months earlier with relatively little training, it was perhaps unsurprising that they required supplementary inputs to enable them to use the tools being piloted. Nevertheless, the very process of designing and providing this training for them helped to clarify to the researchers what specific capacities / skills were required for the implementation of the M&E methods being developed.

Required Staff Capacity/Skills
Below, we provide a list of core competencies needed for implementation of the methods and responding to their findings:

- Facilitation, communication and negotiation skills in order to manage the M&E activities (i.e. explain the tools clearly to the children, encourage participation, explore/elicit the children's views, manage group dynamics);

- Conceptual and practical knowledge related to aspects of psychosocial well-being, to be able to understand the meanings/implications of children's life experiences and their responses to these;

- Analytical capacity, problem-solving skills and a capacity for creativity/innovation in order to interpret and synthesise the outputs from methods or adapt these to the needs of a specific circumstance;

- Note-taking, process-recording and observational skills, to ensure that significant information relevant to M&E is recorded;

- Activity planning skills, in order to implement M&E activities coherently;

- Confidence / pro-active attitude / caring and warm attitude towards children.

4.2. Capacity to Respond to Outputs of M&E Methods

Perhaps not coincidentally, the lack of skills required to implement the M&E tools also limited the animators from being able to respond programmatically to the problems or psychosocial difficulties highlighted by the M&E process. However, it seemed that additional organisational features were necessary to enable field staff to be responsive to issues arising from use of the tools. Some of these minimum requirements are as follows:

Required Organisational Features
- Programme management responsive to frontline issues;

- Competent and systematic supervision and support for frontline workers;

- Responsive and flexible project structure and budget;

The last point above highlights how effective participatory monitoring and evaluation has the potential to flag the need for change in project aims, objectives, activities and/or field of operation. There is no point in developing a system of participatory, child-focused monitoring and evaluation if the organisation does not have the flexibility and capacity to respond to findings by implementing necessary changes. This clearly has implications for the structure and nature of the relationship between implementing agencies and donors, with ramifications for the internal functioning and capacity-requirements of donor institutions.

4.3. Project Activities to Build Capacity

Having identified the above list of required personnel and institutional capacities, the research team initiated a process of capacity-building with Koinonia animators during the course of the project. This was a priority activity, since the enhancement of the animators' capacities was necessary for the evolving M&E process to be meaningful in any real sense within Koinonia's psychosocial programming with children along the Badulla Road.

As a first step, members of the research team designed and ran a 3-day residential training programme for all the animators living and working on the Badulla Road. The key objectives of this training were as follows:

- To enhance animators' facilitation and communication skills;

- To develop animators' understandings of power dynamics between children and adults and amongst children, as well as differences in the perspectives of children and adults;

- To broaden the animators' repertoire of activities to be implemented with children, and to deepen their understanding of how these may be used for psychosocial benefit;

- To develop animators' skills in planning and designing activity sessions for children;

- To enhance animators' sense of self-efficacy and confidence, and to stimulate their creative potential;

The activities and skills introduced during this training session were followed up during subsequent weeks of fieldwork along the Badulla Road. In the mornings prior to pilot testing of tools in a particular village, members of the research team would supervise animators as they prepared and rehearsed their planned activities for the afternoon session at the play-centre. The researchers' observations on the play centre activities implemented by animators would be shared after the session, or the next day, leading to revision and improved practice in the following session. This process was repeated at several play-centres, with the participation of at least one animator from each village. Many animators demonstrated significant increases in confidence and quality of practice, although most were not felt to have progressed sufficiently to be able to implement the M&E tools effectively without supervision.

Given that the members of the research team were unable to commit to a long-term involvement in building the capacity of the Koinonia staff and institution, Koinonia and its partner/donor Tdh elaborated a number of strategies to achieve the capacities that were identified as required. To this end, follow-on training for Koinonia staff was requested from the Psychosocial Support Programme (a local training institution that had been involved in the broader workshops associated with the research project) and the director of Koinonia recruited an additional senior member of staff to strengthen the internal supervisory capacity of that organisation. Through the participation of senior Koinonia and Tdh staff in a number of meetings with the research team, the groundwork has also been laid for further institutional development to meet the needs of programming informed by a participatory system of monitoring and evaluation.

5. Conclusion: Summary of Key Reflections

1. Identification of children's own ideas, concerns and aspirations.
These are tools for programming use rather than abstract outside-of-the-real-world-research. The participatory nature of these methods makes it possible for children to identify their own concerns, the things that they find troubling or frightening and the people and things they turn to when they need help. This is very different from researcher-led approaches in which threats to children are predetermined by adult monitors. One of the findings that emerges from employment of this kind of approach is that in war zones the direct impact of armed conflict – in terms of armed violence and related incidents - is only one of the concerns in children's lives.

2. Identification of immediate and local issues.
The immediacy of information produced through these methods is apparent from some of the findings cited above. This is a tremendous advantage for programming since it encourages a response from programme staff. For example, the senior Koinonia field staff acted immediately and spontaneously on some of the findings. In one village where drowning was identified as a major risk, the animators approached people who live near and fish in the nearby lake to find out about the factors affecting level of risk. They found out that the tanks are full just after the rains and that this is the most dangerous time of year. The mud is also dangerous as children may become stuck in it while trying to fish or play and drown. The animators explained the risks to the children and talked about appropriate protection strategies. With this new knowledge, the children began to inform others. The animators have also used findings from the research to address other issues. They have explained to children where elephants go; how they should not fear the army now since the area now has 'peace'; and how snakes mostly come out in rainy season and so special precaution needs to be taken at that time.

3. Use of information for monitoring purposes
Our work was undertaken in a context where very little data about children's lives had been accumulated. Thus, the findings from different research activities had clear relevance for the development of a baseline against which subsequent impact of the agency's work might be monitored and evaluated. To explain how this would happen in practice, we offer the following two examples.

i.   Through the repeated use of the Risk and Resources Map it may be possible to explore how phenomena identified previously as risks may have been overcome in the children's view or even turned into resources. For instance, tanks which were commonly considered by children as places of danger might, through the activities of the project itself and its animators, become places that are safe and considered beneficial and pleasurable to visit.

ii.   Through various of the methods exploring social ecology it may be possible to monitor the development of children's social networks both in terms of quantity of different categories of people identified as resources as well as in terms of the quality

of relationships. It was notable, in this regard, that participants in the projects visited at the end of our work (run by the YMCA and ESCO respectively) identified the animators as important people and useful resources in their lives. These projects had both been running for several years with well-trained animators. It would be an important mark of the successful development of the Koinonia-run centres on the Badulla Road if participating children came to identify their animators in a similar fashion in the future.

4. Quantification

Several of the methods lend themselves to quantification of data. Perhaps most obvious of these is the Wellbeing Exercise (see above). Once the children have identified their criteria for wellbeing, the criteria from all the children involved in the activity can be aggregated (as in table 7 above). This might involve some analysis (which can be done in collaboration with the children) in which different criteria that appear to be similar conceptually are assessed to establish whether or not they do actually mean the same thing. For example, in the case of the Badulla Road findings, one would need to ascertain whether from the children's point of view 'gets good school grades' amounts to the same thing conceptually as does 'doing well at school'. Likewise, is 'washes often' one of the specific indicators of 'good habits'? In other words, it is important to be precise in the development of indicators that are amenable to measurement and therefore to learn what broad concepts like 'good habits' mean in tangible, practical terms. Once this process of conceptual alignment and refinement has taken place, it is possible to arrive at a list of wellbeing indicators. Since this list might be rather long, the most important indicators (i.e. the ones that are repeated most frequently, such as 'kind/loving' or 'studies well' in the Badulla Road case) could be used as the basis for assessing the wellbeing of individual children and thus groups of children. What percentage of children in a play centre or across the programme as a whole enjoy wellbeing according to these criteria? How does that percentage change over time? In relation to which of the criteria specifically? Exploring these questions could provide a very useful means of monitoring the impact of an intervention.

The challenge with quantification using this approach is first and foremost an ethical one. Asking children to evaluate themselves or their peers might prove very disempowering or distressing. We were also uncomfortable about the potential effect on parents of honestly evaluating their own children's wellbeing, in the event that this fell far short of their aspirations. Furthermore, if their response was guided by the desire to present an ideal picture then this seems likely to invalidate the data. A questionnaire approach might, in theory, be one option but we would certainly be nervous of using such a method in a politically unstable setting where the acquisition of information in this manner may appear authoritarian and trigger a negative reaction. In the event, we chose to pilot further methods rather than invest the time and resources in the development of a process of quantification for the wellbeing exercise.

5. Identification of capacity-building needs

The process of piloting these methods revealed a great deal in relation to capacity-building needs. In terms of M&E it was evident that much work would need to be done with animators if they were to implement the tools themselves and thus take ownership of the

process. In addition, it became apparent through our interaction with the animators that capacity needs to be built for the design and implementation of activities intended to respond to the issues that the different methods themselves reveal. This starts with the development of analytical skills for the better understanding of data produced through the exercises and for the consideration of how to respond. In many cases, the animators with whom we worked were only a few years older than the children themselves and were similarly disadvantaged by the general deprivation of the area, including the severe limitations of the education available.

In order to build the necessary capacity, it seemed that a gradual process is required that involves both the agency (at different levels) and the community. Such a process should have as one of its aims the steady opening up of space for children's participation and the development of skills for effective support of this.

6. Impact of the process itself

Monitoring and evaluation is not a neutral process but involves power differences between those monitored and those monitoring. It is not just about who gets to ask and who gets to speak, but also who is monitoring whom and for what purpose and who makes decisions based on the outcomes of processes. We have advocated the use of participatory methods that are sensitive to children's views and perspectives and to cultural values and understandings in the belief that such an approach helps to reduce power imbalances and the associated abuses. However, this does not remove the obligation of monitors to manage the politics and dynamics of monitoring processes so as to ensure that do not detrimentally affect relations between colleagues and between children and programme staff. It also requires a commitment throughout to transparency and accountability towards all involved.

Even through the few brief meetings we were able to hold with any one group of children, engagement in the activities themselves clearly had a positive impact on children's ability to analyse and articulate issues of concern to them and on the development of cognitive and communicative skills. For example, a group of boys in one village who were very disruptive and struggled to concentrate and communicate at our first meeting demonstrated significant change with subsequent visits and further involvement in our activities. By the time of our fourth and final meeting with them, they were calm and attentive and able to reflect on the whole process, including on changes that had occurred in their lives in the interim. Poignantly, on our last day with these boys, they reminded us that during a risk and resource mapping exercise conducted at the project's outset they had identified snake bites as one of the most serious threats they confront and went on to tell us that that very night a little girl who had taken part in the exercise was bitten by a snake and died.

It seemed that the process of coming together to discuss and reflect on everyday life in an ordered and focussed manner was, in itself, valuable from this perspective. If such activities continued, as an embedded part of a project, they would likely lead to the enhancement of children's capacity to make a connection between the risks and problems they encounter in everyday life and the resources that may be available to them. This capacity is vital for the creation of children's own strategies to address the issues of concern to them.

7. Limitations & Concerns

As with any other approach, the manner in which we worked had its own inherent limitations, of which the following seem particularly important to note:

i. The collective nature of our methods made it extremely difficult to elicit detailed information about the suffering of individuals. Also, it was often more difficult to learn about the threats experienced by children within the private space of the home than more public settings. As a consequence, these methods do not lend themselves particularly well to identification of appropriate responses to individual children.

ii. Our status as outsiders also seems likely to have contributed to the difficulty of eliciting information of a more personal nature. In addition, as outsiders we were not in a position to take forward the focus and energy generated by our sessions with children. It should also be noted that together with the translators we were a mixed group in terms of age, gender and social class. It was our impression that particular constraints may have existed for those of us who were male and for the older members of the team in terms of establishing an easy rapport with children. With parents, conversely, the older members had a possible advantage. Furthermore, it may have been the case that the translators, as middle-class urbanites, encountered some obstacles in a poor rural setting, particularly in relation to parents.

iii. As discussed earlier in the report, the piloting of monitoring and evaluation tools focused broadly on the psychosocial status of children and the factors that impact this, rather than on programme performance in relation to explicitly stated objectives. This was partly because the work along the Badulla Road was very new and it would therefore have been rather premature to try and assess impact and outcome. But it also reflected the fact that the programme objectives were not very specific in relation to children's psychosocial wellbeing. In this sense, as noted, the data yielded from the pilot served mostly as a broad exploration of children's psychosocial wellbeing along the Badulla Road. Hence, it provided a baseline against which changes obtained through future monitoring can be highlighted. Such a baseline is an important first step in the establishment of a monitoring and evaluation system.

Having highlighted this limitation with the piloting process, these tools are clearly amenable to ongoing monitoring, since in the case of programmes with well-elaborated objectives, they will reveal the extent to which an intervention's objectives are being met. It should also be remembered that the piloting did not directly enquire about the relationship between the intervention and the children's psychosocial status. As a consequence, children seldom mentioned the programme, the play centres or the animators. Whilst the lack of explicit data may be a limitation in the case of Koinonia/Tdh play centres on the Badulla Road, it was clear that within well-established programmes (like ESCO and the YMCA), certain very important elements of their interventions appeared in the data. In these cases children made frequent mention of the animators, the benefits of and things they had learned through participation in the programmes.

iv. A potential ethical dilemma exists in the fact that the information elicited from children is not inherently of interest or value from the narrow perspective of the piloting of methods. From this perspective, it is not the actual information itself but the types of information offered by different methods that is of interest. We sought to address this issue by (a) engaging in an ongoing dialogue with project staff to reflect with them upon our impressions from the field and the data being generated and (b) compiling a situational analysis report of our substantive findings that may serve to guide the further activities of the agencies involved.

v. As noted earlier in this report, we encountered particular difficulties in attempting to pilot the methods with younger children. We had anticipated that at least some of the exercises would work with the age group 6-9. But, in practice, this was seldom the case. Certainly those exercises that relied on an element of literacy were problematic but even others appeared to be unsuitable in a setting where the levels of material, social and educational deprivation appeared to impact strongly on the development of cognitive and communicative skills. A good deal of further work specifically focused on the piloting of methods for this younger age group would appear necessary.

vi. We recognise that the methods piloted would not indicate children suffering trauma and mental health problems and would argue that this is appropriate given the aims and objectives of the project. We would suggest that it is perfectly feasible and appropriate to assess the mental health of individuals who appear to be confronting particular difficulties, so long as the programme has the capacity and intention to respond to these children. Such monitoring would require different methods but can be conducted alongside and as a complement to the participatory child-focused methods discussed in this report. However, we would recommend use of local concepts and understandings of trauma and mental health whenever possible rather than importing categories and notions from outside the cultural context since this makes use of local resources and systems of healing more feasible, thereby increasing sustainability.

vii. Finally, bearing in mind that different cultures approach concepts of personhood, life, death, social affiliation and the like very differently, it is important to bear in mind that the conceptual basis of certain tools used in the piloting may not be transferable to particular cultural contexts. For example, in many cultures the wellbeing of an individual cannot in practice be separated from the wellbeing of the group to which that individual belongs, since individuals are integrally incorporated within families, clans and other groups and are not seen as existing outside those groups. In such cases, it may not be appropriate to ask questions about the wellbeing of children but instead to address the state of the family or group to which they belong.

Appendix 1: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Many researchers and humanitarian agencies have found the concept of 'trauma' useful since it highlights how major disasters can overwhelm children and adults psychologically, destroying their resilience and coping. However, despite the popular currency of this term, there has been a growing controversy around the relevance of the concept of trauma - usually elaborated in the form of the diagnosis of PTSD – to the situation of people affected by armed conflict. The critiques of the PTSD model have come from a number of different perspectives, but here we will only discuss those that question its theoretical assumptions and its relevance to non-Western societies (Bracken et al., 1995; Bracken, 1998; Young, 1990; Young 1995; Dawes, 1992; Richman, 1993).

Eisenbruch (1991), for example, is doubtful of the validity of PTSD diagnoses based on questionnaires that use culturally inappropriate concepts and definitions. Even if the instruments are translated and altered in some way to "fit" local cultural norms, the symptoms that are revealed by the questionnaires do not necessarily accord with traditional understandings of disease or misfortune: "...the fact that symptoms and signs can be reliably identified in different settings is no guarantee that they mean the same thing in those settings" (Bracken et al., 1995:1074). That is, a diagnosis of PTSD in a culture where the construct is not culturally recognised is at risk of perpetrating a "category fallacy" (Kleinman, 1988) and mis-recognising the experience (suffering) of the client/patient. Furthermore, Boyden & Gibbs (1996) have claimed that by locating diagnosis in individual pathology, the concept of PTSD is in direct opposition to holistic cosmological systems that pertain in many non-western contexts where, for example, aggrieved ancestors, malevolent spirits and other forces play a part in both cause and cure.

On the other hand, there are many people working with war-affected children who have confidence that PTSD is a diagnostic category with universal validity and relevance, and that it offers a useful way of conceptualising an important dimension of human suffering across cultures.

The methodology that we employed did not preclude the identification of symptoms that might be ascribed to PTSD, or indeed other serious psychiatric diagnoses. However, in a fieldwork context where the possibility to receive mental health support is extremely limited, it was decided that no special effort would be made to test for these diagnostic criteria amongst the participating children. Whilst it was certain that the project partners would do their utmost to assist a child who required special assistance, it seemed insensitive to probe into areas of mental health for which neither we nor the intervening organisation could offer adequate specialised assistance (the entire population of eastern Sri Lanka was served by one psychiatrist and one clinical psychologist at that time). From a methodological standpoint as well, it did not seem appropriate to privilege a single theoretical construct over others. The ramification of this choice, however, is that the tools and methods used in the project would NOT be sufficient to monitor and evaluate interventions that were explicitly concerned with mental health constructs such as PTSD.

Appendix 2: Individual Methods

Risk & Resource Maps

Aim:
To provide information on the risks children face, their problems and anxieties and the resources they have access to. Also to provide information regarding the material environment in which children live.

Participants:
This activity can be used effectively with children aged 10 years or over. With a diverse population, it may be advisable to group similar individuals together (dividing the group according to sex, age, socio-cultural background and so on) and run the activity in parallel for each group. Each group should ideally not be larger than 8 persons. Literacy is not essential.

Facilitators:
1 facilitator can work with up to 2 small groups, although ideally there should be one facilitator per group, with an observer/recorder for each group who takes notes on the children's discussions and other aspects of the process.

Materials:
1 large sheet of paper for each group
Three colours of marker pens for each group (Red, Green, Black)

Instructions:
1. Form the children into groups of around 5-6 each. Try to keep children of the same age together and to form groups of boys and girls separately. Ask the children if they would like to do an activity about their own village. If they say "yes" then continue with the activity. Introduce the activity to the participants. Explain that to help the organization/animators plan their work, you need to understand the community/village within which they are working. Explain that it is very important to understand what resources and things of use are available in the community/village – as well as what dangers or difficulties exist in the community/village – and that this activity will attempt to encourage a discussion of these issues through the drawing of a map. It is important to confirm that children know what a map is.
2. Give each group a large sheet of paper and three marker pens. Explain that the green pens are for things, places or people who are resources, that red pens are for the things, places or people who are dangers or risks, and that the black pen is for anything else that is neither a resource nor a risk. Instruct the participants to draw a map of the community / village as they see it – incorporating the views of all the group members.
3. If the participants have not grasped the exercise or are unsure of how to begin, the facilitators may stimulate a little brainstorming within the small groups about ideas for "useful things/places" and "risky things/places" that are found in their village. Questions that can help the children start include "There are some things that are useful to you in your village, can you tell me one of those things?" and "There are some things that a dangerous or scary in you village, can you tell me one of those things?" Facilitators should not make suggestions, but can mingle with the participants, monitoring the conversation and processes of each group. Once maps are relatively well elaborated, facilitators may ask probing questions about the items that have been marked in green and red.

4. Encourage all the children to share the responsibility of drawing. Don't interfere too much in the process, but do ask: "what have you drawn there? How is it useful? Or how does it create difficulties in for you? "What else is there in your village that is useful or causes problems or danger? and other similar questions.

5. Once all the maps have been completed, invite each group to present their map to the entire gathering and explain what they have drawn. The facilitators should ask questions about each map to find out "why", "when" and "how" particular items are "useful" or "dangerous". Asking questions relating to whether "girls and boys" or "men and women" experience these items differently or not will help develop an understanding of the differential experiences of different social categories. Also ask questions about specific instances that demonstrate the nature of the items – or whether participants have personally experienced this, or how they came to know about this. During the presentations maps, notes should be taken on the discussion, the layout of the maps, conversation and group dynamics. This is the most important part of the activity, so allow adequate time for it.

6. Ideally the facilitators should keep a visual record of the maps that have been generated. This may be done through photographs onsite or off-site with the consent of the participants. There should be a discussion with the participants about what they would like to do with the maps, and some elaboration of a clear outcome (i.e. who would take care of each map, and what they might do with it).

Timelines

Aim:

To generate information about the experiences of participants in their village / community / project.

Participants:

This activity can be used effectively with persons over 8 years of age. With a diverse group of participants, it may be advisable to group similar individuals together (gender, age) and run the activity in parallel for each group. Each group should ideally not be larger than 8 persons.

Facilitators:

At least 1 facilitator and translator for 2-3 groups.

Materials:

1 large sheet of paper per group
Three colours of marker pen for each group (Red, Green and Black)

Instructions:

1. Group the participants into small working groups. Introduce the activity to the children. Explain that we would like to know more about the history of their village and important events in the recent past.
2. Give one piece of flipchart paper to each group. Ask them to draw a line across the middle of the paper to represent time. One end represents the beginning of the period you are interested in and the other represents now. Smaller lines can be drawn across the main timeline to show the different years. You can choose to set the beginning of the timeline 2 years, 5 years or 10 years ago depending on the information required.
3. Ask the children to draw all the important events and changes that have occurred in their village in this time period.
4. Encourage the children by explaining that we just want to find out what they think is important and that there is no right or wrong answers in this activity. Go round to the different groups and ask what they have drawn and when it happened.
5. You can ask the children to draw the positive things in green and the negative things in red. This comes out in the discussions anyway and the most important thing is just to encourage the children to draw.
6. When all the drawings are complete ask the groups to come together and present their timelines to all the children. Ask questions about the different events and when they happened.
7. Keep a visual record of these timelines but make sure the children can keep their original drawings.

Spider Diagrams

Aim:
To generate data about children's social networks and the people that they may turn to for help with different situations / problems.

Participants:
This activity is suitable for children aged 10-14. The work is carried out individually at first and can work with a group of up to 10. It is helpful to split the groups up, so as to have boys and girls working separately.

Facilitators:
1 Facilitator is needed for each group of 10 children. It is not possible to run 2 groups in parallel with only one facilitator.

Materials:
A4 paper and pens

Instructions:
1. Ask the children to sit on the floor and give everybody a piece of paper and a pen. Introduce the activity saying by saying something like: "this is a nice activity because we are going to draw people who are helpful to us in different ways". Explain that we will do this by drawing a spider
2. Ask the children to draw a circle in the middle of the paper and write their name or draw a picture to represent themselves. This is the body of the spider. The legs of the spider are the problems that they face and the feet are the people they go to for help. People who help a lot can be shown by drawing bigger feet.
3. Encourage the children by drawing a spider yourself, but do not write down anything on the legs or feet. If the children are still finding this activity difficult, it may help to go round to children individually and ask them about a problem they face and then who they may go to for help. Remind them that there are no right or wrong answers.
4. When everyone has finished drawing, and you have had time to talk to each child individually, call everyone back together for a Focus Group Discussion. This is intended to aid reflection on problems and people who can provide assistance. Explain that they only have to share the problems that they noted if they want to. Then ask those that are willing to share their problems, and who they go to for help, with the rest of the group.

Problem Trees

Aim: To learn about the situations and issues that children perceive as being a problem or source of anxiety to them and their views of causes and solutions.

Participants:
Children ages 10 and over.

Facilitators:
At least 1 facilitator and recorder for each group

Materials:
Cards of three different colours, several large sheets of paper and pens

Instructions:
Explain to the children that you are trying to find out about the things that are problems for, or worry, them and that you would like them to note these down on cards. Lay the sheets of paper out on the ground and distribute pens and cards of one colour to everyone. Ask the children to list the things that are a problem for them on the cards, allowing one card per problem. The children should be encouraged to discuss and agree each problem before it is indicated on a card.

Once this is done, ask the children to start trying to work out whether there is a link between the different problems they have identified. The links between problems can be made apparent by clustering the cards with related problems together on the paper. Having identified and grouped the problems, ask the children what the causes of these problems might be and instruct them to note each cause on a separate card (using cards of a different colour). If the children lay the 'cause' cards (forming the ends of the roots of the tree) out below the 'problem' cards (the trunk), they can then draw lines between the two sets of cards, indicating their precise connections. Once this is done, the children should be encouraged to discuss consequences of the different problems they have identified. These should be marked down on the third set of coloured cards and placed above the problems, as if they were the leaves of the tree. Again, links between problems and consequences/solutions can be made explicit by drawing lines between them, in this case representing the branches. If this exercise is being used for planning rather than monitoring programmes progress or impact, once the drawing and discussion about causes, problems and consequences is completed, a discussion of possible solutions can take place as a basis for helping the children work out how they can act on a situation to change it.

"What if?" and "Who matters?"

Aim:
To generate information about children's social networks and systems of support and to learn who provides assistance in specific situations of need

Participants:
This activity can be used with children aged 10 and over. Ideally, the groups should be made up of 8-10 children and separated by sex.

Facilitator:
1 Facilitator and 1 recorder are needed for each working group of 8-10 children.

Materials:
Large sheets of paper, pens and cut out people in two colours (one for male and one for female characters)

Instructions:

1. Make a list of key problems facing children in the area. These can be gathered from the Risk/Resource Maps as well as FGDs
2. Cut of paper figures in two different colours. One colour represents females (adults or children) and the other, males (adults or children). Make at least 30 of each colour.
3. Start the exercise with all the children. Go through the list of problems and discuss each one with the children.
4. Select which problems the children in this village/group perceive to be relevant to them.
5. Split the children up into smaller groups, by sex and/or age, and go through each of the key problems in turn with the groups. The paper figures can be used to represent the people who they turn to for help with each problem, and the children can draw or write on these figures to explain who they are in each instance.
6. Record the different people the children identify for each situation. Further information can be obtained by asking the children to elaborate on specific issues and provide examples

Social Map Exercise ("Who Do I Visit?")

Aim:
To obtain information about children's social networks and engage children in discussion of how they use these networks

Participants:
This activity can be used effectively with children aged 8/9 and above.

Facilitators:
At least 1 facilitator and translator for each group.

Materials:
1 large sheet of paper for each individual (these may be combined for group work)
1 marker pen for each participant

Instructions:
1. Introduce the activity to the participants. Explain that the activity involves thinking about people whom they visit.
2. First ask participants to draw their house and the people who live there.
3. Then ask the participants if they sometimes visit other houses. Ask for examples. When examples are given, ask the participants to draw the house and also all the people who live there.
4. When each house and its occupants have been drawn, elicit information about the people who have been drawn. Ask participants questions related to who these people are, how often they visit them and why, what they do when they visit them, how accessible these people are to them, etc – exploring the nature of the relationship with these people in their social network. Notes should be taken during these discussions.
5. Repeat the two steps above until the participants cannot think of any more houses/people that they visit. It may be helpful to ask participants specifically about whom they might visit to play, for festivals or occasions, for assistance with a problem, etc., and it may be useful to find out who visits the participants' homes.
6. Conclude the activity with a recapitulation of the exercise and a positive discussion of the social resources available to the participating children.

Social Network Sorting Activity

Aim:
To provide information about children's social networks: the people in their everyday lives and the nature of their relationship with them, particularly the types of situations in which these people may be helpful.

Participants:
With some variations this activity could probably be used with children from 8 years upwards. To undertake all components of the activity would likely require at least 2 hours and a good degree of concentration, particularly in the later stages. Some degree of literacy is required.

Facilitators:
This works well with a fairly large group, up to 16-20. At several stages the group can be subdivided into smaller groups of 3-4, ensuring that more children have the chance to express their ideas. An observer / recorder is ideally required.

Materials:
Small pieces of paper with some means to stick them onto a larger sheet - 'Post-It Notes' are ideal.
2-3 flip-chart sized pieces of paper.
Sufficient pens for one to be given to each 3-4 children.

Instructions:
1. Start by explaining that we are going to do some different activities to learn about the different people who we meet and the ways in which they help us.
2. Group participants into 3s or 4s and give each group a small pile of notelets / 'Post-Its' (about 10-12) and a pen. Ask each group to think about the people that they meet normally and to write one down on each notelet. Try to avoid giving examples and do not, at this stage, suggest categories of people ('mother' 'teacher' etc) as oppose to named people ('Rajan', 'Viji', etc). This will be sorted later. In the meantime stick two sheets of flipchart paper together to form a larger sheet and attach this to the wall or lay it on the ground.
3. When the groups seem more or less done ask each group in turn to read out what is on their notes and then to stick them on to one or other end of the large sheet of paper. One end is for people that they meet in the home and the other for people outside the home. You might also indicate an area in the middle for people who fall under both categories. In many cases the children will probably have clear ideas about home / outside the home for different categories of people but a few may generate discussion amongst all participants which should be encouraged. If any group has proper names written down ask them to explain who these people are and place them according to category (e.g. friends, cousins, etc). As each successive group takes its turn they should stick their notes on top of the categories of people already laid out on the sheets where these repeat. By the end you should have a range of different *types* of people, many of them occurring several times (such as mother, teacher). Take note of the frequency with which different categories appear.
4. When all the notes are stuck on the sheet of paper ask the participants to look at them and think about people who may be missing. You may prompt with a few ideas of your own if anyone you consider likely is not there - e.g. religious figures, local government figures, people associated with the project itself. Note feedback to such prompts.

5. When the participants are happy with the range of people represented (having added any that seemed missing) invite them to talk about why these people are important, the kind of things that they do to help or the kind of things that are nice to do with this person, etc. Take categories one-by-one, using this as an opportunity to learn in more depth about at least some of them. When particular information is offered about one category of persons you can ask who else represented this is also true for. So, for example, if mothers brush their daughters' hair who else does this? When do they do it instead of the mother and what, if any, are the differences? It may be impracticable to have such a discussion about every person represented so the facilitator will need to decide on the most important persons / issues to explore.

6. Ask participants to rejoin their groups of 3 or 4. Give them more notelets. Ask them to think about the biggest difficulties / challenges that children in their community face. Then decide what are the 4 or 5 biggest of these. They should write each one on a separate notelet. While they are doing this line up the different categories of people along the longest side of the flipchart paper already in use.

7. Invite each group to share the difficulties / challenges they have identified, laying each one on the sheet of paper. Elicit further thoughts about at least some of these from the group and from other participants. Is this a common problem? Who is it worse for - boys or girls? Older or younger children? etc. Each group takes it in turn to share their ideas, laying similar problems on top of those already on the sheet.

8. Review the list of problems identified with the participants as a whole. Ask them to think for a moment about the 3 biggest / most common. ones. Then call out each one in turn asking the participants to put up their hand if this is one of their 3. (NOTE: you might like to ask them to close their eyes when voting in order to avoid copying). Record the number of votes for each and feedback the results to the participants.

9. Depending on time available and enthusiasm of the participants take the 3-7 difficulties that received the most votes and place them along the short edge of the paper so that you now have the basis of a graph or matrix., as follows:

Explain to the participants that they should now think about which of the people represented do or could help them with which difficulty. Each participant should then put a mark on the matrix to indicate this, taking it in turns. Inevitably some degree of copying may occur and it will important to observe the process of completing the matrix in order to discern the extent to which this seems to be true.

10. Invite all the participants to review the completed matrix and talk through issues that emerge from this. Who have they indicated as helping with which problem and who has not been indicated. It would also be a good idea to explore strategies for problem solving involving the people represented and to think of others who might also have a useful role to play but are not represented.

Body Maps

Aim:
To generate data about children's ideas about physical, psychological and emotional wellbeing and illbeing.

Participants:
This activity can be used with children aged 8 years and over. The younger children enjoy participating but it is the older children (12-14) that contribute the most. The groups can be large, 10-15 children, although around 8 - 10 is a more effective number. The groups can be mixed by age and sex.

Facilitator:
1 facilitator and 1 recorder is needed for a maximum of 2 working groups.

Materials:
Large sheets of paper and pens

Instructions:

1. Gather the children into suitable sized groups. Ask them to lay 3 large sheets of paper on the floor. If mats or newspapers are available, these should be laid under the paper to protect it from damage. Ask for one, preferably small-medium sized, child from the group to volunteer and ask this child to lie down on the paper. Make sure that the person is lying down on his/her back with arms and legs spread. Ask for two more volunteers to draw around the body of the child.
2. Ask the children to think about what makes them feel bad or sick. Then ask them to think about the place in or on the body or the body part that feels bad. Then ask them to draw within the outline of the body the affected area or organ and its location.
3. When all the diseases and conditions have been identified and the affected parts drawn on the body, ask the children to list the causes of these conditions.
4. Finally, ask the children what can be done to cure these conditions and, if there is time, who in their community is available to treat them.

Well-being Exercise
(adapted from Jon Hubbard's Functioning Exercise)

Aim:
To elicit the characteristics (and conceptual categories) that children or adults associate with well-being for children of different ages and genders.

Participants:
This activity was used effectively with children (and adults) over 8-9 years of age. With a diverse group of participants, it may be advisable to group similar individuals together (gender, age, socio-cultural background) and run the activity in parallel for each group. Each group should ideally not be larger than 8 persons.

Facilitators:
At least 1 facilitator and translator for each working group.

Materials:
4-6 Cardboard File Covers for each group
Two colours of marker pens for each group
A4 sheet for each participant
Pen or pencil for each participant

Instructions:
1. Introduce the activity to the participating children. Explain that you want the participants to think of a female or male child/young person/middle-aged person/elderly person that they know about whom they could say, "yes, s/he is basically doing well – *om, oralavu nallam irrukka*" if asked the question "are they doing well - *nallam irrukka*?" Specify the age range you want the participants to choose their person from (i.e. between 5 and 10, between 11 and 15, etc). It may help to draw stick figures on a sheet of paper to denote the particular age group and gender (remember that you will have to use stereotypical representations for gender, although you can jokingly question these).
2. Ask participants if they have got the person in their mind. When you have confirmed that they have, ask them to draw a stick figure of that person quickly on their personal sheet of A4 paper. Ask them to mark the person's actual age (in years) or a good guess under the stick figure.
3. Ask the participants to keep their person in mind, and to write down 4 things about the person that lets them know that they are doing well or that allows them to say, "Yes, s/he is basically doing well". Do not give examples. Avoid asking for "reasons" that they are doing well. Ask the participants if they have such a person in mind, and whether they can think of different things about the person that tell them that they're doing well (maximum of 4 and minimum of 1). Ask the participants to write this down on their piece of paper next to the stick figure that they have drawn.
4. Once everyone has completed this task, ask them to think of a new person of the same age group but different gender. Repeat the steps 2 and 3 for this person, and also for the other ages/genders that you are interested in.
5. Mark each cardboard file cover with a stick figure and age range that corresponds to each category that the participants have thought of. Give each group one set of file covers. Ask the participants to briefly explain their "four things" in spoken language, using their notes to aid memory. A designated note taker (perhaps the translator/facilitator) must write down each participant's "four things" in turn, trying hard to capture the spoken language and phrases. Complete this activity for the entire set of file covers.

6. During the exercise, the facilitators can identify commonly occurring or interesting characteristics or markers emerging from the activities. Upon completion of the entire set of file covers, encourage participants to review the file covers and reflect on the characteristics or markers identified by the facilitators. It may be useful to ask questions about "what" these mean in different situations or "how" a person with a particular characteristic would behave in a significant situation (i.e. at home, with neighbours, whilst working, etc). It may be interesting also to explore "what" and "how" questions about a person who does NOT have a particular characteristic / marker. This may be the most important part of the entire exercise so spend some time on this!

7. Thank the participants for their time and explain that you will use the file covers and their ideas to plan future activities. Take any feedback on the activity, and provide some feedback on what you may have learned from the activity.

Image Theatre Exercise
(Adapted from Augusto Boal's *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, 1992)

Aim:
To generate information on problems faced by children in the community and on the repertoire of responses they may make to these.

Participants:
This activity was used effectively with children over 8-9 years of age. During the activity, if the participants are diverse, it is advisable to group similar individuals (i.e. gender and age) together within the small group activities. The total group should be ideally comprise of between 12 and 24 persons, each small group should not exceed 6 persons in size.

Facilitators:
At least 1 facilitator and translator for the activity, as well as an additional note-taker.

Materials:
None required.

Instructions:
1. <u>Preliminary activity to explain ground-rules and method</u>. Arrange participants in a circle, standing facing inwards. Ask for two volunteers. Without speaking, arrange the two volunteers in the center of the circle to be motionless figures standing facing one another and shaking hands. Step back into the circle and ask the participants what story they see in the image before them. When participants volunteer a story, elicit more details from them and others in the group (i.e. "If these are siblings saying goodbye, why are they separating? How do they each feel about each other? What challenges might lie before each of them? What do they say to one another?"). Once a single story has been elaborated, then ask for a different story that may be read within the same image. Elaborate this story in a similar fashion. Then remove one of the volunteers from the still image and substitute a new volunteer in a different (non-shaking hands) pose. Ask the participants to read the new image. Continue to change volunteers, poses and images three or four more times, until the ingredients required for the main exercise have been adequately demonstrated. These are as follows: a) the method of "reading" (projecting onto) an image; b) the principle that multiple perspectives may be valid; c) the method of using bodies (respectfully and carefully) to construct still images that convey a situation; d) the idea that the stories and characters elaborated by the viewers are independent and not connected to the volunteers who are embodying characters in the images.
2. Divide participants into groups of between 4 and 6 persons. Ask each group to create a still-image that shows a child who is facing some kind of problem, as well as people around her/him. Give each group about 15 minutes to develop and rehearse a story and an image.
3. Bring the participants together in a semi-circle. Have each group, in turn, present their silent image for their peer audience to read. Inform the group that the unknown child in the image lives in their village and facilitate the reading of each image, asking the audience to map out the characters in the story, the circumstances of the child, the background to the child's problems, and her/his thoughts and feelings. Explore alternative readings of each image, whilst the note-taker records the themes and ideas associated with each problem. The facilitator can also ask about the relevance of issues in the story to past experiences of the children in the village. The story elaborated by the group presenting each image is not privileged here, and will only be presented at the end of the readings IF the group requests an opportunity to do so.

4. At the end of the multiple readings of each image, the facilitator can ask the participants which suggested story they thought was the most realistic and that they would like to see more of. Then a discussion should be facilitated on how each problem might be resolved, with an emphasis on the most realistic solutions and the potential (social) resources that might be utilized in each case. Again, the note-taken should record themes and ideas produced during the discussion.
5. To conclude the exercise, each group should be instructed to create two further images, depicting a) one effective action to resolve the problem and b) an improved situation that results from this action. The groups should each be given 10 minutes to produce and rehearse the two new images.
6. Bring the participants together in a semi-circle to see the presentation of the series of all three images (problem, action, improved situation) and applaud each of the groups.

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