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Tracer study - Book 2 Training manual



International
Programme on
the Elimination
of Child Labour
(IPEC)



Tracer study – Book 2 Training manual

**Tracer methodology to measure longer term
impacts on children and families of interventions
against child labour**

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1. Introduction

Obtaining reliable information that can be translated into useful, revealing findings depends to a large degree on the group of individuals responsible for carrying out tracer studies in the field. Therefore, a crucial step in any tracer study is to properly prepare the field research team (the enumerators) for the task.

Tracer studies differ significantly from other types of field research. Enumerators therefore should be thoroughly trained, even if they have substantial field experience. The objective of this training manual is to offer guidelines that will facilitate the training of the tracer study team.

The training of the field team should last at least two, but preferably three, full days. It is important that the entire team be present for the full duration of the training.

As the training facilitator, you will need to ensure, by the end of the training, that enumerators are familiarized with the following topics:

- What is a tracer study?
- What is child labour?
- Specifics on the types of child labour in the region they will be visiting
- The main elements of the project, including a general profile of the former beneficiaries they will be tracing
- Good practices when doing field research
- Good practices when doing field research with children
- Ethical considerations when conducting research with children
- The tracer study methodology - main elements
- The tracer study instruments (questionnaires)

2. A word on this training manual

Every training facilitator uses individual techniques for successfully carrying out a training workshop. The forms you may use for training such as PowerPoint presentations, flipcharts or other tools depend on your preferences and available resources. This manual, on the other, hand, offers a rough plan on how to organize the training in terms of time and content.

Annex I offers a tentative agenda that may help you establish your timetable. Of course, you may decide you need more or less time for a particular topic, or you might want to include some participatory exercises that are not included in this example. It is up to you to modify the time allocations, as well as make decisions on implements and changes to training tools as you see fit. However, the core issue

areas (set out in the bullet points above) should be properly covered during every tracer study training. As you can see, the columns for facilitator, people involved and needs have been left blank. You will need to fill these in prior to the training. Decide for each module, which person will be in charge (facilitator), and whether anyone else will be involved, for example staff from implementing agencies and/or IPEC. Also prior to the training, your practical needs will have to be considered: pens, flipcharts, overhead projectors, PowerPoint etc.

3. What is a tracer study?

It is quite possible that most of the enumerators in the training workshop will not be fully familiarized with tracer studies. Therefore, the first step is to introduce tracer studies and to review their objective.

Give ample time for questions, and if anybody from the group has had experiences with tracer studies invite them to share their experience.

What is a tracer study?

- Research in which the primary activity is to trace, find or locate a group of individuals.
- A retrospective study at one point in time.
- A study that collects and analyses information on the changes (impacts) that have occurred in the lives of a sampled group of people previously exposed to an intervention.
- It is not a project evaluation and does not focus on the projects' performance.

A tracer study for child labour projects provides information that will allow you to:

- Document the changes in the lives of former beneficiaries. Did children stay in school? Did they stay out of work?
- Establish if the project contributed to the observed changes.
- Improve the design and planning of future projects. Tracer studies can assist by shedding light on what works better and in what circumstances.

The main characteristics of a tracer study are:

- Time: tracer studies are conducted after a certain interval of time has passed since the individuals were exposed or involved in the project.
- Focus: in contrast with project evaluations or ex post evaluations, the focus of tracer studies is on former beneficiaries of the project and much less on the project itself.

- Objectives: determine what are the changes (longer term impacts) in the lives of former beneficiaries and to what extent the intervention contributed to the observed changes.

4. What is child labour?

The study team will be addressing the issue of child labour throughout the study. It is vital, therefore, that they learn to recognize it and understand the main issues surrounding it.

Group work 1

Get into groups of 3 to 4. Discuss among your group:

- What do you consider to be child labour? Take into account issues such as age of the child and specific tasks at work.
- Is child labour common where you live (it may be a country or region)?

Write down on a large piece of paper:

- 1) Three characteristics that your group believes define child labour.
- 2) If child labour is prevalent where you live write down the type of child labour.

You might want to begin this section of the training by doing a short group exercise. This helps the trainees become more involved and makes the training seem less of a lecture. You may want to adapt this group work to your specific needs, but take into account the following suggestion on your left.

Make sure that you allow enough time for discussions and presentations from each group. Even if they have already been mentioned in the group tasks, review the following points regarding child labour.

Definition of child labour according to the ILO¹

- The term child labour is often defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity. It refers to work that:
 - is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children; and
 - interferes with their schooling: by depriving them of the opportunity to attend school; by obliging them to leave school

¹ IPEC: *Child Labour: A Textbook for University Students*, (Geneva, ILO,2004). Available at: <http://www.ilo.org/ipecinfo/product/viewProduct.do?productId=174>.

prematurely; or by requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work.

- In its most extreme forms, child labour involves children being enslaved, separated from their families, exposed to serious hazards and illnesses and/or left to fend for themselves on the streets of large cities.
- Not all work done by children should be classified as child labour and be considered negative. Children's participation in work that does not affect their health and personal development or interfere with their schooling may be regarded as positive. This includes activities such as helping their parents around the home, assisting in a family business or earning pocket money outside school hours and during school holidays. These kinds of activities contribute to children's development and to the welfare of their families; they provide them with skills and experience, and help to prepare them to be productive members of society during their adult life.
- Two main elements determine if the employment activities of a child are potentially beneficial or classified as child labour (detrimental). The first is age, and the second is the type and conditions of work.
 - Age: the minimum age at which light work (such as household chores) is permissible can be set at 12 or 13 years of age. The minimum age for admission to employment or work is determined by national legislation and can be set at 14, 15 or 16 years of age. Hazardous work should not be allowed for anyone less than 18 years of age.
 - The type and conditions of work: these determine whether a certain type of employment is considered light work, and therefore acceptable for children from ages 12 to 14 (specific ages vary from country to country), and if a certain type of employment is non-hazardous, and therefore acceptable for children from ages 14 to 18. Examples of conditions and type of work might be: working hours, place of work, specific tasks etc.
- In particular, children must not be involved in what has been labelled the worst forms of child labour (WFCL). The Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) defines them as:
 - all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage, serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict;
 - the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances;

- the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in relevant treaties;
- work, which by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children (hazardous work).

Examples of hazardous work in some common sectors

Sector	Examples of tasks	Hazards
Mining	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Underground digging • Carrying heavy loads • Separation of ore 	Exposure to harmful dusts, gas, fumes, extreme humidity and temperature levels; awkward working positions; cave-ins
Child domestic work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working for long hours without rest 	Exhaustion
Deep-sea fishing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diving to depths of up to 60 meters to attach nets to coral reefs 	Exposure to high atmospheric pressure; attacks by fish, congested and unsanitary conditions
Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with machinery • Mixing and applying pesticides. • Loading heavy loads 	Unsafe machinery; hazardous substances (insecticides, herbicides); heavy lifting; extreme temperatures

5. General information

Prior to the start of the training of enumerators, it is necessary to transmit information regarding the project, the type of child labour and the geographical location.

Consider inviting someone who worked directly with the project (ex-project staff) to come to the training and give a short presentation. He/she might have a more personal and detailed account and can offer a richer picture of the project, location, services provided, obstacles encountered etc.

The project

The tracer study will trace children that were former beneficiaries of a distinctive project. This project offered services of some nature to the former beneficiaries.

- What was the timeline of the project? When did the intervention start? When did it end?

- What services were provided and to whom?
- Who (what agency/organization) implemented the project?
- Did these actors have the support of other agencies or government institutions?

The child labour sector

What type(s) of child labour are present in the intervention area?

- What are the main characteristics of this type(s) of child labour?

As an example:

If the main type of child labour in the region was/is mining, review the following aspects:

- What are the usual tasks and activities performed by child miners?
- Do young children perform different mining jobs than older children?
- Is it a hazardous form of child labour? What are the hazards?
- Are there particular tasks or activities that are more hazardous than others?
- What factors promote the prevalence of child miners in this region? (Ex: poverty, social traditions, exclusion, etc.)
- Are other types of child labour common in the region?

The geographical location

- What was the geographical area of operation of the project (illustrate it on a map in a PowerPoint presentation)
- What will be the area of operation of the tracer study?

6. Ethical considerations when doing research with children in the context of a tracer study

It is essential that any research, including tracer studies, follows closely a set of guidelines guaranteeing that no harm will come on account of the study to the respondents or any individual involved in the research.

It is a good idea to begin this section with a short group exercise. The aim is to stimulate participants' opinions on what should be the basic rules to follow when conducting fieldwork. Ask them to get into groups of three or four, and carry out the two tasks outlined in the box on the left. Then, allow for a five to ten minute presentation from each team. After participants have discussed their viewpoints and perceptions, review the following set of ethical rules. If one of them was previously mentioned in group presentations, point it out and highlight its

importance again. It is essential that all members of the team understand and thoroughly internalize these ethical rules.²

Group work 2

Task 1

- Discuss what practices are fundamental during field interviews.
- Think of the different phases of an interview: Presentation, initiation of an interview, body of the interview, finalising the interview etc.
- In a group, write on a large piece of paper 4-5 good practices in field work.

Task 2

- Discuss whether there are certain cultural traditions/practices in your country that interviewers should be aware and mindful of during field work.
 - Write down one or two examples.
-

Rule 1 - All research participation must be voluntary (informed consent)

This means that informed consent must be obtained from research participants. A participant has given their informed consent if they have been informed and have understood the research aims; the research method; the research topics; and the potential use of the data. It is also essential that the respondent knows that they can withdraw at any moment. No participant should be persuaded, manipulated or intimidated into giving their consent to participate.

While performing research with children, it might also be necessary to obtain the permission of a parent or guardian. But it is not enough to secure only the consent of an adult; the child must also accept to participate. Researchers must make a point of communicating to the child that they can decide not to answer the questionnaire or any questions within the survey. This is particularly relevant with children as they might feel that they cannot refuse to cooperate with an adult.

It is important to emphasize repeatedly that this rule does not represent a mere formality; in fact, asking participants if they wish to participate or not is an essential component of a voluntary study. You must offer the necessary information and in a language that children will understand.

² Please read carefully the Chapter 3: "Ethical principles and guidelines for tracer studies" of the *Tracer Study – Book 1 : Methodology manual*.

In order for this crucial step NOT to be forgotten, it is suggested that at this juncture, either in small groups or all together, an informed consent paragraph be drafted. Take into account the geographical location (local language) and the median age of the respondents. Together agree and make a commitment to ask for consent each and every time an interview is conducted, whether it is an adult or a child.

Rule 2 - Protect research participants from harm

Researchers are responsible for protecting all research participants from any emotional or physical harm that might result from the study, and to protect their rights and interests. Harm can also arise if the research causes children to remember distressing memories or feelings. Research must stop immediately if it seems to place a respondent at risk.

Rule 3 - Ensure the safety of the research team

Individual researchers should make sure that colleagues, and others on the team know their location at all times. If a particular area is known to be dangerous, the safety of enumerators should take precedence. Think about the safest form of transportation and avoid carrying valuables. Enumerators must carry documentation that establishes their identity as researchers. Where necessary, obtain permission from the local authorities.

Rule 4 - Respect cultural traditions, knowledge and customs

Researchers must always adhere to local codes of dress and conduct. They should learn how to greet, thank and ask questions according to local customs. Following local status rules, such as who speaks first, is paramount when conducting surveys since the respondents' willingness to participate and the quality of their responses depend in great part on the respect afforded to them and their families.

Rule 5 - Minimize the power imbalance

When interviewing children, the power imbalance stems from the adult-child dynamic as well as from the fact that the researcher is to a large extent a stranger in the eyes of the respondent. Minimize this barrier by using words which respondents can understand. Develop with them interviewing approaches that allow for more time to break the ice and familiarize the child with the enumerator's work. For example, sit next to respondents instead of above them, and be open to spending time chatting and interacting with them in order to build trust.

Rule 6 - Avoid raising unrealistic expectations

Researchers must be clear and honest about the research and what will be done with the information gathered. Always keep promises made to children and adults and do not make promises you cannot keep, especially about future action programmes that might benefit them. It is best not to pay participants, since this can raise

expectations and can create jealousies among those that benefited from the intervention and those that did not. Sometimes the offer of refreshments or food is acceptable if respondents have to forego their lunch time. Always agree with the team in what circumstances this compensation in kind might take place.

Rule 7 - Respect privacy

Do not violate a participant's privacy by asking insensitive questions or by probing for information when it is clear that they would prefer not to answer.

Rule 8 - Ensure confidentiality and anonymity

Protect the identity of the respondents by changing their names and, if necessary, the names of villages in the final report. Communicate clearly to the respondents that their identity will be kept confidential, and that it will be impossible for anybody later on to link their responses back to them.

When dealing with children there is one important exception to the rule of confidentiality.

If a researcher comes across a child that is being exploited and/or abused or if the child is at risk of significant harm the researcher has a duty to take steps to protect the child. The researcher would need to receive professional advice on how to proceed. Actions must be dealt with caution, as the involvement of the study team might worsen the situation of the child.

The tracer study team must decide beforehand if and how it will breach confidentiality in the case of finding a notorious case of child abuse or if a child is being harmed by a worst form of child labour.

7. General good practices for field work

In addition to the ethical rules for fieldwork, there are other tips that can help to improve the data collection and the study as a whole. A review of the following points (general points, beginning the interview, during the interview and ending the interview) could help you decide which ones you consider most important and which points need to be discussed further during the training, as some of them could have been mentioned already in the group work presentations.

General points

- The respondent needs to feel that his acquaintance with the interviewer will be pleasant and satisfying. This means that the interviewer must show himself to the respondent as a warm and

understanding individual who is genuinely interested in the respondent (as a person not as a mere provider of answers). Frequently this factor alone determines whether or not the interview will be carried out.

- The respondent needs to see the study as important and worthwhile. It is the task of the interviewer to explain the objectives and goals of the study (in clear, non-academic language) so that the respondent will see the interview as an opportunity to express his views and as a valuable way to spend his time.
- The interviewer should appear at all times neutral and impartial. Therefore, he should never express his personal views on a subject, nor communicate surprise, approval, disapproval or similar reactions through his voice, gestures or facial expressions.
- The interviewer should use neutral language to indicate that she/he is giving his attention to the answers and is interested in them. Brief assenting comments could include: 'yes', 'I see', or 'that is interesting.'
- In order not to create barriers during the interview, enumerators should help respondents overcome their fears and insecurities. In the early stages of the interview, the interviewer must strive to decrease the uneasiness some respondents might feel. Typical obstacles include:
 - Respondent's scepticism about the purpose of the interview.
 - Respondents' feelings that they are inadequate when answering questions or embarrassed by what they think might be difficult questions. (This is particularly the case when dealing with children). If the interviewer feels the respondent is anxious, it is important to stress that there are no right and wrong answers.

Beginning the interview

- Make the respondents feel comfortable by greeting them politely, speaking to them respectfully, introducing yourself, and letting them know the purpose of the interview.
- Ask to be invited in. Make small talk: for example, about a festival that might have taken place in a temple nearby, or the weather.
- Answer any questions about yourself that respondents want to know. The main point is that the respondent begins to have some level of trust in you.
- Assure respondents of anonymity.
- Explain that they were chosen through a random draw.

- Get them to sit down next to you, preferably at the same level as you.

During the interview

- The interview should be carried out in an informal and relaxed manner. Avoid creating the impression that the interview is in any sense a quiz or cross-examination.
- Nothing in the words or manner of the interviewer should show criticism, surprise, approval or disapproval of the respondent's answers.
- Repeat the question when you feel the respondent does not understand the question, when he misinterprets it or when he strays from the subject.

Ending the interview

- Thank the respondent profusely for the time spent and the valuable information provided. Children, especially, need verbal recognition that their time is valuable. Assure them once again of anonymity, and explain the purpose of the interview if requested.
- Be truthful if asked about what benefits the respondent could obtain from the interview. Do not promise anything that you cannot deliver.

General pointers regarding fieldwork with children

- The content and language of the questionnaire should be sensitive to the language, needs, capabilities and feelings of the age group to be interviewed.
- The language of the questionnaire should be kept as simple as possible, and the tone of voice and manner of interviewers should not be patronizing.
- The child or adolescent must be reminded of his right to withhold answers to particular questions.
- Care must be taken to avoid any physical contact with the child/adolescent.
- Research should only be conducted in safe and appropriate environments.
- If a child is recruited in the street and taken into a central (hall test) location, an adult must always be present in the same room throughout the interview.

- It is advisable for research to be carried out in the home of the child/adolescent, where an adult should remain on the premises - though not necessarily in the same room - throughout the interview.

8. The tracer study

You have already reviewed what is understood by a tracer study. It is now important to explain what it will entail for enumerators.

- Tracing involves physically locating (finding) and interviewing former child beneficiaries.
- Finding the children can prove to be difficult, requiring much effort and time. This depends on certain conditions, for example:
 - the amount of time that has elapsed since the project finished;
 - the physical terrain of the site; and/or
 - migration patterns of former beneficiaries in the region.
- Review and become familiar with the 'Where are they now list' (WNL). This list comprises the sample of children you will attempt to trace and interview. It will contain information, such as address, names, village, that will help enumerators trace the children in each site. Show them a copy of a model.

9. Tracer study instruments (questionnaires)

There are three questionnaires:

1. Beneficiary questionnaire
2. Household questionnaire
3. Relative/friend questionnaire

The Beneficiary questionnaire gathers information on what the former beneficiary is currently doing (what activities he/she is engaged in) and what he/she was doing in the past. Through this questionnaire, we primarily recreate the situation at the time before and after the project, and at the current moment (when tracer studies are implemented) which allows us to obtain relevant information that will enable us to explore impacts on the lives of former beneficiaries.

The Household questionnaire (HQ) complements the information provided by the former beneficiary. It gathers information on the impact areas of employment, education, economic well-being, health and attitudes towards child labour. The questionnaire itself enquires on aspects such as changes in the general health and economy of the

family, as well as siblings' activities and household attitudes towards child labour.

The Relative/friend questionnaire is used in instances where the former beneficiary or his/her family no longer lives in the vicinity, but someone who knows details about the child's life (such as a relative or close friend) is found and is willing to be interviewed in place of the former beneficiary. It gathers basic information that can help establish what a former beneficiary is currently doing even though he or she is no longer living in the intervention site. It is important to note that this information will be qualitative and will not be entered into the quantitative database. The information is used mainly to understand whether there have been any migration patterns as concerns the beneficiaries, as well as to evaluate whether and to what degree former child beneficiaries have currently returned to child labour.

Testing the tools

Once the questionnaires have been translated, adapted and customized, the enumerators need to become familiar with the tools. We recommend that you schedule at least two sessions in which the enumerators carry out mock interviews with each other. In the first round, one will take the role of the respondent and the other will be the interviewer; for the second round, changing roles could be a fun practising exercise. Any confusion arising from the wording and instructions which emerges after these practice rounds should be explained and clarified.

10. Conclusion

If you have enough time and resources to plan for a three-day training session, it is a good idea to further study the questionnaires and to review the focus group discussions. The basic information that needs to be passed on to the enumerator team during a tracer study training workshop is outlined above.

11. After the training

Before carrying out the tracer study in the field, it is essential to plan for:

- A pilot test of the instruments (questionnaires) in the field. Each enumerator should try to carry out one pilot interview using the Beneficiary questionnaires and one pilot interview with the Household questionnaire. They should record any difficulties and problems as well as the amount of time it takes to complete the interview. Problems that might surface from a pilot test could include the following:

- Some questions are not easily understood by respondents and need to be modified or re-worded.
- The instructions for the enumerator are confusing or lack sufficient details.
- A strategy meeting with all members of the field team can be instrumental in preparing enumerators for the up-coming fieldwork and in answering last-minute questions and doubts. The strategy meeting should occur after the training but before fieldwork begins. During the training, decide when to hold the strategy meeting. This meeting should focus on four main aspects:
 - Anticipate any possible tracing challenges. For example: geography, roads and public transportation, the community's calendar.
 - Decide on the division of tasks among the field team.
 - Discuss any final modifications or adjustments to the questionnaires after a piloting test of the questionnaires.
 - How to deal with ethical dilemmas (see chapter on ethics in the Manual).

At the end of the training session, it is important to explain that these two activities must occur before the team leaves for the field. Explain what the piloting of the instruments entails and what the strategy meeting should hope to accomplish. With the participants' input and suggestions, schedule a time for each of the two events.

Annex I

Tentative agenda for a tracer study training of enumerators

Time	Topic/Task	Objective	Facilitator	People involved	Needs
FIRST DAY					
9:00-9:30	Introduction and welcome	Get to know the participants. Offer an overview of what the training will be about. Ask what they expect from the training. Review: 1) The programme for the day; 2) The objectives of the training.			
9:30-10:30	What is a tracer study?	Familiarize the participants with tracer studies. How are tracer studies different from other type of evaluation studies? For what purpose are they useful?			
10:30-12:00	What is child labour?	Offer an overview of the main theoretical aspects related to child labour.			
12:00-12:30	Main elements of the child labour project	Learn what the main objectives and strategies of the project, as well as the type of activities and services that were offered.			
12:30-13:30 Lunch					
13:30-14:00	Types of child labour in the region of the tracer study	Familiarize the team with the type of child labour prevalent in the study area. Discuss how the children and adults refer to this work.	Academic expert, IPEC staff?		
14:00-15:30	Good practices in fieldwork	Review the basic ethical guidelines when carrying out fieldwork. Discuss other good practices in fieldwork.			
15:30-16:00	Good practices in fieldwork with children	Review the basic ethical guidelines when carrying out research with children and adolescents.			
16:00-17:30	Introduction to the tracer study	The team understands specifically what the implementation of tracer studies will entail.			

SECOND DAY			
9:00-9:30	Welcome and review of yesterday's session	Clarify any lingering questions and review the schedule for the day.	
9:30-10:30	Introduction to tracer study instruments	Participants learn about the questionnaires. In particular the time periods will be reviewed.	
10:30-12:00	Practice run of Beneficiary questionnaires	Participants do mock interviews of each other using the BQ.	
12:30-1:00	Questions and discussion	Discuss any questions that surfaced after practising mock interviews with the BQ.	
13:00-14:00 Lunch			
14:30-16:00	Practice run of Household questionnaire	Participants conduct mock interviews of each other using the HQ and FQ.	
16:00-16:30	Questions and discussion	Discuss any questions that surfaced after practising mock interviews with the HQ and FQ.	
16:30-17:00	Wrap up session	Final questions are discussed. Next steps are outlined by the team leader. Discussions on piloting of the questionnaires (when, whom will be involved?)	