

Story telling

Summary

This tool has different names in different contexts. In Vanuatu, it is understood as ‘storian’. In this process, stories and discussion (‘storian’) are used to help the child communicate answers to research questions. In oral-tradition communities, this is a common way of sharing information and documenting information over time.

There is no one right way to do this process. Allowing the child to tell stories is just a prompt to help the child talk or communicate about the questions.

Equipment required

A sign language interpreter where needed.

Process

1. Explain that you are going to ask some questions and that the child might like to use stories (‘storian’) to help answer them.
2. The researcher starts by telling a story about their experience around the research issue.
3. The child and researcher talk about this story and the researcher encourages the child to ask questions about the story.
4. The researcher invites the child to tell them a story about their own experiences about the research question.
5. The researcher can use prompting questions to expand the story to collect other information.
6. Take notes of everything the child tells you. Depending on the comfort levels of the child, notes may be taken at the time or immediately after the researcher completes talking with the child.
7. Be positive about the child’s stories and what they are telling you.

Considerations

1. Children may feel embarrassed about talking in front of adults. Researchers should therefore limit those watching this activity in order to make the child feel more comfortable.
2. May be more suitable for children with high-level cognitive skills and those who are older.

Practice example

During our time with Michel we soon came to realise that he is sociable and enjoys chatting and hearing what others have to say. Story-telling worked well with Michel especially as we had good rapport and he felt comfortable with us. He is a seven year old boy with a cognitive and hearing impairment who lives with his mother and grandmother in Vanuatu. Sharing stories created an ease in asking the questions that Michel thought about at length before responding.