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# *THE ACTION RESEARCH MANUAL FOR RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY AND PEACE BUILDING*

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*“There is no route to peace, peace is the route”*

*Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*

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# Introduction

**WELCOME TO THE PRECEDE NETWORK - the Partnership for Reconciliation through Early Childhood Education and Development in Europe** which is developed through the similar project - funded by the European Union - Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) Civil Society Facility (CSF). The views expressed in this material do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Commission.

Our goal is to support civil society influence over reconciliation process and cohesion through education in early years in the Balkan Region and Europe through the development of a sustainable Balkan Region Network of civil society organisations focused on young children, peace building and through promotion of acceptance of others and respect for diversity. In brief, we are working together on building and strengthening the capacities of civil society organizations to assist peace building and reconciliation through working with young children in the Western Balkans and Europe.

PRECEDE invites all public and private institutions, organizations, NGOs, expert individuals, policy-makers, children and their families, service providers, practitioners, and communities to participate in this exciting initiative.

## **What do we mean by peace building and reconciliation?**

All the activities that could help build an inclusive society where children and adults respect diversity, especially those which build capacity to learn empathy and forget prejudice to strengthen gender equality and promote equal inclusion of people of different faiths, capacities, ethnic, social or any other backgrounds.

Peace building is understood as the process of resolving conflict and establishing sustainable peace. However, the definition of peace building, used in this programme focuses beyond violence prevention to maximize social justice, equality and harmony (DIFID, 2010).

## **What do we mean by early childhood education and development?**

The term early childhood education and development refers to the development, care and education of young children and includes both the child and the context in which children live and grow - growth, nutrition, communication, play, health, safety and security, care, socialisation, participation and informal and formal learning.

## **Who do we mean by young children?**

Children aged from birth to eight years of age. It is a crucial phase of growth and development because experiences during early childhood can influence outcomes across the entire course of an individual's life (Philips, 2012). For all children, early childhood provides an important window of opportunity to prepare the foundation for life-long learning and participation, while preventing potential delays in development and disabilities.

**The purpose of this manual is to support stakeholders, especially civil society organisations and other participants in early childhood education and development, in using action research during project implementation, classroom learning and advocacy for respect for diversity and peace building. The manual is accompanied with an animation, which shows the process of planning and implementing an action research in the field of respect for diversity and peace building in educational and civil society settings.**

# 1. General introduction to principles of research

In this chapter, you will become more familiar with the definition, purpose and steps of research in the field of respect for diversity and peace building through early childhood education and development.

In the broadest sense of the word, the definition of research includes any gathering of data, information and facts for the advancement of knowledge (Shuttleworth, 2008). Among a lot of different definitions of research, we chose the one that was offered by Archer (1995). He defines research in a more specific manner, as a systematic enquiry whose goal is communicable knowledge. It means that each research should:

- be pursued according to some specific plan
- seek to find answers to some defined questions
- be based on faithfully described objects, and
- result in some new knowledge and findings which are explained according to an appropriate theoretical framework.

We also can say that research is the process of systematic observation. In any case, research produces knowledge, and knowledge is power (Sarantakas, 2013).

The purpose of researching peace building and respect for diversity is to collect evidence-based knowledge directed to understanding and defining the key issues that should improve the equity of different policies, especially those concerning the education and development of young children.

The research should help to develop a kind of policies and practice by which (adapted from Vandebroek, 2012):

- every child and parent feels that he/she is welcome and belong to the wider society
- every child and parent is encouraged to develop the diverse aspects of his/her identity

- everyone can learn from each other while crossing cultural and other boundaries.

Equity does not mean providing the same experiences for every child. Instead, it requires that the whole society recognise sometimes unseen barriers to learning and power imbalances, and actively addresses them. That is why it is essential to ensure that research in the field of respect for diversity and peace building in early childhood education and development are based on the following principles:

### **1) TO PROMOTE HIGH ETHICAL STANDARDS**

This means that each piece of research should have:

- **a social value** (research is directed to the improvement of young children's and society's well-being)
- **a scientific validity** (research will produce useful results in the field of respect for diversity and peace building)
- **well-chosen participants** (research is based on fair subject selection and try to involve all different kinds of groups in vulnerable situations, as well as relevant stakeholders)
- **a well-chosen methodology** (research is sensitive in the connection of the research goals and methods of data collection and analysis)
- **a developed procedure** which will ensure that participants are treated with respect, well informed about all aspects and phases of the research and that the research results will be well disseminated.

### **2) TO ENABLE PARTICIPATION OF DIFFERENT SUBJECTS**

As Helen Kara (2015) pointed out, if the aim of the research is to empower disempowered social groups, communities or individuals, which is the case with research into respect for diversity and peace building. It is useful to enable full involvement of participants at every stage of the research process. It is particularly useful in researching sensitive issues, as prejudices, discriminatory practice, institutionalization of unequal opportunities etc.

### **3) TO KEEP OBJECTIVITY IN EVERY STAGE OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS**

According to Sarantakas (2013, p. 108), "Objectivity is the research principle that requires that all personal values and views of the researcher must be kept out of the research process. The purpose of this is to minimize personal prejudice and bias, and to guarantee that social reality will be presented as it is, and not as the researcher interprets it, imagines it or wants it to be." It is possible to reach that principle by:

- conceptualizing the research topic in an objective manner
- choosing the appropriate methodology in a process free of personal preferences, as well as by

- respecting and following professional standards in every stage of the research process.

The ethic of respect should (EECERA, 2015):

- operate for all research participants from pre-birth throughout the course of life
- ensure all the research participants are seen as subjects developing in the context of their families and communities, which are culturally situated as part of wider societies
- try to ensure that all individuals and communities are treated in a way that is free from prejudice regardless of cultural identity
- operate within a code that actively promotes democratic values and contributes to social justice and equity within communities and societies
- be respectful of plurality at the level of paradigms, theories, disciplines and methodologies, arriving at a prismatic process of research that illuminates the complexity of human beings and gives credence to diverse voices, answers to different realities and promotes equality in our understanding of participants in the research.

In designing pieces of research on respect for diversity and peace building, different obstacles and challenges could easily overwhelm researchers. Because of that, it is extremely important to choose the right topic of the research, which will be clear enough, interesting and workable. It means that the research topic should be connected with the interest of the researcher, as well as with available resources of each organisation who plans to conduct research. In this process, the researcher should use available literature and experience of other researchers, having in mind that a research should offer something new to the field, but it cannot change the world. Furthermore, each research should be based on the relevant theoretical perspective and on the right methodology. It involves searching for answers of the question: "What kind of design and methodology can answer research topic and questions best?". If the research is directed to understanding, exploration or generalising, the best choice is qualitative methodology, while questions which include comparison, correlation or relation need a quantitative design. Once the topic and methodology are in place, each researcher or organisation should establish a research team and ensure the availability of research participants. Since this manual is going to explain all these research phases more deeply, it is now important to highlight that researchers have to acknowledge obstacles and challenges without being paralyzed by their possibilities. As deMarrais & Lapan (2014, p. 30) stressed: "We must get on with our work."

It is important because good research in the field of respect for diversity and peace building is the base for:

- professional development of people who work with young children

- changes in policies, strategies and legislations directed to respect for diversity and peace building in early childhood education and care
- enhanced personal and collective awareness about the importance of peace building and respect for diversity in early childhood
- improved practice with young children at all levels (from kindergarten staff to decision makers)
- collection of new evidence-based knowledge.

## 2. Introduction to action research

In this chapter, you will become more familiar with the definition, purpose and steps of participatory research, also known as participatory action research that are useful in the process of researching respect for diversity and peace building issues.

In research, participation can be as limited as simply answering a questionnaire or being part of an interview, or as extensive as full, active involvement in all phases of the research process. In participatory action research, the researcher becomes a facilitator in helping those being studied to also become actively engaged in the quest for information and ideas to guide future efforts (deMarrais & Lapan, 2014). In that sense, action research includes the full involvement of participants at every stage of the research process. We also can say that participation research is an “action-oriented research activity in which ordinary people address common needs arising in their daily lives, and, in the process, generate knowledge.” (Park, 2001, p. 81).

Kurt Lewin (1939, according to Gustavsen, 2001) is the pioneer of action research who associated the idea of such research with the idea of doing experiments that are being conducted in the field, rather than in a laboratory. Since then, the methods of action research are developed and used in many social sciences, including in research directed to the early childhood education and development.

Many people think that action research is the synonym for reflective practice (especially in the field of education), even though it is not the case because **each action research should involve a deliberate and planned attempt to solve a particular problem or set of problems using a coherent, systematic and rigorous methodology**, while such strategic action is not integral to reflective practice. Reflective practice can lead to strategic action, but this is not inevitable (McMachon, 1999).

Self reflection is the central idea in action research. As McNiff (2010, p. 8) mentioned, in “empirical research researchers do research on other people. In action research, researchers do research on themselves. Empirical researchers enquire into other people’s lives. Action researchers enquire into their own. Action research is an enquiry conducted by the self into

the self. You, a practitioner, think about your own life and work, and this involves you asking yourself why you do the things that you do, and why you are the way that you are.”

It is also a main difference between action and evaluation research. While research seeks answers to questions in order to generate new knowledge and/or understanding, evaluation supports innovative and adaptive development by bringing data to inform and guide decision-making in complex, dynamic environments, such as educational or political settings (Rodriguez, 2012). It leads to the conclusion that evaluation research are focused on evaluating as follows: how well predetermined goals or objectives (for example: increasing quality of educational inclusion of Roma children in regular classes) have been met or on evaluating program quality (for example: Respect for diversity and peace building in early childhood education) and similar questions, directed to the evaluation of some processes, actions or programmes. Saying by other words, **traditional research** is where researchers aim to describe, interpret and explain events but do not make any judgements about them, **evaluative research** is where researchers aim to describe, interpret and explain events so that they or others will hopefully be able to make evaluative judgements about them, while **action research** is where researchers seek to describe, interpret and explain events whilst seeking to change them for the better.

The idea that action research can make a major contribution to improving practice stems from the assumption that “if the social sciences want to help construct the future and not only interpret the past, we can hardly avoid embarking on a course which will, in important respects, differ from the descriptive-analytic tradition.” (Gustavsen, 2001, p. 24).

Action research creates not just a change in current practices, but also new knowledge about those practices. Research aims to encourage, enable and inspire people in the early childhood field (educators, teachers, civil society organisations, preschool and school institutions, parents and other stakeholders) to use action research to create professional and social changes in the field of respecting diversity and peace building. **Action research for social change involves collaboration with marginalized or oppressed groups in order to bring to the forefront their voices and to create greater justice and fairness for them.**

The point of action research is that participants and researchers have some benefit of the research process and their results. If we research peace building and respect for diversity, it means that the main aim of the action research is to empower disempowered groups, communities and individuals, as well as to improve our research-based knowledge about our educational or other practice that refer to these topics. We can also say that the aim of the action research in the field of peace building and respect for diversity is to conduct “an educational process through which social groups produce action-oriented knowledge about their reality, clarify and articulate their norms and values, and reach a consensus about further action.” (deMaris & Lapan, 2014, p. 252). In that process, we should be aware and understand how each dimension of research is related to all involved groups or individuals.

The action research should help to develop such kinds of policies and practice where:

- local and national stakeholders, politicians, educators, teachers, civil society organisations, preschool and school institutions, parents and children work together to challenge institutional forms of prejudice and discrimination
- they enable early childhood professionals to build their capacity to listen to and engage children in decision making, to enact children's rights and to increase their commitment to issues of social justice and equity in early childhood.

### **How Can we Achieve Change?**

Firstly, we should carefully analyse and prepare each stage of the research, including:

- choosing to change
- planning to change
- creating the change and
- sharing the lessons (review).

**Generally, it is recommended to involve colleagues and other participants (such as children, parents, teachers ...), in all stages of the research.**

### **CHOOSING TO CHANGE**

In the first stage – **choosing to change**, researchers should think about different dimensions of peace building and respect for diversity and their impact on early childhood development, by answering such questions as:

- What happens in our community (group of children, kindergarten, families, institutions, civil society organisations, governmental policies ...) in respect to peace building and respect for diversity?
- What kind of barriers, bottlenecks and enabling factors are we faced with in the present situation? How do they reflect on early childhood development? What are the reasons for our concern?

Some strategies which could help in developing a research question are (ATA, 2000):

- **keep a journal about different aspects of peace building and respect for diversity from your professional practice** (for at least one week, preferably two):
  - write the journal at the end of each day
  - at the end of the week, read your journal, looking for significant ideas and themes
  - brainstorm a list of things that you would like to investigate
  - review the list
  - write a first draft of your question
  - write a paragraph of supporting rationale for your question and
  - reflect on your question

- **sentence stems** - focus on your organisation, community, classroom or role in your workplace and complete some sentence stems about peace building and respect for diversity:
  - One thing I would like to change is...
  - My practice could be improved by...
  - The young children I work with need...
  - I would like to know...
  - I wonder why...
  - The most important thing about respect for diversity is...
  - The most important thing about peace building is ...
  - I need to learn how to...
- **affinity charting**
  - brainstorm issues of concern or interests relating to peace building and respect for diversity in early childhood education and care
  - write down each item on a separate note
  - group your items using affinity charting
  - place the most diverse statements on the table in a row
  - place items that have a common theme or focus in each column
  - review and reflect on the placement
  - check if some items fit better in a different column
  - develop a draft research question that reflects the key issue in each column
  - choose the question that most interests you and is possible to study.

At that point of the research it is important to know that action research begins with values. It means that each self reflective practitioner who intends to conduct action research should be aware of what drives their life and work, to be clear about what he/she is doing and why she/he is doing it (McNiff, 2010). It is a process of clarifying the kinds of values and commitments which could have a strong impact on action research.

However, reflection is a very personal internalised procedure which can be painful to involve oneself with. That is why it is important that researchers in the field of peace building and respect for diversity (as preschool teachers, representatives of NGOs etc.) know that reflection will empower them in the developing of their own praxis and that values will be integrated in each phase of action research (from choosing the research's topic until the interpretation of research's results).

## PLANNING FOR CHANGE

In the next stage – **planning for change**, researchers should think about the following questions:

- What do we want to improve?
- How can we improve it? How can we start the action?
- Who can help us and how?
- Do we already have some experience about the topic? What do we already know? What should we investigate in more detail?
- What are the possible challenges or obstacles in that process?

It is important to find one small thing that is a problem and can be the focus of our action, in our community, rather than to try to make too big and unrealistic changes.

In that stage of the action it could be helpful to know that the process of reflection on the research topic and plan can take a lot of time, and that it sometimes can be difficult to take the action and research in the same time. However, each practitioner is able to reflect on their own practice and put effort in planning their action research, having in mind that is important to be well motivated, directed to collaboration with different stakeholders, as well as to be clear and concentrated on the research questions.

For example, we might want to improve the confidence of some poor children in our neighbourhood or kindergarten. Having that in mind, we should answer all abovementioned questions. The answers should be the following:

- we want to improve the confidence of some poor children in our neighbourhood
- we can improve it by organising some trainings or workshops in the neighbourhood where those children live
- we can start the action by developing the working plan, which will include people who will conduct trainings or workshops, activities which will be implemented, but also the strategy of invitation and motivation of children who should participate in those activities
- we need help of local authorities who should offer us space for the activities, as well as some financial resources
- we already have some experience in the organisation of similar activities and we already know which kind of activities lead to the improvement of the confidence of children
- however, we should investigate in more detail the connection between workshops/trainings and social inclusion of poor children in kindergarten settings
- the possible challenges or obstacles in that process are the lack of our knowledge about action research, lack of time, lack of interest of local authorities for the project.

Points to consider in developing a good action research question in the process of planning for change are (ATA, 2000):

1. Studying this question will enhance professional practice in the field of peace building and respect for diversity.
2. This question will be of value to the researcher's community, organisation, children, parents, families, kindergarten and/or colleagues.
3. The climate of my organisation and/or society will be supportive of this question.
4. The question focuses on an important issue in the field of peace building and respect for diversity.
5. The question can be studied in the available time.
6. The literature or other resources that will provide background information is available and accessible.
7. The data needed to answer this question is accessible.
8. The question is of personal interest to the members of the research team.

Once we have the appropriate answers on those questions, we are ready to go further.

## CREATING THE CHANGE

The third stage – **creating the change**, has two important elements. These are:

- **collecting and analysing data** (is not too complicated because there are a lot of different sources which can be used in action research, which will be discussed further in the manual)
- **implementing the action**, according to the decisions made in earlier stages.

The evidence to be gathered will be determined by the focus of the evaluation. Normally, the gathering will involve a range of approaches and include both quantitative and qualitative data. **Quantitative data** such as trends in attendance rates or in enrolments can help to paint the bigger picture; attitudinal questionnaires can also help and the analysis of the results can provide a useful basis for further enquiry. **Qualitative data**, however, will provide a richer base of inquiry – such data is well grounded, in close proximity to the specific situation and embedded in its context. It also tends to provide a more holistic picture as well as a more complex one. The data is collected over a sustained time and moves beyond a snapshot of how things are. That helps to answer why and how things are as they are. Because of all these reasons, qualitative data can help us to be more confident in our understanding of what is or has been going on.

Collecting data is just one of the steps of action research. **Data analysis**, comparison of different data and data from different sources and interpretation within a relevant context (preschool environment, social context, programme documents, previous experience, our intentions), are all a necessary part of appropriate interpretation and understanding of the meaning of data obtained. In other words, data analysis sheds light on the quality of the

practice itself. Most of the data collected in action research project is qualitative, which means that the researcher must use his or her intellect to analyse and interpret the collected information. The intellectual process of qualitative analysis includes critical reading, finding connections between data, forming judgments and determining answers to complex research problems (ATA, 2000).

Only when we clarify the characteristics of the existing practice, on one hand, and when we know exactly what we want to improve in our practice, on the other, we create space to work towards the practice/change to which we aspire.

For example, in the field of respect for diversity and peace building, we should decide to work more intensively and harder with young children in the direction of:

- non-violent conflict resolution
- encouraging young children's assertive behaviour
- developing their communication and other social skills
- increasing their knowledge about identity, culture and other kinds of diversity
- .....

Once the decision has been made, we are ready to develop an outline to guide our activities and describe various steps in our action research process, or to develop **a detailed plan of the action we intend to take or the change we intend to make**. The most important questions which should be answered in each action plan are:

- Who are our target groups?
- Who is going to do what, and by when?
- What are the proposed activities?
- How do we intend to implement these activities?

The answers on these questions will depend on the nature of the research question and the context of the study. If one is planning on actions that utilize steps of a longer process, it is recommended to answer the questions for each step separately.

For instance, if the action research is directed to the study of the impact of two different toolkits for respect for diversity in a kindergarten setting, it isn't needed to spend much time reviewing the research that supported the development of programs. The primary interest is which program will give the best results in a specific kindergarten. However, if the goal is to increase awareness of the importance of peace building in some community, the action plan will need to include an extensive review of different strategies to identify the strategies most likely to have a positive impact on awareness of different stakeholders. Engaging in an extensive literature review and seeking out expert information will help to ensure that the interventions which are chosen to implement will have a positive impact. The purpose of the action plan is to describe the actions (in research terms, this is the intervention) planned to take to address the desired change.

Anyhow, it is important to try to work out whether the plans are practicable and to consider how others might react to their implementation. Any required advice needs to be sought early. It is better to get help before starting to gather data, rather than trying to get help in the end in order to interpret information from poorly designed instruments.

It is helpful to keep in mind that reality can be messy and unpredictable. Things will rarely go precisely as expected while carrying out any plans. There should be no fear of making minor deviations from the agreed plan in the light of experience and feedback. However, any deviations from the plan should be recorded, as well as the reasons for making them. Furthermore, it is in this phase that new insights are likely to arise. These can either be incorporated into the research or recorded for future research.

### **SHARING THE LESSONS (REVIEW)**

**Sharing the lessons (review)**, is the stage of action research which usually leads to the next cycle of action. While data is the information we collect during the process of action, the evidence arises as the result of reviewing and evaluating the data. We analyse the collected data according to the question(s) we have asked in our action plan. In this stage, we make connections between our actions and changes in behaviour of our target group and try to find some principles or regularities that can confirm our expectations and be formulated as research results. It could be a theory, some kind of practice, or policy. However, the justification of our evidence needs to be properly reported or shared with others in the community.

For example, we could ask ourselves:

- How much did we know about the importance of peace building and respect for diversity before some training, education or action?
- In what ways have some actions helped us to understand better the importance of peace building and respect for diversity in the education and development of young children?
- In what ways do we think we should improve our practice?
- Which components of the action were particularly useful?
- Which differences can we recognise in our daily practice, according to the topic (peace building and respect for diversity in education and development of young children)?
- ....

**Review and evaluation** is something which should be done at the end of each particular action cycle. It is a crucial step in the process, since this is where the researchers review what has been done, determine its effectiveness, and make decisions about possible

revisions for future implementations of the action research (which, in all likelihood, will comprise future action research cycles).

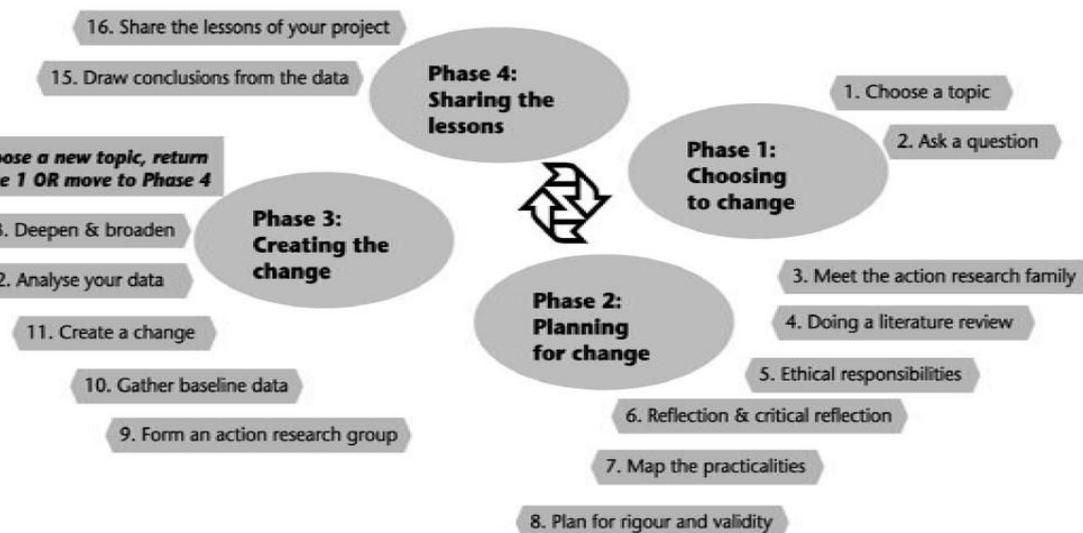
Usual chapters of a report about action research are:

- **Abstract or Executive summary** - the abstract consists of a single, concise paragraph describing the purpose, procedure and results of your research. Use no more than 300 words. Don't write the abstract until you are nearly finished writing, and then draft and redraft until it reads as clearly as possible.
- **Introduction/Background** - the goal of this chapter is to combine information about the setting of the action research and the story behind the research into a smooth narrative that gets the reader engaged in your work's context. The main research question is also introduced here. This section is usually about three to five pages long. The reader should have a good idea what the paper is about before finishing the first page.
- **Literature Review** - the goal of this chapter is to introduce the reader to the major issues and/or themes learned from the literature surrounding the research questions. This section is generally about three to five pages long.
- **Action Research Design** (Subjects, Procedures, Data Collection) - this is a brief, concise few pages section focusing your reader on the essential elements of your research, where answers on following questions are given: *who* is involved in the research, *what* the main question is and what was implemented or analysed, *where* the project took place (description of setting), *when* and *how* the data collection occurred *how* data collection was completed and *limitations* of the study.
- **Analysis of the Data** - the goal of this chapter is to inform your reader about the research results. You can describe the interventions, analysis or strategies you implemented, the methods you used to analyse, interpret, and deconstruct the data and main messages of the research. This chapter should be three to five pages long.
- **Evaluation** - the goal of this chapter is to illustrate what you have learned as related to your research question. You can use your data to tell the story of your research and support your conclusions and emerging theories. This section is the heart and soul of your action research report. The chapter is rich in voice, style, and data, aiming to support major assertions or ideas of the research.
- **Appendix** (Literature, Measuring instruments, Other materials).

Even though the stages of the action research are presented here in a linear manner, it should be known that it is not a linear process, but a spiral and sometimes never-ending process.



## The Action Research Cycle



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MacNaughton, G., Hughes, P. (2009) Doing action research in early childhood studies, Open University Press

### 3. Research tools in action research

In this chapter, you will become more familiar with different tools that you can choose to reach the goals of your own action research in the field of respect for diversity and peace building.

As you already know, action research is not a sole activity of writing what you think to be true; it is about collecting data, the involvement of all stakeholders and coming to some conclusions based on the data. That is why data collection is something that separates action

research from other types of academic writing a paper about a subject (for example, about respecting diversity and peace building in the early childhood development).

It is very important that you choose what data you will collect, and when, how, and how often you will collect it. This decision should be closely connected with the main goal of your action research, having in mind that the research should be simple and focused. It means that, trying to collect too many kinds of data, could result with confusion and burnout of the researchers.

An action researcher generally collects two forms of data: 'raw data' about events in the research project ('what happened') PLUS critical reflections by individuals or groups in the research project on

- the raw data and
- the learning and changes that they are experiencing in the project.

If we decided to improve the confidence of some poor children in our kindergarten, we can determine how many children are in our target group, in what activities or manner do they exhibit low self-confidence, and what has the preschool teacher tried to improve the levels of confidence and then together with the preschool teacher we can develop some activities specifically to encourage the improvement of their confidence. During this period of action, we collect more information about how the children's behaviour changes, remains the same or gets worse and their reaction to the workshops. Involving the children's parents in the activities both in the kindergarten and at home can also be seen as part of the activities as oparents are important stakeholders in action research. When the action is finished (for example, after 10 workshops) we can decide to go to the next stage of the research review and evaluation of the action.

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## **TYPES OF DATA GATHERING**

Depending on your research goal, you can use different kind of data or make a combination of different methods. Examples of data are:

- desk review or creative use of literature
- observation
- conferences, interviews and focus groups
- children's products or performances
- case study
- attitude and rating scales or questionnaires and
- vignettes.

**Desk review or creative use of literature** is a creative endeavour involving the three pillars of research work: reading, thinking and writing. The aim is to outline what is already known

about a topic or subject and where your proposed research fits into that. You can analyse (Kara, 2015):

- academic literature
- policy documents
- project documents
- web pages
- journals and newspapers
- non-academic literature such as novels
- court transcripts
- documented testimonial evidence
- leaflets, tweets and other short tracks ...

For the most part of the time, it is not possible to search and review all existing documentation, but you can feel free to choose some of them, using some method of sampling all documentation. You can choose:

- some types of documents
- some random sample of documentation or you can decide
- to analyse a few most important documents for your research topic.

In any case, it is important to make a decision about the time period that is of interest for your research (for example, last 5 years or months). Anyhow, your reading should be careful, interpretative and supported by note taking.

**Observation** of some kind of practice is a complex research method. As Baker (2006, p. 171) mentioned, “the value of observation is that it permits researchers to study people in their native environment in order to understand ‘things’ from their perspective. Observation requires the researcher to spend considerable time in the field with the possibility of adopting various roles in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the people being studied.” For example, the preschool teachers could observe how the children experienced activities directed to peace building and respect for diversity, how they understand these concepts, what is the impact of some interventions on the behaviour of a specific child, inclusion of different children in vulnerable situations in peer groups etc. Parents can also participate in action research, by observing the behaviour of their child in a home setting, as well as ways in which their children cope with problem situations etc.

When designing a research study and determining whether to use observation as a data collection method, you have to consider (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002):

- the types of questions guiding the research
- the site under research
- what opportunities are available at the site for observation

- the representatives of the participants of the population at that site, and
- the strategies to be used to record and analyse the data.

The most important factor in determining what a researcher should observe is the researcher's purpose for conducting the research in the first place. Having that in mind, it is necessary that notes accompany the process of observing. The notes can be done during and after the observation, as well as in a structured and unstructured way (using check-lists or questionnaires, or just by writing what the observer sees).

**Checklists** enable researchers to focus on a limited number of specific behaviours. There are two basic types of checklists (Jackson, 2008):

- a statistic checklist – can be used for collecting data on characteristics that do not change while the observation are being made (gender, race, age, number of participants ...) and
- an action checklist – can be used to record whether specific behaviours are present or absent during the observational time period (cooperation, solidarity ...).

Observation data also can be gathered using video. This can be particularly useful for a full picture of the matter under research because the resulting data is richer and can be analysed much more thoroughly than observational data gathered by hand.

**Conferences, interviews and focus groups** are methods of collecting data which involve direct conversation with different people.

In a *conference*, one or more people talk about their work, experience or some other aspects of the field of the research. This method can be useful when CSOs would like to research some topics connected with peace building and respect for diversity, especially to gain insight in some aspects of work which other organisations and people have already done in the topic (for example: what is the impact of policy and legislation about peace building, respect for diversity, early and preschool education, which projects took the place and what are their results etc.)

In conferences, lists of planned questions are not used. In an *interview*, respondents respond to planned questions, which are best conducted on an individual basis. *Focus groups* typically bring together 7 to 12 people for an average of an hour to an hour and a half to discuss the topic of research. The participants are selected on the basis of common characteristics in order to obtain their perceptions, opinions, and attitudes. The moderator may take a more or less structured approach to posing questions to the group (Kleiber, 2014).

The essence of an experience emerges from conferences, interviews or focus groups data as participants describe the particular aspects of the experience as they lived it. "Researchers seek to 'discover' the essence of the experience through an interpretation of the rich, textual data provided by participants describing the particular experience being studied." (deMarrais & Lapan, 2014:57).

**Children's products or performances** can be a very useful tool in the process of researching the respect for diversity and peace building. 'Draw and write' is a tried-and-tested technique of gathering data that enables children to express their views and opinions in their own terms. According to Kara (2015, p. 89), "to begin with, children are given a stimulus for ideas, which may be a drama performance, video recording or simple discussion. Then they are asked to draw images that show what they think and feel about specific issue. For example, they could be asked to draw a picture showing some kind of social exclusion, peer-bullying etc. When they have finished their drawing, they are asked to write a few words (or, if they are not able to do this themselves, to tell an adult what to write) to describe the picture. The resulting data can be analysed using qualitative and quantitative techniques."

**Case study** is a particularly useful research technique for the close examination of people, topics, issues, or programmes. These studies might explore a vulnerable child's experience in kindergarten, peer groups, some local community, or impact of some policies and programmes on the quality of life of some social groups. Case studies seek to answer focused questions by producing in-depth descriptions and interpretations of the research topic. In some instances, case studies are used to provide information for decision making or to discover causal links in settings where cause-and-effect relationships are complicated and not readily known, such as particular government policy for Roma minorities or disabled children (Hays, 2014).

**Attitude and rating scales or questionnaires** are particularly appropriate where the research problem calls for a descriptive design. They can be used to gather information about large numbers of respondents or small groups. These collecting data methods are useful when researcher want to measure the impact of some action, programme, intervention or curriculum. Usually, a researcher makes a pre-test and post-test of group of children who will participate in some innovation, and does the same with some comparable group of children who is involved in some regular programme. Children are asked to respond on some statements, by indicating their level of agreement or disagreement. They could also answer some questions that are important for the research topic. The good example of attitude and rating scales or questionnaires are questionnaires used in the process of developing a regional toolkit as well as country specific programmatic toolkits of the reconciliation, peace building and conflict prevention in early childhood care and education in the frame of the PRECEDE project. Baseline survey of the attitudes, opinions and remarks of children, their parents and preschool teachers was conducted prior to and after the piloting of the Regional toolkit "Respect for diversity and peace building" in six project partners' countries. Results of the survey were used in the process of preparation of the national toolkits, which are based on the needs and experience of each country in the field of early childhood education for respect for diversity and peace building.

However, designing a questionnaire or scale is a surprisingly complex procedure that involves many considerations. That is why frequently researchers use existing questionnaires

and scales, rather than designing their own instruments. CSOs and preschool teachers are invited to develop questionnaires in collaboration with researchers in the field of respect for diversity and peace building. They could also try to develop their own questionnaire, by taking a step-by-step approach to questionnaire development, to collect data that will answer unique research questions. In this process, the researchers should:

- identify the goal of a questionnaire (for example: to determine the level of respect for diversity in the parents of children from a kindergarten group or to determine the meaning of peace building in the group of people who will participate in some specific training)
- choose the question type or types (dichotomus - yes/no - questions, open-ended questions, multiple choice questions etc.)
- develop questions for questionnaire which should be clear, concise and directly useful to the research question<sup>1</sup>.

A **vignette** is a *thick description* revealing the qualities of a tangible moment perceived by the researcher (Schratz et al., 2013). Vignettes could be used as an attitudinal survey research, when a researcher would like to have an impact on the attitudes of some group of people with his/her action. A vignette is a sort of illustration in words. In action research, a vignette question describes an event, happening, a set of circumstances, or any other scenario that is connected with the research's goals and topic (Brown et al., 1998). The participants are asked to rank the importance of the situation which is described in the vignette. They could also answer closed or open questions. Their purpose is to selectively portray aspects of reality to which participants are asked to respond.

Like any research method, vignettes clearly address defined research questions, and their form and application which will be directed by the research questions posed, the topics under research, and the kinds of participant groups involved.

Vignettes may be used for three main purposes in action research (Renold, 2002):

- to allow actions in context to be explored
- to clarify people's judgements
- to provide a less personal and therefore less threatening way of exploring sensitive topics.

The simplicity of scenarios can help to identify, clarify, and disentangle the complexities of respect for diversity and peace building in early childhood development.

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<sup>1</sup>More information about this approach is available on different web sites, such as:

<http://www.wikihow.com/Develop-a-Questionnaire-for-Research>,  
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC420179/>, <https://www.westernu.edu/bin/research/IRB/Step-By-Step-Guide-to-Developing-Effective-Questionnaires.pdf> etc.

For example, the vignette can be (adapted from Low Deiner, 2013, p. 15):

“I am a single father of a son with severe cerebral palsy and a traumatic brain injury, which occurred during the birthing process. My wife passed away shortly after Jon was born, and I had to make decisions about Jon’s life on my own. Jon is now getting ready to enter kindergarten. I am concerned about his educational and health needs. I was told that Jon’s educational group will have two preschool teachers and one assistant. However, I worry that they do not have the expertise needed to change him, give his medication, and feed him through his stomach tube. Jon has seizures occasionally that require proper care.

Will an educational group that includes many children without developmental disabilities help him learn the basics? Jon is functioning at three years below his age. Will he be given the proper help to catch up? I don’t want Jon to simply be seated in a corner and not be made part of the group. Who should I contact about my concerns? Are my worries even valid? Sometimes I feel I just don’t know how I can ensure that Jon receives the best education that he will benefit from.”

You can prepare such or similar vignettes and ask preschool teachers to:

- write a letter to the father
- detect bottlenecks and enabling factors of Jon’s inclusion in local kindergarten
- explain ways in which they will provide all necessary care to Jon
- express their own views of the best education for Jon
- etc.

You can also prepare some questionnaire in which preschool teachers will express the level of their agreement with some statements (1 – I strongly disagree ..... 5 – I strongly agree).

The statements in this questionnaire could be, for example:

- My kindergarten is not ready for the inclusion of children like Jon.
- It would be impossible to provide adequate care for Jon.
- Children like Jon need education in a specialised educational institution.
- I am not able to educate children like Jon.
- All kindergartens are obliged to ensure the circumstances which will adequately respond to Jon’s needs.
- I would enjoy welcoming Jon to my educational group.
- Typically developed children would suffer if Jon would be part of their group.
- I am not trained to educate children with developmental disabilities.
- In my kindergarten, the support which Jon needs is not available.

- If Jon would be in my educational group, I would be not able to educate the rest of the children.
- We do not have the assistive technology which Jon needs.
- Jon has the right to inclusion, as every child, and I will do my best to welcome and educate him.

**Generally, it is important to point out that each researcher or organisation should use methods that the researchers will feel comfortable with, and that will enable them to achieve the desired research's objective.**

## **DATA ANALYSING AND INTERPRETING**

Data analysis and interpretation is a very personal process with few rules and procedures. According to Mills (2003), data analysis is the attempt to fully and accurately summarise and represent the data that has been collected, while data interpretation is the answer on the questions “to what?” or “what does data mean?”. In order to begin the data analysis process, it is first needed to reduce the data into a format that can be easily analysed. There are three general types of qualitative data analysis, which are frequently used in action research. These are (Bloget, 2010):

- thematic data analysis (involves the analysis of themes that emerge from the data that has been collected)
- content analysis (the data collected by researchers can be coded in a predetermined and systemic way, chosen by the researcher)
- discourse (conversational) analysis (looks at patterns of speech, such as how people talk about a particular subject, what metaphors they use etc.)

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They are several ways of analysing collected data. Some of them are<sup>2</sup>:

- Triangulate - study the research question from at least three separate pieces of data and three points of view (for example, those three pieces of data might be the preschool teacher observations in the research topic, recorded comments by a parent of children and examples of children's drawings), having in mind that the purpose of the analysis is to determine if the research question still fits the data that is emerging from the study.
- Categorize, sort and code - set up charts, columns, outlines, and ways of counting occurrences to find ways that data develops into categories and explain them (the preschool teacher or NGO representative can make up different categories that fits the concrete situation/s or use categories developed by another researcher).

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<sup>2</sup> Adapted from <https://gse.gmu.edu/research/tr/tr-process/tr-analysis>

- Order – means to decide on a way to order the data findings such as chronologically, by importance and by frequency (how often a conflict among children occurs, for example).
- Speculate - try out different hunches about what the data means, without sticking rigidly to an assumption or hypothesis that was originally held (it can be made by guessing and then seeing if those thoughts are supported by the data).
- Restate the question - rewrite the question many times, changing it when necessary to fit what is important from the data that has been collected (sometimes the researcher will want to make the question more global, sometimes the question may become more tightly focused).
- Talk and validate - talk with others about the research, by explaining the data interpretations to others and checking if they can see the same things (consider their different interpretations and use them to clarify, broaden and otherwise validate the findings).

One possible way of analysing data collected by interviews, as ATA (2000, p. 27) proposes, is:

- “Conduct three interviews using broad questions based on your research questions. Take as many notes as possible during these interviews.
- Reflect on these interviews to identify repetitive themes. Draft new interview questions related to these themes.
- Conduct the remaining interviews. Use selective note-taking. After a group of interviews, reflect on the process. How effective is your interview facilitation? Are the themes you have identified still valid?
- When all the interviews are complete, analyse the data in broad categories or groups. Color code comments in each category using highlighter pens.
- Regroup the data and analyse it using the themes.
- Use the trends from your category and theme analysis as a basis for reflection. What are your conclusions based on your interpretation of the data?”

Linking the terms *action* and *research*, in the process of peace building and respect for diversity in early childhood education and care, highlights the essential features of the data analysing and interpretation, having in mind that action research is a process whose flexibility allows learning and responsiveness of researchers. It means that data analysis and interpretation include critical analysis of the information, its interpretation, and the methods used. Action research is not a problem-solving method per se in that it does not try to find out what is wrong, but as Ferrance (2000, p. 2) points out, it is “a quest for knowledge about how to improve”.

## 4. Possibilities of using action research in civil society settings

There is no doubt that *civil society* is a complex concept. Although the term is widely used, there is no commonly agreed definition. According to Paffenholz and Spurk (2006, p. 2-3),

- „Civil society is the sector of voluntary action within institutional forms that are distinct from those of the state, family and market, keeping in mind that in practice the boundaries between these sectors are often complex and blurred.
- It consists of a large and diverse set of voluntary organizations, often competing with each other and oriented to specific interests.
- It comprises non-state actors and associations that are not purely driven by private or economic interests, are autonomously organized, and interact in the public sphere.
- Civil society is independent from the state, but it is oriented toward and interacts closely with the state and the political sphere.”

Anyhow, civil societies are very important in the process of initiation and sustainability of peace building, because peace building includes a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundation for sustainable peace and development (*United Nations*, 2010). Peacebuilding strategies must be coherent and tailored to the specific needs of the country concerned, based on national ownership, and should comprise a carefully prioritized, sequenced, and relatively narrow set of activities aimed at achieving the above objectives. There are six functions of the civil society sector in peace building. These are (Cox, 2009): protection, monitoring, advocacy, socialization, social cohesion and facilitation. Those functions cannot be reached, if NGOs are not able to prove with some evidence that their actions, policies, strategies or programmes are effective.

That is why action research has become an increasingly popular way of researching national and international development issues among many CSOs.

The general question of action research that could be conducted in different CSOs in the field of respect for diversity and peace building is: How to improve social justice? The main goals of action research, which are directed to find the answer of this question, are (Court, 2006):

- **to inspire:** generate support for an issue or action; raise new ideas or question old ones; create new ways of framing an issue or ‘policy narratives’

- **to inform:** represent the views of others; share expertise and experience; put forward new approaches
- **to improve:** add, correct or change policy issues; hold policymakers accountable; evaluate and improve own activities, particularly regarding service provision; learn from each other.

All of this is much more easily said than done. Reality is, of course, much more complex. However, even simple research design could be useful in communicating the idea of respect for diversity and peace building in early childhood development. Without any evidence, the CSOs are faced with the risk of ignorance or misunderstanding the value of their ideas and missions by the policy-makers.

Following the UNESCO’s Programme of Action Culture of Peace and Non-Violence (2013), possible topics for action research in CSOs could be:

- positive values, attitudes and behaviours for everyday peace
- a programme of action for a culture of peace and non-violence: charting the way towards everyday peace
- a culture of peace and sustainable development
- the main areas of action: the “soft power” of education, culture, sciences, communication and information
  - improvement of the access to formal and non-formal education, with an emphasis on quality education for all
  - greater opportunities for research, networking and public debates illustrating exchanges and transfers between cultures
  - contribution of the media and ICTs to change the perception of different cultures and religions
  - development of an interactive educational programme to stop violence in schools
  - promote education for a culture of peace

### AN EXAMPLE OF THE ACTION RESEARCH IN CSO

<b>CHOOSING TO CHANGE</b>	To identify different dimensions of peace building and respect for diversity and their impact on early childhood development	Existing equity issues regarding access to preschool education of Roma children
<b>PLANNING TO CHANGE</b>	To define objectives of the research and to decide about the way in which you are going to reach them	To inform stakeholders on present disparities in access to preschool education based on data/information from local community with regards to Roma children

<b>CREATING THE CHANGE</b>	Collecting data	<p>Desk review (statistical data and policy documents)</p> <p>Questionnaire for measuring the level of information of stakeholders (decision makers, principals, preschool teachers, public ...) about accessibility of preschool education for Roma children – prior to and after the action</p>
	Implementing the action	<p>To prepare evidence about accessibility of preschool education for children living in poverty (key messages from statistical data and policy documents, as well as the main results obtained by questionnaire)</p> <p>To organise round tables with different stakeholders (for example, three of them) where the data will be presented and discussed)</p>
<b>SHARING THE LESSONS</b>	Review and evaluation of the data	<p>To analyse the data obtained by questionnaire prior to and after the round tables and by desk review according to the following questions:</p> <p>Do relevant institutions as duty bearers recognise the importance of preschool education and its potential for positive impact on Roma children’s development and future lives?</p> <p>Which policy obstacles exist in regards to the accessibility of preschool education for Roma children?</p> <p>What was the impact of the action?</p> <p>What can you do differently next time?</p> <p>Which kind of action can you provide to improve the accessibility of preschool education for Roma children?</p> <p>To communicate the results of action research with media and local community.</p>

**DO NOT FORGET THAT IN EACH PHASE OF THE RESEARCH YOU SHOULD INVOLVE YOUR COLLEAGUES AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS, USERS ETC.**

## 5. Possibilities of using action research in educational setting

Children who are perceived as 'different' because of their impairment, ethnic background, language, poverty, etc. are often excluded from or marginalised in society and local communities. Their inclusion means changing the attitudes and practices of individuals, organisations and associations so that they can fully and equally participate in and contribute to the life of their community and culture. An inclusive society is one in which difference is respected and valued, and where discrimination and prejudice is actively combated in policies and practices (UNESCO, 2001). This refers to kindergartens, preschool centres of learning and educational systems that are open to ALL children. For this to happen, preschool teachers, kindergartens, parents, children and systems may need to change so that they can better accommodate the diversity of needs that children have and that they are included in all aspects of kindergarten life. It also means a process of identifying any barriers within and around the kindergarten that hinder learning, and reducing or removing these barriers.

„Research shows that the combination of structural inequalities, exclusion and intolerance compromises the future life-chances of many young people from traditionally disadvantaged backgrounds. Educational disadvantage and subsequent failure to fully participate in society is exacerbated by a number of factors at the structural level (e.g., segregation policies or lack of effective monitoring) and particular institutional level (e.g., ineffective teaching approaches and insufficient preparedness of school staff to deal with diversity, lack of support structures or unfavourable learning environments, etc.)” (Van Driel et al., 2016, 15). If we aim to develop a more inclusive educational setting, concerted efforts need to be taken. . The entire society should participate in these efforts, including decision makers, duty bearers, kindergartens, teachers, children and their parents.

The topics of respect for diversity and peace building are essential components of the inclusive educational setting. The education of young children, which will provide opportunities for developing inclusive attitudes and behaviours, has a strong impact on the improvement of the inclusivity level of whole society. Preschool teachers educate a new generation of parents and children who will be also parents (one day), which can help in the process of the development of a culture of peace in the community, in the long term.

Action research can be used as a tool for improving the educational practice which is directed in peace building and respect for diversity. In an educational setting, many topics can be analysed and improved by using action research. Some of them are:

- the quality of preschool teachers practice directed to respecting diversity and peace building
- the ways of creating inclusive preschool environments
- the impact of some education, workshops and programmes on children's, parents' or preschool teachers' attitudes about respect for diversity and peace building
- the impact of some pedagogical and didactical approaches and strategies on the behaviour of children
- the preschool teachers' development in responding to children's diversity
- the ways that help in the creation of supportive peer relationships
- the evaluation of own practice on responding to diversity
- the ways to involve parents in the curriculum planning and implementing

While using action research in reflective practice in respecting diversity and peace building, the following steps could help:

1. Take one episode or episodes related to responding to diversity that happened today in your preschool group.
  - a. Describe who, what, where, when this happened.
  - b. How were children reacting to the episode?
  - c. What do you recognise as the problem that should be solved?
  - d. How and which kind of action research could help you?
  - e. Then make your plan and design of your research.
2. Think about your activities that are directed towards respect for diversity and peace building.
  - a. Choose one of them and try to answer how far were children engaged?
  - b. Was the content of the lesson appealing to all the children (or to the child you had particularly targeted to engage in that activity)?
  - c. Which children was it most successful with? Why? How?
  - d. Was it related to the children's lives?
  - e. Were there children who were not interested or engaged? Why?

The action research could help you to find the answer to the question "What could be more relevant to their needs and strengths?"

You can also use action research to investigate the ways in which children’s or parent’s voices can be heard in the decision making process, as well as in the curriculum planning activities.

Anyhow, the main idea is that your research is something that you will do enthusiastically, that will help you in your own practice and that will improve the child’s development.

**AN EXAMPLE OF THE ACTION RESEARCH IN KINDERGARTEN**

<b>CHOOSING TO CHANGE</b>	To identify different dimensions of peace building and respect for diversity and their impact to early childhood development	Children with developmental disabilities do not participate in the curriculum on an equal basis as typically developed children
<b>PLANNING TO CHANGE</b>	To define objectives of the research and to decide about the way in which you are going to reach them	To develop a universal design of the curriculum, that all children can participate in on an equal basis
<b>CREATING THE CHANGE</b>	Collecting data	Observation of children’s behaviour in different curricular activities (using check-lists), with special intention to the behaviour of the child with developmental disabilities
	Implementing the action	To develop and to implement an universal design of curriculum activities, with different stimulus for the child with developmental disabilities (for example: direct instructions, different motivational strategies for participation, offering games which are based on child’s strengths and interest ...)  To make evidence about the child’s response to the curriculum (for example, during 3 months), with special attention to the connection between different kinds of activities and the child’s behaviour

<b>SHARING THE LESSONS</b>	Review and analyse the data	<p>To analyse data obtained by observation, according to the following questions:</p> <p>What was the impact of the action?</p> <p>Which kind of activities were most successful?</p> <p>In which kind of activities has the child participated?</p> <p>What can you do differently next time?</p> <p>To implement lessons learned in the educational practice.</p>
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**DO NOT FORGET THAT IN EACH PHASE OF THE RESEARCH YOU SHOULD INVOLVE YOUR COLLEAGUES AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS, USERS ETC.**

## 6. Tips for researches of peace building and respect for diversity

1. The purpose of researching peace building and respect for diversity is to collect evidence-based knowledge directed to understanding and defining the key issues that should improve the equity of different policies, especially those concerning the education and development of young children. The main elements of research are: specific plan, defined questions, described objects and obtained results.
2. A useful research method in the field of peace building and respect for diversity is action research. Action research can be defined as an active, participatory form of research carried out in the setting its findings are meant to be utilized. It is cyclical in that it involves thinking about results and changing methods to improve upon those results. In the field of peace building and respect for diversity, the aim of action

research is directed to the empowerment of disempowered groups, communities and individuals and to improvement of research-based knowledge about early childhood education and care practice in that topic.

3. Action research is a valuable form of inquiry for educators because it is PRACTICAL (practical improvements are the focus), PARTICIPATIVE (preschool teachers, children, parents and other stakeholders can all be involved in meaningful ways), EMPOWERING (all participants can contribute to and benefit from the process), INTERPRETATIVE (meaning it is constructed using participants' multiple realities in the situation), TENTATIVE (there are not always right or wrong answers; rather, there are possible solutions based on multiple view points) and CRITICAL (participants look critically at specific problems and act as self-critical change agents).
4. Main phases of action research are: choosing to change, planning to change, creating the change and sharing the lessons. All these phases are spiral and closely connected. It means that each action research involves recognizing a problem, planning how to address it, acting on the plans, observing what happens, and then reflecting on those observations. Saying by other words, action research involves: identifying questions to guide the research, collecting information to answer the questions, analysing the information that has been collected and sharing results with others.
5. Researchers are invited to use some of the following research tools: desk review or creative use of literature, observation, conferences, interviews and focus groups, children's products or performances, case study, attitude and rating scales or questionnaires and vignettes. Choice of the tools should be connected with the research's questions, as well as with the motivation, knowledge and skills of the researcher. However, it is important to have in mind that in action research two processes are at work: systematic action directed to peace building and respect for diversity and learning of researchers, especially by their reflections on actions.
6. Practitioners who engage in action research inevitably find it to be an empowering experience. Action research has this positive effect for many reasons. Obviously, the most important is that action research is always relevant to the participants. Relevance is guaranteed because the focus of each research project is determined by the researchers, who are also the primary consumers of the findings.

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