



Participatory Ethnography for  
assessing Child Friendly School  
experiences in a village in India  
within the FINDIgATE Project, 2017  
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This study assesses Child Friendly School (CFS) experiences of Indian children of aged 11-16 years. The study took place within the framework of the FINDigATE project, the main target of which was to study the wellbeing of children in India and Finland and to exchange good practices to improve children's lives. During the last decades after the tokenistic outcome produced by developmental psychology, there has been a growing body of academic literature promoting the advantages of adopting a participatory approach on research based on the child. This study reflects on the concept of participation, the ethical considerations of children's participation in research and the importance to keep a methodological openness or flexibility in research designs involving young people.

The goal of the project was to develop participative methods in research with children. Three pilots were carried out to access the narratives of Child Friendly School experiences of students aged 11-16 years through a specific participatory methodology. The methods, based on children's voices, reflected on a future program for implementing the Child Friendly School (CFS) UNICEF model in the community. The objectives of the study were to determine which of the three participative methodologies effectively facilitated children's voice about their CFS experiences. Based on children's point of view, the goal was to review the gap between the ideal features of the CFS principles and the reality of available resources in the context of the research and to draw recommendations about implementing the complete set of CFS standards in the future.

The author adopted an ethnographic approach and implemented a semi-structured interview aided by three participative methods (mapping the school, photo-ethnography and Lego Play). The results were analysed through the Program Theory-driven Evaluation and the guidelines of feminist ethical research. The participants (25 children in total) reported being victims of physical or verbal punishment. From the total of children, 19 said that they only spoke about the physical punishments with their friends. Several of them gave evidence of a lack of safety in the infrastructure of the school. The girls said that they wait until the recess to visit the toilet at their home. From the total of children, 23 said that the person(s) they trust the most at the school were their friends or a friend and few of them mentioned trusting some of the teachers. Of the children, 21 said that the playing ground or playing with their peers was the aspect they liked the most from their school. In addition, they mentioned that they enjoy spending time in the computer room.

The most effective participative method within this cultural context was the Lego Play, which allowed children to be more spontaneous, produced more diverse narratives and aided them to display a very cooperative behaviour with their peers.

**Keywords:** Participatory methodologies, Flexible research design, Child Friendly School experiences.

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## 1 Introduction

The link between Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and physical and mental health has become a subject of research in the last two decades, giving more visibility to the importance of overcoming child abuse around the globe (World Health Organization 2006, 1). There is evidence that ACEs can transform the brain of children, having long lasting consequences in the physical, cognitive, emotional and social development of the victim (World Health Organization 2006, 8; Jackson 2016, 28, 38). There is a strong connection of ACEs with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), depression, attention deficit disorder (ADD) and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder ADHD, and several other mental health conditions (Shapiro 2018, 337; Bourgeois, Lecomte & Daigneault 2018, 123). Within the different range of ACEs, part of the physical abuse towards infants is imposed as a form of punishment, widely accepted by the significant adults in care of children, endorsed by beliefs, traditions, cultural and social norms, and in some cases by law as a mechanism of discipline. (World Health Organization 2006, 11-12.)

India is home to the largest number of children in the world, which is equivalent to 20% of the global children's population, i.e. 440 million children. Although in India there are not enough studies evaluating the predominance of child abuse, several of them fall short due to lack of standardization of the research methods. There is an imperative need in the country for an in-depth knowledge about the state of child protection, which would adequately apprise policy makers and develop good practices at every level in the society. (Therayi, Kumar, Singh & Kar 2017, 357.)

The rationale to assess Child Friendly School (CFS) experiences in India came from the interest of the author, based on his experience working several years in the sector of development cooperation within different NGOs on topics related to child protection and wellbeing. Likewise, under the master's degree studies in Laurea University, he became part of the FINDigATE project, the main goal of which was to study Finnish and Indian wellbeing in children through education. Hence, this project became an excellent platform to study the protective environment at school within a village in Odisha, India based on children's experiences.

Additionally, the author has an interest in participatory methodologies and the way children partake in research or studies related to their wellbeing, lived experiences and services. There has been a growing interest in the last decades within the social sciences to adopt several participatory methods aiming towards a more equal role of children in research, through a "collaborative and non-hierarchical approach", to enable their voices at every phase of the study. Notwithstanding, there is a concern that participatory methodologies can still perpetuate the existing power imbalances within a specific cultural context, and that instead of chal-

lenging those hierarchies that oppresses children, even after the adoption of well-intended participatory methods, oftentimes external forces beyond the researcher's will can jeopardise the process. (Gallagher 2008, 137-138.)

This thesis will reflect on the findings of three participatory pilots aiming to explore child-friendly school experiences in children between the ages of 11-16, which took place within the FINDigATE project, under UNICEF's Model for Child Friendly School (CFS). The methodological analysis will adopt the Program Theory-driven Evaluation (Donaldson 2007) and guidelines of feminist ethical research (Brooke 2010).

## 2 Background of the project

The experiences of children have long been studied by using conventional ethnographic methods. In the last twenty years, qualitative research regarding children's lives has experienced a significant change of paradigm, leaning towards a more participatory approach in which young people make substantial contributions to research processes; starting from the design, data collection, analysis, evaluation and dissemination of the findings. (Schepers, Dreesen & Zaman 2017, 47; Horgan 2017, 245.) New studies of childhood highlight the perspective of children's rights and capabilities as a research partner. This prospect entails the notion that the child is not seen only as a passive subject, but as a competent social actor (Qvortrup 2012, 243).

If the rights for the participation of children are promoted, it is logical that the child is entitled to participate in studies about their lives. Usually, early childhood research data has mainly been gathered from parents who have acted as mediators of children's experiences and views (Tisdall & Punch 2012, 257). While nowadays there is a less tokenistic style in research involving children, however, it is still common to find children's roles conceived more as end-users than partners in research (Schepers et al. 2017, 48; Jacquez, Vaughn & Wagne 2012, 177). In other words, children are considered as beings whose knowledge acquisition is still maturing; in the same way, adult researchers are in the pursuit of answers and evidence; therefore, they are equally ignorant. Several academics have argued that the issue at hand is not about the ability of children to participate in research, but about the fact that the research design stands on power imbalance. (Gallacher & Gallagher 2008, 511; Schepers et al. 2017, 48; Van 2013, 38; Acharya & Mohan 2013, 234.)

In spite of the positive evidence of involving children in research, being an ethical responsibility to do so, it is a challenging endeavour which requires the designing of suitable methods. In this way, researchers can overcome the typical power imbalance, proceeding without obliterating the original voice of children (their subjectivity) and through which they can overcome the emergent challenges in involving young people in the process. (Horgan 2017, 248; Porter et al. 2010, 216.)

Participatory Design (PD) or collaborative development or co-design has been gaining more extensive space within research (Keinonen, Vaajakallio & Honkonen 2013,16; Schepers et al. 2017,48); it is characterized by the involvement of the primary stakeholders in the design process to anticipate the outcome (Keinonen et al. 2013,11).

It is common to find the adoption of ethnography methods and participatory methodologies in qualitative research, but not every ethnographic methodology meets the criteria of real participation, nor does every collaborative method follow the evidence-based rigor expected from a study. Furthermore, not every methodology has been designed for creating a feeling of empowerment or agency in the participants. (Gallacher et al. 2008, 506-508.)

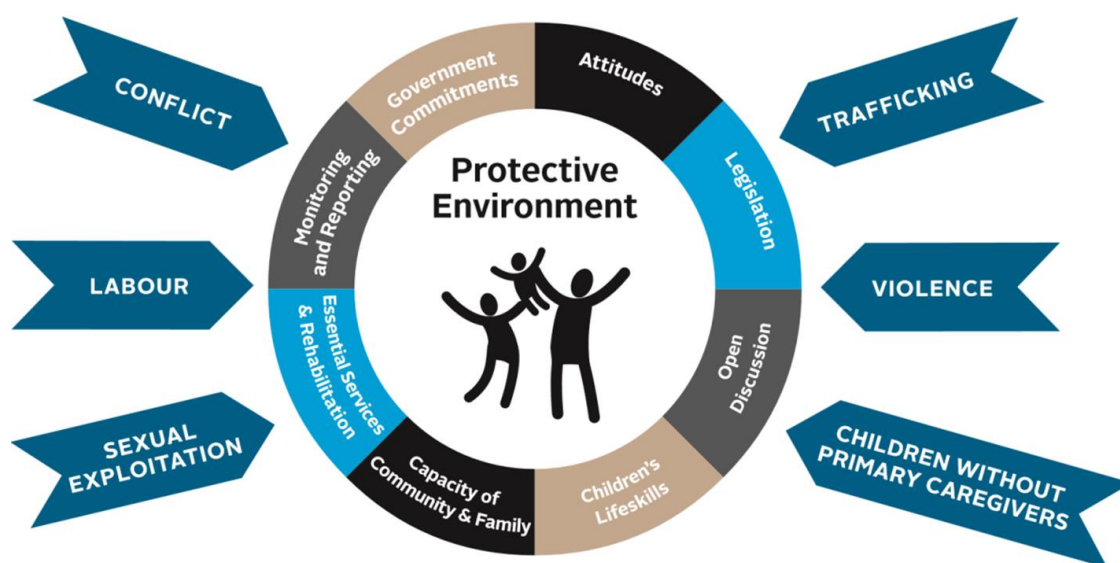
## 2.1 FINDIgATE Project

The purpose of the FINDIgATE -project is to co-create a joint course between Higher Education Institute (HEIs) in India and Finland, to study how children's educational systems operate in India and Finland, and how they improve wellbeing. The course aimed to: 1) Study the systems that are related to wellbeing and education in both countries. 2) To collect best practices in Finnish and Indian pre-school and primary school systems including its impact on wellbeing. 3) Prepare models from good practices and those models will be piloted during students' thesis process in India and Finland. FINDIgATE considers wellbeing to refer to the physical, mental, personal, cultural and social development of a child, which translates to a meaningful life with other human beings; and the structural model of children's wellbeing, consisting of the physical, mental, social and material circumstances. The theory of child wellbeing links with the ecological theory, for which the structure of wellbeing is categorized in micro-, meso-, exo- and macrosystem. The ecological theory gives us the possibility to compare factors between individuals, groups, and nationalities. (Marjanen & Juvonen 2016, 1.)

## 2.2 CFS Model

UNICEF has developed a framework for rights-based, child-friendly educational systems, and schools that are characterized as "inclusive, healthy and protective for all children, effective with children, and involved with families and communities - and children." Within this framework, a child-friendly school ensures that every child and environment is physically safe, emotionally secure and psychologically enabling. A CFS is a gender-sensitive space, free from violence and abuse, and secures the health and well-being of the students. (UNICEF 2009, 32.)

According to UNICEF's Protective Environment Framework (Figure 1) for protecting children from abuse, there should be a synergy of different actors and sectors summarized by eight key elements. In the event of the absence of one of them, children are more exposed to the infringement of their rights. (Child Protection Basics 2012, 4.)



*Source:* Enhanced Protection of Children Affected by AIDS. A Companion Paper to The Framework for the Protection, Care and Support of Orphans and Vulnerable Children Living in a World with HIV and AIDS. New York: The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), March 2007.

Figure 1: Protecting Environment Framework UNICEF 2007 (Child Protection Basics 2012, 4)

This thesis, based on the children's point of view, will focus on the following three elements of the protective ring: 1) Attitudes, traditions, customs, or practices which facilitate wellbeing or abuse; 2) The capacity of adults in customary contact with children (such as teachers, caregivers and other vital stakeholders of the community) to ensure child protection, and 3) Children's life skills, knowledge, and participation, providing them with the capacity to protect their rights and overcome any risk. (Child Protection Basics 2012, 4.)

### 2.3 The importance of research design in participatory research with children

The research design constitutes the first stage in arranging and planning the research course after the research idea and research hypothesis have been comprehensively defined to obtain the most accurate results possible (Toledo-Pereyra 2012, 279). Customarily, research design has been considered paramount to attaining first-rate research data. As Toledo-Pereyra (2012, 279) simply described: "From the experimental question to the research hypothesis and data collection variables, we can begin to consider the optimal research design. Details on the selection of the research design are considered within and very much in relation to the knowledge of the researcher and the support of his research group." However, the research design under this traditional perspective revolves around the experience and power in the

hands of adult researchers; it is precisely at this initial stage when the analysis of the most suitable methodologies, which will enable genuine participation of children, must be carefully considered (Waller & Bitou 2011, 12).

The origins of Participatory Design (PD) took place in the Scandinavian countries around the 1970s when executive management teams at companies decided to democratize the decision-making process and introduce the launching of new technology in the production chain, in the hope that “tacit knowledge” of workers could be a resource for design (Ehn 2008, 95). Hence, collaborative designing emerged, characterized by iterative frameworks, a constant dialogue and assessment of possible choices, opportunities, and prototypes, which are conceived in association with the stakeholders. Eventually, the PD approach shifted from the object-design perspective to other areas related to wellbeing such as health, social services, education, and qualitative research, among others. (Vaajakallio & Mattelmäki 2013, 57.)

Taking, for instance, Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR), which is a line of research in which communities and scholars are considered as equals partners, caring that each one of the participants contributes with their experience to the research development. Contrary to conventional research- in which academics usually elaborate an axiom based on theoretical frameworks and their professional expertise and get access to the communities to enlist individuals belonging to the target groups of the study to apply the chosen methodology- CBPR believes in the capacity of communities’ members in shaping and engaging in each phase of the research process. There has been a growing interest during the last years in adopting CBPR for engaging infants and youth, giving them the opportunity to be part of research and changes that affect their wellbeing. (Jacquez et al. 2012, 176, 179.) This type of research placing “children as social actors” is the outcome of the influence that the new sociology of childhood has played, in which infants do not appear as defenceless and incapable (Christensen & Prout 2002, 479).

These features of the new sociology of childhood are very much in line with the holistic approach towards child wellbeing, which opens a window for the subjectivity of children’s contribution to research. In a thorough analysis of the wellbeing models, which are widely implemented and promoted by four well-known international agencies, it was found that the inclusion of subjective data is still wanting. Marjanen and her colleagues added that “as a result, indicators are still predominantly focused on a child’s needs and rights, over that of his/her will and desire” (Marjanen, Ornellas & Mäntynen 2017, 645).

Many authors openly expose their doubts about how achievable it is to get genuine participation of infants and young people without the adults’ input in a research process. This ambiguity is even stronger concerning the involvement of small children. Most likely, this is due to the influence of the dominant developmental approach of childhood theoretically based on

the biological process of growth (Prout & James 1997, 10), such as in Piaget's theory which claims that children do not develop conceptual thinking until the end of middle childhood (Jacquez et al. 2012, 177). This dominant stand, which favours the "objective" approach in research, tends to consider children's subjective experience as untrustworthy and very complicated to replicate (Uusiautti & Määttä 2013, 15). Current research has shed light on the topic, providing evidence that children can demonstrate abstract thinking much earlier. Depending on the context and conditions of the research design, they have been shown to be very trustworthy partners (Jacquez et al. 2012, 177). The question in hand is not about their capacity to engage in research but rather the statement of "what children can do under what conditions" (Zimmerman 2005, 1), and here relies on the importance of adequate participatory design.

#### 2.4 Ethnography in research

Ethnographic knowledge is vast and sometimes scattered; widely used in different disciplines and for different purposes. Several descriptions about ethnography favour the fact that it is the study of information obtained straight from the source about social and/or cultural experiences within a specific context. Ethnographers usually are immersed in the communities, using different arrays of data collection through a systematic and inductive approach of analysis. (Case, Todd & Kral 2014, 61.)

Within some fields in social science, ethnography has been frowned upon due to its explanatory or storytelling nature, and sometimes for its lack of methodological strictness, possible biases in data collection, and interpretation (Tickle 2017, 67). In the book "Fictions of Feminist Ethnography" (1994, 1) Kamala Visweswaran explicitly outlines the difference between a fable and the true purpose of ethnography: "Ethnography set out to build a believable world, but (unlike fiction) one the reader will accept as factual".

Regardless of its descriptive nature, ethnography applied through research methods such as systematic reflexion, triangulation, participants' corroboration, among others, can help to validate the dossier collected in the research, avoiding that the research team will decontextualize or inaccurately interpret the data. (Tickle 2017, 67.)

#### 2.5 Participatory tools in research with children

Participatory methodologies in the field of research with children aim to recognize the possible imbalances of power, covered previously by recognizing children as partners, and by giving a place of importance to children's know-how in the research (Clark 2010, 116).

In the book "The Meaning Makers Learning to Talk and Talking to Learn" of Gordon Wells (2009), based on research, which he directed, follows the development of a representative sample of children from their first words to the end of their primary schooling. His findings

contain many examples of their experience of language in use, both spoken and written, recorded in naturally occurring settings in their homes and classrooms. This shows the active role that children play in their development as they both make sense of the world around them and master the linguistic means for communicating about it. The author compares the term of children as co-researchers to meaning-maker. (Wells 2009, 3.)

Recognizing children as meaning-makers will help us to develop an attentiveness to the power of epistemology, as we might silence some voices during the process of research. Brooke and True (2010) have defined epistemology as “a system of thought that we use to distinguish fact from belief.” They thoroughly explain about the importance of acknowledging that there are different voices, ways to perceive the world and its meanings: “Recognizing that there are many epistemological perspectives each opening and foreclosing certain understandings of what it means to know and contribute to shared knowledge enhances any scholarship.” (Ackerly & True 2010, 25.)

The importance to give status to children’s voices have given origin to a series of participatory methods known as the Mosaic Approach, adopted for a study called “Listening to young children” with children under five-years-old (Clark 2010, 117). Within the mosaic approach, there are visual and verbal methods such as mapping activities, child-led tours, role-play exercises and child-led photography. Some academics in recent years have expanded the mosaic including techniques such as collage, model-making, story-telling, print journalism and electronic publishing, radio production drama, puppetry, music, and dance. (Gallacher et al. 2008, 501) Nevertheless, there is a fundamental question in need of an answer: What is the level of real participation of children within the implementation of participatory methodologies? Bearing in mind that proponent of children’s participation in research view children as equal researchers is of paramount importance, it also brings forth the question regarding children’s competencies and interest. Are children willing and able to make decisions about matters such as participatory research? (Munford & Sanders 2004, 472.)

Hammersley (2015, 579) argues that “in practice, in participatory research with children adult researchers almost always remain in control to a considerable extent: they simply operate under the pretence that the children are in charge.” Notwithstanding, he is not against implementing participatory tools with children; on the contrary, this author emphatically points out the importance of an adequate and age sensitive *modus operandi* in research with young people, and about choosing the most effective method to not perpetuate the power and control of adult researchers towards children. (Palaiologou 2017, 309.)

### 2.5.1 The tension of participation in research with children

Participation as a methodological pursuit means allowing children and young people to be the owners and manufactures of their data and have a say in every phase of research. This ap-

proach looks for a research process which is emancipatory and a learning experience for all the parties (Saxena 2011, 33).

Roger Hart (1992, 8) describes participation as an allegorical ladder, starting at the base of the staircase with “1- manipulation, 2- decoration, 3- tokenism”; climbing towards higher degrees in which participation is allowed and desirable. At the upper parts of the ladder children are “4- being assigned but informed, 5- consulted and informed, 6- adult initiated shared decisions with children, 7- child initiated and directed, 8- child initiated and shared decisions with adults”. The bottom of the ladder are the situations where adults leading research or programs concerning children’s lives should be avoided, to overcome the hierarchy of power which manipulates children, for instance in some projects of urban infrastructure (for the construction of playgrounds or parks) children have been consulted and their information used by adults without giving feedback or credits to the participants. Likewise, children are many times the most photographed and less consulted stakeholders. For example, pictures of children are widely used by NGOs to decorate their magazines, reports or presentations, many times with quotes that did not come from the children. (Hart 1992, 9.) According to the Oxford Dictionary, the meaning of tokenism is “The practice of making only a perfunctory or symbolic effort to do a particular thing, especially by recruiting a small number of people from underrepresented groups in order to give the appearance of equality”. A good example of tokenism is the controversial campaign of PLAN-Finland featuring a 12-year old pregnant girl to represent the issue of early pregnancy, which affects the lives of many young girls in the global south (Wall & Taylerson 2018).

However, although the “ladder of participation” and the repertoire of participatory methodologies are important to keep in mind during research with children, other academics strongly question the frequent rhetoric of “participation” used by researchers. In practice, presents evident contradictions in the research process (Hart 1992, 9; Gallacher et al. 2008, 503). James (2007) elaborates on the matter with a very illustrative example: “Although children’s words quoted in research reports may be ‘authentic’ - in that they are an accurate record of what children have said - it remains the case that the words and phrases have been chosen by the researcher and have been inserted into the text to illustrate an argument or underline a point of view. The point of view being presented is, therefore, the view of the author, not that of the child.” (James 2007, 264-265.)

Hence, it is very crucial to understand the importance of adopting a permanent self-reflective standpoint while researching with young people; continuously “revisiting our epistemological choices, boundaries, and relationships throughout the research process” (Ackerly et al. 2010, 37). Within the epistemology of the word “participation” lies a very subtle structure of power which is worth being aware of. To partake or participate means that children are engaged in action. But what happens to those children who decide to be physically present in the differ-

ent spaces of the research but are passive or adopt a silent attitude? Should they be overlooked for choosing not to engage, or not conforming to the design, or for appearing not to follow the instructions? Hence, it is essential to understand that a definite set of methods should not be incorporated in our research design, at least not without leaving adequate space for reflection and changes (Lambert, Glacken & McCarron 2013, 612).

It is important to note that we might need different methodologies to approach only one question of our research agenda in order to, on the one hand, delve into what Malaguzzi defines as the “hundred languages of children” (Edwards, Gandini & Foreman 1998), and on the other hand, into the “silences, absences, differences and oppressions” of our target group (Ackerly et al. 2010, 7).

The notion that children need adults to feel empowered, which also reinforces the use of participatory tools applied by adults, conflicts with the robust body of studies demonstrating that children are autonomous, possessing the capacity to fashion and (re)arrange their environments without researchers’ intervention. Therefore, we need to change the paradigm towards the adoption of participatory methodologies, taking into consideration that they are not intrinsically good or bad, but what matters most is the methodological attitude concerning how they are implemented in research. (Gallacher et al. 2008, 503, 513.) Adults are the ones needing to adopt tools to connect better with the child. As researchers, we are bound to be attentive to the epistemology of power we might perpetuate when we see children aided with our participatory methods, and when we are not aware of the different voices and silences adopted by a child (Ackerly et al. 2010, 267).

On these grounds, participatory tools should not be considered as an alternative to ethnography, as they complement each other to widen and upgrade our research by a more nuanced perspective about the diverse styles, voices and actions/inactions in a child’s world (Gallacher et al. 2008, 506). In other words, it is very crucial to keep an eye on the subjective world of the participants (Ackerly et al. 2010, 23).

## 2.6 A critical Feminist Perspective to overcome power imbalances in the study

Feminist ethnography aims for the acknowledgment of minority factions of society, about their experiences and by enabling the different voices to be genuinely heard. First and foremost, this approach challenges the hierarchical duality that might frame our perception such as those between researcher and the field, professor and pupil, connoisseur and people who are the subject of research, among others. (Penttinen & Kynsilehto 2017, 5.)

Feminist research is an analytical outlook on the society that exposes social injustices that are experienced otherwise by determined groups of women. The adoption of a feminist approach in research does not demand from the individuals to be social activists or inevitably to

be labelled as feminists. As Ackerly and colleagues described: “A critical feminist perspective is expressed through a feminist research ethics that guides our research decisions and helps us to reflect on and attend to dynamics of power, knowledge, relationships and context throughout the research process.” (Brook et al. 2010, 1.)

While India is a culturally and geographically diverse nation, which possesses very ancient traditions and beliefs, and has an inherently dynamic society, unfortunately, within this diversity, some voices are still silenced under different power structures. Considering this cultural context, it demanded from the author the adoption of a critical feminist perspective for this study, which took place in the selected village of the FINDIgATE project. We detected that feminist research ethics (Appendix 1, page 68) was very helpful to overcome several ethical dichotomies that were present during the data collection (Ackerly et al. 2010, 21).

### 3 Goal and Objectives

The goal of this study is to develop participative methods in research with children, by carrying out three pilots to access the narratives of Child Friendly School experiences of students aged 11-16 years through a specific participatory tool, and based on children’s voices, to reflect on a future program for implementing Child Friendly School (CFS) standards in the community.

The objectives of this study were:

1. To determine which participatory methodology better facilitates children’s voice about their CFS experiences.
2. To review the gap between the ideal features of the CFS principles and the reality of available resources in the context of the research based on children’s point of view.
3. To draw recommendations about implementing the complete set of CFS standards in the future.

### 4 Methods

In this study, the three participatory methods with children were implemented and compared during the visit of the FINDIgATE team from Finland to a rural area of Southern India in January 2017. The data was collected under a Learning Festival, which lasted one week, and which was organized by a Power Generation Company, as a part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program to contribute to children’s education. Students from the Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT) collaborated with the company, by developing interactive games and scientific experiments with the children. The three participative methods were compared under the spirit of a cultural sensitivity approach and cultural-centered approach. While cultural sensitivity refers to transform the agenda based on power imbalances

and transform the communication based on the needs of the target group, cultural-centered approach means to build up theories and inferences from within the culture (Dutta 2007, 304). The participative methodologies were analysed based on the Theory-Driven Evaluation Methodology (Donaldson 2007), which follows a six-step framework for program evaluation and which facilitates the presentation of the results under a Logic Model.

#### 4.1 Study Settings

Approximately, 2500 school students, aged between 5 to 16 years, and their teachers participated in the Learning Festival. The purpose of this event was to facilitate a learning environment through technological and fun activities, for which bachelor's degree students in the field of technical sciences at KIIT University, had developed interactive games to support the learning process of children. They tested the games at the rural schools a week before the festival and helped with the arrangements of the event.

The three participative methods had been executed as a collaboration between Laurea University of Applied Sciences, Finland and Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT), India, within the FINDIgATE cooperation project, which aimed to research Finnish and Indian wellbeing through education and exchange best practices between both countries. The FINDIgATE project started in October 2016 by getting familiar with the teachers and students from India and Finland, and by presenting the topic of research to the project team. During the following months before traveling to India in January 2017, the FINDIgATE team had online sessions, individual assignments and independent reading of academic literature concerning child wellbeing and education in both countries. Likewise, the research plan was sent to the Indian FINDIgATE team to get familiar with the needs of the study.

During the months of February-April of 2017, students and teachers from both countries kept in contact to deepen the data analysis, to write academic articles, and to exchange thoughts about the possible development of the project. In May of the same year, the Indian students visited Finland for learning about local initiatives regarding education and wellbeing and some of them did data collection. This exchange helped to deepen the knowledge about children's lives in both countries, about the different traditions and cultural elements that enhance or jeopardize their wellbeing.

#### 4.2 Generating data from the application of the participative methods

The data generation took place in India during January of 2017 in which students from both countries, under the supervision of the teachers, cooperated in this process. During the first week of collecting data in the selected village for the project, twenty-five children (14 girls, 11 boys) between 10-16 years old, were invited to talk about their school experiences and participate voluntarily in the discussion. The FINDIgATE team gathered at the end of the day

for reflecting and solving obstacles that came along the way. The second week was intended for data analysis and presentation of the findings to the team.

The KIIT students acted as interpreters for the children within the pilots, translating from Odia and Hindi languages into English. Several of the interpreters come from privileged backgrounds and from different areas of India where other local dialects are spoken. Only two of them could speak the Odia language and the rest communicated with the children in Hindi.

#### 4.3 Theory-driven Evaluation Methodology in analysing the participative methods

A Theory-driven Evaluation approach was selected as analysis method due to its holistic and evidence-based approach, and because it offers, a retrospective angle to analyse the data collected in India two years ago. According to Donaldson (2007), Program Theory-driven Evaluation Science (PTdES) is “the systematic use of substantive knowledge about the phenomena under investigation and scientific methods to improve, to produce knowledge and feedback about, and to determine the merit, worth, and significance of evaluands such as social, educational, health, community, and organizational programs.” (Donaldson 2007, 9.)

The main reasons for adopting this methodological approach were: due to its facilitation to produce new and feasible knowledge. It also serves an inclusive approach of all the stakeholders in each phase of the research facilitating to foresee what could be the efficacy of CFS principles in the community of this study. (Donaldson 2007, 5, 14.) The PTdES suits the experimental design of this research enabling the process of data analysis using a deductive approach, and it aids to report the results in a transparent and accountable manner (Donaldson 2007, 32).

To facilitate the process, the steps from the Program Evaluation Framework (Figure 3) were adopted. The framework consists of six-steps or momentums for the evaluation and a set of four categories, which summarises 30 Standards for reviewing the quality of the evaluation endeavour. (Donaldson 2007, 11-13.)



Figure 2: Recommended framework for program evaluation (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2018)

The Program Theory-driven Evaluation strictly adheres to ethical and sound evaluation practice of the American Evaluation Association (AEA) (Donaldson 2007, 11-13). Under the same cornerstone of good evaluation practice, this thesis assumes the guidelines for feminist research ethics, which are an adaptation of the Gender-Crisis Prevention and Recovery Project (G-CPR) which is being incubated by the Social Science Research Council (Brook 2010, 7). The feminist research ethics do not conflict with the AEA guidelines, but nuances concrete elements matching the needs of the context. It offers a proactive application of research ethics by consolidating the values of feminist research intending to reformulate the status of the participants giving them enough power and control from the outset to post phases of research (Brooke 2010, 7).

## 5 Results of the critical analysis of implementing participative methods to assess CFS experiences in India

Testing the three participative methodologies provided the author with the medium to access in more nuanced manner children's school experiences. Nonetheless, not every method worked effectively under the circumstances of the study and children were not always receptive in every activity. For instance, the first method to be tested was the mapping tool where the participants were requested to draw a sketch of their school. It was difficult for children to be relaxed and fully engaged under this activity. The second method was a photo-ethnographic pilot, proving to be a more enjoyable activity, which helped the author to have a look on children's school settings and other spaces photographed by them. Anyhow, this tool is not devoid of possible biases and the lack of cameras for several participants made it difficult to replicate. The most effective participative method was the Lego Play, which allowed children to be more spontaneous, produced better narratives and helped them to display a very cooperative behaviour with their peers. The children shared stories of physical abuse, which is common practice at the school, problems with the school infrastructure, lack of sanitary services and about the relations with teachers and peers. The Lego Play allowed children to be more specific with the different standards of the CFS Model, as well as to share about their positive experiences of the everyday school life.

Following the six steps of the framework for program evaluation the author will unfold the dozier of data generated in the field, reflect upon the findings and draw inferences about the importance of keeping children's voice at every phase of the study and how this data could contribute towards a future implementation of CFS Model.

### 5.1 Engaging Stakeholders for assessing CFS experiences in children

An evaluation team formed by FINDigATE's teachers and members of the project was permanently available during the collection of data. The group met every day after the activities to reflect on the spot about the performance of the research and solve possible obstacles that emerged. During the first pilot of participative methodology, the children shared their experiences of physical abuse in the schools. This is an expression of evident hierarchical discourse displayed by students and teachers within the rural educational institutions in India (Sriprikash 2010, 304). For this reason, the personnel from the Power Generation Company and the teachers were not invited to be part of the stakeholder team to avoid any attempt against children's privacy and free will within the study.

Based on the ladder of participation, children should be included in every decision concerning their lives (Hart 1992, 8). Therefore, it would have been ideal for them to partake in the stakeholder's meetings during the process of data collection. Notwithstanding, it would have required some specific arrangements, as the meetings were held every day after the Learning Festival had finished. In addition to that, the stakeholders' team wanted to prevent any pos-

sible re-traumatization (Shapiro 2018, 161-164) by being exposed to the negative experiences collected during the data generation

## 5.2 Describing the program for assessing CFS experiences in children

In India, there are not enough studies evaluating the predominance of child abuse and several of them fall short due to lack of standardization of the research methods. There is a need in India for an in-depth knowledge about the state of child protection, which would adequately influence policy and practice at every level. (Therayi et al. 2017, 357.)

Therayi and colleagues reported a thorough summary of the different studies done in India related to child abuse. In a meta-analysis of Barth, Bermetz, Heim, Trelle and Tonia 2013 of the global prevalence of childhood abuse containing only two studies from India (Banerjee, 2001; Hasnain & Kumar, 2006). These two studies presented the lack of standardization mentioned above. Other available studies broadly displayed the high rates of abuse. Research on street children in Jaipur reported that a significant ratio of children (61.8%) had faced “moderate” abuse while 36.6% children indicated abuse in the “severe” and “very severe” categories. (Mathur, Rathore, & Mathur, 2009.)

Among illiterate runaway adolescents in New Delhi, 62% boys experienced domestic violence, 72% reported physical abuse, and 35% reported being victims of sexual abuse (Bhat, Singh, & Meena, 2012). Forty-eight percent of college students in Puducherry said being mocked because of appearance; 56% reported being beaten during their childhood, with 13.4% of such cases requiring medical treatment; 10% reported being exposed to the genitalia of another person; and 6.4% reported being forced to expose their genitals to another individual (Bhilwar, Upadhyay, Rajavel, Singh, Vasudevan, & Chinnakali 2015). A study conducted on a representative sampling of 1060 adolescent school-going girls in Delhi revealed abusive experiences not limiting to school. It reported that 43% of the girls experienced physical maltreatment, 40% faced neglect, and 27% were subject to sexual abuse. (Daral, Khokhar, & Pradhan, 2016.)

The research by Therayi et al. (2017) is the only known study focusing on the predominance of sexual, physical, and emotional abuse in a school setting in India. Altogether 6682 school-attending adolescents in Thrissur, Kerala participated in a cross-sectional self-report study. One year and lifetime prevalence of physical (75.5%, 78.5%), emotional (84.5%, 85.7%) and sexual (21.0%, 23.8%) abuse was very high. Abuse was deemed to have taken place even if a single item from these three categories reported. Most of the abuses were reported as occurring “sometimes” rather than “many times”.

More males than females reported being victims of abuse; figures for one-year incidence were physical abuse (83.4% vs. 61.7%), emotional abuse (89.5% vs. 75.7%), and sexual abuse (29.5% vs. 6.2%). Certain factors considerably heightened the probability of abuse, such as being

male gender, low socioeconomic status, regular intake of alcohol and drugs by a family member at home and having other issues at school. Children were more inclined to report abuse less frequently if they liked attending school and if they always felt safe at school. This research implemented an ICAST-CI based survey which has an emphasis on the questions covering different kinds of verbal, physical and sexual violence as well as experiences of neglect, but that also included some additional questions about their experiences at school, for instance, whether they felt safe at school and if they liked school. (Therayi et al. 2017, 356-357.) There is a risk that the emotional charge due to the remembrance of experiences of abuse might have overridden the judgment of possible child friendly experiences in the educational settings (Clore & Huntsinger 2007).

The results of the studies mentioned above significantly contrast with the religious and hierarchical philosophy practiced in India since a long time ago. For instance, the Manusmriti (Manu's Law), one of the most ancient and influential Indian religious books dating from 100 BC (2250 years ago), was used to shape the hierarchical structures of Indian society for centuries, adopting discrimination based on caste. Notwithstanding, it was only during the colonial times under the English regime when this old book was translated to outline the basis of Hindu law under the colonial British Raj (Zheng 2017, 1). In one of the verses of Manusmriti, it states as follows: "On women, infants, men of disordered mind, the poor and the sick, the king shall inflict punishment with a whip, a cane, or a rope and the like" (Rocher 2014, 241).

India declared its obligation to forbid all corporal punishment of children in its third/fourth report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2011. The commitment was renewed when the Government acknowledged the recommendation to ban corporal punishment in all settings made during the Universal Periodic Review of India in 2012 and again in 2017 (Global Initiative to End All Corporal punishment of Children 2018, 1).

Regarding the implementation of UNICEF's Model for CFS, there was an in-depth evaluation done in 40 schools Karkala Taluk, Karnataka. The data was collected using a predesigned format, by talking to the headmaster and school teachers, and inspecting several school settings. It was found out that none of the schools met all the criteria for CFS. Of the schools, 90% did not have adequate toilet facilities, 90% did not have safe transportation for the students and children in 82% of schools had excess baggage. In 72% of the schools no access to potable water existed, 57% did not have adequately ventilated and illuminated classrooms. Physical punishment administered in 45% of the schools. Of the schools, 72% did have periodic health check-ups, 60% had clean kitchens/ dining rooms, 60% had adequate facilities for games, and 57% had first aid medical services at school. (Hegde & Shetty 2008, 407.)

Different International Non-governmental Organizations (INGO) and local agencies operating in India have the reports of the implementation of CFS in the country. Anyhow, there are no

exhaustive evaluations of whether the ten criteria of CFS are met in totality, and the available reports only give some evidence in terms of hygiene, infrastructure, access to safe drinking water, and improvement of classroom culture (Walker 2010; UNICEF India 2014; Action Aid India 2017 & PLAN India).

There was a need to study CFS experiences within the Indian context through a methodology adapted to the cultural circumstances and which would reflect not only the abuses faced by the participants, but other essential elements of their wellbeing. Most importantly, a non-intrusive method that would enable children's perspectives and voices to be heard freely would be needed.

### 5.3 Focusing the Evaluation Design for assessing CFS experiences in children

#### 5.3.1 Merging the ethnographic process and participatory pilots

According to the Manual for Child Friendly Schools, the participation of girls and boys in mapping safe spaces should be at the core of a child friendly school's protective environment. When boys, girls, and young people map out safe and unsafe settings, there is often a difference between what girls, boys, and young people perceive as safe space. (UNICEF 2009, 139.) The document recommends the implementation of a Participatory Mapping to identify the critical factors in terms of safety at school.

During the data generation in this study, the aim was to merge some participatory tools with informal interviews and observations to capture children's interest and inspiration, as well as to facilitate their communication. By proceeding in this way, the author believed that the expression of skills and free choice of the participants would be acknowledged, enhancing the level of trust between the parties.

The semi-structured interviews contained the following questions: "The places we like the most in our school are..."; "The places we don't like from our school are..."; "The places at school we consider safe for ourselves are..."; "The places at school we don't consider safe are..."; "Who listens to me at school?"; "The person I trust the most at school is..."; "I feel safe at my school because..." and "I don't feel safe at my school because..."

For this study, an informal conversational style interview adopted contrary to the usual "question and answer" format adopted by several academics involving children for research purposes (Darlington & Scott, 2002; Docherty & Sandelowski, 1999; McCrum & Bernal, 1994). The rationale for this is to avoid the risk of children sensing the questions presented by an adult as an examination and answering them with the feeling of what is the most accurate rather than their personal insights (McCrum & Bernal, 1994).

In the traditional ethnographic process, observation is one of the approaches for data collection in which the researcher plays the main role in this endeavour. Spradley (1980, 39) stated that “wherever the ethnographer may go and whatever the size of the social unit (e.g. a street corner, a village, a town, a city), all participant observation takes place in social situations.” Therefore, every social situation consists of three important elements: actors, activities, and places. (Lambert et al. 2013, 603.)

It was crucial for this study to define accurately the category of the observational role for the author, which was the most optimal for the cultural context and the circumstances taking place at the Learning Festival. Due to the children’s tendency to look to adults for guidance despite the project’s aim to make this endeavour a fully participatory experience, the author’s role as a semi-participatory observer was deemed most appropriate in that it would allow for as minimal interference as possible in children’s activities while satisfying their need for guidance. In addition to that, the author had the opportunity to observe what was happening during the data generation.

A flexible design was key for the practice of the researcher’s role and the instrumentalization of participatory tools adopted for the study. In support, Gallacher and colleagues (2008, 513) underlined that researchers might benefit from a methodological immaturity in research with children and discussed about the power put in practice through participatory methods: what is the most important in research with children is not the method adopted by the researcher, but the way it is put in use or “the methodological attitude taken”. A neat research procedure cannot be constraint to innovative methods, planned beforehand and cautiously put in action. Research is intrinsically unforeseeable, and any logical plan can go amiss. “Methodological immaturity privileges open-ended process over predefined technique.”

The children’s mother tongue is Odia and the translators from the FINDIgATE project only spoke Hindi except for two students who were fluent in both Odia and Hindi. Even though the Hindi language is mother-tongue to about 41.1% in India, the proportion of people speaking this language is even higher. There are many factors in responsible for this interesting phenomenon. Primarily, Hindi is very popular in the media and entertainment industry (cinema, television, news, politics, among others), that is one of the reasons why people living in the “Non-Hindi” belts can also understand the language and can speak some level of Hindi. Additionally, since Hindi has the highest share of speakers in India among the other 18 languages declared as official languages of the country - despite that the list of regional languages along with Hindi and English is even bigger - usually Indians feel compelled to learn Hindi and English for socioeconomical reasons. Hence, that is the reason the children and young people participating in the Learning Festival, for whom the medium of education is the Odia language, can speak and understand Hindi (Ministry of Home Affairs of India; Pandey 2018).

According to a feminist research ethic, there should be a concern regarding the ways social, political and economic aspects are interrelated and correlated with people's lives, even more important among the different participants on our research. We mean by participants all those who are part of the target group, research team, assistants, interpreters, facilitators, project managers, among others. (Ackerly et al. 2010, 32-35.)

On a relational level, we had to be attentive about the different relationships of power between all the participants in our research and how our actions will affect their environment. In the case of an educational setting, we must be aware of the relation among the children who are part of the study, their relationships with their teachers and caregivers, and with the other adults who participate in the study. According to this relational perspective, it is important to pay special attention to the way gender shapes the relationships between men and women, boys and girls and within peer groups; about the power dynamics among them and how these aspects influence the culture and society where the study took place. (Ackerly et al. 2010, 32-35.) For instance, in the cultural context where the pilots were carried out, there is an important gendered norm that must be followed, which is that in groups of children where girls were present, if the researcher was a man, a female adult had to be present. This fact turned out to be for our convenience, as it gave us the chance to have several female volunteers as interpreters. The female volunteers were very helpful to understand the better the stories told by the girls and their link with the Indian patriarchal and for detecting carefully the epistemology of power present in the narratives of the participants.

The issue that children were interacting mainly in the Hindi language - which is not their mother tongue- also that the interpreters were students without previous experience in investigating with children and were not professional interpreters, and the fact that English is a colonial language in India used by the author visiting from Finland, created the need to be highly attentive not only to the stories told by the children and their participation in the pilots, but also to acknowledge their silences and bodily communication. In this study, there were many potential risks to silence some of children's voices and privileged some of their narratives or parts of their stories (Horgan 2017, 250).

The data generated during the participative methods with children was collected by author using a research journal on daily basis. Additionally, some of the participative activities with the children were filmed or photographed. By this, it was aimed to observe deeper the body language of the participants, their degree of cooperation and the level of playful performance they exhibited during the pilots. In addition, children donated their drawings and texts produced by them during the activities. The data generated comprises 15 pages transcript documented in a verbatim manner with Ariel 12 font, space 1.5. The results of the prior analysis are presented in the following chapters of this report (McCormack 2014).

### Participatory Mapping for assessing CFS experiences in children

Several experts consider mapping as a political expression, which helps to situate the individual within a specific context; portraying the intersection of different elements such as agency, culture, social relationships, and the role spaces play in people's lives (Horgan 2017, 254).

During the first pilot, the Participatory Mapping, the aim of the research and the activity of the mapping first introduced to the children (9 in total) in the mapping activity. The mapping was planned to take place within 45 minutes. They freely formed groups of two individuals except for one group, which was comprised of three individuals. They were given paper sheets, colours, pencils and erasers. The semi-structure interview took place during the mapping using the set questions previously presented, leaving room for clarifying questions based on the children's answers. They were told that they could decide whether to donate the material produced by them to the research without their names written on the paper. A verbal consent to publish pictures of their drawings asked from the children. The author made the participants aware that they could withdraw from the activity at any time without any negative consequences. According to local and Indian practice, no informed consents collected from the parents or caregivers.

From the outset, the children were very uncomfortable and apprehensive with the mapping activity. Even though they were constantly reminded that this was not an assignment and they were not expecting to deliver perfect sketches, the different groups were not successful in creating a map and only drew what it resembled, a storage building. The children seemed engaged in the activity more to please the adult researchers than exercising their free choice and agency.

During the attempt to draw a sketch of the school, most of the participants requested rulers to aid the drawing process and expressed difficulties with creating a spontaneous drawing of their schools. Academics argue that children's drawings tend to get more realistic with age, though the rate at which they develop the skills for producing realistic drawings varies from child to child. Some authors say that the number of realistic details included in a child's drawing correlates with the child's conceptual development, and accordingly, children's drawings might provide a proximal measure of their cognitive ability (Imuta, Scarf, Pharo & Hayne 2013, 1). Anyhow, to assess the participants' conceptual development and whether their education supports it, it is a conclusion that should be drawn from a thorough study using accurate tools of evaluating the cognitive state of the participants.

Regardless of the failure of the mapping method, children shared everyday concerns such as the threats of the school infrastructure during the pilot. According to one narrative:

... a child fell from the fourth floor...

The poor state and unhygienic conditions of the toilets worried the children. A girl reported:

In almost all the toilets one cannot lock the door. So, I usually wait until I'm back to my home...

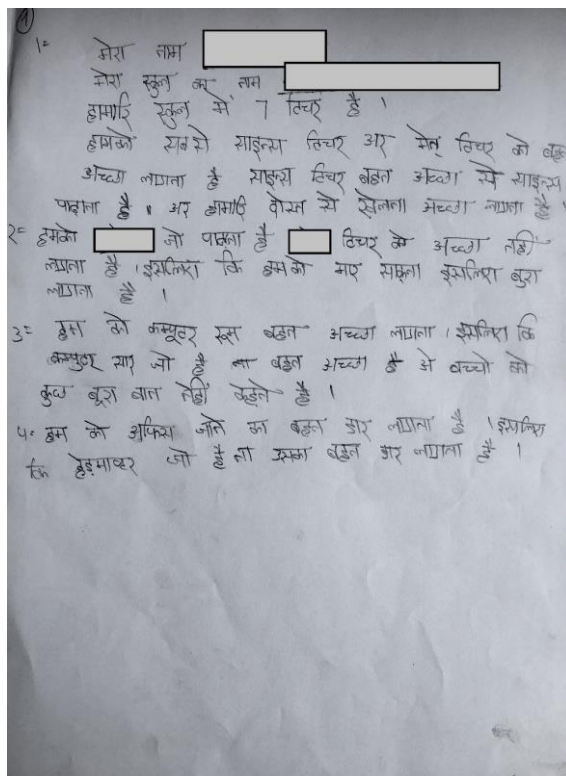
The children also told about places they liked to spend time, such as the schoolyard where they played different games or sports and described that there is a garden they take care of collectively. In addition, the computer lab was a preferred place at school for several of them.

The narratives describing the spatiality of the school gave an insight into the power relations between the teachers and the students, and how they felt during punishments imparted in the classrooms in front of all the other students. Several children mentioned that some teachers asked them to keep their hands open while they were beaten vigorously with a cane. Likewise, a pencil was placed between the fingers while the adult squeezed the hand of the child, producing pain. Other form of punishments consisted of slapping of the face or back-side of the head, slaps around the shoulder area and/or verbal abuse.

When the participants were questioned with whom they share the stories of physical punishments at school, several of them said that among their friends. When they were asked if they usually shared these experiences with a significant adult figure, many of them said that parents usually support teachers' punishment under the principle that the child surely was misbehaving and that it is the teachers' duty to keep the boundaries of proper behaviour. A 14-year-old girl reported that:

... teachers are like the second parents at school...

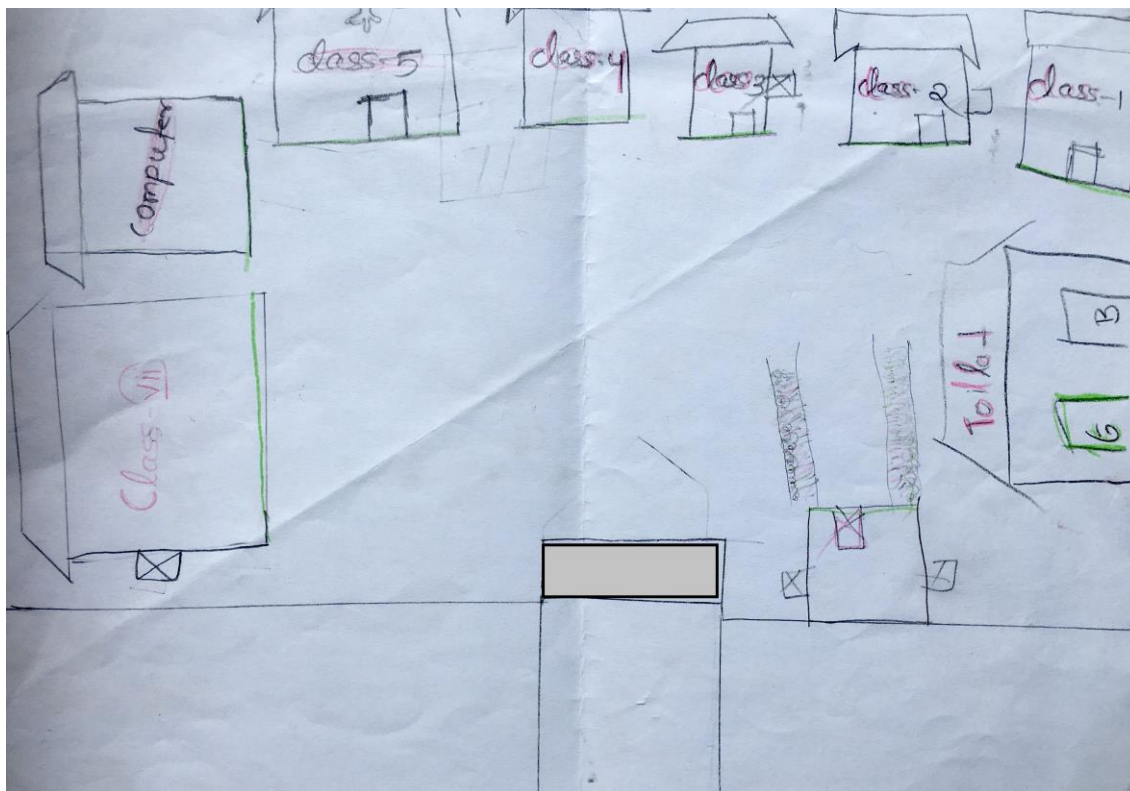
Towards the end of the activity, when asking who among them would like to donate the "maps" for the research or if they preferred to take the material with them, they all agreed to leave it with the author. When collecting the "maps" the author realized that behind the papers the participants had written some of the answers to our questions, several of them contained names of the children, school and teachers, as well as references of physical punishment (Picture 1). This indicates how children were more comfortable with the format of "questions and answers" most likely frequently used by their teachers for their assignments than using a free format like mapping their school.



Picture 1: Text behind the map produced by 13 and 14-years old girls

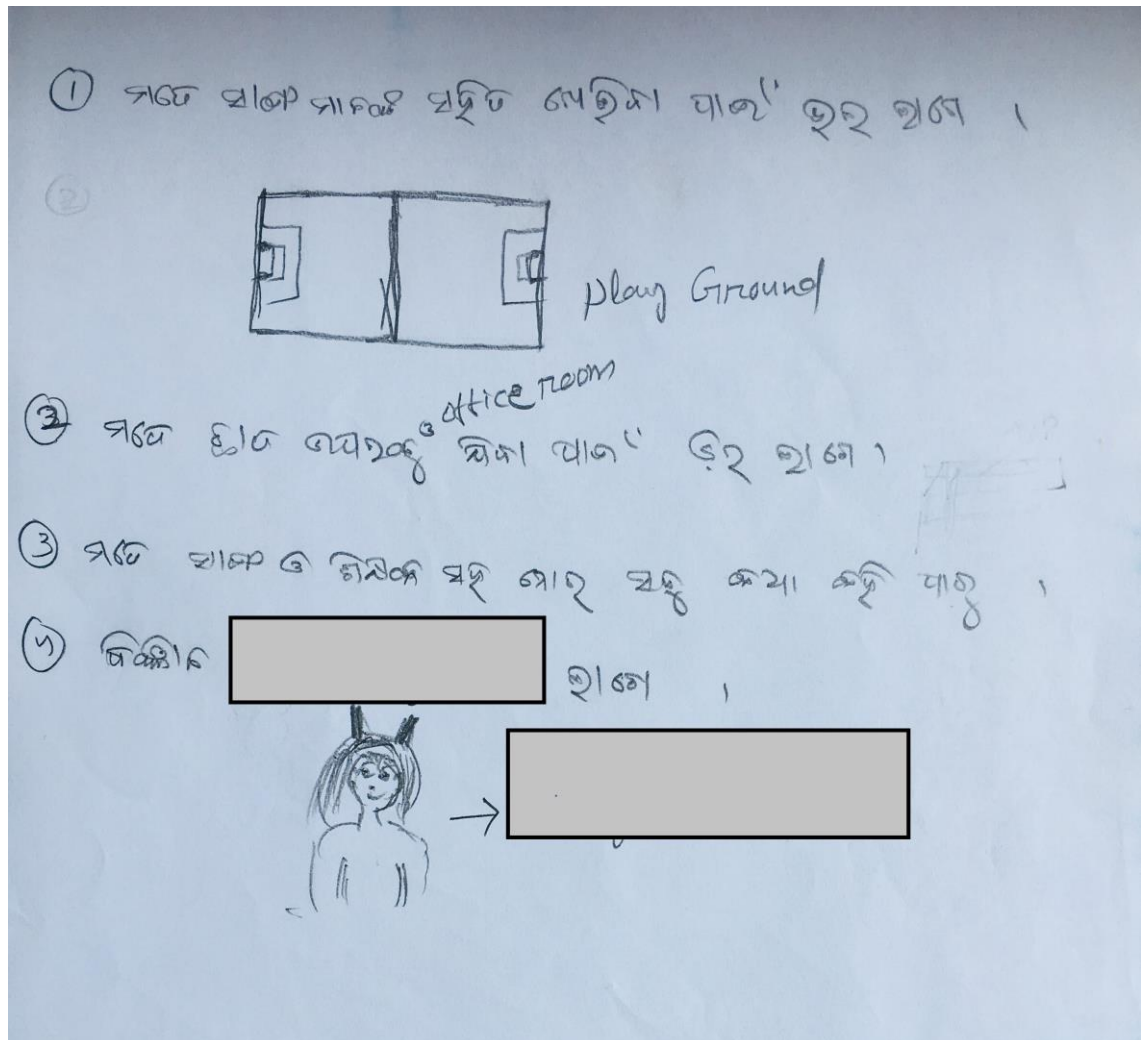
Translation from Hindi language (picture 1):

1. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ the name of my school is \_\_\_\_\_. My school has 7 teachers. I like my science and math teachers very much. The science teacher is very good with the subject. I like playing with my friend.
2. I don't like \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ Sirs and neither do I like what they teach, that is because they beat me, and I don't like that.
3. I like the computer lab very much because the computer teacher is very good and never says anything bad to us.
4. I fear very much going to the office because the headmaster sits over there, and I fear him very much.



Picture 2: Front page of mapping the school

The lack of details in the drawing by the girls (Picture 2), considering the age of the participants, may reveal the lack of enjoyment of the task. As well, it is visible in the image how the participants were attempting to draw and erase several times. This kind of reflection was even more evident in the text produced by two 14 and 15-year old boys, who reported fearing the terrace of the school due to the lack of boundaries and that a student had fallen from there. The office of the head master is the other place of the school they did not like because allegedly this person uses physical and verbal punishment on regular basis. The boys use the word “fear” to refer both to the lack of security in the infrastructure of the school and the office of the teacher who uses physical punishment. Additionally, the boys made a drawing of one of the teachers with bull’s horns emerging from the head.



Picture 3: Text and drawings by 14 and 15-years old boys

Translation from Odia language (Picture 3):

1. I like playing with my friends.
2. I'm scared of going to the terrace and the office room.
3. I can share a lot of things with my friends and teachers.
4. I hate my \_\_\_\_ teacher.

In psychology, an image possesses the capacity to elicit the awareness about how others experience the world (Mannay, Staples & Edwards 2017, 346). Hence, after hearing of the punishments suffered by the children, the researcher felt that the image of the “pencil” as an instrument of punishment and school duties had to be taken out from the following pilots.

Therefore, the mapping tool was discarded for further collection data with a bigger group of participants.

The advantage of having group discussions with children is that they can link their views with one another, allowing them to partake in dynamic exchanges in ways not possible to obtain during one-to-one interviews. Moreover, the peer support which occurs within small group interactions could help to overcome the power imbalance that exists between researcher and child in one-to-one interviews. Furthermore, group interviews serve as a platform for the construction of a “collective knowledge”. Nonetheless, there is academic evidence that the dynamics of peer group cultures and the way children participate in research might serve to exclude some of the participants, going against the principle that every voice in research with children matters and, in many cases, some children adopt strategies to overpower the conversations and copying answers from other children. (Horgan 2017, 252.)

In the mapping activity, it was evident that some children were uncomfortable expressing their opinions. Some children adopted answers given by other participants and the most talkative ones usually spoke on behalf of the group. Other children elucidated a pleasing nature towards the adults present during the research process. Even though the participants shared many of their school experiences during the Participatory Mapping, they acted with resistance under this activity. This is the reason why the author paid special attention to the silences and body language performed by the children, with the aim to overcome any possibility of adopting a stand of power imbalance.

#### Photo Ethnography for assessing CFS experiences in children

According to Lacan, the world becomes visible to us by observing (Bryson, Holly & Moxey 1994, 293). Visual images - whether drawings or photography- along with an interview in research, can be instrumental in expanding the traditional question-answer method. Visual methodologies allow us to analyse how “seeing and being seen” are subjectively and socially established. The blend of the optical element and the narratives supply novel insights about children’s personal lives. (Mannay et al. 2017, 346.)

During the second pilot, the Photo Ethnography, a camera was given to one girl and a boy to photograph anything they wanted. The children took pictures of their schools’ settings, homes, and portraits of their friends or family members. Later, the researchers asked the children to freely share their narratives about what they have photographed.

The children took pictures of the gardening in the schoolyard, of the classrooms and birds flying in the sky and trees. In addition, they photographed family members and friends. In this case, the narratives did not contain stories of physical abuse as happened with the previous methodology, and the participants elicit a more relaxed and spontaneous behaviour while

talking. The pictures of the school settings were in line with the description regarding the infrastructure provided through the mapping method. This is the importance of combining participatory tools with other research methods to overcome mis- and over interpretations by the researchers (Literat 2013, 94).

Anyhow, photo-ethnography is not a method devoid of misinterpretations and unconscious use of power by adults. Regardless that the children were sharing a vibrant array of stories around the pictures, several of the western members of the FINDIgATE team were focusing more on the images of poverty, which were not in line with the enthusiasm elucidated by children while sharing their stories. Hence, we concur with Cook & Hess (2007, 43) that the adoption of cameras certainly gives us peek into children's diverse world. Notwithstanding, the methodological use of the camera can bias the assumptions of the researchers, narrowing down children's rich stories by the adults' choices.

#### Lego Play for assessing CFS experiences in children

Plausibly, Lego Play offers a window to foster innovative ways of expression and exploration, helping participants to look at familiar situations from a new perspective (Mannay et al. 2017, 352).

During the third pilot, the Lego Play, the children (15 in total) were asked to represent their schools and surroundings playing with Legos. They could deliberately form groups to cooperate on the task and were organized in small groups around the Lego material scattered around the table to facilitate face-to-face discussions. When the author noticed that children's play overrode the original instructions, they could continue with their own game. While building their school with the Lego, the author asked the questions selected to scan the CFS experiences of the participants.

Building with Lego was a different experience for the participants, even though they never had any exposure to Lego before, confirming that Lego has a universal functionality. The children appeared very spontaneous and playful under this pilot. Additionally, the participants performed various levels of collaboration to complete the task, by taking different roles and suggesting ideas to each other and displaying several cues of physical contact among them.

In a research carried out on children's collaboration around Tabletop in the UK, India and Finland, the authors found out that in India the participants largely displayed many forms of physical contact compared to the other two countries. This aided the collaborative process, and it was used to prevent members of the groups from distracting and eventually diverting the attention of the group away from the task. (Izdihar et al. 2015, 21-22.) A similar behaviour has been noticed within the Lego activity of this pilot.

Lego Play was a better medium of interaction between researcher and children, narrowing down considerably the power structures, the pleasing attitudes displayed by children and to help overcoming the tensions and lack of playfulness which came into evidence during the Mapping activity. Even though, the narratives were very similar to the data collected during the Participatory Mapping, under the Lego Play their descriptions were more elaborated and detailed.

The arguments of Selina Schepers and colleagues (2017, 48) citing Caillois and Frasca theories, are very relevant for our perspective of play within this participative method. Caillois presents all the diverse forms of play on a scale starting from organized form of play (ludus) towards a free style of playing (padiá), enabling moving from one form to the other. Ludus and padiá are not in contraction, and for instance, sometimes people tend to transform padiá into ludus. The experts specify that ludus is conformed by a set of more structured activities with concrete rules and usually has a winner and loser, like many of the games. In the case of padiá being a freer style of play, is not necessarily devoid of rules, but does not end with people winning or losing. Padiá embodies socio-cultural norms that influence the players. (Schepers 2017, 48.) Therefore, by overlapping these theoretical approaches, our play perspective is funded in the notion of play, being as free and voluntary as possible, creating the best scenario for data generation under ideal ethical conditions (Brooke 2010, 28). In the Picture 4, there is evidence of free play (notice how the sharks were incorporated to the landscape), and a relaxed posture of participants' bodies (notice the girl supporting her face with one hand and contributing to the construction and two girls in the background holding hands).

Under this activity, children were very detailed about the unsanitary conditions of the toilets and how some of them wait until they reach home to visit the sanitary facilities. Girls seemed more preoccupied with this topic than boys. They pointed out that many of the doors of the toilets could not be locked.



Picture 4: A group of girls building together a representation of their school

According to the first global assessment of water and sanitation in schools - carried out by the World Health Organization and UNICEF - shows that 620 million children do not have decent toilets at school and around 900 million cannot wash their hands properly. Ensuring that children attend school and conclude their education is key to a country's development, but a lack of adequate hygiene facilities discourages students, especially girls, from attending school and completing their education. Within the assessment India appears to have a limited drinking water accessibility, sanitation and hygiene at schools. (World Health Organization 2018, 11.)

Based on the information about the sanitary condition of the schools, we agreed that some of the girls would meet only with the female translators to discuss further this topic; following the cultural norm in India that men are not present during the disclosure of sensitive topics. The girls open up about the difficulties they face during menstruations due to the lack of clean and safe sanitary facilities at school. Many of them cannot attend school during their periods which affects their academic performance. It seems that sharing about this topic was important for many girls, because after the data collection was over, many other girls approached the female volunteers to share about the burden they face every month. A 15-years old girl reported:

...boys are smarter than us because they don't have to endure menstruation every month...

Regarding how common the issues at school due to menstruation a 16-year old girl confirmed:

...I know is happening to many other girls, but this is a topic that we cannot openly discuss...

When girls were asked how do they cope with the school tasks during the time they cannot attend school because during their periods, a 15-year old girl said:

Usually, the workload because we cannot attend school is very much. Teachers give compensation tasks and we ask our friends to see the notes they have made at class

The Government of India issued national guidelines on Menstrual Hygiene Management in 2015 (UNICEF India 2015) but a survey in 2016-2017 exhibited that only two thirds of schools in India provide menstrual hygiene education with large variations between states. In the case of Odisha, state where this study took place, the proportion of schools where education about menstrual hygiene is imparted is 67% compared to a national average of 64%. (World Health Organization, 2018, 55.) Many children said not having access to clean water at school. This matches with the estimation that in India 88% of the population use a basic drinking water service at home in 2015, in rural areas less than half (49%) were located on the premises and only two thirds (64%) were free from contamination. (World Health Organization 2018, 19.)

Under the Lego Play children were very expressive among them. It's culturally common in India to see young people holding hands for a long time or cuddling among their peers and these expressions of affection were very common throughout this specific pilot. They spoke eloquently how their friends understand them very well and give them consolation during hard times. A 14-year old girl said that after being unfairly punished by one of the teachers, it was difficult for her to stop crying and feel regulated again. After hugging her two best friends and hearing from them that she was not alone, she was able to comeback to a calm state. Boys also, spoke how important was friendship for them. A 15-year old boy confessed:

...I would go crazy without my best friends...

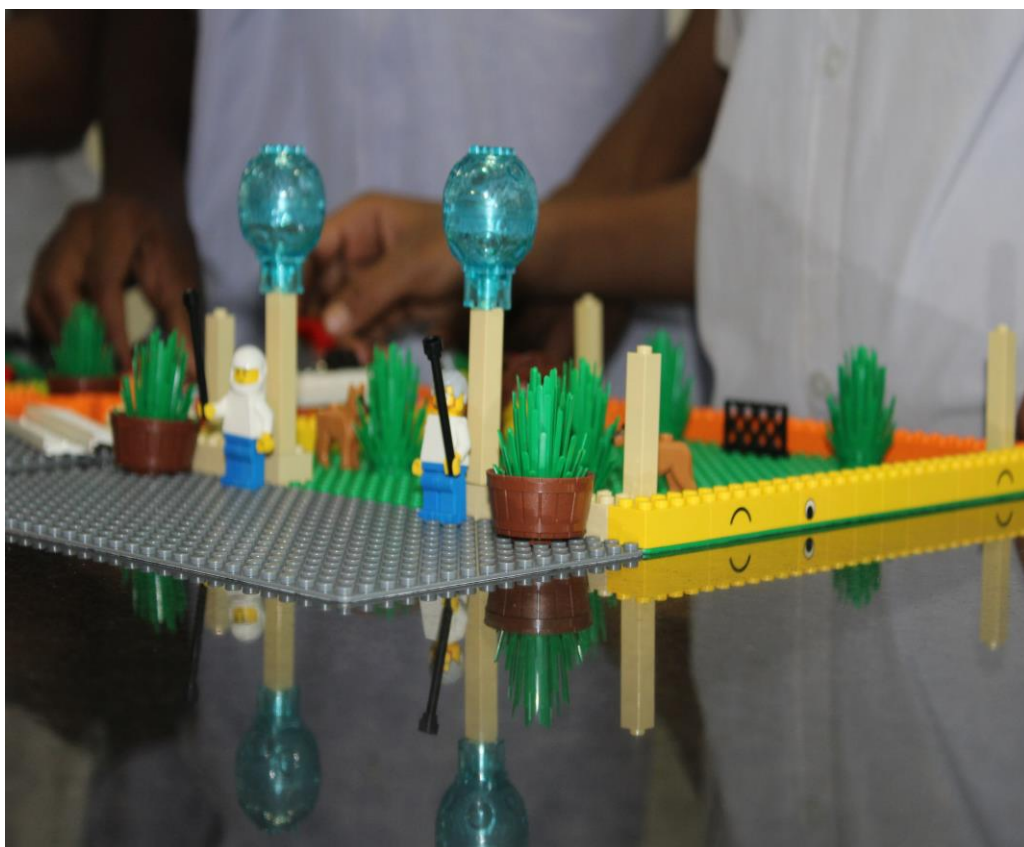
A 13-year old girl confirmed about the friendliness and collectivist culture present in India:

I do everything with my (girls) friends. We pick up each other to go to school, to go out to play. I like how we can speak about everything and lose sense of time

It seems that the free nature of Padia in the Lego activity, gave the participants the comfort for demonstration of affection and cooperation. Bodily performance such as physical contact and collaboration are key elements during a learning development (Jokela & Lucero 2013, 7, 9). A study concluded that making children use their bodily performativity, such as gestures, tends to bring out implicit knowledge, which in consequence leads to learning (Broaders, Wagner, Mitchell & Goldin-Meadow 2007, 539). Individuals working together tend to keep close social propinquity among them while standing and seating position based on a research (Hall 1968, 121-122). Therefore, we can hypothesize that the closeness in the participants was used probably to maintain the social proximity they are accustomed during the everyday life at school.

Izdihar and colleagues (2015, 23) found out in their study that young Indian students - compare to students from England and Finland- were the most amiable, usually very prompt to share close space with one another and display the most physical tactics in the activities. The children of our study displayed a very similar behaviour noted by Izdihar and colleagues in their research. For instance, children tilted close to the Lego blocks or to be near to one another, frequently displayed physical contact with other participants and at the same time moved an object together. The researchers noticed that within this intimate to personal space, participants might have viewed themselves to be closely and somewhat personally related to each other as to display such behaviours. Presumably, a close sense of social proximity and relationships as well as a high sense of friendliness may be present during the interaction to allow such behaviours to unfold. (Izdihar et al. 2015, 24.) The demonstrations of affect by holding hands or hugs are a common feature of the homosocial Indian culture were very much present during the activity and afterwards.

India is generally depicted as owning a collectivist culture (Chavan 2005, 2) and this might be a reason why children participating in this pilot resonated very well with the guidelines of “building together our school”. Also, it might be one of the reasons why the answers provided by the most outspoken children in the presence of the less talkative ones, felt like a shared common experience. The communal culture of sharing space and experiences might be the rationale why they were so comfortable manipulating the Lego blocks together and using physical contact to suggest new ideas to each other. Likewise, individuals appeared comfortable to be superseded by the collective behaviour of the group and ready to give up or suggest new inputs during different times. For instance, within a group after speaking about physical punishment, children were negotiating whether to add two figures guarding the entrance, representing the need in their community to protect all children from potential dangers (Picture 5). Some children opposed to add the figures because in reality there are not guards by the entrance of the school. After some deliberation, the children opposing idea, allowed the figures to be placed by touching the hands of the other participants. The arrangement at the Learning Festival (Picture 6) allowed children’s privacy and comfort to play freely and share their experiences.



Picture 5: Boys placing figures guarding the school



Picture 7: Space for data collection during the Learning Festival

#### 5.4 Findings

The findings are the combination of the data generated during the three pilots and which reflects the CFS experiences of the children. Of the participants, 15 children reported being victims of physical or verbal punishment. The students mentioned that physical punishment was imparted due to their lack of attention during classrooms, for answering incorrectly, or for misbehaviour. The 19 children said that they only spoke about the physical punishments with their friends.

Of the children, 7 students gave evidence of a lack of safety in the infrastructure of the school. The girls said that they wait until the recess to visit the toilet at their home. All the boys interviewed said that the toilets are dirty but did not mention facing any major problem related to the sanitary facilities. Only three boys said that waiting for permission to visit the toilets was physically uncomfortable.

Of the participating children, 23 students mentioned that the person(s) they trust the most at the school were their friends or a friend. Three of them mentioned trusting some of the teachers. Of the children, 21 said that the playing ground or playing with their peers was the aspect they liked the most from their school. In addition, 6 children enjoy spending time in the computer room.

## 5.5 Gathering credible evidence of CFS experiences among children

### 5.5.1 Logic Model in assessing the quality of the project

In recent years, the Logic Model, a standard tool for illustrating program logic and theory, has been widely used. This tool is adopted in different fields of evaluation to aid with the program planning, design and assessment (Donaldson 2007, 24). In the Figure 4 and Figure 5, we present the Logic Model framework applied in mapping of Research's Process Theory, which is described as inputs, activities, outputs; and the Research Impact theory, which describes the initial outcomes, intermediate outcomes and longer-term outcomes (Donaldson 2007, 25). Out from this Logic Model, we will draw the Mediation Model and Path of moderators. The word mediator is synonymous with initial outcome depicted in the Figure 5.

### Research Process Theory

Inputs	Activities	Outputs
Pilot 1: Mapping CFS places and experiences	Mapping safe and unsafe spaces from children's point of view	Visual map containing the safe and unsafe environments and children's discourse.
Pilot 2: Photo-ethnography of CFS places and experiences	Children are free to photograph CFS places and described their experiences	A set of photos and stories of children about CFS and experiences.
Pilot 3: Lego Play of CFS places and experiences	Represent with Lego CFS places	Children's discourses about CFS environment and experiences

Figure 3: Logic Model Framework - Research Process Theory for assessing CFS experiences with children

### Research Impact Theory



Figure 4: Logic Model Framework: Research Impact Theory for assessing CFS experiences in children

## 5.6 Mediation Model

By adding this concept of “Mediator” in the Logic Model Framework (Figure 5) we are going to be able to determine whether the research was competent enough or not in modifying its aim and whether the research is directed towards the right direction (Donaldson 2007, 27).

The research process, based on the approach of a flexible design, the constant reflection of the potential power imbalances, the piloting of the chosen participatory methods, along with the ethnographic observation and semi-structured interviews, had a positive direct impact towards the achievement of the long-term, which is an analysis of the CFS experiences based on the UNICEF model. Hence, the five Mediators (see Figure 5) summarize the efficacy of the research process.

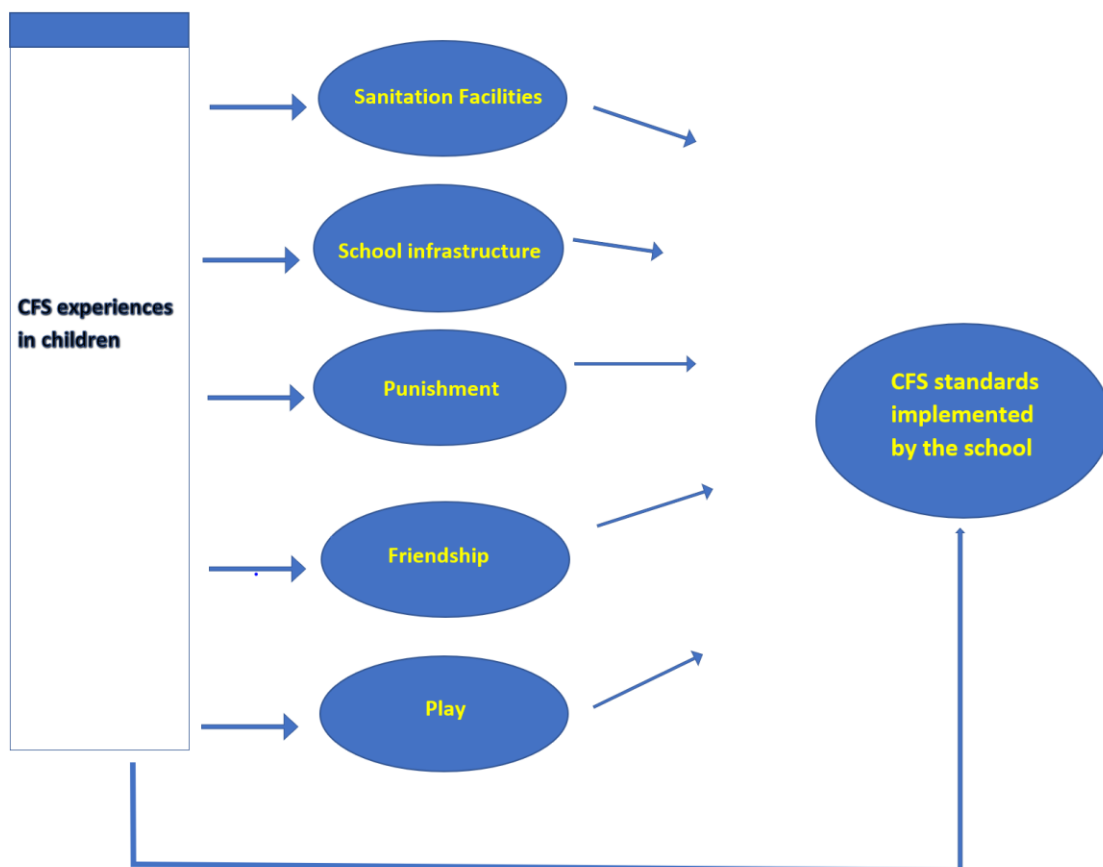


Figure 5: Mediation Model for assessing CFS experiences

Donaldson (2007, 28-29) argues that pilot empirical work could be carried out to assess the likelihood that each individual input of the research process will have a considerable effect on the targeted mediators and influence the outcomes when the program will be implemented. Carefully selecting the mediators, aids to describe and visualise the pathways of the ef-

fect towards the consolidation of the CFS Model (Donaldson 2007, 29). In the same way, the mediators that emerged from this study after piloting the participative methods, has produced important knowledge that could serve a possible implementation of the CFS model in the community. According to Hansen and McNeal (1996, 502) the level of change of practices that a program can generate is precisely influenced by the strength of connections that take place between mediators and the practices in question.

#### 5.6.1 Moderators Path for assessing CFS experiences in the children

Moderators equate to qualitative or quantitative potential variables that affects the direction or strength between the research process and the Mediators, or the Mediator and the outcome (Donaldson 2007, 30).

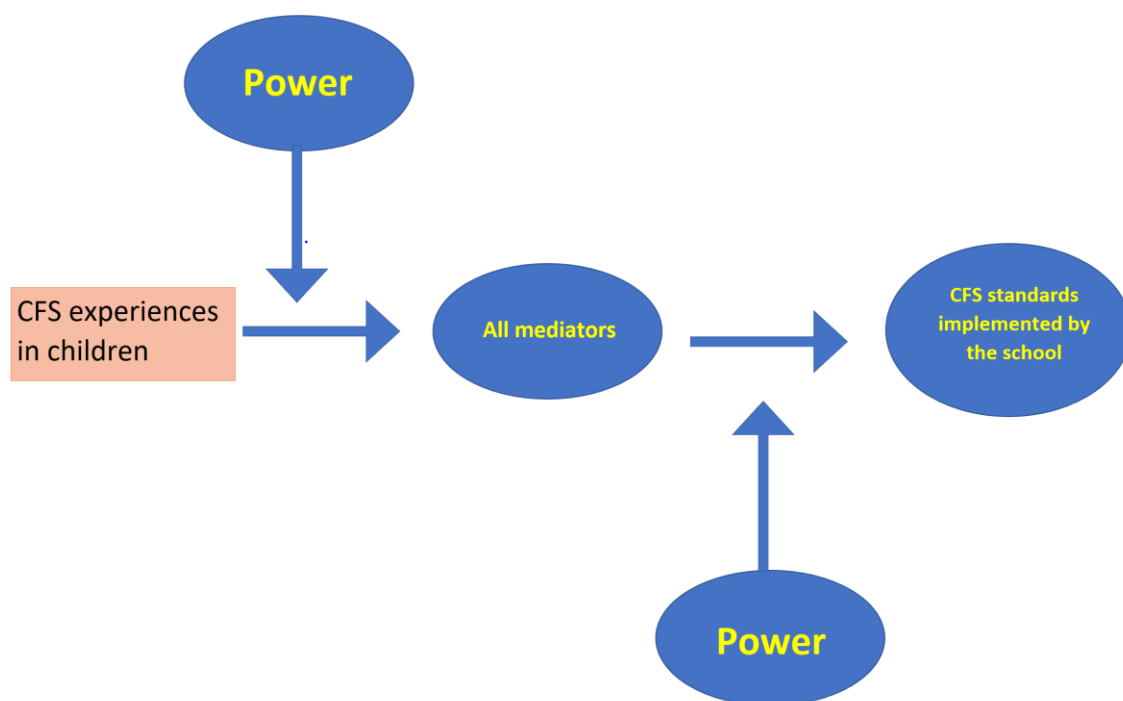


Figure 6: Power as moderator in the study impact theory for assessing CFS experiences in the children

Within the hierarchical culture practiced in India, detecting any possible epistemology of power -within and without the research process- was a very crucial step. On one hand, the researcher was very committed in not to replicate the dominant structure of the local society through the research methods. It was very significant not to take children's pleasing nature as a sign of cooperation with the research process, and it was important to read properly their silences and body language to avoid any type of pressure. An 11-year old girl told:

...when teachers speak, we must listen carefully and obey...

By detecting the bold influence that adults exercise within the local context, was key to create a nexus of trust with the participants, ensuring that the information shared by them will not reach teachers or adults in the community to avoid any risk for children's security. The relationship of power imbalances between the mediators and the final outcome could help us to ensure that all the elements of Protecting Environment Framework (Figure 1, page 8) could be systematically adopted during a future implementation of CFS and for searching possible strategies to create synergies and ownership within the community regarding child protection issues.

The research did not cover in depth the power used by children among them, which possibly came into evidence during some of the pilots. For instance, the use of touch adopted by children during the activities to usher the process within groups, cannot be decontextualized from the local culture and read through western standards. Hence, we cannot conclude how much it contains a level of power or it's a normal practice within the collectivist Indian culture.

At the Learning Festival, we did not observe children presenting any type of disabilities. When asking to some of the children about them, the answer was that they cannot come to school by themselves. The author also noticed some level of resistance to discuss this topic. In India children with disabilities are five times more likely to be left out of school compared to children coming from the low caste (Singal 2009, 8). Considering that disability is still a taboo in the Indian society, this might be an issue at the village of our study. Therefore, in case of a future implementation of the CFS Model taking place in the community, the inclusion of children with disabilities and special needs need to be taken into serious consideration by all the stakeholders. A 13-year old boy told:

In my neighbourhood, there is a boy who cannot walk by himself and the family is busy and can't take him to school.

Within the Incheon Declaration adopted at the World Education Forum in South Korea in 2015, paragraph seven boldly acknowledges the inclusion and equity in education of people with disabilities and states that "no education target should be considered met unless met by all." (UNESCO 2015.) In addition, the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have also clearly included people with disabilities. The SDG 4 reflects the international commitment to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. SDG 4.5 specific mentions vulnerable persons including people with disabilities. Therefore, SDG 4 cannot be achieved without improving education access and quality for children with disabilities. (United Nations 2018.)

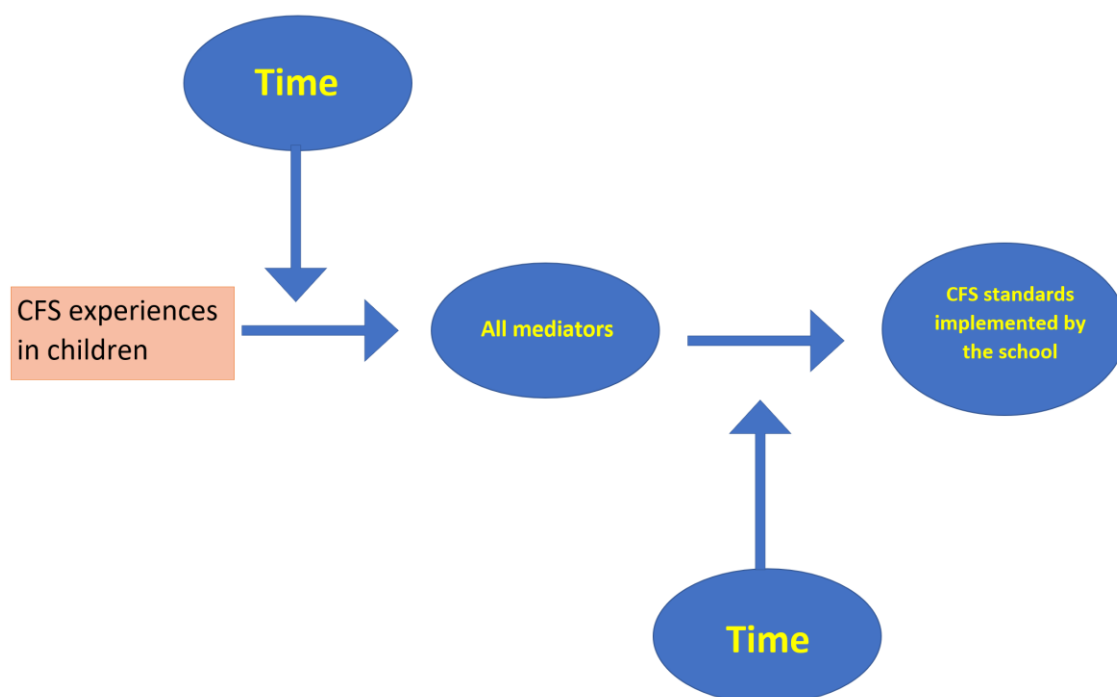


Figure 7: Time as moderator in the study impact theory for assessing CFS experiences in the children

Time was a moderator between the study and all mediators, preventing the author to assess all the CFS standards within the range of a week for the data generation. Time is also needed for the participants to go deeper in their level of trust to share about other forms of physical abuse, such a sexual violence, which considering other studies in India, might have also take place within the community. Other components of the UNICEF Protecting Environment Framework (Figure 1, page 8) demands time to detect how the intersection of community, school and families interact around child protection issues and find possible solutions for implementing all the standards of CFS model.

Due to lack of time the study could only take into the analysis the CFS standards based on children's assessment, as this report will cover later. This is also the reason why time moderates the path between the mediators and the long-term outcome, because it would have required a long exposure in the community and the inclusion of other crucial stakeholders to go deeper regarding other CFS standards. In order to give this step in the future, time is needed to assess how to proceed following the utmost ethical strictness without putting children under the risk of retaliation or further physical abuse.

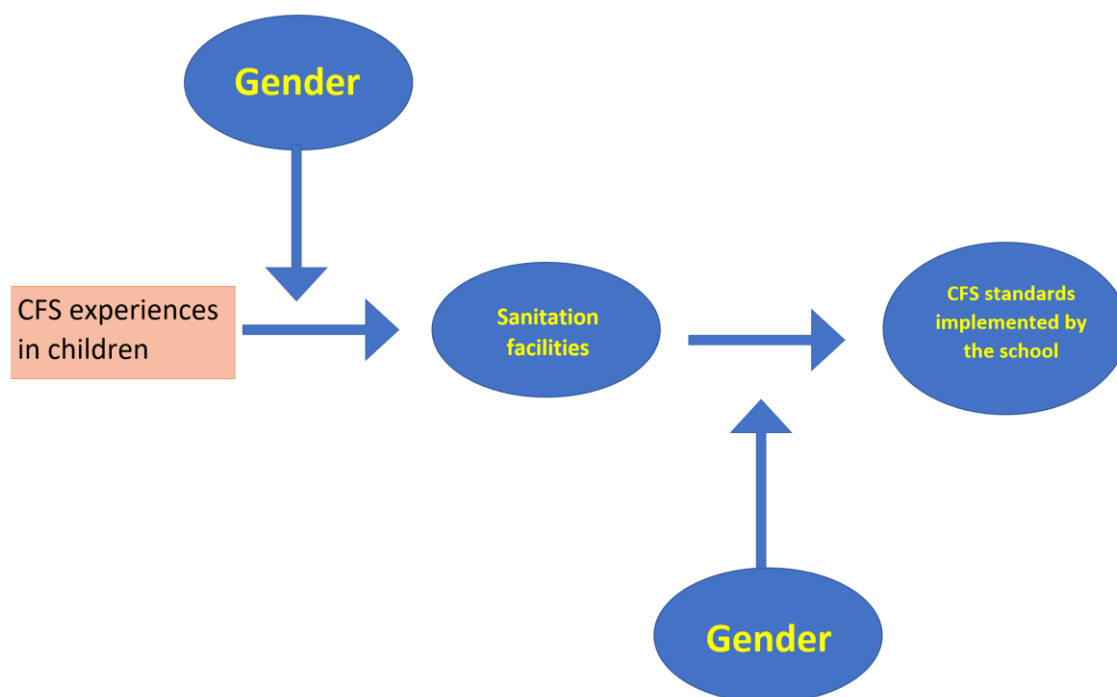


Figure 8: Gender as Moderator in the study impact theory for assessing CFS experiences in the children

A gender-sensitive approach conditioned the research process and the evidence about how the lack of sanitation facilities affects mainly girls, impacting negatively their school performance; evidencing that the school is not following the national guidelines on Menstrual Hygiene Management issued in India during 2015 (UNICEF India 2015). The feminist research ethics applied for this study, emphasized to listen the voice of girls and avoid any risk to silence the most vulnerable ones (Ackerly et al. 2010, 25).

Gender moderated the path between the study and the mediator (sanitation facilities), demanding to have female translators to comply to the cultural norm about young girls interacting with a male researcher in a private space in the presence of other female adults. Likewise, have an exclusive-female space helped to create a safe and secure environment for girls to talk about their burning issues related to menstruation. The female translators played a very important role in understanding the traditional misconceptions around menstruation and how still in some areas of India the education of boys is still considered more important than for girls.

During a possible implementation of the CFS Model, Gender conditions the path between the mediator and the final outcome to achieve tangible impact in the girl's lives. The implementation of the Menstrual Hygiene Management guidelines and the sanitation standards of CFS

model, will help to overcome the specific issues affecting girls' educational process and in a wider perspective contribute to their inclusion in the society.

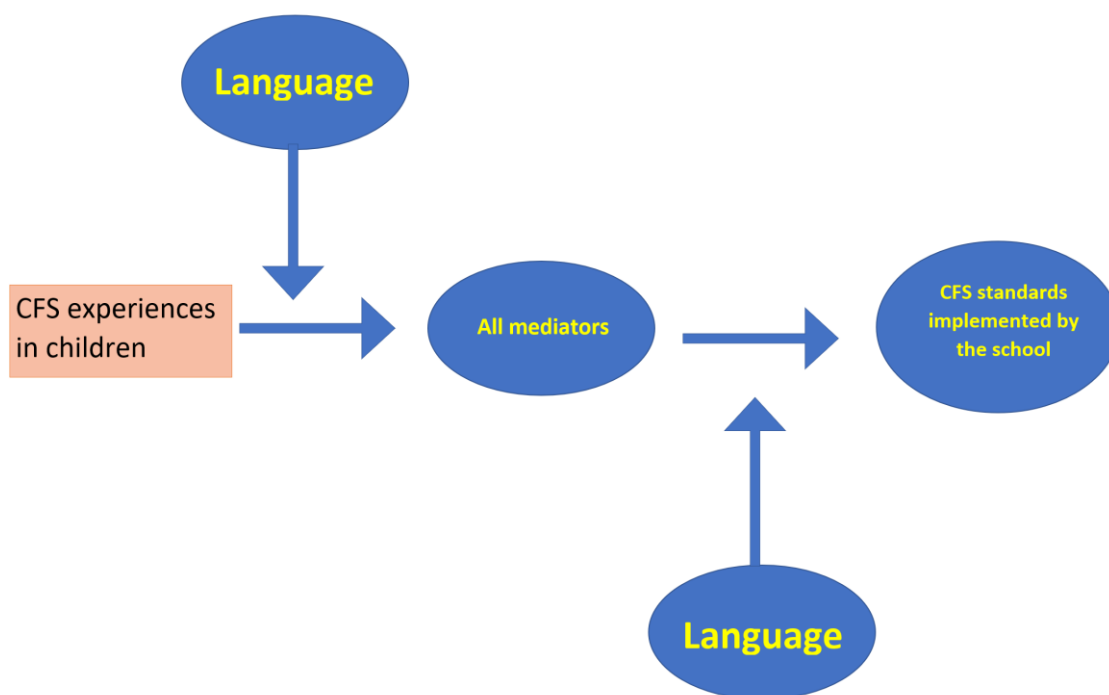


Figure 9: Language as a moderator in the study impact theory for assessing CFS experiences in the children

Due to languages barriers the author had to ensure that very clear instructions were given to the participants during the data generation. The translators were well informed beforehand about the aim of the study, the importance of having a child-friendly approach throughout process, the necessity to keep as pure as possible the original voice of the children and the importance of the translators' role as gate-keepers between the children and the author.

Some children were very proud in using English language; something that many Indians do throughout their lives as this is part of the colonial heritage. Within many sectors in the country, English language is a medium to reach all the geographical regions where different dialects are spoken (Pandey 2018). The author gave the instructions to keep using Hindi or Odia language during the pilots to avoid that other children whose English proficiency was not optimal yet, could be left out of the discussions. In addition, the researcher felt that children were using English language as part of their pleasing nature towards the foreign researcher and perhaps feeling impressed by the presence of people coming from different countries.

During an implementation of a CFS Model, language barriers and the possible structures of power hidden in the use of foreign languages, should be strongly taken into consideration, aiming not to leave any important stakeholder behind.

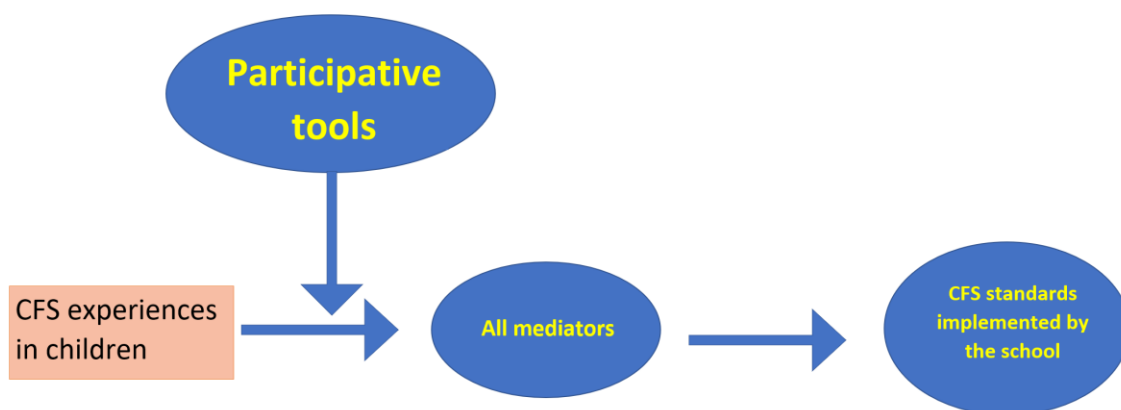


Figure 10: Participatory tools as moderator in the study impact theory for assessing CFS experiences in the children

Participatory methods are considered to equip children and young people to speak openly about their lives' experiences within a secure environment for them (Horgan 2017, 246). This principle brought us to the conclusion that a set of pilots of different participatory tools, embedded within the Ethnographic process, was very necessary. The combination of Photo Ethnography and Lego Play was very effective to collect CFS experiences shared by the children, allowing to have richer narratives and social performativity, not only the storytelling of negative experiences, but also about children's joyful moments at school. The importance of a participative method -facilitating the observation of the diverse and holistic world of the child, reflecting the subjective wellbeing of the participants- is something that might have gotten lost by merely assessing the CFS standards. This aspect correlates to what Marjanen and her colleagues found out after a throughout analysis to the wellbeing models implemented and promoted by four international well-known agencies. Despite that this organizations make mention of subjective data in their current literature and in different reports concerning the models, the space for subjective wellbeing is still very deficient. The indicators are still very much oriented in measuring children's necessities and rights, leaving behind important elements of the subjective world of children. (Marjanen et al. 2017, 13.)

Considering that the research team could not visit the school settings, the Photo Ethnography taken by the children, was effective because it gave us a peek into important aspects of the infrastructure, such as the classroom, sanitary conditions and areas which the children enjoyed the most.

The Lego Play facilitated the deepening of the information about the state of the CFS standards based on children's perspectives. In addition to that, it opened a channel to observe their level of cooperation, social interaction and playfulness, which are very important indicators during any learning process. As Horgan (2017, 246) argues, that it is not the methods themselves that are crucial, but the social interactions taking place in the collective construction of knowledge which really makes a study a participatory experience.

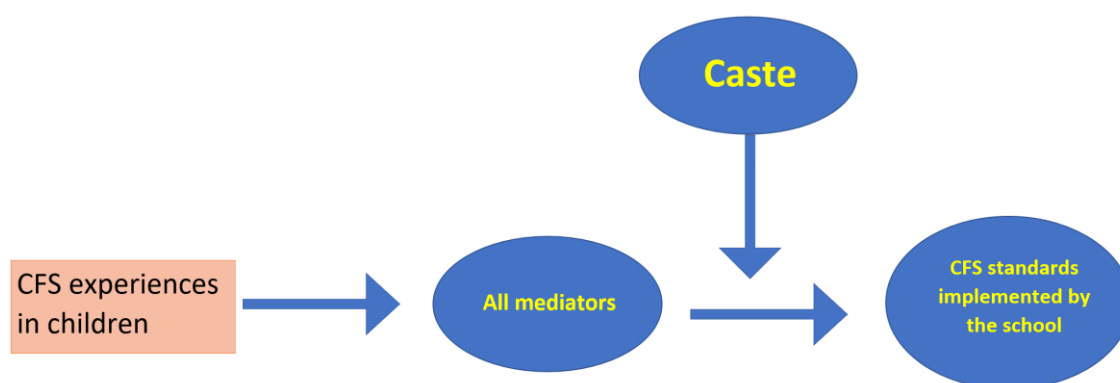


Figure 11: Caste as a moderator in the study impact theory for assessing CFS experiences in the children

There was no evidence in children's accounts about how the caste system -which is still in force in the Indian society (Deshpande 2000, 322)- plays a role in their lives. But, this theme came as an important topic of discussion during the reflexion meetings of the FINDigATE project. For a future study for implementing the CFS standards and the protective environment framework of UNICEF in the community, caste is an important moderator to be taken into serious consideration. To detect the level of intensity and intersection of caste with other elements present in the community such gender, socio-economic situation, disability and physical abuse, would be instrumental for the application of the CFS model.

## 6 Justifying conclusions stemming from the implementation of the study

### 6.1 CFS standards based on the data generated by children

Based on the Protecting Environment Framework UNICEF (Figure 1), the CFS model sets different standards for improving school's safeguarding capacity and enhancing the elements that are operating effectively. It is important to mention that the author could not cover all the standards of the model and the following assessment is based on children's report obtained through the participative methods tested with the participants.

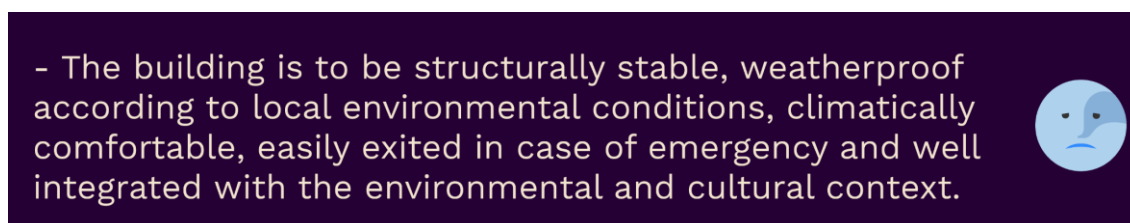


Figure 12: Structure standard (UNICEF 2009)

Children reported serious issues with the infrastructure, such as the lack of physical boundaries in the upper floors. They mentioned how during monsoon time the heavy rain has partially flooded some of the classrooms.

When there is rainy season it can rain so hard that sometimes the water came inside the classroom and we had to move all the desks (12-year old girl)

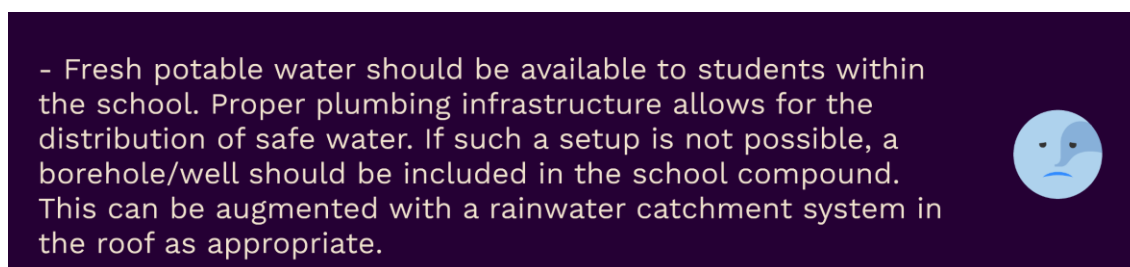


Figure 13: Safe water standard (UNICEF 2009)

Children reported that water was not clean sometimes. Few times did not come from the water tap. Considering the description, the author concludes the lack of availability of potable water, which might jeopardize children's health.

Few times the water tap is broken, and water doesn't come (13-year old girl)

- A separate space should be provided with water and soap or other cleaning agent for children to wash their hands.



Figure 14: Hygiene facilities standard (UNICEF 2009)

Children reported several problems related to the hygiene facilities. There is a space to wash hands but there is not availability of soap and allegedly, water was not always clean or running from the taps.

Once, I saw the water was very yellow, but it came clear after few minutes (14-year and 15-year old girls)

- For pupils, designated separate bathrooms for boys and girls within or close to the classrooms are the most practical and safest arrangement. These facilities can also be designed and located so that they are shared among clusters of classrooms to protect younger children.



Figure 15: Bathroom standard (UNICEF 2009)

There are separate bathrooms for boys and girls, but the sanitary conditions are not optimal. Girls reported that many doors were not locking properly, which produced a feeling of lack of protection and discomfort to use the facilities. In addition, the unsanitary conditions of the toilets and lack of facilities during the menstruation prevented them to attend class.

It's difficult to use toilets sometimes because the doors can't be locked. I'm afraid that someone pushes the door (13-year old girl)

- Space for school meal preparation should be designed and provided with equipment and furniture that ensure food is kept fresh and away from flies and other pests that undermine food quality.



Figure 16: Kitchen standard. Source (UNICEF 2009)

Children told about the lack of kitchen's facilities at school. They gave evidence of lack of sanitary standards during the food preparation. Likewise, the Photo Ethnography revealed through a picture about the issues regarding this standard.

There is not a kitchen at school as such. But there is an area for cooking where children should not go to disturb (14-year old boy)



Picture 8: Cooking school meal

- Easy access to open spaces from classrooms allows children to be in close contact with their environment and to engage in physical activities. Open spaces can be designed as play yards for sports, school gardens and orchards, decks or verandas for outdoor learning activities, open performance spaces, wide corridors and courtyards



Figure 17: Open Spaces standard

Based on children's descriptions and the pictures provided through the Photo Ethnography, the place counts with an adequate open space designated for their physical activities. The children told about a project of organic gardening taking place at the school. This is one of the spaces of school children mentioned enjoying the most.

We take care of the garden in the schoolyard. I like the big flowers we have there and, we play that we are gardeners (11-year old girls)

The schoolyard is big enough to have races and we compete with our friends who can run faster (12-year old boy)

## 6.2 Ethical considerations for assessing CFS experiences with children

The following guidelines for feminist research ethics have been useful for the study to consider the ethical considerations at hand. The guidelines have been developed in the context of the Gender-Crisis Prevention and Recovery Project (G-CPR), but they have been produced in a style that can be adapted to different scenarios within the research of social sciences giving an importance of a gender sensitive approach. (Brook 2010, 1-4.)

### 6.2.1 Participant engagement in the study

For the FINDigATE project it was very important that the studies done in India would respect the local culture, beliefs, traditions and social practices. According to Brook (2010, 19) community engagement at every step of the research is paramount. Anyhow, when there are risks towards vulnerable groups this consultation needs to be carefully considered.

Under the FINDigATE project a team was formed by professors and students from India and Finland to reflect every day after the generation of data at the Learning Festival. The most pressing issues were brought to general discussions with the aim to overcome the obstacles. Due to the severity of children's physical abuse reported in the first pilot, it was decided that teachers from the school and staff from the Power Generation Company (who organized the Learning Festival at the village) will not be part of the stakeholder team to respect children's privacy and prevent any possible reprimand towards them. The children could not be part of the stakeholder team because it would have required special arrangements and possible disclosure of confidential information to the adults in order to obtain their participation. This situation brought the need to keep children's voices as intact as possible throughout the research and that they would be very well informed before every activity.

### 6.2.2 Social value and beneficence of assessing CFS experiences with children

This guideline follows the Helsinki Declaration of Helsinki as an ethical principle which is that the participants' benefits are a priority more than any potential contribution to the society (World Medical Association (WMA)). Anyhow, it is not always possible to secure a beneficence for the people participating in research. Sometimes the value of a research influences good governance practices, improvement of services or knowledge generation. (Brook 2010, 20).

The author has been aware that the FINDigATE team did not have the time and resources to assess and implement all the standards of the CFS with the aim to create a protective environment for the children of the village. The CFS standards cover in a very holistic way all the different components that need to be in place within a community. In addition to that, there are several obstacles stemming from cultural and social practices of the context that need to be assessed first before rushing an implementation of the model.

The author concludes that there is a need to deepen the knowledge of participatory methods under the CFS standards, which would also consider the subjectivity of children's lives. For this reason, the stakeholders' team carefully reflected on implementing the study creating a space for children to evaluate the selected standards by minimizing all potential risks affecting children and through which the study could produce valuable knowledge about how to research with children in similar cultural contexts.

### 6.2.3 Quality research design of the study

The author adopted a flexible design and a constant ethical reflection for the study with the aim to easily solve the obstacles emerging during the process of the study. Additionally, the study adopted the implementation of the participative methods as pilots. A representative sample with a bigger number of participants was not needed for this case. Notwithstanding, Hertzog (2008) argues that to find the wisdom when a representative sample or a pilot is needed within the social studies, is a very straight forward issue to resolve due to many factors related to the nature of the research. Considering the characteristics of the FINDigATE project, the adoption of pilots was the best option. Authors such as Isaac and Michael (1995) suggested that pilots in social studies should have 10 - 30 participants; Hill (1998) suggested 10 to 30 participants for pilots in survey research; Julious (2005) in the medical field, and van Belle (2008) suggested 12 participants. Hence, for this study we had a total of 25 participants following the above recommendations.

The author adopted the ethnographic methods of semi-participatory observation and semi-structured interviewed, which were complemented by three participative methodologies to aid the research with children. The triangulation of methods and the ethical reflection in situ every day of the data generation, helped to anticipate the risks and makes the design of the study feasible. Likewise, the report of findings under the Program Theory-driven Evaluation methodology, helped to report the results under a scientific criterion which main purpose is the generation of knowledge under ideal ethical conditions.

The author searched for copyright authorization for the use of the Protecting Environment Framework (Figure 1, page 9), designed and produced by FHI 360, who hold copyright to this image published in Child Protection Basics (2012). UNICEF is cited within the FHI 360 report as the source of the information presented in the graphic, which was taken from the UNICEF publication Enhanced Protection for Children Affected by AIDS (2007). Both, entities, granted permission for the use of the Protecting Environment Framework under the condition that UNICEF will be mentioned as a source of information and FHI 360 as producer of the graphic. Likewise, copyright permission was requested from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention and the Program Performance and Evaluation Office for the publication of the Framework for Program Evaluation (Figure 2, page 18). The CDC confirmed that The Framework for Program Evaluation is in the public domain as it was created with public funds and it could be used for academic purposes with the accurate citation.

### 6.2.4 Risk and safety

A beneficial aspect for this study is that it took place within the Learning Festival organized by the Power Generation Company and which also partnered with the KIIT University to develop the activities of the festival. This company plays a very important role in the village

employing many families in the community and the locals find it reliable. Therefore, this study within the FINDigATE project was taken by the teachers of the schools as part of the agenda of the Learning Festival.

Under this didactic environment the children taking part of the pilots of the participative methods were given the freedom to participate and count with a space where their stories could be heard without risk of reprimands by the teachers. During a particular occasion when one of the teachers passed by monitoring the students while they were in the activity with Legos, the author of this study changed the questions that represented a risk for the children. Once the teacher left the place, the author could return to the data collection and talk in depth about the critical aspects of the negative experiences reported by the children.

The FINDigATE team was committed to assure that the study would not harm children's well-being. Considering that children were reporting stories of physical abuse and there was not prior knowledge about children's psychological state, the FINDigATE team was ready in case children would present difficulties in coming back to their window of tolerance or would present symptoms of abreaction.

The author followed the four principles of CARE process, meaning choice, agenda, resilience and emotion. These principles have been successfully implemented to reduced health-care induce stress in infants. The study made sure that children will have choices, which means to provide power within a powerless environment; agenda, means letting the participants to get familiar with the plan of the study and get familiar what to expect and what is expected of them; resilience, means to start with strengths and reframe the negative experiences; and emotions, refers to recognize and normalize common fears and responses (Lerwick 2016, 143).

#### 6.2.5 Informed consent for participating in the study

According to Pekkarinen (2018), consent from the parents is a requested for studies with children under the age of 15. Pekkarinen adds that there are situations in which guardians' consent cannot be obtain due to the characteristics of the research contexts. For instance, situations in which parents might prevent children's voices to express freely. When the study does not harm children and the participants are in the cognitive state to make decisions of their own, guardian's consent is not required (Pekkarinen 2018). In the same line, Horgan (2017) says that the parental consent it's framed from an adult perspective on the premises that children do not know what they are consenting to and that parents are better equipped to how to assess the potential risks or benefits of the research. But is parental consent really needed when there are underlying risks in the research? Is there a need for adult's consent when the research is about children's assessment of services, as it is the case of the CFS? (Horgan 2017, 255.) Horgan (2017, 255) critically argues that: "Ethical procedures are crucial

to developing ethical literacy in research practitioners and of paramount importance to the research process, but we need to interrogate further the potential for overly paternalistic/child protectionist frameworks adopted by ethical review bodies to hamper participatory research processes and reinforce adult-child power inequities especially in the field of child participatory research founded on the concept of children as agentic.”

Despite sending the study’s plan a month before traveling from Finland to the village, the FINDigATE team found out during the data generation that parents and children were not informed in due time about the aim of the pilot; nor written consent was taken from them. According to one of the professionals responsible in the organization of the Learning Festival, in India parents trust other adults who are taking care of their children. Hence, request of consent for research was a western practice which was not necessary in this specific local context.

Considering that the participants of this study reported practices of physical abuse imparted by the teachers, that parents usually support these corrective measurements, and that several of children avoid telling their guardians when this type of disciplining has taken place, the FINDigATE team felt that verbal consent from the children was the most ethical and appropriate way form of approval. The author made sure that the rationale of the study would be explained to the participants before the data generation, that the children were free to decide whether to participate or not and they could leave at any moment during the activities. Likewise, they were informed about the use of the data and its publication. The author reassured the participants that their names or any compromising data would not be disclosed at school, and that the material produced by them during the Participative Mapping, could be taken by them or destroyed per their request.

#### 6.2.6 Vulnerability within the assessment of the CFS experiences of children

The author took all the necessary preventions not to perpetuate the traditional and cultural dynamics of vulnerability present in the context of the study. It was paramount for the FINDigATE team that the data generation would not hinder children’s wellbeing and that they could return to their environment without affecting further their situation. Based on the data generated in the field, it was evident that girls were very vulnerable, and it was very important to create a safe space for them to share their experiences among their peers, which at the same time follows the cultural norm that male adults would not spend time in a private space with underage girls without having female adults present. The study plan had an inclusion of children with disabilities and special needs. Nevertheless, children presenting these vulnerabilities were not seen in the Learning Festival and the study did not count with enough time to deepen the knowledge about what happens in the village with children belonging to this vulnerable group in the community.

### 6.2.7 Participant recruitment

The environment of the Learning Festival, in which there were different desks displaying fun activities and games, helped the recruitment of children to participate in the study. The author counted with a private space close to the desks and with enough translators volunteering offering to the children the possibility to participate in the study. The participative methods served as medium of interaction, for which Lego Play was the most suitable option. These kinds of tools when they are adapted to the needs of the context are an excellent aid within the ethnographic process (Waller et al. 2011, 15,17).

### 6.2.8 Confidentiality and data security in the study

The study follows the stipulated protocol to ensure the confidentiality of the participants, the stories shared by them and that the data generated in the field will not put under evidence the identity of the children who cooperated in the process. Pictures with children's faces, data containing first names of students or adults, images or text which would reveal the exact location or name of the village are not going to be part of the study's report. This confidentiality and data security guideline were communicated to the children prior their participation in the activities.

### 6.2.9 Securing privacy and avoiding abuse

Even though the previous guideline seeks to protect the confidentiality of the participants of the study according to the feminist research ethics in case there is a transgression to human rights, all kinds of abuse should be reported to the competent authority by keeping intact the privacy of the victim from being known by the perpetrators. (Brooke 2010, 32.) This guideline should be consider carefully before contacting the legal system in the community, as in many cases there are not enough legal mechanisms in place to protect the victims. The author did not find evidence that the local authorities would follow an inform-child protection protocol, which is a fundamental part of the Protecting Environment Framework (UNICEF 2007). To report physical punishment to the authorities, would have required an assessment about the efficacy of the authorities to ensure child protection in the village. The fact that children told during the data generation that they usually do not trust their experiences of physical abuse with their guardians and only spoke about it among their peers, was a powerful reason not to disclose this information to any adult in the community.

### 6.2.10 Identity politics, group dynamics and individual authority

Under this guideline the study should not worsen the power dynamics taking place at the community where the research is to be carried out. Furthermore, the design of the study should reflect the awareness of how the power imbalances affect the life of the participants and that they will not permeate the process of research. Additionally, special attention that the report of the findings will not silence the voices of different groups of the community.

(Brook 2010, 33.) The FINDIgATE team and the daily meetings that took place in the field during the data generation, was a very good way to buffer the process from any potential risk of power dynamics and aided the author of this study to keep in constant attention the vulnerabilities of the participants.

#### 6.2.11 Anticipated and unanticipated effects of assessing the CFS experiences with the children

The risk for negative effects due to the participation in research is an undeniable fact (Brooke 2010, 34). The FINDIgATE team made sure that analysis of anticipated negative consequences would be assessed and that actions to mitigate them would be taken under utmost consideration. In the same way, the stakeholder's meetings after the data generation was a measurement to solve unanticipated effects in situ.

Although, there is evidence that very few people experiment negative effects due to previous traumatic experience, the FINDIgATE team was responsible to take care of any individual manifesting symptoms of abreaction or re-traumatization. Abreactions are potentially reasonable within emotional and cognitive processing; they fundamentally represent the subjective response of a person due to dysfunctional information stored in their brains (Shapiro 2018, 163). In case children would display heavy traumatic symptoms, the research team would have intervened to bring them back to the emotional baseline they were at before participating in the research.

Several studies have pointed out that the involvement in research where the participants share traumatic memories can experiment therapeutic effects (Brooke 2010, 35). Brooke (2010, 35) contents that this beneficial effect may be linked to an effective methodological designed rather than just participating in the study. Hence, this is the rationale the author adopted for a flexible design in order to discard activities that were potentially risky for children's wellbeing.

## 7 Ensuring use and sharing lessons learned of the study

### 7.1 The role of embodiment and gestures in assessing the CFS experiences with children

It was imperative for the pilots with the children to detect which methodology enabled more cooperation and comfort under ideal circumstances in which children could partake freely. It can be concluded that piloting the chosen participatory methods to discard and select the most suitable one for the local context, had a direct impact to reach the aim of the study.

Lego Play worked very well to facilitate the voice of children and an atmosphere of peer group collaboration. Successful collaboration depends on the sophisticated coaction of several elements and contextual features, such as the characteristics of the participants, interaction

process among them, the support provided, the nature of the tasks, and length of time (Patel, Pettitt & Wilson 2012, 21).

A constant observation during the fieldwork about how the children interacted among themselves and with the adults was carefully noted. According to Stevens (2012, 338) humans share frequently physical experiences which translates in common knowledge, co-creation of concepts and systems based on the moments shared within a group. In addition to that, the different array of models in which the body generates meanings and actions, many times in multimodal interaction, are manifold and cover from adoption of tools, gesture, signal, prose, tone of voice, body orientation, gaze and speech.

This study adopted Lindblom's conception of embodied actions not merely as a set of arbitrary movements, but as socially embodied actions that are an assortment of activities charged with meaning for the individual. Lindblom highlights that the conception of action, in oppose to movement, entails deliberateness or an aim (Lindblom 2007, 195). This definition of embodied actions taking place within the cultural context of the study helped the author to figure out some of the children's hidden messages in order go beyond their narratives and take into serious consideration their silences. For instance, when children were asked to follow a specific instruction, they normally consented, however, their body language suggested that their intention was contrary. Within the hierarchical Indian culture, it is expected that children obey and adopt adult's instructions without questions (Sriprakash 2010, 298). There are several studies about the social compliance in children and how vulnerable they can be towards suggestive influences from adults (Bruck & Ceci 1999, 423). Additionally, during the field work, active observation of children's performativity was necessary in case some of them would have displayed any symptom of abreaction while disclosing traumatic experiences.

## 7.2 The importance of methodological triangulation in assessing the CFS experiences with children

Triangulation in research refers to the adoption of two or more methodologies with the aim to expand the credibility of the results generated and the validity of the study. Triangulation can also be defined as verification of the results, a process of identification and exclusion of data, methodological flaws and spotting research biases. (Ştefura 2014, 583.) The combination of the ethnographic methodology and the participative tools helped to verify the data generated in the field. Likewise, to validate the findings the author opted for a program Theory-driven Evaluation, helped in presenting the results under a logical framework and produce valuable knowledge (Donaldson 2007, 9) in assessing the CFS experiences in children.

Likewise, it can be concluded that participative methods disconnected from the ethnographic process are not the panacea for research (Gachaller et al. 2008, 506). It is the design - even

more importantly in this case a flexible design - that plays a role in making the process a real participatory experience. As it happened within the Lego Play implemented in this study, where the participants displayed a numerous action of cooperation, gave evidence of playfulness and shared their school experiences in a freer style compared for instance with the mapping method. Within this flexible design for the study, the feminist research approach was fundamental for keeping a constant reflection on the power imbalances and to avoid silencing or overlooking some of the voices of the participants during the process of the study (Brooke et al. 2010).

Additionally, it can also be concluded that children shared their experiences about physical abuse or threats present at school regardless the method implemented. Notwithstanding, this study was in search for the most culturally-sensitive and ethical method to assess the CFS experiences of the children. Hence, is very important to go beyond the checklists containing standards of needs and rights, which could have been assessed through any of the participative methods implemented. Through a wider methodological approach understanding that children are social beings, whose wellbeing includes also subjective experiences of joy, friendship and cooperation, and that also they communicate with their silences and performance, the author could tap a richer array of experiences shared by the participants of the study.

### 7.3 The practice of punishment within the cultural context of the study

Despite India's recognition of the United Nation Convention of Child Rights to ensure that all children's needs are met and that human rights are protected, there are still existing geographical pockets where the implementation of child protective measurements stemming from the law is very deficient or non-existent in some cases. (Bajpai 2012, 59-60; Adaikalam, Juvonen & Marjanen 2018, 5.) Within the different range of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), part of the physical abuse towards infants is imposed as a form of punishment, widely accepted by the significant adults in care of children, endorse by believes and traditions, including by law as a mechanism of discipline. (World Health Organization 2006, 11-12.)

The fact that children do not communicate with the adults about their experiences of physical punishment and that they keep this information in secret from their guardians, and furthermore that they usually share this information of physical abuse with their friends, might be and indicator of their lack of knowledge of the different mechanisms in place within the community for children to demand about their rights and seek for help.

This study focused only on children's assessment of the CFS standards that were selected. In order to have a wider picture of the state of law protecting children's rights at the community, the study would have needed to included other significant stakeholders and the evaluation of other services related to child protection.

#### 7.4 Future studies of the CFS experiences in the context

Thanks to the implementation of FINDgATE project a connection was built between Indian and Finland's universities, opening a door for future studies, agreements and application for funding with the aim to contribute to children's wellbeing in the community.

There is a strong connection of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, attention deficit disorder (ADD) and ADHD, and several other mental health conditions. (Shapiro 2018, 337; Bourgeois, Lecomte & Daigneault 2018, 123.) These facts open a line for studying the impact of physical abuse and its connections with neurobiology and psychology of the child and about how abuse might impact learning and educational development of children in the community.

Considering that punishment is something imbedded within the traditional practices in India, most likely the adults of today were punished children in the past. Therefore, more than looking for legal procedures to prosecute the teachers, this study opens a possibility to re-search adult's attitudes towards child protection practices. In addition, it is important to find out how to find a change of mindset within a sensitive cultural approach for implementing the UNICEF model for CFS in the community. Also, to research how to install a culture of good practices and increase of know-how by adults in responsibility for children's wellbeing, about child rights and child's protective framework supported by all community's stakeholders. During an eventual implementation of the CFS model, the knowledge about child protective practices by teachers and other professionals in the community should be evaluated. It is important to look for participative methods that would suit the cultural context and which would not create a feeling that the researchers will prosecute the possible abuses reported during the evaluation.

Once a better rapport and trust has been established with the children and other important stakeholders in the community, it would be very convenient to apply the Child Abuse Screening Tool (ICAST) to a representative sample of participants. This instrument was developed by UNICEF and by The International Society for the Prevention of Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN) to enable systematic collection and comparison of data across cultures, time or between research groups for collecting data on the extent and depth of child abuse. (Runyan, Brandspigel, Zolotor & Dunne. 2015, 6.) This instrument needs to be translated to the local language and cultural adapted for the data generation.

Considering the positive experiences reported by children, such as places they like to spend time with their friends, the garden with organic plants at school and the close friendships enjoyed by them, these are elements that should be enhanced and taken into consideration within a possible implementation of the CFS Model. Likewise, the Lego Play or similar tools

could be kept as an interactive methodology which could aid the generation of important data to cover the other standards of the model.

#### 7.5 Limitations of this study

The author could only evaluate the current state of few standards of CFS model and only based on children's assessment. The study should be considered as a pilot with an open design which produced significant knowledge about how to research with children within very specific conditions and cultural context. The data generated is not representative enough to produce conclusions that would inform the studies of CFS experiences within different cultural contexts. The philosophical backbone of the study was the subjective school experiences of children and the process about how to adapt the participative tools to the needs of the participants and cultural circumstances. Considering the universality use of Lego as a participative tool, the author can conclude that this method opens the window for adapting Lego within research with children, where not only the verbal aspect is important, but also the diversity of embodied actions displayed by them and how this would inform studies based on child's lived experiences.

#### 7.6 Author's competencies in research with children

The author of this thesis has experience in working with INGOs in development cooperation and is familiar with the implementation of programs focused on child protection and community development. Likewise, the author was involved in the evaluation of Child Friendly Spaces for the asylum seekers in Finland and has studied Indian culture and society.

The author is aware that in the sector of development cooperation there is a lack of congruency about how to research with children. It is very common to find that some practices still place children as objects of research rather than as collaborators. Moreover, there is a lack of coherence between the participatory methodologies and the chosen tools, and despite the frequently used terms referring to children's rights and agency, professionals still exercise control in research with children and young people (Green 2015, 224-225).

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Appendix 1: Framework for Research Ethics and Evaluation: Justification and Guidelines.

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These guidelines and other information supportive of feminist research can be found at <https://www.macmillanihe.com/companion/Ackerly-And-True-Doing-Feminist-Research-In-Political-And-Social-Science/study-resources/Additional-resources>, a link associated with *Doing Feminist Research in Political and Social Sciences* (Palgrave 2010).