



# MODEL of CHANGE

## PHASE 2 – RESEARCH VIEWPOINTS

**Research viewpoints** on this issue in the **wider community** via **Focus Groups**, to identify prevalent beliefs and root causes in the local context, establishing a baseline.\*

\* we use the term “baseline” to mean: this research serves as a basis from which you will later be able to measure whether activities arising from the *Model of Change* have brought about changes in the community (in people’s thinking and action) regarding the issue of child witch accusations.

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In this phase you are seeking to gain insights into the perspectives of a diversity of people within the **wider community** on this issue of child witch accusations. It is a broad research enterprise to understand our context.

**Method:** running **Focus Groups** with selected participants.

**Purpose:** to explore the topic of child witch accusations, and to discover the local roots, realities, and responses for this phenomenon.

**Outcomes:** on completion of PHASE 2 of the *Model of Change*, the Planning Committee will have achieved the following...

- planned for the Focus Group research.
  - trained Facilitators, as needed, and run several Focus Groups.
  - analysed the research findings.
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You may personally have first-hand experience of child witch accusations. You know what you believe, and how you would act in particular situations. You may have some experience of others too, but not everyone will think and behave in the same way. It is important not presume to know what other people think and why they act as they do.

So there is a need to do research to discover a wider spectrum of views. The easiest way is to ask people, but this should be done in a non-threatening environment, where they feel free to speak openly and honestly. One method that has proven to be effective is to run a number of Focus Groups.

Note: throughout this *Model of Change* the term “we” refers to SCWA, and “you” refers to the Planning Committee – or on occasions, as indicated, their appointed Facilitator.

## How to run Focus Groups

Follow these guidelines to help you know who to invite, what to prepare, how to run things well, and the next steps you should take afterwards.

The Planning Committee should decide how best to initiate Focus Groups (how many, with whom, when, and where), aiming to ensure the research is as effective as possible.

### Who should you invite?

When selecting and inviting participants, you need to consider the following points.

**Participants:** Ideally there should be a representative sample of participants, reflecting the diversity within the local community.

- community leaders and members of the public;
- men and women;
- a range of ages, young and old;
- rural and urban groups;

...and so on, according to your local context.

You will need to run several groups, according to your capacity, in order to capture a cross-section of views and experiences.

It is essential to run groups for children in addition to groups for adults, in order to discover children's perspectives and perceptions of the local realities regarding child witch accusations. Note that with groups for children it is extra important to create a welcoming and friendly atmosphere, so that they can feel confident to contribute their ideas and views.

Sometimes, it is easier to run groups separately – for example, a group for men, a group for women, a group for children, a group for elders. In some cultures, women may not contribute to the dialogue if the men are present, or it is unlikely that children will say much if they are in a group with older people.

**Numbers:** Each group should have a maximum of 8 to 10 people, plus a Facilitator and a Scribe. If you have more than this, some people will attend but not participate. You may also need a person to help with arrangements for the event.

**Invitations:** When you invite the selected people to take part, explain clearly to them the aim of the group (the **purpose** given above) so that they can think about it prior to the group, and explain that the discussion will last between 1.5 and 2 hours. Give them the date, time and place for their group.

**Date and Time:** It may be convenient to hold each group after an existing activity (such as a church service, village meeting), as people will already be present. However, if you do this, you should...

- obtain the permission of the leaders of the church, community, or village in advance; and
- make sure that you carefully explain to them the research that you are doing.

Note: You will still need to issue invitations to the selected participants in advance.

**Names:** On the day, make sure that all the participants know each other or that you have a list of names so that the Facilitator can introduce them to each other. This will help the participants to feel more at ease with each other, and will enable the Facilitator to speak to them by name.

## What do you need to prepare?

**Questions:** Prepare (and print) a set of clear 'open' questions to initiate dialogue.

Note that an 'open' question means you should NOT use questions which invite simple 'yes' or 'no' answers. For example, do NOT ask, 'Do members of your community believe that children can be witches?' Instead ask, 'In your community, what are some of the things that people believe about witches?' as this encourages a narrative response.

The questions should fall into three aspects:

- Roots — exploring what people think about witches and child witch accusations, and what might cause a child to be accused.
- Realities — exploring what happens to children who are accused of being witches, and how are they treated by others.
- Responses — exploring how people respond to children who are accused of being witches, and what (if anything) is done to help or protect them.

Some suggested questions are provided (see annex) for you to use or adapt. Think about which questions are most important for you to ask in your context. Some questions might require the Facilitator to seek more information or details.

**Forms:** Print a set of Participant Forms (see annex), one per person.

## How do you run the groups?

The Facilitator for each Focus Group should do the following:

**Ambience:** Create a positive atmosphere. It is important that the participants feel welcome, comfortable, and at ease. This way they will tend to forget that they are taking part in a research exercise, which can result in better quality, more honest answers.

**Anonymity:** Stress that everything that is recorded or noted down will be completely anonymous. It will not be possible from the research data to trace particular answers to a particular person.

Ask the participants to complete the Participant Form. They must NOT put their name on this (it is anonymous). Emphasise that this will be used only to provide background information about the group. Note: If it is easier, the Scribe can fill in the details for all 8 to 10 participants in the group. *However, refer to the analysis note\* under “Next steps”.*

### **Explain and Encourage:**

At the start, make sure that the participants understand:

- the **purpose** of the group, which is to discover the roots, realities, and responses to child witch accusations in this community;
- that there are no ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ answers;
- that their opinions are all of interest to you; and
- that everyone should participate in the discussion.

Encourage open and free responses, with respectful listening. Nobody is here to censor or judge other’s answers, so discourage debate and argument. It is OK to have differing points of view; you want to hear each person’s perspective.

Use the prepared questions to draw out participants’ responses under each of the three aspects (Roots, Realities, Responses).

### **Roles:**

The Facilitator must be as neutral as possible in his or her way of speaking to the group and asking the questions, so as not to influence the responses of the participants. Only ask ‘open’ questions which do not suggest answers. As participants tend to all talk at once when answering questions, the Facilitator must impose some order and ensure that everyone has the opportunity to answer and be heard. As Facilitator, try not to express any shock or horror or surprise at the answers given, as this might be perceived as disapproval, and so discourage further honest responses. It is OK to ask a further question to clarify answers, but do not comment in any way on the answers that have been given.

The Scribe must write down the answers **precisely**, as they are given, **without any commenting or interpreting or elaborating or paraphrasing them**. It may be quicker and easier to record responses with an audio recording app (these can be downloaded onto a mobile device). If you are able to do this, the Scribe will need to carefully transcribe all the responses after the meeting, and then delete the recordings.

## Next steps

After each **Focus Group**, the Planning Committee will need to analyse the responses. For this you need the transcript of the answers and the Participant Forms.

**Analysis:** Initially, you should aim to identify common answers and perspectives among the responses given. These will be used to inform the key topics at the **Action Forum**, to be held later. Then, using the information from the Participant Forms, you may be able to identify whether there are significant differences in beliefs and practices among young and old, rural and urban dwellers, men and women.

*\* Analysis Note: If you wish to be able to analyse the answers from a mixed group afterwards by gender, age, and so on, you will need to give a number to each participant so that you can link the answer to the participant anonymously. Write the participant's numbers on the Participant Form. If you don't want to link answers to individuals during your analysis, you can simply note who is in each group with statistical data (for example: "a group of 4 men, 4 women"; or "a mixed group of children aged 7 to 13"; and so on).*

It is a good idea to let the participants know what you have discovered when your analysis for the Focus Groups is completed, as this will show them how much you value their contributions to the research.

## How to conduct 'Voice of the Child' interviews

During this phase of the *Model of Change* we also advise conducting some one-to-one interviews which are separate from the Focus Groups. These interviews are with children who are known to have experienced child witch accusations. These have to be done with great care and sensitivity by an adult known and trusted by the child.

### Why do interviews with children?

It is essential to hear the voices and perspectives of children in any event where adults are learning about the impact of child witch accusations. In this *Model of Change* this would include events such as the Action Forum in PHASE 3, or the Interactive Workshops in PHASE 4. However, having children present may risk re-traumatising the child, and they may find participation difficult or upsetting. So interviewing a child in advance in a safe environment ensures their viewpoint can be fully represented.

We have developed the following guidelines and questions to help with this process.

### Guidelines for setting up an interview with a child:

- People who have been trained in working with children, and ideally in counselling, should lead this process.
- These counsellors should identify children whom they know have experience of witchcraft accusations and abuse, and most importantly, whom they know will feel comfortable talking about their experiences.

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- The person who asks the child questions (the interviewer) should already have a positive relationship of trust with the child, and the 'conversation' (the interview) should take place 'one to one'.
- The environment for the interview must be a place with which the child is familiar, and where they feel comfortable and at ease. If this is in a room, then the child should be invited to choose where they wish to sit, and the door left open, so the child does not have the sense of feeling trapped.
- Before the interview, it must be made clear to the child that they are under no obligation to answer the questions. If they choose not to answer any or all of the questions, this will not affect the provision of future support to the child. The child should not feel pressured in any way into answering.

### Process for doing an interview with a child:

- The interview process should start with a short game to put the child at ease. This could be something as simple as the interviewer hiding a pebble in one of their hands behind their back, and then stretching their hands in front of them, and inviting the child to guess which hand the pebble is hidden in. Then swop, so that the interviewer has to guess which hand the child has hidden the pebble.
- The interviewer should then explain to the child that they and other adults like them care about what children think and feel about things, because adults can learn a lot from children. Children can help adults to make this world a better place by sharing their experiences and thoughts and ideas.
- The interviewer must explain that this information will be shared with other people who want to help children and that this is why the interview is being recorded.
- **The interviewer must ask if the child is happy to talk about their own life and life in their neighbourhood, so that other people can learn from them. The interviewer must also ask if the child is happy for this information to be shared with others.**
- **If the child is not happy, then the session will go no further, except to affirm that that is okay.** The interviewer can then simply play another game and allow the child to go.
- **If the child becomes upset or traumatised during the interview, then the interviewer should end the interview.** The interviewer should ensure the child is OK, and allow the child to leave. No pressure must be put on the child in any way to answer the questions.
- The time with the child should finish with the interviewer thanking the child for their time and for sharing their thoughts. The interviewer should then ask the child if they have any questions that they would like to ask.

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- Close with another, simple game, and an offer to pray with the child, if the child is happy for that. If they are, then it is an opportunity to bless and affirm the child in prayer. If they are not, then simply thank the child, and allow them to go.

### **Questions for doing an interview with a child:**

- Suggested questions for doing an interview with a child are given in the annex.

### **Recording an interview with a child:**

- If possible, and if the child is happy with this, record the interview using a digital recorder. Some apps on a mobile phone or computer are able to do this.
- If it is not possible to record, then take down detailed written notes of the questions and answers.
- In either case, ensure that you are giving the child your full attention.

Extracts from these interviews (anonymised, so as not to reveal the child's identity or location) will be used during the Action Forum in PHASE 3 (if such an event is held), and may also be used during the Interactive Workshops in PHASE 4.

## **Finally...**

Please send all the completed responses and notes (scanned or photographed) to SCWA. More detailed analysis can take place at a later date and a research report produced.

Also, if you are not able to analyse the results, please simply send them to SCWA and we will arrange do an analysis for you.

Thank you.

« [info@stop-cwa.org](mailto:info@stop-cwa.org) »

## PHASE 2 ANNEX

### Focus Group – Suggested Questions

Some suggested questions are provided here for you to use or adapt. Think about which questions are most important for you to ask in your context. Some questions might require the Facilitator to seek more information or details, to clarify responses.

#### Exploring the **ROOTS** of Child Witch Accusations

- 1a How would you describe a witch? What words do you use in this community for a 'witch'? What else can you tell us about witches?
- 1b In your community what are some of the things that people believe about witches? And what are some of the practices (the sort of things witches do) involving witchcraft?
- 1c As far as you are aware, have children always been accused of being witches? Or is this a more recent phenomenon? If more recent, when do you think this change started, and why? Are there any significant things that happened in your community or nation that may have brought about this change?
- 1d What sort of things might cause people to suspect a child of being a witch? (Please give as much detail as possible.)
- 1e Can you identify any underlying causes, driving forces in society, or commonly held beliefs which may encourage child witch accusations in your community, or in the nation as a whole? If so, what do you think these are?

#### Exploring the **REALITIES** of Child Witch Accusations

- 2a When a child is accused of being a witch, what happens next? What do people (in the family or community) do? What happens to the child? (Please give details of things you know that have occurred.)
- 2b Do these practices (and the people who carry them out) vary from region to region, or according to different religions? What are some of the differences?
- 2c What effect do these accusations have on the daily lives of the children in their communities?



## Exploring the **RESPONSES** to Child Witch Accusations

- 3a What is the view of the community here towards child witch accusations? What is people's attitude towards children who have been accused, and how do people treat these children? (Please describe in detail.)
- 3b Are there some in the community who want to stop children being accused in this way? What are these people doing to help children or protect them?
- 3c How could children who are accused of being witches be reconciled with their families and communities?
- 3d How do you think churches could be better enabled to protect children in your community? What could the church do to help children who are being accused?

## Focus Group – Participant Form

**Note to Facilitator:** You can give one form to each participant to complete and hand back to you, or else ask the Scribe to fill in the details for the whole group.

Place: ..... Date: .....

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### Note to Participant:

Please do NOT put your name on this form. Note that all responses and contributions made during this **Focus Group** today will be anonymous. Any comments made and answers given to questions by any person attending will not be attributed to any named individual. The details you enter on this form provide useful background information which will help us to note the context of the responses and to make comparisons.

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Please provide the following background information:

- Name of town and commune (sector) or name of village where you live:  
.....
- Your gender: — FEMALE / MALE — *please delete as appropriate.*
- Your age: .....
- Your religion: .....
- Name of your place of worship (the church or mosque or temple you attend):  
.....
- Do you have work or a job? — YES / NO — *please delete as appropriate.*
- If YES, what work do you do? .....
- What is your role in your community (if any)? For example, please indicate if you are a religious leader, community elder, or other recognised role:  
.....

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Thank you for assisting us with our research today.

## Voice of the Child – Interview Questions

Following the guidelines given, if the child has indicated that they are happy to talk about their own life and life in their neighbourhood so that other people can learn from them, and also indicated that they are willing for this information to be shared with others, then the interview can proceed.

The following questions will provide a useful framework.

1. What is your favourite activity? Why do you like this?
2. Describe something that you are good at doing.
3. Describe some of the good things that are happening in your neighbourhood. How do these things make you feel? Why do they make you feel like this?
4. Tell me about some of the bad things that are happening in your neighbourhood. How do these things make you feel? Why do they make you feel like this?
5. Why do you think that these bad things are happening?
6. What do you think we should do to stop them from happening? What should adults do? What should children do?
7. Some people accuse children of being witches. What would you like to say to those people? Why?
8. If you were president for the day, what would you do to make our country a better place? Why would you do this?

### Notes:

- For all of the questions, the interviewer should try to help the child to expand on their answers through asking follow-up open questions such as “Why?”, “What do you think about this?”, and so on.
- Do not disagree, or express disapproval, or critique the answers the child gives. This is their opportunity to share their perspective.
- It is important to begin and end the interview on a positive note.
- Don’t forget to thank the child for helping you and others to learn about their life experiences and neighbourhood.