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## Module 8:

# INTERVIEWING A CHILD From the UN Police Perspective

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### OVERVIEW

In Module 8 we will explore tools and techniques to appropriately interview children.

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Know the UN guidance and approach to interviewing children, to inform your advising and mentoring role to the host state police.
- Be able to apply child friendly interviewing techniques when interacting with children as UN Police.

### ACTIVITIES

- PowerPoint presentation
- Group Work on case studies
- Debriefing
- Quiz

### LEARNING HANDOUTS

- Summary of Child-Friendly Interview Techniques
- Case Study 1
- Case Study 2
- Case Study 3

### FACILITATION TIME

2.5 hours

## TRAINER'S NOTES



The competencies taught in this module are relevant notwithstanding the specific mandate attributed to different missions. However, they must be approached according to the established mandate:

- Operational support mandate: Patrols (in POC sites, IDP camps, joint operations with UN military, etc.), investigating cases, crime prevention, technical and tactical advice to host State police, joint operations, working on trafficking and border control, working on organized crime, etc.
- Institutions' building mandate: Assisting police reform and restructuring, advising and training host State police on community policing and other methods, monitoring, sensitization projects, etc.
- Executive mandate: (e.g. Kosovo, East Timor), safeguard law and order, facilitating the launch of a new domestic police service, etc.

Despite the different mandates, child protection factor remains applicable in all contexts. Hence it should be adapted to the specific mandate of the mission, but is relevant to all mentoring and capacity building roles played by the UN Police.



There is a role play exercise that goes with the content of this module in the trainer's material. It can be used at the beginning, middle or at the end of this module.

### SLIDE 1: Learning Outcomes



Read the two learning outcomes below and then continue with the plenary discussion.



Even though the main focus of this module is on techniques for interviewing children, it is important that you understand your role as UN Police Officers in the context of peace operations. The UN Police mandate in most cases is to mentor and advise host State police on interviewing children and not to undertake interviews yourselves other than in exceptional circumstances.



We will learn in this module to:

- Know the UN guidance and approach to interviewing children, to inform your advising and mentoring role to the host state police.
- Be able to apply child friendly interviewing techniques if and when interacting with children as UN Police



### PLENARY DISCUSSION

 Ask the following question to learners in plenary:

 Thinking of your experience as police officers, what are the differences between interviewing a child and interviewing an adult?

 Take a few answers orally. Then, share the following elements with learners.

## **SLIDE 2: Why is interviewing children different from interviewing adults?**

### *POSSIBLE RESPONSES:*

- ❖ Children have not yet completed their development.
- ❖ Children have a different conception of time than adults and may not understand the urgency of a situation.
- ❖ Children think differently from adults. They understand events and situations differently, based on their stage of development, their maturity and other personal characteristics like their gender, ethnic origin, culture, etc.
- ❖ They communicate differently from adults.
- ❖ Children can get scared or intimidated by figures of authority (for example police officers) or by new environments (for example a police station).
- ❖ Victims, and in particular child victims, risk being further distressed when having to relate what has happened to them.

 This also refer to the child's development and maturity levels discussed in module one. Attention to the level of development and maturity of each child is required, as it is unique to him or her, and this may influence the way questions will be asked during interview, or how explanations are provided about what happened.

## **SLIDES 3: Core Guidelines for interviewing children**

 Child-friendly interview technique is a specialized training program that cannot be covered within the timeframe of this module. Hence, it is important to understand that this course does not make you an expert to conduct child-friendly interviews. Proper expertise is needed, and UN Police can help sharing relevant norms and practices in this regards to help improve the way such interviews should be conducted by the host state police.

 There are recognized core guidelines to follow in order to interview a child in line with international standards. These core guidelines apply to all children of all ages and police officers must embed them full:<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> UNICEF, Guidelines for interviewing children, [https://www.unicef.org/esaro/5440\\_guidelines\\_interview.html](https://www.unicef.org/esaro/5440_guidelines_interview.html)

1. Do no harm to any child; avoid at all-time pejorative questions, attitudes or comments that could be interpreted as insensitive to cultural values, or that could place a child in danger or expose a child to humiliation, or that could reactivate a child's pain from traumatic events.
2. Do not act in a discriminatory manner which would increase social exclusion based on sex, race, age, religion, status, educational background or physical abilities.
3. No staging; do not ask children to tell a story or take an action that is not part of their own experience to explain a situation. It is important to have in mind the approach on "need to know" basis, to focus on key data for investigation and the necessity of getting all the details about the experience of the child to reduce risks of re-victimisation (i.e. not to recreate the whole experience, no return to the site of incident).
4. Ensure that the child or guardian knows that he/she is being interviewed. Explain the purpose of the interview and its intended use.
5. Obtain consent from the child and his or her guardian for all interviews or video recording. When possible and appropriate, this permission should be in writing.
6. Pay attention to where and how the child is interviewed to assure the confidentiality of the child testimony. Limit the number of interviewers. Moreover, try to make certain that children are comfortable and able to tell their story without outside pressure, including from the interviewer.

#### **SLIDES 4 to 6: Six Rules of a Good Interview**

 There are some recognized rules to follow to conduct a good interview with a child. These rules apply to children of all ages; however, police officers must expect different reactions to their questioning based on the age of the child. These rules also apply to all categories of children, whether they are victims or witnesses of abuses or a criminal act, or accused or convicted of a crime act. The principles are of a general nature and UN police Officers still have to use their judgment on a case-by-case basis in applying the principles flexibly.

The first three rules would be in preparation for the interview:

1. **Create trust:**

The way a police officer interacts with a child has a direct impact on the way the child will respond and react to questions. Part of creating trust would be to introduce yourself, your mission and your role, and to explain the process fully. A child may not feel comfortable to volunteer information to an aggressive police officer while a child may be more inclined to discuss freely with a police officer that manages to create a climate of trust. To effectively communicate with a child, it is crucial to first establish a good relationship and build trust. This can be done using verbal and non-verbal language appropriately, for example by taking time to discuss matters not related to the situation like the child's school or sports and games. Also, the child needs to understand the situation and why he/she is being interviewed and what the information will be used for. It is therefore crucial that the police officer explains the situation to the child and ensures that she/he fully understands. If and when possible, organize for the police officer that will conduct the interview to be of the same gender as the child. If the child trusts the police officer, he/she will feel comfortable to discuss.

**2. Create a child-friendly atmosphere:**

When preparing the room for interviewing a child, police officers must ensure that they conduct the interview in a safe and non-threatening environment (no weapons, quiet environment and privacy). Police officers should choose a room that is quiet and in where there will be no interruptions. Nobody should be allowed to walk-in while a child is being interviewed, and the police officer should not accept phone calls while talking to the child. The police officer should always meet the child at “eye level” – which means that he/she should set the chair to sit beside or in front of the child, rather than stand. It is good to attend to the basic needs of the child before the interview, for example by offering some water and food, letting them use the toilet, etc. If certain basic needs are not met, the child will not be able to participate effectively in an interview. This will also help in building trust.

**3. Keep an open mind and remain objective:**

It is important to view the child objectively without stereotypes and prejudice. In order to be receptive to information that the child will communicate, police officers must put their own opinions and beliefs aside. They must also refrain from forming a first impression of the child based on visual information that may be misleading, for example the clothes the child is wearing or the facial expressions of the child. If the child looks nervous, it may not indicate guilt but rather fear of being in an unfamiliar environment.

The three last rules would be more relevant during the interview:

**4. Remain professional:**

Police officers must show empathy and respect to the child; this will facilitate the discussion. They must also remain patient and give the child time to answer questions, as children do not have the same sense of time as adults, and may not understand the urgency of answering questions. In addition, children do not always know which details are important and which are not. This is most true of younger children. Finally, police officers must show interest in the child’s story and not look bored or impatient.

**5. Know how to listen:**

Using active listening techniques and engaging in the conversation with the child will contribute to building trust and reducing fear. If the child feels that the police officer is listening and is interested, the child will communicate more easily and talk more freely. Police officers should avoid interrupting a child while he/she is talking. If possible, it is good to record the interview or take notes in order to avoid the necessity for the child to repeat his/her story multiple times. It is important to explain to the child why the interview is being recorded or the police officer is taking notes, and what the information will be used for. In addition, it is appropriate to leave time for children to be silent and not to force the conversation unnecessarily.

**6. Know how to conclude:**

Before concluding the interview, the police officer must ensure that all points have been covered and inquire if the child wants to add something. It is then important to inform the child of the next proceedings and thank the child for his/her cooperation. Police officers should not raise expectations inappropriately and promise things to the child they cannot deliver at any time during the interview.

 When interviewing a child, you can use some techniques that will make your interactions easier. The techniques are divided into two types: verbal and non-verbal.

The techniques we present here can be used with children of all ages but they of course have to be adapted to the age and circumstances of the child. This session should be taken as an introduction to interviewing children and you will have to rely on your experience as police officers to judge situations accurately and know how to proceed.

**SLIDE 7: Interview Techniques – Verbal communication**

 Examples of verbal techniques include:

Good Practice	To Avoid
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use short and simple sentences (one idea per sentence)</li> <li>• Use positive sentences Ex: “Did your parents know you were here at night?”</li> <li>• Use neutral, non-subjective sentences Ex: “Why were you here at night?”</li> <li>• Use open questions as much as possible: Ex: “Please tell me what happened.”</li> <li>• Practice active listening: create an environment in which the child feels free to explain his or her situation</li> <li>• Repeat the same question twice using different words to ensure that the child understand properly the question</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid long and complicated sentences, with several ideas</li> <li>• Avoid complex words</li> <li>• Avoid negative sentences and double-negatives Ex: “Your parents haven’t told you not to come here at night?”</li> <li>• Avoid sentences with double meaning and suggestive sentences Ex: “Did you come here at night to engage in prostitution?”</li> <li>• Do not judge or appear to judge</li> <li>• Avoid confrontational vocabulary</li> <li>• Do not insist that a child answer a question if he/she is unwilling to do so</li> <li>• Avoid raising your voice or shouting at the child</li> <li>• Avoid intrusive and questions baring on the privacy of the child and that do not have a direct link to the case</li> </ul>

Children, especially when they are young, can get confused if they are asked several questions in the same sentence or if the person interviewing them uses words they cannot understand. In addition, children will often not understand double negations and negative sentences. Finally, it is important to avoid suggesting to the child what answer you are looking for, as children are often reluctant to contradict adults in positions of authority. If the child thinks you are looking for a specific answer, he or she will likely give you that answer even if it is not the truth.

Practicing active listening means that you are engaged in the conversation. You can do this by looking interested and attentive, by showing signs of encouragement to the child, and by giving enough time to the child to think before answering a question.

Always keep in mind that children who grow up or live in armed conflict environments socialise differently and their behaviors cannot be compared to children living in peaceful environments.

**SLIDE 8: Interview Techniques – Non-Verbal communication**

Examples of non-verbal techniques include:

Good Practice	To Avoid
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish visual contact. However, always be mindful of the local culture; in some cultures, it is bad manners for children to look adults in the eye</li> <li>• Sit at the same level as the child to avoid intimidation</li> <li>• Maintain a calm demeanor</li> <li>• Pay attention to the child’s non-verbal communication and respond appropriately</li> <li>• Keep the interview short (as children often have a shorter concentration span)</li> <li>• Girls should preferably be interviewed by a person from the same gender</li> <li>• Use translator as needed and explain the role of translator</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid being too close to the child and touching the child</li> <li>• Avoid physical behavior that shows judgment, annoyance and impatience (frowning, looking at watch, raising eyebrows, etc.)</li> <li>• Avoid any behavior that gives the child the impression that you don’t pay attention or don’t take him/her seriously by for example leaving the room in the middle of the interview, accepting phone calls or texting messages or allowing other people to enter</li> <li>• Avoid adopting a dominating behavior, for example by standing above the child</li> </ul>

 The important aspect of non-verbal communication when interviewing a child is to create an interaction with the child that is engaging but not intimidating. This is not easy to do, especially when interviewing children that are under distress, fear or shock. Children, especially when very young, tend to imitate adults' behavior, so if you are calm and patient, the child is more likely to calm down.

 This may be counter-intuitive to many, but it is important to avoid touching the child. When a child is distressed or crying, our first reaction will sometimes be to hold the child to comfort him or her. However, in many cases this can be intimidating for a child, especially if the child has been physically or sexually abused. It is better to ensure that you establish good eye contact and smile, but avoid physical contact.

### **Group work on case studies**

Time required: 45 minutes

5 minutes	For introduction of exercise and instructions
20 minutes	For group work on exercise
20 minutes	For correction of exercise and discussion

 Ask the learners to work two by two.

 Distribute Case Study 1 to all groups.

<b>Case Study 1<sup>2</sup></b>
<p>Rebecca is 13 years old and lives in Juba, in South Sudan. Her parents were killed in late 2013, when the fighting started. Now Rebecca lives with her grandparents, who try to take care of her as much as possible but they are poor and in bad health.</p> <p>Rebecca goes to school every day. One afternoon, she is going through the market on her way back from school when she is grabbed by an older boy, who drags her to a nearby alley. He threatens Rebecca with a knife and puts his hand on her mouth to prevent her from screaming for help. The boy smells of alcohol. He tells Rebecca that his name is John and that he knows where she lives. He tells her that she must bring him money once a week, otherwise he will go to her house and beat her grandparents.</p> <p>Rebecca starts to steal in the market on her way back from school. When she cannot steal money she steals food to bring to John. She becomes very stressed and sad, and her grandparents worry about</p>

<sup>2</sup> Case study adapted from "Police Training on Child Rights and Intervention Techniques, Libyan Police", International Centre for Children's Rights and UNICEF Libya, December 2014

her, but she does not want to tell them about her problems.

One day, Rebecca leaves school early and passes by a coffee shop in the market. She manages to steal the wallet of a customer sitting in the coffee shop. The customer sees her and screams. Rebecca panics, starts running and trips. The customer catches her and calls the police. Two officers come; one stays with Rebecca while the other takes the customer's statement. Then, they take Rebecca to the police station. The two officers are men, so they feel like it would be better for a female officer to interview Rebecca. They brief their female colleague, who then starts the interview with Rebecca.

**Interview of Rebecca by the Police Officer:**

*Police Officer:* Good afternoon Rebecca, I am a police officer here. How are you?

*Rebecca:* (Lowers her head and looks at the floor) Please call my grandmother, she will be worried.

*Police Officer:* Later Rebecca. You and I must talk now because you will soon see the judge who will want to know what happened today. The two officers who brought you here told me you stole a wallet. Why did you do that?

*Rebecca:* The officers have lied.

*Police Officer:* (Raises her voice) Of course not. They wrote in their report that you took the wallet and ran, and that the customer caught you. What were you doing in the market in the middle of the day? Do your parents know you skip school?

*Rebecca:* My parents are dead. I live with my grandparents. You have to call them. (She starts to cry)

*Police Officer:* We will call your grandparents, please don't worry Rebecca. They will come here and you will be able to talk to them, is that alright?

*Rebecca:* Yes, thank you. (She smiles at the Police Officer)

*Police Officer:* While we are waiting for your grandparents, can you please tell me how long you have been living with them?

*Rebecca:* Since two years now.

*Police Officer* (Asks more questions to Rebecca about school and what she likes to do in her spare time)

*Rebecca* (Answers more and more freely the Police Officer's questions and seems more calm)

**Rebecca's grandparents have arrived. The Police Officer talks to them separately and then they join Rebecca in the interview room.**

*Police Officer:* Now that we know each other better Rebecca, I will ask you a few questions on what

happened. If you don't understand my questions it will be important that you tell me so and I will repeat. Is that alright?

*Rebecca:* (In a low voice) Yes...

*Police Officer:* Now, Rebecca, please tell me why you are here. You can take your time to explain.

*Rebecca:* It wasn't my fault.

*Police Officer:* No Rebecca, lying is wrong. Please don't lie to me.

*Rebecca:* (Lowers her eyes and keeps silent)

*Police Officer:* OK, Rebecca, what do you mean? Your grandparents force you to steal? I don't believe you.

*Rebecca:* (Keeps silent)

*Police Officer:* I let you talk now. Please tell me what you mean when you say it's not your fault. Take your time, I'm listening.

*Rebecca:* It's because of John... (Starts crying)

*Police Officer:* That's good Rebecca. Who is John?

*Rebecca:* I don't know.

*Police Officer:* Alright, you don't know. Have you known him for long?

*Rebecca:* No.

*Police Officer:* It's certainly not John who stole the wallet but you! Are you ready to admit your crime?

*Rebecca:* (Starts crying again) No, I am not a thief...

*Police Officer:* (Stands up) But you took the wallet. Why?

*Rebecca:* His name is John but if I tell anyone he will beat my grandparents!

*Police Officer:* We are here to protect you and help you. You say that all this is because of John and that you have not known him for very long. That's good. When did you meet him for the first time?

*Rebecca:* (Keeps silent for a whole minute, looks at her grandparents, then at the floor)

*Police Officer:* (Waits patiently for Rebecca to be ready and start talking) Take your time Rebecca, we are not in a rush.

*Rebecca:* He followed me one day after school, and then he attacked me... (Continues telling the

story)

 Ask learners to identify good and bad interview practices by the police officer by highlighting the lines in the dialogue. Ask them to also indicate why each line is a good or a bad practice.

 Explain to learners that the case study is an example of an interview to show useful and less useful interview techniques. It is important to note that each interview will depend on the context of the case and the age of the child. They should determine their answers using the context of this case study and what they think the police officers did that was useful and less useful in this context.

 Give 20 minutes to groups to discuss and prepare their answers.

 Ask a few groups to share their answers orally and explain why they found each practice identified good or bad. Encourage learners to discuss if they disagree.

 Then provide the following correct answers:

***NOTE: If you have more time, you can also use a role-play for this exercise by asking one learner to play the police officers and the other to play Rebecca.***

***CORRECT ANSWERS:***

**\* Good practices are in green font and bad practices in red font.**

**Interview of Rebecca by the Police Officer:**

*Police Officer:* Good afternoon Rebecca, I am a police officer here. How are you?

*Rebecca:* (Lowers her head and looks at the floor) Please call my grandmother, she will be worried.

*Police Officer:* Later Rebecca. You and I must talk now because you will soon see the judge who will want to know what happened today. The two officers who brought you here told me you stole a wallet. Why did you do that?

*Rebecca:* The officers have lied.

*Police Officer:* (Raises her voice) Of course not. They wrote in their report that you took the wallet and ran, and that the customer caught you. What were you doing in the market in the middle of the day? Do your parents know you skip school?

*Rebecca:* My parents are dead. I live with my grandparents. You have to call them. (She starts to cry)

*Police Officer:* We will call your grandparents, please don't worry Rebecca. They will come here and

you will be able to talk to them, is that alright?

*Rebecca:* Yes, thank you. (She smiles at the Police Officer)

*Police Officer:* While we are waiting for your grandparents, can you please tell me how long you have been living with them?

*Rebecca:* Since two years now.

*Police Officer* (Asks more questions to Rebecca about school and what she likes to do in her spare time)

*Rebecca* (Answers more and more freely the Police Officer's questions and seems more calm)

**Rebecca's grandparents have arrived. The Police Officer talks to them separately and then they join Rebecca in the interview room.**

*Police Officer:* Now that we know each other better Rebecca, I will ask you a few questions on what happened. If you don't understand my questions it will be important that you tell me so and I will repeat. Is that alright?

*Rebecca:* (In a low voice) Yes...

*Police Officer:* Now, Rebecca, please tell me why you are here. You can take your time to explain.

*Rebecca:* It wasn't my fault.

*Police Officer:* No Rebecca, lying is wrong. Please don't lie to me.

*Rebecca:* (Lowers her eyes and keeps silent)

*Police Officer:* OK, Rebecca, what do you mean? Your grandparents force you to steal? I don't believe you.

*Rebecca:* (Keeps silent)

*Police Officer:* I let you talk now. Please tell me what you mean when you say it's not your fault. Take your time, I'm listening.

*Rebecca:* It's because of John... (Starts crying)

*Police Officer:* That's good Rebecca. Who is John?

*Rebecca:* I don't know.

*Police Officer:* Alright, you don't know. Have you known him for long?

*Rebecca:* No.

*Police Officer: It's certainly not John who stole the wallet but you! Are you ready to admit your crime?*

*Rebecca: (Starts crying again) No, I am not a thief...*

*Police Officer: (Stands up) But you took the wallet. Why?*

*Rebecca: His name is John but if I tell anyone he will beat my grandparents!*

*Police Officer: We are here to protect you and help you. You say that all this is because of John and that you have not known him for very long. That's good. When did you meet him for the first time?*

*Rebecca: (Keeps silent for a whole minute, looks at her grandparents, then at the floor)*

*Police Officer: (Waits patiently for Rebecca to be ready and start talking) Take your time Rebecca, we are not in a rush.*

*Rebecca: He followed me one day after school, and then he attacked me... (Continues telling the story)*

### **SLIDE 9: Recognizing and Managing Distress**



In conflict and post-conflict contexts, the number of children who are suffering from shock or who are distressed is higher than in other circumstances. Interviewing a child in shock or distress can be extremely challenging.



The symptoms listed here are normal reactions that a child may have during an interview. Trauma can only be diagnosed and treated by medical professionals who are trained to do so; therefore, it is not the role of police officers. However, being able to recognize possible symptoms of shock and distress can help you approach a child with more care and knowing when a referral to a medical professional is necessary. The simple recollection of facts can bring a very high level of stress to children suffering from shock or who are distressed. Therefore, it is important to ensure that the child will not suffer additional distress from the interview before starting it (by having a medical professional seeing the child, or by requesting the presence of a social worker during the interview, for example).



Shock and distress can be caused by:

- ❖ A single event: for example, an attack on the child's village.
- ❖ An on-going situation: for example, repeated sexual or other abuse by a member of the child's family.
- ❖ Multiple events over time: for example, repeated forced displacements of the child and his/her family due to repeated bouts of fighting.

 It is important to note that the same events will affect children differently. This is due to many factors, such as the child's personality, upbringing, support structures, culture, personal resilience, etc. Some children will come out of a horrible experience experiencing shock and distress and some not.

 In the same way, shock and distress can last for various lengths of time depending on the child, the circumstances and whether the child receives medical attention or not.

 Symptoms of shock and distress can be physical and psychological. They include<sup>3</sup>:

- Shock, denial, or disbelief
- Anger, irritability, mood swings
- Guilt, shame, self-blame
- Feelings of sadness or hopelessness
- Confusion, difficulty concentrating
- Anxiety and fear
- Withdrawing from others
- Memory loss
- Apathy
- Feeling disconnected or numb
- Insomnia or nightmares
- Being startled easily
- Racing heartbeat
- Aches and pains
- Fatigue
- Difficulty concentrating
- Edginess and agitation
- Muscle tension

#### **SLIDE 10: Other Considerations**

 In cases where a girl was victim of sexual abuse, it is better to have a female police officer conduct the interview if available. Also, police officers should keep in mind that they should focus their questions on the information relevant to the present case, and avoid asking personal questions that are unrelated to the alleged offense. For example, police officers should refrain from asking questions on the girl's lifestyle, of the type "what do you normally wear when you go out" and "do you often go out alone at night". This type of questioning may make the girl feel judged and that the police officer is blaming her for what happened. In addition, these types of questions are intruding on the child's privacy and are therefore inappropriate.

 A good interview will be one in which the child feels safe and taken seriously. In this context, it is crucial for the police officer to explain the situation clearly to the child and provide information on why

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<sup>3</sup> HelpGuide.org: <http://www.helpguide.org/articles/ptsd-trauma/emotional-and-psychological-trauma.htm#signs>

the child is being interviewed and what the next steps will be in the legal process (if any). If you are taking notes or recording the interview, you should also explain to the child why you are doing that, and what the notes/recording will be used for. It should be recommended to have parents present during the interview when possible.

 If you are conducting the interview through an interpreter, which may be the case in most peacekeeping missions where UNPOL officers do not speak the local languages, additional precautions must be taken. These include:

- Explaining to the child who the interpreter is, and that the child can request clarification anytime he/she does not understand a question.
- Briefing your interpreter carefully on child-friendly interview techniques such as those included in this training module. Your interpreter will take active part in the interview and therefore must understand how to act in a child-friendly manner.
- Ensuring that your interpreter translates your words properly and those of the child also. If the interpreter does not understand your questions or the child's answers properly, it is crucial that he/she asks for clarification and not make false assumptions.
- You will need to consider that conducting an interview through an interpreter takes longer than speaking directly to a child, and allow for sufficient time to conduct the interview.
- You have to keep in mind that cultural differences come into play in translation and make sure that your questions are simply phrased to avoid confusion during translation.

 **Group work on case studies**

Time required: 45 minutes

5 minutes	For introduction of exercise and instructions
20 minutes	For group work on exercise
20 minutes	For group presentations and discussion

 Divide the learners into four groups. Distribute Case Study 2 to two groups and Case Study 3 to the other two groups.

 Ask the groups to read their case study and answer the questions. They can write their answers on a flipchart if possible.

 Give 20 minutes for group work.

<b>Case Study 2</b>

Yesterday, the national police of Mali arrested a 10 year old boy in Kidal who was carrying a weapon at the market. When he arrived at the market place, the child looked lost and nervous, and was walking around in circles, so some passers-by noticed him and called the police. The police officer approached the child, who started to cry and said he did not want to hurt anybody but he was supposed to steal food and bring it back to the armed group's camp before dawn or he will be beaten. The national police arrested the child and secured the weapon. They then put the child in a detention center for the night.

You are located at the UNPOL section in Kidal and you receive the information about the arrest. Your colleagues in the national police ask for your advice on how to interview the child. They say they want to help the boy but they also need urgent information on the modus operandi of this armed group. You go to the detention center and agree to help.

**Questions:**

1. What advice can you give the national police on how to proceed with the interview? Please provide details about what methods you will propose to your national colleague (i.e. interview setting, interview steps, what to look for in the child, etc.). Base your answers on elements presented in this module.
2. What type of information do the police need to get from this interview?

**Case Study 3<sup>4</sup>**

Pascaline is arrested by the Congolese army during an attack on a village in North Kivu. She was part of the armed group that conducted the attack, but is not carrying a weapon. The military commander who arrested Pascaline brings her to the nearest police station. The police station chief calls you at the UNPOL section and asks you to assist his officers to conduct the interview. He thinks you will be better placed to talk to Pascaline since you are a woman. When you arrive, the police officers have already started talking to Pascaline to get the first details.

Pascaline is dirty, her clothes are torn and she is skinny. Pascaline says that she is 13 years old and that she was kidnapped during an attack by the militia on her village. Shortly after her capture, the militia leader gave her as a "wife" to one of the commanders. She has been with this man since and she has to follow him during attacks also.

Pascaline's behavior is very agitated and she is constantly shifting her position on her chair. When the officers ask her when she was kidnapped she says that she doesn't know. She does not either remember the name and location of her village. When the officers try to ask her for more details, she gets angry and start shouting that they should leave her alone. Then she refuses to answer any more

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<sup>4</sup> Case study adapted from "Formation spécialisée en matière de droits et de protection de l'enfant destinée aux forces de sécurité du Sénégal", Module 5, International Bureau for Children's Rights, UNICEF and Save the Children, April 2015.

questions and keeps silent, looking at the floor and frowning.

The police officers are not sure how to proceed, so they ask you for advice.

**Questions:**

1. Do you see any symptoms of distress in Pascaline? If yes, what are they?
2. What advice can you give the national police on how to proceed with the interview? Please provide details about what methods you will propose to your national colleague (i.e. interview setting, interview steps, what to look for in the child, etc.). Base your answers on elements presented in this module.



After 20 minutes, ask the learners to come back in plenary. Each group designates one presenter who will read the case study aloud and summarize the group's answers to each question.



Ask the two groups who worked on Case Study 1 to present. After the two presentations, ask learners to share their comments and questions.



Use the possible answers below to complete the discussion. The answers listed are for guidance and groups may have phrased their own answers differently. The important aspect is that the correct answers are based on the good interview practices presented in this module.

*POSSIBLE ANSWERS:*

**Case Study 2:**

1. What advice can you give the national police on how to proceed with the interview? Please provide details about interview setting, interview steps, what to look for in the child, etc. Base your answers on elements presented in this module.
  - ❖ Advise police officers to put the child in a quiet and comfortable room. Offer the child some water and ask him if he is hungry.
  - ❖ Inform the child about his rights to legal aid and seek consent from the child for the interview.
  - ❖ A social worker should be present during the interview and should be allowed to talk to the child before the start of the interview, if conditions allow.
  - ❖ If the child knows where his parents are, call the child's parents and ask them to be present at the interview if possible; inform the parents on the case and ensure the presence of a lawyer for the child, if conditions allow.
  - ❖ Avoid over-crowding in the room.
  - ❖ Allow for breaks in the interview and adapt to the young age of the child.
  - ❖ It is important to verify if the child is in need of medical attention, and provide such attention if necessary before the interview starts.

- ❖ The police officer conducting the interview may want to consider wearing civilian clothes instead of his uniform. The child might be scared by uniforms, as he is likely to have been mistreated before by people wearing uniforms in the armed group that sent him to conduct the attack.
- ❖ In the relationship building phase of the interview, the officer conducting the interview should set ground rules and establish the importance of telling the truth.
- ❖ The officer should sit down at the same level as the child.
- ❖ The officer should start by introducing himself and asking the child's name, using a gentle tone of voice. Then, he should explain why the police have brought the child to the detention center. He should also tell the child his rights.
- ❖ It will then be important to use a few banal conversation topics to establish trust between the child and the interviewer, for example about the sports the child likes to play. Through this conversation, the interviewer should look for signs of distress in the child. If there are signs of distress, the police officer should discuss with the social worker on the best course of action.
- ❖ If they decide to continue the interview, the police officer should try to ask open questions to get the version of the child about the situation, for example by asking "Please tell me what happened today".
- ❖ The officer should remain patient and give the child all the time he needs to tell his story. He should remain friendly and avoid looking judgmental.
- ❖ When asking for information about the association with the armed group, the officer could start with asking the child what he meant when he told the police officer that he didn't want to hurt anyone.

2. What type of information do the police need to get from this interview?

- ❖ Information about the child's family: where are his parents or guardians, where is the child from, when did he last see his family, etc. in order to facilitate family tracing and help the child.
- ❖ Information about the armed group: who are they, where are they operating, do they have other children, what is the identity of the relevant commander, etc.
- ❖ Information about future planned attacks on civilian.
- ❖ The child is below 13 years of age, which is the minimum age of criminal responsibility in Mali. Therefore, the child cannot be held criminally responsible for any crime he might have been forced to commit during his association. Appropriate follow up measures need to be taken as the child is under the age of criminal responsibility.



Ask the two groups who worked on Case Study 3 to present. After the two presentations, ask learners to share their comments and questions.



Use the possible answers below to complete the discussion. The answers listed are for guidance and groups may have phrased their own answers differently. The important aspect is that the correct answers are based on the good interview practices presented in this module.

*POSSIBLE ANSWERS:*

### Case Study 3:

1. Do you see any symptoms of trauma in Pascaline? If yes, what are they?
  - ❖ She is agitated and shift
  - ❖ She may suffer from memory loss, as she cannot remember her village
  - ❖ Her emotions alternate between anger/aggressiveness and apathy
  
2. What advice can you give the national police on how to proceed with the interview? Please provide details about interview setting, interview steps, what to look for in the child, etc. Base your answers on elements presented in this module?
  - ❖ It is important to verify if the child is in need of medical attention, and provide such attention if necessary.
  - ❖ Advise police officers to put the child in a quiet and comfortable room away from the crowded area. Offer the child some water and ask her if she is hungry.
  - ❖ Advise that a female police officer take over the interview and that a social worker should be present during the interview and should be allowed to talk to the child before the start of the interview.
  - ❖ The officer should start by introducing herself and asking the child's name, using a gentle tone of voice. Then, she should explain why the police have brought the child to the detention center. She should also tell the child her rights and explain fully the process and what will happen after.
  - ❖ The female police officer who will conducting the interview may want to consider wearing civilian clothes instead of his uniform. The child might be scared by uniforms, as he is likely to have been mistreated before by people wearing uniforms in the armed group that sent him to conduct the attack.
  - ❖ In the relationship building phase of the interview, the officer conducting the interview should set ground rules and establish the importance of telling the truth.
  - ❖ The officer should sit down at the same level as the child.
  - ❖ It will then be important to use a few banal conversation topics to establish trust between the child and the interviewer, for example about the sports the child likes to play. Through this conversation, the interviewer should look for signs of distress in the child. If there are signs of distress, the police officer should discuss with the social worker on the best course of action.
  - ❖ If they decide to continue the interview, the police officer should try to find out first the version of the child about the situation, for example by asking open questions like "Please tell me what happened today".
  - ❖ Allow for breaks in the interview and adapt to the young age of the child.
  - ❖ The officer should remain patient and give the child all the time he needs to tell his story. He should remain friendly and avoid looking judgmental.
  - ❖ When asking for information about the association, the officer could start with asking the child what she remembers from her parents, siblings, house, village, town, and then try if she remember what the name of her village.



**NOTE:** *If you have more time, you can also stimulate the discussion during the debriefing by asking: What would be the different actions in terms of coordination, and follow up UN Police Officer should carry out in the sequence of events prior to the interview?*

### **POSSIBLE ANSWERS:**

- **Contact the UN Police child protection focal point or the Child Protection Advisor within the mission to inform them immediately.**
- **Fill in incident report.**
- **Suggest immediate handover of the child to a Child Protection Advisor.**
- **Support the process for the possible transfer of the child to the DDR program according to the Child Protection Advisor's instructions.**
- **Help with logistic support for the transportation of the child to a medical facility if needed prior to the interview.**
- **Advocate for the best interests of the child in the treatment of cases involving children to your police counterpart.**
- **Advocate for the child's rights to legal aid that could be provided through local partner of the child protection system.**
- **Advocate for detention as a last resort and only for judicial reasons and not for information gathering and the use of alternative measures to detention.**
- **Etc.**

### **SLIDE 11: Questions?**



Ask learners if they have questions on the content of this module. It is important to allow sufficient time to answer all questions.



Distribute the end of module quiz to learners and gives them 10 minutes to answer the questions. Then distribute the answers for auto-correction. Ask learners to work in pairs and correct each other's answers.

### **SLIDES 12: Key Messages**



The key messages slides summarise the important take away that connect with the objectives of the module as described at the beginning of the session. Ask learners what the key messages are before showing the slide with the possible answers. It will help them synthesise and integrate the key concepts taught throughout the module and it will help you in assessing the learning and concentrate on gaps or inaccuracies.



Ask the following questions in plenary. Encourage learners to discuss. Then, complete the discussion with the suggested answers presented in the next slides.



What are the key messages of this module?

## SLIDES 13 to 15: Key Messages

1. In some rare occasions, mission's mandate will include operational support to assist and even conduct interviews with children (UNMISS only on POC sites), while the majority will focus on supporting reforms, restructuring and capacity building efforts of host State police in interviewing techniques.
2. Key international standards exist to guide UN police personnel's mentoring role to the host State police in regards to interviewing children (the UN Model strategy and the UN Guidelines on Child Victims and Witness of a Crime).
3. Interviewing a child requires special techniques, as the approach should be adapted to the level of development of the child, his or her conception of time, his or her communication approaches and the various risks of intimidation and re-victimisation.
4. Children should be interviewed by people who are trained to do so. UN Police should generally not interview children but refer to civilian child protection staff. When UN police are interacting with children, the following guidance applies.
5. Always and promptly seek the support and guidance of the child protection adviser and the police child protection focal points when you are dealing with a situation that requires the interviewing of a child.
6. Six ground rules of a good interview:
  - Create trust.
  - Create a child-friendly atmosphere.
  - Keep an open mind and remain objective.
  - Remain professional.
  - Know how to listen.
  - Know how to conclude.