DEALING WITH OBSTACLES AND CHALLENGES

Overview

In stages 1-4 we have covered the steps involved in introducing child protection, the organisational foundations required, the development of a child protection policy and procedures and the implementation of these policies and procedures. We have therefore completed the construction of the house. However, it now needs to be protected against 'bad weather' / obstacles and challenges.

You may encounter obstacles and challenges at any of the 6 stages outlined in this Toolkit, but you will be in a better position to identify these and respond to them now that you are clear as to what is involved in each of the previous stages. Stage 5 of this toolkit therefore focuses on identifying and responding to obstacles and challenges to the development and implementation of child protection policies and procedures.

5
Dealing with obstacles

4

6

3

1

2

Stage 5 - Dealing with obstacles and challenges

Objectives
Upon completion of this module you will be able to:

1) **Identify possible obstacles and challenges to implementing child protection policies and procedures in your organisation.**
2) **Identify strategies or steps you can take to overcome these obstacles and challenges (internal and external).**

Additional material
Additional materials are available to support the information provided in the main text as additional handouts:

APPENDICES

- Examples of obstacles and solutions to implementing child protection policies and procedures from CSC members workshop, October 2003 - **Appendix 18**

POWERPOINTS

- For facilitators (on CD-Rom) if the toolkit is to be used in a training context

Introduction

Common obstacles which may be experienced by organisations in relation to implementing child protection policies and procedures which we will look at in more detail are [22]:

- Fear
- Denial
- Lack of resources
- Complacency
- Entrenched culture

Other obstacles may relate to corruption in organisations, organisational hierarchy- engaging the whole organisation rather than just a few individuals, child protection issues being seen as another layer of bureaucracy, cultural taboos and people feeling insulted etc. (See **Appendix 18** for further examples of possible obstacles and solutions).

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22. [adapted from *Choose with Care - A Handbook to Build Safer Organisations for Children, Bernadette McMenamin, Paula Fitzgerald, ECPAT Australia, 2001*
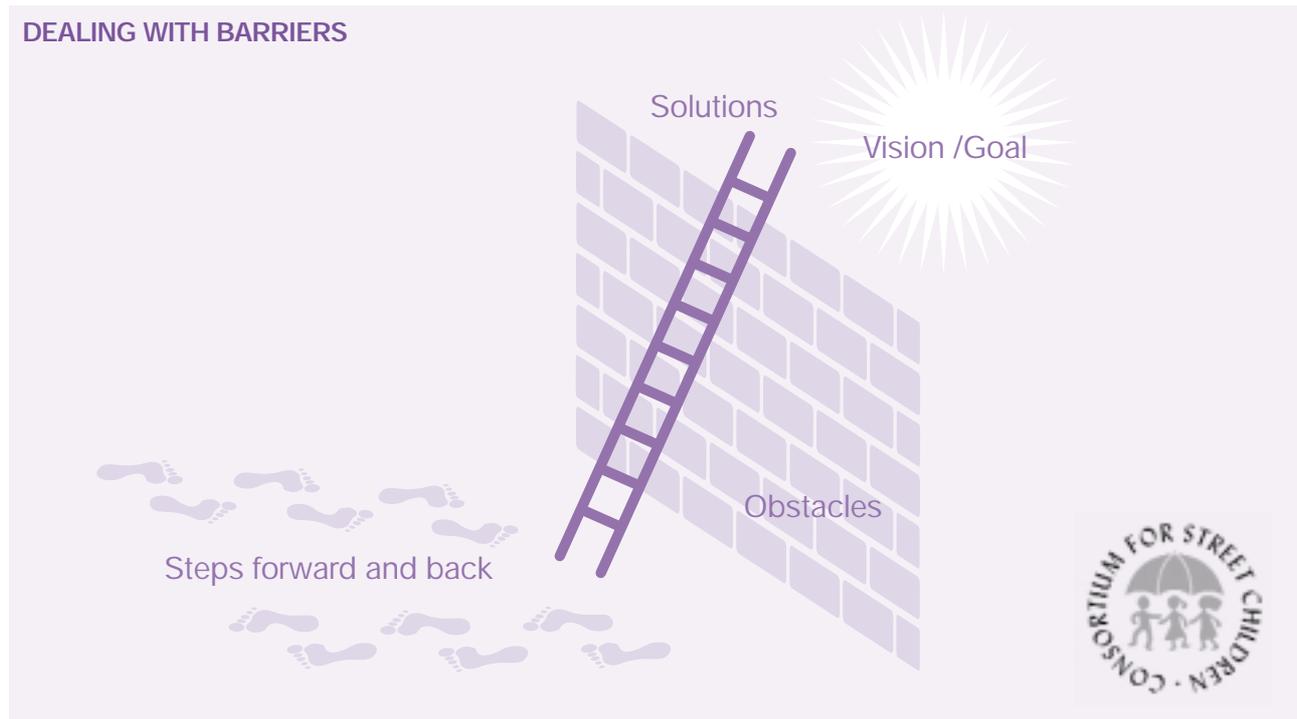
The best way to protect children is to empower them to protect themselves

COMMON OBSTACLES

	FEAR	DENIAL	LACK OF RESOURCES	COMPLACENCY	ENTRENCHED CULTURE
Example	• Of discouraging volunteers • Of having to deal with child abuse • Of casting suspicion • Of creating more work & bureaucracy • Of loss of trust and spontaneity of staff	• Provides the perfect environment for abuse to flourish • Is disempowering and dangerous	• Financial and human resources • Reliance on volunteerism • Lack of time to dedicate to developing and sustaining policies	• Based on lack of understanding of the nature of abuse • Lack of commitment to the organisation / programme • A sense that child abuse happens elsewhere	• 'Occurs particularly in older organisations or organisations managed by one or two long-term workers' • Can create the illusion that everything in the organisation is controlled and 'known' inside and out: "In fact, denial and complacency can flourish in this environment" • Challenge to 'deconstruct old and outdated organisational habits without losing the uniqueness of the programme'
Best Antidote	• Knowledge and participation • Stress the benefits of child protection policies & procedures	• Acknowledge that child abuse can and does occur; learn about how and why it occurs; take decisive steps towards an open environment	• People are informed and involved, and understand that 'creating and maintaining a child safe environment must be at the centre of the organisation's activity' • That policies and procedures make sense, are easy to follow and are kept up-to-date	• Re-focus people's attention on the aims of the organisation (e.g. for the benefit of children) and ask: "If safety and well-being of children are not at the centre of the organisation's programme / activities, then why not?"	• Review of programmes; networking with similar groups for new and fresh ideas on programme management.

DEALING WITH BARRIERS

1) Identify them & bring them out into the open
2) Brainstorm ideas of how barriers can be removed or managed
3) Try not to view barriers as a disadvantage, but rather as a natural part of the process of change and review
4) Work openly and sensitively, allowing views and concerns to be raised

One way of identifying and responding to barriers is shown through the diagram below which represents a process which you can undertake. This process is also explored in practice in **Exercise 16 overleaf 'Identifying obstacles and solutions'**

DEALING WITH BARRIERS

Solutions

Vision /Goal

Obstacles

Steps forward and back

The best way to protect children is to empower them to protect themselves

PRACTICAL EXERCISES STAGE 5, SECTION 5.1

Exercise 16: Identifying obstacles and solutions

Aim

To identify obstacles that are relevant to your organisational context and brainstorm solutions to these obstacles

Duration

40 minutes

Task

Divide into groups and identify problems / challenges / obstacles and solutions using the footsteps exercise (see diagram on the previous page). Draw these on flip-chart paper:

STEP 1 Identify your vision (represented by the sun).

STEP 2 Identify what progress you are making towards your vision (these are your footsteps forwards.)

STEP 3 Identify obstacles that are blocking you from your vision (these are represented by bricks forming a wall).

STEP 4 See if any of the obstacles can be taken away/ if any of the bricks can be moved (possible solutions). For those obstacles/bricks which cannot be removed, identify other ways in which you can get round or over them (ladder).

FACILITATORS' TIPS FOR STAGE 5

Present Stage 5, in the form of a powerpoint or using other methods (see powerpoint 13 on the CD-Rom). Introduce Exercise 16 as part of the presentation.

The following pages can be photocopied as handouts for participants to take away with them:
• Handout of Stage 5

Facilitators' Tips for Exercise 16

■ Set the scene by telling participants that they are going to go on an imaginary journey towards the sun / towards a brighter future for child protection in their organisation. Describe the task in terms of a journey.

■ This exercise could also be organised so that different groups focus on the 7 different areas of the policy and any obstacles in relation to these areas. In a second stage, participants could be asked to widen their discussions to include the overarching obstacles such as those discussed above.

■ Be sure to allow enough time for this exercise as it is likely to raise many concerns which might not previously have been expressed.

■ Be prepared to openly acknowledge obstacles and concerns that people have. Be honest in admitting that sometimes, it will not be easy to overcome some obstacles. Encourage discussion within the wider group to stimulate ideas to overcome obstacles and try to provide as much guidance as possible. At the end of the exercise, be sure to emphasise that the positive aspects of child protection / the 'vision' (building a child-safe organisation) outweigh the possible obstacles that might be encountered along the way.

■ Depending on local cultural circumstances, participants can actually draw around their own feet in order to show steps forward and backwards!

■ This exercise works equally well with adults and children and is a more interesting and more visual version of the common 'Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats / Constraints' exercise (SWOC / SWOT). However, a simple SWOC / SWOT brainstorm can be used instead.

■ Participants should be encouraged to display their pictures on the wall afterwards and to feed back to the plenary group.