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# The ethical dilemmas of research with children from the countries of the Global South. Whose participation?

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#### ABSTRACT

The article outlines issues in the area of childhood studies and children's rights that concern the participation of children and adolescents from the countries of the Global South in participatory research. The article presents the ethical aspects and methodological dilemmas of such research, pertaining to engaging children and adolescents in research conducted by adults. Other issues addressed in the text refer to the child's right to respect, the subjective treatment of children and adolescents (as respondents) as well as the limits of participatory involvement of children in the research process. The article also discusses the ethical dilemmas of research whose methodological approaches and concepts were designed in a different, distinct socio-cultural context and can interfere in the life and functioning of the community it is conducted in, including a negative influence on children's social situation in the future.

#### **KEYWORDS**:

research with children, childhood studies, children's rights, participation, Global South.

#### Introduction

"Children observe with different eyes, ask different questions – they ask questions that adults do not even think of – have different concerns and have immediate access to peer culture where adults are outsiders." (Kellett, 2005)

In the article, I would like to draw attention to problems connected with conducting research with children in the countries of the Global South by researchers representing countries of the Global North. The division into two worlds: one of the Global

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North and the second of the Global South<sup>2</sup> adopted from political and economic concepts (Therien, 1999; Therien, 2010), and accepted in childhood studies and research on children's rights, entails that we stop thinking and speaking about children from these two worlds as equal. This division also determines a different way of looking at children's problems, moves the ethical frontiers of such research. Moreover, it reveals inequality at the start – in the dimension of scientific theories and international explorations since dominant theories and dominant researchers belong to the countries of the Global North. This is why orientalism from the countries of the Global North frequently translates to a Eurocentric discourse, which creates, replicates and legitimises dependence (humanitarianism), lack of research independence as well as academic superiority towards the countries of the Global South.

The term "problematic" is defined in this article as all types of threat to children's well-being that can accompany the process of research with children and whose presence is connected with social, cultural and political factors, the theory of modernisation "whose assumptions translated to the attitude towards childhood studied and evaluated based on the degree of modernisation" (Liebel, 2017, p. 189) as well as the colonisation of children and childhoods by adults. What is more, the research I want to draw attention to is connected with the movement of researchers from the Global North to the countries of the Global South and their relocation to a world of the unprivileged. At times, it generates a clash with the difficult reality of research subjects and situations connected with the processes of marginalisation, discrimination, exploitation and poverty in which children find themselves in their living environments. It means navigating a distinct reality, which is sometimes normatively and customarily in dissonance with the reality of the researcher's country and place of origin (more: Markowska-Manista, 2017). Leaving a safe legal zone, leaving one's home for an extended period of time and entering the field, means engaging in contact with what is alien, with unexpected legal, social and cultural problems and an aggregate of situations which caught researchers unprepared and which they will have to face (Lee--Treweek & Linkogle, 2000). It is worth stressing that researchers from the Global North find themselves in a situation which is less acute and disadvantageous than children from the Global South they study and they co-conduct their research with. Unlike the

<sup>2</sup> In the Cold War period, the concept of the First, Second and Third Word was shaped. After the collapse of the communist system, this unequal, broadly criticised division ceased to make sense. The concept was criticised e.g. with regard to its evaluative character referring to developing countries, hence the emergence of the terms Global North and Global South, considered to be more neutral. However, this division into the economic and political domination of countries designated as countries of the Global North has led to the promotion of norms, values and practices from this part of the world. In the era of globalisation, the norms, values and practices of the Global North have become universal (valuable by token of their designation) and have started to displace those from the Global South (see: Twum-Danso Imoh, Bourdillon & Meichsner, 2019, p. 2).

researchers, the children remain permanently immersed in difficult, at times radically challenging life situations and in so-called fragile contexts of everyday life.

The temporary presence in a different socio-cultural context for the purpose of conducting research and the awareness of the possibility to return home and leave the difficult situation behind that comes from a privileged position of researchers from the Global North, ensure a certain level of existential safety and a possibility to distance oneself from the situation. This sense of safety or distance are not available to those researched, particularly children and youth. Borys Cymbrowski and Dorota Rancew-Sikora write that the worlds of a safe, comfortable life and a sense of existential comfort are based on social exclusion. They are also connected with closing off and separating those worlds which are recognised as pleasant and valid from those unpleasant and invalid (2016, p. 14). That being the case, as the scholars continue (2016, p. 14) – when we fail to speak or write about them, when we avoid describing difficult situations in our research, they become invisible, hidden and consequently do not disturb and do not expose the researchers to criticism on the part of the academic community. What seems equally crucial - not all studies of this kind conducted in the countries of the Global South engage adults, youth or children from the country or community they are conducted in. This is connected with the consequences of colonialism as well as various forms of postcolonial dependence and domination in thinking about research and interventions for other human beings.

# **Children as researchers and respondents**

When undertaking research on the problems of children in Europe, researchers usually face a dilemma: who to study? Children or adults? The decision is very frequently based on the choice of methodology and the procedures of ethics, which enable a faster and easier access to adult respondents. In the case of children, this process can be more complicated, time-consuming and difficult due to a range of ethical restrictions connected with researching children. These restrictions are dictated primarily by the ideas of the child's well-being and the protection of children's rights, including the right to dignity and expressing one's opinion – in other words, ensuring the right to express one's views freely in all matters affecting the child (Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child). It is equally important to adjust the methodology, research procedures and language to children's environmental and cultural conditions as well as their age.

According to the recommendations: Ethical Research Involving Children (ERIC), published on the website of a project implemented by UNICEF's Office of Research, in cooperation with several other organisations, researchers need to consider a range of factors and circumstances connected with engaging children in research. Research

with children and youth should be conducted only when: the subject of the study is important for children's health and well-being, their participation is necessary due to the fact that other people are unable to answer the questions posed to children, the method/methods are appropriate for children, and the circumstances in which the study will be conducted ensure children's physical, emotional and psychological safety (see: ERIC).

Until recently, the reliability of data collected from children and adolescents was undermined. In many spheres connected with childhood, researchers based their work on stereotypes, or these various spheres were not described at all and treated as a taboo. As a group subordinate to adults and the power structures of adults (due to the socio-political and cultural positioning of children as "subaltern", politically and socially dominated), children were perceived as not fully able to express their needs or problems. Can then, as Gayatri Spivak (1988) asked, "the subaltern speak?" What is more, as Spivak argued, dominant power relations impact the representation of the subaltern by postcolonial researchers, who can attempt no more than to "re-present" them by means of narration which the researchers themselves do not identify with. In other words, theoreticians can merely present these voices filtered through their own interpretation. As Spivak puts it: "the theoretician does not represent the oppressed group" (2013, p. 70), he/she does not express their voice. This includes the voice of children as a group oppressed by adults.

The autonomy of children as research subjects and their role as co-creators of research failed to be recognised as well. This situation was connected with a victimising approach in adultist practices. This lack of recognition, which translated into "absence", was and still is rooted in perceiving children's social position as inferior, marginalising their voices and hierarchical power relations between adults and children that consolidated in the 20th century, primarily in the societies of European and North American countries (see: Alderson, 1995; Alderson & Goodey, 1996). Additional aspects are connected with uncertainty, threat and risk in conducting this type of research as well as the fear of being criticised for academic activity undertaken for the protection of the rights of communities exposed to violations of human rights, particularly in the predysfunctional contexts of living and functioning.

Everyday (non)engagement of children in research depends thus not only on legal regulations and public discourse, but also on the history of relations between adults and children, based on the fact that for years, researchers and scholars were accustomed to power asymmetries. Research exploring the asymmetrical treatment of children in societies allows one to shed light on this broad, and frequently unacknowledged problem. Additionally, the practices of children in research (or lack thereof) were also linked to a change in the perception of child development, including the development of children's competences. Proposing a model of perceiving children as

"incomplete versions of adults", Prout & James (1997) indicated that children's competences should be treated as "different", which does not mean "smaller" or "inferior".

Today, with the development of childhood studies as well as trends oriented towards children's rights, their participation, subjectivity, agency and the decolonisation of the child, there is a growing conviction that research with children is essential to understand their situation. It is also crucial for a reliable message and representation which, through respect for children's rights, abolish an approach enacted by adults of ignoring children's voices, social statuses and instrumental treatment in various cultures. Judith Ennew and Dominique Plateau (2004, 2005) postulated children's 'right to be properly researched' by referring to the following articles of the CRC:

- 3.3: "States Parties shall ensure that the institutions, services and facilities responsible for the care or protection of children shall conform with the standards established by competent authorities, particularly in the areas of safety, health, in the number and suitability of their staff, as well as competent supervision";
- 12.1. "States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child";
- 13: "1.The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice. 2. The exercise of this right may be subject to certain restrictions, but these shall only be such as are provided by law and are necessary: 2. For respect of the rights or reputations of others; or 2. For the protection of national security or of public order (order public), or of public health or morals";
- 36: "States Parties shall protect the child against all other forms of exploitation prejudicial to any aspects of the child's welfare".

They argued that children are entitled to this right ('to be properly researched') by the same token as all people are entitled to basic human rights referring to dignity, respect, protection, participation and freedom of expression, which are strictly connected to participation in research that concerns them.

Manfred Liebel writes that children's participation is now widely recognised as an important aspect of social life, reflecting an approach based on respecting children as social subjects with their own rights, dignity and a potential to influence the local and international circumstances of their existence (2017, p. 159). Recent years have shown an increase in studies conducted in the area of social sciences with children as respondents (Cousins & Milner, 2007). The growing number of methods through which children are engaged in social research is followed by a growing awareness of the need to approach such research in an ethical way (Morrow 2008; Phelan & Kinsella, 2013; Graham, Powell, Taylor, Anderson & Fitzgerald 2013; Spyrou, 2011, Spyrou, Rosen & Cook 2018; Liebel 2017), in any geographical, social, cultural and methodological context. Attention

is drawn to children's well-being understood as a recognition and realisation of their rights in the scope that is particular to a given environment. The growing ethical awareness and sensitivity of researchers that are revealed in the search for procedures and the maintenance of high research standards, make the academic world scrutinise the ethics of applying particular research methods, the ethics of the relationship between respondents and researchers, the ethnics of language as well as conduct that is sensitive to cultural differences. This scrutiny is required not only by social, cultural and political contexts, but also the sensitive subjects addressed by researchers, "towards which social and environmental expectations are quickly changing exposing researchers to a real risk of making a mistake" (Cymbrowski & Rancew-Sikora, 2016, p. 15).

In child-centred research, ethics has gained a status of something much more important than mere authorisation to launch a study granted by an ethics committee. Recommendations, codes of ethics, reflexivity and collective responsibility are of key importance in conducting reliable and ethical research on children. What is worth stressing – ethical issues considered within the research process contribute to increased reflection of the environment on present and potential ethical abuse in the relationship between the researcher and the respondents in daily practice. Standards and recommendations are developed and improved for the purpose of supporting researchers and other key actors in integrating an ethical approach in their studies (Specialist Research Ethics Guidance Papers, Ethical Research Involving Children, Ethical Research Involving Children (ERIC)) and they ought to be taken into consideration when conducting research with children on children.

Experiences in this type of research have shown the prominence of the awareness of ethical dilemmas that are present throughout the research process and that the researcher has to face on a daily basis. They also show how crucial ethics is for conducting research with children. Researchers engaged in this type of research frequently find themselves in quandary due to the complex ethical reality which is frequently impossible to predict (see: Canosa, Graham & Wilson, 2018, p. 400). However, provided the dilemmas are addressed with conscious effort, they often contribute to the improvement of ethical methodology. In the development of ethical approaches and practices, it is necessary to engage in a dialogue on two levels: between researchers, as well as between researchers and children as the participants of a research process.

### Ethical dilemmas in research on children with children

In their article *The ethics of participatory research with children*, Thomas Nigel and Claire O'kane write that ethical challenges in research involving direct contact with children can be overcome by applying a participatory approach (1998, p. 336). This approach

involves inviting children to take part in the decision-making process through participation in such research activities as: defining the aims, the conception and organisation of the study, deciding about the action plan as well as sharing one's reflections and suggestions about the research. It is particularly important as research on children conducted by children does not only involve diagnosing the developmental or social problems related to children, but also a whole spectrum of problems and phenomena generated by the processes of globalisation and multiculturalism which are frequently difficult and violate children's rights. These problems can be better diagnosed and understood by involving children in these activities. Additionally, participatory research is not only about children's participation in decision-making. It is also about the respect on the part of adults towards children's ideas and suggestions.

At the same time, participatory approach allows the researchers to implement the provision of the Convention on the Rights of the Child which states that: "States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child" (CRC, art. 12). Furthermore, a participatory approach allows children to recognise that their actions and voices are crucial and can become effective tools to implement change that would benefit children and their communities. As a human being, the child's right to identity, dignity and privacy has to be respected. Article 13 says that "the child shall have the right to freedom of expression (...) in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice". The provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the provisions of the Nuremberg Code which regulates moral, ethical and legal principles of conducting research with people as well as some principles of the Helsinki Declaration (1964) form the basis for the formulation of the code of conduct towards children in social research. At the same time, they impose an obligation on the researcher to guarantee full protection to children against all forms of abuse, both in the course of the research process and at the stage of disseminating research results. A participatory approach allows one to listen to the voice of the respondents, to see the diverse experiences of children as well as the complexity and volume of the category of childhood from different positions and perspectives.

Participatory research with children is particularly important for those individuals, groups or communities that are perceived as unheard, invisible, disenfranchised, living in poverty and disadvantaged with regard to the conditions they find themselves in. This type of research is also important for diverse groups of recipients from the countries of the Global North as it allows them to see a broader and more complete representation of a particular problem or situation and search for adequate solutions. This is why children's participation based on full engagement in research is so important, as opposed to their "symbolic participation", periodical consultations or frag-

mentary interviews. "Symbolic participation" seems to be a particularly problematic issue as this model of participation is frequently implemented by researchers whose intention is to facilitate children being heard and seen, but have failed to consider what it means with reference to various contexts and circumstances that accompany this type of activities in the environment where the research is conducted. As a result, there may be studies in which children seem to have a voice and be visible (photographs, videos), but have no true influence on how their statements will be included and represented in reports or academic publications. For this reason, it is essential that researchers address the issue of confidentiality, both making the children aware of the risks connected with using identifying material and putting effort to ensuring confidentiality (Feinstein & O'Kane, 2008).

There can also be situations in which children can have a partial say about the research subject and the form of its presentation, but are dependent on the choices and decisions of adults. Jill Clark (2004) argues that researchers willing to depart from the traditional approach and engage in truly "objective" studies on children and youth, should ensure participation of these groups as co-researchers. The participation of children and youth as researchers in academic research proves to be a valid way of collecting data about these groups (Alderson, 1995; Kirby, 1999).

Afua Twum-Danso (2009) argues that participatory research with children in the countries of the Global South has become attractive not only due to researchers' cognitive curiosity. Its appeal comes also from the fact that it is relatively easier to receive funding for studies conducted in developing countries. However, as the scholar emphasises, there is no consensus about what participatory research with children conducted in this area is, or what it means in practice, in the local environments. Such research is not always conducted well (Twum-Danso, 2009). Moreover, we do not always have the possibility to learn about the problems that accompanied the studies.

Manfred Liebel (2017, p. 199) points that some forms of participation practiced with children in the countries of the Global South frequently go beyond the type of participation that is allowed to children in the countries of the Global North. On the one hand, children's participation in research in the countries of the Global South can give children a right to rights, on the other hand, it can generate new problems and challenges both for the children as key social actors and the communities they are part of.

It must be added that the perception of "children as social actors" (Smith, 2007; Esser, Baader, Betz & Hungerland, 2016) and co-researchers has given birth to an area with new ethical dilemmas and responsibilities that scholars researching childhood and issues related to children in the countries of the Global South have to face. These dilemmas are linked to, inter alia, the influence of the researchers from the Global North on children – researchers and respondents from the Global South, their relationship and the reception of this type of activities by the local community and all those

responsible for children in places where the research is conducted. For this reason, employing the perspective of "ethical symmetry" in research relations with children is recommended in many academic circles.

# Ethical symmetry in research with children

The process of understanding and acknowledging that children, like adults, can share their views and provide reliable answers to the questions that concern them, on the issues that are important to them, is historically conditioned by research on children. For ages children were treated as beings dependent on the care and support of adults, while the research approach that negated the value of children's voices was based on academic paradigms based on adult dominance and the colonisation of childhood.

Today, we know that yielding reliable results depends on a reliable, trustworthy researcher, a proper, ethical and contextually adequate research procedure and adjusting research tools and techniques to the possibilities and developmental stage of children, while "the best people to provide information on the child's perspective, actions and attitudes are children themselves" (see: Scott, 2000, p. 99). Additionally, the decision to engage children in research must be connected with treating them in a more subjective way. As Wendy Cousins and Sharon Milner argue: "children are transformed from purely passive objects of research to active partners in its creation" (2007, p. 451).

These postulates are included in the approach defined as ethical symmetry. They designate a starting point for research as an ethical relationship between the researcher and the participants, irrespective of their being children, adolescents or adults. Equality is a point of departure for a researcher adhering to the postulates of ethical symmetry. Applying an equality perspective enables us not only to see the differences but also certain common experiences among various groups of children in the different worlds they were categorised in with regard to multiple factors determining and problematizing their situation. Throughout the research process, the researcher should apply the principle of equality in actions and responsibilities, as well as employ adequate methods and ways of non-discriminatory communication.

"The researcher takes as his or her starting point the view that the ethical relationship between researcher and informant is the same whether he or she conducts research with adults or with children" (Christensen & Prout, 2002, p. 482). Moreover, ethical practice is linked in this aspect with an active (rather than passive) construction of research relations and cannot be based on constructs rooted in prejudice and stereotypes referring to a particular group of children or their childhood (Groundwater-Smith, Dockett & Bottrell, 2015).

Research relations do not exist in a vacuum, they are always part of social relations as well as cultural and political contexts and climatic conditioning. All of these factors fundamentally define the character of the research process – from the conceptualisation of the study to advocacy. They also have a strong influence on research results. This is why applying ethical symmetry is necessary on each of these stages. Its application facilitates reflection on the ethical values that underpin interactions and decision-making about particular steps in the research process. In case of research with children, ethical symmetry facilitates the recognition of how conducting this type of research is different or similar to conducting research with adults in varying contexts (Christensen & Prout, 2002, p. 484). Finally, applying the approach based on ethical symmetry in participatory research with children requires the recognition of both children's competences and rights to co-decide and express opinions about matters that are important for them. It can contribute to developing an approach that would strengthen children's position in society and serve both their present and future interests.

# Non-intrusive ways and a rights-based approach in childhood studies

Part of the research conducted since the colonisation period of the countries of the Global South by researchers from the countries of the Global North was involved in a racist project (Denzin, 2017) based on the dominance of "white researchers" and European science "produced in the imperial centre, and exported to the rest of the world" (Connell http://www.raewynconnell.net/p/theory.html). Colonialism has left its influence on the life of over three quarters of humanity (see: Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2002, p. 1). In order to explain and understand the processes taking place in the era of colonisation in the societies and countries of the Global South, it is necessary to decolonise knowledge and research (Fine, 2017). Particular attention in this field is drawn to human rights, participatory and non-discriminatory approaches. Another important issue is to propagate the concept of social justice and show places and spaces for the implementation of changes and undertaking activism (Denzin, 2017, p. 9). These processes take place, inter alia, through the use of indigenous epistemology (Denzin, 2017; Smith, 2012), feminist and critical scientific theories, the consideration of the theories of the Global South including indigenous theories and indigenous knowledge, as well as through the application of participatory methods (Fine, 2016, 2017). It is also important that the experience, observation and analyses referring to research conducted in a "Western" climate, based on European values and conceptions, be adapted to the situations, current times and trends of "indigenisation" in the environment of the researched children.

As Manfred Liebel argues, research should: support children, give them a voice and respect their image, emphasising their way of perceiving and understanding the world as well as their views (Liebel, 2017). The child's right to respect, a respect for children's opinions and image are particularly important. The protection of children's rights and the postulates referring to the ethical aspects of research with children should manifest themselves in striving to ensure that the research process and the research results do not harm children. Research activities should be conducted so as to benefit both present and future interests of children (Liebel, 2017).

It is worth referring once again to Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which lays foundations for promoting so called "participation rights" (Hodgkin & Newell, 2007) by ascertaining children's right to have their voice taken into account in all matters affecting them (UN, 1989). It is a significant provision to be considered when deliberating on the potential of children's opinions and ideas being genuinely studied and implemented by adults.

We should then consider how children can take on the role of researchers and how adult researchers can support them in this endeavour, bearing in mind the fact that relations between adults and children are not always the same in different contexts. To perceive children as human rights subjects, worthy of respect and dignity, with complex and multidimensional lives of their own, seems to be a necessary precondition to conduct rights-based research. However, one must bear in mind that "this approach is a source of both possibilities and challenges" (Beazley, Bessell, Ennew & Waterson, 2011 in: Invernizzi & Williams (eds.), 2011, p. 167).

## **Conclusions**

Childhood is a socially, historically and culturally conditioned phenomenon. It changes with time – depending on the circumstances in which the child functions and the processes it participates in. Childhood undergoes a range of transformations and takes on various forms. With these transforming conditions, it expresses changing expectations and activities. Many scholars assert that children can be active and crucial participants of research conducted in various contexts and various disciplines, provided they can be engaged in the studies. However, engaging children from the Global South in research based on ethical principles adopted in the countries of the Global North is still rare in practice. The protection of rights, including the right to safety, and the consideration of the needs of children as vulnerable research participants irrespective of their place of living or the country of temporary stay, should be inherent elements of all research conducted with children.

Participation in research is a challenge and opportunity both for adults and children. Children are not only passive participants of globalisation processes: socialisation, acculturation or adaptation to the new conditions of the transforming world, but active members of the society, co-creating it in the same way as adults. It is obvious that in some cases of research on children, adults can be more reliable sources of knowledge. Another argument is that conducting research with adults is much easier as no special methodology needs to be adjusted and no parental consent needs to be obtained. Both of these are required in case of research in which children are co-researchers and respondents. However, participatory research with children, i.e. research in which children's perspective is taken into account along with other perspectives, seems particularly important today.

This type of research is addressed by Manfred Liebel, who refers to experiences with socially marginalised children in the Majority World. The scholar draws attention to to what extent and how children (themselves) can take on the role of researchers (Liebel, 2017, p. 236). Liebel formulates prerequisites that are necessary to successfully conduct research with children. The first condition focuses on the space "in which children will not be subjugated to the power of adults, or in which adults are aware of their power and consciously avoid using it" (Liebel, 2017, p. 236). The second requirement is connected with the presence of adults "who are ready and able to take on the role of co-workers, consultants or co-researchers – accompanying children in the spirit of solidarity, but not managing the research process" (Ibid, p. 236). The third condition draws attention to the fact that children need both experience and training to participate in research "in a way that would empower them and provide tools to conduct their own research" (Ibid, p. 236). The fourth of the prerequisites proposed by the scholar is ensuring that "research results are disseminated and implemented in an organised way and controlled by children themselves" (Ibid, p. 236).

Based on my experience in conducting field research with children in the countries of the Global South, I propose the fifth condition: the researcher's responsibility for the cultural and social as well as emancipatory change which the researcher introduces into the environment of adults through engaging children. This is rather important for research whose methodological approaches and conceptions were developed in a different, distinct socio-cultural context and can interfere in the life and functioning of communities in which it is conducted, including having a negative impact on children's future social situation. Participatory research is also important due to a transition in recent years from approaches in social research that treated children and youth as objects of enquiry to approaches based on a view that they are social actors who can offer valuable information about their reality (Shaw, Brady & Davey, 2011, p. 4).

In the text, my aim was to draw attention to dilemmas connected with the participation of children from the Global South in participatory research. For us, adults and scholars, the ethical aspects and methodological dilemmas as well as the limits of such research come as particularly important issues. They are particularly important when they refer to engaging children in adults' research activities and are connected with difficult, culturally, socially and politically sensitive subjects. Ethical slogans endorsing research projects never guarantee children's protection against abuse and harm. However, an approach implemented by adult researchers that is oriented towards the child's well-being in the process of engaging children in research can contribute to raising awareness (of both adults and children) about issues that are important for children –investigated from their perspective.

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