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**Study Protocol for In-Depth Interviews with Young Adolescents and their Parents/Guardians**

**The Global Early Adolescent Study:**

an exploration of the evolving nature of gender and social relations

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# Overview of Research Team

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# 1. Purpose of protocol

This protocol outlines the first step of Phase 1 of the Global Early Adolescent Study (GEAS), namely the qualitative in-depth interviews with young adolescents and their parents. The protocol provides a broad methodological framework for how to plan and carry out the data collection and data management in each of the participating sites.

## Objectives and Research Questions

There are three main objectives for the qualitative data collection with adolescents and parents:

1. **Gendered transitions into adolescence**

To understand transitions into adolescence (from the perspective of adolescents and their parents) with a focus on gendered challenges and opportunities

1. **The role of gender norms, behaviors and roles in interpersonal relationships during transitions into adolescence**

To understand changes in interpersonal relationships (with parents, siblings, extended family, peers) during transitions into adolescence, with attention to the role of gender norms, behaviors and roles

1. **Transmission of gender norms, behaviors and roles**

To explore how young adolescents adopt and enact gendered behaviors and roles (what is appropriate for an adolescent girl or boy to do, know, think and feel), with attention to the contrasts between young people’s discourse and their parent’s discourse

That is, the focus of the qualitative study is not to explore differences in gendered beliefs, values and norms between boys and girls; rather, the goal of the interviews is to understand how young adolescents *adopt and enact* gender norms in interpersonal relationships. Thus, we will interview both young adolescents and their parents to understand these processes.

**Table 1** summarizes the core research questions to be addressed in the interviews with young adolescents and with their parents, and the methods used to conduct the interviews. Interview guides with suggestions for questions are presented in the “Data collection” section. Please note that during the training and most likely when these questions are ‘pilot tested’ in each site, they are likely going to change a little.

**Table 1. Research objective, questions and corresponding methods**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Objective** | **Research QuestionS** | **Method** |
| **Young adolescents** |
| Gendered transitions into adolescence  | * What are the similarities and differences in the ways that boys and girls perceive ‘adolescence’?
* What are the main challenges and opportunities for a young person when becoming an adolescent boy or girl?
 | Timeline (group) |
| The role of gender norms, behaviors and roles in interpersonal relationships during transitions into adolescence | * What are the key interpersonal relationships in the lives of young adolescents?
* In what ways do gender norms inform these relationships?
 | Venn Diagram (individual)In-depth interviews (individual) |
| The role of gender norms, behaviors and roles in interpersonal relationships during transitions into adolescence | * How do interpersonal relationships (with parents, other family members, siblings, friends, teachers) change with the onset of adolescence?
* How is this similar or different for boys and girls; in what ways are these changes gendered?
 | In-depth interviews (individual) |
| **Parents** |
| Gendered transitions into adolescence | * How do parents perceive the period of ‘adolescence’ as similar or different for boys and girls?
* What are the perceptions of parents of the main challenges and opportunities that boys and girls face during adolescence?
 | In-depth interviews (individual) |
| The role of gender norms, behaviors and roles in interpersonal relationships during transitions into adolescence | * How do parents perceive that their girl and boy children’s interpersonal relationships change with the onset of adolescence? How is this influenced by gender?
 | In-depth interviews (individual) |
| Transmission of gender norms, behaviors and roles | * How does gender influences parents’ expectations of their children (what they can do, think, feel and act on)?
* How do parents perceive that adolescents learn about these expectations?
 | In-depth interviews (individual) |

# 2.0 Conceptualizing gender norms

## 2.1 Theoretical perspectives on gender

**Box 1. Gender Vocabulary**

**Gender** has several definitions. It usually refers to a set of characteristics seen to distinguish between male and female, one's biological sex, or one's [gender identity](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gender_identity).

**Gender identity** is the gender(s), or lack thereof, a person self-identifies as; it is not necessarily based on biological sex, or based on [sexual orientation](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sexual_orientation). [Masculine](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Masculine) (male) and [feminine](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminine) (female) are the two main genders.

**Gender norms** are “unwritten laws” or rules, codes/cues that a society or group uses for appropriate and inappropriate values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors related to gender. These rules may be explicit or implicit. Failure to follow the rules can result in severe punishments or exclusion from the group.

**Gender roles** are the [enactment] of the social and behavioral norms that are considered appropriate a particular society for men and women in social or interpersonal relationships. Socially accepted gender roles differ widely between different cultures.

**Gender beliefs** are ideas and attitudes that an individual holds, which guide his or her behavior. Social norms about gender central in building up beliefs in the mind of an individual.

**Gender ideologies** are beliefs about and judgments of, behaviors and practices, reflecting the importance of adhering to culturally defined standards for gendered behaviors.

**Gender socialization** is the process of learning the social norms and practices associated with gender and biological sex. Men and women behave in different ways partly because they learn different social roles. Gender socialization occurs through such diverse means as parental attitudes, schools, how peers interact with each other, and mass media.

Different schools of thought have structured the way gender has been conceptualized as it relates to behavioral and health outcomes. An *essentialist* approach considers gender as a personality trait hard-wired within individuals, much like being born a male or female. Today, few people subscribe to this notion. From a *social cognitive learning perspective*, gender is considered a social process; and research concentrates on the extent to which individuals embrace socially determined gender norms and how these beliefs inform gendered behaviors. An important contribution of this approach is the recognition that gender is a multidimensional construct, with masculinity and femininity representing distinct and complementary dimensions that independently inform behaviors of both sexes. This approach however, fails to recognize the dialectical process of gender as reinterpreted and reconstructed by individuals who in turn influence dominant norms of femininity and masculinity. Such a dialectical conceptualization of gender is delineated in a *social constructionist* approach that positions young people not only as enacting but also as actively engaged with shaping and even changing gender norms, which they endorse, resist or alter as they enact gender in their interpersonal relationships.

## 2.2 Focus of the GEAS

In the GEAS, we are interested in ways gender norms in different social contexts are expressed in individuals’ beliefs about gender, including gender roles, and how these beliefs are related to gendered behaviors among young adolescents.

We want to learn about young adolescents’ perceptions about the social norms regulating interactions between men and women and their respective roles in their social context. We want to explore young people’s own normative beliefs about what is appropriate versus inappropriate behavior for men and women, and how these beliefs align or not with the social norms they perceive in their community in general and in their specific environment in particular (family, peers). We also want to explore the ways in which young people’s gender beliefs act as a self-regulatory mechanism, which filters and informs their behaviors in the context of relationships.

We are interested in studying these processes in the context of transitions into adolescents, as gender norms may become more pressing, solidifying gender beliefs about the diverging opportunities and challenges of boys and girls as they become adults. In this context, we want to explore gender socialization; that is, how young adolescents learn to act and think in certain ways when it comes to gender. We hope to understand how individual gender norms, attitudes, roles and behaviors are related to (and dictated by) social norms around gender and how other people (family, peers, community) model both such norms and gendered behaviors.

# 3. Conducting Qualitative Research

Below is a brief introduction to qualitative methods, and key skills in interviewing. A more detailed description and troubleshooting guide will be included in the training manual.

## 3.1 What is qualitative research?

Qualitative research is a type of scientific research that seeks to understand a topic or question from the perspective of local populations. It is especially useful for exploring tacit attitudes, values, opinions and emotions such as social norms and gender roles. When used alongside quantitative (survey) research, qualitative methods can help us better understand the complex reality and implications of statistics.

A key difference between qualitative and quantitative research is their flexibility. Quantitative research methods such as surveys require that identical “close-ended” questions be asked in the exactly same way and order with every participant/every time. The interview questions in the protocol are asked to every participant the same way and exactly as they are written. In contrast, qualitative methods are flexible, allowing and requiring interaction between the researcher and the study participant. Questions are typically phrased in an “open-ended” way, meaning that they can be worded differently for different participants and allow for a variety of responses to emerge from the participant. Qualitative research involves, at some level, a relationship, an interaction between two (or more) people. That is, the interview is not mechanical and the interviewer is recognized as a person him/herself. This quality is both a strength and a challenge for becoming a good interviewer, harnessing the reality of being a responsive human being who has thoughts and reactions to participants for enhancing the quality of an interview while also preventing these qualities from getting in the way of the key characteristics of effective interviewing.

Moreover, the interviewer can follow up in more depth to explore particular issues of salience to the participant or to clarify their comments. One way to think about this relational process is that the participant is the expert and the researcher is trying to learn about their experience or situation. Participant responses thus affect how and which questions the researchers will ask next. It is essential that the researcher listen very carefully to what the participants says, and encourages them to tell more through “probes” (e.g. follow-up questions about why and how). Qualitative interviewers must be well-versed in the study objectives and skilled at eliciting responses beyond the superficial level without leading the participant or letting their personal biases and assumptions get in the way of the responses that the participant is giving to share her/his experience from her/his own perspective.

## 3.2 Important skills in qualitative interviewing

***Asking open-ended question***

It is important that the questions asked in qualitative interviewing are open-ended. This means that the question cannot be asked in a way that elicits a simple a single word such as ‘yes’ or ‘no’ (this is typically called a close-ended question). Asking open-ended questions is a technique for getting more in-depth answers, focusing on the participants experience and feelings. These questions are called “semi-structured” questions, because they are written to enable the participant to provide answers (data) that respond to the research question being explored but also allow the interviewer to ask various other kinds of questions with the goal of helping the participant to provide the best and most complete answers and thus good and useful data. So, for example, in qualitative research it is not sufficient to know that a young person usually feels close to her mother. Here we want to know what her mother does to foster that closeness. We want to hear stories and examples of what mother does to foster closeness and we want to know the situations that create distance between mother and child as well.

***Avoiding leading questions***

Leading questions are worded in a way that can influence the participant’s answer. An example of a leading question is, “Wouldn’t you agree that parents are most important for teaching their daughters how to behave as women?”. A better way of asking the question is: From your perspective who are the people that are most influential in teaching a girl what it means to be a woman?”

***Asking follow-up questions***

Follow-up questions are essential for qualitative interviews. They prompt participants *to go into more depth* about something that was mentioned in response to the original question asked and *to clarify particulars or ideas, something* the participant said, that the interviewer does not fully understand based on the answer. They are typically listed in the interview guide as cues for the interviewer. However depending on the answer to the original question it is not always necessary to ask the follow-up question. Often times the interviewer will form follow-up questions in line with the respondent’s story as he/she conducts the interview, These questions can be different than those listed in the guide (as long as they are relevant to the research objectives). Engaged and/or responsive listening will help you decide which follow-up questions to ask. Using the above example, a follow-on question might be: “What does X [the person identified in the previous question] do to teach what it means to become a woman? Can you give me an example?”

***Encouraging and Probing effectively***

Encouraging the participant to continue talking can be done in various ways. There are physical ways to indicate encouragement, such as neutral sounds (“um hmm”) and body language (nodding, gestures, sitting up, smiling). Probes are phrases and questions that the interviewer can use to help the participant to expand on their responses. Sometimes probes are outlined in the interview guide, but they can also be up to the interviewer to use at their discretion. Probing requires that the interviewer listens carefully to the participant’s response, and ‘picks up’ threads or cues to probe on. Do not assume that you understand exactly what the participant means with their response. Probe to confirm your understanding, and for more details about what the participant is feeling and thinking. Probing is an essential technique in qualitative interviewing, and requires lots of practice. Thoroughly knowing the interview guide and understanding the research objectives and questions will help you become an effective prober. In addition, probing is most effective when the interviewer is aware of the emotional tone that she or he sets and sense of the connection he or she has with the interviewee. Probing can help establish and maintain a sense of rapport and to convey that the interviewer is indeed listening and truly interested in and not judgmental of whatever the participant is saying.

Examples of direct probing questions for clarification:

* What do you mean when you say . . .?”
* “Can you tell me more?”
* “Can you please elaborate?”
* “I’m not sure I understand X. . . .Would you explain that to me?”
* “What about that is X?”

Examples of direct probing questions for going into more depth:

* “Why do you think . . .?”
* “How did this happen?”
* “How did you feel about . . .?”
* “What happened then?”
* “How did you handle X?”
* “Can you give me an example of X?”
* “How did X affect you?”
* “In what ways did…?”

Examples of indirect probes:

* Neutral verbal expressions such as “uh huh,” “interesting,” and “tell me more” “I see”
* Verbal expressions of empathy, such as, “I can see why you say that was difficult for you”
* Reminders that they are not being judged, “I really want to hear about your opinions/experience.”; “I know it may be unusual for an adult to ask you about this or want to know these kinds of things, but I really do want to hear your perspective.” “You are the expert here.”
* Reminders that their answers are confidential, “I want to remind you that no one here, in your family, etc. will know what you said in this interview. It is completely [confidential]
* Mirroring technique, or repeating what the participant said, such as, “So you said that you were . . .”
* Culturally appropriate body language or gestures, such as nodding in acknowledgment.

***Asking one question at the time***

Many questions and follow-up questions are grouped together in an interview guide. Yet, it is important *not* to pose several questions at once, without first giving the participant an opportunity and enough time to answer the first one. Sometimes participants need time to think about an answer; it is common that they have never considered the questions we are asking before and formulating an answer may be hard for them. Conveying patience is important too (“Take your time.”), though with an eye towards the overall time to complete the interview.

***Keeping the participant answering the question***

It is very common for a participant to answer a question and then to continue talking about something that is not part of the interview. It is important to refocus the participant when this happens, as time is precious in an interview (and participants can become tired and disengaged). Gently interrupting at a point as soon as possible that reaffirms the importance of their answers without making them feel that they are “doing a bad job” or that their other experience is not important is key. Phrases such as ‘That sounds very interesting. Let me ask you the next question, ok?” and if you can connect the next question in some way to the unnecessary information that can be a smooth transition.

(This section was adapted from Mack et al., 2005)

**Suggested Readings:**

* Mack et al. Qualitative Research Methods: A Data Collector’s Field Guide. Family Health International; 2005.
* Hudelson, P. Qualitative Research for Health Programs. World Health Organization; 1994.

## 3.3 Narrative interviews: A type of in-depth interview

There are many different kinds of semi-structured interviews and interview questions that are designed to generate different kinds of answers or data, for instance, descriptions, examples or opinions. Narrative interview questions are one type of semi-structured strategy; of all semi-structured interview approaches, the narrative one is the most flexible while also having as its purpose the generation of a very particular type of data: the narrative or story. One of the instruments for assessing gender that the GEAS is developing is a narrative interview.

The GEAS will use a narrative interviewing technique for eliciting stories with adolescents that will enable us to answer our research questions about how gender “works” in their lives. Developing this part of the protocol is one of the purposes of the project. This type of interview enables young adolescents to be narrators of their own stories about navigating the interpersonal and social experiences; in the telling of these stories, adolescents will “narrate” how they live and experience gender norms during transitions into adolescence. The focus of narrative interviewing is to elicit stories that illuminate the research topic of interest (in this case gender norms). The data will emerge in story telling in response to a question that elicits a particular kind of story. These will be followed by semi-structured questions; some provided on the protocol and some that are more like a conversation. Such conversations are similar to what one would ask to fully understand a story that someone, (in this case the participant) is telling. These follow-up questions will also enable the interviewer to ensure that the adolescent has included the parts of her/his experience that shed light on how they are experiencing, enacting, and responding to the gender norms they are confronting in their transition to adolescence.

Narrative interviewing moves away from the stimulus/response model. Instead, there are two parts to narrative interviewing:

1. Posing one particular question designed to invite or elicit a story about the topic of interest, in this case interpersonal and social experiences that, in the telling, will illuminate how the participant engages with gender norms; and
2. A “menu” of potential follow-up questions, the answers to which will fill out the story so that it will contain the data that answer the research question. This “menu” is usually supplemented by questions for clarification or going into more depth about some aspect of the story that are specific to that story which the interviewer asks. It is more of a conversation, where interviewer and interviewee are two active participants who jointly construct a story with a meaning. The goal is to facilitate extended and detailed stories, encouraging participants to speak in their own ways, to tell what happened to them from their perspective, and to include their own thoughts and feelings about the experience they are conveying in the story.

In narrative interviewing, rules of everyday conversation apply (turn-taking, entrance and exit talks) on the one hand, while other practices (interrupting, cutting off pauses, blurting out an idea) are to be avoided. Instead of following a completely standardized interview guide, the interviewer uses the more “fluid” interview guide in her/his role to create the opportunity for storytelling, showing attentiveness and responsiveness by asking questions that enable the participant to elaborate on what she/he is saying. While the specific wording of questions is less important than the degree of reciprocity and the emotional engagement of both participants, certain kinds of questions are more likely to generate narrative opportunities and will be on the “menu” of questions contained in the protocol. The one standard question that will be on the protocol that interviewers will ask all participants will be the initial story elicitation question. One example of a story elicitation question is: “Can you tell me a story about a time when you realized you were no longer a [girl] child? [you were becoming an adolescent]?”, which is often followed by: “Can you tell me the story of how that happened?” Even that question may require other ways to word the question to enable the participant to understand what kind of story to tell.

Follow-up narrative questions are similar to the probing questions introduced in the general approach to qualitative interviewing above. What is different is that these questions fulfill the function of elaborating a story through asking questions for clarification and going into more depth. Another way to think about asking questions to enable the participant to elaborate her/his story is to ask questions about details and questions about processes.

**Suggested reading:**

* Tolman, D. & Sorsoli, L. Hearing Voices. Listening to Multiplicity and Movement in Interview Data.

## 3.4 Participatory data collection with young adolescents

Much sexual and reproductive health research on young adolescents relies on retrospective reports from their older counterparts. This study takes a different approach, based on the understanding that younger boys and girls can be competent, reliable informants about their own childhood, with their own perspectives to share. Most research methodologies, however, advantage adults in terms of social and communication skills or knowledge, therefore it is important to develop participatory, visual methods which shift the balance of power from researcher to participant and are cognitively and developmentally appropriate for this age group (Dell Clark 2011).

Participatory methodologies are important for eliciting aspects of gender attitudes about relationships (e.g. some attitudes may be taboo) and puberty/growing up experiences that adolescents may be less comfortable discussing in ‘standard’ interviews. The research by Marni Sommer is one example of participatory methods; in a recent study, Sommer had Tanzanian boys write anonymous stories on experiences of violence and peer pressure that were critical for eliciting mentions of sexual and physical violence in the society, topics considered taboo or shameful to discuss.

**Suggested reading:**

* Sah, M., Zambezi, R., Simasiku, M. Listening to Young Voices: Facilitating Participatory Appraisals on Reproductive Health with Adolescents. Care International in Zambia; 1999.

# 4. Study population

Interviews will be conducted with young adolescents ages 11-13 and their parents/guardians living in urban poor areas in Baltimore (US), Nairobi (Kenya), New Delhi (India), and Shanghai (China), Ghent (Belgium), Capetown (South Africa), Assiut (Egypt), Ile-Ife (Nigeria), Edinburgh (Scotland) and Blantyre (Malawi).

## 4.1 Sample and recruitment

Each site should recruit and interview 30 to 40 adolescents aged 11-13 years (half boys and half girls) and one of their parents—most often it will be Mother-- or where there is no parent a guardian. The parent/guardian should be the mother of an eligible adolescent. If the adolescent does not have a mother, the father should be included; if there is no father, the primary caregiver (regardless of gender) should be approached.

**Adolescents can be recruited through two ways:**

1. By approaching their parents/guardians first for parental consent for their adolescent child’s participation and the parent’s own participation, and then the adolescent for their own assent.
2. By approaching the adolescent first for their own assent to participate, and then ask for their parents consent for their adolescent child’s participation and the parents’ own participation.
* If the parent agrees that their adolescent child can participate, and the adolescent wants to participate, each parent will also be invited to participate in separate interviews.
* The adolescent interviews will start with icebreaker activities in groups of about 4 to 5 adolescents, followed by individual in-depth interviews.
* The parent in-depth interviews will all be conducted individually.

### 4.1.1 Sampling method

Sampling for qualitative interviews differs from “traditional” survey research. Because the aim is to understand a particular issue (gender norms in the transition into early adolescence) from those having the experience (the transitioning adolescents), the aim is to identify those who can provide that information about their own experiences: 11-13 year old adolescents. That is, the rationale for sampling is to identify participants who can provide data to answer the research question. Rather than obtain a random, representative sample that allows specific statistical analyses, the goal of this sampling technique is to make it possible to explore the diversity of responses regarding a particular topic qualitatively and thus provide a deeper understanding of a particular process, experience or situation.

* We will use purposive sampling, which means that people are not chosen at random, but because they fit pre-set selection criteria. These criteria can be demographic background, and having the type of experience relevant to the research question on which to draw to answer the interview questions (Table 2).
* Each site should therefore aim to sample groups of adolescents and parents in the same networks, organizations or communities.
	+ These people should hold attitudes and norms (e.g. about gender) that reflect the wider community (i.e. not be part of an extremist or isolated group).
	+ Participants must not represent only those most active in community groups/NGOs (thus often easiest to recruit but may limit or otherwise bias the diversity of the sample).

**Table 2. Inclusion and exclusion criteria for recruitment**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Inclusion Criteria** | **Exclusion Criteria** |
| **Young Adolescents** | Male and females between 11-13 years of age | Not between the ages of 11-13 years old |
| Lives within the geographic boundaries of each site | Does not live within the geographic boundaries of each site |
| Able to assentHas obtained signed consent from a parent/guardian to participate in the study | Unable to assentUnable to obtain signed consent from a parent/guardian to participate in the study |
|  | for the face validity study only: literate | for the face validity study only: not literate |
| **Parent** | Parent (mother) of an eligible adolescent. If the adolescent does not have a mother, the father should be included; if there is no father, the caregiver should be approached. | No child ages of 11-13 years old |
| Resides in the geographic boundaries of each site | Does not reside in the boundaries of each site |
| Has given informed consent to participate in the interview | Has not given consent to participate in the interview |
| Has an eligible adolescent who has assented to participate in the narrative interview | Does not have child who has assented to participate in the narrative interview |

Additional information about family structure, including number of parents living in the household, family structure (monogamous, polygamous) and sex of siblings will be used to include adolescents who have opposite-sex siblings and adolescents who have both parents living in their home to gain information on parental expectations and gender roles within the family.

### 4.1.2 Steps in recruitment

1. ***Select a recruitment approach***
* Recruiting adolescents through their parents (recommended), *or*
* Recruiting adolescents directly, and then approach their parents for consent

1. ***Identify venues for recruiting parents and adolescents and engage community leaders***
* Work with local partners to identify the best channels for recruitment.
	+ Share information with selected groups of key stakeholders (adults or youth) about the project and explain that parents and adolescents are being asked to volunteer together.
* Locate different places where it is possible to find parents and/or young adolescents who are eligible to participate.
	+ These locations can be schools or after-school programs, religious organizations, youth or community centers.
	+ Each local team should be determine what venues might work best and discuss these options with the core research team before initiating recruitment.

1. ***Approach parents/guardians of eligible adolescents OR the adolescents directly***
* Once venues have been identified, the local teams will approach parents or adolescents through a range of different recruitment methods, e.g. speaking at meetings or informal social venues or through youth counselors working in youth community programs where the study takes place or by distributing flyers.
* The objective is to recruit 30-40 parent/adolescent dyads
* Parents and adolescents must meet the inclusion criteria listed in Table 2.
* Both verbally and in written materials, explain the project and that people are being asked to volunteer. Follow guidelines prepared by the GEAS team at Hopkins
	+ Appendix XII for flyers to distribute to parents
	+ Appendix XV for parent recruitment script
	+ Appendix AA for flyers to distribute to adolescents (to be developed)
	+ Appendix BB for adolescent recruitment script (to be developed)
1. ***Inform participants of study goal and obtain assent/consent***
* If recruiting adolescents through parents: explain the project to each parent/guardian and ask if he/she would allow their child to be contacted, and if he/she is willing to participate in individual interviews.
	+ If the parent/guardian is interested, read through the consent form.
		- Appendix IV is the consent form to be used both for parent’s own participation, and for their child to participate. They will only sign (or verbally consent if illiterate) one form.
	+ If the parent has provided consent, contact the adolescent and introduce the study to them.
	+ If the adolescent is interested, read through the assent form (Appendix VIII).
	+ If the adolescent agrees to participate, he/she will sign the ascent form, agreeing to participate in group activities and in the in-depth interview.
	+ Make sure that the adolescent willingly assents, and is not being pressured by his/her parent/guardian.
	+ The data collector will record the adolescent and their parent/guardian on their interviewee list.
	+ If consent/assent is not obtained (the parent and/or adolescent refuses), the data collector should record this on their list of people contacted. This means that the parent or adolescent can no longer be interviewed.

* If recruiting adolescents directly: explain the project to each adolescent and ask if he/she would be interested and allow that his/her parent/guardian is contacted.
	+ If the adolescent is interested, read through the assent form (Appendix Y).
	+ If the adolescent has provided assent, contact the parent/guardian and introduce the study to them (see Appendix XV for parent recruitment script)
	+ If the parent/guardian is interested, read through the consent form.
		- Appendix IV is the consent form to be used both for parent’s own participation, and for their child to participate. They will only sign (or verbally consent if illiterate) one form.
	+ The data collector will record the adolescent and their parent/guardian on their interviewee list.
	+ If assent/consent is not obtained (the adolescent and/or their parent refuses), the data collector should record this on their list of people contacted. This means that the parent or adolescent can no longer be interviewed.

1. ***Schedule interviews***
* Invite the adolescent to a pre-set day and time to be interviewed where he/she will first join about 4 to 5 other adolescents of the same gender (boy groups and girl groups) for group interview activities, and then be interviewed individually. Several times can be proposed depending on what best suits the adolescent.
* Schedule a time and venue to interview the parent/guardian individually. The interviews should take place in confidential locations (see further details under each data collection section)

# 5. Interviewer training and piloting

## 5.1 Selecting interviewers

* Each site will need to determine how many interviewers to recruit in order to collect the qualitative data. This will in part depend on availability and background of interviewers and timeline.
* It is however recommended that at least 4-6 interviewers are recruited in each site for the interviews with adolescents. The same interviewers can be used for interviews with parents.
* There should be a gender balance in interviewers so that both males and females are recruited.
* Ideally the people recruited have had experience talking with children/young adolescents either as a researcher doing interviews or as a nursing, psychology, or social work student.

## 5.2 Interviewer characteristics

***Recruited interviewers should all (required):***

* Be available during your training days.
* Speak the native language in which the interview will be conducted.
* Be appropriate for interviewing adolescents, considering: age, gender, familiarity and status in the community, their style when talking with others.
* Have experience working with young people in your community.
* Have cultural sensitivity.
* Be at least 18 years of age.
* Be mature, responsible and trustworthy.
* Be able to manage their tasks in a timely way and work in teams.
* Be a good listener and have good communication skills.
* Be comfortable talking with adolescents about sensitive topics.
* Be willing and able to “suspend judgment” of what adolescents may want to say.
* Be an adult who adolescents in the community feel they can trust with personal stories.

***It is also preferable if the interviewers (recommended):***

* Have experience conducting qualitative interviews.
* Have experience working on projects that deal with sensitive topics.
* Have participated in a research project before, preferably qualitative.
* Have experience in any kind of clinical setting.

The interviewer should be able to lend a sympathetic ear without taking on a counseling role or being judgmental. Core skills of interviewing include establishing a positive interviewer/participant dynamic (building rapport), listening actively and emphasizing the participant’s perspective, and being able to adjust their style quickly to suit each individual participant.

**It is recommended that the interviewers are college or graduate students in nursing, medicine, social work or education**, with a focus on pediatrics and/or working with children and adolescents. These students will already have received some training in interviewing skills.

### 5.2.1 Safeguarding

As a safeguarding approach (given that interviewers will be alone with adolescents), make sure to get a reference or background check for each interviewer. This should include a criminal background check. All interviewers have to participate in mandatory training on the appropriate conduct around children and child protection, including reporting of suspected child abuse, and be trained in the local protocol of what to do in case of disclosure.

## 5.3 Training of interviewers

* The site PI and field coordinator will participate in a training-of-trainers (ToT) session in Baltimore June 8-11, 2014.
* A training manual will be available within 2 weeks following the ToT session, which all sites should use for training of local interviewers. This manual will include a proposed training schedule and describe, in detail, all activities to carry out during the session.
* Following the central ToT session, a number of follow-up sessions will be held via Skype or Elluminate. In addition, the central training will be videotaped, and the recordings from this session will be available for use of local trainers. For example, the videos will display effective interviewing techniques, as well as ‘bad’ interviews for contrast.
* Each site should set a date for the local training, which should ideally be 3-5 days long. In addition, the local team should include 1-2 days of post-training pilot sessions in the field for all interviewers, including debriefing sessions.
* The local training dates should be after the central ToT session has been conducted.

## 5.4 Piloting questions/interview guides

* The site-PI and local field coordinator should practice interview questions and guides with adolescents and parents in their community to see how they work and take notes immediately after completing practice interviews, including what worked, what was challenging, what language and cultural issues seem to be present.
* This should be an *informal* practice with family members or friends, with the purpose of getting experience before the training so that each site can bring their input and questions regarding how questions are phrased and asked and the challenges of eliciting information from different aged individuals.

# 6. Ethical considerations

## 6.1 Key ethical principles in research

There are **three core principles** that form the ethical basis for research involving human subjects around the world.

* ***Respect for persons*** require protection of people from being exploited because of their vulnerability, or because of power differentials between the researcher and the community. This means that individuals should be treated as autonomous agents, and that persons with diminished autonomy (such as children) are entitled to protection. The dignity of all participants must be respected.
* ***Beneficence*** requires that the researcher *do no harm* to participants. It also states that the researcher should minimize the risks to participants; whether physical, social, emotional, psychological or other forms of risks. The researcher should also maximize benefits to participants, ultimately striving to balance risks and benefits.
* ***Justice*** requires a fair distribution of risks and benefits resulting from the study. This means that those who take on the burden of participating also should share the benefits that may arise from the results. This requires the researcher to think about why people are being selected into the study; if some people are being systematically selected simply because of their easy availability, their compromised position, or their manipulability, rather than for reasons directly related to the problem being studied.

## 6.2 Informed consent

Informed consent helps ensure *respect for persons* during studies with human subjects, and is essential for any research activity. It is a way of ensuring that people understand what it means to participate in the study.

Most people think of informed consent as a form that the participant signs. However obtaining consent is a multistep process. The first task is to inform people about the study in a way that they can understand. Both parents and their children should have enough information about the study to be able to make a conscious, deliberate decision about their participation. It is especially important that the person is told:

* The purpose of the research
* What is expected from a participant, including the amount of time it will take
* Expected risks and benefits
* The participation is voluntary, and they can withdraw at any time without consequences
* How their confidentiality and privacy will be protected
* The name and contact information of the local PI who can be contacted for questions and problems

**Informed consent can be written or oral:**

* ***Written consent:*** the person gets a written form describing the research, and signs that form to document their consent to participate. If the participant is illiterate, the form is read to them, after which they mark or check a box. This is often followed by the signature of a witness.
* ***Oral consent***: in this case the person gets all the information that they need either verbally or in writing (depending on literacy) and then verbally consents to participate. The participant does need to sign anything. This approach is often used in research with minimal risks; however it does not mean that the requirement for consent is waived.

### 6.2.1 Parent consent vs. child assent

All adolescents participating in Phase 1 of the GEAS are considered children (aged 11-13). By regulatory definition, children are “persons who have not attained the legal age for consent to treatments or procedures involved in the research, under the applicable law of the jurisdiction in which the research will be conducted” ([45 CFR 46.402(a)](http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/45cfr46.html#46.402)). Parental consent is therefore required for all participating adolescent children in the GEAS.

However, parental consent constitutes only half of the consent process. Assent, the agreement of a child to participate in research, is the second component of the informed consent procedure for all children. If a parent consents to their child’s participation, but the child does not assent, the parent or their child is no longer eligible to participate.

## 6.3 Plan for reporting adverse or unanticipated events

Given the nature of the study, adverse events are highly unlikely. If any adverse events were to occur, research staff will be advised to report the situation to their in-country field coordinator who in turn will notify the study principal investigator (Robert Blum) and site principal investigator for immediate response and for notification of the IRB. Any disclosure of child abuse should be reported to legal authorities in all sites. Parents and adolescents should be informed about the child abuse disclosure policy, included in the consent and assent forms.

# 7. Data collection with adolescents

## 7.1 Overview of interviews with adolescents

The interviews with adolescents are comprised of three main activities: “Timeline” (group), “Venn Diagram” (individual) and semi-structured in-depth interview using a narrative technique (individual). The Timeline activity should take place in a **same gender groups (boy groups and girl groups). All activities** should also be matched by same-gender interviewers – so that female interviewers interview girls and males are interviewed by male interviewers. After the timeline group interview, adolescents will be interviewed individually. **The individual interview is opened with a “Venn Diagram”** activity, followed by the semi-structured interview using a narrative technique. In total, the process of all these activities is expected to take **no more than 2 hours.**

Interviews should be conducted and recorded in the local language of each site. Interviewers will be working in teams of ***at least* 3 people** (Interviewer A, B and C) to conduct the sessions with adolescents. Additional interviewers can be used at each session (i.e. larger groups of adolescents) depending on the capacity of the site. Interviewer roles can be rotated in the team between different sessions.

**Both the group activity and the individual interviews should be audio-recorded, provided the participants give their consent/assent.**

***Part I: Group activity***

* Adolescents will first meet in a group. During this time, one person (Interviewer A) will lead the icebreaker activity (Timeline), ask follow-up questions and moderate discussions.
* The second person (Interviewer B) takes notes and records major themes as well as body language and other non-verbal communication.
* The third person (Interviewer C) prepares the session and takes care of logistics.

***Part II: Individual interview***

* Following the group activities, the interviewers will split up to interview adolescents individually.
* During this time, interviewer A and B will conduct separate semi-structured in-depth interviews -- each with one adolescent. If there is another interviewer, he/she can also interview an adolescent – keeping in mind the importance of matching on gender.
* The first part of the individual interviews is the Venn diagram activity. Directly following this activity, interviewers will start asking in-depth and narrative questions.
* Meanwhile, interviewer C will lead a “fun” activity with the remaining participants.
* Activities will then rotate until all adolescents have been interviewed.

## 7.2 Preparation for adolescent interviews

* Contact the adolescent and their parent/guardian 1-2 days before the interview to confirm that they will be attending.
* Confirm the venue with the local organization that will be hosting the session, or from which you are renting space.
* Prepare all interview materials, which can include:
	+ Tape recorders
	+ Digital camera to capture visual outputs/drawings (not pictures of the adolescents)
	+ Water and snacks
	+ Consent and assent forms
	+ Interview guides
	+ Flip chart paper, whiteboard or large sheets of paper
	+ Marker pens in different colors
	+ Masking tape
	+ Notebooks and pens for interviewers
	+ Paper and pens (color) for adolescents
	+ Bags/files for interviewers to keep documents
* Decide on interviewer roles: who will moderate the group activity, take notes, conduct individual interviews, and lead “fun” activities.

## 7.3 Location of adolescent interviews

The interviews with adolescent should take place in an ‘adolescent-friendly’ venue. Young adolescents should be able to feel comfortable, and know that their privacy is being assured. The venue should have access to one room for group icebreakers, and additional breakout rooms or private spaces to assure confidentiality for individual in-depth interviews.

## 7.4 Steps in conducting the group and in-depth interviews with adolescents

The following describes the basic steps of conducting the group interview and individual interviews with adolescents. More detail is provided in the training manual, and in the interview guides (Appendix X).

### 7.4.1 Before the interview begins

* Arrive at interview location in good time.
* Prepare materials and set up refreshments (food and drinks).
* Double check interviewee list to confirm who is attending.
* Prepare a checklist of all topics to be covered during the session (see Appendix X guidelines). This checklist is flexible; interviewers should incorporate and follow-up on the topics that emerges during interviews. It is however important not to lose sight of the interview objectives - these should always guide questions and probing.
* Confirm the roles of the interviewer team (group moderator, note taker, in-depth interviewers, lead of “fun” activities).

### 7.4.2 Sensitivity during interviews

* Throughout the interviews with adolescents, interviewers should:
* Keep an open mind, and not pass judgment by reacting positively or negatively to adolescents Avoid extreme facial, verbal and body language reactions to what adolescent say, showing surprise or embarrassment over statements.
* If the adolescents ask your opinion or request information during the interview, tell them that it is their opinion that is important. If they insist, let them know that you can talk further at the end of the interview.
* Include frequent reminders that the interview is voluntary, private and confidential: “No one will know what you say to me, not your family, no one in this organization, or your friends”. “You can stop or take a break at any time”.
* Build trust with the group and with individual adolescents, for instance by listening actively and responding carefully to their concerns and questions.

### 7.4.3 Welcome and consent

* Greet the adolescents (and their parents/guardians if they arrive together). Make sure that there is a place for parents to wait during interviews, if they want to remain at the location.
* Confirm that all participants have assented (written or orally if illiterate) to participate, and have parental consent.
* Gather all adolescents (without the parents) together so that you are sitting in a circle.
* Introduce the research team, the study and explain the purpose of the interview. Make sure to describe each step and how long it will take. Explain that the interviews will be recorded and that a second person will be taking notes during the group activities.
* One more time, read the child assent form out loud, slowly, to make sure that everyone understands. Ask the participants to say “yes” if they agree to participate (follow guidelines in Appendix Y).

### 7.4.4 Part I: Timeline Activity (Group-based)

The Timeline activity explores the research questions related to Objective 1: Gendered Transitions to Adolescence:

* What are the similarities and differences in the ways that boys and girls perceive ‘adolescence’?
* What are the main challenges and opportunities for a young person when becoming an adolescent boy or girl?

***Materials needed:***

* Flipchart paper
* Markers
* Tape or sticky glue to hang up paper on walls

***Activity type:***

* This is a group activity, with approximately 4-6 adolescents of the same gender per group.
* The below guide is for a group of girls. For a group of boys, adapt the guide so that you are talking about boys first.

**STEP 1: Introduction to Timeline**

*The group should develop two (2) timelines. Meaning, you should**split the girls into two groups: one will create a ‘girl’ timeline, and one a ‘boy’ timeline. Then they come back together and compare the timelines, and you ask the follow-up questions. Replace all names used in the guide with those generated by the group.*

*Begin by telling the group:*

* You are going to work in two small groups to make up a story about a child who lives in your community. One group will work on the story of a boy and the other will work on the story of a girl.
* What should we call them? [ask group to name girl and boy]”.
* On this piece of paper, I have put a mark to represent the day that “Mary” was born. On this paper I put a mark to represent the day that “John” was born. This line marks the point that “Mary” has become an adult woman. This one marks the point that “John” has become an adult man. All of this space in between shows the days and years between birth and becoming an adult.
* Each group is going to write on this line all the important events and changes in John and Mary’s lives between birth and becoming an adult. We’re calling this a timeline – it tells the story of their experience growing from a child into an adult.
* “Great, ok so now let’s split into two groups – I would like group 1 to finish the timeline for “Mary” [girl name] and group 2 to finish the one for “John” [boy name]”.

*Explain to the group that they should think about changes and events that the two characters experience from the time that they are born until they become adult women and men.*

**STEP 2: Develop the Timelines**

*Provide the materials to the two groups and give them 15 minutes to develop the boy and girl timelines in their two groups. Help them out as needed and clarify that changes and important events can be in body, feelings, school, family, etc.*

**STEP 3: Follow up questions**

*After the timelines have been developed, bring everyone together again and put up both timelines on the wall. Start asking follow-up questions for the girl timeline, and then contrast with the boy timeline [“what about John?”]. Initiate the discussion using the following questions as a guide:*

* Let’s talk about “Mary”. What are some of the changes that take place during [adolescence] for “Mary”?  *[Probe for physical, emotional, social changes].* What are some important events in her life?
	+ Does “John” have these same types of changes or events? How might some of these changes be different for boys?
* When does Mary stop being a child?
	+ How does she know? What is different for her when she is no longer a child?
	+ What about John? When does he stop being a child?
* What do you call that stage when Mary is no longer a child – but she’s not yet an adult?
	+ How does “Mary” know that she’s an [adolescent]? What makes [adolescence] different from being a child?
* When does [adolescence] end?
	+ Does this mean that when this happens to Mary, she is considered an adult?
	+ What about for “John”? What are some of the other things that happen to that tell you that he is now an adult?
* What are some of the changes in how people may treat “Mary”now that she is an adolescent [local term] [compared to when she was a child]?
* Do you think “John” is experiencing the same changes in how people treat him?
* What are some of Mary’s new responsibilities during [adolescence]?
	+ What about “John”, what are some of his new responsibilities?
* How do things change for “Mary” in school? Are there changes with her girlfriends during this time? How about with the boys in school?
	+ What about for “John”?

### 7.4.5 Part II: Venn Diagram (individual warm-up to in-depth interview)

The Venn Diagram activity explores the research questions related to Objective 2: The role of gender norms, behaviors and roles in interpersonal relationships during transitions into adolescence

* What are the key interpersonal relationships in the lives of young adolescents?

***Materials needed:***

* Flipchart paper (larger paper is okay as well)
* Post-it notes or smaller pieces of paper
* Different colors pens

***Activity type:***

* This activity should be done **one-on-one (individual**), as a transition into in-depth narrative interviewing. That is, at this point the interviewer and adolescent should sit together in a private room. The activity will help familiarize the interviewer with the types of relationships in the life of the adolescent being interviewed, so that these can form the basis for the in-depth and narrative questions.
* The below guide is for an interview with a girl (should be adapted if a boy)

**STEP 1: Introduction to Venn Diagram**

*This activity should be done in a private, confidential room together with one adolescent (that is, this activity follows the Timeline exercise but is no longer done in a group)*

*Begin by telling the adolescent that you are interested to learn more about the people in his/her life. Explain that it can be both ‘good’ and ‘bad’ relationships (people that he/she likes or not) with family, peers, teachers, religious leaders, other community members.*

*Explain that in this activity you will create a map together of all these people. Ask the adolescent to draw one circle/ring for each person (mother, father, sibling, etc.). No names need to be mentioned, or they can make up names.*

*Explain that the circles should be larger if the person is more important to them, and smaller if they are less important. The circles can overlap/be close if the people know each other. For each of circle, ask the adolescent to decide whether that relationship is ‘good’ or ‘bad’. For good, he/she should draw a smiley face, and if bad a sour face.*

*Give the adolescent about 5-10 minutes to do this. Help out as needed.*

**STEP 2: Ask follow-up questions**

*Before getting more into narratives and stories, use the VD to get an understanding of the important people in the adolescent’s life. Then, use these people as you continue to explore relationships. Use their names to probe for stories and examples.*

* Let’s talk more about the circles you drew…
* I see that you made this circle bigger for \_\_\_\_.
* Can you tell me a little about your relationship with \_\_\_\_? How long have you known\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_? What do you usually do together?
* I see that you marked your relation to \_\_\_\_\_ as a good/bad one [depending on what they draw]. Can you tell me a little about that? What makes it a good/bad relationship? [complete both for good and bad relationships if they draw both]
* Can you tell me whom (one or more people) you like to spend most of your time with?
	+ Where is this person(s) on the diagram?
	+ What do you like to do with them?
* When we drew the timelines before we talked about changes that happen when boys and girls grow up.
* Is there an adult person that you can talk about these changes with, to whom you can go for advice?
	+ About body changes? Feelings? Problems?
	+ Where is that person(s) on this diagram?

**STEP 3: Transition into Narrative Interviewing**

*Continue with the questions from the narrative interview guide, as described in the next section.*

### 7.4.6 Part III: In-Depth Interview with Narrative Technique

The in-depth interview using narrative techniques is the core of all activities with adolescents; both the Timeline and Venn Diagram activities are leading up to this stage. The in-depth interview (and specifically the narrative questions) explores both Objective 2 and 3, addressing the following research questions:

* In what ways do gender norms inform these [adolescent’s] relationships?
* How do interpersonal relationships (with parents, other family members, siblings, friends, teachers) change with the onset of adolescence?
* How is this similar or different for boys and girls; in what ways are these changes gendered?
* How do young adolescents learn about what is appropriate and inappropriate for young men and women to do in interpersonal relationships? I.e., what is the role of different sources such as parents, siblings, other family members, friends, and media in transmitting gender norms?

**Activity type:**

* The in-depth interview should be done one-on-one and follows the Venn diagram activity.
* The below guide is for an interview with a girl (should be adapted if a boy)

**Narrative vs. Semi-Structured Interview Questions**

We will be soliciting 2-4 stories from each adolescent about the relationships that they drew in their Venn Diagrams, and how these relationships might have changed since becoming an adolescent. The questions asked will focus on finding out about gender norms in these relationships, and specifically on transmission of gender norms, behaviors and roles. However, not all questions asked during the interview will be narrative questions. The interviewer will also ask a range of semi-structured questions to help the adolescent to start thinking about a topic, before asking them to tell a story about it.

**NOTE:** These questions are a **guide** for covering the research topics of interest. While it is not expected that the interviewer ask all the questions listed below nor use the exact order in which they are asked, it is important that the sections of the protocol on relationship changes and gender socialization are always asked. The interviewer should be flexible, listen carefully to what the adolescent is saying, and ask questions that follow and clarify responses and stories.

**How to ask Narrative Follow-up Questions:**

Many different follow-up questions can be used to solicit narratives. It is up to the interviewer to chose the follow-up questions that best suit the situation. Questions that are aiming to solicit narratives are bolded and marked with ‘narrative’ in the interview guide below. In order to elicit narratives, the interviewer can use a range of different follow-up question depending on the adolescent’s story. That is, choose the questions that best fit the situation and insert these in the guide below. With some practice, it will become easy and obvious how to listen to the stories and then ask questions that will enable the adolescent to “fill in the holes” in the story or elaborate it so that you can understand what they are saying in the story.

Examples:

* What was the situation? Where were you?
* What happened exactly—tell me the story of what happened, like it was a scene in a movie
* What about that was new or different?
* What were you thinking when that happened?
* What do you think about it now?
* How did [actions of people, things mom/dad said, etc.] make you feel?
* What did you want to do or have happen? (or hope or expect )
* What was surprising about [what happened]?
* Looking back, what kind of experience was it for you (what did it mean to you)? Why?
* What was the best thing or the most positive thing about it for you?
* What was the worst thing about it or the most negative part of it for you?

**Interview Questions**

*Note: These questions will follow the Venn diagram activity.*

|  |
| --- |
| ***Relationships with parents**** We are trying to understand what your relationship with your parents [mom/dad] is like now that you are becoming an adolescent [or growing up/no longer a child]).
* Since you started to grow up, does you mum treat you differently [then when you were a small child]?
	+ [If yes] How is it different? What about your dad? [only ask if has two parents]
	+ [Explain more if needed]: What are some things you can do now, that you could not when you were a child? At home (chores), after school, with friends…? What about things that you cannot do now, but you could before?
* **Narrative:** Do you remember a situation where you realized that you were no longer a child and that your parents were treating you differently than before?
	+ - What happened exactly—tell me the story of what happened, like it was a scene in a movie or on a tv show?

[*Select from menu of follow-up questions as needed to get a full story*]***Relationships with siblings**** Do you have brothers and sisters? Could you tell me about them [are they older or younger]?
	+ How has your relation with [brother/sister] changed now that you are no longer a child?
* **Narrative**: Is there a situation or memory that remind you that things are different in your relationship with them now? If yes, can you tell me a story about this?

 [*Select from menu of follow-up questions as needed to get a full story*]***Relationships with friends**** Now I would like to know a little bit more about your friends.
* Can you tell me about \_\_\_ [point to best/close friend on diagram]? How did you meet \_\_\_\_?
* Often young people tell us that when they are no longer children their friendships change.
	+ What has it been like for you and \_\_\_\_\_\_? Has your friendship changed since you became older? What about for some of your other friends, are they the same as you had when you were younger?
* **Narrative**: Can you tell me a story about what happened with your friends, how your relationship was new or different?

 [*Select from menu of follow-up questions as needed to get a full story*]* Do you have any friends who are boys [opposite gender]?
	+ Can you tell me about him/them? What do you usually do together?

***Romantic relationships**** Do you know any girls that really like a boy [opposite gender]?
	+ What do you call this type of relationship: is a [boyfriend/girlfriend]?
	+ Can you tell me what happens in such a relationship? [Probe]: Like, do they do special things with each other? Give each other things? [If yes] can you give me an example?
* Have you ever liked a boy [opposite gender] in a special way? Can you tell me a little bit about him? Was it a ‘boyfriend/girlfriend’ [local term] relationship?
* **Narrative**: Can you tell me about when you realized that you were boyfriend/girlfriend? What was the situation? What happened? You can start with for instance where were you?

[*Select from menu of follow-up questions*]* How do you think your parents feel [would feel] about you having a boyfriend? How so?

***Gender socialization*** * In general, are there certain “rules” about how girls [same gender] should behave when they are [adolescents]?
	+ Can you describe those to me? How are these things different from when they were children?
	+ Are these things the same for boys [opposite gender]? How are boys supposed to behave?
* How do girls in your community learn about these rules [what is ok or not to do for girls]?
* **Narrative**: Can you tell me about a time when you learnt one of these rules? What happened exactly—tell me the story of what happened, like it was a scene in a movie?

[*Select from menu of follow-up questions as needed to get a full story*]* What happens to girls who break these ‘rules’? How might people treat them differently?
* **Narrative**: Can you tell me about a time when this happened to you or a friend of yours? What happened exactly—tell me the story of what happened? How did it make you feel? [*Select from menu of follow-up questions*]
 |
| ***[Ask only if time permits]**** Imagine that you woke up and were a boy [opposite gender]. How would you feel?
	+ How do you think your life would be different? How would you be treated differently?
	+ What could you do as a boy [opposite gender] that you can’t do as a girl [same gender]? And what could you not do?
	+ What’s an example of something that you would want to do as a boy [opposite gender] that you don’t get to do now?
 |
|  |

## 7.5 After the interview with adolescents

* Once the individual interview is finished, thank the adolescent for his/her time
* Screen for distress (see details below)
* Provide them with their participation incentive ($5 and t-shirt)
* Let them know whom to contact if they have any more questions about the study

***Screening for distress after the interview***

* Immediately following the interview, provide the adolescent with a list of local resources to address any issues that you have talked about. This will enable them to become familiar with support services that they may not be familiar with, in a non-stigmatizing, non-judgmental way.
* Ask all participants “*I know the survey questions may potentially raise many sensitive topics. How are you feeling now? Are you feeling upset? Would you like me to connect you with support services now?*
* Where there is indication of distress that the interviewers deems is ok to share with the parent/guardian, the interviewer will say: “*Based on your saying to (or showing) to me that our interview may have upset you, I want to share with your mother (or farther) that there is possible help that might be useful. Would it be ok with you if I talk to your mother (or father)? Ok, let’s talk with him/her/him together now”*. If not, help them identify another adult they could talk with.
* Subsequently, the researcher and adolescent subject will meet with the parent, the distress discussed and referral information provided with the offer to assist with referral provided.

***Reporting of adverse events and abuse***

* For any adverse event that occurs, the research staff should report the situation to their in-country field coordinator who in turn will notify the study principal investigator (Robert Blum) and site principal investigator for immediate response and for notification of the IRB.
* If the child discloses abuse from their parent or guardian, this should be reported to legal authorities in all sites. Parents and adolescents should be informed about the child abuse disclosure policy, included in the consent and assent forms.

# 8.0 Data collection with parents

## 8.1 Overview of interviews with parents

Unlike the interviews with adolescents, the interviews with parents are not specifically seeking to capture narratives or stories from the respondents. It will therefore be a more ‘regular’ in-depth interview format. All interviews with parents will be done individually; i.e. there will be no group activities. Interviews are expected to last about **one hour** (no more than 90 minutes).

## 8.2 Preparation for parent interviews

* Contact the parent 1-2 days before the interview to confirm that they will be attending.
* Confirm the venue in which the interview should take place (see below).
* Prepare all interview materials, including:
* Tape recorders
* Water and snacks
* Consent and assent forms
* Interview guide
* Notebooks and pens for interviewers
* Bags/files for interviewers to keep documents

## 8.3 Location of parent interviews

The location of the interviews should be decided together with the parent, depending on their preference. It should be in a private, confidential location (from the perspective of the informant) such as the household, or outside e.g. and community organization or other venue.

## 8.4 Steps in conducting the interview with parents

The interviews with parents seeks to address the following research questions:

* How do parents perceive the period of ‘adolescence’ as similar or different for boys and girls?
* What are the perceptions of parents of the main challenges and opportunities that boys and girls face during adolescence?
* How do parents perceive that their girls and boy children’s interpersonal relationships change with the onset of adolescence? How is this influenced by gender?
* How does gender influence parent’s expectations of their children (what they can do, think, feel and act on)?
* How do parents perceive that adolescents learn about these expectations?

**Activity format**

* Individual, in-depth interview.
* Parents can have more than one child who is or has gone through adolescence, and they can be both boys and girls. We therefore need to tailor questions in line with their family structure. E.g. if they have a son, ask “what about your daughter”. If not, we ask them “what if you had a daughter”?
* The below version is for an interview with a parent of an adolescent boy participant– adapt questions if the participant is a girl.

***Introduction:***

*“Thank you so much for agreeing to talk to me about adolescence and the ways in which boys and girls are being raised in this community…. I’d like to begin by first talking a little bit about adolescence – the period of time between childhood and adulthood...”*

***Transitions into adolescence***

* I’d like to begin by asking you to me a little about your adolescent child(ren) [give time frame if necessary]? Their gender, age, school grade, etc.

*[Explain that the parent can make up names so as to not disclose the children’s identities]*

* Now, let’s talk a little bit about the period of time between childhood and adulthood...
	+ What do you call this period in your culture/language?
	+ What are some of the events and changes that happen during this period? How do you know when a child has begun ‘adolescence’?

*Probe for physical, emotional, behavioural changes*

* Think about your son [who is also in the study]. When did you first realize that \_\_\_\_\_\_ [name] was becoming an adolescent [local term]?
	+ What happened? Can you describe a situation or something that occurred that made you realize that he/she was no longer a child?
	+ How is your son reacting to the changes that he is experiencing growing up?
* What are some of the challenges or risks facing adolescent [young] boys today as they grow up?
	+ Do you worry about these challenges/risk for your son? What if you had a daughter, would your worry about similar things? Different? How so?
	+ How are these similar or different compared to when you were growing up?

*[If needed, specify e.g. are there challenges that come with urban life, peers, aspects of globalization, health threats, media…]*

* What about opportunities, are certain things that boys can do today that you could not when you were young?

*If needed, specifying types of opportunities e.g. in schooling, in relationships, in careers*]

* + If so, what are they? If not, why not?
* What are your dreams and expectations for your son as becomes a young man?
	+ In what ways are your expectations similar or different for your daughter [if you had a daughter]? Are girl’s opportunities different from boys? How so?

*“Now, I’d like to start asking you about the types of relationships adolescents have at this time period….”*

***Parent-child relationships***

Since your son/daughter started to grow up [becoming an adolescent], in what ways has your relationship with him/her changed? How?

What are some ways that you might treat him/her differently from when he/she was a child? Could you give me an example?

What about how your child is treating you, has this changed?

How do you feel about these changes in your relationship with \_\_\_\_\_?

What are some things that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ could do as a child that are no longer appropriate now for this stage? Could you think of an example?

How do you think it would be different if it were your daughter [if you had a daughter]?

***Peer relationships***

Many people tell us that as young people enter into adolescence their relationships change both with their siblings and with their friends/peers.

Does your adolescent son have an older sibling? Younger? Have you seen that \_\_\_\_\_ has changed the way he is spending time with his sibling(s)?

What about with his relationship with peers?

Does he have new friends now that he did not when he was younger?

Have you met these new friends? How do you feel about his new friends?

***Romantic relationships***

Have you noticed whether \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ has started showing interest in girls [opposite gender]?

How can you tell? Has he discussed this with you? How did you feel about this?

If you have not discussed this, how do you feel about talking to him about this at some point?

What if your son were to say that he/she had a girlfriend [will need to find appropriate local term for this] right now. How would you respond?

What if it was your daughter [if you had a daughter], would your reaction be different? If so, how

Do you know of any parents who have sons/daughters the age of your child where this has happened? If so, how did they respond?

***Gender socialization***

***Parent’s role*** *in transmitting gender norms*

You told me earlier about changes that your son is experiencing growing up, and about your expectations for him as a young man.

What has been your role in helping him understand and manage these changes? How do you let him know about your expectations for him as a young man?

Would it be the same if it were your daughter? If not, can you tell me a little bit about how it might be different?

What about your husband [if interviewing mother]. What is his role in helping your son manage these changes? Is it different from yours? If so, how?

***The role of peers, community and other sources*** *in transmitting gender norms*

* In your community, how does a boy learn what is expected of young men [what it means to be a man or woman?]
	+ Who or what provide this guidance to boys? How do you think that boys pick up what is expected of them as men?
	+ What about for girls, how do you think they learn what is expected of young women?

What other things to you think influence boys and girls as they are growing up to become young men and women today?

Like the Internet? Media? Music or movies or sports heroes or anything else?

Can you describe some specific examples that you think influence young boys? Girls?

How do you think that all these influences are similar to when you were growing up? Different? In what ways?

## 8.5 After the interview with parents

* Once the individual interview is finished, thank the parent for her/his time.
* Provide them with their participation incentive.
* Let them know whom to contact if they have any more questions about the study.
* If there is evidence of distress among any of the adult participants, they will be provided with referral information through a printed sheet and will be offered assistance in making a referral if that is their choice.

# 9. Interview Troubleshooting

Below is a brief selection of tips for handling different situations that may arise during the interviews. A more detailed guide, including how to be an effective interviewer and moderator, will be developed for the Training Manual.

**WHAT TO DO IF…?**

1. ***The participant does not want to talk?***

Assure the participant that there are no right or wrong answers; it is his or her personal opinion and perspective that are of interest to the study. It is important to emphasize the voluntary nature of the interview. Remind participants that they are not obligated to respond to any question. If the interview guide includes questions that may be of a personal or sensitive nature, explain this to participants in advance. You should emphasize that you would like for participants to respond to all questions as fully and honestly as possible, but only to the extent that they feel comfortable doing so. It may be helpful to move to a different section of the interview guide and then work your way back to the questions that were giving problems.

1. ***The interview is interrupted***

Be patient and understanding. Stop the recorder and document the time in your notes. When the participant is able to continue the interview, document the time and start the recorder. You may want to review where the conversation left off. If interruptions continue, ask the participant if another time or setting would be more convenient.

1. ***The participant does not want to complete the interview***

Ask the participant if he/she is willing to let you use the interview data up to that point and assure him/her that confidentiality will still be maintained. If the participant declines, destroy the recording and notes.

1. ***It is clear that the participant knows little about the research topic***

Some participants may turn out to have little knowledge about how gender norms are enacted and adopted in interpersonal relationships. If you discover this to be the case during the interview, do not be afraid to bring it to a close. Otherwise, there is the risk that participants will fabricate responses in order to please you or to avoid appearing ignorant. Full incentive should still be given.

1. ***The recording equipment fails***

If the recording equipment fails, the notes you will have taken during the interview and later expanded will serve as backup documentation. Check for equipment failure immediately following the interview, and expand notes within 24 hours if a failure has occurred.

# 10. Documentation of interviews

Documenting the interview consists of making tape recordings, transcribing the tape recordings, taking notes during interviews and expanding field notes using a word processor. All data should be formatted and given an archival number as specified in the Data Management section.

## 10.1 Recording of interviews

* All interviews should be audio-recorded so that they can be transcribed verbatim. Use a recorder that can save audio-files onto computers.
* Make sure to test and check the recorder before and during the interviews.
* A second recorder (e.g. phone) can be used in the event that the main recorder should fail.

## 10.2 Note-taking

* Notes should be taken both for group activities and individual interviews. All notes should be taken on their respective guides (*structured note taking guides for group activity vs. individual interview will be developed*).
* Notes should include date, time and place of the session, size and composition of each group; participants characteristics (age, gender, in/out of school, etc.). Use the standard cover page in Appendix Z (will be developed).
* Also, include a map/drawing of the room(s)/places where interviews were conducted, where interviewer and participants were seated.
* Observe and document participants’ behaviors and contextual aspects of the interview as part of your field notes. Major themes, body language and other non-verbal communication and interruptions that occur during interviews should be noted.
* Notes should include documentation of a participant seeming distracted, participant reluctance to answer or becoming emotional over a particular topic or question or if you suspect the participant is not being truthful and why that might be the case.
* Key phrases and terminology in local language, along with definitions.
* Stories and anecdotes that may emerge outside of interviews, e.g. during breaks.

Because there is only one interviewer present for the narrative interviews, the notes taken during the individual interview will not be as detailed as the notes taken during the group activities; however, individual interviewers should still attempt to document what occurs during the session:

* To assist in transcription, e.g. if parts of the recording are difficult to hear.
* To characterize participants’ behaviors and contextual aspects of the interviewer.
* To note questions for follow-up either with the individual or emerging themes and questions that should be addressed in future interviews.

## 10.3 Expanded Notes

* Note taker should expand on notes into a rich description of what was observed. This should take place as soon as possible following the interview, no later than 24 hours to ensure that the memory is still fresh. Expanded notes should be typed up using a word processor and word processor files should be saved in the format specified in Data Management.
* Create a narrative describing what happened and what you learned.
* Identify questions for follow-up.

## 10.4 Visual documentation

* Number the Timeline and Venn diagram clearly with the participant id codes.
* Take pictures of all drawing activities, or carefully copy drawings into paper that can be used for analysis. Be sure that the participant/group code is visible in the photograph.
* Pictures taken during data collection activities should be named using the abbreviation conventions specified in Table 3: “[site][activity][event #].jpeg”.

## 10.5 Transcription

* All adolescent (including group activities) and parent interview recordings should be transcribed using a word processor.
* The person transcribing should have experience in this method. It does not have to be the same person as the interviewer, and this will likely depend on site resources.
* Transcribe all recordings directly into a computer file saved in a format specified in the Data Management section (see below).
* Transcription of recordings should begin as soon as possible after the data collection activity.
* Transcription should follow the Transcription Protocol, which ensures that transcripts are consistent and systematic and can be processed using the lead site data analysis software. See Appendix CC for the Transcription Protocol and a sample transcript (to develop).
* All expanded field notes should be integrated into the transcripts. If someone else than the interviewer is transcribing, the interviewer should write up their expanded field notes and give those to the person transcribing.
* Transcripts should be labeled using the abbreviation conventions specified in Table below: “[site][activity][event #]-transcript.doc”.
* Interviewers should check the typed transcripts for accuracy if other staff members have performed transcription.
* All transcripts should be translated verbatim into English for analysis. Most English language transcriptions will be done at Johns Hopkins.

**Please note that the analysis process of interview data will be discussed in a different document.**

# 11. Data management and sharing

## 11.1 Saving and naming data files

After each data collection activity, use the Documentation Checklist included in Appendix DD to gather all forms and notes. All documentation materials should be properly labeled and the Archival Form (Appendix EE) should be filled out. All data, electronic and paper, will be linked to a specific data collection event using a labeling system described below and the Archival Log (Appendix FF). The Archival Log will be maintained by the data coordinator at each site and will be used to track all data collection events.

Word processors should be used to type up transcription and translation of recordings as well as to expand notes taken at data collection events. The following header, complete with information, should be placed at the top of all word processor documents:

**Table 3. Uniform header for all word processor documents**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Archival # |   |
| Site |   |
| Data collector(s) |   |
| Date of data collection |   |
| Data collection method |   |
| Transcriber |   |
| Translator |   |
| Typist |   |
| Date of computer data entry |   |

**Table 4.**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Site** |  | **Activity** |  | **Event number** |  |
| Assiut | AS | Group Interview | GI | 1 | 01 |
| Baltimore | BA | Adolescent In-depth Interview | IDI\_A |   |   |
| Blantyre | BL | Parent In-depth Interview | IDI\_P |  |  |
| Capetown | CA | Venn Diagram output | VD |   |   |
| Edinburgh | ED |  Timeline output |  TL |   |   |
| Ile-Ife | IF |   |   |   |   |
| Nairobi | NA |   |   |   |   |
| New Delhi | ND |   |   |   |   |
| Shanghai | SH |   |   |   |   |

*As an example,* a group interview with 4 adolescent girls in Baltimore would have the following files associated:

* BAGI01-enotes.doc
* BAGI01-transcript.doc
* BAGI01-audio.doc
* BAGI01-translate.doc

Picture of Timelines and Venn Diagrams would be saved as

* BATLxx.jpeg
* BAVDxx.jpeg

The in-depth interviews with each individual adolescent would have the following files

* BAIDI\_Axx-enotes.doc
* BAIDI\_Axx-transcript.doc
* BAIDI\_Axx-translate.doc
* BAIDI\_Axx-audio.wav

The in-depth interviews with parents would have the following files

* BAIDI\_Pxx-enotes.doc
* BAIDI\_Pxx-transcript.doc
* BAIDI\_Pxx-translate.doc
* BAIDI\_Pxx-audio.wav

## 11.2 Data storage

* All physical data (notes, tape recordings, transcripts, etc.) should be kept in a locked filing cabinet or equally secure location.
* It is recommended that all documents related to a given data collection event are stored in a secure location at each field site, in one large, heavy-duty archival envelope per event with an archival information sheet. The envelope’s contents will include typed transcripts, expanded field notes, debriefing notes, handwritten versions of the notes, and possibly cassette tapes.
* At the conclusion of the study all recordings (original and backup) will be destroyed and documentation of this will be placed in the archival envelope.

# 12. Organization of fieldwork

In order to carry out all activities for the interviews with adolescents, each site will need to lay out a plan describing when and by whom each step will be conducted:

* Coordinate recruitment of interviewers
* Meet with interviewers asking them about:
	+ Availability for training
	+ Availability for carrying out activities
	+ Background and suitability for the task
* Set a training date for interviewers and find and reserve a venue
* Arrange for food and transportation, as needed
* Translate training materials, as needed
* Print training materials, as needed, and prepare training supplies
* Carry out training of interviewers
* Recruit adolescent and parent interviewees
	+ Make contact with local organizations to recruit interviewees (parents and adolescents)
	+ Plan times and places to hold the interviews with adolescents. At least two interviewers should be present during each session
* Carry out initial interviews (approximately 2 groups of 5 adolescents) and then review the process to make any necessary changes before further data collection. Give feedback to JHSPH about how these two first sessions went, about any problems or changes that should be made.
* Type up interviews verbatim into transcripts of discussion and notes
* Translate all transcripts word by word into English
* Collect and upload [online data platform] all raw and translated documents and audiofiles from data collection
* Store all consent forms at site in a locked cabinet

# 13. Timeline

The below timeline is a guiding template; each site should develop their own detailed timelines in line with the specific tasks and activities.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   |   |  May | June | July | Aug | Sept | Oct |
| IRB Approvals |   | X | X |  X |   |   |   |
| Training session |  |   | X |   |   |   |   |
| Narrative guide | Narrative protocol | X | X |   |   |   |   |
| TranslationNarrative interviews |   | X | XX |  X |  X |   |
| Translation |   |   |   | X | X | X |
| Qualitative analysis |   |   |   |   | X | X |
| Local training of interviewers |  |   | X | X |   |   |   |
| Recruitment of adolescents and parents |  |   |   | X | X | X |   |
| Interviews with adolescents and parents |  |   |   | X | X | X |   |
| Vignette instrument   | Vignette stem development |   |   | X | X | X | X |
| Adolescent focus groups 3-day retreats |   |   | X | X | X |   |
| Translation, back translation |   |   | X | X | X | X |