

Formative Design Research - Ethiopia

Guide to Group Conversations with Key Influencers

Overview

This is a guide for conducting youth-participatory design research with key community influencers of adolescent girls, for the Adolescents 360 (A360) project. Please note that included in this document are more research methods than we will need during any one conversation. We provide a variety of suggested tools for how critical topics can be explored; each team will have the flexibility to choose which of these methods are most appropriate for the audience they are speaking with. At the end of every day, we will reconvene to discuss insights from the day as well as which methods worked best so that we can learn for the next day.

Introductions

Before beginning any discussion with key influencers, please ensure you:

- Go through the necessary consent procedures with each person.
 - Show appreciation for them giving us their time.
 - Explain that we are on a learning journey to better understand the lives of adolescent girls in their community and how community members influence adolescent girls' development.
 - Remind them that they are the experts, not us. We are simply here to ask questions and learn.
 - Remind them that there are no wrong answers. This is about them, their lives, and their opinions.
 - Encourage them to speak openly and honestly. Remind them again of the privacy and confidentiality of this conversation, and that they may stop at any time.
 - Remind them that the goal of this conversation is to get their help in developing programs that are going to improve the health and lives of girls and boys throughout his country.
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Values and Health

Suggested for conversations with groups of key community influencers. This activity requires two researchers – one to facilitate the discussion and one to take notes. It is best to conduct this activity in a space where people can stand up and move around – either indoors or outdoors.

Time Needed: 30-45 minutes

Step 1: Ask participants what they understand about the word “values.” Once they have shared some answers of their own, explain that values help define who we are and how we act by giving worth and importance to certain beliefs, principles or ideas. Values are attitudes or behaviors that individuals believe are good or desirable. Every individual and every culture has values. The purpose of this activity is to learn about what you value.

Step 2: Ask everyone to stand up in the middle of the room or area. Point to one side of the room (or area) and call it “Agree”. Point to the opposite side of the room (or area) and call it “Disagree”. Make sure participants understand.

Step 3: Explain that you will read a statement. Once the statement is read, each person will move to the side that best represents how they feel about the statement. Then you will ask for volunteers to express why they agree or disagree with the statement. If during the discussion a person changes their opinion, they can move to the other side. Remind them that there are no right or wrong answers, and that you encourage them to debate with one another.

Step 4: You can use as many of these statements as you want. If you are getting good conversation and debate out of one of the statements, stick with it. Remember, we are more interested in what the conversation is about and how the participants think and feel, and less interested in what side of the room they move to.

- Girls and boys in my community have equal opportunities to succeed.
- Adults should talk to girls about sex.
- A girl becomes a woman when she has children.
- Girls who use contraception are “dirty”.
- A woman’s role in life is to bear children and keep her husband happy.
- I feel comfortable talking to my children about sex.
- Adolescent girls should be able to access information and services to prevent pregnancy, whether they are married or not.
- A woman can refuse sex if she doesn’t want to have it.
- The only way for a woman to prove her worth is to have children.
- Most girls have sex in exchange for money or other material goods.

Step 5: Lead a discussion about the activity using the following discussion questions:

- How did you feel during this activity? What was easy? What was difficult?
- Were you surprised by anything that you heard during the discussions that we had during the activity?
- Do you think that girls in your community would feel similarly or differently to you about these topics?

CONTEXT

This activity requires two researchers – one to facilitate the discussion and one to take notes.

Time Needed: 10-30 minutes

Objectives: Open with a conversation that taps into the perceived value, status and associations related to adolescent girls in the community.

- For those of us who are not from this country or from this area, we'd love for you to help us understand the adolescent girls in your community.
 - Tell us about the different types of adolescent girls in this community.
 - What does it mean to be a 'good girl' in this community? What do those girls have in common?
 - What does it mean not to be a 'good girl'? What do they have in common?
 - Which do you most commonly see here – good girls or bad girls? Why?
 - In this community, what's the typical life for a girl who is, say, 15yo?
 - How is or isn't that different from a typical life of a 15yo boy here?
 - I want to understand if and how boys and girls are regarded differently in this community. Would you say that girls and boys are treated the same? Explain.
 - How are they treated the same?
 - How are they treated differently?
 - Do they have the same opportunities? Why or why not?
 - Do they have the same amount of control of their lives? Why or why not?
 - Do they have the same influence in their families? Why or why not?
 - Are they treated differently in the eyes of the local religion? If so, how?

IMPORTANT: We're looking for context – feelings, perceptions and associations related to girls – that may shape how adults respond to girls having access to contraception and agency over their bodies.



TOPIC SPECTRUM

This activity requires two researchers – one to facilitate the discussion and one to take notes.

Time Needed: 15-45 minutes

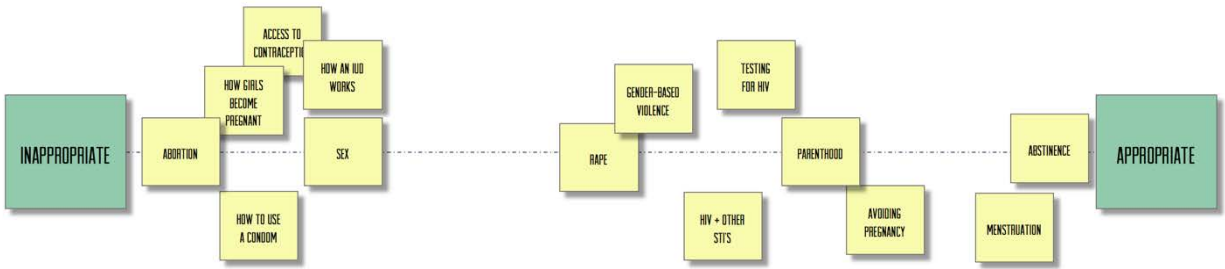
Materials Needed: Stickies, markers

Objectives: Continue focusing on just adolescents by exploring whether community influencers believes SRH is a valid and appropriate topic to address with adolescents and why. Discuss which topics are appropriate and which should be off limits.

First, ask the participants whether they believes it's appropriate to discuss sexual and reproductive health with **unmarried** adolescent girls. If not, why not? If so, why and which topics do they feel are appropriate to discuss with girls? Then, share with participants stickies with a different SRH topic noted on each. Ask them to add any topics they feel are missing.



Once the list is complete, have participants place each topic on a spectrum from least appropriate to most appropriate topics to be addressed (by no one in particular) with **unmarried** adolescent girls. At this point do not address who has the responsibility to address with adolescent girls. Just get a clean read on which should and shouldn't be addressed.



Once the participants indicated what is and isn't appropriate to discuss with **unmarried** adolescent girls:

- Discuss the ranking with the goal of understanding the logic behind it.
- **IMPORTANT**: Determine the perceived risk in talking to **unmarried** adolescent girls about the least appropriate topics, as well as what makes other topics more appropriate.
- **IMPORTANT**: Figure out what circumstance might move a topic closer to 'appropriate' and acceptable. Determine why.
- Without judgement explain what topics are considered appropriate in other countries. Discuss. Gauge reaction.
- **IMPORTANT**: Discuss how, if at all, his/her opinion changes under different circumstances, like the adolescent is a) already sexually active, b) has already conceived, c) is married.

Responsibility Bulls-Eye

This activity requires two researchers – one to facilitate the discussion and one to take notes.

Time Needed: 15-45 minutes

Materials Needed:

- Flipchart or poster with the bulls-eye drawing on it
- Sticky notes with the words written on them
- Blank sticky notes



Step 1: Hang up the bulls-eye on a wall or spread it out on a flat surface. Hand out the sticky notes to the participants – one per participant.

Step 2: Explain that this is an exercise to discuss who they feel is most responsible and least responsible for providing information or services about sexual and reproductive health to adolescent girls, particularly for preventing pregnancy.

Step 3: Ask one participant to read what is on her/his sticky note and to say whether s/he feels this person is most responsible, somewhat responsible or not responsible for providing sexual and reproductive health information or services to adolescent girls. Ask the participant to explain why s/he feels that way. Once s/he is finished explaining, ask others for their opinions. Do they agree with her? Disagree? Encourage them to debate and decide if they want to leave the sticky where it is or move it. You can also write new sticky notes with the same word and place it in multiple places on the bulls-eye if they do not agree.

Step 4: Repeat this exercise until you have gone through all of the sticky notes. Make sure you give all of the participants time to talk and discuss their feelings.

Step 5: Ask the participants whether there are other people that they would like to add to the bulls-eye, for whom they think are most responsible for providing adolescent girls with sexual and reproductive health information or services. Write those down on sticky notes and stick them on the bulls-eye. Make sure you ask them to explain their answers and continue discussing and debating with one another.

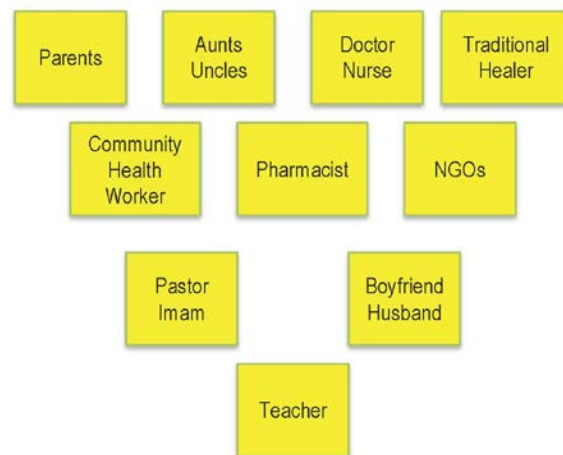


Photo Sorts

This activity requires two researchers – one to facilitate the discussion and one to take notes.

Time Needed: 10 – 30 minutes

Materials Needed: 10 photo cards

Step 1: Make sure you have a large, flat surface to work on like a table or even the ground. Lay out the following cards on the surface. Each card will have a word and a photograph of a woman expressing that word.



Step 2: Make sure that the participants know what all of the words mean on the cards. Explain that you are going to describe a life event or a state of being for an adolescent girl, and they are to each point to the picture that best describes how they feel when they think about adolescent girls going through that event. Explain that it might be an event the girl has already gone through, or one that she thinks she might go through in the future. If she has already gone through it, they should choose the card that best describes how they, as community influencers, felt at that time. If adolescents they know have not gone through it, they should choose the card that best describes how they feel right now when thinking about an adolescent girl they know going through it in the future.

Step 3: Read out the following events/states one at a time. After each one, give them time to choose the card that best describes their feelings. Tell them they can pick more than one card, but they need to explain to you why they have all of the feelings they feel. Ask them to “think out loud” meaning that they should explain what they are thinking as they choose between the cards, out loud to you. Remind them that they are welcome to change their decision at any time and as often as they want; what you care about most is that they explain their thinking. If they say something that is really interesting to you, make sure to probe by asking questions like “Why do you feel that way?” or “Can you tell me a bit more about that?”

- Being born
- Getting their period for the first time
- Having their period every month
- Having a boyfriend
- Having a husband
- Having sex
- Becoming an adult
- Becoming a mother
- Getting a job
- Making decisions for herself and her life
- Getting married

- Using contraception
- Being a girl
- Being Ethiopian

- Talking to a health provider about sexual health
- Graduating from school
- Going to University
- Speaking up for what she believes in

Story telling

This activity requires two researchers – one to facilitate the discussion and one to take notes.

Time Needed: 30 – 40 minutes

Materials Needed: Stickies, flipchart and markers

OBJECTIVE: To fill in a hypothetical story to determine community reactions to adolescent girls' needs, and help-seeking behaviors and services available.

Steps for facilitator:

- 1) Begin this session by explaining the method: "I'm going to read to you the beginning of a story about a girl in a community" and that participants will help in filling in their stories with what would happen to them if they were in your community.
- 2) Write the name of the person in the story on a sticky note and paste in on the center of the board.
- 3) People will identify services, institutions or people where the girl in the story will seek help. Write them down and paste them on the board. The more helpful/accessible the service/people, the closer the sticky note should be placed to the name of the person in the story.
- 4) If possible, take a picture at the end. DO NOT take pictures of the participants.
- 5) Select up to two stories to discuss.

Story 1

Introduction: I'm going to read to you the beginning of a story about a girl in a community like yours. I would like your help in filling out her story with what would happen to her if she were in your community.

Hiwot is 15 years old. Hiwot goes to school and helps her mother with cooking and chores around the house. She's been hearing from some of her relatives nearby that her parents are talking about arranging a marriage for her. Hiwot is nervous. She wants to keep studying but she does not want to go against her parents. She is not sure if she is ready to get married and she knows that she is not ready to have children.

Q. How would Hiwot feel about her parents arranging a marriage for her?

Q. What would Hiwot do next?

Q. What do you think would be responses of people she told about her concerns?

Q. Will Hiwot go anywhere to get help? Will she try to access any services? If so, what are they?

Q. Who might talk to Hiwot about contraception?

Q. What will happen to Hiwot if she tries to seek any support? Will she be happy with any support she receives and how she is treated?

Q. What do you think will happen to Hiwot?

Q. How would this situation change if Hiwot were a boy?

Story 2.

Introduction: I'm going to read to you the beginning of a story about another girl in a community like yours. I would like your help in filling out her story with what would happen to her if she were in your community.

Tigist is 19 years old. Tigist has been married for six months. She's excited about having entered a new phase in life and getting started as a married woman. Her husband makes pretty good money, but Tigist thinks that if she could work, her new family's situation would be a lot easier. Her relatives are teasing her about when she is going to give them a child. Tigist thinks a child might be nice, but Tigist isn't sure what to do.

Q. What would Tigist do next?

Q. What do you think would be responses of people she told about her concerns? Who would she talk to?

Q. Who might suggest to Tigist that she use contraception to delay child-bearing?

Q. Will Tigist go anywhere to get help? Will she try to access any services? If so, what are they?

Q. What do you think will happen to Tigist?

Q. How would the situation change if Tigist already had a child and did not want a second child?

Story 3.

Introduction: I'm going to read to you the beginning of a story about another girl in a community like yours. I would like your help in filling out her story with what would happen to her if she were in your community.

Ayne is 18 years old. After studying very hard in secondary school, Ayne moved to the city to study at university. Ayne has been enjoying the freedom of living in the city, but she knows her parents want her to stay focused on her studies. Ayne has been seeing a slightly older university student named Berhanu for a few months. Recently he's been talking about getting more serious about being with Ayne. Ayne isn't quite sure what he means and what he expects.

Q. What would Ayne do next?

Q. Who would Ayne talk to? What advice would you give Ayne?

Q. Who might talk to Ayne about contraception?

Q. Will Ayne go anywhere to get help? Will she try to access any services? If so, what are they?

Q. What do you think will happen to Ayne?

Q. How would the situation change if Ayne and Berhanu had already had sex?