In-depth interviews with Initiation Counselors

I) Determine whether interview will be conducted in English or Chichewa

II) Introduction: GAIA would like to develop a program for girls aged 10-18 to help them learn accurate and comprehensive information about their bodies and preventing unintended pregnancy. My name is Kristin Nash and I am a Masters of Public Health student at the University of Washington in America. We are helping GAIA by talking to girls about where they get information about sexual and reproductive health. By sexual and reproductive health, we mean topics like bodily changes, sex, pregnancy, and contraception. We’re also talking to adults in the community to understand their attitudes toward educating girls on these topics. Your answers to these questions will help GAIA to better understand how girls currently learn this information, what they learn and how you'd prefer they learn. We will collect the information, keeping participants anonymous, and will provide it to GAIA so they can develop a program that reflects girls’ needs. When responding to questions, please do not identify yourself or anyone else by name.
### Demographic information:

I’d like to begin by asking several questions about you and your work with girls…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How old are you?</td>
<td>Actual age, if known________________ or Estimated age________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If exact birthdate is not known, ask for an estimated age and note that this is an estimate.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Have you ever attended school? <strong>Circle one</strong></td>
<td>Yes  No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What is the highest standard/form in school you have achieved?</td>
<td>HIGHEST LEVEL ATTAINED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circle highest level, then write highest standard/form/tertiary years completed</td>
<td>(Primary school) STD: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Secondary school) FORM: 1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tertiary education, if any</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Did you receive training to be an initiation counselor? Please describe.

5. Do you have an occupation/job in addition to performing duties as an initiation counselor?

**Circle best response**

Subsistence farming - 1
Commercial farming - 2
Raising and/or selling livestock - 3
Small business - 4
Temporary employment - 5
Piecework/ganyu – 6
Vendor – 7
Professional, specify type (e.g., teacher, nurse, ______) – 8
Student – 9
Homemaker/housewife – 10
Unemployed -11
Other (specify) __________________________ - 12

6. Do you receive financial or other remuneration for duties as an initiation counselor? Please describe.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7a. In what village do you reside?</td>
<td>Village: ______________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 7b. In what type of accommodation do you reside? | permanent home (brick, corrugated iron) - 1  
“semi-permanent” (mud) - 2  
“temporary” home (leaves, branches, sticks) - 3  |
| 8. What is your religion? | Christian (Catholic) - 1  
Christian (Anglican) - 2  
Muslim - 3  
Traditional - 4  
Athiest - 5  
Other - 6 (specify) __________  
No religion - 7  |
| 9. What is your ethnic group? | Chewa - 1  
Yao - 2  
Lomwe - 3  
Tumbuka - 4  
Sena - 5  
Mang’anja - 6  
Sindikudziwa - 7  |
| 10. What language or languages do you speak? | Chichewa - 1  
Lomwe - 2  
English - 3  
Other – 4 _______________ |
IV) Sources and content of sexual and reproductive health information

Now, I’ll be asking you questions regarding what you teach girls about different sexual and reproductive health topics. For each topic area, I will ask about the content of your teachings, as well as how else they learn about the topic and what you think about each source of information. Please feel free to stop me or ask questions at any time if something is unclear.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Initiation Counselor and other sources of information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1a. What do you discuss with girls about bodily changes and menstruation? <strong>Probe for detail.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At right, note: specific messages delivered on this topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1b. Do you think initiation counselors are a good way for girls to learn about this topic? Why or why not?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If they do not discuss this topic with girls, ask 1c, otherwise skip to next question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1c. If you do not discuss this topic with girls, why do you not?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If needed, use prompts:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It’s not appropriate to discuss (probe for why not)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I don’t feel like I have enough information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Any other reasons?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1d. Where else do girls learn about bodily changes and menstruation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Probe, if needed:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents/Guardians (who specifically?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended family members/adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends/same-age peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health workers (what type specifically?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media (e.g., radio, magazines, newspapers, TV, advertising, billboards, internet, posters, pamphlets, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other sources _________________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1e. Do you think the sources you just mentioned are good ways for girls to learn about bodily changes and menstruation? Why or why not?

1f. Which are the best sources for this information? Why?

1g. From these other sources, are they taught the same or different from what they learn in initiation?

If different, please probe:
1h. What, specifically, are they taught that is different from what they are taught by you?

Now, for the next topic…

2a. What do you teach/advise girls about appropriate sexual behavior? Are expectations different for girls than boys? If so, how?
Probe:

At right, note: specific messages delivered on this topic.

Prompt, if needed:
• Does age or onset of menses play a role in determining when first sex is appropriate? How?
• What about being in a relationship? What type?
• Do girls have a say in whether to have sex? Can they say no? Under what circumstances?
• What about monogamy versus multiple partners?

2b. Do you think initiation counselors are a good way for girls to learn about this topic? Why or why not?

If they do not discuss this topic with girls, ask 2c, otherwise skip to next question.

2c. If you do not discuss this topic with girls, why do you not?
If needed, use prompts:
• It’s not appropriate to discuss (probe for why not)?
• I don’t feel like I have enough information.
• Any other reasons?

2d. Where else do girls learn about appropriate sexual behavior?
- Probe, if needed:
  Parents/Guardians
  Extended family members/adults (who specifically?)
  School
  Friends/same-age peers
  Health workers (what type specifically?)
  Media (e.g., radio, magazines, newspapers, TV, advertising, billboards, internet, posters, pamphlets, etc.)
  Other sources________________________________

  2e. Do you think the sources you just mentioned are good ways for girls to learn about appropriate sexual behavior? Why or why not?

  2f. Which are the best sources for this information? Why?

  2g. From these other sources, are they taught the same or different from what they learn in initiation?

    **If different, please probe:**

    2h. What, specifically, are they taught that is different from what they are taught by you?

---

Ok, now I’d like to ask about another topic…

3a. What do you teach them about pregnancy and childbirth, including how girls and women become pregnant?

  **At right, note: specific messages delivered on this topic.**
Also probe for more detail on:

- What is your opinion about childbearing among girls under age 18? If it’s ok, when is it ok? Do you share your opinion with the girls?
- Do you discuss that there can be complications for mother and baby when the mother is an adolescent, or under age 18?
- Is childbearing among girls under 18 common in your community? Do you think this influences the girls you work with?

3b. Do you think initiation counselors are a good way for girls to learn about this topic? Why or why not?

If they do not discuss this topic with girls, ask 3c, otherwise skip to next question.

3c. If you do not discuss this topic with girls, why do you not? If needed, use prompts:
- It’s not appropriate to discuss (probe for why not)?
- I don’t feel like I have enough information.
- Any other reasons?

3d. Where else do girls learn about pregnancy and childbirth?

Probe, if needed:
Parents/Guardians
Extended family members/adults (who specifically?)
School
Friends/same-age peers
Health workers (what type specifically?)
Media (e.g., radio, magazines, newspapers, TV, advertising, billboards, internet, posters, pamphlets, etc.)
Other sources________________________________

3e. Do you think the sources you just mentioned are good ways for girls to learn about pregnancy and childbirth? Why or why not? Which are the best sources for this information? Why?

3f. From these other sources, are they taught the same or different from what they learn in initiation?

If different, please probe:
3g. What, specifically, are they taught that is different from what they are taught by you?

Ok, now I’d like to ask about one more topic area…

4a. What do you tell girls about contraception and condom use?

At right, note: specific messages delivered on this topic.

4b. Do you think initiation counselors are a good way for girls to learn about this topic? Why or why not?

If they do not discuss this topic with girls, ask 4c, otherwise skip to next question.
4c. If you do not discuss this topic with girls, why do you not? If needed, use prompts:
   • It’s not appropriate to discuss (probe for why not)?
   • I don’t feel like I have enough information.
   • Any other reasons?

4d. Where else do girls learn about contraception and condom use?

Probe, if needed:
Parents/Guardians
Extended family members/adults (who specifically?)
School
Friends/same-age peers
Health workers (what type specifically?)
Media (e.g., radio, magazines, newspapers, TV, advertising, billboards, internet, posters, pamphlets, etc.)
Other sources__________________________

4e. Do you think the sources you just mentioned are good ways for girls to learn about contraception and condom use? Why or why not?

4f. Which are the best sources for this information? Why?

4g. From these other sources, are they taught the same or different from what they learn in initiation?
If different, please probe:
4h. What, specifically, are they taught that is different from what they are taught by you?

Now I’d like to ask a few more questions about the role of initiation counselors and ceremonies for girls learning about their sexual and reproductive health…

B. Initiation Process
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At what age do girls participate in the ceremony?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How long is the ceremony? At what time of year is the ceremony?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you work with the girls in addition to the ceremony itself? If yes, for how long and what happens during those interactions?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you feel able to provide correct and comprehensive information to girls? If yes, what best helped prepare you for this role? If not, why not?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would you like GAIA to support you in the work that you do? How?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prompts: information, materials, training, supervision, certification</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, I’d like to ask about areas where you think girls might be lacking information…

**C. Gaps in Knowledge**
Generally, do you feel that the information girls receive on sexual and reproductive health is adequate?

Is there anything you think girls should learn more about? What?

How could the sexual and reproductive health education of girls be improved?

Do you think girls should be educated to avoid early pregnancy, and by early I mean before age 18? If yes, what do you think should be done?

V) Closing:
Do you have any additional thoughts about how girls learn about or should learn about sexual and reproductive health matters? What do you think is the best way to deliver sexual and reproductive health information to girls in general? Do you have any additional information or comments? Anything you would like to share that I have not asked about? Thank you for your time!