

The Global Early Adolescent Study: an exploration of the evolving nature of gender and social relations

10-14 years: a critical age

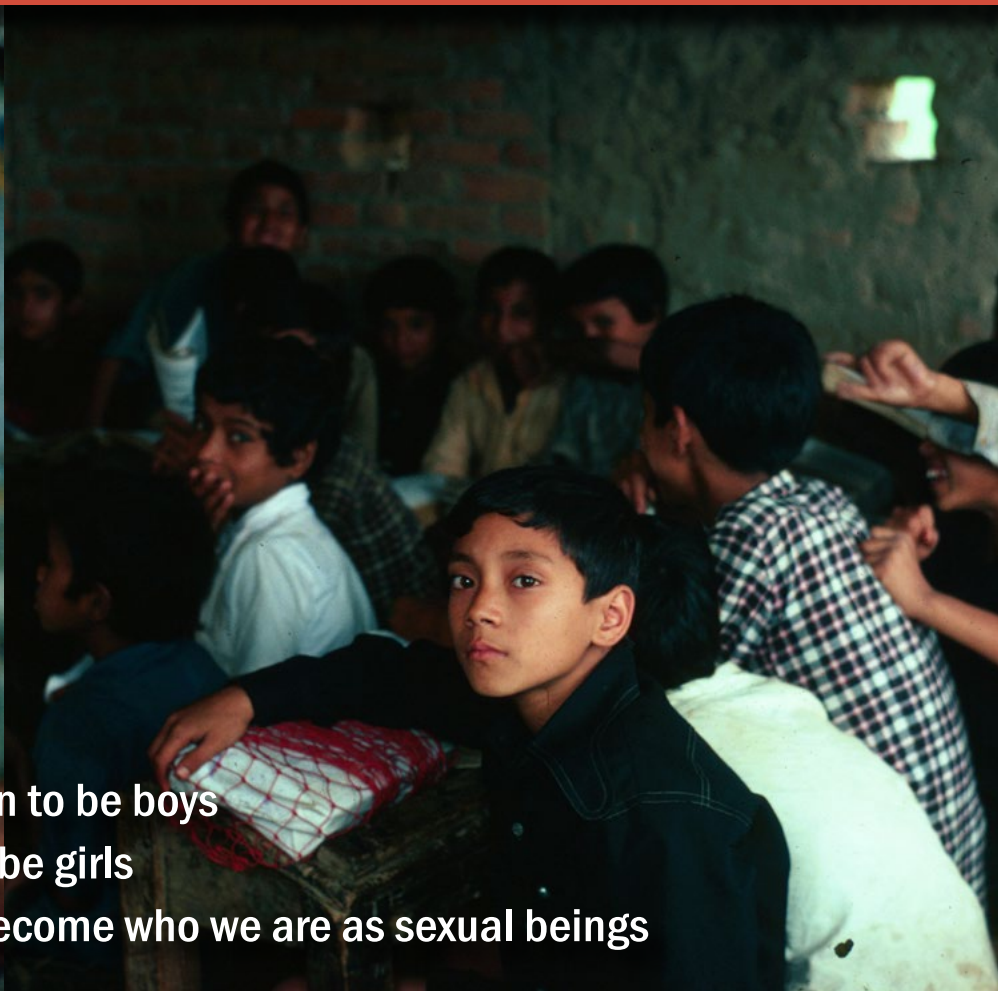


Gender socialization:

...how boys learn to be boys

...and girls to be girls

...how we become who we are as sexual beings



A Time of Transition

The ages 10-14 years are among the most critical for human development, yet one of the most poorly understood stages. While the biological processes are universal, the social contexts within which they occur vary considerably. During this transition, young people are expected to assume socially defined gender roles that determine their sexual and reproductive health future.

Ten-City Study in Poor Urban Environments

A cross-country comparison offers a unique perspective on the commonalities and differences of the role of parents, peers as well as media in shaping young people's sexuality and the role of gender norms in that development across diverse cultural settings.

The focus is on urban poor youth, a vulnerable and fast growing population worldwide; and our sites range from small and medium sized communities to those that are vast. Focusing on poor urban youth worldwide will generate information for parents, teachers, youth workers and youth themselves that will inform programs and services.

Study Goals

The goal of the Global Early Adolescent Study is to understand the factors in early adolescence that predispose young people to subsequent sexual health risks and conversely that contribute to healthy sexuality so as to provide the information needed to improve sexual and reproductive health outcomes.

Baltimore, USA – Caroline Moreau, MD, MPH, PhD, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

The study will take place in East Baltimore with a focus on 5 zip codes (representing 22% of the city's population of 630,000).

Poverty in the selected areas is estimated at 25% with a predominately African-American population (85%). Random sampling of households will be conducted using the list of household enumeration from the 2010 census.

Cape Town, South Africa – James Lees, PhD, University of the Western Cape

The study will take place in Khayelitsha in the Cape Peninsula. Khayelitsha covers approximately 43sq Kilometers (16.80sq miles) and is made up of 22 sub-sections or areas. The area includes 118,809 households with a total population of close to 400,000 residents (2011 census data). Of the total population over 40% of the residents are under the age of 19 years. Around 60% of residents still live in shacks (informal dwellings) and 29% do not have access to a flush toilet connected to a sewerage system. More than 53% of the working age population is unemployed.

Assiut, Egypt – Omaima El Gibaly, MH, Public Health & Community Medicine

The Global Early Adolescent Study will be based in the Al-fath and adjacent El Waldya communities of Assiut, Upper Egypt. Two out of five residents are below the poverty line.



Ghent & Antwerp, Belgium – Kristien Michielsens, PhD, International Centre for Reproductive Health, Ghent University

In Belgium sites will be merged in communities of two cities, Ghent and Antwerp, with the largest pockets of low income youth. The cities have a population of respectively 250,000 and 512,000 people, with between 8 and 10% poor, and approximately 3.3% young adolescents.



Ile-Ife, Nigeria – Adesegun Fatusi, MBChB, MPH, FWACP, Director of the Population and Reproductive Health Programme (PRHP) and the Institute of Public Health (IPH)

The study will take place in Ile-Ife, in Osun State, western Nigeria and the headquarters of Ife Central Local Government Area (LGA). In the poorest sections, where the study will take place, most houses are mud and work is in the informal economy.

Study Design and Objectives

PHASE I will have:

Completed in-depth interviews with 10-14 year olds in each site and their primary care giver so as to develop a narrative on the unfolding of adolescence and the factors that impact it.

Developed and piloted three new instruments to be used with early adolescence on:

- a. gender norms and values,
- b. sex-role biases and beliefs,
- c. health and sexuality related behaviors.

Completed a systematic review of the sexuality and gender literature globally as it pertains to young adolescents.

PHASE II will use the validated instruments produced in Phase 1 to pursue the following objectives through a 5-year longitudinal study of 11-13 year olds:

Describe gender socialization as an evolving process in different cultural settings from early to later adolescence.

Investigate parental/caregiver and peer influences on gender socialization of young adolescents.

Understand how the contexts (schools, neighborhoods, media, culturally diverse settings) within which a young adolescent develops moderate parental/ adult caregiver influences on gender socialization.

Understand how gender socialization in early adolescence influences sexual behaviors and gender-based violence in middle and late adolescence.



Nairobi, Kenya – Caroline Kabiru, MPH, PhD, Head of the Urbanization & Wellbeing Research Program, African Population and Health Research Council

In Kenya the study will be carried out within the Nairobi Urban Health and Demographic Surveillance System (NUHDSS), in Korogocho slum which is located 7.6 kilometers from Nairobi's city center. Korogocho is characterized by high levels of unemployment, sub-standard and overcrowded housing, limited education and social services, high levels of crime and insecurity, and inadequate water and sanitation infrastructure. The study area comprises seven villages.

New Delhi, India – Rajib Acharya, MSc, MPS, PhD, Population Council, New Delhi

New Delhi will undertake the Global Early Adolescent Study in the urban slum of Sunder Nagri and Nand Nagri with a population of over half a million residents. Most residents are rural migrants.



Blantyre, Malawi – Bernadette O'Hare, FRCPCH, MPH, DTM&H, University of Malawi

The study will take place in Blantyre, population of just under 2 million inhabitants. It is Malawi's center of commerce and the main manufacturing center.

Nearly 45% of the population is 14 years of age or below; and with a total fertility rate (TFR) over 5, the population continues to grow. More than half the population (nearly 1 million live in the city proper; and one in four children are involved with child labor.



Shanghai, China – Chaohua Lou, PhD, Senior Researcher, Shanghai Institute of Planned Parenthood Research (SIPPR)

Shanghai will use the Pu Tuo District of the city which includes the 3 poorest communities. Nearly one million people live in this section of Shanghai.

Glasgow and Edinburgh, Scotland – Candace Currie, Professor and Director, Child and Adolescent Health Research Unit, School of Medicine, University of St Andrews

Data collection will be carried out in 2 of the largest cities, Edinburgh and Glasgow that are home to a significant proportion of Scotland residents living under the poverty line.

A total of 283,000 people in Glasgow reside in the 20% of most deprived areas in Scotland and over 36,000 children in Glasgow were estimated to be living in poverty in 2012. In Edinburgh, this proportion was estimated at 18%.





JOHNS HOPKINS BLOOMBERG SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Study Director – Robert Wm. Blum, MD, MPH, PhD

William H. Gates, Sr. Professor and Chair of the Department of Population, Family and Reproductive Health
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

Study Co-Investigator – Venkatraman Chandra-Mouli, MBBS, MSc

Department of Reproductive Health and Research
World Health Organization, Geneva

CONSULTING ORGANIZATIONS

- Hunter College, Deborah Tolman
- Institute for Reproductive Health, Georgetown University, Rebecka Lundgren
- Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University, Marni Sommer

COLLABORATING ORGANIZATIONS

- African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC), Nairobi, Kenya
- Assiut University, Assiut, Upper Egypt
- Ghent University, International Centre for Reproductive Health, Ghent & Antwerp, Belgium
- Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ile-Ife, Nigeria
- Population Council, New Delhi, India
- Shanghai Institute of Planned Parenthood Research (SIPPR), Shanghai, China
- University of Malawi, Blantyre, Malawi
- University of St. Andrews, Child and Adolescent Health Research Unit, St. Andrews, Scotland
- University of the Western Cape, Cape Town, South Africa

Photos credits

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Page 2: Egyptian kids (Katie Aune)

Boy in school (Pal Teravagimov/shutterstock.com)

Page 3: Indian children (Steve Estvanik)

Brother and Sister (David Lade/shutterstock.com)

Page 4: Boys (Tamara Kushch) – Girl in classroom (Zurijeta)

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Deenah Darom, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

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JOHNS HOPKINS
BLOOMBERG SCHOOL
of PUBLIC HEALTH

Department of Population, Family
and Reproductive Health
615 N. Wolfe Street – E4527
Baltimore, MD 21205, USA
Ph. 410-955-3384
Fax 410-955-2303
rblum@jhu.edu



**World Health
Organization**

Reproductive Health and
Research Department
Family, Women's and Children's
Health Cluster
20, avenue Appia
CH - 1211 Geneva, 27
Tel: +41 22 791 3966
Fax: +41 22 791 4171
daribic@who.int