

Open empowerment: Digital natives, democracy, and security in Latin America  
107163-001

The SecDev Foundation

**Research Ethics and Security Protocol**

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## **Overview**

It is the policy of the International Development Research Center (IDRC) and of the SecDev Foundation that any research carried out involving human subjects or animals be conducted in accordance with high ethical standards. Towards this end, the following Research Ethics Protocol will guide any research involving human subjects (henceforth referred to as 'participants' or 'subjects of research') undertaken within the Open Empowerment Initiative (OEI).

This protocol contains: I) a brief project description of the OEI, II) an outline of the principles that underlie IDRC's and the SecDev Foundation's ethical standards of research (page 2), and III) a brief to guide researchers in adhering to these standards (page 3-14). Section III) will include details on how information will be obtained from Subjects of Research in a consensual manner and how such information will be maintained in a manner which protects the confidentiality and privacy of Subjects of Research and the steps that will be taken by the SecDev Foundation and its sub-grantee partners to protect the security of Subjects of Research and the researchers who will be involved in the OEI. Lastly, included are two annexes: Annex 1 includes a privacy policy protocol for the handling of any 'other forms of data' of a privately identifiable nature that may be obtained from digital data sources and that may fall outside the scope of traditional human subject research protocols outlined (page 14-16); and Annex 2 contains a glossary list of key terms (page 16-19).

## **I. Project Description**

The SecDev Foundation, with the financial support of IDRC and in partnership with the Igarapé Institute, is undertaking a study on cyberspace in Latin America entitled the Open Empowerment Initiative. In addition to the SecDev Foundation and Igarapé Institute, the research will be undertaken by five regional research partners. This research may entail a mix of qualitative and quantitative research approaches including, but not limited to, desktop research, technical research, and collective and/or individual interviews. The following steps will apply to any research involving human subjects and/or research that may put at risk researchers: 1) Where any research is undertaken that involves human subjects, the ethical research principles and ethical research guide found below will be adhered to; 2) Prior to undertaking research involving Subjects of Research—if any—research teams will obtain a legal opinion in the national jurisdiction in which they carry out such research, concerning what, if any, legal obligations they may have to report illegal activities they become aware of in carrying out such research; and 3) New information that emerges in the lead-up to or conduct of the research that alters the below research guidelines will be taken into account and if deemed significant the research guidelines will be adjusted accordingly. IDRC will be informed of any such adjustments and/or if any difficulties are encountered in complying with the ethical standards described below.

## **II. Outline of the Ethical Research Standards**

The following principles serve to protect the dignity and privacy of every individual who, in the course of the Research Work carried out under this Project, will be requested to provide personal or commercially valuable information about him/herself or others (Subject of Research). These principles guide the ethical research guide found in Section III.

- 1) Before an individual becomes a Subject of Research, he/she shall be notified of:
  - the aims, methods, anticipated benefits, and potential hazards of the research;
  - his/her right to abstain from participation in the research and his/her right to terminate at any time his/her participation; and
  - the confidential nature of his/her replies.

2) No individual shall become a Subject of Research unless he/she is given the notice referred to in the preceding paragraph and provides a freely given consent that he/she agrees to participate. No pressure or inducement of any kind shall be applied to encourage an individual to become a subject of research.

3) The identity of individuals from whom information is obtained in the course of this Project shall be kept strictly confidential. At the conclusion of the Project, any information that reveals the identity of individuals who were subjects of research shall be destroyed unless the individual concerned has consented in writing to its inclusion beforehand. No information revealing the identity of any individual shall be included in the final report or in any other communication prepared in the course of this Project, unless the individual concerned has consented in writing to its inclusion beforehand.

4) When children (ages below 18 years) are involved in the Project, it is the policy of the Centre that special care be taken to ensure that their participation is undertaken in accordance with high ethical standards. Accordingly, in addition to the requirements of paragraphs A4.1(a) – A4.1(c) being complied with, children shall not be allowed to participate unless:

- their parents or guardians have been counseled with respect to the children's participation in accordance with the requirements of paragraphs A4.1(a) – A4.1(c); and
- their parents or guardians have given their free, explicit and informed consent to the participation of the children in the Project.

Parents or guardians shall have the right to withdraw their children from the Project at any time.

### III) Ethical Research Guide

The following are a series of nine steps that researchers will review prior, during, and subsequent to any research involving subjects of research. Doing so will: 1) ensure that information obtained from participants is done in a consensual manner and that such information will be maintained in a manner which protects the confidentiality and privacy of Subjects of Research; and 2) protect the security of participants and the researchers who will be involved in the OEI. **All researchers—even those not anticipating research involving participants—will review Step 2) below so as to ascertain and assure their own security.** (Note: The scope of potential research circumstances and research partners outlined in the below guide is far broader than that anticipated of the OEI and this scope is instead meant to account for a wide range of contingencies researchers may encounter during research design and in the field).

## ETHICAL RESEARCH GUIDE:

Step	Question	If...	Solution	Additional Notes
<b>1 - ETHICS APPROVAL - 1</b>				
1a	<b>Have you had your project reviewed by the ethics review team?</b>	If yes...	Continue to Section 2	
		If no...	Seek review of research instruments by Robert Muggah (the <b>ethics review team</b> hereafter)	
<b>2 - RECEIVING PERMISSION - 2</b>				
2a	<b>Have you obtained legal opinion on the conduct of your research?</b>	If yes...	Continue to 2b	Consult the ethics review team if this step poses any concerns or uncertainties.
		If no...	Obtain a legal opinion in the national jurisdiction in which you intend to carry out research entailing participants, concerning what legal obligations you may have to report illegal activities you become aware of in carrying out your research.	
2b	<b>Do you know what power structures you need to contact in order to conduct your research?</b>	If yes...	Continue to 2c	For your safety, and that of your partners and participants, it is advisable that you be aware of the <i>power structures</i> you need to contact in order to receive the necessary <b>permission</b> to conduct your research.
		If no...	Consult with your local partners, local residents, and professionals who have worked extensively in the area ( <b>local informed advisors</b> hereafter) about the different power structures in the area, their impact on the local area, and who should be informed in the interest of the safety of your participants and your research team.	
2c	<b>Have you/will you contact the necessary power structures in order to receive permission to conduct your research?</b>	If yes...	Continue to 2d	For your safety, and that of your partners and participants, it is advisable that you contact the necessary power structures, unless advised otherwise by your local informed advisors in the respective context.  Your local informed advisors should be effective mediums to initiate contact with the local power structures. If not, it is likely they know of individuals who would effectively establish contact and inform these groups.
		If no...	Before proceeding, seek the counsel of your local informed advisors to ensure that bypassing a necessary power structure is not endangering anyone's safety or research credibility.	
2d	<b>Have you/will you make initial contact with the community leaders to introduce them to your study and to seek permission to conduct research in their community?</b>	If yes...	Continue to Section 3	For your safety, and that of your partners and participants, it is advisable that you make introductions with local community leaders unless advised otherwise by your local informed advisors.
		If no...	Before proceeding, seek the counsel of your local informed advisors to ensure that bypassing local community leaders does not endanger anyone's safety or research credibility.	
<b>3 - CONSENT PROCESS - 3</b>				
3a	<b>Did you tailor the consent discussion to local languages and sensitivities?</b>	If yes...	Continue to 3b	It is advisable not to proceed unless you receive substantial input from local sources in regards to your <b>consent process</b> .
		If no...	Meet with your local informed advisors as well as local residents indigenous to the area (if time permits). Ensure that the language used is appropriate and can be understood by both your <b>enumerators</b> and your <b>target population</b> .	
	<b>During the consent</b>	If yes...	Continue to 3c	<b>BOTTOM LINE:</b> At the very least, you should

Step	Question	If...	Solution	Additional Notes
	process do you mention you will ensure <i>confidentiality</i> and <i>anonymity</i> ?	If no...	Discuss with your local informed advisors how to appropriately communicate with your participants and <b>community leaders</b> (when necessary) that you will be abiding by the strictest <b>confidentiality</b> and <b>anonymity</b> .	ensure that no one has access to the participants' data with the exception of selected members on the research team. This means that your enumerators and supervisors, who will be handling this information, should have strong references and be well-screened during the recruitment interviews. In addition, they should be trained extensively on the importance of confidentiality and anonymity as well as the appropriate procedures to ensure their implementation.
3c	Will your interviewers give contact information to the participant?	If yes...	Continue to 3d	<b>ALTERNATIVE:</b> If you cannot give information to the participant because they are incapable of contacting the necessary persons, try to organize a follow-up correspondence with community leaders to determine if any issues have arisen as a result of the study.
		If no...	Discuss with your local informed advisors the best way to allow participants to follow-up in case of any questions or concerns.	
3d	Will you inform the participants about the <i>risks</i> and <i>benefits</i> of his/her participation in the study?	If yes...	Continue to 3e	<b>BOTTOM LINE:</b> Be transparent. If there are no foreseeable benefits, you must inform participants, otherwise s/he may be left with false hopes of benefiting in some way from participation.  As a general rule, if the participant will not receive any benefits (immediate or long-term), the amount of risk should always be kept at a minimum.
		If no...	Consider the amount of psychological, emotional, physical, social, and professional risk that a participant would take were s/he to participate in your study. Then consider the long-term objective of the study and if there are any foreseeable outcomes that would be conceived as possible benefits to the participant or his/her community.	
3e	Will you be piloting the informed consent procedure amongst a few local residents who are naïve to the study?	If yes...	Continue to Section 4	<b>ALTERNATIVE:</b> If time or resources do not allow you to pilot your consent form, discuss the form and procedure with your enumerators, ensuring their comfort and familiarization with the procedure. It is also helpful to solicit input from your local informed advisors.
		If no...	It is helpful to recruit a few local participants to pilot the consent form using the final translation. Questions subsequent to the consent form should ask about participants' comprehension of the procedure, the extent to which they felt their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time, and the extent to which they felt their participation aligned with their goals and values.	
<b>4 – SAMPLING/SELECTING PARTICIPANTS– 4</b>				
4a	Are you recruiting <i>vulnerable groups</i> ?	If yes...	First, be sure that you have understood the vulnerabilities and elevated risks of harm that encircle this particular group. Discuss with your local informed advisors what vulnerabilities and risks you should be especially aware of in addition to the proper precautions to take when interacting and working with such groups.  Second, be clear about the following in the research proposal you submit to either your ERB or your ethics review team: i) The vulnerable groups you anticipate working with; ii) The elevated vulnerabilities and risks of harm that you have recognized in these groups; iii) The protective and precautionary mechanisms you will set in place to defend their rights, safety and well-being.	<b>NOTE:</b> Although the GLOSSARY (Annex 2) gives a description and portrait of typical vulnerable groups, the extent and nature of vulnerability varies within each context.  It is therefore important to discuss with your local informed advisors the following: 1) Which groups are vulnerable using the definitions in the GLOSSARY? 2) What are the greatest risks to these groups if working with them? 3) What are the best mechanisms to defend their rights, safety and well-being as well as provide appropriate protection and precautionary mechanisms?

Step	Question	If...	Solution	Additional Notes
		If no...	Continue to 4b	
4b	<b>Is the recruitment of vulnerable groups necessary for your research study?</b>	If yes...	Articulate the need in your proposal to your ERB or ethics review team why it is necessary to include such vulnerable group(s) in your research.	<b>REMINDER:</b> Recruitment of <i>vulnerable groups</i> is necessary when 1) You are targeting these groups specifically in the effort to ameliorate their conditions; 2) The information you are seeking can only come from these groups and not from <i>resilient groups</i> or other more privileged informants.
		If no...	As a general rule, if it is not necessary, do not include vulnerable groups. Ensure that the risk would not outweigh the benefits. Remember that vulnerable groups inherently possess a greater level of vulnerability and susceptibility to coercion, mistreatment, and deprivation of resources.	
4c	<b>Will you be recruiting vulnerable groups equitably?</b>  <i>See Glossary for definition of 'Equitable Recruitment'</i>	If yes...	Continue to 4d	<b>ADDITIONAL INFO:</b> If you are sampling groups that are close to the road because of convenience, this does not necessarily mean inequitable treatment nor does it imply unethical sampling. This is called "convenience sampling" and is a legitimate sampling technique used in the absence of a functional infrastructure and passable roads which would allow access to more remote villages.
		If no...	You must justify the reasoning for not recruiting vulnerable and resilient groups equitably to your local informed advisors and to your ethics review team. As a general rule, unequal recruitment selection can bias your data, can instill mistrust in your participants, and can endanger the safety and well-being of the vulnerable groups you are selecting.	
4d	<b>Will you provide follow-up support mechanisms and/or resources for these vulnerable groups in case of post-study distress?</b>	If yes...	Continue to 4e	<b>GENERAL RULE:</b> If you have deemed the risk of harm your study would pose to be minimal (i.e. <i>minimum risk</i> ), then follow-up support mechanisms are not usually necessary.  If the risk of harm posed on these groups is elevated beyond minimum risk, it is generally a good idea to envision a mechanism or outlet which will allow these groups to seek counsel or aid in case the work you have conducted with them has directly affected their security or well-being.
		If no...	First, confirm that your survey research project does not pose greater than <i>minimal risk</i> for your participants.  If your project does pose greater than minimal risk to your participants, discuss with your ethics review team and your local informed advisors about the risks and consequences of not conducting a post-survey follow up.	
4e	<b>Can any individual of the adult age qualify for participation given their membership to the household?</b>	If yes...	Continue to Section 5	
		If no...	Make sure you are clear in your <i>consent form</i> why you are selecting certain individuals from the household. In addition, make sure that you are <i>equitably recruiting</i> participants with respect to your research objectives.	
<b>5 – RECRUITING MINORS – 5</b>				
5a	<b>Are you planning on recruiting minors less than 18 years old?</b>	If yes...	First, ensure that you have received permission from your ethics review team and your local informed advisors. Your local informed advisors should assist you with the appropriate protocol on interviewing minors, the expected guardianship situation of the population you will interview (that is, will they have legal guardians, are they orphaned, or will they have guardians who may not serve the best interests of their child?).	<b>NOTE:</b> In certain contexts, minors 14 years or older may be considered adults due to their marital status or household role (e.g. head of household, provision of income, hunting rights, etc.). When this is the case, it is important you receive guidance from your local informed advisors and your ethics review team to discuss the ethical procedure of treating minors between 14 and 17 as adults.
		If no...	Continue to 5b	

Step	Question	If...	Solution	Additional Notes
5b	<b>If recruiting minors, will you be soliciting the consent of the minors' parents or guardians?</b>	If yes...	Before soliciting consent, ensure that the minor's guardians are mentally/emotionally functional and capable of meeting the needs and demands of the child (that is, parents are not neglectful or abusive). This may be determined with the help of your local informed advisors with possible complementary visits with local social workers, anthropologists, doctors or wardens (if the minor is institutionalized in an orphanage or prison)	<b>NOTE:</b> If a parent does not meet i-iii in the "If no..." section, consult with your local informed advisors and your ethics review team about the ramifications and procedure when not soliciting consent from the minors' parents.
		If no...	Ensure that reasons for not soliciting consent of the minor's guardians are for at least one of the following reasons: i) Physically absent (e.g. child is orphaned or abandoned); ii) Parents are mentally incapable of making an informed decision (e.g. mentally ill, cognitively impaired); iii) Parent has evidenced a clear disregard for the well-being of the child (e.g. neglectful, abusive).	
5c	<b>If recruiting minors, have you constructed an assent form or assent process?</b>	If yes...	First, be sure that your ethics review team and your local informed advisors have reviewed and approved your assent document  Next, be sure to include the assent process in your pilot as well as your actual survey to ensure quality, appropriateness, effectiveness and sensitivity. From the outcome of your pilot, coupled with comments from your interviewers and their experience, adjust the assent form document as needed	<b>NOTE:</b> Generally, it is not advisable to recruit minors without passing through a culturally and ethically validated assent procedure unless there is convincing evidence that the rights, safety and well-being of the minor were at all times defended and that the interview could not have been conducted otherwise.  <b>REMINDER:</b> An assent form, in lieu of a consent form, recognizes that the minor in question has a limited capacity to understand the nature, benefits and risk of his/her participation in the prospective study.  Therefore, it is up to you and your local informed advisors to ensure that your recruitment procedure is free from persuasion, coercion or language what would confuse the minor into misinterpreting the nature of her/his participation.
		If no...	First, verify with your ethics review team that proceeding in an interview without conducting the assent procedure is ethical and appropriate.  Second, consult with your local informed advisors to discuss how to ethically recruit minors such that they understand the nature, benefits and risks of the study and their participation. This means that you will not be conducting a formal assent procedure where the minor gives official indication of her/his willingness to participate, but an informal session that will inform the minor of the abovementioned (i.e. nature, benefits, risks, etc.).	
5d	<b>If recruiting minors, do you have structures put in place to offer follow-up support in case of any distress as a consequence of the minor's participation?</b>	If yes...	Continue to Section 6	Unless the risk imposed on your child participants is deemed minimum by your ethics review team, it is not advisable to recruit minors unless you have mechanisms in place that allow ongoing and continuous support subsequent to their participation.
		If no...	First, consult with any organization or appropriate guardian who assumes responsibility and/or supervision over the minor to coordinate a protection and precautionary mechanism that will be available to the minor.  If you are unable to secure such mechanisms through a supervising institute, coordinate with local organizations who work with minors and trauma to organize an anticipatory reception for minors who have suffered some psychological, emotional, or physical consequence as a result of their participation.	

Step	Question	If...	Solution	Additional Notes
<b>6 – RECRUITING WOMEN – 6</b>				
6a	<b>Are you planning on recruiting women?</b>	If yes...	First, be sure that you have understood the vulnerabilities and elevated risks of harm that encircle the female population you wish to work with. Discuss with your local informed advisors what vulnerabilities and risks you should be especially aware of as well as the proper precautions to take when interacting and working this population.	In certain contexts, women cannot be interviewed if the male spouse or head of household is present. It is important that you verify with your local informed advisors the ethics of interviewing women when the male spouse or male head of household is present.  If you plan on discussing subjects that pertain to community and gender-based violence with women, it is important that you and your team receive special training that will sensitize them to specific gender issues and will inform you on appropriate protection and precautionary mechanisms. These can be found on the website of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) <sup>1</sup> or the World Health Organization department of Gender and Women's Health. <sup>2</sup>
		If no...	Continue to Section 7	
6b	<b>Do you expect to have a representative sample of women in your survey?</b>	If yes...	Continue to 6c	<b>REMINDER:</b> In your project proposal, concept note, and final report it is important to always explicitly indicate the intended <i>target population</i> you wish to study as well as the level of representation your sample possesses in regards to this target population. For instance, you may have intended to recruit both female and male household members, but were only able to recruit female widows due to restrictive male dominion over female rights. You must, thus, indicate that your female sample does not represent your target population, for it represents a smaller population of female widows.
		If no...	If this is undesired (for example, you wish to recruit women living in a household where a male is already present but are unable to do so), clarify with your local informed advisors which female groups you expect to recruit and prepare to draft a brief note in the limitations section of your report discussing the lack of representation of your female sample.  If this is desired (that is, you wish to recruit a specific female group), be sure to articulate this selection criterion and its rationale to your ethics review team as well as to your local informed advisors. This should eventually be articulated explicitly to your interviewers so they understand the rationale and are able to execute this selective recruitment procedure during the survey.	
6c	<b>Will the number of women participants recruited be representative of your target population?</b>	If yes...	Continue to 6d	If you cannot recruit the desired number of women for your study, it is important that you indicate this clearly in your limitations section. If you are unable to achieve the desired number of women in your study, your female population is, thus, not representative. In addition, the female participants you do recruit in this context may represent a unique group of women who share similar experiences (e.g. interviewing only female heads of households or widows because the male head of household is not present). This will indeed present bias in your data, and without warning the reader, can, in turn, present misleading information.
		If no...	First, consult with your local informed advisors to validate and confirm the reasons for the disproportionate selection anticipated.  Second, discuss how this could be compensated via other data gathering mechanisms (e.g. focus groups with women only or interviews with key informants working directly with women issues).	
6d	<b>When interviewing women, are your interviewers female as well?</b>	If yes...	Continue to 6e	<b>ALTERNATIVE:</b> If you cannot ensure that women participants will be interviewed by women interviewers, remove any questions regarding gender-based violence and domestic violence. In addition, no questions regarding menstruation, medical or sexual history should be asked by men.
		If no...	Consult with local informed advisors about the cultural ramifications (e.g. response rates, reliable reporting, and emotional comfort of the women participants) of men interviewing women. If possible, attempt to organize your interviewers such that all women participants are interviewed by women.	

<sup>1</sup> UNIFEM (2009). Evaluation Policy. [http://www.unifem.org/attachments/products/UNIFEM\\_Evaluation\\_Policy.pdf](http://www.unifem.org/attachments/products/UNIFEM_Evaluation_Policy.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Source: WHO (2001) Putting women first: ethical and safety recommendations for research on diagnostic violence against women. <http://www.who.int/gender/violence/womenfirtseng.pdf>.

Step	Question	If...	Solution	Additional Notes
6e	<b>If interviewing women, do your questions broach the subject of gender based violence, such as rape and sexual assault?</b>	If yes...	<p>First, ensure that your interviewers are women and that they have fulfilled the requirements for a certified gender-based violence familiarization and sensitization course. These courses should be conducted by certified trainers through a reputable and licensed organization. Information about such programs may be retrieved through United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) or the World Health Organization department of Gender and Women's Health.</p> <p>Second, always ensure the utmost privacy and secrecy.</p> <p>Finally, do not interview male members of household when you will or have interviewed a female member of the same household.</p>	<p><b>ALTERNATIVE:</b> If your interviewers cannot participate in a gender-based violence familiarization and sensitization training, your questions should not be targeting the female participant directly. In this case, questions should be in regards to third-person testimonies and should not ask for explicit details of the violent event.</p> <p><b>GOOD TO KNOW:</b> Many women, and most likely some of your female interviewers, have had experience with gender-based violence. A lack of training and sensitization to the issues surrounding this phenomenon could invoke distress for both parties, the female participant and your female interviewer.</p>
		If no...	Continue to 6f	
6f	<b>If interviewing women, do your questions broach the subject of domestic-violence?</b>	If yes...	<p>First, ensure that your interviewers are women and that they have fulfilled the requirements for a certified gender-based violence familiarization and sensitization course, which would include domestic violence (see above for details on training courses).</p> <p>Second, ensure the utmost privacy and secrecy.</p> <p>Finally, do not interview male members of the household when you will or have interviewed a female member of the same household.</p>	<p><b>ALTERNATIVE:</b> If you cannot ensure the privacy and secrecy of female participant's responses during the interview, no questions about domestic violence should be asked, in the safety of the participant.</p> <p><b>ALTERNATIVE:</b> If a male member of the household insists on being interviewed as well, exclude all questions pertaining to domestic violence. Knowledge of such questions could cause retaliatory violence against the female participant for having answered such questions.</p>
		If no...	Continue to 6g	
6g	<b>Will you have ongoing and follow-up protection and precautionary mechanisms for female participants in case of any post-interview distress?</b>	If yes...	Continue to Section 7	<p><b>ALTERNATIVE:</b> If you are unable to secure these support mechanisms, do not ask any direct questions about domestic violence or gender-based violence that target the female participant directly. If a support mechanism cannot be guaranteed, the female participant should, in no way, be implicated in questions regarding violence, sexual assault, and domestic violence. Questions regarding sexual history, thus, should also be excluded. Questions should be in regards to third-person testimonies and should not ask for explicit details of the violent event.</p>
		If no...	<p>If participation in your research poses risk of harm that is elevated beyond minimal risk, consult with local organizations (e.g. UNIFEM) who work with women and gender-based violence issues to organize an anticipatory reception for women who have suffered some psychological, emotional, or physical consequence as a result of their participation.</p>	

Step	Question	If...	Solution	Additional Notes
<b>7 – MANAGING &amp; STORING DATA – 7</b>				
7a	<b>Do you have documents or materials that directly link participants' names to their data (e.g names or signatures on their questionnaire)?</b>	If yes...	<p>First, verify that you have received approval from your ethics review team that you are ethically permitted to match data to actual names.</p> <p>Second, be clear with your local informed advisors about your intentions to match data to names and discuss the ethical and security ramifications</p> <p>Third, convert identifying information to codes known only by the research team. This way, no names are directly linked to data. You can use numbers or any alphanumeric combinations that will ensure anonymity of data. Using initials only is not recommended.</p> <p>Finally, store codes in a digital password-protected file in a password-protected laptop that has updated antivirus software.</p>	<p><b>BOTTOM LINE:</b> In survey research, no personally identifying information should ever be directly linked to one's data. This means that neither names, GPS locations of the participant's household, place of business, nor her/his birthday should be ever marked on materials which contain data that this specific participant has provided. This is to protect the participant's security and well-being</p> <p>If you must have participants' names for follow-up or surveillance purposes, use codes that only you and your research team have access to. (See "If yes..." section to the left for additional info)</p>
		If no...	Continue to 7b	
7b	<b>Can the data and materials be accessed by those who are not affiliated with your research team?</b>	If yes...	<p>As a general rule, do not store data and data-related materials in areas that are accessible to individuals who are not affiliated to your <b>research team</b>. This can cause a myriad of issues from data theft, forgery, false accusations data-related materials are misplaced, and possible denunciations to officials, armed groups, or other power structures.</p>	<p><b>ALTERNATIVE:</b> If you cannot keep the data materials beyond the reach of those unaffiliated with your <b>research team</b>, be sure to store your data and data-related materials in a locked safe, cabinet, or desk with consistent surveillance by a member of the <b>research team</b>. Ensure that all digital files are archived in a computer account that is used only by you and/or a member of the <b>research team</b> and that is protected by a password and an updated antivirus software.</p>
		If no...	Continue to 7c	
7c	<b>If data and materials were confiscated by individuals who are not affiliated with your research team, could the participants be placed at an elevated risk of harm?</b>  <b>(See GLOSSARY for risk of harm)</b>	If yes...	<p>First, receive approval from your ethics review team that such a risk is worth taking in light of the benefits anticipated in your research</p> <p>Second, ensure that in your informed consent procedure, you explicitly but diplomatically declare this risk to your participant while informing the participants of the measures you are taking to mitigate such risk</p> <p>Third, ensure that no identifying information is linked to participants' data.</p> <p>Fourth, GPS indicators (if used) should identify publicly administered buildings or a central market; never should they identify a household or village without a recognized market or publicly administered building.</p> <p>Fifth, data accessible to individuals unaffiliated with the research team should receive constant supervision by a member of the research team.</p> <p>Sixth, all data and data-related materials should be organized and locked in a safe, cabinet or desk which is only accessible to one member of the research team.</p> <p>Finally, all digital copies of data-related materials should be protected by both passwords and updated antivirus software. Only you and select members of your research team should have access to these passwords.</p>	<p><b>ALTERNATIVE:</b> If you cannot ensure password protected digital data storage and safe-locked hardcopy data storage, you must ensure that any identifying information is kept separate and far from the actual data. This generally means that data are stored in one building, whilst identifying information is stored in another building or floor of the building.</p>

Step	Question	If...	Solution	Additional Notes
		If no...	Ensure, nonetheless, that 1) <b>identifying information</b> is kept separate from data and data-related materials and 2) Data and data-related materials are safe-locked and only accessible to a selected number of members from the <b>research team</b> .	
7d	<b>Will you be storing digital and hard copies of data in a locked office?</b>	If yes...	Continue to 7e	
		If no...	This generally not advisable. At the very least:  For physical materials (e.g. questionnaires): Try to find a safe or secure box with a lock where you can safely store these materials.  For digital materials: archive all digital copies of databases and other data related materials on a USB key and remove traces of the original files on the computer itself.	
7e	<b>Will you be using password-protected laptops/computers to store your data?</b>	If yes...	Continue to 7f	<p><b>HELPFUL HINT:</b> When archiving your files, it is generally a good idea <b>NOT</b> to destroy the older files, in case the new files are corrupted or lost.</p> <p>You can archive your newer files without deleting your older files by adding the date extension to the name of your files. For instance, if you have an SPSS database file from 12 November 2009 from a survey project in Sudan, you can devise a consistent and recognizable code that will allow you to sort the files in chronological order. Thus, the name of your database could be Sudan_Database_121109.sav (in the non-US dating system) or Sudan_Database_111209.sav (in the US system). While this is a stylistic preference, the US system will allow you more facility when sorting your files chronologically. Thus, the US dating system is recommended.</p> <p>To denote that you are using the US dating system, you may simply use the acronym title. For instance: Sudan_Database_US111209.sav.</p>
		If no...	Archive all digital copies of databases and other data related materials on a USB key and remove traces of the original files on the computer itself at the end of each day. Entrust either yourself or a designated <b>research team</b> member with this task.	
7f	<b>Do your computers have up-to-date antivirus software installed?</b>	If yes...	Continue to 7g	<p><b>ALTERNATIVE:</b> When you are working in the field, within developing regions, it is likely that internet networks are limited and available computers are unprotected. This means that chances to update your antivirus are virtually nonexistent, which allow new computer viruses to run rampant. It is, thus, important you take preparatory precautions to ensure no important files become corrupted or lost in case you cannot update the antivirus software in your computers. Below are some preparatory measures to take:</p> <p><b>First</b>, use a USB key strictly for your field research. Do not use this key on any personal or office computers where you normally work whilst not in the field.</p> <p><b>Next</b>, ensure that all files on this USB key have been either removed or archived in a safe folder in your personal or office computer before travelling to the field.</p>

Step	Question	If...	Solution	Additional Notes
		If no...	<p>Before venturing into the field, first ensure that any sensitive or personal data of yours that you are bringing from home has been either removed or archived onto a different computer or a USB key that remains behind whilst you are in the field.</p> <p>Second, ensure that the personal laptop you are using has an update antivirus and will remain updated for the duration of your trip.</p> <p>Finally, attempt to coordinate a mass antivirus update for all computers/laptops you anticipate using whilst in the field. This may mean additional budgetary expenses to provide your local partner organization with the capacity to purchase a new license to update their software. You can also use a free antivirus on the website provided in the footnotes.<sup>1</sup></p>	<b>Finally</b> , if these computers will have access to the internet, browse the free antivirus software websites that allow you to scan for viruses and possibly install a free version of the antivirus software. <sup>3</sup>
7g	<b>Will you be storing the data and materials in a location that is outside the research region?</b>	If yes...	Continue to 7h	<p><b>BOTTOM LINE:</b> If you or your partner organization has a regional or main office in a region unrelated to the region in which you are working, it is generally a good idea to remove the data from the region of interest. This is because after time, as new projects become priority, these data will be left unattended and eventually forgotten about. This may leave them vulnerable to theft or mismanagement in general.</p> <p>It is, therefore, advisable, that you remove the data from the region of interest once you have confirmed that the presence of these data in the region is no longer relevant (e.g. data collection has finished, or data entry has finished, or reporting on the data is finished, etc.)</p>
		If no...	Ensure that you have followed the appropriate steps indicated in Chapter 5: <i>Data Storage and Protection</i> of the SAS Ethics Manual.	
7h	<b>Once finished with your research and deemed appropriate, will you be destroying the data and related materials?</b>	If yes...	Unless otherwise recommended by your local informed advisors or your ethics review team, ensure that you have left at least 3 years from the time of reporting before you destroy your data.	<p><b>GENERAL RULE:</b> Unless otherwise specified by your local informed advisors or your ethics review team, survey field research data should be stored in a region that is socio-politically distant to the research region of interest for no more than three years subsequent to the day of report publication or announcement. The data should be destroyed via a paper shredder.</p>
		If no...	Ensure that you have followed the appropriate steps indicated in Chapter 5: <i>Data Storage and Protection</i> of the SAS Ethics Manual to ensure proper long-term storage of your data and data-related materials. Then, Continue to Section 8 – Reporting and Dissemination of Results	

<sup>3</sup> Free antivirus websites: <http://free.avg.com/us-en/homepage>.

Step	Question	If...	Solution	Additional Notes
<b>8 – REPORTING &amp; DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS – 8</b>				
8a	<b>Will you validate your results with your sampled communities?</b> <i>(See GLOSSARY for Community validation)</i>	If yes...	Continue to 8b	<b>GENERAL RULE:</b> It is customary to pass through a validation process with local residents from your target areas. This will help avoid misunderstandings and frustrations if your findings were misinterpreting information or portraying situations in a way that could be conceived as insensitive or inappropriate. For a detailed account of adverse effects arising from such an instance, please review the article that is referenced in the footnotes <sup>4</sup>
		If no...	Verify with your local informed advisors and your ethics review team that such a step is not necessary. Discuss with your local informed advisors the possible consequences of not passing through a validation process	
8b	<b>Can the words used in the report be used against the participating community and its residents in a way that would endanger their physical, emotional or professional safety?</b>	If yes...	First, confer with your ethics review team for the most ethical way to retain your reported findings while defending the well-being and safety of those implicated  Second, confer with your local informed advisors to find the best language and approach to allow you to retain your findings while defending the well-being and safety of those implicated	<b>GENERAL RULE:</b> If your study engenders a risk of harm to your participating communities that is elevated beyond <i>minimal risk</i> , a foreseeable, concrete, and sustainable benefit for these communities must be conceivable and must outweigh these risks of harm.
		If no...	Continue to 8c	
8c	<b>Are there concrete plans for passing on the new knowledge resulting from the project to the people who are directly affected?</b>	If yes...	What is planned? Ensure that your mediums of information are appropriate to the tradition and capacity of the local culture.	<b>HELPFUL HINTS:</b> Some ideas to help generate local public awareness of your findings are:  Seminars, workshops, conferences, lectures, public meetings, information through radio and television, travelling exhibitions, clearly-written leaflets, etc.
		If no...	Discuss with your local informed advisors how you may provide information in the future in case of any requests from the participating communities.	
8d	<b>Will you provide unlimited access to the results of your data?</b>	If yes...	Discuss with your local informed advisors the best way to provide local access to your findings	<b>GENERAL RULE:</b> It is generally a best practice to provide unlimited access to the data from and the results of your research. Research projects between industrialized and developing countries bring together partners of very different backgrounds. Since media access can vary considerably between cultures, extra care should be taken to communicate the results adequately to the populations who look to be the beneficiaries of the research sometime in the future.
		If no...	First, justify to your ethics review team and any organization who has an interest in reviewing your data and findings why you have chosen not to provide full access and disclosure of your research.  Second, provide a detailed description in your report or on your website about your methodology, sampling strategies used, the final sample number, non response rates, reliability, validity issues, errors in sampling, data collection or data entry as well as any other limitations that arose during the entire project.	
<b>9 – POST-SURVEY FOLLOW-UP – 9</b>				
9c	<b>Will you be conducting a post-survey follow-up in the area where you have conducted your research?</b>	If yes...	Discuss with your local informed advisors the best strategy to ensure an effective but expedient follow-up procedure.	<b>GENERAL RULE:</b> If your survey research does not engender questions or themes that could cause emotional stress or if your survey research does not impose greater than minimal risk on your participating communities, a post-survey follow-up is not usually necessary.
		If no...	First, confirm that your survey research project does not pose greater than minimal risk for your participants.  If your project does pose greater than minimal risk to your participants, discuss with your ethics review team and your local informed advisors about the risks and consequences of not conducting a post-survey follow up	

<sup>4</sup> Ellis, *Emotional and Ethical Quagmires in Returning to the Field*, Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, 24 (1995:Apr.-1996:Jan.) p.1:68

Step	Question	If...	Solution	Additional Notes
9c	<b>Will you be returning to participating villages to ensure that residents have not suffered any negative consequences as a result of your research?</b>	If yes...	If you believe that your research has posed risk of harm that is elevated beyond minimal risk, it is a good idea to return with your local informed advisors as well as a mental health expert, sociologist or anthropologist who is experienced in the behavior and customs of the local culture. If you do encounter people who have suffered physical or psychological/emotional consequences, you may need to call upon these experts to assist you.	<p><b>ALTERNATIVE:</b> If you are unable to physically return to the participating communities once the survey has been completed, you may designate a member of your local informed advisors or an external consultant who has both expertise in the customs of the local communities as well as a sociological, anthropological, or mental health background.</p> <p><b>REMINDER:</b> As mentioned above, if your research does not engender thematic issues that could evoke emotional stress or could increase the participants' risk of harm above minimum risk, there is generally no need to return the area to inspect for adverse effects.</p>
		If no...	Confer with both your ethics review team and your local informed advisors to be sure that excluding a follow-up procedure is justified.	
9e	<b>Do/will you have support mechanisms in place to provide post-survey support to residents suffering from direct consequences of their participation in your study?</b>	If yes...	Continue to 9e	<p><b>NOTE:</b> If you tell your participants that guidance and counseling will be available to those who suffer negative consequences from their participations, it is highly probable that you will receive participants who suffered little from the survey but which to receive general care or counseling to address other issues unrelated to your survey. In this case, if you do establish a follow-up support outlet, it is a good idea to screen your visitors to ensure that their needs are truly in response to their survey participation.</p>
		If no...	<p>First, determine if this outlet is necessary given the nature and anticipated risk of your research</p> <p>Second, if deemed appropriate, solicit the help of your local informed advisors to identify any and all organizations that provide emotional and/or mental health support in the area. If you have additional local partners on the ground, they may also be a good resource for this type of information.</p> <p>Third, coordinate a partnership between these support groups/organizations and your research team so that you can establish a support-mechanism that is ready and able to receive complaints or personal visits as needed.</p>	
9e	<b>Do/will you have a system set in place to maintain a correspondence between you and your local partners to follow-up on local issues which may have arisen as a result of your research?</b>	If yes...	End Practical Ethics Guide Document	
		If no...	Discuss with your local informed advisors how you can maintain a weekly correspondence with them whilst you are away. This means that at the very least, you can send each other a weekly email to check-in and ensure one another that plans are running smoothly and that there are no serious issues to address. This is in the interest of the safety and well-being of your local <b>research team</b> and those who participated in your survey research.	

## Annex 1. Other Forms of Data

Below is a privacy policy protocol for the handling of any data of a privately identifiable nature that may be obtained from 'other forms of data' (principally digital data sources) that may fall outside the scope of traditional human subject research protocols.

The SecDev Foundation is committed to peoples' privacy. We are a Canadian not-for-profit organization, and our privacy safeguards conform to Canadian and Ontario privacy laws and statutes, which are a robust set of guidelines designed to protect individuals' personal privacy.

For further information regarding Canadian and Ontario privacy laws, please visit:

- [Canadian Privacy Commission](#)
- [Office of the Ontario Privacy Commissioner](#)
- [Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act](#)

This privacy policy is intended to provide general details on what information would or would not be potentially collected within the scope of the Open Empowerment Initiative through the use of online technical and digital research tools and methods.

The SecDev Foundation will not collect IP addresses or email addresses. Users will not be required to create accounts to access our webpages.

The SecDev Foundation will use Google Analytics to collect aggregated user data for the purpose of analyzing webpage use and improving functionality and user interfaces. Google Analytics serves to aggregate data of diverse users before it generates reports. This means that only general patterns of users and their activities would be accessible and the SecDev Foundation would not have access to any personally identifying information.

Data points include:

- user's geographic location (city and country) and language;
- user browser, operating system, and service provider;
- session duration, session count, and session activity;
- referral site (if applicable); and,
- date and time stamps.

The data collected by Google Analytics is never used to personally identify individual users or individual user activities. The SecDev Foundation may share generalized aggregations of data with partners to demonstrate the perceived reach and impact of Open Empowerment Initiative research methods and tools, with the end-goal of generating public awareness of research findings.

## Annex 2. Glossary

**Anonymity:** Withholding any identifying information or any information that could be used to locate or identify the respondent and/or his/her household and/or family. Anonymous reporting means that the respondent's identity, including names and any other types of identifying information discussed during the interview will be discarded from all recorded transcripts, documents, and all other data-related materials (e.g. questionnaire).

**Assent Process** (see also **Consent Process**): If you wish to interview minors (i.e. children or youths less than 16 years of age), you must receive assent from the child. In order for a child to take part in a research study, s/he must give her/his assent to participate. However, before you can solicit participation directly from a minor of under 16 years, you should first receive permission (i.e. consent) from a parent or legal guardian. A parent means a child's biological or adoptive parent. Guardian means an individual who is authorized under applicable local law to consent on behalf of a child to general medical care. For an in-depth overview of the assent process, please review section "Working with Vulnerable Groups" in Chapter 4: *Risk Assessment* in the SAS Ethics Manual.

**Community Leaders** (see also **Power Structures**): An individual or group of individuals claiming authority and status of protectorate over a specific community. These individuals can serve as the door between your research team and the residents of this community. Generally all procedures or interventions should first be approved and sanctioned by the community leaders.

**Community validation:** This is a contextual, factual, and ethical validation of the data that you are ready to collect, report or publish. This process can take place before the collection of data (i.e. during the design stages of the survey) as well as after the survey has been completed and the data have been collected and analyzed. In the former case, you would meet with community representatives to validate the need for and methods of your survey. In the latter case, after the survey has been completed, your findings would be ready to be published or distilled. However, before publishing or distilling your findings to your target audience, it is ethically responsible to return to the surveyed region(s) to speak with individuals representing the communities where you initially conducted your survey research. It is with these representatives that you will discuss the findings of your research and how you will distill them. You can remind them of your target audience, but they should already be aware of this point.

**Confidentiality:** Protecting the privacy of an individual and/or his household and/or family. Confidentiality means that no information retrieved during the interview or elsewhere will be disclosed to a third party that is not directly affiliated with your research team. Recognizing the sensitivity of the issues discussed, it is the responsibility of everyone on your research team to maintain strict confidentiality throughout and subsequent to the administration of your survey.

**Consent Process** (see also **Permission**): The initial stage of the interview during which the researcher must secure consent from the participating individual, a parent or legal guardian, and/or her/his community representatives (aka *community leaders*). To conduct research in the area and recruit local residents, the principal investigator must receive initial consent from the recognized authority figure (traditional leader, administrative chief or head, etc.). This is usually administered via the usage of a structured consent form that is often read first to the recognized leader of the local area and then to the respondent him/herself. For an in-depth overview of the consent process, see Chapter 2: *Obtaining Consent* in the SAS Ethics Manual.

**Ethics review team (aka Ethical Review Board):** A group of at least three professionals specialized in different areas of social research. Areas should include research ethics and research methods and practice. These professionals will review your project proposal and advise you on its ethical rigor and methodological validity to ensure a research project that respects the rights and safety of those implicated in the research endeavor.

**Data:** Any information observed or collected that is to be treated, analyzed, or discussed at any point during your research project. Such information can be spoken, written (numerically or as text), or simply observed.

**Data-related materials:** Any documents, forms, files, or images that relate to the retrieval or coding of data. Examples are the questionnaire, consent form, focus-group interview questions, and electronic databases.

**Enumerators (aka Interviewers):** Individuals who will be conducting the interviews and collecting data in the field on behalf of you and your research team. Generally your enumerators should share the same ethnicity and speak fluently the same language as your intended respondents. In addition, it is important that your enumerators are not of a stature or class that could be threatening to the respondent.

**Ethics review team (aka Ethics Review Board):** Group of at least three professionals who are experts in the areas of field research ethics, field research methodology and practices, gender-issues, and/or anthropological/cultural norms and traditions of the region/society in question. To avoid any conflict of interests, these professionals should not be: 1) employed by any institute affiliated with the research team; 2) Employed by or affiliated with an organization providing funds to any institute associated with the research team; 3) Employed by or affiliated with any potential beneficiaries of the research in question.

**Equitable recruitment:** This refers to fair and equal sample across both vulnerable and resilient groups. If your target population would include both of these groups, then equitable recruitment would require that both groups have an equal probability of being included in the survey. Reasons for targeting vulnerable groups should stem from your focused interest on the issues that affect these groups and not from convenience or a lack of a rigorous sampling strategy which would equitably include all groups (vulnerable and resilient). When not specifically targeting vulnerable groups for the aforementioned reasons, equitable recruitment indicates that you have taken adequate measures to ensure that recruitment of vulnerable groups is due to mere chance rather than volition.

**Identifying information:** Any piece of information that would reveal the identity of a particular person or household. This information could be provided via paper documents, digital files, audio recordings, and video recordings. Identifying signatures could include GPS coordinates of the household or village center, the name or initials of the individual, photos of the household or individual, birth date and descriptive physiological features, etc.

**Local informed advisors:** Local partners, local residents, and/or professionals who have worked extensively in the targeted area and who may provide otherwise inaccessible information about and insight into the various contextual components of the region and its population.

**Managing and storing data:** Ensuring confidentiality means that the data you collect is kept private and out of the hands of individuals or groups who have no affiliation or implication in the administration or data analysis of the research study. Violating this agreement with your participants can necessarily put them at great risk. It is therefore imperative that you keep

your data safely stored, locked, and out away from those who are not affiliated with your *research team*.

**Minors:** Generally any individual younger than 16 years of age. In cases where certain societies view minors as ending at an early age (e.g. less than 14 years), it is important to consult your *ethics review team* in order to ethically respect the rights of young respondents. (see section “Working with vulnerable groups” in Chapter 4: *Risk Assessment*).

**Minimal Risk:** The risk imposed by the research or any interventions or procedures included therein does not exceed the risk which the participant or participating community would experience in a normal or average day.

**Permission:** This generally refers to the authority granted by the relevant *power structures* to engage with the community over which these structures claim dominion or control.

**Protective and Precautionary Mechanisms:** Strategies, mechanisms, and resources put in place to mitigate any *risk of harm* and to also provide consolatory support in the case of evoking intense memories or emotions related to a traumatic event. Such mechanisms are essential when working with vulnerable groups, whose vulnerability to exploitation, coercion, discrimination, and deception is more elevated than their more resilient counterparts. See Chapter 4: *Risk Assessment* for a detailed overview of the protective and precautionary mechanisms to take when recruiting from various populations.

**Post-study distress:** In the unlikely case of post-study distress, your participant and/or her/his participating community may suffer psychologically, emotionally, financially, or physically subsequent to and due directly to their participation in your survey. Such distress may arise from reliving themes or events that have been experienced traumatically. In addition, distress may be caused by the social repercussions of responding to such a survey. This could include stigmatization, marginalization, loss of work, and dissolution of previously established relationships. Lastly, distress may be induced by retaliatory threats or violence by individuals or groups who may be angered by such participation.

**Post-survey follow-up:** In cases where it is possible, following up with your participating communities after the survey has been completed and the data have been analyzed and documented will provide you with additional feedback to not only validate (confirm or refute) your findings, but will provide the participating communities an opportunity to discuss with you what the next steps are, if there have been any consequences of their participation, and how they may be kept abreast to the distillation of your findings. Such a follow-up can lend itself to future cooperative surveys down the road within the same communities.

**Power Structures:** These are groups of individuals who claim authority and control over a particular group of people, usually within a community, village, neighborhood or district. These authority groups generally present the bridge between you and the people you wish to interview within the respective community. For the sake of the participant’s security as well as your own and that of your researchers, it is highly recommended to first identify which power structures exist in the target community as well as what would be the most appropriate procedure to implement when attempting to engage with participants from this community. Power structures may represent community elders or leaders, traditional or religious leaders, administrative or community planners overseeing the particular district, neighborhood, or community, government officials claiming dominion over the respective region, an unofficial armed (e.g. gang, rebels, armed villagers) or unarmed (e.g. elders, union of villagers protecting area) group claiming dominion or the status of protectorate over the respective region, etc. Again, these structures can be identified through the counsel of your local informed advisors, however, your background research and study in the area should inform you already as to what authority groups (i.e. power structures) you should expect to encounter.

**Representative Sample:** Methodologically speaking, this is a sample of individuals who would be appropriate to represent the specific characteristics you wish to highlight in your study. This can be nationality, ethnicity, gender, urban versus rural location, etc. To be representative, the number of sampled individuals sharing a specific quality or characteristic you wish to study should be commensurate with that of the true population of people expressing the same characteristic. For instance, if you wish to sample both men and woman in a national sample, you should maintain the proportion of men and women in your sample. This could be 1:1, 1:1.24, etc. The same would hold true for region, ethnicity, urban and rural location, and any other defining attribute you deem to be integral to your research.

**Research team:** A concerted team of actors directly contributing to the administration of your survey research, from its conception and administration to reporting. These individuals rely on access to the data or data-related materials in order to satisfy their role in the research team. Therefore, these members, any only these members, should have access to data and data-related materials where meets their needs.

**Resilient Groups:** Unlike *vulnerable groups*, these groups of individuals are generally more resilient to discrimination, denial of resources, marginalization, deception and various other society-induced inequalities. Resilient groups normally represent the general public, healthy male adults of working age. Note that the range of adulthood may differ depending on context. Additionally, it is important to consult with your local informed advisors to confirm who may be identified as a member of a resilient group and who should be identified as a member of a *vulnerable group*.

**Risks** (also known as **Risk of Harm**): Represents the potential for an individual to be placed in danger. Harm may be physical, psychological, emotional, as well as many others. Research may or may not involved a certain level of risk to the participant, her/his community, or the researcher. The researcher and her/his ethics review team should determine the level of risk that may be involved given the respective study. (See the SAS Ethics Manual for further details).

**Target Population:** All individuals sharing a specific attribute, quality, experience or history defined and framed by the principal investigator. For instance, if you are looking at a population sharing a collective experience of a certain region only, you would most likely choose local residents living within that region. This sample can then be subdivided by specific traits, such as experience with violence, mortality rates, ethnicity, etc.

**Vulnerable Groups:** Vulnerable groups are defined as a specific population of persons who exhibit dependence on authorities, personal aides (e.g. nurses) and/or institutions. Vulnerable groups may also be defined by their elevated vulnerability to encountering violence or discrimination. Such groups may possess a greater vulnerability to coercion and persuasion, and the researcher must at all times remain diligent not to cause any undue harm by taking advantage (voluntarily or involuntarily) of these vulnerabilities. Such groups include women (pregnant or within the age range of childbearing potential), children, the elderly, the mentally and physically challenged, ethnic minorities, the socio-economically disadvantaged, prisoners, etc.