MEASURING EMPOWERMENT IN THE GEAS

CAROLINE KABIRU, APHRC
THE GEAS

- 15 country study of the evolving nature of gender and social relations

Central questions

- What are the factors that are related to inequitable gender norms in early adolescence?

- How do gender norms relate to a spectrum of health outcomes and how might they contribute to sex differences in health outcomes across adolescence and across cultures.
THE GEAS

Core assumptions

• Healthy development is based on *empowerment* rather than acquiescence and *decision-making* rather than compliance.

• *Equity* is a component of a healthy society and that understanding gender norms among early adolescents is important because gender differentiation is a central component of adolescent development that will enhance or subvert equity.

Two study phases

• Development of a measurement toolkit (Vignettes-based measure of gender equitability; gender norms instrument, health plus instrument, context measure)

• Longitudinal study
Three key domains of empowerment in early adolescence:

1. Freedom of movement
   - Whether I can do activities alone (without adults), e.g.: sports, parties, youth center, meet (opposite/same-sex friends after school

2. Voice
   - Whether my parents and peers listen to me, ask for my advice/opinion, and whether I can speak up or ask for help.

3. Behavioral control/decision-making
   - Whether I can make decisions on my own, e.g. about school, what to wear, how to spend my free time, who my friends are, when/who to marry

Also considering inclusion of a fourth component - financial access to resources and control of resources
THANK YOU
(www.geastudy.org)