



Africa Oral Genealogies & Family Histories Project

Interviewer Best Practices

1. Interview ALL the heads of families living in the village, including their wives.
2. Conduct the interview when it is most convenient for the family.
3. Make sure as many family members as possible attend the interview. Often, family members will help each other remember more.
4. Conduct the interview in a familiar and relaxed environment.
5. Make sure each person interviewed signs the FamilySearch Authorization.
6. Fill in the interviewee and interview location information on the mobile app.
7. Place the microphone close to the speaker's mouth. Best to clip it on their clothing. Remember to hit START on the app to begin recording.
8. Begin the interview by saying the following:
 - a. *“Hello. My name is [interviewer’s name]. I am interviewing [interviewee] in [city or location] on [date]. We will be speaking in [language].”*
9. Record the Family Story first. This should include history of how the family came to the village and about the history of the village. This is valuable information for future family members. Try to cover as much information as possible in the 15 minutes allowed.
10. Give people time to think. Do not rush them. Memories can take time.
11. Here are some questions that can help you create the Family Story.
 - a. *Does your extended family group (Tribe, Clan, etc.) have a name? Symbol? Song? What do these things represent?*
 - b. *What are some historical events? (Wars, natural disasters) What brought your family to this village? Where did they come from?*
 - c. *What is the naming tradition of your family?*
 - d. *Describe life growing up. How did your parents provide for the family? What were some daily activities? What kind of clothing did you wear? What kind of food did you eat?*
 - e. *Did you have family activities and traditions? Do these continue today? If not, are they missed?*
 - f. *Does your family have strong family physical traits? Similar likes or dislikes?*
 - g. *Are there any objects or items that have family significance? Are they passed from generation to generation?*

- h. Was and is your family religious? How did this affect your family's activities?*
 - i. Are there any stories that are repeated often in family gatherings?*
- 12. Listen carefully to the answers. Often, they will lead you to more questions. The more you concentrate and interact with the people, the more comfortable they will become in sharing their family stories.
- 13. Begin the next segment of audio recording. If a pause is ever needed, STOP the recording and begin a new one when ready to proceed.
- 14. Write the names, dates and places of life events, if the person is alive or dead, AND the sex of the individuals as they are given.
- 15. WRITE CAREFULLY. Someone will have to be able to read your writing to enter the names into the computer.
- 16. Use open ended questions. These are questions that cannot be answered with yes or no or with one person's name.
- 17. Here are some questions to ask for family name information: **ALWAYS START WITH THE NAME OF THE FIRST ANCESTOR.**
 - a. Can you tell me again, who is the first (oldest) person in your family that you can remember?*
 - b. Tell me about this person. Did they have a large family?*
- 18. Begin writing the names, dates and places of life events, if the person is alive or dead, AND the sex of the individuals as they are given. When they finish with the first family, methodically go through each child to receive the names of that person's descendants. Repeat the process as you go. Keep the information organized and easy to understand for the person who will be entering it into the computer and for audit purposes.
- 19. As you proceed, ask them if there is anything else that they can remember about each particular family.
- 20. Take photos of the interviewee, the extended family, the area, and the Authorization.
- 21. When you have completed the interview, thank them again for their willingness to share this important family information.
- 22. Remind them that they will get a copy of the information in the future.