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RP7: Sexual and Reproductive Resilience of Adolescents in Ghana and Tanzania
The project at a glance:

**Summary:**
The project focuses on sexual and reproductive resilience of adolescents in Tanzania and Ghana. It creates a better understanding on what sexuality, gender, family and having children mean to adolescents living in rapidly changing urban and rural contexts. The project also examines how social actors (peers, parents, community) as well as institutions (initiation rites, religious movements) and organizations (interventions) can contribute to building adolescents’ resilience towards sexual and reproductive health risks.

**Project leader and co-leader:**
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**Advisory Board:**
Prof. Brigit Obrist, Prof. Trudy Harpham, Prof. Fred Krüger, Dr. Claudia Kessler, Dr. Urs Geiser

**Duration:**
07.2009 – 06.2013

**Funding:**
National Centre of Competence in Research North–South (NCCR North–South)

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**Background:**
Over half the world’s population is under 25 years. Children and adolescents hold the key to our future yet many of them must overcome numerous challenges to lead healthy lives. One crucial concern is their sexual and reproductive health.

**Sexual and Reproductive Resilience:**
In the past sexual and reproductive health research focused mainly on risk and vulnerability faced by individuals. The concept of 'Sexual and Reproductive Resilience' is a new way of looking at sexual and reproductive health. It shifts the perspective from a deficit– to a strength–based approach and examines at risk individuals and their interactions with their social environment in the context of sexual and reproductive health.

*Sexual and Reproductive Resilience assesses capacities and identifies competences needed on the household, community and other levels of society to overcome sexual and reproductive health risks.*

Using quantitative, qualitative and participatory methods, this project looks at female and male adolescents (10–19 years) in rural and urban areas in Ghana and Tanzania. It aims at understanding how they handle reproductive health challenges and at identifying ways of fostering supportive social environments that contribute to building adolescents’ sexual and reproductive resilience.

**Significance for research, policy and practice:**
Resilience thinking offers policy–makers, practitioners, advocates and researchers a different way of thinking about populations at risk. The findings will provide evidence needed for the improvement of existing and the development of innovative, culturally appropriate, effective and socially acceptable services and interventions in the field of adolescent reproductive health.