There are some issues that need clarification.

1.      You say that you will not collect any identifiable information. Do you not plan to connect the conditions and the savings information with the post-period survey?  How will you manage the payment of those choosing the delayed payout if you don’t have identifiers? Do you not plan to connect from the games with the data from the savings portion of the study?

*We will collect identifiable information for administrative purposes, but we will not use identifiable information in the analysis. We will only use the phone numbers of the participants as identifier and all the data for the games in the lab and the savings will be linked through the phone numbers. Because participants will save through their phones sending money to us from their own mobile phone – in Kenya, mobile money is the most common transaction tool among the poor. So, I did not consider phone numbers as identifiable information, and I am adding an explanation to that part in the protocol.*

2.      Page 6 says that “they will be given back their savings.” Does that mean that their savings are not accessible during the 15 to 30 day period?

*Yes, this is a commitment savings product and they will not be able to access their savings in the meantime. This will be made clear to them in the lab, before they start saving.*

3.      Will subjects be told that they have to have money to take part in the study?  How will you know if they have made the deposits?   Who is maintaining these accounts or will have access to them?

*Well, we are not forcing them to deposit any money at all. If they do not have the money to save, they simply don’t save, and we would see it in data. We have the full control of this short-term savings plan, i.e. we will be controlling the accounts together with the researchers on the ground from Busara Behavioral Economics Center. Only the researchers will have access to the savings data –and to the savings account. All savings will be made through mobile money. As we explain at the beginning of the protocol, mobile money is an account uniquely linked to a person’s mobile phone number. When someone sends money to the savings account, we will receive the money, and know from which phone number it was sent. This will be the identifier in our data that is also linked to the lab data. Mobile money is an existing system, used throughout the country, and it is called MPESA. The special savings account is something that we created for our experiment – we basically collect the money they want to save, and at the end of the period, return it with interest, or the lottery prizes.*

4.      The description of the time preference tasks says that subjects may be paid sometime in the future. This is vague.

*This is just wrong usage of word in our explanation. With the instructions, it is clear that they will certainly get the money, either in 1 day or in the specific future day, depending on which one they choose. We made some changes to the time preference task and I added the draft of the new version in the Appendix. We also excluded one of the risk preference tasks we intended to use before. Now, we only have 1 risk preference task and I added the screenshots of this task in the appendix.*

There are other issues:

1.      The questionnaire that you will use at the end of the period of savings was not provided.

*I added an early draft of the end survey as well as the initial survey we will distribute in the lab in the Appendix.*

2.      The consent form doesn’t provide enough information about the study. There are two parts, 1) playing games with the possibility of financial payouts, and 2) investing in savings.  If you don’t want to invite people to participate in the savings study until the end of the study, you will need a second consent form to use at the time you issue the invitation. If you don’t want subjects to know they are research subjects in the second portion you will have to make a request for a waiver of the requirement to secure information consent.

*I added a second consent form to be distributed before we start the second part for savings.*

3.      If local researchers are involved – even in the presence of a Duke researcher -the research will need review and approval in Kenya. The lab is sending message about the study to prospective participants and apparently conducting the study.  The protocol says that the first part of the study will be conducted in the presence of Merve, but doesn’t say anything about who will conduct the second part of the study – are you going to have access to the financial product that Kenyan’s use or are you going to replicate it?

*Yes, we have also applied to the IRB in Kenya, to cover the local researchers. We will only start data collection after we get the approval from there.*