Interview Protocol

The following interview protocol has been prepared for the research on "Communication Technologies for Left-Behind Children in Rural China", in the scope of the "Global perspectives, local realities" SHS course. To continue our research on the Chinese field, by interviewing parents of left behind children, our assumptions could be tested and eventually further analyzed.

Please, fill in the missing informations as follows before starting the interview session:

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Session length: 40 minutes

Participant Name: _____   ← Fill in

Email: _____   ← Fill in

Time/Date: _____   ← Fill in

Location: _____   ← Fill in

1. Introduction & Setup (5 mins)

The session starts with a short introduction to what this interview is about, the context and the background for which it is being conducted. In the meantime, be sure that everything is setup correctly by double checking the following To-Do list:

- [ ] Setup the recording tools and check if they work correctly
- [ ] Prepare note-taking utilities, such as pen and paper
- [ ] Verify the environment, being sure to have a relaxed location for the following 40mins
- [ ] In case a beverage is desired in the meantime, be sure to have it ready and available now
- [ ] Be sure that your interviewed person has everything needed

The introduction of the interview could be similar to the following one:

"*Good morning and thank you for participating!*

I am Yann. I am studying at EPFL for a master degree in computer science. My main interest for this interview is to understand whether a technology of communication embedded in a smart toy could be helpful for parents distant from their children. During the interview, I will be having a conversation with you, asking questions that could help me to achieve my curiosity. In the meantime, my partner, will be assisting me by taking some notes. It is important to always remember that we are not evaluating you or your opinions in any way, there are no possible right and wrong answers that you could give.

Here is how the session is going to proceed. Firstly, we'll break the ice by asking you a few general questions to know each other. We will record this interview, given your consent. We won't ever share this recording nor use it for anything else but pure support for this interview, so that I can go back and review things later to make sure we got everything right. Your name won't ever be linked to any result, so be relaxed and feel free to share your thoughts with us, without any troubles. Keep in mind that this is completely voluntary, the recording can be stopped whenever you want. Thus, if you don't like this idea, please let me know.

How does all that sound to you? Do you have any questions at this point?"

☐ Ask the interviewee to sign the written consent for recording purposes.

2. Demographics and background (5 mins)

This section will help us create a background of the interviewee, while allowing him/her to start opening up to our questions. Use this session as a warming-up occasion to break the ice, while catching the first important features. Start to note down details on the interviewee, like **gender**, **age**, **education level**, **marital status**.

- Tell us your name, and a little bit about yourself.
- Where do you come from?

- What is your occupation? Are you studying or working? In both cases, can you tell us something about it?
- Where are you currently living? Do you live with someone, or alone?

3. Main questions (20 mins)

The following questions can be helpful to interpolate your impressions with the interviewee's feelings and personal stories. Use them carefully as they might be intimidating for some people. Don't forget to check for **nonverbal behaviors**, as they might be critical to have a complete idea of who you are interviewing, especially in this part. Note that the most important questions to be answered are marked with a red asterisk (*****).

(*****) <u>Pre-interview questions about their children</u>

- How many children do you have?
- How old are they?
- What gender are they?
- Where do you they live?
- With who are they staying in your home village? (Lonely, with one of both parents, with grandparents or other relatives)

<u>Main interview questions about the interviewed parent</u>

- (*****) How often and for how long do you come back home?
- What is the main reason why you live far away from your children?
- How do you feel about this situation, not living with your children?
- Remember the last time you went back to your home village, how was the contact with your children? Was the meeting with your children as before you left them?

- During your childhood, have you ever experienced living far away from one of your parents? If yes, for how long? How did you live the situation? Could you tell us what was the main reason of your parent to out-migrate? How was the contact when meeting again with your parent? Could you communicate together, at that time, while being distant?

  (check for nonverbal reactions while user showcase personal experience)

- How common is your situation of distant parenting? Do you know any other persons in the same situation as you? How do they live it?

- (*) How would you define the importance of living with your children?

- In your case, is there a trade off between living with your children and having a job position? If yes, imagine that you could live in an ideal world, what would be the best solution? Would you rather work in your home village or be able to bring your children in town?

- (*) Do you own electronic devices? If yes, which ones? (Smartphone, computer, more…)

- (*) Do your children in your home village own electronic devices? If not, would they have the opportunity to use any? (Neighbourhood, school, etc.)

- (*) Do you use electronic devices to contact your children? If yes, how often? In general, are you calling your children when you have time? Or do they also get in touch with you, on their initiative?

- (*) From 0 to 7, how would you define the importance of communicating with your children? (0: insignificant, 4: neutral, 7: essential)

  (check for nonverbal reactions while user showcase personal experience)

4. Interviewee's "show and tell" prototype (8 min)

This section is practical and allows us to showcase our project, related to the issue of distant parenting. In the context of CHIC (China Hardware Innovation Camp), a plush toy that encourages social interaction between parents and children, in a distant situation. It is a very resourceful moment, as it could bring additional and authentic feedback on a novel user scenario.

The explanation of the prototype could be similar to the following one:

" We have been working on this prototype. It is a plush toy that encourages social interaction, by having remotely turned on LEDs and sounds from a mobile application. Parents and children can therefore stay longer connected. Letting your children know when you think about them will help you stay 'toygether'™. "

Showcase the prototype and how it works with the mobile application.

- What do you think about the idea?
- In your opinion, which are the positive and negative aspects?
- If you had the possibility to try this technology, would you be interested?
- What would you modify to improve it?

5. Closing (2 mins)

Thank the user at the end for participating to the session. Offer the possibility to ask any kind of question the interviewee might want to address you. This is his/her time to wear the interviewer's shoes in your regards.

If the interviewee has no additional question, the interview is officially finished. **Thank** again **your interviewee** for the time and availability to participate to this session. Underline how useful his/her help has been for the project.

Turn off the recording tools only when you are **completely sure that nothing will be added**. It is important to not miss anything, so better have some extra recording to cut later.

Take some time to, directly after the end of the interview, write down some impressions you may have about the session. It is important to note down very early impressions about both verbal and physical languages, before they are forgotten. Those are the most authentic resources to get.