

# PREPARING FOR DATA COLLECTION AND CONDUCTING FIELDWORK

*This chapter is written for survey coordinators and technical resource persons.*

*It will help you to:*

- Prepare for data collection
  - Make logistical arrangements
  - Print the questionnaires
  - Select the fieldworkers
  - Choose and arrange the equipment
  - Train the fieldworkers
  - Carry out fieldwork
  - Arrange data entry computers and hire data processing staff
  - Make arrangements for returning the questionnaires to headquarters
  - Plan early to obtain supplementary information
  - Address ethical considerations
- Understand the fieldwork procedures and the roles of fieldwork staff
  - What interviewers should do in the field
  - What the measurers should do in the field
  - What field supervisors and field editors should do in the field

## MAKING LOGISTICAL ARRANGEMENTS

Logistical arrangements include (1) setting up central headquarters, (2) deciding on the size and composition of the field teams, and (3) planning for the fieldwork.

## SETTING UP HEADQUARTERS

The survey must have a central headquarters, preferably in the capital, from which the whole operation will be coordinated. It is often possible to set up this office at a government institution such as a national statistical office or ministry of health. Usually, two to three rooms are needed for general administrative activities, in addition to meeting rooms where the training can take place (unless training is held at a separate venue). The headquarters office will hold the computing equipment and serve as the storage place for completed questionnaires. The rooms where questionnaires and data-processing equipment are kept must be secure, so that only survey personnel can access them. Telephone facilities are necessary for keeping contact with the field teams, unless mobile phones will be used.

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## DECIDING ON THE SIZE AND COMPOSITION OF THE FIELD TEAMS

The number of interviewers required depends on the sample size, the number of days to be spent interviewing and on the number of households one interviewer can complete in a day (or the number of clusters a team can complete in a day). You can estimate this number from the length of a working day divided by the amount of time it takes to complete one interview (determined when you pre-test the questionnaire – see below), allowing some travel time. You should keep in mind that travel time will usually be substantially longer in rural than in urban areas. Even though the interviews will probably take less time than estimated during the pre-test, when interviewers get used to the questionnaires, it is safe to use the estimated length of interview from pre-test as the saved time can compensate other unexpected delays in the field.

### EXAMPLE:

The pre-test has shown that an interviewer will need approximately 60 minutes to complete all interviews in a household, on average. You also estimate that at least 15 more minutes will be needed to move from house to house (to close the interview, leave the household, check completed questionnaires and pass them to the field editor, breathe for a minute, find the next household, introduce yourself to the new household and gain entry). Considering a 6-hour working day (to allow for transportation to and from the selected area and for a midday break), one interviewer would cover about five households a day  $[(6 \text{ hours} \times 60 \text{ minutes}) \div 75 \text{ minutes}]$ . A four-interviewer team would cover 20 households a day, which could correspond to the size of a cluster.

To estimate the total duration of your survey, you should also allow for travel time from town to town, 1-day breaks every week, and travel time of fieldwork teams from headquarters to the field and back. You should also make sure to allow time for call-backs, as well as unanticipated delays.

### EXAMPLE:

In MICS Manual Chapter 'Getting Started', we estimated that 8 teams

would cover 6,000 households in 40 working days, but we allowed a further 14 days for travel from town to town and for unexpected delays. We, then, estimated that each team will have four interviewers and a total of 32 interviewers will be needed.

You can also calculate the number of interviewers needed using this formula:

$$\text{Number of interviewers} = \frac{\text{Sample size}}{\text{Desired length of fieldwork} \times \text{Households per interviewer per day}}$$

**EXAMPLE:**

If the sample size is 6,000 and you want the work done in 40 days, and if each interviewer can do 5 interviews a day, the required number of interviewers will be  $6000 \div (40 \times 5) = 30$  interviewers. Because we are planning to have 4 interviewers per team, we will round up to 32 interviewers.

An alternative way of calculating the number of interviewers needed and the total number of days needed to complete the fieldwork is to take into account the number of teams needed to begin with, and follow this by calculating the number of interviewers needed. The following formula can be used for this purpose:

$$\text{Number of teams} = \frac{\text{Sample size}}{\text{Desired length of fieldwork} \times \text{Number of interviews per team per day}}$$

**EXAMPLE:**

Continuing the example in MICS Manual Chapter 'Getting Started', we calculate the number of teams needed as follows: We have a sample size of 6,000 households and we want to complete the fieldwork in 40 working days. We estimate that a fieldwork team composed of one supervisor, one editor, one measurer, and four interviewers will be able to complete 20 households per day, which is our cluster size. Then,  $6000 \div (40 \times 20) = 7.5$ . Rounding this up to allow for call-backs, unexpected delays, etc., we get eight teams – in other words, 32 interviewers.

The advantage of this approach is that it makes it possible to take into account the fieldwork teams to begin with, and allows the linking of cluster size with team size, composition and fieldwork duration.

***Avoid using a large number of interviewers.*** Having a large number of interviewers means that fieldwork can be conducted over a shorter period of time; however it also means that it will be more difficult to ensure high-quality training and supervision. UNICEF recommends that the length of fieldwork and the number of field staff be balanced in such a way that the number of interviewers is kept at a size that will enable standardized training to be organized centrally and high-quality supervision of fieldwork to be carried out. A relatively small number of interviewers will make it possible for the same trainers to provide training to all interviewers, thus ensuring consistency.

Once you have decided how many interviewers are required, work out the team composition.

The team composition and the number of interviewers per team will have to be decided based on a number of factors: the expected duration of interviews, the content of the questionnaire, the size of clusters, etc. On the average, for a typical MICS4 covering most of the standard modules, each team will need three to five interviewers\*. A common team composition will include eight persons:

supervisor, editor, driver (unless public transportation is used), four interviewers, and a measurer. This arrangement assumes that the vehicles will be large enough to carry eight persons plus their equipment, questionnaires and personal luggage.

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**When in doubt, be conservative. If you are not sure whether each interviewer can do four or six interviews a day, choose the smaller number. Allow plenty of time for travel and for rest, since fieldwork can be very tiring.**

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## PLANNING FOR FIELDWORK

### *Contacting Local Authorities*

In some areas, the arrival of a team of strangers may be regarded with suspicion. National authorities should prepare a letter to send to local authorities well before survey staff contact them. In the past, survey managers' failure to contact local authorities in advance to let them know that teams would be visiting has caused problems. In one extreme example in Latin America, local authorities arrested the interviewers when they arrived with no prior notice. You can avoid such problems by contacting local authorities and community leaders before beginning the study, to ask for their permission and to advise them of the team members' arrival dates. You can also ask them at this time to identify suitable local guides and, if necessary, translators. Another area in which local authorities may be helpful is in arranging accommodations and meals for the survey team.

### *Preparing Communities*

In order to ensure high participation levels in the survey, it is necessary for people in the community to know that the interviewers are visiting for legitimate reasons. Each team member should be provided with an identification badges and a letter of introduction/intent from an official agency or organization.

There is much variation in willingness to participate in a survey both across countries and within countries. Depending on the circumstances, some survey managers have found it helpful to print posters that can be hung in the sampled communities before the teams visit. Other survey managers have taken out a magazine or newspaper advertisement that field staff can then carry with them to show to reluctant or suspicious respondents.

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\* There may be cases where cluster size will be small, say 12. In this case, a team composed of a supervisor, plus three interviewers, assuming that they can complete four households per day, will be sufficient.

### *Arranging Transportation, Accommodations and Security*

Transportation may be provided by government offices, donor agencies, or arranged privately – for example, by renting cars. When using borrowed (government or donor agency) vehicles, ensure that they are well maintained and that there will be no conflicting demands for them during the fieldwork period. Allow funds in the survey budget for fuel, maintenance and unforeseen repairs, or ensure that they will be covered by government funds (you will need to ensure that vehicles can be re-fuelled and serviced 7 days a week during fieldwork). Estimate fuel needs by calculating the typical distances to be travelled from town to town and within each selected area, but be prepared for overruns in fuel and other transportation costs.

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**Make plenty of allowance for extra mileage, since the actual distances to be travelled are often underestimated.**

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It is often possible to arrange for the team's accommodations with local communities: Teams may sleep in guesthouses, army quarters, schools, or even the mayor's house. Depending on the arrangements, it may be necessary to provide teams with sleeping bags and other camping equipment. If private accommodations are arranged, make sure that the interviewers get a daily allowance that is sufficient to cover their costs. Meals may also be arranged with the local authorities, as mentioned above. Many places have no commercial restaurants, so meal arrangements have to be made in advance.

Security issues are also important. Fieldwork may take place in urban slums or in rural areas where there may be security problems. Local guides are often useful in anticipating and avoiding security risks. These issues must be considered in advance.

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**Adequate arrangements for transportation, accommodations, meals and security are essential not only for ensuring high-quality and timely data collection, but also for the psychological well-being of the interviewing team.**

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On the other hand, there have been cases where, due to anticipated security problems, the police or the military has accompanied fieldwork teams to the clusters, and this has resulted in high refusal rates and reluctance of the local community to cooperate with the fieldwork team. Such situations will, of course, depend on the political context, and consideration should be made of the possible effects on data quality of taking such precautions. However, the priority should always be the security of the fieldwork team.

Finally, careful arrangements should be made for paying the fieldworkers and field supervisors as well as providing them with 'pocket money' for meals, accommodations and unexpected expenses. Timely payment is essential for maintaining the team's morale.

### ***Preparing the Fieldwork Schedule***

An important part of logistical arrangements is to create a schedule for fieldwork activities. The schedule should include lists of the clusters/EAs that each team will visit. The following considerations should be taken into account while planning the schedule:

- Fieldwork should be spread over time to allow sufficient time for feedback to each of the teams so that their performance can be improved. Avoid recruiting a large number of field staff to complete the data collection in a short time.
- Consider the conditions in different parts of the country. Some teams may need more time than others due to rough terrain, long distances, larger household sizes, etc.
- It may not be practical to give each team the same number of clusters. For example, for linguistic reasons it may be best to give a particular team greater or fewer clusters.
- Take note of events that may happen in particular areas/regions. The teams may not be able to work efficiently in an area at a particular time due to local elections, festivals or even seasonal weather variation. Be sure to plan the teams' visits with these sorts of local events in mind.
- If possible, all teams should begin fieldwork in a central location. This will make it easier for senior survey staff to visit all teams during the first week or two of fieldwork.

Checklist for fieldwork schedule:

- Food/accommodations arranged for field staff
- Local officials informed
- Local guides arranged, if there are security concerns
- Payment of field staff scheduled (with cash available, if applicable)
- Break day is scheduled in appropriate place (recreation/laundry facilities available)
- Extra time allowed for alternate languages
- Holidays/local events scheduled
- Arrangements for questionnaires to be returned to field office
- Extra travel time for difficult terrain

### ***Obtaining and Preparing Copies of Local Maps***

Before the fieldwork begins, you should obtain copies of maps indicating the large areas (states, provinces, districts, towns, etc.) as well as the small areas (villages, census enumeration areas, etc.) in which the survey will be conducted. These may be available from the census bureau or

another government office. Military maps are often very useful, if it is possible to gain access to them. Make sufficient copies of all maps in advance.

## PREPARING THE QUESTIONNAIRES

### PRE-TESTING THE QUESTIONNAIRES

You must pre-test the translated questionnaire in the field. The pre-test should identify potential problem areas, such as dates of birth or vaccinations, unanticipated interpretations and cultural objections to the questions. Apply the pre-test to respondents similar to those who will be interviewed during the survey. The survey coordinator should do the pre-test with the help of experienced interviewers (such as permanent field staff of national statistical offices, researchers themselves, or people with past household survey experience who might work as field supervisors or interviewers in MICS4) – well before fieldworker training is to take place. Make sure to work with individuals who will be able to provide feedback at the end of the pre-test exercise. Do not make final copies of the questionnaire for the survey until *after* you have pre-tested, and, if necessary, revised it.

The objectives of the pre-test were discussed in MICS Manual Chapter ‘Designing the Questionnaire’ and are not taken up here. However, a number of additional points should be noted.

- It is very important to assess the duration of interviews during the pre-test, since this influences the plans for fieldwork, planned workload for interviewers and, most importantly, helps you assess whether the duration of the interviews will be appropriate for respondents. Although there are no standard recommended durations for interviews, it is important to make sure that interviews are not so long that they fatigue respondents and lead to the collection of poor quality data. Therefore, make sure to evaluate starting and ending times of your completed questionnaires at the end of the pre-test. In doing so, also note that during the pre-test, interviewers are still learning the questionnaire, so the time spent per interview is longer than it will be in the field after they become more experienced.
- Regarding the duration of the pre-test itself: Global MICS experience has shown very clearly that 1 week of questionnaire training for the pre-test is not sufficient. Depending on the length of the questionnaires, pre-test training should probably run for 1 to 2 weeks, plus additional time for the pre-test fieldwork exercise.

### FINALIZING AND PRINTING THE QUESTIONNAIRES

Once the questionnaire has been translated and pre-tested, you will need to make copies of it to use in field staff training and in the survey itself. When preparing the questionnaire for printing, remember the following:

- Do not change the layout of the questionnaire. In particular, do not try to squeeze too many questions onto a page and do not use font that is too small. A good layout helps

- to reduce interviewer error in the field.
- Use good-quality paper. This will help you to write clearly and will prevent the questionnaires from tearing.
  - Use a heavier stock of paper for the cover of each questionnaire, preferably in a different colour, so you are able to easily differentiate them. Recommended colours are yellow for the household questionnaire, pink for individual women questionnaire, and green for under-5 questionnaire.
  - Print the information panels of each questionnaire on the outside of each cover, rather than on inside pages, to permit staff to find questionnaires according to the identification fields without having to open the questionnaire.
  - Ensure that questionnaires are stapled together well, with a minimum of three staples per questionnaire, preferably with the staples on the spine of the questionnaire.
  - Print more copies than you need. There will always be some wastage, and extra copies are needed for training. Allow a separate set of questionnaires for each household in your sample.

*The manual for interviewers, supervisors and editors should be translated with the same care as the questionnaire.* Pre-test it by giving it to potential interviewers, field supervisors and field editors. Have them read the relevant manual and discuss it with them to identify any instructions that are unclear.

## **SELECTING THE FIELDWORKERS**

The quality of the information obtained from a survey depends on the quality of the work done in the field. Good survey organization and thorough fieldwork are vital.

Teams of interviewers, editors, measurers and supervisors will do the fieldwork. A detailed description of each of their tasks is provided later in this chapter, but the brief job descriptions given below will help you identify potential candidates.

The *field supervisor's job* is to:

- Identify the clusters to be surveyed
- Supervise and observe interviewers and measurers as they perform in the field
- Ensure that all team members follow instructions
- Answer team members' questions as they arise
- Control data quality by checking for errors during interviewing, checking that forms are completed fully and correctly, and checking that all respondents are answering the questions
- Identify problems and retrain interviewers who are doing their job incorrectly
- Check the work of the field editor and assist with editing as needed.

The *field editor's job* is to:

- Monitor interviewer performance by:

- Observing several interviews every day, especially during the early stages of fieldwork
- Editing all completed questionnaires in the field, before leaving the cluster
- Conducting regular review sessions with interviewers
- Compiling completed questionnaires from a cluster and packing them up to be sent to the central office
- Assist the field supervisor as needed.

The *interviewer's job* is to:

- Identify the specific households to be surveyed
- Gain the consent of respondents to be interviewed
- Conduct interviews using the standard questionnaire
- Maintain standard procedures in conducting the interviews and recording the answers.

The *measurer's job* is to:

- Measure the weight and height/length of all children under five
- Maintain the anthropometric equipment.

All candidates for fieldwork, whether they are interviewers, measurers, supervisors and editors should be:

- Intelligent and educated – to secondary-school level or higher
- Willing to follow instructions precisely and accurately
- Polite and able to establish a good relationship with respondents
- Fluent in the language of the respondents
- Physically able to walk long distances.

All field staff should be selected for their ability and motivation to perform these tasks. In other words, the selection should be made according to an objective set of criteria. Survey managers will find it helpful to have a standardized selection process that includes talking to each candidate in order to judge communication and language skills and administering a simple written test to ensure basic mathematical skills and neat penmanship.

Previous survey experience is not necessarily a positive factor. While participation in well-conducted surveys can be an advantage, previous involvement in poorly planned and implemented surveys may have led to bad interviewing habits that may be hard to correct.

**EXAMPLE:**

In many countries the standards of so-called market research are very poor. Interviewers with previous experience in these surveys may actually require more training than completely inexperienced candidates.

You should also try to avoid overqualified interviewers, who may follow their own agenda and stray from the precise techniques developed for conducting the survey.

**EXAMPLE:**

In some countries, medical doctors were used for data collection, often with disastrous consequences due to their inability or unwillingness to follow the questionnaire instructions precisely and their tendency to make medical diagnoses during the interview.

Use female interviewers in each team. In almost all societies, women will be very reluctant to provide answers on sex-related matters to male interviewers. Since the MICS4 questionnaires include modules on contraception, sexual behaviour, HIV/AIDS and other sensitive issues, female interviewers must be recruited. Field supervisors and field editors can be of either sex, although having female supervisors and editors will also make it possible for them to observe interviews.

Ensure that the age of the interviewers is adequate for the information you want. In some societies, women may be reluctant to provide answers to sensitive issues such as pregnancy outcomes or breastfeeding to interviewers who seem too young. On the other hand, it is often useful for each team to have one younger interviewer who may be able to establish better rapport with young, unmarried respondents.

In addition to the above qualifications, field supervisors and field editors must understand the importance of adhering to survey procedures and be capable of ensuring that interviewers follow instructions. Field supervisors should preferably have previous field experience as interviewers in well-conducted surveys.

Always select more field staff than you will need. Train all of them and select the required number at the end of the course. This will guarantee that only the best fieldworkers will be involved in the study, and will also provide a few additional interviewers in case you need replacements. Provide training certificates to all participants of the training course, including those who will not be employed for the fieldwork.

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**Always select more potential interviewers than you will need.**

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## **CHOOSING AND PREPARING THE EQUIPMENT**

Equipment must be purchased well in advance of the survey. Detailed information on equipment is provided in Manual Chapter 'Instructions for Supervisors Editors and Measurers', 'Anthropometry, and 'Global positioning Systems'. Table 1 lists some of the main items of equipment required in addition to the questionnaires, cluster control sheets and maps.

Notebooks for the supervisors/editors	Sleeping and cooking equipment (if necessary)
Clipboards	Geographic Positioning System (GPS) units
Backpacks or other types of bags	Weighing scales and accessories (batteries)
Pens (blue for interviewers, red for editors and supervisors)	Length/height boards
Plastic bags or envelopes for completed questionnaires	Salt iodization testing kits
Envelopes for filing control sheets and maps	Display set of vitamin A capsules (recall aid)
Paper clips, staplers, staples, tape, and twine	Literacy test cards
	Flashlights
	First aid kit
	Cleaning supplies for boards and scales

**IMPORTANT:** *In addition to this equipment, fieldworkers should also carry letters of introduction to the households, preferably on official letterhead, and identification cards with their photograph.*

### **TRAINING THE FIELDWORKERS**

Collecting high-quality data will only be possible if all field staff are thoroughly trained and thus are familiar with the content of the questionnaire as well as fieldwork procedures.

#### **PREPARING FOR TRAINING**

Training should be planned ahead of time. Before you train the interviewers, you should:

- Translate and pre-test the questionnaires, instructions for filling in the questionnaire and the field procedures for the survey. This means planning for field supervisors and editors to check completed questionnaires, fill out daily Cluster Control Sheets on the completed questionnaires, return them to headquarters, make transportation arrangements for teams, and make payments to fieldworkers.
- Identify typical field locations for practising household selection and interviews. (Ensure that these areas have not been selected for the MICS4 sample)
- Prepare equipment for use in demonstrations during training and for pilot study (fieldwork practice).

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**Decide which interviewers, editors and supervisors are qualified to go on and dismiss those who cannot perform the tasks adequately.**

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## THE TRAINERS

Training should be provided by senior survey staff. At least two trainers will be necessary, although it is usually helpful to have more so that there can be ample observation of participants during practice sessions.<sup>1</sup> It is recommended that a separate trainer – who is a seasoned professional in that area with experience in the field – be used for training in anthropometry. In addition, it is often helpful to organize lectures by authorities in the various fields covered in the questionnaires, such as education, maternal and child health, child protection, HIV/AIDS, etc. These experts can be invited to give a brief introduction to the subject; they should not train on the questionnaire, however, unless they have been involved in the survey process and are very familiar with the questionnaire itself. If there is a Technical Advisory Committee, it is helpful to have members of the committee make short presentations in technical areas. This also helps the field staff understand the importance of the MICS4 effort at the national level.

All trainers should become comfortable with the questionnaire, including the skips and the purpose of the questions. If the trainers are not comfortable with the questionnaire, the interviewers will pick up on this and doubt the quality of the survey. Similarly, if the trainers question the effectiveness, or use, of some questions during the training, the interviewers will doubt the instrument and will not be motivated to collect the data correctly. All trainers must be comfortable and thoroughly familiar with the questionnaire before the start of the training.

## THE TRAINING VENUE

UNICEF recommends that fieldwork training be carried out in a central location, preferably with a relatively small group of interviewers. The smaller the number of trainees (30-40 candidates in a class at one time), the better. Training all

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**Training all interviewers in a single classroom is the best way to ensure that data collection is standardized,**

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staff in a single classroom is strongly encouraged because this is the best way to ensure standardization of data collection. The venue should have adequate space and light, comfortable seating for all participants, and be away from distracting sounds and noises. It will be necessary to arrange for overhead and/or PowerPoint projectors and a microphone may also be necessary. Ideally, there will be enough room for participants to spread out when they practice in groups.

The likelihood of training all field staff at one time in one venue will undoubtedly depend on a number of factors, including the total number of trainees, the size of the country, etc. However, the main goal for survey administrators should be to ensure that all trainees receive identical training. This is very difficult to accomplish if training is carried out by different trainers in different locations. Alternatively, if two or more training sessions must be conducted simultaneously, organize communication meetings between all trainers at the end of the day.

In cases when different training locations are necessary, it is important to make sure that training

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<sup>1</sup> If more than one group of interviewers is being trained, there should be at least two trainers in each classroom.

for each team is the same, to the extent possible. It is best to use the *same trainers* and training materials for *all* the survey fieldwork training. This means that one group of trainers, who know the requirements of the survey very well, should do all the training, even if this means that they must repeat the training course several times.

### THE PARTICIPANTS

It is important that the size of training classes be kept as small as possible, so that trainers are able to get to know the trainees, to work with them on an individual basis, and provide extra training if necessary. As indicated earlier, the number of trainees should be more than will eventually be needed for fieldwork, to make sure that those trainees who will not be able to produce good quality work are eliminated before the actual fieldwork starts. In addition to prospective field supervisors, field editors, measurers, and interviewers, trainees should also include those who will later be entering the data. It is critical that data entry clerks know the questionnaires well, since they will be dealing with problems in the questionnaires during the data entry stage later.

### TIPS FOR TRAINERS

Training should be carried out in a good working atmosphere, so that interviewers are motivated to perform well in the field. Be sure that adequate space is available in the classroom(s), and that beverages and snacks are provided.

Below are some simple guidelines in conducting the training sessions:

- It is very important that training and practice sessions are conducted in a participatory fashion. Trainers should encourage trainees to ask questions and make sure that everything is clear and understood before the actual fieldwork starts. In addition, trainers should ask questions of trainees, ask them to read the questionnaires aloud, and practise the administration of questionnaires as much as possible.
- In regard to practice in the classroom, there are several ways of ensuring that trainees get experience in asking the questions: these include demonstration interviews, front-of-class interviews and mock interviews. Additionally, real respondents might be brought into the classroom for practice, and/or interviewers may be taken to households in the vicinity of the training venue to ask questions of real respondents, even before the pilot study (field practice) begins.
- It is best to schedule practices for the latter part of the day.
- Use audio-visual aids, such as overhead projectors or PowerPoint slides, during the training. One advantage of overhead projectors is that a questionnaire can be easily filled in as a demonstration. This can be especially helpful for more complex modules, such as the household listing and the bednet roster.
- Inviting a high-level official to open and close the training course can help ensure that trainees believe in the seriousness of the survey and conduct themselves in a responsible manner.
- One of the ways to motivate trainees is to issue certificates showing course completion.

- In addition to practice sessions in the classroom and in households, trainees may be given homework assignments, including readings, and they can be asked to complete interviews at night, perhaps with other family members, relatives and neighbours.

In cases when some of the trainees are those who have already worked in the pre-test, they could be used to assist with practice in the classroom, and can be involved in editing questionnaires filled in during the training.

### **EVALUATING PARTICIPANTS**

Training should include both observational and written tests at various points during the process. This is necessary to understand general difficulties and to identify elements of the survey tools that require revision and more emphasis. The objective of the tests should not be to ask difficult questions to the trainees; rather, easy questions should be asked, perhaps sometimes with intentional errors, to test how alert and motivated trainees are.

By the end of the training course, trainers should be able to develop profiles of the capacities of each trainee on an individual basis, and take decisions about the best roles they could be playing in the fieldwork. This involves the observation of trainees' performance in the pilot study, as well as their relationships to each other, which might provide clues on their leadership qualities, on whether they can easily build rapport with respondents, and whether they are careful in editing and spotting mistakes. By the end of the training course, you should be able to decide on those who would be the best individuals to supervise teams, edit questionnaires, or conduct interviews.

### **THE TRAINING SCHEDULE**

The length of training will depend on the content of the questionnaire, as well as the complexity of field procedures and the characteristics of the field staff. A longer, complicated questionnaire will require longer training. Based on lessons learned from previous rounds of MICS, as well as the pre-test of model questionnaires for the current round, UNICEF recommends that training be carried out for at least 2 weeks (preferably up to 3 weeks), depending on the content of the questionnaire. Training should not exceed 8 hours per day, at the end of which trainers should meet to evaluate the day.

Table 2 provides an example of a 14-day training course for interviewers, supervisors, editors, measurers, and data entry staff. This model training schedule is intended to be used as a guide for countries when designing the actual training schedule for MICS field staff.

#### ***How to use this template***

This schedule should be used to give an indication of how much time should be spent on different modules and topics. The schedule needs to be customised to the country specific MICS survey tools. Modules not included in the country questionnaires can be deleted (and replaced

with non-MICS standard module if any have been added).

Removing modules and therefore sessions will allow more time for practice and discussion. It is not recommended that the overall length of the training is shortened even if country specific questionnaires do not contain all the modules contained in this template.

The schedule is for 14 full days. It is recommended that extra days off should be inserted within the schedule.

### ***Trainers and Experts***

Names of trainers need to be inserted for each session. Ideally trainers should be those who are very familiar with the questionnaires and were involved in conducting the pre-test and/or will be the eventual fieldwork supervisors. Expert speakers specializing in certain module topics should be invited to introduce topics and to clarify any concepts, theory and technical terms contained in the module. It is essential that at the very least the following experts come to the training, if the particular modules are included in the questionnaire:

- It is imperative to invite a nutritionist experienced in conducting anthropometric measurements to conduct the training and supervise the classroom and site practice for the anthropometric module.
- A child development specialist to explain the concepts behind the Early Childhood Development Module.
- Reproductive health/HIV/AIDS expert

### ***Structuring the individual module sessions***

Training sessions for each module should start with an overall introduction to the module topic conveying why the topic is of importance. The session should then proceed by a detailed description of each and every question with instructions on how to administer the question and follow the skip patterns. If time allows trainees can practice administering the module; substantial practice time will also be given at the end of each questionnaire.

### ***Identifying the interviewer, measurer and editor roles***

Roles should not be determined at the start of the training. Instead, trainers should be constantly observing the practice sessions throughout the course to identify the stronger trainees. Once all questionnaires have been covered the trainees should be given an extra half-day practice to administer all 3 questionnaires (if possible real respondents can be brought into the training location). Based on the performance and accuracy displayed in this practice and beforehand, the eventual fieldwork roles should be assigned. Even if the roles have been assigned before the start of the training, all fieldwork staff (interviewers, editors, measurers, and supervisors) should attend full 14-day training.

### *Additional training for the measurers*

Once roles have been assigned, the persons who will be the team measurers should be given separate training and extra practice for taking anthropometric measurements and for testing for oedema. It is recommended that the measurers are taken to a day care centre or equivalent institution where they will be able to perform measurements on children age less than 5 years old.

### *Supplies required for training*

Each participant should be provided with an Interviewer's manual (MICS Manual Chapter 'Instructions for Interviewers') at the start of the training. Later, those selected as editors and measurers should be given the separate manual (MICS Manual Chapter 'Instructions for Supervisors, Editors and Measurers') for these roles.

Participants should all receive a blank copy of the questionnaires at the start of the training. As the training proceeds they should be supplied with further blank copies to be completed in the practice sessions. In total, an estimate of at least 4 sets of questionnaires per participant should be available during the training. Extra copies will then be required for the pilot (field practice during days 11 and 12).

As well as the ordinary stationery that is required for the training, the following supplies and visual aids will also be required (if relevant):

#### *Household questionnaire:*

- Pictorials of building materials of house
- Pictorials of water and sanitation facilities
- Examples of insecticide treated nets
- Salt tests
- Iodized and non-iodized salt (materials for testing practice)

#### *Individual Women's Questionnaire:*

- Immunization cards provided in pregnancy
- Types of anti-malarials
- Health cards for recording birth weights.

#### *Questionnaire for children under 5:*

- Example of a birth certificate
- Immunization cards for children
- Weighing scales (MICS recommended)
- Height Boards (MICS recommended)

All logistical arrangements for both the visits to the sites to practice taking anthropometric measurements and for the pilot should be made in advance of the training.

### *Centralized versus decentralized training*

MICS strongly recommend a centralised training where the fieldwork staff is trained in one single classroom. If a larger number is required to be trained, two or more separate training sessions may be organized. In order to maximize standardization of instruction, however, it may be preferable to keep all of the participants together for lectures, and then split them into smaller working groups. If training must be conducted at different sites, rather than organizing simultaneous training sessions, same group of trainers should visit the sites separately to ensure a more standardized training (data collection may still start after the end of training in each site to avoid time lapses).

**Table 2 Example of a 14-Day Training Course for Fieldwork and Data Entry Staff**

Time	Topic	By	Methodology
<b>Day One</b>			
09.00-09.30	The Basics: What is a Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey?	MICS Coordinator	MICS Video /Presentation
09:30-10:00	The importance of MICS for Country	High level Official	Speech
10:00-10:30	Introduction of trainers/workshop participants	Trainer Name	
10.30-10.50	<i>Health Break</i>		
10.50-11.30	Overview, administration and rules of the training	Trainer Name	Presentation Q&A
11:30-12:30	MICS Framework: Modules and Indicators	Trainer Name	Presentation Q&A
12.30-13.30	<i>Lunch</i>		
13.30-15.00	The Survey Instruments: general rules and conventions Using the manual	Trainer Name	Presentation Q&A
15.00-15.20	<i>Health Break</i>		
15.20-17.00	Household Questionnaire: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Household Information Panel</li> <li>▪ Household Listing Form</li> </ul>	Trainer Name	Presentation Q&A
<b>Day Two</b>			
09:00-09:30	Recap of previous day		
09.30-10.45	Household Questionnaire: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Education</li> </ul>	Trainer Name	Presentation Q&A
10.45-11.00	<i>Health Break</i>		
11.00-12.30	Household Questionnaire: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Water and Sanitation</li> </ul>	Expert in area Trainer Name	Presentation Q&A
12.30-13.30	<i>Lunch</i>		
13.30-15.00	Household Questionnaire: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Household Characteristics</li> </ul>	Trainer Name	Presentation Q&A
15.00-15.15	<i>Health Break</i>		
15.15-16.15	Household Questionnaire: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Insecticide Treated Nets</li> <li>▪ Indoor Residual Spraying</li> </ul>	Expert in area Trainer Name	Presentation Q&A
16.15-17.00	Practice and discussion	Trainer Name	Pair work, Role play
<b>Day Three</b>			
09:00-09:30	Recap of previous day		
09.30-10.45	Household Questionnaire: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Child Labour</li> <li>▪ Child Discipline</li> </ul>	Expert in area Trainer Name	Presentation Q&A

10.45-11.00	<i>Health Break</i>		
11.00-12.30	Household Questionnaire: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Handwashing</li> <li>▪ Salt Testing</li> </ul>	Trainer Name	Presentation Practice Q&A
12.30-13.30	<i>Lunch</i>		
13.30-15.00	Household Questionnaire: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Practice</li> </ul>	Trainer Name	Pair work, Role play
15.00-15.15	<i>Health Break</i>		
15.15-17.00	Household Questionnaire: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Feedback on practice</li> </ul>	Trainer Name	Q&A, discussion
<b>Day Four</b>			
09:00-09:30	Recap of previous day		
09.30-10.45	Individual Women's Questionnaire: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Women's Information Panel</li> <li>▪ Women's Background <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Access To Mass Media And Use Of Information/Communication Technology</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Trainer Name	Presentation Q&A
10.45-11.00	<i>Health Break</i>		
11.00-12.30	Individual Women's Questionnaire: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Child Mortality / Birth History</li> <li>▪ Desire for Last Birth</li> </ul>	Trainer Name	Presentation Q&A
12.30-13.30	<i>Lunch</i>		
13.30-15.00	Individual Women's Questionnaire: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maternal and Newborn Health</li> <li>▪ Post-Natal Health Checks</li> <li>▪ Illness Symptoms</li> </ul>	Expert in area Trainer Name	Presentation Q&A
15.00-15.15	<i>Health Break</i>		
15.15-17.00	Individual Women's Questionnaire: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Contraception</li> <li>▪ Unmet Need</li> </ul>	Expert in area Trainer Name	Presentation Q&A
<b>Day Five</b>			
09:00-09:30	Recap of previous day		
09.30-10.45	Individual Women's Questionnaire: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting</li> <li>▪ Attitudes Towards Domestic Violence</li> <li>▪ Marriage/Union</li> </ul>	Expert in area Trainer Name	Presentation Q&A
10.45-11.00	<i>Health Break</i>		
11.00-12.30	Individual Women's Questionnaire: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sexual Behaviour</li> <li>▪ HIV/AIDS</li> </ul>	Expert in area Trainer Name	Presentation Q&A
12.30-13.30	<i>Lunch</i>		
13.30-15.00	Individual Women's Questionnaire: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maternal Mortality</li> <li>▪ Tobacco and Alcohol Use</li> <li>▪ Life Satisfaction</li> </ul>	Expert in area Trainer Name	Presentation Q&A
15.00-15.15	<i>Health Break</i>		
15.15-17.00	Questionnaire for individual men: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Review of all modules in the questionnaire for individual men</li> </ul>	Trainer Name	Q&A, Discussion
<b>Day Six</b>			
09:00-09:30	Recap of previous day		
09.30-10.45	Individual Women's and Men's Questionnaires: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Practice</li> </ul>	Trainer Name	Pair work, Role play
10.45-11.00	<i>Health Break</i>		
11.00-12.30	Individual Women's and Men's Questionnaires: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Feedback on practice</li> </ul>	Trainer Name	Q&A, discussion
12.30-13.30	<i>Lunch</i>		
13.30-15.00	Questionnaire for children under 5: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Under 5 Information Panel</li> <li>▪ Age</li> <li>▪ Birth Registration</li> </ul>	Trainer Name	Presentation Q&A
15.00-15.15	<i>Health Break</i>		

15.15-17.00	Questionnaire for children under 5: ▪ Early Childhood Development	Expert in area Trainer Name	Presentation Q&A
<b>Day Seven</b>			
09:00-09:30	Recap of previous day		
09.30-10.45	Questionnaire for children under 5: ▪ Breastfeeding	Expert in area Trainer Name	Presentation Q&A
10.45-11.00	<i>Health Break</i>		
11.00-12.30	Questionnaire for children under 5: ▪ Care of Illness	Trainer Name	Presentation Q&A
12.30-13.30	<i>Lunch</i>		
13.30-15.15	Questionnaire for children under 5: ▪ Malaria ▪ Immunization	Trainer Name	Presentation Q&A
15.15-15.30	<i>Health Break</i>		
15.30-16.00	Questionnaire for children under 5: ▪ Practice	Trainer Name	Pair work, Role play
<b>Day Eight</b>			
09:00-09:30	Recap of previous day		
09.30-10.45	Questionnaire for children under 5: ▪ Anthropometry and classroom practice	Expert in area of nutrition	Presentation and Group work
10.45-11.00	<i>Health Break</i>		
11.00-12.30	Questionnaire for children under 5: ▪ Practice	Trainer Name	Pair work, Role play
12.30-13.30	<i>Lunch</i>		
13.30-15.00	Questionnaire for children under 5: ▪ Feedback on practice	Trainer Name	Q&A, discussion
15.00-15.15	<i>Health Break</i>		
15.15-17.00	General Q&A on questionnaires	Trainer Name	Q&A, discussion
<b>Day Nine</b>			
09:00-09:30	Recap of previous day		
09.30-10.45	Interview Techniques Dealing with non-response/difficult situations	Trainer Name	Presentation & discussion
10.45-11.00	<i>Health Break</i>		
11.00-12.30	Interview Techniques Dealing with non-response/difficult situations	Trainer Name	Presentation & discussion
12.30-13.30	<i>Lunch</i>		
13.30-15.15	Demonstration Interviews		
15.15-15.30	<i>Health Break</i>		
15.30-17.00	Practice of all questionnaires (Exam)		
<b>Day Ten</b>			
09.00-10.45	Exam and demonstration interview feedback	Trainer Name	Discussion
10.45-11.00	<i>Health Break</i>		
11.00-12.30	Assignment of roles: • Roles and responsibilities of supervisors, editors, interviewers and measurers	Trainer Name	Presentation & discussion
12.30-13.30	<i>Lunch</i>		
13.30-15.15	1. Identifying households in the field/reading maps, Field check tables 2. Measurer training in centre with children (whole afternoon)	Trainer Name  Expert in nutrition	Presentation & discussion
15.15-15.30	<i>Health Break</i>		
15.30-17.00	3. Editor training 4. Interviewer self-study	Trainer Name	Discussion
<b>Day Eleven</b>			
09.00-17.00	Pilot Study (rural area)		
<b>Day Twelve</b>			
09.00-17.00	Pilot Study (urban area)		

Day Thirteen			
09:00-10.45	(1) Editors: Questionnaire editing practice (2) Interviewers/measurers: Feedback from pilot study	Trainer Name Trainer Name	Discussion
10.45-11.00	Health Break		
11.00-12.30	Questionnaire feedback from editors		Discussion Group work
12.30-13.30	Lunch		
13.30-15.15	Further Pilot study debriefing	Trainer Name	Discussion Group work
15.15-15.30	Health Break		
15.30-17.00	Preparing for Fieldwork: ▪ Logistics and schedule		Work in teams
Day Fourteen			
09.00-10.45	Preparing for fieldwork: Equipment and supplies		
10.45-11.00	Health Break		
11.00-12.30	Closing ceremony - Certificate distribution		
12.30-13.30	Lunch		
13.30-17.00	Half day for additional editor and supervisor training		

### Tips for Fieldwork Training

#### Explain thoroughly the purpose of the survey and introduce survey instruments.

- Arrange an opening ceremony and invite a high-level official from the implementing agency to deliver a speech on the importance of the survey.
- Introduce all team members and participants from the implementing institutions (national statistics office, ministry of health, etc.) and other organizations.
- Provide a framework for the survey and describe indicators.
- Outline the whole survey procedure including reporting and analysis.
- Motivate fieldworkers by explaining the importance of the data to be collected and what will be done with it.
- Explain the administrative arrangements for the work.
- Give details of the working hours and pay, the survey schedule, transportation arrangements and everyday procedures.
- Provide a general overview of the survey instruments, including a description of the modules included.

#### Discuss the survey procedures and questionnaires.

- Discuss interviewing techniques. Explain how to gain the confidence of the respondent, how to avoid inducing answers, and the importance of completing each assigned interview and of following standard procedures. Emphasize that the interviewers must ask the questions *exactly* as they are worded on the questionnaire. Discuss ethical issues.
- Discuss the general structure of the questionnaires, explaining eligibility issues.
- Conduct a module-by-module discussion of the questionnaire.
- Explain and discuss each question. There should be no unfamiliar terms. Give each fieldworker *Interviewer's Manual* (MICS Manual Chapter 'Instructions for Interviewers') to take to the field.
- Do demonstration interviews, preferably using an overhead projector so that participants can observe how answers are recorded.
- Organize lectures in the form of brief presentations to be delivered by professionals specializing in relevant topics.
- Have role-playing interviews, where trainees interview each other. Use questionnaires completed in the pre-test as example cases.
- Conduct a general training on anthropometric techniques. This will allow field staff to assist the team measurer.
- Introduce and train fieldworkers to perform salt tests.
- Introduce and train fieldworkers on visual-aid materials, such as vitamin A capsules.
- Practise recording data and managing forms.
- If the sexual behaviour module or other modules including sensitive questions are included in the

survey, be sure to role play these questions so interviewers get over any initial uneasiness about discussing sexual matters.

- Videotape the practice sessions if possible, and provide constructive criticism of the different interviewers. Hold more demonstration interviews as the training proceeds.
- Conduct brief written exams to test the interviewers' understanding of the questionnaire. This can also help you filter out interviewers who did not comprehend the training.
- Give out homework. Ask the interviewers to read the next day's topics from their manuals, and/or go through the modules that will be covered. Ask interviewers to complete interviews with their families, relatives, neighbours. Have the trainees edit each other's questionnaires and spot errors.

**Conduct a pilot (field exercise) and have further discussion of interviewing.**

- Practise reading maps.
- Discuss how to handle empty buildings and refusals.
- Organize practice in the field. Each trainee should complete at least five practice interviews in the field. Observe all the interviewers' practice sessions and provide them with feedback.
- Discuss the problem of the interviewer influencing the respondents' answers and other interviewer mistakes. Agree upon solutions to these problems.
- Go over field practice questionnaires with individuals who have particular problems, and discuss problems as a group.
- Ask the participants to share their ideas and suggestions for dealing with difficulties.

All participants should have a comprehensive understanding of the questionnaire at the end of the training. Sessions on the questionnaire should begin with the cover page of the household questionnaire and allow time for explanations, questions, and practice. An example of how to structure a lesson on a questionnaire module is below:

**Household Listing Form (in the Household Questionnaire)**

- **Overview of module:** The trainer reads through all questions and instructions one-by-one, explaining key definitions and concepts such as household member, head of household, completed years of age, mother versus caretaker, and natural mother and father. Reviewing the interviewers' manual before the session will remind the trainer of important issues that should be stressed. (45 minutes)
- **Demonstration interview** – Two trainers will demonstrate how to complete the household listing form (one is the interviewer and the other is the respondent). It will be most helpful if an overhead projector is used and the answers are written onto the questionnaire so that all trainees can see. Do not make the household too complicated – four members of different ages should be sufficient. (10 minutes)
- **Question and answer period** (10 minutes)
- **Practice in small groups** – Split trainees into groups of three or four. Have them take turns being the interviewer, respondent, observers. Trainers should circulate among the groups and observe the practice. (40 minutes)
- **Wrap-up** – Trainers can provide general feedback to the class based on their observations and any additional questions can be fielded from participants. (15 minutes)

**Table 3 Example of a 3-Day Additional Training Course for Fieldwork Staff (Supervisors, Editors, and Measurers)**

Day 1	<p><b>Household selection and map reading</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain the procedures to be followed and the importance of random selection of households.</li> <li>• Provide practice and time for discussion.</li> <li>• (If sketch-mapping will be used for segmentation of small areas, then provide at least 2 additional days for training in the field.)</li> <li>• Introduce and practise the roles of field supervisors and editors.</li> </ul>
Day 2	<p><b>Quality control</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain the need to monitor interviews and check interview quality on the spot.</li> <li>• Discuss how to deal with interviewer errors.</li> <li>• Explain what to do with the completed questionnaires and how to deal with unanticipated problems.</li> <li>• Emphasize that the field supervisor should keep field notes and go through what should be recorded in these notes.</li> <li>• Discuss the survey schedule and the need for liaising with the survey coordinator.</li> </ul>
Day 3	<p><b>Additional sessions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standardize and practice anthropometric procedures.</li> <li>• Practice on editing questionnaires</li> <li>• Proceed with the selection of field supervisors and editors.</li> </ul>

The format above can be used for all of the modules. Note that during the first few days of training, the sessions will require more time as trainees become accustomed to the questionnaire and interviewing techniques.

Field supervisors, editors, and measurers will also need additional training (Table 3) that may be held over two – three consecutive days or in several shorter sessions that occur concurrently with the main training for all field staff. For example, the field supervisor, editor, and measurer trainings may be timed to coincide with additional practice for interviewers.

### **BRIEFING THE DRIVERS**

All persons involved in the survey should be briefed about its purposes and the main methodological guidelines. Drivers who will work with the team throughout the whole survey are a group in need of special attention. In particular, the following issues may need to be addressed:

- Drivers often fail to understand random sampling and may even refuse to take secondary roads or paths to reach scattered households. This preference for certain roads is known as ‘main road bias’.
- Another common problem occurs when drivers interfere in the interviews. Since all interviews are confidential, drivers should not be within hearing distance of any interview and should not read completed interviews stored in the vehicle. A special session at the beginning of the fieldwork may help prevent these problems.
- Drivers should remain with the team at all times. Such expectations from the driver, including the schedule, will need to be made clear when the drivers are first recruited.
- Drivers should be briefed on any security concerns in certain areas and given guidelines on what to do in the event of an accident or other unexpected event.

## CARRYING OUT THE PILOT STUDY

The pilot study is the final rehearsal for the fieldwork. It is used to test that all procedures work smoothly and that all protocols are understood and followed. The pilot study should be carried out at the end of the training period, but at least a few days before beginning the actual fieldwork. This will allow time for correcting any problems detected during the pilot study.

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**A properly conducted pilot study (field practice) will identify major problems with the survey methodology and help prevent them during the data-collection phase.**

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The pilot study should cover both urban and rural areas. These areas should be selected to be representative of the situations the interviewers might face during the survey. The pilot study should last for at least 2 days, depending on the results of the exercise for interviewers, supervisors and editors, and include the daily routine shown in Table 4.

**Table 4**  
**Daily Routine for the Pilot Study**

- Briefing at headquarters
- Transporting the team to the field sites
- Locating clusters
- Contacting local authorities and introducing yourself
- Identifying selected households
- Interviewing and measuring
- Editing and compiling questionnaires
- Evaluating the results and providing feedback to the survey team, including re-training or additional training, as needed.

The pilot study should be seen as an integral part of the training programme. *Close supervision of the interviewers during this phase is essential.*

## SETTING UP COMPUTERS AND ARRANGING DATA PROCESSING STAFF

You must obtain the services of a data processing expert with experience in using the software packages you will use. Make sure to obtain the copies of the data entry software (CSPRO) and the statistical analysis package (SPSS) in advance. Information on the software is provided in MICS Manual Chapter 'Processing the Data'.

Your data processing expert will need to adapt the MICS4 standard model programs for entering,

cleaning and tabulating the collected data. Training on the adaptation of the model programs will have been provided through workshops. Nevertheless, the survey coordinator will need to work closely with the data processing expert to ensure that the data entry, editing and tabulation programs produce the needed data sets and the correct tabulations for each indicator. Before the main survey begins, make sure that the programs have been properly tested and are functional.

**IMPORTANT:** *Use the questionnaires from the field practices and pilot study for testing the data entry and analysis programs. Check the programs for the production of tables. Sort out any problems and make any corrections that may be necessary.*

You will also need data entry staff. Depending on the size of your survey and the duration of fieldwork, a number of data entry clerks, data entry editor(s) and data entry supervisor(s) will have to be recruited together with the rest of the fieldwork personnel and trained additionally by the computer programmer in using the data entry software. (See MICS Manual Chapter ‘Processing the Data’ to calculate the number of data entry clerks needed.) The additional training for data entry should require no more than 2 days. However, it is important that all data entry staff participates the main fieldwork training session, together with the interviewers, field supervisors, editors and measurers so that they understand the purpose of the survey and the content of the questionnaires.

Arrange for the necessary office equipment, including computers, printers, memory sticks and paper, and make sure that the power supply is adequate. One computer will be needed for each data entry clerk, plus one for the data entry supervisor. Furthermore, ensure that there is plenty of shelf space so that the questionnaires can be readily available for the duration of fieldwork. MICS Manual Chapter ‘Processing the Data’ contains further suggestions on how to manage the data processing and organize record-keeping.

*Remember – unless all arrangements for data entry and analysis are made before starting the fieldwork, this process can lead to major delays in producing survey results.*

In addition to data entry clerks and data entry supervisor, you will need a data entry editor to edit questionnaires and to provide consistent responses to the problems in the questionnaires identified in the office – either by the computer or when verifying materials manually. These persons can be selected during the selection of fieldwork personnel and trained additionally for data entry.

### **MAKING ARRANGEMENTS FOR RETURNING THE QUESTIONNAIRES TO HEADQUARTERS**

Instruct field supervisors and editors on the procedure for returning completed questionnaires to the data processing headquarters. Remember that the questionnaires contain confidential data and should be handled appropriately.

Completed clusters of questionnaires should be returned weekly so that data can be processed quickly. In the early stages of the survey, this will also enable you to check for any systematic problems that may still be occurring in the field. When simultaneous data entry is in place, errors can be identified and feedback can be provided to fieldworkers, permitting the early identification of systematic errors that can compromise the quality of the survey.

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**The prompt return of the questionnaires to headquarters contributes to quality control, allows for early data entry and feedback to fieldworkers.**

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Field supervisors should arrange for completed clusters of questionnaires to be delivered back to the survey headquarters on a weekly basis. This can be done by a roving team that picks up clusters of questionnaires or by having the drivers deliver them. Ideally, however, the collection of completed questionnaires will be incorporated into regular supervision visits to the team by senior survey staff.

Back-up copies of computer files should be made daily and kept in a secure location where only survey staff has access to them.

## **PLANNING EARLY TO OBTAIN SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**

Field staff can be valuable informants because they become familiar with conditions in communities. They may obtain insights about how programmes are operating, the reasons why a programme is not working, or the problems experienced by fieldworkers during data collection. If possible, make the most of this opportunity to obtain qualitative as well as quantitative data from your field staff by conducting focus group discussions after the survey finishes. Health and development programme staff may have a particular interest in what these field staff observe. Enlist the help of such interested parties and prepare a discussion guide. Write a short report of these discussions, and include any pertinent observations in your survey report.

## **ADDRESSING ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Household surveys typically raise a number of ethical questions, particularly surveys that pertain to the health of children and other household members. Such questions relate to individual rights to privacy, the need for informed consent, and responsibilities that arise upon uncovering potential health problems in a survey.

Key ethical considerations are presented in this section.

### **ETHICAL APPROVAL**

The survey must abide by the laws of the country, so the first step for any survey coordinator is

to become knowledgeable about local regulations and protocols. Ethical review boards are becoming increasingly common. In some cases a review may be necessary only because of a single topic covered in the questionnaire. For example, if the 'Child Discipline' module is included then it may be necessary to present the survey proposal to an ethical review board. If approval by an ethical review committee is required, this should be requested at an early stage to prevent delays.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

All information provided to the interviewers should be kept strictly confidential. Records should be securely stored. Computerized records should not include any names that might be used to identify the families, unless this is strictly necessary (for example, if follow-up visits are planned).

Confidentiality begins in the field. Interviewers must avoid discussing particular cases with each other. Editing of the questionnaires should ideally be done in a private place (in the vehicle, for example) so that the questionnaires are kept out of sight and discussions with interviewers cannot be overheard.

### **INFORMED CONSENT**

Mothers and/or all other respondents should be informed about the contents of the interviews and measurements to be carried out. They must understand the procedures and give their full approval. In order to obtain informed consent, an interviewer must be ready to explain the purpose of the survey and answer questions. Respondents should not be coerced in any way.

Special consideration should be given to minors. Because girls ages 15 and older are eligible to be interviewed, it may be necessary to provide additional explanation or to obtain permission from a parent or guardian.

Different countries may have different rules regarding informed consent. In some countries, written consent may be required.

### **FEEDBACK TO FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES**

Before starting the survey, the coordinators should plan what type of feedback will be given to communities. In most cases, the number of interviews per community will be too small for statistical validity, but even some general feedback is often appreciated by local authorities (for example, that 30 of the 40 children in the village had not been vaccinated). If possible, this type of feedback should be given before the team departs for a new community.

## CONDUCTING FIELDWORK

This section describes the main activities to be carried out when conducting the MICS4 fieldwork and provides an overview of the roles and responsibilities of each member of the data collection team. Additional instructions for interviewers, editors and supervisors can be found in the MICS Manual Chapter ‘Instructions for Interviewers’ and ‘Instructions for Supervisors, Editors, and Measurers’. Additional instructions for measurers can be found in MICS Manual Chapter ‘Instructions for Supervisors, Editors, and Measurers’.

### INTERVIEWER RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE FIELD

The daily routine of the interviewer should include the following:

- Fill in a new Interviewer’s Control Sheet (see Appendix Four) for each PSU (sample segment).
- Locate the household to be interviewed.
- Introduce herself to household members and ask permission to carry out the interview.
- Apply the questionnaires to *all eligible members in the household*.
- Fill in the responses to the questionnaire in a neat and legible way.
- When in doubt about the coding of an answer, write it down in full at the margin of the questionnaire and check the correct coding with the field supervisor at the end of the day.
- If applicable, carry out or assist in the additional procedures for data collection, including testing salt iodine and anthropometry.
- Check completed questionnaires to be sure that all applicable questions were asked.
- Return to the household to interview women, mothers or caretakers not contacted during initial visits.

### *Conducting an Interview*

In this section you will find a number of general guidelines on how to build rapport with a respondent and conduct a successful interview.

### *Building Rapport with the Respondent*

The field supervisor will assign an interviewer to make the first contact with a household selected for MICS4. Any *knowledgeable adult member of the household* is a suitable respondent for the household interview (this person may or may not be a woman aged 15 to 49 years or a mother or caretaker). In the unlikely situation that the household is composed only of children (below age 15), the most capable child should be interviewed but this should be brought to the attention of the field editor and supervisor. If one or more eligible women or children under five

are identified in the Household Listing Form, the interviewer will complete individual questionnaires for every eligible woman and mother/caretaker identified.

The first responsibility of an interviewer is to establish rapport with the respondent.

1. **Make a good first impression.** When first approaching the respondent, do your best to make her/him feel at ease. The introductory sentences at the beginning of each questionnaire should be read exactly as they are printed in the questionnaire.
2. **Always have a positive approach.** Never adopt an apologetic manner, and do not use phrases such as “Are you too busy?” Such questions invite refusal before you start. Rather, tell the respondent, “I would like to ask you a few questions” or “I would like to talk with you.”
3. **Stress confidentiality of responses.** Explain that the information you collect will remain confidential, that no individual names will be used for *any* purpose, and that all information collected will be grouped together to write a report.
4. **Answer any questions from the respondent frankly.** Before agreeing to be interviewed, the respondent may ask you some questions about the survey or how she/he was selected. The respondent may also be concerned about the length of the interview. If she/he asks, tell her/him the average duration of each of the questionnaires, which will have been estimated during the pre-test and provided to you during your training. Indicate your willingness to return at another time if it is inconvenient for the respondent to answer questions then.
5. **Interview the respondent alone.** The presence of a third person during an interview can keep you from getting frank, honest answers from a respondent. It is, therefore, very important that the interviews be conducted *privately* and that all questions are answered by the respondent her/himself, especially for the woman’s interview, which includes the most sensitive questions. If other people are present, explain to the respondent that some of the questions are private and ask where the best place is that you can talk with her alone. Sometimes asking for privacy will make others more curious, so they will want to listen; you will have to be creative in finding a solution. Establishing privacy from the beginning will allow the respondent to be more attentive to your questions.

### ***Tips for Conducting the Interview***

1. Be neutral throughout the interview.
2. Never suggest answers to the respondent.
3. Do not change the wording or sequence of questions.
4. Handle hesitant respondents tactfully.
5. Do not create expectations about assistance based on the responses.

### ***Preparatory Activities and Interviewer's Control Sheets***

Each morning your supervisor will brief you on your day's work and explain how to locate the households assigned to you. When your supervisor assigns households to you, you should write the identification information on the Interviewer's Cluster Control Sheet (see MICS Manual Chapter 'Instructions for Interviewers'. The identifying information (household number, name of the head of the household) and your name and date of assignment will be written in Columns 1 and 2.

Columns 3 through 9 of the Interviewer's Cluster Control Sheet serve as a summary of the results of your work in the field for each household. At the end of the day, you will be responsible for recording in these columns the final outcome for all household visits and individual interviews you have conducted.

When you receive your work assignment, review it and ask any questions you might have. Remember that your field supervisor and editor will not always be available to answer questions once the work begins. You should be sure that:

- Columns 1 and 2 of your Interviewer's Cluster Control Sheet are complete and that it contains all the information you will need to identify the selected households
- You have a Household Questionnaire for each household you are assigned
- You fill in the identification information on the cover page of each Household Questionnaire
- You know the location of the selected households you are to interview and have sufficient materials (maps, written directions, etc.) to locate them
- You understand any special instructions from your field supervisor about contacting the households you are assigned
- You have several blank questionnaires for women, men and children under five.

After completing a household interview, you will allocate a Questionnaire for Individual Women, a Questionnaire for Individual Men and a Questionnaire for Children Under Five for each eligible woman, man and child identified in the household. Fill in the identification information on the cover sheet of the appropriate questionnaire for each eligible woman, man and child identified in the Household Listing Form.

### ***Contacting Households***

Each household in the MICS4 sample has been carefully selected. To ensure high quality results it is essential to contact each specified household.

Although there may be variation in different countries, selected households are generally identified by the name of the household head together with a unique number that identifies the household.

You may have problems in locating the households that were selected, because the people may have moved or the listing teams may have made an error. Here are examples of problems you may encounter and how to solve them. Note that in each case, the household selected for MICS4 is associated with a particular dwelling structure.

**Situation 1: Name of present household head is different from name provided by field supervisor**

In some cases the name of the household head in the listing is not the name of the current household head. After ensuring that you are in the correct structure/dwelling, interview the household that is living there now. Specific examples of this situation include:

- **The household has moved away and a new household is now living in the same dwelling.** In this case, interview the new household.
- **The structure number and name of household head do not match with what you find in the field.** Say, for example, that you have been assigned a household headed by *Sola Ogedengbe*, who is listed as living in structure number 003. But when you go to 003, the household living there is headed by *Mary Kehinde*. Consider whatever household is living in 003 as the selected household. You would interview the household headed by *Mary Kehinde*.
- **The household selected does not live in the structure that was listed.** If, for example, you are assigned a household headed by *Vincent Okigbo*, located in 007, and you find that *Vincent Okigbo* actually lives in another structure, interview the household living in 007. In other words, if there is a discrepancy between the structure number and the name of the household head, interview whoever is living in the structure assigned to you.
- **The head of the household has changed.** In some cases, the person who is listed as the household head may have moved away or died since the listing. Interview the household that is living there.

**Situation 2: No one is found at home**

- **The selected household has moved away and the dwelling is vacant.** If a household has moved out of the dwelling where it was listed and the neighbours say that no one is living in the dwelling, you should consider the dwelling vacant and circle '05' ('Dwelling vacant') in HH9 on the cover sheet of the Household Questionnaire.
- **No one is home and neighbours tell you the family has gone to the market.** This household will require a call-back. Make a note on your Interviewer's Cluster Control Sheet and on the cover of the Household Questionnaire. Return to the household at a time when the family is likely to be back (later in the day or the next day). If after call-back(s) there is still no one at home, Circle '02' ('Not at home') in HH9 on the cover sheet of the Household Questionnaire.
- **The house is all closed up and the neighbours say the people are on the farm (or away visiting, etc.) and will be back in several days or weeks.** Circle '02' ('Not at home') in HH9 on the cover sheet of the Household Questionnaire. The house should

normally be revisited at least two more times to make sure that the household members have not returned.

### **Other situations**

- **A household is supposed to live in a structure that, when visited, is found to be a shop and no one lives there.** Check very carefully to see if anyone is living there. If not, circle '05' ('Address not a dwelling') in HH9 on the cover sheet of the Household Questionnaire.
- **A selected structure is not found in the cluster, and residents tell you it was destroyed in a recent fire.** Circle '06' ('Dwelling destroyed') in question HH9 on the cover sheet of the Household Questionnaire.
- **The listing shows only one household in the dwelling, but two households are living there now.** In this case, interview both households, and make a note on the cover page of the household that was not on the listing. Your field supervisor will assign this household a number, which you should enter on the questionnaire. However, if the listing shows two households, only one of which was selected, and you find three households there now, only interview the one that had been selected and ignore the other two. In either case, inform your field supervisor of the situation.

### ***Identifying Eligible Respondents***

To be 'eligible' means to 'qualify' for something. An eligible respondent is someone who is qualified to be included in the survey. You will use the Household Questionnaire to identify who is eligible to be interviewed for the Questionnaire for Individual Women and the Questionnaire for Children Under Five. All women aged 15 to 49 years and all children under 5 years of age who are members of the household are considered eligible in MICS4. It is very important that you do not miss an eligible respondent when you fill in the Household Listing Form.

The following are examples of the kinds of problems the interviewer may experience in obtaining an interview with an eligible woman (for the woman's questionnaire) or a mother or caretaker (for the under-five's questionnaire):

- **Eligible respondent not available.** If the eligible respondent is not at home when you visit, ask a family member or a neighbour when the respondent will return. You should contact the household at least three times, trying to make each visit at a different time of day. Under no circumstances is it acceptable to conduct all three visits on the same day and then stop trying to contact the respondent.
- **Respondent refuses to be interviewed.** The respondent's availability and willingness to be interviewed will depend in large part on the initial impression you make when you meet the respondent. Introduce yourself and explain the purpose of your visit. Read the introduction printed on the appropriate questionnaire. If the respondent is unwilling to be interviewed, it may be that the present time is inconvenient. Ask if another time would be more convenient and make an appointment.

- **Interview not completed.** A respondent may be called away during the interview or may not want to answer all the questions at the time of your visit. If an interview is incomplete for any reason, you should try to arrange an appointment to see the respondent again as soon as possible to obtain the missing information. Be sure that you record on the cover sheet of the questionnaire that the interview is incomplete and indicate the time you agreed upon to revisit the household; you should also report the problem to your field editor or supervisor.
- **Respondent incapacitated.** There may be cases in which you cannot interview a respondent because the person is too sick, is mentally unable to understand your questions or because she/he is deaf, etc. In these cases, specify that the respondent is incapacitated on the cover sheet of the questionnaire (circle '5' in WM7 or UF9).

The outcome and date of the final attempt to contact an eligible respondent should be noted in Column 10 of your Interviewer's Cluster Control Sheet. It is important that you are consistently accurate in recording your visits, since this form provides a summary of all eligible respondents in the MICS4 sample. These forms will be returned to the central office for review following completion of interviewing.

### ***Making Call-backs***

Because each household has been carefully selected, you must make every effort to conduct interviews with the households assigned to you, and with the eligible respondents identified. Sometimes a household member will not be available at the time of your first visit. You need to make at least three separate visits when trying to obtain a household interview, and at least three separate visits when trying to obtain interviews with women or children under five.

At the beginning of each day, you should examine the cover sheets of your questionnaires to see if you made any appointments for revisiting a household or eligible respondent. If no appointments were made, make your call-backs to a household or respondent at a different time of day than the

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**Make every effort to interview selected households. Make at least three separate visits when trying to obtain a household interview.**

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earlier visits: For example, if the initial visits were made in the early afternoon, you should try to arrange your schedule so you make a call-back in the morning or late afternoon. Scheduling call-backs at different times is important in reducing the rate of non-response (that is, the number of cases in which you fail to contact a household or complete an individual interview).

### ***Checking Completed Questionnaires***

It is the responsibility of the interviewer to review each questionnaire when the interview is finished. This review should be done before you leave the household so that you can be sure every appropriate question was asked, that all answers are clear and reasonable, and that your handwriting is legible. Also check that you have followed the skip instructions correctly. You

can make minor corrections yourself, but the respondent should clarify any serious errors. Simply explain to the respondent that you made an error and ask the question again.

### ***Returning Work Assignments***

At the end of fieldwork each day, check that you have filled out the cover sheet of a Household Questionnaire for each household assigned to you, whether or not you managed to complete an interview. You should inform your field supervisor about any problems you experienced locating a household, completing a Household Questionnaire, or conducting an interview with an eligible respondent. For difficult cases, at least three visits will be made to a household during MICS4 in an effort to obtain a completed interview.

Once you have completed all the interviews required for a sample household, the completed Household Questionnaire, with accompanying questionnaires for women and for children under five placed inside, must be returned to your field supervisor. Make sure you have filled in on your Interviewer's Cluster Control Sheet the final result and date of all interviews you completed and the date you returned the questionnaires to your field supervisor.

### ***Supplies Required for Fieldwork***

Before leaving for the field, interviewers should make sure they have adequate supplies for the day's work (including those described in Table 1). These supplies include:

- A sufficient supply of questionnaires
- Interviewer's Cluster Control Sheets
- Interviewer's Manual
- Identification documents
- A clipboard
- Blue ballpoint pens
- A briefcase or bag in which to carry the questionnaires
- Visual aids such as vitamin A tablets, literacy cards, etc. (see Table 1)
- Salt testing kits
- Any personal items you will need to be comfortable, given the circumstances and the area in which you are working.

## **MEASURER RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE FIELD**

Each team will have a designated measurer. It is the responsibility of this person to measure the height and weight of each child under five years of age. The measurer will visit households after interviewers have completed the interviews and will measure all eligible children with the help of another team member, recording measurements directly onto the under-five questionnaire. More information about anthropometric measurements and the measurers' responsibilities can be found in MICS Manual Chapter 'Anthropometry'.

### ***Supplies Required for Fieldwork***

The measurer will need to take the following supplies to the field each day:

- Scale
- Height/length board
- Blue ballpoint pens
- A backpack or bag for the scale
- Any personal items you will need to be comfortable, given the circumstances and the area in which you are working.

Some measurers take small candies to the field to give to children after measurements. If you decide to do this, please check with the parent or guardian before giving out any candies.

The measurer will be responsible for the equipment. This includes, keeping the scale out of the sun, cleaning the scales and height/length boards, and daily verification of scale accuracy.

### **SUPERVISOR AND EDITOR RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE FIELD**

The field supervisors and editors are the primary links between the field coordinator and the interviewers. As such, they are responsible for ensuring both the progress and the quality of fieldwork.

Field supervisors and editors will have many tasks during the survey. While a summary of the tasks is included here, a more complete description of the field supervisors' and editors' duties and responsibilities is included in Appendix Four: Instructions for Supervisors and Editors.

### ***Responsibilities of the Field Supervisor***

The field supervisor is the senior member of the field team. He/she is responsible for the well-being and safety of team members as well as the completion of the assigned workload and the maintenance of data quality. The field supervisor receives his/her assignments from, and reports to, the field coordinator. The specific responsibilities of the field supervisor are to prepare for the fieldwork, to organize and direct the fieldwork, and to spot check the data collected in the questionnaires.

Preparing for fieldwork requires that the field supervisor:

- Obtain sample household lists and/or maps for each area in which his/her team will be working and discuss any special problems.
- Become familiar with the area where the team will be working and determine the best arrangements for travel and accommodations.
- Contact local authorities to inform them about the survey and to gain their support and cooperation.
- Obtain all monetary advances, supplies and equipment necessary for the team to complete its assigned interviews. Careful preparation by the field supervisor is

important for facilitating the work of the team in the field, for maintaining interviewer morale, and for ensuring contact with the central office throughout the fieldwork.

Organizing fieldwork requires that the field supervisor:

- Locate each segment/cluster/EA and pace the boundaries with the team.
- Assign work to interviewers, taking into account their linguistic competence, and ensure that there is an equitable distribution of the workload.
- Maintain fieldwork control sheets and make sure that assignments are carried out.
- Make spot checks of the questionnaires (for example, re-administering the 'Household Listing Form' in Household Questionnaire or 'Woman's Background' module in Questionnaire for Individual Women).
- Regularly send completed questionnaires and progress reports to the field coordinator and keep headquarters informed of the team's location.
- Communicate any problems to the field coordinator.
- Take charge of the team vehicle(s), ensuring that it is kept in good repair and that it is used only for project work.
- Ensure that questionnaires are kept confidential and that interviewers do not discuss the results of the interviews among themselves or with others.
- Make an effort to develop a positive team spirit; a congenial work atmosphere, along with careful planning of field activities, contributes to the overall quality of a survey.

### ***Responsibilities of the Field Editor***

The specific responsibility of the field editor is to ensure high quality data collection. Close monitoring of interviewers and editing of completed interviews is essential to assure that accurate and complete data are collected. This is especially important during the initial phases of fieldwork, when it is possible to eliminate interviewer error patterns before they become habit.

Monitoring interviewer performance requires that the field editor:

- Observe several interviews every day.
- Edit all completed questionnaires in the field – editing must be completed prior to leaving the sample area where the data was collected.
- Conduct regular review sessions with interviewers and advise them of any problems found in their questionnaires.
- Put completed questionnaires from a sample area in order and pack them up to be sent to the central office.

The field editor may also assist the field supervisor and measurer as necessary.

**Table 5**  
**Keeping Up the Morale of the Team**

Particularly after the first 2-3 weeks of fieldwork, it is important to keep the morale of the team high. Interviewing becomes routine and standards may be relaxed. Here are some suggestions for maintaining the team's spirits:

- If possible, avoid having fieldworkers away from their families for more than 2 consecutive weeks.
- Ensure that the fieldworkers understand exactly how much and when they will get paid and avoid any delays in paying them. Ensure that money for expenses (for example, meal allowances) is provided before costs are incurred.
- The fieldwork team should work together as a group at all times. Interviewers can carry out interviews in neighbouring houses in the same cluster, while the field editor is in the cluster area as well, editing questionnaires. The field supervisor is preferably with the team at all times too, taking care of all logistic arrangements, observing interviews from time to time, editing questionnaires if necessary. This increases the sense of security among the team, and it becomes possible to help each other make decisions about locating houses and so forth.
- Special attention must be paid to drivers. You should brief them and explain the need for random sampling and for reaching sample households that may be far away from good roads. They must also be instructed about the need to avoid interfering with the interviews. Otherwise, they may try to influence the sampling and interviewing procedure.
- Within the limitations imposed by the workload, interviewers should have time to rest at midday and at the end of each working day, as well as having at least 1 full day off per week. Otherwise, they will become excessively tired and this will affect the quality of their work.