

## INTERVIEWERS' MANUAL FOR CONDUCTING THE LADDER OF LIFE FOR MCA

As stated in the main Interviewers' manual for MCA the Ladder of Life (LoL) is conducted by the interviewers. Each team of four splits into two teams of two to conduct the LoL and the short household questionnaire.

This will always come after the completion of the household listing which will tell you who are the participants of the LoL. The information inviting them to the exercise has to be sent (through invitation letters calling them to come to the LoL and HHQX interviews) earlier allowing them to prepare themselves and arrange the use of their time better.

### **Preliminaries:**

After everybody has come to the place then you start the talk by introducing yourselves to the participants and welcoming them to the exercise. Go through the list of names and see if all the participants are present, this will also help you to get to know the participants by names as well as making them know each other.

You should make sure the people you called for the LoL knows each other otherwise it will be difficult ranking one another and this will defeat the purpose of the exercise.

You should try making them comfortable and participative. We want everyone at the exercise to say something and avoid allowing some of them to dominate the talk.

Then you explain to them what the project is all about and its importance to them as the community and the Nation at large as well as to the government and the donors. In most cases people out there tend to think that researchers are out there to offer something to them, especially the poor, so make it clear that this survey does not offer any financial or material aid/assistance. One of the key purposes of this survey is to test the key development stimulants and thus know if it is worth funding road projects or it would have been better to fund another project instead.

### **1<sup>ST</sup> STEP: Describing different wealth groups and eliciting the steps of the ladder**

You may wish to open up the discussion with the following statement;

*Now, let us discuss on how people in our community make progress in their lives. We all know that, life is dynamic and not static. An individual may be at a particular stage of life at one point in time and move to another step above or below the former at the later stage. Therefore, we have a ladder of life with different steps on which people can move from one step to the other.*

### **Procedure:**

- A. Explain to them the concept of the wealth groups i.e. the three main groups and the sub groups in each of the three;
  - Upper group (**best off-highest in terms of wealth**)

- Better off
- Worse off
- Middle group
  - Better off
  - Worse off
- Lower group (**worst off-lowest in terms of wealth**)
  - Better off
  - Worse off

*NB: They should take into account the socio-economic realities of life i.e. in principle life has never been static and equal for all members of any society. In reality, life is made of ups, downs, one can slip and fall down get up and go ahead, one can slip and fall down and stay fallen, one can slip and stay upright, provided that life is a movement of its sort! Also it is not likely that all members of the community will have exactly equal well-being because of differences in social, political, cultural, and economic contexts. Life in a community is like fingers of our arms, which are not equal, but they help each other during the act of doing something.*

Here we want to know how the community considers successful people around them and what it means by being rich or poor in that particular community. Explain to them that we want to have the characteristics of households or individuals that fall in each of the six categories in 2004, thereafter the characteristics of the in 2009.

*NB: The grouping should be done basing on the socio-economic conditions of the Kitongoji. It is the Kitongoji and not the village which should always be the reference. The rich and the poor are as per the Kitongoji i.e. in the Kitongoji who are considered rich, better off or poor.*

- B. Ask them to give characteristics of each group and subgroup before they start ranking themselves, here you should be cautious in making sure there is a clear distinction between groups.
- C. The facilitator should fill in these characteristics on a large flip chart sheet (draw sufficiently to the left so that later on there is space to add two columns: one for 2009 and another one for 2004)

## **2<sup>ND</sup> STEP: Sorting on the ladder of life**

### **Procedure:**

- A. Give the respondents cards bearing the names of each participant to the Ladder of Life (for each participant there should be two cards bearing his/her name since the ranking is for the two recall periods i.e. 2004 and 2009). The cards should as much as possible be given randomly so as to avoid having many people having cards bearing their own names. If there are people who cannot read, provide assistance.

- B. The facilitator will mention a name from the list of 15 households and participant(s) with the cards bearing the mentioned name will show up by raising their hands. One of these participants will be required to place a card of a particular person in 2004 and give reasons, and another do the same for the same candidate in the ladder of 2009.
- C. The facilitator should ask whether the participants agree with a particular sorting before announcing the next individual from the list.

*NB: Throughout the exercise you should lead the participants in making sure they stay focused on the main theme of the LoL exercise. You should never allow the group to lose focus. This has to be done with a great deal of courtesy, all you have to do is just making sure everything is alright and the people are participating fully in this exercise.*

The note taker should record all the findings i.e. on the ranking and the characteristics of the three groups during the exercise while the facilitator is leading the participants in the exercise.

This is important since this data is essential in making the exercise viable and also for the subsequent HHQX where records on one's ranks will be supposed to be entered.

### **3<sup>RD</sup> STEP: Placing the poverty lines on the ladder of life**

At this stage you assist the participants to set the community's poverty line but this will be done in comparison to the national and global poverty lines on the 2004 ladder, i.e. you use the national and global poverty lines to test them at the community level.

#### **Procedure:**

- A. Community poverty line; stating with this you ask where by looking at our ladder of life does the community poverty line pass in 2004 ladder?
- B. National poverty line; here in Tanzania where a person is able to get TZS 20,000/= for his/her monthly expenditure is considered non-poor. Consider a household of two adults in this kitongoji that has to live on TZS 10,000/= a week for purchasing its food and non-food basic needs which of the six wealth groups of the 2004 ladder of life fall below his household?
- C. Global poverty line; this used to compare absolute poverty across countries, when a person is able to get US \$ 1 per day or about TZS 40,000/= per month (US \$ 1 = TZS 1,300/=) is considered non-poor. Consider a household of two adults in this kitongoji that has to live on TZS 20,000/= a week for purchasing its food and non-food basic needs which of the six wealth groups of the 2004 ladder of life fall below his household?

*NB: For B and C there must be no other income, service of items for these households but only the stated sum should cover all the cost for the stated period of time. Make sure this is understood by the participants.*

At the end of this exercise you will have a sheet of paper with the characteristics of the six categories, each of the 15 household ranked in 2004 and 2009 and the poverty lines drawn between the steps on the ladder. So this should be you target!