



UNODC
United Nations Office
on Drugs and Crime

Module 8: Fieldwork and quality control

*31 May 2017
Pattaya, Thailand*



Center of Excellence in
**STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON GOVERNMENT,
CRIME, VICTIMIZATION AND JUSTICE**

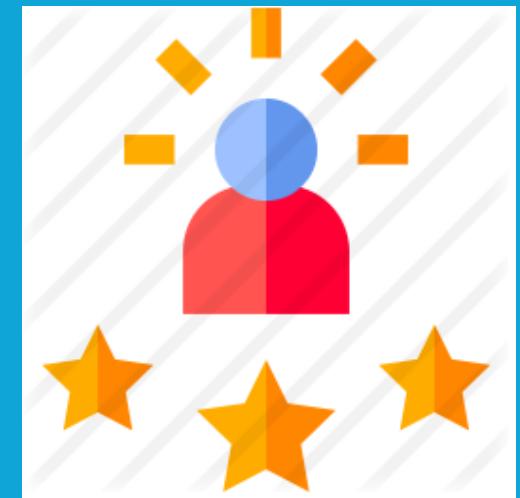
Key messages:

- The **interviewer's role is fundamental** to all phases of the survey process.
- Interviewers have **many roles** besides that of a question asker and recorder of responses.
- Interviewers need **comprehensive initial training** reinforced by continuous on the job training.
- Managing fieldwork requires a well **organized effort to oversee the enumeration**.
- A comprehensive **set of quantitative indicators should be created and reviewed frequently** to assess the overall progress of the survey and to evaluate the work of individual interviewers

Survey fieldwork overview

The survey field operation comprises a broad range of activities:

1. **Hiring** and **training** interviewers and other field staff.
2. **Distributing** interviewing forms and **materials**.
3. **Listing** or identifying addresses or persons in sample.
4. **Conducting** interviews.
5. **Retrieving** completed interview forms.
6. Conducting **activities to ensure the quality** of the field processes.



Contacting respondents and reducing non-response

The first contact with respondent introduces them to:

- the organization,
- the survey, and
- in many cases, the interviewer.

For face to face surveys, the first contact by the interviewer should be preceded by an introductory letter. For telephone surveys, the first contact will be by the interviewer.

Content of survey introduction

The introductory letter and/or the interviewer's introduction should contain:

- **Basic information** about the survey.
- The organization(s) sponsoring and conducting the survey.
- The **purpose** of the survey.
- What **types of information** will be collected.
- An assurance that the respondent's information is important and will be kept **confidential**.
- **Who** the respondents are.
- Whether the survey is **voluntary** or mandatory.
- Letters should inform the respondent **when** and **how** they will be contacted, be **signed** by a high ranking official and carry the **agency logo**.

Meaningful refusals

A high refusal rate can substantially impact the reliability of the survey's estimates.

Effective tools for reducing non-response include:

- **Well trained interviewers** using:
 - Well crafted introductory messages,
 - A comprehensive knowledge of the survey, and
 - A positive, persuasive tone.
- Well crafted **introductory letters**.
- A free phone number for respondents to call (**hotline available 24/7**)
- Follow-up by **senior interviewers to handle reluctant respondents**.
- Providing informational **materials** (flyers, letters, uniforms)
- Varying **call back** or **revisit times** (analyze trends in non response). Survey protocols should include the frequency and number of attempts allowed before discontinuing the effort.

Proxy respondents

- Surveys generally designate persons in the household to act as respondents.
- Some select one person, some more than one or all.
- A proxy respondent is a person selected to respond if the selected person is unable to participate.
- Surveys must decide if, and under what circumstances to allow use of proxy respondents.

Advantages: Reduce cost and reduce non-response, BUT....

Disadvantages: For victimization surveys, proxies may not know about crimes experienced by the respondent (under-report).

Of the 58 surveys in the UNODC-UNECE inventory, 31% allowed use of proxy respondents.

Interviewer's attributes (1/2)

- ✓ The interviewer is the **heart of the field operation**.
- ✓ The quality of the data is directly dependent on the **quality of the interviewer's work**.
- ✓ Selecting **qualified, motivated, and skilled interviewers** is one of the initial tasks in fielding the survey.
- ✓ Interviewers should be **educated** in order to be able to understand the complexities inherent in their job and in victimization survey concepts.
- ✓ For some surveys, such as violence against women surveys, **female interviewers** may improve willingness to participate and report sensitive offenses.
- ✓ For telephone surveys, interviewers must have **good telephone skills**.



Interviewer's attributes (2/2)

Interviewers must:

- Be **knowledgeable** of the survey's purposes.
- Be **capable of reading questions clearly, accurately** and at the right **pace**.
- Be **competent listeners** capable of accurately recording responses.
- Be **organized, timely** and **efficient**.
- Be capable of maintaining a **neutral tone** throughout the interview.
- Be capable of interacting with people from **different backgrounds**.
- Be capable of **operating computers** (for automated surveys).

“The interviewer’s role is fundamental to all phases of the survey process.” *UN Manual on Victimization Surveys*

Interviewer training (1/3)

Training must be comprehensive and ongoing. Training includes:

- Initial classroom training;
- Interviewer manuals and instructional materials;
- On the job evaluation and instruction;
- Periodic retraining.

The goals of initial classroom training should be to make the interviewers:

- ✓ Aware of the importance and sensitive nature of the survey.
- ✓ Aware of the survey content and implementation procedures.
- ✓ Able to follow the correct interview methodology.
- ✓ Able to create a climate promoting disclosure by the respondent.
- ✓ Able to manage potential critical situations.

Interviewer training (2/3)

Initial training should include:

- Instruction on the nature of their duties
- All key survey concepts and instructions.
- How to efficiently plan their assignments.
- How to deal with non-respondents.
- How to conduct interviews.
- How to navigate forms and computer systems if used.
- How to transmit work.
- How to deal with unexpected situations that may arise.
- Practice interviews and role play.

The interviewers' manual should be used as a reference during training so interviewers become familiar with its content and can use it as a reference when they need assistance while on the job.



Interviewer training (3/3)

Following initial training, interviewers should:

- **Understand** the survey.
- Understand how to **properly conduct** the interview
- Know how to follow the proper procedures for **receiving and transmitting assignments** and **communicating with the field office**.
- Be able to manage the **relationship with the respondent**.
- Be **motivated** and **understand the importance of their role** as an interviewer

Continuous interviewer training

Training should continue after interviewers have begun their work to maintain skills and knowledge of the survey's content and procedures. This training can take a number of forms:



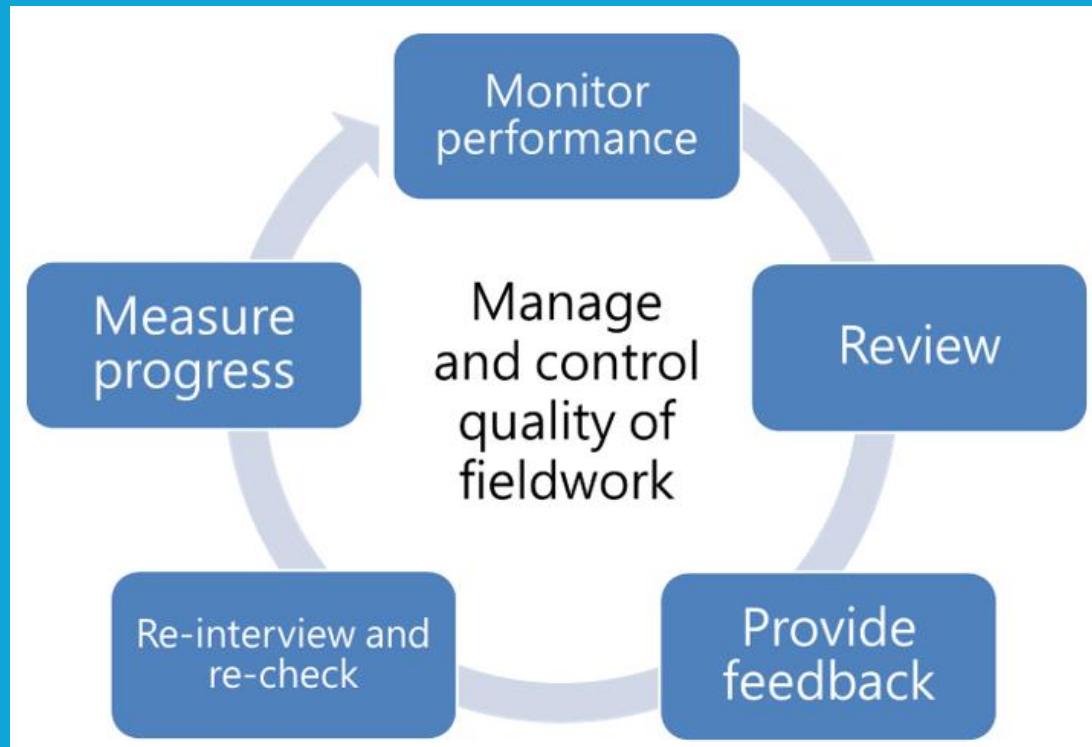
- ✓ Observation
- ✓ Periodic training memos
- ✓ Review exercises
- ✓ Refresher classroom training

Materials provided should also focus on problem areas identified during observations and data review and editing.

Supervising interviewers

Essential components for establishing and maintaining survey quality include:

- Adequate training and preparation of interviewers.
- Comprehensive oversight of the field operation, including:



Survey and interviewer progress metrics (1/2)

Quantitative measures are useful for assessing both individual interviewer performance, as well as the overall conduct of the survey. Measures can assess:

- **Timeliness**
 - Do interviewers begin and complete assignments on schedule?
- **Response:**
 - Do interviewers maintain high response rates?
- **Completeness:**
 - Do interviewers make entries in all required data items?
- **Pace of interview:**
 - Are questions asked at a proper pace, neither too fast or too slow?
- **Accuracy:**
 - Do edits demonstrate accurate recording of information?
- **Efficiency:**
 - Do interviewers complete their assignments within budget?

Survey and interviewer progress metrics (2/2)

- Quantitative measures for interviewers can be aggregated to assess overall timeliness, completeness, accuracy, and efficiency of the survey project.
- Indicators should be automated if possible and updated frequently, even daily.
- Control sheets and interviewing center logs are also useful tools for maintaining quality.

Metrics are a tool for continuous improvement.

Comprehensive and continuous interviewer training, combined with a well designed system of monitoring and evaluating their work will help assure that the survey produces accurate reliable data.

Summary points:

- Interviewers are essential to ensuring quality results from a victimization survey.
- Interviewer training should be comprehensive and reinforced by continuous on the job training.
- A manual outlining interview protocols and other essential information should be provided to all interviewers
- Quality control mechanisms are needed to ensure the fieldwork is managed effectively and the data collection progresses to plan.

Quality is never an accident. It is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction and skillful execution. It represents the wise choice of many alternatives.

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Thank you! Questions?

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