INTERVIEWER'S INSTRUCTION MANUAL – BABY BOOM

The goal of this manual is to offer the interviewer a series of general instructions that will help in filling out the Baby Boom survey instrument. This is especially important considering that the persons to be interviewed are women above 60 years of age. Many of the informants will in fact be quite elderly, often above 80 and perhaps even 90 years of age.

1. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

1.1 **Initial contact with the respondent**

The first point to be considered is related to the initial contact with the informant. Before beginning the survey itself, it might prove to be useful to spend a few minutes in conversation with them. The idea here is to create a more personal link between the respondent and the interviewer. This link tends to be of great help in making the entire survey more smooth and fluid.

It is also important to emphasize that all of the information given during the interview will be treated confidentially and that none of it will be passed on to third parties. All data will be anonymized without exception and no personal information will be retained at all. The interviewer should also mention that the respondent need not answer any question they feel uncomfortable with and that the entire interview can be stopped at any time.

Once the survey has been completed, the interviewer should talk briefly once again with the respondent, asking how she felt that the questions went and things like that. This recommendation is especially important if you are assisted by Social Services (through social workers) in locating potential respondents. Apart for reasons of politeness, the idea here is to ensure that the participation in the survey was a gratifying experience for the respondent and communicate that to the social workers who look after her needs. This last point is only pertinent where access to the respondent is gained by means of these Social Services.

All interviewers should be women.

Other aspects referring to the survey instrument itself, can be summed up in the follow points.

1.2 **General indications**

General indications regarding the survey instrument can be summed up in the following points.

a. **Some information can be noted directly by the interviewer**.

- Question 1.9→ The interviewer already knows whether or not the respondent lives in a private household or in a residence.
- Table 2.1: question→ If the informant has said that she has only had one marriage or cohabiting union (questions 2.2 and 2.3), the interviewer should fill in the necessary information directly.
- Table 3.1.1. Women generally find it easier to respond to some questions if the interviewer refers to each child by their name. This is pertinent for variables CHILDR1- CHILDR8. It is useful to ascertain this information at the outset of each table, and organize it from the oldest to the youngest. It often helps in knowing the sex of the offspring.
- Table 3.1.8→ If the age or the year when a child left his/her parental home is the same as that for his/her marriage, this question can be answered directly.

b. **Regarding all dates used in the survey.** If the informant has difficulty in remember the date of a particular event, the interviewer can help the informant in remembering in important ways. If she does not remember the date of birth of her children or her siblings, she should be asked, for example, how old they are (a question already include in the instrument). Respondents, however, may continue to have difficulty in remembering. In these cases, the interviewer can use two other ways of getting at the information: (1) "how long ago….?"; (b) "how much older are you than –say- your husband…?" or "what is the age difference between –say- your first and your second sibling…?". These options are not included in the instrument and thus the interviewer will have to calculate the proper response directly.

c. **Other indications**

- 1.6→ When asking about educational attainment, we are referring the the highest level of completed education. This refers to all questions regarding education in the survey.
- 1.11→ Some informants may understand this question as meaning referring to the individualized links with different kin. For example, she might have one daughter who calls daily, another every 2-3 days and one son who calls once a week. If this is the case, the interviewer must help the respondent understand that the question refers to all of kin together, and that the frequency of contact must be understood collectively.
- General notes to Table 3.1
  - ✓ If a woman has had adopted children, these should not be included in the table which refers to the reproductive history of the informants.
  - ✓ If an informant had twins, the information should be gather for each of them separately (thus occupying two columns of the table)
- Table 3.1: 3 → It is important to remind the informants to be as precise as possible with regard to how long they actually breastfed a child. If they use alternate ways of estimating the time, the interviewer must decide on what the correct figure is (either the mean or the highest number). An interviewer's intuition is very important on this point

- Table 3.1:4→ The second response option "Grandparents" refers to the parents and/or to the parents-in-law of the respondent.
- Table 4.1→ It is important to insist on the fact that in table we are only asking about health problems that the woman had DURING HER REPRODUCTIVE PERIOD (15-50).
- Table 4.1→ The gynecological problems mentioned here do not include mild vaginal infections or mild menstrual cramps.

Useful definitions.

Main partner (or spouse). This refers to the partner or spouse the informant lived with for the longest period of time.

Live birth. A live birth refers to a child who survived at least 24 hours outside of the maternal womb. If it died within that period it is considered a stillbirth.

2. SPECIFIC OBSERVATIONS ON THE BABY BOOM SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Up to this point, this manual has contained general suggestions for the interviewer designed to facilitate the interview. In this next section, we will list different indications which will help the interviewer assess the reliability of the responses given to certain questions.

2.1 PFEIFFER SHORT PORTABLE MENTAL STATE QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire will only be given when doubts exist as to the ability of the informant to respond to the questions contained in the survey instrument.

A point should be given for each error. If the answer for any given item is not fully correct, the entre response is considered incorrect. For example, if one of the subtractions (the last item) is wrong the entire item is considered wrong. This also occurs with dates which must be answered fully for them to be correct.

This is a tool available for the interviewer to judge the ability of a person to respond to the questions in the instrument. The total score from the test should be considered indicative and the final decision will be made by the interviewer herself.

2.2 SECTION 1: SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION AND CURRENT FAMILY AND CORRESIDENTIAL STATUS

Tables 1.1 and 1.2 (household structure)

HH or PR: The household head or the person of reference in the household is the one responsible (either owner or renter) of the household where the informant lives. [If more than one owner or renter, the HH or PR is the older one.]

I: The informant

2.3 SECTION 2: MARRIAGE / PARTNER HISTORY

Table 2.1: Partners/spouses

If the informant states that she has had more than one stable relationship, the information gathered in this table should be listed chronologically, starting with the first spouse/partner and concluding with the present spouse/partner

2.4 SECTION 3: REPRODUCTIVE HISTORY

Question 3.3

This question is only asked when women respond in question 3.2 that they have used more than one contraceptive method. The codes used are the same as those appearing in question 3.2 (1→11).

Question 3.5

If the informant states that she has used contraceptive methods intermittently over her reproductive life, 'Yes' should be ticked for all six options.

2.5 SECTION 4: REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH HISTORY

Table 4.1 (Health problems of the informant)

All of the problems/issues listed in column 1 should be read to the respondent.

Table 4.3 (Pregnancies not terminating in a live birth)

All of the cells in this table refer to the NUMBER of pregnancies that did not end in a live birth.

The result of the sum of the cells referring to the question 'When did this take place?' should be equal to the number in the cell referring to the question 'If yes, how many?'. For example, if a woman with two miscarriages does not recall when one of them happened, that miscarriage should be listed in 'do not recall' [1].

Question 4.5

If more than one person contributes to her care, ask about the main caregiver.

Question 4.7

Each health condition listed contains two questions with the following possible responses: 1 (Yes), 6 (No), 9 (Do not recall). For any given condition, if the response the initial question is affirmative (the informant has had a given health condition), then she is asked whether or not she has had it in the past 12 months. For example, if a women responds that she has had high blood pressure before (HIPEAR=1), then she is asked if she has had high blood pressure in the past 12 months HIPEARY). If

however the answer is no (HIPEAR=6), then the interview moves on to the next item.

2.6 SECTION 6: FAMILY HISTORY

Questions 6.3 & 6.6

If the informant's father (or mother) was unemployed when she was about 16, then she should be asked about the occupation he (she) had over the majority of his adult life.

2.7 SECTION 7: OPINIONS, VALUES AND ATTITUDES

Question 7.2

Show the card with the scale and ask the informant to indicate where she would situate herself, and then mark the corresponding number.