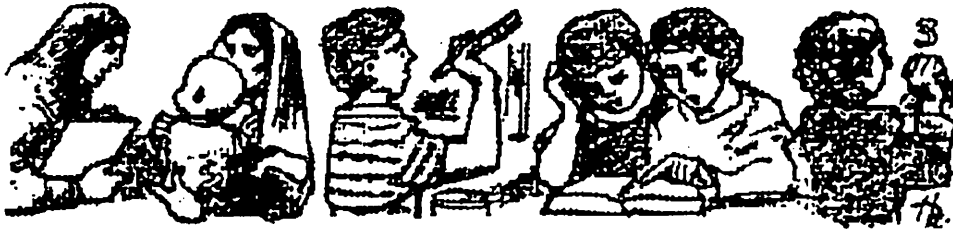


ALLIANCE BRIEFING

CHURCHES COMMUNITY WORK ALLIANCE



Registered Charity No: 1004053

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**BRIEFING NO 8
MARCH 1993**

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NEIGHBOURHOOD PROFILES: PART I SOME BACKGROUND ON SURVEYS AND THE CENSUS

I. WHY DO RESEARCH?

Most people suspect that when a politician says "we need more research on this subject" it is a strategy for delaying painful political action. When an academic says those words they can usually be translated, "I would like to continue to earn a fat salary while doing some work which I find interesting and not too stressful or sweaty."

Why then should a community worker, a local community group, a voluntary organisation or a church ever want to do research on their locality or on an issue that affects it? I want to suggest three main reasons for neighbourhood profile and issue related research in community work.

(A) TO INFORM YOUR WORK

It is surprising how much work in the community gets established and goes on without anyone spending time trying to understand what are the main characteristics and needs in a neighbourhood. This in itself does not make the projects bad or irrelevant, but it does tend to prevent you from seeing whether your work is the most appropriate that is possible, and from discovering unmet needs which present potential opportunities for new work.

Such background research on your neighbourhood is very timely when a new worker(s) is employed, or as part of a systematic review of aims and objectives for a project.

(B) TO SUPPORT A FUNDING BID

While it might be better if all attempts to launch a new project came out of recommendations resulting from general research we are all aware that in practice most projects emerge as an emotive response to a need which has presented itself.

You may well know beyond doubt for example that there are lots of homeless young people in the area and that your group wants to do something to help them. But the project will need money, and the funding body does not know the area. So you need to gather evidence, both of the extent of the need in the locality, and that your project will be an effective way of meeting that need. So you decide to get statistics from the housing department and interview some homeless youngsters about their needs.

It is unfortunate that in a competition for funds those with the lowest ranking in the league tables for social deprivation may stand the best chance of finding the pot of gold. That usually means looking at Census data and making claims that Youtown is far worse than anywhere in the galaxy because

The Church Urban Fund in particular seems obsessed with such statistics in the form of Z scores and demands this sort of research to back up any bid.

Although research for funding purposes may seem a chore it is a necessary one, and if you undertake it in the right positive frame of mind you can also learn much that will be of interest and value... even if you don't get the money!

GREG SMITH is the Research Officer with Aston Charities Community Involvement Unit in the London Borough of Newham. He works on research projects supporting a variety of community and voluntary groups.

(C) TO BACK UP A CAMPAIGN

Then there are those forms of community work which are essentially about local political action. For example the Tenants Association knows that many of its members have been complaining about condensation, or the local Tamil Association believes that their members are discriminated against in employment training provision.

Despite several petitions the authorities have done nothing saying that they haven't yet seen any evidence. It's obvious that they won't take notice unless you hassle them armed with some facts and figures. So it's time to get organised and do some research.

II. WHAT TO DO: VARIED APPROACHES

There are many different methods and strategies for research, some of which are particularly appropriate for particular kinds of information gathering. Often it is useful to combine two or three strategies to get a fuller picture.

Social Researchers often make a distinction between qualitative and quantitative studies. The former relies more on in depth impressions, case studies, conversations and anecdotes while the latter involves gathering statistics in a standard form from a much larger number of individuals.

The boundaries between quantitative and qualitative research are not like the Berlin Wall. The methods a-f below can be seen as on a continuum from most qualitative to most quantitative.

(A) LITERATURE SEARCH

Using libraries to find out what has already been written about the history or sociology of your neighbourhood or about your issue or topic is an obvious first step. A local studies librarian may be especially helpful. It is also often worth using some of the computerised database services which are now available, for example library catalogues, and databases or abstracting services which local reference or academic libraries may have available.

I would particularly recommend the VOLNET on line database maintained by the Volunteer Centre U.K. and Community Development Foundation. It is specially designed to cover social issues of interest to the voluntary sector, and is very cheap to access for community groups with a computer & modem. Contact: Volunteer Centre UK, 29 Kings Rd, Berkhamsted, Herts HP4 2AB (0442 873311).

(B) MAPPING EXERCISE + WALKABOUT & PHOTOS

Visual impressions of your neighbourhood are often more telling than thousands of words. Get a large scale map (from Ordnance Survey if you have to or from your local Town Hall Planning Department if you can beg it). Plot on it important communication channels (roads, railways, bus routes, popular pedestrian routes) barriers (railways, canals, main roads, derelict land, large industrial sites etc) main community facilities (pubs, churches, community centres, schools, health services, shopping) types of residential area (council estates, tower blocks, multiple occupation, terraced owner occupied, hostels, detached five star homes etc).

Walk around the area and make a note of your visual impressions, both overall and significant local details. Look at architecture, street furniture, litter, condition of buildings, graffiti, signs and notices (in minority languages perhaps?), uses of buildings, presence and movement of different types of people at different times of day or week. Take photos of whatever strikes you as atypical or significant, or just plain interesting.

(C) TALKING & LISTENING TO PEOPLE

Most successful community workers are doing this all the time and forming impressions of the community they work in. To make this into research the conversations need to be systematic, and the key points at least need recording or writing down.

You can draw up a standard check-list of questions (almost an open ended questionnaire) on the issues that you want to know about, and work through these formally or informally in every meeting you have.

You may want to arrange a series of interviews/meetings with key people on your patch (professionals, community group leaders, well known long term residents), or hold group discussions with groups that are already meeting (pensioners groups, the mosque committee, kids in school or youth club).

If it is at all possible try to tape record or even video discussions, at the very least take down notes, or write the conversation up from memory within an hour or so. Be on the look-out for comments which you were not expecting, for we all find it too easy to only hear what we want to hear.

(D) OBSERVATIONAL TECHNIQUES

This is a much neglected way of gathering useful statistical information which can easily be used if you have a few hours to spare, or even these days by using video recording. For example you may simply want to count the number of users of a community centre (perhaps broken down by gender, ethnic group and broad age group), or the levels of traffic down a particular road, or even the number of times particular persons talk in a committee meeting. In each case it makes sense to draw up a tally chart to record your data in standard form.

It is usually quite important to make sure you are dealing with a typical time period (e.g. not a holiday week, not just in the rush hour) and therefore to repeat your observations several times and average the findings. You may find a local school or college willing to let their students take observations for you as part of their project work.

(E) SAMPLE SURVEY WITH STRUCTURED QUESTIONNAIRE

This is the research method which is most familiar to the general public and is particularly appropriate when you need to get data from a large number of people, who ideally represent a fair cross section of the whole population, and when there is no other easy way of finding out their attitudes, opinions, and reported behaviour. A more detailed consideration is given in my second paper - Briefing No 9.

(F) USING OFFICIAL STATISTICS E.G. CENSUS

The large numbers and comprehensive coverage of official statistics are the most impressive form of data to present in that they are usually seen as authoritative and give the impression that you have done a professional job in researching the facts.

Actually most of them are subject to criticism at a number of levels, but if you can use them to the advantage of your local community then all power to you. The main useful source of statistics for neighbourhood profiles is the Census, which is reasonably up to date now the 1991 figures are available. However, there are many other useful data sets if you know where to find them. A more detailed consideration is given below.

III. MAKING THE MOST OF THE PROCESS: PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT

Before going on to cover the technical and practical side of using census and survey research strategies, it is important to consider how the research process fits into your programme of community work. At one level this is about ideology; why and how does the research matter to the local community and what involvement and ownership do they have, in other words does your research fit in with models of community development & empowerment to which most community projects are committed?

At a second level are a range of practical issues, mainly centring on the time and resources which must be devoted to research, and which may not find room in your already overcrowded programme of priority activities.

(A) PHILOSOPHY

There is a widespread cynicism about research and researchers, which is especially strong in deprived urban areas and among ethnic minority communities. This is probably the result of most research having been "top down", instigated by the authorities, and carried out by outside fly by night experts who have made a good living, without experiencing local problems at first hand. There is some reason to see such top down research as being a mechanism of political or economic control.

A second valid criticism is that "there have been thousands of surveys but nothing ever gets done". One result of this is that the public seem increasingly less willing to co-operate or give honest answers to pollsters, (one partial explanation of the disastrous performance of the opinion polls in the 1992 General Election).

In order to counter some of this cynicism and to bring research methods more in line with community work values a grass roots "bottom up" approach should be developed. The key questions here are "who needs the research" and "who owns and uses the data". While there may be some "costs" for the "bottom up" method in respect of the risks of broken confidentiality becoming malicious gossip in a close community, there is generally a rise in confidence, and in response rates when the interviewers and researchers can be seen as having a common interest with the respondents, or at least to speak the same language, to be "us" rather than "them".

In a recent survey on disability I was involved in, in Newham, we pioneered this "bottom up approach". The survey was initiated by a group of disabled people who wanted material in order to lobby the Council and the Health Authority for improved services in the context of Care in the Community reforms. All the questions included on the questionnaire were suggested by disabled people or groups working with them. The final report was also written by the disabled people's group. It is hoped to distribute a summary version of this report very widely, for example through disabled people's organisations and back to some of the respondents themselves.

Two other aspects of empowerment were found in the disability survey and can be replicated in other pieces of community based research. Wide community participation in the research inevitably means learning by doing. The most obvious strategy is the use of volunteer interviewers. They can develop not only the skills of survey interviewing (which may even lead them towards future employment), but growing interpersonal skills, in some cases involving interpreting and translation, as well as much increased awareness about issues affecting their respondents, and the local community. Work as an interviewer may even be a good nursery class for future community activists.

Of course if you have the funds to spare you should pay the interviewers a decent rate, even though you should try to recruit people who would have volunteered anyway.

The second level of empowerment involves informing the public by the survey itself. For example the disability survey had a long section on Social Security benefits and services for disabled people, which raised awareness among the respondents that these existed. It was possible to provide them with leaflets and for a welfare rights worker to follow up queries by phone, leading in a number of cases to successful applications for benefits/services.

Another survey for a local church allowed a letter to be distributed to every local household (only a proportion of whom were eventually interviewed), which not only described the survey, but talked about plans for the building redevelopment and invited comment. There is no reason why other bottom up surveys should not be linked in with similar welfare rights campaigns or for example with petitions on local issues.

(B) PRACTICALITIES

The main practical difficulties with research in community work settings focus on timescale and resource constraints. Most of the strategies and methods outlined above could be carried out by the community worker alone with a small number of consultation meetings, provided that realistic time slots can be carved out of her work programme.

But as I have argued, it is better to involve more people and if you are doing survey research, team-work is essential. So is time. You should give yourself at least 6 months to do even a small survey, the first 2 months to prepare the questionnaire and select the sample, 2 more months for interviewing, and then two for data analysis and report writing. When using volunteer interviewers we have found it is unrealistic to expect most people to do more than a about 15-20 interviews each or to put in much more than 10 hours of work in a 6 week period.

The other main cost in a do-it-yourself survey is in printing questionnaires, and supporting literature and finally in reproducing the final report. As a rough guide you should probably aim to set aside funds of between £500 to £1000 if you are going to print anything substantial.

Some local authorities have funding for voluntary groups for "feasibility studies" which might cover this level of expense. No doubt resourceful community groups could think of other ways to raise such sums from trusts, industry or sponsored events. It is a good idea to draw up a budget and a schedule for the research project as soon as your group has committed itself to carry it out.

IV. USING CENSUS & OTHER STATISTICS

(A) THE 1991 CENSUS

Findings are currently (early 1993) being published. For full details of what is available in print contact OPCS or HMSO bookshops. Publications are expensive but should be available in any good reference library.

The Census took place in April 1991 and every household in the UK was required to fill in a standard form. Although less than 100% response was achieved, especially in inner city areas, additional studies have enabled corrections to be made for this under-enumeration.

The census collected details of each person living there, their age, sex, marital status, birthplace, ethnic group, employment and occupation, limiting long term illnesses, etc. In addition information was collected about the type and condition of the dwelling, tenure and amenities such as toilets, bathrooms and central heating.

Basic findings in the form of tables for these questions are now available at national, district or borough, ward and enumeration district level. At a later stage statistics based on more complex questions such as occupation and travel to work patterns will be released on the basis of a 10% randomly selected sample. It will also be possible for researchers to do special cross-tabulations on areas of particular interest again from a 2% sample of anonymised records at local authority level.

For most community work purposes you will want to look at district or borough level findings and more local neighbourhood ones. These are known as the Local Base Statistics (95 tables at ward level and the Small Area Statistics (82 tables at Enumeration District level; the Eds are blocks containing only a few hundred dwellings).

To use these local statistics most people will need help from professional statisticians or planners - to use them efficiently it will help to have computerised access to census data. It is possible to buy data sets and software (known as SASPAC) to run on an ordinary PC but for most community work situations costs will be prohibitive.

Unfortunately OPCS have been required to take an increasingly commercial view on the copyright of the Census data they own, rather than making it widely and freely available to all enquirers. You may therefore encounter some difficulties in obtaining data (e.g. from local planning departments) but below are some ideas ...

(B) GETTING AT SMALL AREA DATA: RESOURCES AND HELP POINTS:

The most useful OPCS publications are probably the County Monitors Series which give the basic Census findings down to district or borough level. They only cost £2 which for HMSO publications is a bargain.

At a more local level most Local Authority planning departments are or will soon be working on documents such as ward profiles based on the Local Base Statistics, and on topic related work such as "Ethnic Minorities" or "Pensioners Living Alone". Eventually such items should reach local reference libraries and you may well be able to liberate them from your Town Hall if you can find a friendly officer or Councillor.

It is worth knowing that other public bodies also produce important sets of statistics at Local & National level. The Area Health Authorities' Director of Public Health is required to produce an annual public health report which often contains very useful material.

Then there are other OPCS publications of national survey data which cover many of the questions which were not asked in the Census. The most significant reports are the *General Household Survey*, the *Labour Force Survey* and the *Family Expenditure Survey*.

Much useful data is summarised in the annual HMSO publication *Social Trends*. Most of these OPCS/HMSO are only useful for comparisons between your locality and the country as a whole, although it is possible in theory to extract regional and district level data.

If your local authority is unable or unwilling to help you look at your neighbourhood census findings in detail it is worth contacting your local University - notably sociology, geography, statistics or computing Departments.

There is a scheme whereby any academic can gain access to the Census files stored on Manchester University's computer, and although there are some restrictions on how the data is made available, it should be possible to strike a deal which is of mutual benefit, for example by setting up your research as a student assignment.

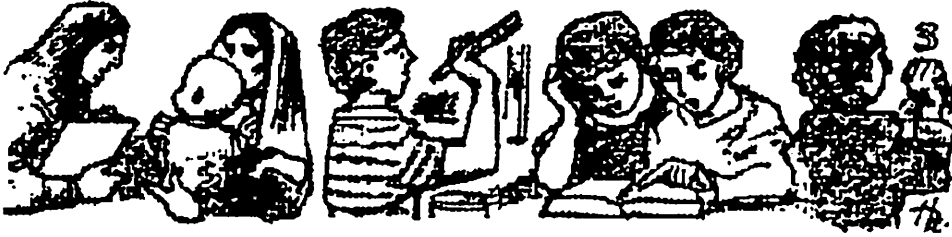
There is software available not only to produce census tables and graphs but to turn it into large scale maps of your neighbourhood, showing concentrations of particular types of people or housing.

Another source of help, especially appropriate for church related projects in urban areas, is the Church of England. The office of the Archbishop's Commission on UPAs is co-ordinating a programme to use census data to measure levels of deprivation in each parish. The contact is John Chilvers, ACUPA Office, Church House, Westminster (071 222 9011 - Monday/Wednesday/Friday).

In many dioceses an officer (addresses from the Diocesan HQ) will be working on Census data and is well worth contacting.

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Registered Charity No: 1004053

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NEIGHBOURHOOD PROFILES: PART II DOING A SURVEY AND PRESENTING THE RESULTS

DOING A SURVEY

If you are convinced you need to do a survey and have found the resources in people and money you are now ready to go ahead on a six to twelve month action programme. Much can be achieved by common sense and good planning but you will need some technical skill. The section which follows gives no more than hints but there are references to a number of useful resources which you may need to obtain.

STAGE 1: DESIGNING QUESTIONNAIRES

There is a trade-off between asking all the questions you are interested in and making the questionnaire too long. No interview should normally take more than half an hour and it is better if you can complete it in ten minutes. So only include questions you really need.

Having said that do not forget to include basic demographic questions such as the age, gender, ethnic group, occupation, housing tenure, educational level, family situation of respondents so that you can break the results down by these groupings.

It is crucial to make all questions perfectly clear and unambiguous, and avoid questions which are loaded or leading and therefore liable to put answers into people's mouths. Questions often need to be broken down into stages so that they are simple and clearly ask only one thing.

Some questions should only be asked if a respondent meets a particular condition e.g. IF YOU ARE A PENSIONER "Do you go to the Senior Citizens Club". IF NOT PENSIONER GO TO NEXT QUESTION.

Multiple choice answers should be given wherever possible although some open ended questions or opportunities for free ranging comment are inevitable and useful. It should be clear whether the answers are mutually exclusive (only one answer can be given per person) or whether multiple replies are possible.

Always include an "other; please give details" category to cope with the answers you hadn't thought possible. It is best to give each possible reply a code number and ask interviewers to put a circle round it (not a tick).

GREG SMITH is the Research Officer with Aston Charities Community Involvement Unit working in the London Borough of Newham. His work involves a wide range of research projects in support of voluntary sector and community groups.

This paper is written from his experience in the present job as well as out of many years experience in social research and church and community work in inner city areas.

EXAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE PAGE

1) Do you like living in this neighbourhood?

- 1 very much
- 2 generally yes
- 3 not sure/mixed feelings
- 4 not much
- 5 not at all

2) What are the good things about this neighbourhood?

3) Would you or members of your household take part in any of the following groups if they were set up at the redeveloped parish church centre?

Read out this list: circle one answer in each row

	definitely	Perhaps	not interested
under 5s	1	2	3
primary age children	1	2	3
teenagers	1	2	3
adults	1	2	3
senior citizens	1	2	3
the unemployed	1	2	3
the homeless	1	2	3
ethnic minority groups	1	2	3
disabled people	1	2	3
mental health problems	1	2	3
other	1	2	3

4) AGE _____ years (accept round number if necessary)

5) Gender Male 1 Female 2

6) Where were you born & mainly brought up?

- 1 locally (within 2 miles)
- 2 in London
- 3 S.England
- 4 N. England or Midlands
- 5 elsewhere in UK
- 6 overseas (please name country)_____

IF NOT LOCALLY BORN When did you move here? 19 _____

Be generous with the layout of the questionnaire form. Include instructions to interviewers if possible in a different type face. Print the Questions themselves in a distinct bold type. You really need word processing facilities to design a decent questionnaire.

Further examples of questionnaires for community surveys are available from the author on hard copy or as ASCII text files. Send a large SAE and/or blank formatted floppy PC/DOS disk to Greg Smith, CIU, Durning Hall, Earlam Grove, London E7 9AB.

Before you use your questionnaire PILOT IT. That means test it out before you print the final version on at least half a dozen potential respondents to see if there are any major problems.

STAGE 2: SAMPLES AND RESPONSE RATE MAXIMISATION

SAMPLING

Constructing a representative sample for a survey is a complex and mathematical process if you want to predict precisely the behaviour of the general public, (e.g. the outcome of an election, and even then as we have seen people lie to the opinion polls or change their minds at the last minute!)

However, for the purposes of a neighbourhood or church members survey, we can get away with a much less rigorous approach providing we remember a few basic rules.

1) If you are gathering information from a small closed group of people such as the 105 members of a congregation, or karate club, forget about sampling strategy just interview everybody who is willing. Simply note the number who refuse or are uncontactable and work out your percentage response rate.

2) If you can only manage to interview a proportion of the population you want covered the main thing is to avoid bias.

For example in a general survey of residents it would be wrong for 75% of interviews to be with men rather than women. If there are 30% Asians in your parish it would be wrong to have a sample which is 95% white. Other biases would be to miss out on interviewing Council Tenants, or to do all the interviewing in the day time and thus miss out working people. You may also need to think about which age groups are included.

The easiest way to avoid bias is to set up a quota system based on what you know about your local population. Eg:

Male 50%	Female 50%	
Whites 70%	Asians 20%	Black 10%
Council Tenants 40%	Owner Occupiers 50%	Others 10%
Under 30s 20%	Over 60s 20%	

Keep a record of who is being interviewed, and as the survey progresses instruct your interviewers to only interview the groups you are short of. This type of quota sampling is especially useful if you are approaching people for interview as you encounter them in a public place.

3) Providing you avoid bias, for these sort of surveys there is usually no need to interview more than about 200 people unless you want to do detailed breakdowns for example of the views of Asian women over 65 (there may only be 2 or 3 of them in a sample of 200).

Generally speaking it is not the percentage of a large population interviewed that matters so much as the total number. Once you get into three figures you can be about 95% certain that the results reflect the population within a margin of error of 10%.

SELECTING HOUSEHOLDS

Despite what has been said above it is good practice and gives your research greater credibility if you have made a serious attempt to construct a systematic sample using some element of random choice. To do this you need to have an accurate and complete list of the population you are sampling. To sample households or individual adults in a neighbourhood the usual list employed is the register of electors (available in your local library or from the Town Hall). You can also decide to use the Post Office's file of addresses in your area.

You could pick a true random sample using random number tables or a computer to choose say 200 names out of the 20,000 electors in your town's register. But they would be widely scattered and therefore hard to interview.

A two stage clustered approach is easier to manage. First you choose say five council wards (either at random or deliberately chosen to get a particular social mix of housing types and ethnic group). Then within those wards you pick a random starting point and choose every 10th household in the streets until you have 40 addresses in each ward. There are many variations on this sort of sampling which you can read about in the reference books.

One further advantage of using electoral registers in sampling is that you can identify many members of particular ethnic minorities by looking at their names. This works particularly well for Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims. This technique can even be used for mapping the distribution of these groups within a neighbourhood.

MAXIMISING RESPONSE RATES

Even the most scientific sampling strategy is little use if you fail to get back more than half the questionnaires. Usually non-response introduces a bias that distorts your results, as some groups are more likely than others to respond. This means you have to work hard to increase response rates.

By and large self completion and postal questionnaires are useless unless there is a strong incentive such as £10 offered for each one returned. Failing that, you will normally be lucky to get 10% returned. However, a short self completion questionnaire may be appropriate for use in a group session, for example in a class room or as a ten minute exercise within a regular club or congregation meeting.

A good team of interviewers can do much better, but persistence and persuasiveness are needed. In a household survey they may have to call round five times at different hours on different days before they find someone at home. In practice in a neighbourhood profile survey it is permissible to allow interviewers to move on to replacement addresses, for example by knocking next door to the address on the sample sheet, as long as this is recorded.

Selling the questionnaire to busy people is an art, and you need to show how it is in the respondent's self interest to co-operate. An incentive such as a prize draw may help.

The questionnaire should not be too long (taking more than 15 minutes is excessive) and interviewers need to be honest about the time required. It is important too to stress confidentiality, and that the whole of the data will be made anonymous in the reports.

People are most likely to respond to interviewers who they see as like themselves, but perhaps not so well known as to be part of local gossip networks. Thus is a good idea for women to interview women, young interviewers to interview youth, Asians to speak to Asians etc. For some ethnic minority groups it is essential to have interviewers who speak the minority language.

In a general survey it is not usually worth the trouble and expense to have a written translation in the fifteen languages that may be spoken locally. But if you have more than one interviewer who will be using, say, Gujarati it is important to get them to meet, to work through the questionnaire and agree on a consistent way of translating each question.

STAGE 3: TRAINING INTERVIEWERS AND FIELDWORK

If you are using interviewers it is essential to train and supervise them properly. A whole day or two long evenings is about right. They need a full briefing about the purpose and process of the survey, practical information about the mechanics of it and information on administrative procedures. However, practice is the most important element and should major on two aspects.

Firstly there should be listening skills exercises to make sure the interviewer hears and records what is actually being said. Secondly there should be extensive practice at using the questionnaire, in pairs with one person role playing a respondent and "changing ends" at half time.

You need to nominate a fieldwork supervisor who is responsible for collecting (and if possible checking through with the interviewers) the completed questionnaires. It is a good idea to number the questionnaires before they are issued and keep track of where they are, and what stage they have reached. The supervisor is also responsible for seeing that the whole selected sample is covered and that any quota system is maintained.

STAGE 4: DATA INPUT AND ANALYSIS

Once the survey is complete it is important to get on quickly with the data analysis. If you are working with a very small questionnaire you can get away with using tally sheets, perhaps using a blank questionnaire on which to mark off the number people giving each kind of answer. For most surveys however you will need a computer.

If you haven't got the hardware, software or skills to process the data it is worthwhile approaching a local college or school for help at the planning stage of the survey.

Some standard database packages may be usable for analysing questionnaires but I have usually found it is better to enter the data as a spreadsheet with one row for each questionnaire and one column for each question.

The data file (saved as ASCII) text can then usually be transferred quite easily into a statistical analysis package. A spreadsheet also allows you to sort the data in whatever order you want and to print out all the (textual) replies to any open ended question listed in a single column.

The three packages I have used for statistical analysis are:

1) SPSS (Statistical Package for the social Sciences) which is very powerful statistically and widely used in universities, but which costs a lot unless you are working as part of an academic institution. The PC version is easier to use than the mainframe one, which I would reserve for massive data sets requiring complex analysis.

2) KWIKSTAT is a shareware package running on IBM PC compatibles and does more than enough to analyse your data. It is cheap without being too cheerful.

3) EPI INFO is a public domain set of programs for the PC which are offered by the World Health Organisation. It has a brilliantly simple method of data entry based on a word processed version of your actual questionnaire. It can import and export files to spreadsheets, databases and SPSS.

PINPOINT from Longman Logotron is aimed at schools for use on Acorn Archimedes machines and looks useful and attractive in presentation. Check if your local school uses it, or buy it for your Archimedes if you have one.

The author could let you have a copy of Kwikstat or EPI INFO if you send formatted floppy disks (with 2mb space).

Whichever program you use you will probably not want to do much more than extract basic Frequency tables for each variable (i.e. how many people answered each question in each possible way), plus some simple cross-tabulations for the major sub-groups of respondents (e.g. men v women, age groups, ethnic groups, council tenants v owner occupiers).

PRESENTING RESULTS

So your research is finished - unlike many research reports isn't going to gather dust on the top shelf IS IT?!!!

You need to disseminate, promote, publicise

SUMMARY REPORTS

Every researcher should consider doing a popular tabloid summary report of every piece of research. You can reach lots more people with 4 pages which are cheaper to print than 400, and more likely to be read. The golden rules are to write in a popular not academic style use catchy headlines and sub heads and to illustrate with graphs and photos or cartoons.

PRESS RELEASES

Prepare an interesting press release and send it to your local rag with a copy of the summary report. Unless there is a mass murderer at large, it will be news and you should be able to get a feature article in the local press.

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

Call a meeting or use existing regular groups to present your findings. It is well worthwhile producing some exhibition boards, OHP slides or a slide show, even a video to get the message across.

THE FULL OR REFERENCE REPORT

There needs to be a full version of your findings for the serious reader although these can be very expensive to produce, especially as not many copies will be needed. With our disability survey we have only 2 master copies, which are available as chapters or as a whole for photocopying by anyone who wants them.

The full report of a neighbourhood profile usually contains:

- Contents page
- Summary of key Findings
- Method: Who, did what, when and why (Questionnaires should be printed in an appendix)
- Background on your neighbourhood: History/Map/Boundaries/Environment/Transport links)
- Statistical Data from The Census etc.
- Extensive results from your own surveys; including basic tables and graphs.
- Perceptions, opinions, stories gathered from your networking survey, or group discussions.
- Conclusions gathered around key themes
- Implications for your own work
- Addresses of other agencies serving your patch
- Acknowledgements

MOVING TO ACTION

Now we have reached the (new) beginning of the story. You have the ammunition, so the action begins. You can start reviewing your objectives on the basis of information rather than groping around in the dark on hunches. You can begin your new projects and apply for funding knowing there are substantial needs which you can tackle. Or you can plunge afresh into specific issue campaigns knowing that information is power and you will be able to get the Council or the Government to do something!

Or you can of course think about all the unanswered research questions, and start all over again!.

BASIC BOOKS ON SURVEY METHODS INCLUDE

Paul Nichols: "Social Survey Methods - A field Guide for Development Workers" (1991); Oxfam Publications

David Phillips: "Do-It-Yourself Social Surveys" (1988); Faculty of Social Studies, Polytechnic of North London

Hoinville, Jowell and Associates: "Survey Research Practice" (1978); Heinemann Educational Books, London