



## Testing the questionnaires - A summary of Skype meetings (10 & 11/04/2013)

### Introduction and general comments:

- Jacobs requires high standards of research, along with some flexibility in conducting the data collection.
- Although the sample may not be fully representative of all children in the country (including, for example only children in schools) it is important that the sample will be representative as possible, taking into account the characteristics of the population. For example, including different ethnic groups, children from rural and urban areas and / or a combination of private and public schools. All according to the characteristics of each country.
- It is important that a large part of the origin questionnaire will be included in each country, to ensure that a comparison between countries can be made. Therefore, 75% of the questionnaire should not be omitted.
- It is also important not to delete items that are part of the 3 psychometric scales: SLSS, BMSLSS, PWI-SC, and the single-item about overall life satisfaction (OLS) (see the Appendix 2 in the information pack for more details).

### Guidelines for testing the questionnaires

- The main purpose for testing the questionnaires is to ensure that the questionnaires are understood by the children. This includes 2 aspects: (a) in terms of language. i.e. a language understood and spoken by children. (b) in terms of adjustment to the socio-economic context of each country, therefore, there may be items that are not suitable in some countries or other items that need to be added.
- The goal is not to improve the language of the questionnaire, in terms of the quality of language. But to improve the language of the questionnaire to be more understandable for children, and compatible with their socio - cultural world.
- If different languages are spoken in one country, the questionnaire should be tested in those languages.
- Testing of the questionnaires can be done through focus groups, in-depth interviews, or a combination of both methods.
- 2 groups should be held for each age group. The decision on the number of groups depends on the characteristics of the population in each country. For example, if there



are significant differences between children from public and private schools children from both schools should participate.

- Between 6 to 8 children should participant in each group. We recommend inviting 8 children for each group, as there are usually last minutes cancellations.
- If only interviews are being held, a minimum of 12 interviews per age group is necessary. Children should be chosen carefully taking into account the characteristics of the population in each country.
- At the beginning of the group/ interview the children complete the questionnaire individually. Then a discussion is held.
- With the 8-year-old age group the questions should be read out while children are answering the questionnaire, as we have found in most countries that children in these age groups find it tiring to have to read too much information. In some cases, it may be that children aged 10 will also prefer this method.
- The focus groups / interviews concentrate on the questionnaire. The aim is to check if the children understand the questions, to ask for their suggestion on how to improve the questions (in case they don't understand), and to understand how children comprehend the questions (since it can be different from adults' understanding).
- The discussion should include three main parts:
  1. Discussion of general keywords, for which you want to hear the opinion of the children. For example Happy vs. Satisfied
  2. Checking and discussing the 3 main scales: 5 point agreement scale; 11 point satisfaction scale; frequency scales (and emoticons for the 8 years-old). For each scale it is important to understand whether the scale is understandable, how they understand it, and if they have suggestions for improvement.  
Some example for questions for discussion with the children: (1) What do you think about these options for response? It was clear? (2) How you understand these options? (3) Why you choose this option and not another?
  3. Discussion the questions: Going through the questions one question after another. Here too, for each question it is important to understand whether the question is understandable, how they understand it, and if they have suggestions for improvement  
Some example for questions for discussion with the children: (1) do you understand the question? (2) Do you think there is a better word? Or better why to ask? (3) What the question is asking about?



- Because of the length of the questionnaire, the discussion may include only half of the questionnaire. In this case, the next group / interview will start the discussion on the second part of the questionnaire.
- Take into consideration the possibility of using and testing the training sheet (Appendix 4). It is designed for children aged eight. But, if you have concerns about the understanding of the scales, you can use it with older age groups.

### What's next?

- Following the process of testing, the improvement of the questionnaire will be in two levels:
  1. Similar improvements for all countries
  2. Specific improvements for a particular country
- We ask you to send us (before May 20) a summary of the comments from the testing using the template we sent you (one for each age group). If interviews were also conducted please specify that on the first page, and include in the report the comments from the interviews. The comments from all the countries will be summarized and discussed in the meeting in Frankfurt.
- Some researchers prefer to record the interviews, it is not mandatory. If this is done, there is no need to send us the transcript of the conversation, but only to include the comments in the summarized report.