

## **Survey Administration**

### **Design Changes**

The original design for this project called for a pilot phase, an ethnographic study of high school leavers using an unstructured interview format to obtain an idea of how successfully these youth might be reached and what were some of their dominant AOD concerns. An Anthropology graduate student began this phase of the project with four issue areas to guide data gathering and reporting: 1) AOD use, abuse, and problems; 2) reasons for dropping out of school; 3) current status - employment, how time and money are spent, as well as positive and negative assessments of current situations; and 4) reclamation - what would impel the school leaver to return/finish high school and suggestions for other actual or potential school leavers, for example.

Not long after the implementation of the ethnographic pilot phase, the research design was altered slightly. This was necessitated by a number of factors. High school leavers are very difficult to locate, especially in great numbers. This activity was time-consuming, and often non-productive. Dividing the school leavers into two groups - those interviewed in the ethnographic pilot phase and those interviewed in the structured interview phase - would have had the effect of diluting the size of the structured interview sample. Also, using a more structured interview instrument would ensure that the same information was being collected from every respondent and would guarantee a uniform, standardized format. As time and resources were limited, it was decided to forego the strictly ethnographic approach in favor of one which would maximize the number of school leavers participating in the more structured interview. Several open-ended questions were included to tap the more qualitative dimensions of their experience and to approximate an anthropological perspective. This structured approach also had the added benefit of enhancing comparability between the school leavers and the statewide high school sample.

### **Survey Instrument**

The same core questionnaire was to be used for these surveys as would be used for the random sample high school survey planned statewide as the next needs assessment study. The purpose was to obtain the same core of information for high school leavers as for stayers in the same age group (16 through 19 years of age). The questions are health and lifestyles questions with an emphasis on youth use and access to AOD, opinions and attitudes toward AOD, and risk for AOD-related problems (Appendix 1).

A survey instrument was developed which included previously validated and tested questions from national surveys, such as the Monitoring the Future Survey, conducted each year by the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research. Questions from