

**REPORT ON THE SOUTH AFRICA PILOT, 26 February to 9<sup>th</sup> March 2007**  
**Draft: for review with MM**

**I THE PILOT: AIMS, LOCATION, PROCEDURES**

**Aims**

1. To accomplish field tests in South Africa of the methods and ‘instruments’ (checklists, survey questionnaire etc.) which we plan to apply in the project across the three countries. (These have already been tested in the Malawi and Ghana pilots, conducted in November and January 2006 respectively.) Unlike our pilots in Ghana and Malawi, the RSA context required us to conduct two pilots, one in each agro-ecological zone. [Our collaborators at CSIR had already made a decision to use different researchers in each of the two agro-ecological zones selected for the study (Eastern Cape and Gauteng/North-West Region) because of important language differences (the predominant language is Xhosa in Eastern Cape, but Tswana and Sotho in the Gauteng/North West study area) and the distance between the two zones.
2. To assess the length of time required for particular methods and to devise a broad programme/pattern of research for application in each site.
3. Training of the South African RAs in each zone to ensure their competence in the full range of methods to be employed. (In South Africa and Ghana, unlike Malawi, no pre-pilot training for this project was conducted, with the exception of a short base review in each of the two agro-ecological zones, because experience in Malawi indicated that the training is most effectively conducted during the field pilot itself.)

Ideally, we would have liked to include work with child researchers in the pilot, but this was not possible in South Africa because the first children’s training workshop (in Eastern Cape) had only just been completed and child researchers needed to be back at school full-time to catch up with work they had missed, while the second children’s training workshop (for Gauteng/North-West region) has not yet taken place.

**Locations**

*Eastern Cape*

The first South Africa field study took place in the upland area of the Port St Johns Local Municipality (Ward 10), which is situated in the O.R Tambo District, north of the tourism town of Port St Johns in the Eastern Cape Province, from Monday February 26<sup>th</sup> through to the following Sunday March 4<sup>th</sup>.

The Eastern Cape pilot studies focussed mainly on one Pondoland settlement and its satellite:

a) Mtambalala, a fairly large dispersed rural settlement centred on an unpaved but motorable all-season laterite road about 5 kms from the paved provincial road (R61) and approximately 16 kms from Port St Johns town. It has a primary cum JSS school (termed JSS), and another JSS in the nearby community of Gabelana (about 3 kms distant, but still part of Mtambalala), a government health centre and three retail stores. This site became the focus of the pilot following a meeting on the first day with the local councillor who was extremely keen that we work there: he has been in

discussion with the national Ministry of Education about poor access to schools in this area for some time.

b) Gabelana, the satellite settlement about 3 kms from Mtambalala. This has only two formal services, a JSS and a general dealer shop.

c) Additionally, a visit was made to Gunyani SPS in the village of Luqhoqheni, along the paved provincial road (R61) about 35 20 kms from Port St John. The only interviews undertaken in this village were with teachers and schoolchildren, following a prior arrangement made by CSIR to visit the school.

The whole of the study region falls within the former homeland area of Transkei.

The RAs and lead collaborators were all based together in Port St Johns town during this pilot, which facilitated extended discussion in the evenings.

#### *Gauteng/North West region*

The second South Africa field study took place in the peri-urban zone of Winterveld and environs in the border areas of Gauteng and North West Province from Monday March 5<sup>th</sup> through to the following Friday March 9<sup>th</sup>. Almost all work (with the exception of one survey questionnaire undertaken at the end of the accompanied walk with schoolchildren to Kromkuil) was conducted in Winterveld.

Winterveld is an extensive dispersed settlement situated in the plains about 50 kms north-west of Pretoria in the Tshwane metropolitan area and centred on two paved roads both of which link it to the nearby formally established largely residential settlement of Mabopane. It has two secondary schools (from which child researchers are to be recruited), a number of primary schools and health centres, a police station, NGOs and numerous small businesses including retail shops. The majority of inhabitants are either unemployed and, living on social grants or work in the distant industrial centre at Rosslyn, near Pretoria. Winterveld is located within the area occupied before 1994 by the homeland of Bophuthatswana.

**Weather/transport conditions:** The pilot took place towards the end of the rainy season in both regions, i.e. at the end of the summer. The next rains are not expected in either region till November. (The rainy season in both zones extends from approximately November to April.) No problems were experienced in accessing settlements in either region.

#### **Participants:**

##### *Eastern Cape*

The pilot in Eastern Cape was undertaken by the lead South African collaborator (Mr Mac Mashiri), one other CSIR staff member (Mr Siphon Dube), and four Masters' students, all recruited for the project from the Walter Sisulu University in Mthatha [three women: Busi Luwaca, Nokholo Hlezupondo (both Psychologists) and Noma Mlomo (a Criminologist), and one man, Andisiwe Bango (a Geographer)], with support from the UK researchers (Dr Gina Porter and Dr Kate Hampshire). Dr Thomas Lichtenberg, a staff member at the Walter Sisulu University, who is coordinating their input, was present for the first day of the pilot. It is anticipated that the Eastern Cape RAs will be using project data in the preparation of their Masters' theses.

##### *Gauteng/North West region*

The pilot in Winterveld was undertaken by the lead South African collaborator (Mr Mac Mashiri), with assistance from three other CSIR staff members (Mr Goodhope

Mponya, Mr Mfuneko Kango and Mr Sipho Dube), and three additional researchers, Ms Marinkie Molwelang, Mr Lucas Marole , and Mr Dumisane Buthelezi (all recruited for the project because of their language skills in Tswana and Sotho), with support from the UK researchers (Dr Gina Porter and Dr Kate Hampshire).

### **Procedures**

During the pilot the following methods and ‘instruments’ to be used by adult researchers were employed by the research team in each zone, with support from the UK researchers:

- In-depth interview using checklists
  - key informants checklist
  - parent checklist
  - children checklist
- Focus groups
- Accompanied walks
- Life histories
- Survey questionnaire
- Ethnographic diary

Additionally, RA notes taken during interviews and other work were regularly reviewed by the UK researchers and feedback given, to ensure consistent reporting procedures.

Dr Porter and Dr Hampshire accompanied different research staff during each session. Each day they thus worked with at least two researchers, so that, during both pilots, each had an opportunity to work with every researcher.

### **Language**

The majority of interviews were conducted by researchers in Xhosa in Eastern Cape and in Tswana or Sotho (and occasionally in Zulu and Venda) in Gauteng/North West Region, but notes were taken in English, which is the researchers’ preferred written language.

## **II PILOT TIMETABLE**

The aim in the pilot timetable was to proceed from key informant interviews to focus groups, then individual in-depth interviews, accompanied walks and other methods. Given the short period available for the two pilots, this preferred pattern had to be adjusted to the availability of respondents for interview.

### ***EASTERN CAPE***

#### ***Day 1 (Monday 26<sup>th</sup> February): Port St Johns and Luqoqheni***

Preliminary meeting: Mr Mashiri, Drs Porter, Hampshire and Lichtenberg. Subsequent brief review of methods and ‘instruments’ with all participating researchers. Allocation of key themes (health, education, activities, transport/mobility/migration) to researchers (i.e. one researcher per theme).

Gunyani SPS school at Luqoqheni near Lusikisiki:

In-depth interviews with head teacher and two other teachers

Two focus group discussions, one with girl children, one with boys.

Port St Johns  
Meeting with Councillor Marini (Ward 10)

***Day 2 (Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup>): Chief's court near Lusikisiki and Mtambalala***

Meeting with tribal authorities, including Mtambalala sub-Chief, at Chief's court for research permission and to give information about the project.

In-depth interview with key informants:

Health centre community nurse

Teacher at JSS

Store owner

Lorry/vehicle owner

In-depth parent interviews (four)

Review of day's work and findings with all researchers: each researcher reviewed key findings from their interviews in turn.

***Day 3 (Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup>): Tribal authority headquarters and Mtambalala plus potential research sites in Port St Johns***

Meeting and key informant interview with ward head, Mtambalala (all researchers)

Meeting with Chiefs at tribal authority re research permission and to give information about the project.

In-depth interviews with parents (X4)

Group discussion with 20 female parents

Visit to view potential sites for main study in Port St Johns (p-u/small town) [MM, GP, KH]

Review in Port St John

***Day 4 (Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> March): Mtambalala region***

Life histories with young adults (X3)

Accompanied walk from Gabelana (Ngcaka school) with JSS pupils to Bolani, a remote upland village with no road access, approximately 4 kms distant, and return

Review in Port St John

***Day 5 (Friday 2<sup>nd</sup>): Mtambalala***

In-depth interviews with parents (X2)

Life histories with non-school-going children (X2)

Life histories with school-going children (X3)

Interview with head teacher

Focus group discussions in school with boy and girl children separately

Review of survey questionnaire (to be piloted next day)

Review of techniques, note-taking and sites for main study, Port St John

***Day 6 (Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup>): Gabelana section of Mtambalala***

First test of survey questionnaire (X4)  
Children's interviews with checklist (X8)

Review (second discussion) of techniques, note-taking and sites for main study, Port St John

***Day 7 (Sunday 4<sup>th</sup>): Gabelana section of Mtambalala and visit to potential research sites***

Second test of survey questionnaire (X4)

Visit to possible research sites (full research team with the exception of MM) en route to Mthatha airport: Tombo, Cwebeni (both sites where the child researchers are at school) and Mthatha re selection of suitable urban site.

***GAUTENG/NORTH WEST REGION***

***Day 8 (Monday 5<sup>th</sup>): Pretoria and Winterveld***

Brief review of project, methods and 'instruments' with all participating researchers. Allocation of key themes (health, education, activities, transport/mobility/migration) to researchers (i.e. one researcher per theme).

Introductions to Deputy Principal at Winterveld High School (one of two schools where child researchers will be participating in our study)

Winterveld Community Authority: key informant group interview with four officials, including the Chair of the Authority (all researchers)

Other key informant interviews:

Principal and deputy principal of High School

Doctor at private clinic (Sisters of Mercy)

Officials at Police station

Taxi driver (as mobile ethnography while driving around the settlement)

Review at CSIR, Pretoria

***Day 9 (Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup>): Winterveld***

Key informant interview with Vice Principal and teacher at Winterveld High

Key informant interview with NGO

Focus group discussion with 9 school girls

Parent in-depth interviews (X7, including one parent+daughter)

Review at CSIR, Pretoria

***Day10 (Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup>): Winterveld***

Parent interviews (X2)

Focus group discussions with parents (X2, 5 men in one group, 10 women in the other)

Children's checklist interviews (X5)

Preliminary review of survey questionnaire and current day's work at CSIR, Pretoria

***Day11 (Thursday 8<sup>th</sup>): Winterveld***

Visit to Lesolang High School (collection of essays, proposed interviews with school children not possible as they were doing tests)  
Life histories with young adults (X4)  
Accompanied walk with school children from Winterveld High School to Kromkuil  
Survey questionnaire (X1)

Review in the field

***Day12 (Friday 9<sup>th</sup>): Winterveld and other potential research sites, North West region***

Interviews with parents (X2)  
Life histories with children (X2)  
Survey questionnaire (X8)  
MM/GP visit to other potential research sites:

Lead researchers (MM, GP) review of South Africa pilots.  
Final review with all researchers.

### **III FINDINGS FROM THE SOUTH AFRICA PILOT**

#### **a) The checklists and other qualitative work**

● *The revised checklists worked well in Eastern Cape and Gauteng/North West region but minor adjustments are still needed*

The checklists employed in the South Africa pilot have now been through numerous revisions (i.e. following the inception workshop and earlier pilots in Malawi and Ghana). We will make further small adjustments to take into account piloting in South Africa and children's research outputs now available from the Malawi study.

● *Confirmed (as in Ghana and Malawi) that checklists are best prepared only in English*

No need to translate because the emphasis is on flexibility – developing a conversation.

● *Working with the children and parent checklist into four themes (i.e. four separate checklists for children, four for parents) also proved effective in South Africa*

The original children's checklist was particularly long and a decision was made during the Malawi pilot to split the children's and parents' checklist into four discrete themes (1. education, 2. health, 3. activities [work and play], 4. transport and migration). This has worked well in Ghana and also in both South African pilot sites.

● *Giving researchers prime responsibility for one of the four themes*

In South Africa, as in Ghana and Malawi, researchers administered questions mostly on their own 'theme' (i.e. with the exception of life histories). Thus, the researcher with responsibility for education administers education-focused questions to children, parents, and teachers, the researcher with responsibility for health administers health-focused questions to children, parents, health workers etc. and so on. This gives researchers responsibility for one theme through the study and hopefully a sense of ownership of their theme. However, the person allocated the health theme in Eastern

Cape is a Criminologist and the lead researchers in South Africa and UK have made a decision that she should work instead on issues of crime, children and transport, given the significance of this issue in the local context (re rapes on the journey to and from school etc.) and the need to link the research to her Masters' thesis.

- *The importance of an end-of-day meeting of all RAs to review and discuss findings every field day*

It is particularly important, given the split into themes, that researchers meet for a review and discussion of findings at the end of each day to ensure adequate cross-fertilization of ideas and issues. Each theme needs to be constantly examined in the light of its relationship to the other themes. This approach proved as helpful in the South African pilots as it did in Malawi and Ghana.

- *Focus groups: value of restricting themes covered in focus group discussions, working without checklists, and decision to put less emphasis on this method in Eastern Cape*

The focus groups conducted later in the pilot in each region of South Africa (i.e. when RAs had gained familiarity with their topic issues), were led without recourse to check sheets. As in Malawi and Ghana this usually produced more fluent and effective discussions with participants, especially in Gauteng/North West region. However, in rural Eastern Cape focus groups did not work well: both adult and child participants seemed to be intimidated by this method of eliciting information and unwilling to discuss issues freely. Consequently, a decision was made to put more emphasis on individual in-depth interviews in this region (though it is possible that focus groups will prove more effective in urban contexts and thus should not be ruled out as a method without further trial).

- *Particular effectiveness of life histories among people with complex migration histories and consequent decision to extend this method to children*

In Eastern Cape, where many of our respondents have experienced migration, we found that life histories were an extremely effective route to discussion of transport, mobility and its impacts. Periods of residence in different places allow respondents to structure their responses and to place and remember experiences with some accuracy. Consequently, we extended use of the life history interview from people in their mid-twenties to young people of 18 and under to good effect. This child life history interview does not replace the children's checklist but offers a valuable complementary approach. In Gauteng/North West region this extension of life histories to older children also seemed to add a useful additional dimension to the research.

[In the northern Ghana research area, where migrants also represent a substantial proportion of the population, the extension of life histories to younger people may also be advantageous.]

- *Value of an accompanied walk as a major component of interviews with children.*

The accompanied walk with school children worked very well in both pilot areas in South Africa, as it had in Ghana and Malawi, though some researchers found the length of walk difficult in the afternoon heat.

- *The value of direct reportage (i.e. in the first person)*

In both regions of South Africa researchers quickly adapted to the requirement for direct verbatim reportage, which is more efficient in terms of note taking but also gives a better feel of the interview and allows local voices to come through in our reportage.

- *The importance of probing and reporting beyond the factual in in-depth interviews, focus groups etc.*

The importance of probing and obtaining an understanding of people's feelings emotions about residence in remote places, or being late for school because of transport work, etc. etc. was stressed to the researchers who, as in Ghana and Malawi, are used to eliciting factual information but in some cases have less familiarity with in-depth qualitative work.

- *The value of flexibility and working without prior appointments*

Fixed appointments can make the work schedule inflexible and reduce the potential for achieving a full day of interviews. During the South Africa pilots, as in Malawi and Ghana, we achieved a great deal in limited time by being flexible and finding potential interviewees as we moved around the settlements, rather than fixing up lots of appointments in advance. A series of pre-arranged appointments would limit what can be accomplished during a field day. Ideally, it is best if only the village leaders and main key informant interviews are booked in advance.

- *The value of a review of the first qualitative data set from the main survey in each agro-ecological zone, before moving to the second and subsequent sites.*

It will be important to review qualitative data collected at the first main site of field research in each country before proceeding to the second site. This will help pick up overlap, any misunderstandings of terminology not picked up in the pilot, and help establish if there is any potentially redundant data component (i.e. excessive triangulation).

- *The importance of pursuing porterage (head loading) issues in the health checklist interviews.*

Even where people dismiss this factor as insignificant it is important to record that fact and to encourage them to elaborate on the reasons for this view.

## **b) The questionnaire survey**

- *Further revision of the draft survey questionnaire is required, followed by re-test in all countries*

The draft survey questionnaire was tested in both agro-ecological zones in South Africa. These pilots indicated the value of making further revisions, including removal of some basic questions from the child to the parent section (which will reduce the length of the child interview) and some reorganisation of question order within the child section. A few clarifications will be inserted where confusion arose (e.g. combis, which are actually minibuses but are referred to as taxis) to cover specific South African terminology.

\*\* It will be necessary to retest the questionnaire in all countries prior to its application at the end of the qualitative data collection phase, following these



revisions. Careful training of research staff will be required before the main survey is conducted.

- *Preference for English-only questionnaire in South Africa.*

In South Africa there was a strong preference among researchers for an English only questionnaire, because of the need to work in a number of different languages, especially in Gauteng/North West.

- *Seasonal timing of the questionnaire survey*

Although the survey is designed to pick up seasonal variations, ideally it should be administered in the wet season [i.e. when transport is likely to be at its most difficult] in all countries if possible.

Possible date for Malawi survey: October/November 2007

Possible date for Ghana survey: June/July 2007

Possible date for South Africa survey: December 2007

- *SPSS data entry*

Given the amount of qualitative work needed to ensure adequate understanding of local conditions, it was agreed in South Africa that (as in Malawi and Ghana) SPSS data entry will be done in UK to reduce in-country work load. (Survey sheets to be sent by DHL to UK)

### **c) Other key points**

- *The benefits of presenting the study topic as ‘children’s lives’ rather than ‘children and transport’ will need to be borne in mind in the main study*

During the inception workshop, we agreed a standard introduction for use by all researchers (adults and children) that refers to the topic of research as ‘children, transport and mobility’. However, in the Malawi pilot we found respondents confused by the very broad nature of many of our questions. Moreover, we concluded that emphasising transport at the start of the interview could suggest to respondents the need to concentrate on transport issues [especially with the thought that funding for interventions might be available in this area], when there were other, (possibly more pressing) issues of concern to our respondents. In the Ghana pilot the broader topic title was used effectively. \*\*\* In South Africa there was a tendency in introductions with key informants during the pilot (especially in Gauteng/North West) to refer to transport issues because of CSIR’s focus and reputation in this field. It will be important in the main study to ensure the context is set more broadly, in order to ensure over-emphasis on transport at the expense of other pressing issues does not occur.

- *Selection of sites for adult researcher studies*

The following sites have been selected for the main phase of the child mobility research in **Eastern Cape**. Each represents a different locational and service provision context:

Urban high density: Mthatha Ngangelizwe

Peri-urban/small town: Port St Johns

Rural: Mtambalala

Remote rural (no services): Bolani and Lumphoko

The following sites have been selected for the main phase of the child mobility research in **Gauteng/North West region**. Each represents a different locational and service provision context:

Urban high density: Soshanguve (Block NN focus)

Peri-urban/small town: Winterveld

Rural: Vryeboschlaagte

Remote rural (no services): Klipvoor

In all sites it will be important to distinguish interviews of residents living in homesteads close to a good public transport route with regular services and those further away. This is indicated on the checksheets but needs emphasis to ensure it is noted in all in-depth interviews with individuals.

● *A brief characterisation of each potential research site (by in-country project leaders) is useful at an early stage:*

population size

population distribution

principal economic activities

ethnicity

road access and transport services

character (urban/peri-urban/rural/remote rural)

● *The value of including not only rural settlements with services but also remote rural settlement without any services (i.e. no primary school etc.)*

This will be important for picking up primary education access issues, in particular. However, where primary education is provided for most villages including the remotest as is the case in the North West Province, it would still be important to understand access issues relating to other activity areas such as health, shops, etc. which are unavailable

● *The value of researcher residence in study settlements during the field component*

Residence in the field can substantially reduce field transport and subsistence costs. If the RAs are all resident in one compound/homestead this will also help provide a key contact point for organising focus groups etc.

#### **d) Some additional points re South Africa**

- In South Africa the main survey will include settlements where the pilots were conducted, because these settlements are extensive, and the ‘instruments’ are now substantially refined since all country pilots have been completed.
- In South Africa researcher handwriting appears mostly sufficiently clear to proceed straight from basic field notes to typing up.
- Government education policy in South Africa has produced varying educational patterns in different regions.  
In rural Eastern Cape the following education pattern generally applies:
  - JSS: Grades 1 to 8 or 9

- Senior Secondary School: Grades 8 or 9 to 12

In Gauteng/North West region the following education pattern generally applies:

- Primary: Grades 1 to 7
  - Secondary: Grades 8 to 12
- Or
- Primary: Grades 1-7
  - Middle: Grades 8 to 9, possibly 10
  - Secondary: Grades 11-12.

Entrance to *primary school* in South Africa is at age 7. Pupils must pass to attend *secondary schools* but are allocated to the nearest school. Private schools in South Africa are mostly located in urban and peri-urban areas.

- Settlement is mostly highly dispersed in both pilot regions. Moreover, there appears to have been less removal of settlement to paved road locations in South Africa than elsewhere in Africa, despite the reduction of restrictions to settlement since 1994.
- It appears that particular *safety issues* may arise when conducting research in urban South Africa. Safety of researchers is of paramount importance at all times in South Africa as in our other study countries. It will be important to ensure that researchers working in potentially difficult areas operate in pairs (e.g. interviewing in neighbouring houses). Country project leaders will need to bear safety considerations in mind at all times and to reconsider research strategies and sites selected if safety issues appear substantial.

## CONCLUSION

Issues picked up and addressed through revision of 'instruments' following the Malawi and Ghana pilots were helpful in smoothing progress in the South Africa pilots. All necessary researcher training was pursued on site, to considerable advantage. However, the pilots and associated RA training in South Africa were more restricted than we would have wished, due to the need to pilot the study in both of the (very diverse) agro-ecological/cultural zones.