

INDICATORS OF POVERTY AND SOCIAL  
EXCLUSION PROJECT

**Preliminary Findings from the Qualitative  
Stage of the Indicators of Poverty and  
Social Exclusion Project**

**Michael Noble, Andrew Ratcliffe, Wiseman Magasela,  
Gemma Wright, Danielle Mason, Sharon Zichawo  
and Richard Chigume**

**Key Report 1**

September 2004

*Building a Caring Society. Together.*



**social development**

Department:  
Social Development  
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**



**Indicators of Poverty and Social Exclusion Project**

**Preliminary Findings from the  
Qualitative Stage of the Indicators  
of Poverty and Social Exclusion  
Project**

**By Michael Noble, Andrew Ratcliffe, Wiseman Magasela,  
Gemma Wright and Danielle Mason at the Centre for the  
Analysis of South African Social Policy, University of  
Oxford and Sharon Zichawo and Richard Chigume at the  
Institute of Government at the University of Fort Hare**

**Key Report 1  
September 2004**

## **Acknowledgements**

The Indicators of Poverty and Social Exclusion (IPSE) project forms part of the National Department of Social Development's Social Policy Analysis Programme and is funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) Southern Africa. The project was undertaken by a research team within the Centre for the Analysis of South African Social Policy (CASASP) at the Department of Social Policy and Social Work at the University of Oxford in the United Kingdom. The team for this stage of the project comprised Professor Michael Noble, Gemma Wright, Wiseman Magasela, Andrew Ratcliffe and Danielle Mason. Richard Chigume and Sharon Zichawo from the University of Fort Hare also collaborated on this stage of the project. The research team would like to thank Professor Jonathan Bradshaw from the University of York in the UK for his contributions and commitment to this project as consultant.

In addition to members of the team who undertook some of the focus groups, the following people are thanked for their contributions to this project as focus group facilitators or translators: Esmerelda Alman, Tozama Diamond, Desiree Galeshewa, Juby Govender, Zola Hloma, Daryl Howard, Mbu Kunene, Xolani Kupiso, M Mogotsi, Khanyisa Ndzuta, Geoffrey Nkadimeng, BP Qwana, Siphiso Tayo, Matimela Joyce Lerato Tsiti and Anna van den Berg. Dr Rebecca Surender from the Department of Social Policy and Social Work at the University of Oxford is thanked for running focus group training events for the facilitators in South Africa.

## **Recommended citation**

Noble, M., Ratcliffe, A., Magasela, W., Wright, G., Mason, D., Zichawo, S. and Chigume, R. (2004) *Preliminary Findings from the Qualitative Stage of the Indicators of Poverty and Social Exclusion Project*, Key Report 1, Pretoria: Department of Social Development, Republic of South Africa.

## **Disclaimer**

The University of Oxford has taken reasonable care to ensure that the information in this report is correct. However, no warranty, express or implied, is given as to its accuracy and the University of Oxford does not accept any liability for error or omission. The University of Oxford is not responsible for how the information is used, how it is interpreted or what reliance is placed on it. The University of Oxford does not guarantee that the information in this report is fit for any particular purpose. The University of Oxford does not accept responsibility for any alteration or manipulation of the report once it has been released. The information supplied is subject to the conditions of the contract between DSD and the University of Oxford. The views expressed in this report are not necessarily those of the Department of Social Development or DFID.

## **Project Purpose<sup>1</sup>**

Poverty research in developing countries has traditionally focused narrowly on income, and often on subsistence income. This approach, whilst important, does not capture the entire picture. Research in developed countries had a similar focus until the 1970's when there was a paradigm shift towards more refined concepts such as multiple deprivation and, later, social exclusion. Policy makers in South Africa, now categorised as a middle income developing country and still suffering from deep divisions resulting from the legacy of apartheid, still tend to define poverty in narrow income terms. The wider goal of this project is to build a strong conceptual and evidence base upon which a more complete understanding of the nature of poverty and deprivation in South Africa can be built.

This project addresses the following issues:

1. What definitions of poverty and social exclusion are appropriate in contemporary South Africa?
2. How can such definitions be operationalised so as to create measures and indicators that will usefully inform policy-making?
3. What is the extent of poverty and social exclusion in South Africa using a consensual definition?
4. What does a consensual definition of poverty/social exclusion imply for policies to alleviate poverty and generate a more inclusive society?
5. How does a consensual definition of poverty/social exclusion relate to subsistence-based income poverty lines?

## **This Report**

The aim of this report is to disseminate some preliminary findings from the qualitative phase of the Indicators of Poverty and Social Exclusion (IPSE) project in South Africa. Over 50 focus groups have taken place across South Africa with men and women from a range of income, race, and language groups. This report presents an overview of the first insights emerging from this fieldwork. These findings must be viewed with some caution as they emerge from a first phase of qualitative analysis and should be treated as tentative conclusions because of this. The issues emerging should, however, provide an interesting addition to other social research on poverty and social exclusion. As the analysis of the focus group data continues a more detailed picture will emerge, and further reports will be produced to disseminate the information. In 2005 CASASP will begin a process of producing a number of reports using the focus group data which will provide more detailed analysis on key themes.

This report begins with a brief background to the IPSE project, placing the focus groups in context. There then follows an account of the methodology employed in the focus

---

<sup>1</sup> Noble, M., Ratcliffe, A. and Wright, G. (2004), 'Conceptualising, defining and measuring poverty in South Africa: an argument for a consensual approach'. Available on the Southern African Regional Poverty Network [www.sarpn.org.za](http://www.sarpn.org.za).

groups<sup>2</sup>. Subsequent sections are devoted to drawing out, in a quite impressionistic way, the central issues raised in the focus groups.

## **Project Outline**

The IPSE project has three broad stages. These are:

**Qualitative Stage-** a series of Focus Groups carried out nationwide with men and women from a wide range of income levels, races, language groups, geographical areas etc. The aim of the qualitative phase of the project is, first, to inform the survey stage and second, to provide a valuable data set in its own right for qualitative analysis.

**Survey Stage-** building on the insights coming out of the qualitative stage of the project a survey instrument is designed that will both define and measure poverty and social exclusion. Questions included in a nationally representative sample survey will be used to generate a list of ‘Socially Perceived Necessities’<sup>3</sup> that will provide a basis for the design of a set of indicators. Additional survey questions will measure the extent of poverty and social exclusion defined in terms of this set of consensual indicators.

**Analysis Stage:** The data generated by the nationally representative sample survey will be analysed to provide a detailed, multidimensional picture of poverty and social exclusion in South Africa.

The project is currently in the middle of the survey stage. The qualitative phase is complete and the team are currently working on designing survey questions and are negotiating for their inclusion in a nationally representative sample survey.

The data presented here are very preliminary findings from the qualitative stage of the project.

---

<sup>2</sup> A detailed account of the methodology used for the focus groups is given in Ratcliffe, A., Magasela, W., Noble, M., Wright, G., Zichawo, S. and Chigume, R. (2005) *Methodology for the Qualitative Stage of the Indicators of Poverty and Social Exclusion Project*, Key Report 2, Pretoria: National Department of Social Development, Republic of South Africa.

<sup>3</sup> See Mack, J. and Lansley, S. (1985) *Poor Britain*, London: George Allen and Unwin.

## Focus Group Methodology

An in-depth description of the methodology employed in the focus groups can be found in the project's Key Themes Report 2: Methodology for Qualitative Stage of the IPSE Project. An outline of the methodology is given here.

Over 50 focus groups have taken place as part of the IPSE project. They have been held in 9 of South Africa's 11 official languages, 6 of its 9 provinces, with groups covering a range of incomes, and all the major race groups. A full list of the categories of focus group is included in **Appendix 1**.

Once an area had been selected in which to hold a focus group, 7 to 10 participants, who met the necessary selection criteria, were recruited. The selected participants then took part in a focus group discussion looking at issues including: what they considered essential or necessities that everyone in South Africa should have, be able to do or have access to; what they thought about exclusion for certain spheres of society, and who, if anyone, was excluded; their views on poverty and the poor in South Africa; and their aspirations for the future. The question schedule for the focus groups appears in **Appendix 2**. Because the focus group discussion was designed to 'flow' without the need for too much direction from the group facilitator, the question schedule includes detailed notes and instructions for the facilitator, these are also included in **Appendix 2** (those parts in *Italics* are instructions).

The focus group question schedule was made up of four main sections. After a lead-in question to break the ice, the first section looked at what the participants considered 'essentials that each and every South African should have and that no one should have to do without'. Participants were asked to generate a list of essentials for adults, including activities and services as well as possessions. After participants had generated the list of adult essentials they were then asked their views on a pre-prepared list of essentials for adults. Having given their views on the pre-prepared list of essentials for adults participants were then asked to generate their own list of essentials for children. Finally, they were asked for their views on a pre-prepared list of children's essentials.

The second section of the focus group discussed exclusion from various 'social spheres'. Participants were asked to describe a given social sphere and then identify those who they felt were excluded or unable to fully take part in this area of life. The social spheres that were discussed were: the economy; health; education; housing and neighbourhood; personal security; and friends and family.

The third section asked participants for their views on poverty, looking at how participants defined poverty and who they identified as poor.

In the final section of the focus group participants were asked to give their aspirations for South Africa in the future. The purpose of this section was to bring the group to a natural close and to get an idea of the main priorities of the participants.

## Findings

This section of the report begins with a discussion of some general points coming out of the focus groups before moving on to look at selected themes in greater detail.

### General Impressions from the Focus Groups

In almost all of the focus groups, when participants were asked to name essentials the first items to come up were 'the basics'. The first three items mentioned were usually food, shelter, and clothing. These items suggest that, as one might expect, the first things that people thought of when asked about the essentials were the absolute basics. The terminology used is itself interesting, 'shelter' was generally mentioned rather than 'housing', 'a house', or 'a home' again emphasising that we are talking about the bare minimum.

However, the fact that the basics came up first in the focus group discussions should not be taken to imply that people necessarily had a minimalist notion of what was an acceptable standard of living. In fact, the opposite was often the case. One very strong impression coming out from the groups was that participants had a very clear and detailed idea of what constitutes an acceptable standard of living. To take 'shelter' as an example, when participants were asked to give more detail on what constituted an acceptable standard of shelter they gave a thorough description of the essential minimum standards for a house (at this stage of the discussion 'house' had generally replaced shelter as the appropriate terminology). This description often included such details as what building materials were appropriate, the required number of rooms, what was needed inside the house, and so on. Housing will be discussed more thoroughly in a later report, but the main point here is that participants generally had a well-defined notion of acceptable standards. This is not to say that all group necessarily agreed on what those standards were, that is a question for the survey stage of the IPSE project, but that participants found it relatively easy to elucidate what they thought the standards of acceptability were.

Another element that came out strongly across the groups was the social basis for many of the essentials. When asked why they considered a given item an essential, participants often referred to social themes such as: respect or respectability; dignity; decency etc.

The importance of children was also an issue that came out forcefully across the focus groups. Before the focus group participants were asked about children in particular, participants very often suggested children's essentials. Essential items that applied to both adults and children were also often justified with reference to children. So, for example, the importance of dressing one's children in a decent or respectable manner was repeatedly mentioned under the topic of clothing. A special report about necessities for children will be produced at a later stage.



There now follows a more detailed overview of the most important themes raised in the focus groups. This discussion will roughly follow the order of the focus group discussions, beginning with essentials, moving on to social exclusion, before discussing poverty and, finally, aspirations.

## Essentials

### House and Home

The first noteworthy point when focus group participants discussed housing was that they generally had a very clear idea of what an acceptable house 'looks like'. Some key features that were highlighted in the focus group discussions were:

- The *physical integrity* of the house. The importance of the physical structure of the house was repeatedly emphasised. This issue was often raised in reference to informal settlements which were criticised because of a lack of structural strength. The need for a house 'built from blocks' was also often raised in the groups.
- The *Size and number of rooms* in a house was another central concern for participants. The idea that parents and children should not have to share a bedroom was commonly expressed. RDP houses were criticised because they are often not divided into separate rooms.
- *Amenities* were also considered very important for adequate housing. There was broad agreement on the need for hot running water, flush toilets, and electricity in the house. The importance of having a bath or shower in the house, as opposed to a tap or hand basin only, was also a major concern of those who took part in the focus groups.

### Household Goods

As with the discussion of the house itself, participants were able to give a detailed inventory of the essential possession needed in a house. Whilst this list varied from group to group there were some items that were mentioned with great regularity. These included: fridge; stove; television; radio; furniture. However, in addition to these 'functional' items there was also evidence that some items were considered essential because of their role in expressing social status. So, for instance, many participants included amongst their essential household items such things as a kitchen scheme, a room-divider, a bedroom suite etc. These items which go beyond the purely functional (e.g. a kitchen scheme was mentioned rather than kitchen cupboards which might do the same job) may be considered important 'badges of social inclusion'.

## **Clothing**

In the same way that household goods included both 'functional' and 'social' goods, the discussion of clothing was divided into protection aspects and the social aspects. The protection aspect of clothing which was repeatedly mentioned in the groups was the need for clothing to protect you from the elements, provide shade from the sun, keep out the rain, the cold etc. The more social need for clothing that was raised was the need to appear decent or respectable within one's community. This 'social standing' requirement for clothing was particularly emphasised with regard to children whose clothes were considered important both for their own status amongst their peers; and their parents status amongst theirs.

## **Employment**

It will come as no surprise that employment was raised as an essential in the overwhelming majority of groups. Having paid work was seen as crucial in order to generate enough income. It was also seen as important in maintaining one's dignity, and in many groups the social stigma associated with unemployment was mentioned. The waste of talent implied by unemployment was also stressed.

## **Access**

As well as discussing essential possessions the focus groups also covered those services and public goods which it is essential that every South African is able to access. The main items that were raised in this area, and which were raised in every focus group, were: electricity; transport; health services (hospitals and clinics); and Education (schools in particular, but also universities, pre-schools, technikons etc.). The need for everyone to have access to funeral insurance or a burial society was also strongly emphasised by a number of participants. Other services, such as the police, refuse collection, street cleaning, sewerage, etc. were also mentioned in some groups.

## **Transport**

The issue of transport mentioned above is worthy of particular note. When it comes to the discussion of social exclusion below, it will become clear that inadequate transport is a major impediment to access to a number of important social provisions, in particular health services, and educational institutions. The lack of coverage of public transport, particularly at night, was raised as a major problem. As was poor road quality in some areas. Transport problems were seen as a major difficulty for seeking or maintaining employment. The safety of children travelling to school also came out as a serious concern for participants.

## Education

Education was another theme given extremely high prominence by participants. Education was seen as a crucial route to employment. Education was also discussed more generally as important in empowering people so that their voice can be heard. Adult education was seen as important as well as the education of children. The major financial burden of putting a child through school was a concern for many focus group participants. The cost of school fees, uniforms, school books etc. was considered very high by many parents in the focus groups.

## Activities

The final type of essentials covered by the focus groups, in addition to goods/possessions and services, was activities. Participants were asked which activities they considered that everyone should be able to do and that no-one should be unable to do if they wish.

There was a great deal of variety in the activities selected, probably reflecting differing individual tastes. However, three broad types of activity came through as important from the qualitative data, these were:

- *Recreation*, this included a wide range of activities but there was widespread agreement that everyone should have the time and resources to take part in a recreational activity that they enjoy, whether this be going out to the cinema, pursuing a hobby or craft, or walking in a park.
- *Rest* was a major concern for many participants. In some groups there was a strong view that everyone needed some time to rest and relax each day.
- *Exercise* was also viewed as an important activity. Taking part in sporting activities was considered an important form of recreation. Exercise was also repeatedly raised as being important for health reasons.

## Child-specific Essentials

Having discussed the essentials for adults, participants were asked to name any other essential that applied specifically to children. Essentials that applied to adults and children, for example food, were not repeated. The main child-specific essentials mentioned by participants were:

- *Toys* were the major child-specific possession that came out of the groups. Most participants considered it essential that every child has toys to play with. Educational toys were given particular prominence in the discussions.
- *Play* was also considered an essential in itself. One view which was often expressed was that placing too much emphasis on formal education and not leaving any time for play was bad for children.
- *Safety*- The safety of children was a massive concern for many focus group participants. The fear of child abuse, muggings, and child-rape was often raised in the groups.

- *Love*- the need for children to be loved was raised in all groups.
- *Respect, discipline, and manners* were viewed as critical by many focus group participants. The need for adults to impart these virtues in children was seen as very important for society in the future.

## Differences in Responses

Although the focus groups cannot provide a statistically sound basis for assessing the different responses of different groups, it is nevertheless interesting to look at the differences in responses coming out of the qualitative data. Some apparent differences in response include:

- *Context specific examples*- These were essential items which only applied to the specific circumstances of the focus group participants. For example, burial land was raised very strongly by plantation workers who do not own the land on which they live. Similarly, land for cultivation/livestock, water for fields etc., tractors, were essentials mentioned in rural areas that might not apply in other contexts.
- *Instrumental v. fundamental differences*- there were some items which provided different instrumental ways of achieving the same function, for example a wheelbarrow was raised as an essential in one area because it was needed to fetch water, in areas where running water in the home was the norm such 'instrumental' necessities were not needed to fulfil the same function.
- *Transitional essentials*- the wheelbarrow example above is also illustrative of the issue of 'transitional essentials'. These are items that are essential only because one lacks other items. So, a wheelbarrow for collecting water would cease to be essential if one had piped water.
- *Gender differences*- men viewed some household essentials as less important e.g. washing machine. They also viewed their own spending money as important.
- *Rural-Urban*- often people viewed the problems affecting their area as worst but some sympathy for the other type of area, some belief that government favours rural areas held by those in urban areas.

## Identifying the Excluded

Having discussed essentials for adults and children, participants were asked to discuss exclusion from various 'spheres' of society. Participants were asked to discuss any aspects or people they could think of that made up a given sphere, they were then asked to identify any groups of people who they thought were excluded from that sphere. The social spheres discussed in the groups were: the economy; health; education; housing and neighbourhood; friends and family; and personal security.

## **General Findings**

The main overall finding from the social exclusion section of the focus groups was that there was very broad agreement between focus groups on who were excluded. The same groups of people were also identified as excluded for most of the different spheres

Those groups of people that were strongly identified as excluded across all the social spheres were:

- Poor people
- Uneducated people
- Unemployed people
- Sick or disabled people
- Those suffering from mental illness
- Street children
- Orphans

There now follows a brief outline of the findings for each of the social spheres.

## **Economic Sphere**

There was a remarkable degree of consensus on who were excluded from the economic sphere of society. In every focus group, participants identified the unemployed as excluded. Other excluded people that were mentioned included: poor people, disabled people, street children and the uneducated.

## **Health and Education Spheres**

The health and education spheres showed broadly the same conclusions and so can be discussed together. For both these spheres the issue of access to services was very important. Those identified as excluded from these social spheres were those who lived in areas without schools or hospital, or those who lived far away from these facilities. As discussed in the essentials section above, inadequate transport was raised time and again as a major factor excluding people from access to health and education services.

## **Housing and Neighbourhood**

As discussed earlier, participants generally had a very clear notion of an acceptable standard of housing, this came through into this section and participants clearly identified as excluded those whose houses or neighbourhoods were not of an acceptable standard. In most groups, those who lived in informal settlements and squatter camps were identified as excluded. People living in deep rural areas were also seen as excluded by some participants. In some focus

groups, people living in RDP houses were also seen as excluded from acceptable housing.

### **Family and Friends**

Participants generally found it more difficult to identify groups of people who were excluded from having friends and family. Orphans and street children were often identified as excluded. Poor people and those who could not work were also said to be sometimes excluded. People who exhibited bad or anti-social behaviour, such as criminals, drug dealers, thieves etc. were also classified as excluded by some participants. Those suffering from mental illness were also identified as excluded in some focus groups.

### **Personal Security**

Participants found it tricky to identify the excluded for this sphere. This was largely because there was a widely-held view that no-one was safe from crime in South Africa. When asked to identify those who were at more risk, participants mentioned: women, children (particularly street children), and those living in poorly built and informal housing.

### **Poverty and Poor People**

There was an overwhelming consensus across the focus groups that poverty is very widespread in South Africa. There also seemed to be quite broad agreement on defining poverty. When asked what they took poverty to mean, the participants' first response was usually to offer a quite minimalist definition. Most often this was defined in terms of not having enough money or not having enough to eat. However, many other aspects of poverty also came out in the discussions, for instance:

- Land ownership
- Dignity
- Powerlessness
- Being unable to access services
- Living in low quality housing such as informal dwellings
- Living in overcrowded conditions
- Being without relatives

When asked which groups of people in South Africa were poor, participants often mentioned the unemployed, and the homeless. In some groups the racial dimension of poverty was stressed, although the race group identified as worst off was not always the same. Some stressed the rural-urban dimension but, again, there was no clear agreement about whether poverty was worse in rural or urban

areas. Other participants stated that it was not possible to identify specific groups as poor because poverty is everywhere in South Africa.

## **Aspirations**

The focus group discussions concluded with participants stating their aspirations for the future. A number of key themes emerged strongly from this section of the focus groups, including:

- *Basic Needs*- the fulfilment of basic needs, such as the provision of housing, electricity, clean water, and tarred roads, was mentioned in many groups, particularly in those held in low income areas.
- *Unemployment*- this was probably the aspiration that was raised most often in the groups. The importance of creating work for people, and for young people in particular, was keenly felt by many participants.
- *Crime*- crime was considered the number one problem for South Africa by many participants. The need to reduce levels of crime, especially violent crime, was a prominent aspiration in many groups.
- *Education*- a lot of participants felt that providing high quality education for all was the main priority for South Africa over the coming years.

## **Concluding Remarks**

At this stage it is difficult to draw any conclusive conclusions from the qualitative stage of the IPSE project. A more thorough analysis of the qualitative data is ongoing and more detailed findings will be reported over the rest of the project period. Furthermore, any conclusions from the qualitative work will be subject to statistically rigorous testing during the quantitative stage of the project.

That said, even at this preliminary stage of the project, there are some interesting points that can be tentatively made. First, participants had a clear and detailed view of what they considered an acceptable standard of living. This is not to imply that there was no debate on this issue, indeed there was often substantial debate between participants, but each participant in the focus groups was able to draw their own line between the essentials and the non-essentials.

Second, certain themes emerged very strongly across the focus groups. The importance placed on education, employment, and housing may not come as a surprise. However, the recurring issue of inadequate transport as an impediment to access to services, may be less obvious. Transport is not traditionally treated as a core aspect of social policy, but the findings from the focus group discussion point to transport as a key driver of social exclusion and disadvantage.

Third, the 'relative' aspects of poverty and social exclusion emerge strongly from the qualitative data. Of course, when people are suffering from absolute poverty in its most extreme forms, including hunger and disease, then it is this that must be tackled first. However, the focus group discussions suggest that relative aspects of poverty and social exclusion should not be neglected. This can be seen in the importance participants placed on 'social' goods for the home and in their views on the need for appropriate and dignified clothing.

CASASP  
October 2004



## Appendix 1      Profile of the Focus Groups

Province	Race	Rural/Urban	Formal/Informal	Income	Language	Gender	Place name
E Cape	Black African	Urban	Informal	Low	Xhosa	Male	Mzomhle (Gonubie)
E Cape	Black African	Urban	Informal	Low	Xhosa	Female	Mzomhle (Gonubie)
E Cape	Black African	Urban	Formal and Former Homeland	Low	Xhosa	Male	Mdantsane
E Cape	Black African	Urban	Formal and Former Homeland	Low	Xhosa	Female	Mdantsane
E Cape	Black African	Urban	Formal and Former Homeland	Middle	Xhosa	Mixed	Umthatha
E Cape	Black African	Urban	Formal and Former Homeland	Middle	Xhosa	Mixed	Umthatha
E Cape	Black African	Rural	Formal and Former Homeland	Low	Xhosa	Male	Fort Beaufort
E Cape	Black African	Rural	Formal and Former Homeland	Low	Xhosa	Female	Fort Beaufort
Gauteng	White	Urban	Formal	Middle	Afrikaans	Male	Melville
Gauteng	White	Urban	Formal	High	English/ Afrikaans	Male	Melville
Gauteng	Black African	Urban	Informal	Low	Sepedi	Male	Winnie Mandela
Gauteng	Black African	Urban	Informal	Low	Sepedi	Female	Winnie Mandela
Gauteng	Black African	Urban	Informal	Domestic Workers	Sesotho	Female	Diepsloot
Gauteng	Black African	Urban	Formal	Low	Sesotho	Male	BraamFischerville (Soweto)
Gauteng	Black African	Urban	Formal	Low	Sesotho	Female	BraamFischerville (Soweto)
Gauteng	Black African	Urban	Formal	Middle	Sesotho	Male	Chiawelo (Soweto)
KZN	Indian	Urban	Formal	Low	English	Male	Phoenix
KZN	Indian	Urban	Formal	Low	English	Female	Phoenix
KZN	Indian	Urban	Formal	Middle	English	Male	Chatsworth
KZN	Indian	Urban	Formal	High	English	Male	Chatsworth
KZN	Indian	Urban	Formal	High	English	Female	Chatsworth
KZN	Black African	Rural	Formal and Former Homeland	Low	IsiZulu	Male	Dududu (Port Shepstone)
KZN	Black African	Rural	Formal and Former Homeland	Low	IsiZulu	Female	Dududu (Port Shepstone)
KZN	Black African	Rural	Farm/Plantation	Low	IsiZulu	Male	Seven Oaks (Greytown)
KZN	Black African	Rural	Farm/Plantation	Low	IsiZulu	Female	Seven Oaks (Greytown)
KZN	Black African	Urban	Informal	Low	IsiZulu	Male	Clermont
KZN	Black African	Urban	Informal	Low	IsiZulu	Female	Clermont
KZN	Black	Urban	Formal	Mid	IsiZulu	Male	Luganda

	African						
KZN	Black African	Urban	Formal and Former Homeland	Mid	IsiZulu	Female	Umlazi
Limpopo	Black African	Rural	Formal and Former Homeland	Low	Venda	Male	Duthini (Thohoyandou)
Limpopo	Black African	Rural	Formal and Former Homeland	Low	Venda	Female	iTsani (Thohoyandou)
Limpopo	Black African	Rural	Formal and Former Homeland	Low	Tsonga	Male	Mavambe (Giyani)
Limpopo	Black African	Rural	Formal and Former Homeland	Low	Tsonga	Female	Mchipisi (Giyani)
Limpopo	Black African	Urban	Formal and Former Homeland	Middle	Venda	Male	Thohoyandou
Limpopo	Black African	Urban	Formal and Former Homeland	Middle	Venda	Female	Thohoyandou
North West	Black African	Rural	Formal and Former Homeland	Low	Tswana	Male	Lokaleng (Mafikeng)
North West	Black African	Rural	Formal and Former Homeland	Low	Tswana	Female	Lokaleng (Mafikeng)
W Cape	Coloured	Urban	Formal	Low	Afrikaans	Male	Scottsville
W Cape	Coloured	Urban	Formal	Low	Afrikaans	Female	Phillipi
W Cape	Coloured	Urban	Formal	Middle	Afrikaans	Male	Malibu (Eersteriver)
W Cape	Coloured	Urban	Formal	Middle	Afrikaans	Female	Heideveld
W Cape	Coloured	Urban	Formal	High	Afrikaans	Male	Ocean View
W Cape	Coloured	Urban	Formal	High	Afrikaans	Female	Milnerton
W Cape	Coloured	Rural	Farm/Plantation	Low	Afrikaans	Male	Kaapzicht Farm
W Cape	Black African	Urban	Informal	Low	Xhosa	Male	Thembani (Khayelitsha)
W Cape	Black African	Urban	Informal	Low	Xhosa	Female	Khayelitsha
W Cape	Black African	Urban	Formal	Low	Xhosa	Male	Gugulethu
W Cape	Black African	Urban	Formal	Low	Xhosa	Female	Gugulethu

A total of 52 focus groups were undertaken, four of which were eliminated during the quality control process.

## Appendix 2: Focus Group Question Schedule with instructions for facilitators

(Instructions for the Facilitator are in *Italics*)

### About the group

*The purpose of this first section is to explain to participants what is going to happen in the focus group and put them at ease about confidentiality and privacy issues, as well as any other concerns that they might have. This section takes place BEFORE the tape recorder is explained and turned on. Should there be questions or concerns that the participants raise with the facilitator they should be answered at this stage. If the participants ask for further details about the project it is best to answer using words taken from the preamble (below), this is so as to avoid biasing the discussion. Again, it is vital not to mention the word poverty until the appropriate part of the discussion (Q7 onwards)*

- Thank you for coming today.
- We can expect to finish at about X o'clock
- Where the toilets are.
- Refreshments (give details)
- Incentives R75
- Confidentiality of the project: anonymity will be preserved as far as possible, no-one's name will be published or otherwise deliberately made public.
- Confidentiality of participants: it is important that group members also respect each others confidentiality and do not reveal anything that is said within the group.
- Do remember that you may see other group members after the group. We would encourage you not to say anything you might regret tomorrow.
- Everyone has a right to be heard so please do not interrupt when someone else is talking. There is no right answer, we are interested in hearing everyone's views on the topics we are discussing.
- We are recording the focus group so that we can listen again to what everyone says so that nothing is missed and that no-one's views are forgotten. We are not recording the focus group in order to identify people afterwards or so that we can name people.
- The questions being asked are general questions about social issues in South Africa, they are not about confidential matters about yourselves. Should there be any question that you do not feel comfortable answering you are free to decline to answer it. If at any time you want to stop taking part you are free to leave at any time. However, I can assure you that none of the questions are about personal matters and I think it unlikely that you will feel uncomfortable answering them.
- When you first speak can you please give your first name so that we can tell who is speaking when we come to listen to the tapes afterwards. Your name will never be released or used in any way which could identify you.

### **Personal Introductions**

The following should introduce themselves to the group:

The facilitator  
The translator  
The observer(s)  
Group members

### **SWITCH ON TAPE RECORDER**

*Test quality of Recording:*

*Check that recording is audible by asking participants to say their first names (we do not need to know people's family names because this may raise doubts about confidentiality) and then rewind the tape to check everyone can be clearly heard. Ask participants to speak as clearly and loudly as possible.*

### **Confidentiality (this is to be repeated so that we have it on record)**

- Confidentiality of the project: anonymity will be preserved as far as possible, no-one's name will be published or otherwise deliberately made public.
- Confidentiality of participants: it is important that group members also respect each others confidentiality and do not reveal anything that is said within the group.
- We are recording the focus group so that we can listen again to what everyone says so that nothing is missed and that no-one's views are forgotten. We are not recording the focus group in order to identify people afterwards or so that we can name people.
- The questions being asked are general questions about social issues in South Africa, they are not about confidential matters about yourselves. Should there be any question that you do not feel comfortable answering you are free to decline to answer it

### **Preamble**

This project is being undertaken by the University of Oxford and the University of Fort Hare.

The constitution is based on the principles of democracy, equality, social justice, and non-discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, disability, etc. with the aim of establishing and building a single society. We are talking to people across the country and looking at what all South Africans think are the essential things that each and every South African must have, be able to do, and have access to. It is important that as many different viewpoints as possible are heard.

### A. Necessities for South African society

No.	Question
Q1a	<p>To begin the discussion, we will start with a question about communication. If someone needs to get in touch with a friend urgently who lives in a different area, how would they contact their friend?</p> <p><i>Purpose: Q1a and Q1b are designed to lead into the subsequent discussion and get the participants thinking about the issues we are interested in.</i></p> <p><i>Instructions: Every participant MUST answer this question. Work from one end of the group to the other.</i></p>
Q1b	<p>In your opinion, is it essential for a person to have a telephone of their own?</p> <p><i>Purpose: Q1a and Q1b are designed to lead into the subsequent discussion and get the participants thinking about the issues we are interested in.</i></p> <p><i>Instructions: Every participant MUST answer this question. Work from one end of the group to the other.</i></p>
Q2a	<p>We have discussed whether it is essential to have a telephone, now can we discuss other essentials. What are the essential things that we think each and every South African:</p> <p><i>Purpose: Q2a (including parts i, ii, and iii) broadens the discussion to generate a list of essentials for life in South Africa. This question should create a list of 'Socially Perceived Necessities'. The question aims to cover 3 dimensions of essentials.</i></p> <p><i>(i) the 'must have' element aims to identify essential items, possessions and goods.</i></p> <p><i>(ii) the 'must be able to do' part aims to identify essential activities.</i></p> <p><i>(iii) the 'must have access to' part aims to identify essential services.</i></p> <p><i>The reason that we begin with the 'must have' part of the question is that participants will find it easiest to come up with items and goods. The items and goods (e.g. telephone) are then to be used to prompt for activities (e.g. contact friends/family, look for work etc.) and access (e.g. telecommunication facilities). It is not necessary to ask parts i, ii, and iii as separate questions as long as good, activities and services are all covered. Often participants will raise activities or access issues during the discussion of goods/items, this is fine, the participants suggestions should be written on the flip chart and then used to prompt for further examples e.g. "you have said education is an essential that everyone in south Africa must have, can you think of any other services that everyone must be able to access?"</i></p> <p><i>Instructions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Facilitator must write up EVERY essential that the participants mention on the flip chart. In exactly the way the participants say it and in the language of the focus group. The facilitator MUST NOT put the essentials into their own words or translate them into English.</i></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Promote discussion on contentious items- how strong is the support for these items? Why d people think it is/is not an essential? E.g. microwave.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Prompt for reasons why items are essential e.g. why is a house essential? Shelter, security...</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Prompt for greater detail e.g. food. What is an essential level/quality of food? Number of meals</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Make sure goods, activities and access are all covered. Use examples put forward by participants to prompt for further examples.</i></li> </ul>
(i)	must have?
(ii)	be able to do
(iii)	have access to
Q2b	<p>We have got a list of essentials here but I would like to know whether you think these things are also essentials.  <i>Purpose: Q2b is designed to ‘test’ some other things that might be considered essentials for adults. This question asks participants to ‘vote’ on whether they think each item or activity is an essential for each every South African.</i></p> <p><i>Instructions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>The list of essentials is at the end of the question schedule. It is divided into a section on Adult essentials and a section on essentials for children. In question 2b the facilitator will ask the ADULT items and activities only.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>The facilitator should wait until the participants have given all of their own essentials before reading from our prepared list of essentials.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>For each item on the list the facilitator should note down on the list how many participants agree that the item is an essential and how many disagree.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>For this question it is not necessary to promote discussion on the items, it is simply a matter of quickly gauging opinion.</i></li> </ul>
Q3a	<p>Now let us consider children? Are there other essential things that we think children must:  <i>Purpose: Q3a (including parts i, ii, and iii) is very similar to question 2a but it focuses on CHILDREN in particular aims to generate a list of essentials for children in South Africa. This question should create a list of ‘Socially Perceived Necessities’ for children. The question aims to cover 3 dimensions of essentials.</i></p> <p><i>(i) the ‘must have’ element aims to identify essential items, possessions and goods.</i></p> <p><i>(ii) the ‘must be able to do’ part aims to identify essential activities.</i></p> <p><i>(iii) the ‘must have access to’ part aims to identify essential services.</i></p>

	<p><i>The reason that we begin with the ‘must have’ part of the question is that participants will find it easiest to come up with items and goods. The items and goods (e.g. telephone) are then to be used to prompt for activities (e.g. contact friends/family, look for work etc.) and access (e.g. telecommunication facilities).</i></p> <p><i>Instructions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Facilitator must write up EVERY essential that the participants mention on the flip chart. In exactly the way the participants say it and in the language of the focus group. The facilitator MUST NOT put the essentials into their own words or translate them into English.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Promote discussion on contentious items- how strong is the support for these items? Why do people think it is/is not an essential? E.g. going to children’s movies</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Prompt for reasons why items are essential e.g. why are toys essential? Reason might include: that toys are Educational, fun, good for a child’s development... etc.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Prompt for greater detail e.g. books. Possible issues to prompt might be: do you mean school books or books for general reading?</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Make sure goods, activities and access are all covered. Use examples put forward by participants to prompt for further examples.</i></p>
(i)	must have?
(ii)	be able to do
(iii)	have access to
3b	<p>We have got a list of essentials for children here but I would like to know whether you think these things are also essentials. <i>Purpose: Q3b is similar to question 2b but here the focus of attention is on CHILDREN. This question is designed to ‘test’ some other things that might be considered essentials for children. This question asks participants to ‘vote’ on whether they think each item or activity is an essential which every South African child must have.</i></p> <p><i>Instructions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>The list of essentials is at the end of the question schedule. It is divided into a section on essentials for adults and a section on essentials for children. In question 3b the facilitator will ask the CHILDREN items and activities only.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>The facilitator should wait until the participants have given as many of their own essentials as possible before reading from our prepared list of essentials.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>For each item on the list the facilitator should note down how many participants agree that the item is an essential and how many disagree.</i></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>For this question it is not necessary to promote discussion on the items, it is simply a matter of quickly gauging opinion.</i></li> </ul>
--	--

**10-15 Minute Break**

**B. Exclusion, Inclusion and Participation**

*Purpose: The purpose of Section B (Questions 4,5,6) is for participants to arrive at and define in their own terms members of society whose daily lives and lifestyles place them outside of social institutions and processes. This is an exercise that the facilitator will have to do along with participants and not rely on participants' immediate intuition on this question. The idea is to work out with participants social actors who actively participate within each one of these institutions and social actors who are not active in these institutions. Participants will have to describe in their own words those who are not taking part in the economy, education, health and cannot have families.*

*Areas to cover in this section:*

*Introducing Social spheres (Question 4)*

*Aspects of the Social spheres (Question 5)*

*The included (active participants) and the excluded (non-participants) (Question 6)*

*The facilitator will go through Questions 4,5 and 6 for each of the social spheres in turn i.e. go through the questions for the economic sphere then return to the start and do the same for the Health sphere and so on.*

*Instructions:*

- *The facilitator uses employment/work (or something else that has been raised in the discussion of essentials in question 2a) as an example of the economic sphere (see question 4 below).*
- *The facilitator then draws a circle representing the economic sphere.*
- *The facilitator then gets participants to list other aspects of the economic sphere and writes these in the circle (see question 5 below)*
- *The facilitator then asks participants to identify who are the excluded and who are the included in the economic sphere. (Question 6). The facilitator writes the name/names of those who are excluded OUTSIDE of the economic circle on the flip chart.*
- *Once the excluded have been identified for the economic sphere the facilitator repeats this process for each of the other social spheres shown in question 4. After looking at the economic sphere the remaining social spheres should be looked at in the*



<i>following order: Health, Education, Housing and Neighbourhoods, family and friends, personal security.</i>	
4.	<p>We have discussed the essentials that every South African must have. Now, let us look at different areas of life that people take part in. We have talked about the importance of employment as part of life, this is an example of the economic area of society. We have also mentioned the importance of health care, this is an example of the health area of society. Etc.</p> <div style="text-align: center;"> </div> <p><i>Instructions: the facilitator introduces each of these social spheres (mentioning them but not drawing the circles at this stage). The facilitator then tells the participants that we will begin by talking about the economic sphere.</i></p>
5.	<p>Can you mention the things that make up the economic area When you think of the economy what things might you include that together constitute South Africa's economy?</p> <p><i>Instructions: Once the economic sphere has been covered in question 6 this question is repeated for the other social spheres in the following order: Health, Education, Housing and Neighbourhoods, family and friends, personal security.</i></p> <p><i>As a guide to what we are looking for, the following are examples of aspects of each of the social spheres:</i>  <i>Economic Sphere- businesses, workers, wages, products (food, clothing etc.), shops, owners.</i>  <i>Health sphere- hospitals, clinics, doctors, nurses, psychiatrists, treatment, drugs and medicines, the sick, the injured etc.</i>  <i>Education Sphere- schools, universities, teachers, pupils, pre-schools etc.</i></p>

	<p><i>Housing and Neighbourhoods- Housing is about types of dwelling e.g. shacks, RDP houses, four-room houses, hostels, flats etc. Neighbourhoods are types of residential area e.g. suburbs, squatter settlements, townships, rural areas etc.</i></p> <p><i>Family and Friends- friends, peers, parents, siblings, work colleagues etc.</i></p> <p><i>Personal Security- protecting yourself, protecting your property e.g. you home, feeling safe etc.</i></p>	
6.	<p>From each of the social areas they will be those who do take part (the included) and those who, whilst willing, are not able to take part (the excluded). Lets look at those who are outside of these social areas ....</p> <p><i>Instructions:(once the economic sphere has been covered in question 6 this question is repeated for the other social spheres in the following order: Health, Education, Housing and Neighbourhoods, family and friends, personal security).</i></p> <p><i>As a guide to what we are looking for, the following are examples of people or groups who are excluded for each of the social spheres:</i></p> <p><i>Economic Sphere- the unemployed, people with disabilities,</i></p> <p><i>Health sphere- people who live in areas without hospitals, people who live far from hospitals, people who haven't the means to access health care.</i></p> <p><i>Education Sphere- people who cannot afford to pay for education, people who live in areas without schools.</i></p> <p><i>Housing and Neighbourhoods- people who live in squatter settlements, people who live in overcrowded houses, people who live in areas without services, the homeless.</i></p> <p><i>Family and Friends- those who live alone (e.g. the elderly), child-headed households, orphans.</i></p> <p><i>Personal Security- those who cannot afford secure housing, those who live in dangerous neighbourhoods, women in cities at night</i></p>	
<b>C. Poverty</b>		
<p><i>The remaining questions in sections C and D are more straightforward than the earlier sections and we would expect the discussion to flow reasonably well without too much intervention from the facilitator. However, the facilitator should still ask for explanations and reasons for the contributions the participants make.</i></p>		
7a	<p>Are there people in South Africa that are poor?</p> <p><i>Purpose: This question is designed to be answered quite quickly to lead into the discussion in question 7b.</i></p>	
7b	<p>Who are they?</p> <p><i>Purpose: This question aims to identify those groups in South African society who are considered poor by the</i></p>	

	<i>participants.</i>	
8.	<p>Q8 In South African society when we say a person, family or household is poor what do you understand this to mean?</p> <p><i>Purpose: Question 8 is slightly different from question 7b, although there will be some overlap. In question 8 we are interested in how participants think about and define poverty i.e. what poverty means to them.</i></p>	
<b>D. Aspirations</b>		
9.	<p>We have discussed life in South Africa as it is today but what aspects of life would you like to see improve for South Africans in the future?</p> <p><i>Purpose: This question is designed to provide closure to the discussion and to give us an idea of participant's priorities and aspirations for the future.</i></p>	
<b>E. Closing Comments</b>		
	<p>Thank you very much...</p> <p>Ask participants for the details on the form.</p> <p><i>We will provide a form asking for basic demographic details about the participants. The facilitator should ask the participants for the details after the recorder has been switched off. The facilitator should fill the forms in for the participants rather than asking them to fill them in, this is because we don't want to worry people about confidentiality by making them sign their name, also illiteracy may be a problem in some groups.</i></p> <p>Reassure people on anonymity, confidentiality etc.</p> <p>Further information</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. about the project. The information gathered from discussions such as these around the country will be used to develop a national survey that will measure the opinions of South Africans on the society in which we live.</li> <li>2. about issues raised (bring contact details for help organizations)</li> </ol>	

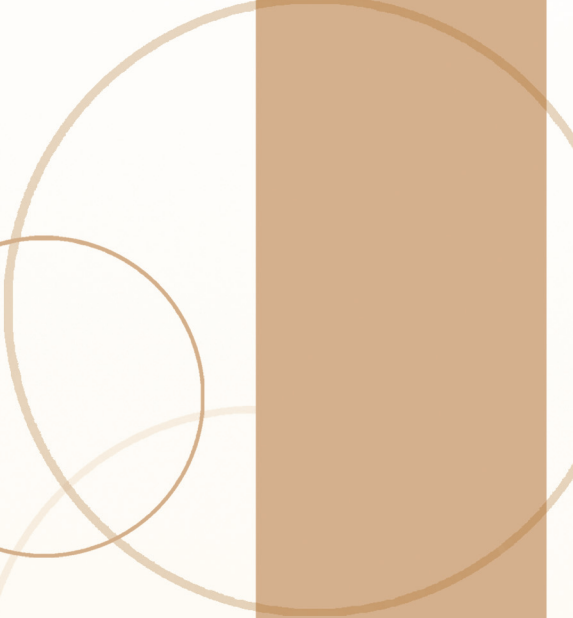
<b>List of Essentials</b>		
<b>Adult Essentials for Question 2b</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
<i>Goods/Possessions</i>		
two meals a day		
meat/fish/vegetarian equivalent every other day		
heating to warm living area of home if it is cold		
dressing gown		
two pairs of shoes		
new, not second-hand, clothes		
Air-conditioning in your house		
TV		
carpets in living room and bedrooms		
a house phone		
fridge		
a car		
a car for each adult member of the household		
a dictionary		
a religious book such as the bible, the Koran,...		
presents for friends or family on celebrations		
warm coat for when its cold		
an umbrella		
washing machine		
dishwasher		
an electric oven		
a flush toilet in the home		
savings for emergencies		
electricity in the home		
regular savings for retirement		
Beds and bedding for everyone in the household		

a house that keeps out the weather		
video cassette recorder		
money to keep home in decent state of repair		
insurance of contents of dwelling		
fresh fruit and vegetables every day		
a home computer		
cell phone		
tumble drier		
freezer		
satellite television		
CD player		
replace any worn out furniture		
replace or repair broken electrical goods such as refrigerator or washing machine		
appropriate clothes to wear for job interviews		
all medicines prescribed by your doctor		
access to the Internet		
a small amount of money to spend each week on yourself, not on your family		
being able to buy a newspaper		
being able to buy a magazine		
a table and chairs for the house		
money to pay a domestic worker		
an electric fan		
money for children's school fees		
appropriate clothes to wear for important events such as weddings or funerals		
a spare bedroom for visitors		
a shower or bath in the house		
<i>Activities</i>		
a leisure activity		

a hobby		
a holiday away from home for once a year, not visiting relatives		
celebrations on special occasions such as Christmas, birthdays, Divali		
a meal in a restaurant once a month		
attending weddings, funerals and other such occasions		
visiting friends or family in hospital or other institutions		
attending church/mosque/Synagogue or other places of worship		
being able to have friends/family around for a meal/snack/drink/braai		
visits to school, for example, sports day, parents evenings		
going into town or to a mall for the day		

<b>Children's Essentials for Question 3b</b>		
<i>Goods/possessions</i>		
Three meals a day		
Toys (e.g. dolls, play figures, teddies, etc.)		
Sports equipment		
Leisure equipment (e.g. sports equipment or a bicycle)		
Enough bedrooms for every child over 10 of different sex to have his/her own bedroom		
Computer games		
A warm coat for when its cold		
Enough bedrooms so that girls and boys over 10 do not have to share a room		
School books of her/his own (not shared)		
Non-school books of his/her own		
A bike, new or second hand		
Construction toys such as Duplo or Lego		
Educational games		
Smart shoes that fit properly e.g. for when you go into town		
At least seven pairs of underpants		

At least four cardigans/sweatshirts/sweaters or jerseys		
All the school uniform required by the school		
At least four pairs of trousers, leggings, jeans or jogging bottoms		
At least 5 Rand per week to spend on sweets		
Meat, fish or vegetarian equivalent at least twice a day		
a computer in the home suitable for school work		
Fresh fruit or vegetables at least once a day		
A safe garden or yard to play in		
Some new, not second-hand or handed-on clothes		
A carpet in their bedroom		
A bed and bedding to her/himself		
a pair of trainers/running shoes sneakers		
<i>Activities</i>		
A hobby		
a sport or leisure activity		
Celebrations on special occasions such as birthdays, Christmas other religious festival		
Swimming at least once a month		
Play group at least once a week for pre-school aged children		
A holiday away from home at least once a year with his/her family (not visiting relatives)		
Going on a school trip at least once a term for school aged children		
Friends round to play once a fortnight		



Department of Social Development  
Private Bag x901  
PRETORIA  
0001

Toll Free no: 0800 60 10 11  
Website address: [www.socdev.gov.za](http://www.socdev.gov.za)

