

APPENDIX D: SHITLHELANI COMMUNITY MEMBER QUESTIONNAIRE

Interviewer : Vonani Michael Baloyi
Interviewee : Mthavini Grace Mathebula
Date : 08.02.2005
Venue: Shitlhelani Village
Time : **17H00 to 18H23**

1. When was electricity installed at your village?

There is electricity in my household and it was installed in 1996.

2. Did you know about electricity before it was installed at your village?

I never knew anything concerning electricity.

3. What was the name of the electricity provider?

ESKOM was the electricity provider.

4. Did you receive lessons form the electricity provider as first time users of this resource? What is it that the electricity provider teaches you?

Yes, ESKOM people taught us about the usefulness of electricity, like ironing, cooking and for lights in the evening. They taught us on how to save electricity, for example, not to keep lights on in all the rooms for the whole night. We were also taught not to iron clothes daily but to set aside the day for ironing all the clothes.

5. How did the electricity provider teaches you about electricity?

ESKOM people taught us as a big group of all Shitlhelani village. They also asked us questions after the presentation, which if correctly answered we had opportunities to win things like irons, stoves, TVs that also use electricity.

6. Did you find what the electricity provider teaches you about electricity useful? In what way?

We were impressed by the way ESKOM people taught us on how to save electricity because we would spend lot of money on it if it is used incorrectly.

7. Do you have electrical appliances such as iron, stove, kettle, lights at your home? Which of these electrical appliances consume lot of electrical appliances?

I have a radio and a TV which do not consume lot of electricity. During the lessons presented by ESKOM we were taught that iron, stove, kettle, geyser and refrigerator use great amount of electricity.

8. How much electricity do you buy monthly? Do you buy the same amount of electricity monthly?

As I do not have an electric stove, I only buy R30 electricity (57, 6 KWh Units) monthly for playing radio, TV and for ironing as well as the Refrigerator. Sometimes when lot of clothes was ironed I spent up to R50 for electricity. For cooking I still use fuel wood because I do not have a stove.

9. Did electricity bring some changes to your life than before it was installed?

Yes, there is a great change to our life or I could say life is more comfortable now than it was before. Some years back we used to heat iron on fire before we could iron our clothes. But for now I just plug iron and switch it on before ironing my clothes. We couldn't buy refrigerators which keep foodstuff like chicken portions fresh for a long time before electricity was installed. Electricity provides us with light in the night which keeps the whole Village clear. Unfortunately I do not have an electric stove but those that have it cook easily rather than using firewood.

10. Is there anything that the electricity provider teaches you about electricity apart from its usefulness?

They taught us safety measures we should adhere to when using electricity, for example not to use nor touch worn out cables with wet hands as we might be shocked. We were taught that electric shock can cause death and when someone has been shocked by electricity we can rescue him/her by using dry but not wet wood (as it is a good conductor of electricity).

11. What do you use for cooking and lights when there is electricity breakdown?

When there is electricity breakdown I use candles for lighting in the evening and for cooking (we laughed) I use firewood.

12. Where did you get this firewood?

It is not easy to get firewood around our village because many trees have been chopped down nowadays but I bought it from the people who go around the village selling it (we went together to a place where there is a pile of wood that she uses for cooking).

13. Which one between fuel wood and electricity is safer to use? Explain why?

Electricity is clean and healthy to use. In this kitchen (she pointed to one of the houses where we walked together to and stand next to the cooking spot), firewood was still burning and lot of smoke coming out. You can see this smoke troubles a lot during the night after cooking because I spent long time rubbing my soaring eyes before I fall asleep.

14. Do you have committees at your village that update you from time to time about how to use electricity safely?

We do not have committees in our village set up for educating community people about electricity except the ESKOM people themselves who sometimes teach about it over the radio (Munghana Lonene).

15. I have observed many people from the village who have electricity in their homes going to the veld, chopping down trees and setting veld fires for fuel wood. Do you think that it is good for people to continue chopping down trees and setting veld fires for fuel wood?

It is not a good idea, because (she pointed to a place which was once densely forested but now cleared of trees) when strong wind blows our houses which were initially protected by trees will be destroyed. I would rather say that the chopping of trees should be stopped once and for all. I wish that if all people could afford to buy electric stoves and utilize electricity in their homes, then deforestation could be minimized.

- 16 There is an arbor day, that is , the day on which many people throughout the world plant trees. Do you also plant trees on this day? If yes or no, explain why?**

I have heard about it but I have not planted trees on that day (we laughed together). I have tried on several occasions to plant mango trees on my yard but as you can see that there is no fence, they were always destroyed by domestic animals. I gave up to plant trees because of that and until such time when my yard is fenced. Nonetheless, I still consider the importance of trees as wind breakers.

- 17. Nowadays you will hear most people complaining about the global warming (rising of the earth's temperature). What do you think might be the causes of the change in earth's climatic conditions?**

The present climatic conditions differ a great deal to the once we had some years backward. Few years ago when temperature rises we would expect rain to cool us down but that has changed. I think that this (rise in earth's temperature) is caused by the absence of trees (we laughed together). [I indicated to her that deforestation and veld fires are some of the causes of global warming).

- 18. What lesson have you learned from the conversation that I had with you and what can you teach others about using electricity in order to protect the natural environment?**

Today I have learnt that the present climatic conditions are caused by for example veld fires and chopping down of trees. I will spread this message to whomever I will see cutting down trees or setting veldfires. If it needs be I will report those that will continue committing these unlawful actions to the headman in order to restore our natural environment.