

APPENDIX 2

Research Methodology

1) Interviews with former and current DLA personnel and land reform activists

I attempted to interview individuals who had key positions in particular areas of the land reform programme (from formulation to implementation), as well as, individuals with extensive expertise in particular areas of the programme. Interviews with local and provincial members of the DLA were mainly conducted in Mpumalanga, to coincide with the fieldwork I conducted in the area.

Interviews took between 1 and 5 hours and consisted of a qualitative and structured questionnaire (for comparative purposes) followed by a more informal discussion focussing on the individual's area of expertise. The structured interview was divided into several sections, covering the early 1990s, the ANC's position on land reform, the role of non-governmental organisations, the role of the World Bank, the Pilot Programme, Restitution, Redistribution, tenure reform in the former homelands, tenure reform for farm workers and labour tenants and gender. Discussions on violence/ land invasions normally took place during the informal sections of the interviews. These discussions would inevitably include analysis of the Zimbabwean and Brazilian land reform experiences. In most cases, interviewees were then asked to draw lessons from the international experiences with which they were familiar. The informal section of the interviews also focussed on issues such as personal experiences and predictions for the future of land reform in South Africa.

The majority of respondents, who are currently employed by the Department of Agriculture and Land Affairs (especially those in middle and lower levels of the department), asked to remain anonymous. What can only be described as a "fear" among employees of the DLA must be a sure sign that, as one respondent put it, "*all is not well in the Department of Agriculture*". A number of land reform activists, also chose to remain anonymous. I understood that this request had something to do with their wishes to retain amicable relationships with the DLA and, in some cases, their involvement with the Landless Peoples' Movement (which was in the early stages of formation at the time) coupled with visits from the National Intelligence Agency.

The greatest shortcoming with this part of the fieldwork was my failure to obtain interviews with members of the Department of Agriculture's current leadership. I made numerous attempts to set up interviews with key individuals – a frustrating and bureaucratic experience. Each attempt involved endless telephone conversations (as I was transferred from one official to another), and several letters, faxes and e-mails to the various spokespersons, secretaries and representatives concerned. Twice I managed to set up interviews but both times I was told that the interview had been cancelled when I arrived in Pretoria. Journalists and former members of staff of the DLA will attest to the difficulty in gaining access to the current leadership.

2) Fieldwork at the Sheba and Solane projects in Mpumalanga

These two communities were chosen because they represent two extremes. The Solane redistribution project is probably the most successful land reform project in Mpumalanga. The Sheba Trust project, on the other hand, is probably the least successful land reform project in the province.

After being introduced to the two communities, by a TRAC employee, in May 2001, I spent approximately one week getting to know some of the individuals concerned and attempting to corroborate my observations of the projects with the information the Department of Land Affairs had provided. In June 2001, accompanied by the DLA project officer for the area, I spend two days with each community, conducting quantitative interviews. Thereafter, I spent two weeks (dividing my time between the two communities) conducting qualitative and unstructured interviews, attending group discussions and participating in as much informal conversation as possible. In September 2001, I returned to spend another week with each community.

As mentioned above, the first set of interviews I conducted at Sheba and Solane were qualitative. There were standard questions - i.e. how many hectares people had access to, how many people were employed, how many children went to school, did people participate in decision-making, how many women were on the elected committees and so on. I soon abandoned this approach. There were two main reasons for this. Firstly, much of the qualitative information could be obtained elsewhere and could easily be verified. Secondly, I found that people were either uncomfortable, or uninterested, when faced with a long list of questions.

When I returned I again set up individual interviews. Although I steered the interviews to cover a number of issues, the interviews were largely unstructured. These interviews were more insightful as people were less guarded and sometimes clearly enjoyed relating their experiences. In the Solane case, most of the interviews were conducted in people's homes. At Sheba, a large number of these conversations took place during car trips to and from Nelspruit or Baberton. Group discussions included formal meetings – in Solane these took place in a community hall or on the farm itself, at Sheba these mainly took place outside. Informal group discussions took place at, for example, dinner times. These were often the most interesting and sometimes resulted in arguments amongst community members, particularly at Sheba.

I selected a number of individuals to ensure a representative sample – i.e. elderly men with farming experience, widows, single mothers, married women, educated and uneducated young people, a local ANC representative, committee members, chairpersons, employed and unemployed individuals, farm workers and so on. Thereafter, the interviews were conducted randomly.

The group discussions at Sheba were very successful, in the sense that everybody participated and disagreements were voiced without restraint. At the Solane community discussions, however, women tended not to speak in front of their husbands and/or

fathers. It was necessary to interview the female members of the Solane community when their husbands were not home.

In some cases, community members acted as interpreters. It is probably inevitable that one loses some of the intent or actual information through translation. However, the majority of the interviews could be conducted without interpreters. When I needed interpreters, I tried to use different individuals in each case; to avoid one set of bias and in an attempt to ensure that interviewees felt free to speak - for example, a female interpreter when interviewing women at Solane.

3. Meeting with the Xhmani San Community

I also had the opportunity to accompany the former Minister of Land Affairs, Derek Hanekom, to a community meeting with the Xhmani San on 8 September 2002. With the exception of the interview I subsequently conducted with Isak Kuiper (the community's spokesperson) I spent the day as an observer (i.e. I generally did not participate in the discussion and merely took notes). The Minister had been invited to discuss with, and assist, the community with a pending crisis – i.e. potentially losing their recently acquired land as a result of bad debt acquired by an unrepresentative CPA (see chapter four).