

Appendix 9

Guide questions for the Focus Group discussion with woman-headed families held at the Bophelong Library on 18 December 2008, 9am to 2pm

Introduction

The aim of the Focus Group is to deepen our understanding of social reproduction in woman-headed families in a black working class township in contemporary South Africa. The women have different ages, different generations of black women headed families. Discuss the social relations within the woman headed family through four main areas, namely:

Consumption patterns (the nature of, the choice of food eaten on a daily basis, clothes, school, uniforms etc);

Finances (income and expenditure, access and forms of income, management of income);

Division of labour within the home and decision-making (housework and childcare, income and expenses,) and

Culture and tradition (within the home, relations with kin (especially males), attitude and relations to men)

A key question is:

How is patriarchy manifested and reproduced in black women headed families?

Aims of the focus group

To understand more fully the social relations that exist within black female headed families in the context of the restructuring of work in contemporary SA.

To get clear understandings of the opinions and views of participants.

Note to facilitator

- ✓ There are no right or wrong answers, we need to unravel and understand what exists.
- ✓ Stimulate the Full participation of participants to encourage openness and tolerance in their responses
- ✓ Get everyone to speak and make their views heard
- ✓ Respectful openness, across different generations of women
- ✓ Confidentiality
- ✓ Trust amongst all.
- ✓ Follow-ups will be individual through indepth interviews and collective as a group.

Areas of focus – guide questions for discussion
--

Family

What is a family?

- What makes up a family?
- How do we build a family? What comes into this process - identify
- What is a female headed family?
- What does it mean to be the 'head' of the family? Are you comfortable with this? if you had a choice what would you prefer?
- Early life – how did you own family life, growing up, influence you to understand 'what is a family, your attitudes and expectations?
- How do we bring up children – what is involved in this?
- Would we bring children up differently if men in the home?
- *What would be different in the family if men in the home? How does a female headed family differ from one headed by a man or where married couple of heterosexuals? Are their advantages and disadvantages?
- Is there a broader family outside your immediate family? How is this cultivated, kept alive, strengthened and/or weakened?

Income and work

What are the main forms of income in the family/

Who works in the family, and what do they do?

Division of labour in the family?

- Who does what work?
- How is this decided? Who decides?
- Is gender a factor? Age? Capacity? Power?
- In the evenings and/or holidays, what do your family do? What do you do together?
- Survival strategies of female headed families
- Is this different to families where men present?

Decision-making in the family

- Who makes the decisions in the home, how are decisions made, are all decisions dealt with in the same way?
- What decisions cause conflict/problems
- What decisions don't cause conflict/problems
- How are resources/income distributed in the family? Clothes, uniforms, etc. does this cause conflict?
- Is this different in younger/different generations of women
- When it comes to culture – who makes decisions?
- When do people/men who don't live with us, make decisions in the family?

Relations with Men

- What are our relations with men, our fathers, brothers, lovers, fathers of our children – do they differ?
- What is your opinion of (heterosexual) relations between men and women
- Do men respect children, their children, women, the mothers of their children?

- Men and paternity – not taking responsibility, how do we understand this?
- Are men dependable? How do we understand our relationship to men? We continue to have children with them?
- How do we break the cycle of abuse, non-maintenance, getting men to take responsibility. How do we bring up men?
- What do we teach girls and boys?

Emotional support for women?

- How do we cope when we have stress, managing the resources, making it stretch?
- Who do we turn to?

Sexuality

- ✓ Virginitv – is it important?
- ✓ Should women also enjoy sex?
- ✓ As single female headed families should we enjoy safe and protected sex when we want it? what constraints exists?
- ✓ What do we do/did we do when we wanted to have sex, and not to live with the men permanently?

Hiv/aids

- ✓ This is an important issue in all our families and in our community. How does this impact on family life?, what and how? Resources, the food we need to buy etc?
- ✓ What are the important issues to deal with in the family?
- ✓ In the community?
- ✓ In our broader society

Culture and Patriarchy

- ❖ What are the roles of men and women in our family
- ❖ How does culture fit in? ancestors/ badimo
- ❖ Interacting in our daily lives, in communities, with government, the clinic for instance.
- ❖ How is patriarchy reproduced in our homes? What is our role as women?