

ATTITUDES TO FIREARMS

THE CASE OF KWA MASHU, TSOLO-QUMBO AND LEKOA-VAAL

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LIST OF TABLES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Reason for the survey

How to read this monograph

Research methodology

Aim of the research project

Overview of the three case studies

Interpretation of findings

CHAPTER 2

INDICATORS OF FIREARM PENETRATION

Chapter overview

What is firearm penetration

Most common type of crime

Levels of violence and crime

Level of household victimisation

Level of gang-related activity

Frequency of hearing gunshots

Change in the number of firearms

Interpretation of findings

CHAPTER 3

LEVELS OF FIREARM OWNERSHIP

Chapter overview

Associated firearm possession

Ease of access to a firearm

Who obtained a firearm in response to crime

Interpretation of findings

CHAPTER 4

THE NEED TO REDUCE FIREARMS

Chapter overview
Desire for reduction in firearms
Willingness to discourage firearm ownership
Interpretation of findings

CHAPTER 5 ACTION TO IMPROVE FIREARM CONTROLS

Chapter overview
Structure turned to for conflict resolution
Structures identified for improving firearm controls
Actions to improve firearm controls
Interpretation of findings

CHAPTER 6 FORMS OF COMMUNICATION AND INTERACTION

Chapter overview
Frequency and forms of communication
Membership of different structures
Interpretation of findings

CONCLUSION

NOTES

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1
Sample demographics of the survey by settlement area

TABLE 2
Most common types of crime by settlement area

TABLE 3
Change in the level of crime by settlement area

TABLE 4
Change in the level of violence by settlement area

TABLE 5
Level of victimisation of household by settlement area

TABLE 6
Prevalence of gangs by settlement area

TABLE 7
Strength of gangs by settlement area (mean score)

TABLE 8

Frequency of hearing gunshots by settlement area

TABLE 9

Frequency of hearing gunshots by settlement area (mean score)

TABLE 10

Change in the number of firearms by settlement area

TABLE 11

Change in the number of firearms by settlement area (mean score)

TABLE 12

Reason for decrease in the number of firearms by settlement area 39

TABLE 13

Reasons for the change in the number of firearms

TABLE 14

Reason for increase in the number of firearms by settlement area

TABLE 15

Associated firearm possession by settlement area

TABLE 16

Ease of access to a firearm by settlement area

TABLE 17

Ease of access to a firearm by age

TABLE 18

Ease of access to a firearm by gender

TABLE 19

Relationship between ease of access to a firearm and associated firearm penetration by settlement area

TABLE 20

Willingness to own a firearm by settlement area

TABLE 21

Willingness to own a firearm by age

TABLE 22

Willingness to own a firearm by gender

TABLE 23

Reason for willingness or unwillingness to own a firearm

TABLE 24

Level of sympathy to taking action by settlement area, gender and age

TABLE 25

Willingness to take action to discourage firearm ownership by settlement area, gender and age

TABLE 26

Source turned to for help following an argument

TABLE 27

Source turned to for help by settlement area

TABLE 28

Source turned to for help by gender and age

TABLE 29

Source turned to for help by willingness to discourage firearm ownership

TABLE 30

Best structure for improving firearm control in the short and long term

TABLE 31

Best structure for improving firearm control in the short term by other variables

TABLE 32

Recommendations for action to improve firearm controls

TABLE 33

Recommendations for action to improve firearm controls by settlement area

TABLE 34

Recommendations for action to improve firearm controls by gender

TABLE 35

Frequency of exposure to different forms of communication by settlement area

TABLE 36

Frequency of exposure to different forms of communication by gender

TABLE 37

Frequency of exposure to different forms of communication by age

TABLE 38

Level of membership

TABLE 39

Number of structures belonged to by willingness to discourage firearm ownership

TABLE 40

Average number of organisations belonged to by settlement area and gender

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The research presented in this monograph aimed to outline indicators of firearm penetration and attitudes to firearms by looking at three case-study areas: Lekoa-Vaal, Kwa Mashu and Tsolo-Qumbo. The three communities in these case studies were chosen because they are historically, socially and economically disadvantaged, with serious crime and firearm-related problems. It was felt that 'softer' case-study areas would negate the applicability of the findings to the purpose of the research: the resolution of firearm accumulation. Through gaining a better understanding of some of the dynamics at play in the case-study communities, the researchers hoped to determine whether there would be willingness to reduce firearms in the community; and what the community would be willing to do to address firearm proliferation. The main findings were as follows:

- The prevalence of firearms in all the case-study communities is increasing. This is directly indicated by the frequency with which gunshots are heard, as well as by the perception of the respondents. The youth are viewed - both by their peers and by the adult women in the community - as the group responsible for the increase in firearms, as they are the group seen carrying firearms, particularly the youth involved in gang activities.
- The main reason cited across the sample for the increase in the number of firearms was the high level of accessibility. This is particularly conducive to meeting the demands of the youth. The youth want firearms, and they can get the firearms. Although the study did not focus on whether the firearms were licensed or not, it is probable that large proportions of these firearms are not licensed. This means that the users of the weapon were not screened in any way for their suitability to carry a firearm, or their ability to use a firearm with competence. The highest level of firearm ownership was evident in Lekoa-Vaal formal areas and the settlement of Tsolo-Qumbo. Here too, ease of access is seen as a contributing factor to the increased firearm penetration. In the two focus groups, it was evident that accessibility was closely linked to an internal source of firearms within the case-study settlements.
- The second reason given for the increase in firearms was that they were obtained in reaction to the perception of rising crime and violence. It is probable that should the crime trends continue to increase, women in the community could start to carry firearms too - especially in the light of the feeling that the police in these settlements are not doing an adequate job.
- The highest ratio of violent crime to property crime was evident in Kwa Mashu formal settlements, followed by the Lekoa-Vaal informal settlement and the Kwa Mashu informal settlement areas.
- The highest increase in violence was measured in the Lekoa-Vaal formal settlement.
- Crime increased by more than two-thirds compared to previous years in all settlement areas except the Tsolo-Qumbo settlement area.
- The highest level of victimisation, increase in crime and level of gang activities occurred in the Kwa Mashu township (in the formal settlement, the informal settlement and the hostel areas), as well as the highest frequency of hearing gunshots.
- Respondents from Kwa Mashu indicated the greatest perceived increase in firearms compared with the other areas.

- The main reasons respondents gave for considering owning a gun were linked to issues of self-defence or protection. Looking at existing action against crime, it was found that in the Lekoa-Vaal urban area and Tsolo-Qumbo, 13.7% and 9.3% respectively of the respondents at a household level had already obtained a firearm as a crime-prevention measure.
- Across all three case-study areas there was support for better control over firearms and a desire to live in a community without firearms. The variations within the sample across settlement area, gender and age were not significant enough to single out one sub-sample as being substantially more convinced of the need to reduce firearms than any other group (with the possible exception of female respondents, respondents from Tsolo-Qumbo and respondents under the age of 20 years). Respondents saw it as desirable to reduce the number of firearms in their areas, and they would be willing to take action to do so - if and when the security situation improved. Female respondents were more supportive of this than male respondents.
- Reflecting both cultural, political and geographic influences, the respondents from Tsolo-Qumbo supported the traditional authority. This was reflected in who they identified as conflict resolution mediator, and what they considered the best structure for improving firearm controls. Apart from shying away from community-involvement type initiatives, the Tsolo-Qumbo respondents were pretty much on a par with the Lekoa-Vaal respondents as regards their recommendations.
- In the urban environments of Lekoa-Vaal and Kwa Mashu, the police were used to resolve arguments, or alternatively the matter was resolved by the respondents themselves with the help of family, friends and neighbours. The police and defence force were seen as the main role-players in action to improve controls, in conjunction with the community and existing community structures.
- The respondents identified a range of recommendations for action. These would be a useful guide to policy makers by showing what these communities would support. Of the actions recommended, 30.2% were for community-based initiatives. While the development and implementation of firearm-related policy is taking place at a national level, little grass-roots impact will be felt. During this period, the community needs to design and implement its own strategies to control firearms.

CHAPTER 1 **INTRODUCTION**

Reason for survey

One of the three pillars of the Arms Management Programme's working model to reduce small arms proliferation is resolution₁. Resolution implies those medium-term actions which lead to the reduction of accumulated small arms as well as reducing existing local demand (that is, future accumulation of small arms).

In order to design and implement resolution mechanisms for small arms, it would be necessary to both broaden and deepen our understanding of communities' attitudes to small arms. Primary data collection was seen as a precursor to this. Different research methodologies were applied

within three case-study communities. These included a quantitative survey; focus groups; and qualitative one-on-one interviews providing a snapshot of the youth's attitudes to firearms.

These three communities were chosen as case studies because they were economically disadvantaged, with serious crime and firearm-related problems. It was felt that 'softer' case-study areas would negate the applicability of the findings to the purpose of the research: the resolution of firearm accumulation.

How to read this monograph

A quantitative survey is a useful mechanism for obtaining information about a community's attitudes to and perceptions of firearms. Qualitative methods, such as focus groups and one-on-one interviews, provide better tools for obtaining insight into the more sensitive issues of firearm sources, levels of ownership and the nature of firearm penetration. For this reason, different sections of the monograph draw more heavily on different sources of information.

The record of the information collected in this research project is grouped in terms of the insight it provides into a specific research topic (as defined in the various chapters of this monograph), as opposed to the format in which it was collected. For this reason, the various sections of the report allude to the source of the information only briefly, without justifying the choice of methodology. For more background information on the methodology considerations, please always refer back to the following section on the research methodology.

Information obtained from the youth snapshot is indicated by a shaded box, while a broad grey margin strip signifies that the information was obtained from the focus groups. All data tables from Chapter 2 onwards comprise information gathered in the quantitative survey.

Research methodology

This monograph represents the synthesis of a number of discrete research projects linked by two common threads:

- similar research objectives, focused on deepening the understanding of attitudes to firearms and strategies to resolve firearm proliferation; and
- the fact that all research was conducted in one of three communities where firearm misuse is commonplace.

The four research projects were as follows:

- quantitative survey of 2530 respondents across the communities of Kwa Mashu, Tsolo-Qumbo and Lekoa-Vaal
- two focus groups in Kwa Mashu (15 in the women's group and 20 in the youth focus group)
- ten focus groups in Tsolo-Qumbo (103 respondents)
- qualitative interviews with 20 youths in Kwa Mashu (snapshot)

Attention needs to be paid to the time at which the research was conducted. Some of the research was conducted in early April 1998 and the later research was conducted in July 1999.

A range of factors, some planned and some unplanned, have influenced the decision to publish the information only at this time.

Quantitative survey

The main component of the research methodology was the quantitative survey. A stratified random sample was applied within each case-study area. The predetermined demographic categories were stratified by gender, race, age and settlement area. The fieldwork for the three community quantitative surveys took place in September 1999. In the community of Tsolo-Qumbo, DRA-Development was in the field from 13 to 20 September. In the case of Lekoa-Vaal, Nala Consultancy was in the field from 6 to 29 September. In the community of Kwa Mashu, surveys were completed during the period 1 September to 27 October, with the main concentration occurring between 7 September and 5 October. Njobo-Nebandla oversaw this process.

Given the stratified random sampling, the main variable for this analysis is based on residential settlement type and location (referred to as "settlement area" in this document). This variable forms the defining parameter of where the actions to reduce firearms will be geographically located. The table below gives the breakdown of the sample by this variable.

Table 1: Sample demographics of the survey by settlement area

Case study	Frequency	Settlement area	Frequency	Percent
Tsolo-Qumbo	755	Tsolo-Qumbo Rural homestead	755	29.8
Lekoa-Vaal	806	Lekoa-Vaal Urban formal	473	18.7
		Lekoa-Vaal Urban informal	278	11
		Lekoa-Vaal Hostels	55	2.2
Kwa Mashu	969	Kwa Mashu Urban formal	748	29.6
		Kwa Mashu Urban informal	176	7
		Kwa Mashu Hostels	45	1.8
Total	2530		2530	100.1

The other two key variables used in the analysis are the gender and age of the respondents. Gender plays a definitive role in the life experiences of people, clearly impacting on the attitudes and perceptions of respondents. Where significant variations were evident between male and female respondents, the findings of the survey are so presented. Similarly, in instances where people of different ages had significantly divergent views, the data are so presented. It was evident following the first qualitative survey₂ of this nature - as written up by both Meek₃ and Hansmann₄ in *Society Under Siege III* - that the quantitative survey falls short in that it often does not provide the space for confidence building between the interviewer and the interviewee. Under these circumstances, some of the more subtle perceptions of firearms are not uncovered. This is a common problem when undertaking research into the issue of firearms - especially when large proportions of firearms in communities are illicit. It was for this reason that the focus groups were incorporated into this study.

Focus groups

The use of focus groups was identified as the most appropriate methodology for gathering

information about illicit firearm-related activities within communities, as well as for providing information with which the quantitative findings could be contrasted. Given cost considerations, it was decided that focus groups would be conducted in only two case-study areas. It was considered adequate to use focus groups from one urban case study (namely, Kwa Mashu) and one rural case study (namely, Tsolo-Qumbo). In Tsolo-Qumbo, the focus groups were handled by DRA-Development, while Njobo Nebandla undertook to conduct the focus groups in Kwa Mashu. In both Kwa Mashu and Tsolo-Qumbo, the same focus group prompt sheet was used to guide the discussions. The focus groups were conducted in Zulu in Kwa Mashu and in Xhosa in Tsolo-Qumbo. These discussions were transcribed and translated into English. In Kwa Mashu, two focus groups were arranged. The women's focus group comprised 15 women, and the youth focus group comprised 20 people (of which 10 were male and 10 were female participants). Ten focus groups were conducted in the villages within the Tsolo and Qumbo areas.

As a research methodology, the conducting of focus groups is a useful tool for obtaining information. To be properly applied, this requires an experienced facilitator, to ensure that the transcription does not record only the opinions of the most vocal members in the discussion group, to ensure that the group dynamics are recorded, and interventions made to allow all participants time to raise their views.

As a methodology, focus groups have come under much critical attention in recent times - especially in terms of the desirable size, selection of participants and length of the focus group. The context in which the focus group is to be applied, as well as the subject of the focus group, strongly informs the extent to which these factors can be controlled by the facilitator. A gap identified from the focus group was the lack of information on the broader context and socio-economic pressures informing the attitudes of young people. It was therefore seen as necessary to complement the research through the use of qualitative interviews to give a voice to the youth.

Snapshot of youth

The use of snapshot qualitative interviews was seen as an effective way to obtain information about the attitudes of young people in Kwa Mashu township. It was felt that their opinions were often not effectively canvassed through quantitative surveys and community channels, and hence this separate piece of research was commissioned focusing purely on young people. The snapshot interviews were important in gauging the perspective of the youth as a possible target group for a firearm reduction campaign.

As a means of information gathering, a series of one-on-one interviews was undertaken with a sample of 20 youths within the Kwa Mashu Township. Twenty juveniles living within Kwa Mashu Township were interviewed. All the respondents had been residents of Kwa Mashu Township for more than five years and were under the age of 25. Twelve male respondents and eight female respondents were interviewed. A stratified sampling method was used in order to obtain a range of opinion. Although it was intended to interview an equal number of male and female respondents, it was difficult to find female respondents who had prison records or were currently involved in criminal activities. The sample was adapted accordingly.

Each respondent was interviewed for 45 minutes. A senior field researcher, Sibusiso Msimango, was utilised for this activity, and no translation occurred in the interview. A semi-structured prompt sheet was used. The questions were asked so that the respondent would remain under the impression that the questionnaire was about contemporary culture in Kwa Mashu. It was felt that placing too much emphasis on the firearm-related aspects of the survey could bias the

findings and alienate some of the respondents.

The interviewer found it difficult to set up some of the one-on-one interviews, especially in the case of those respondents involved in 'criminal activities' or who had 'served time in prison'. As a result, in these instances the interviewer had first to approach a person who knew the respondent and set up the interview. Only after this were the introductions made to the relevant respondent. In some cases, the interviewer had to use incentives such as offering to pay for transport. Sometimes it was necessary to set up more than one interview to complete the questionnaire.

Aim of the research project

The overall research project reflects four discrete items of research. Although these were commissioned individually, they had a common aim: to obtain complementary information about firearm penetration and strategies to reduce the demand for firearms. The different research methodologies were conducive to the collection of different types of information, and thus through the use of a patchwork of methods the overall utility of the research was enhanced and the objectives achieved. The research was aimed at:

- measuring indicators of firearm penetration in order to establish the existence and identify the nature of a firearm proliferation problem;
- understanding the attitudes of the case-study communities towards firearms;
- determining whether there was a willingness in the community to reduce firearms; and
- identifying possible leverage points within the community for medium-term solutions to firearm proliferation, and methods of making these leverage points implementable.

Overview of the three case studies

The following section of the report provides an overview of the three case studies and the people living in these areas, and gives some insight into what it is like to live in these areas. The brief overviews of the three cases studies, however, can in no way do justice to the complexities of day-to-day life and survival within these settlements. An almost daily incidence of violence, gang-related problems, criminality and high levels of personal insecurity trouble all three communities. Yet, given these seemingly negative factors, people living within these settlements have assimilated these experiences into their daily existence and often show high levels of resilience. This is demonstrated particularly in the vibrancy of the youth in the Kwa Mashu youth snapshot.

The economic and spatial development of the three case-study areas was detrimentally affected by the apartheid policies of 1950 to 1990. Design and intention inherently limited the viability of these areas for economic growth, and although spatial development planning could now partially redress these, the future prospects of these areas remain poor. This, coupled with entrenched cultures of violence, inadequately functioning local government and a small rates base, implies that these conditions are in the short term set to continue. Future prospects in Kwa Mashu are perhaps better than those in Tsolo-Qumbo and Lekoa-Vaal. The Durban Metropolitan Area, under which the administration of Kwa Mashu falls, was recently selected as the best-functioning metropolitan area in South Africa.

The Lekoa-Vaal Metropolitan Area, in stark contrast, is reportedly facing financial problems. Tsolo-Qumbo is a deep rural area where government expenditure is low; rural development remains one of the lower national priorities. The snapshot of the attitudes of the youth in Kwa Mashu provides insight into the normality with which they define their environment. There is a strong sense of responsibility amongst the youth towards their household; there are fair opinions expressed about their neighbourhood; and they are quite resigned to the prospect of remaining in the township - even though their accommodation is inadequate.

Tsolo-Qumbo

The rural areas of Qumbo and Tsolo are amongst the poorest and most under-developed in the Eastern Cape Province. Tsolo is situated near the town of Umtata and Qumbo is situated approximately 75 km from Tsolo. The topography is mountainous and some of the villages can be reached only by foot or on horseback.

Most of the people in Tsolo and Qumbo are unemployed, and it is not uncommon for the houses to have no electricity or running water. The roads are in a poor state and are often closed during bad weather. The facilities available in Qumbo and Tsolo are as follows: police station, hospital, magistrate's court, some stores and taverns. Most of these buildings are in a dilapidated condition. Communication infrastructure is also weak.

Murder and stock theft are prevalent crimes in Tsolo and Qumbo. For the past five to six years there have been many mysterious killings linked to stock theft that have impacted upon cultural practices. In the Eastern Cape stock is a form of both direct and indirect income, as people both measure their wealth in terms of livestock, and rent out land for stock grazing. Between 1993 and 1999 there were over 800 deaths related to this issue. As time passed, the murder became more indiscriminate and recently the attacks have also targeted women. These attacks on women are also indiscriminate, although there are two labels used to justify these actions, namely the accusations of being an adulteress or a witch. In both cases there seems very little substance to the allegations.⁵

Lekoa-Vaal

The Lekoa-Vaal Metropolitan Area is situated south of Johannesburg's central business district, in the Gauteng Province. The metropolitan area of Lekoa-Vaal comprises just under one million people. Approximately 84% of the residents are black people, 15% are white people, while 1% of the population consists of "Coloured" people and Indian people⁶. Historically, the residents of former 'Vaal Triangle' were in the forefront of the struggle against apartheid, opposing racially discriminatory laws and actions by the state, often by violent protest. This violent reaction to conflict is still characteristic of the area, especially with regard to competition over taxi routes and amongst school-going youths.

As in Kwa Mashu, the built environment reflects the skewed settlement patterns and lack of functional and economic integration with neighbouring residential and business areas. The formation of the Lekoa-Vaal Metropolitan Area was an attempt to address historical imbalances and build a functionally integrated locality.

Kwa Mashu

Kwa Mashu is a township situated 20 km outside Durban's central business district, falling within

the Durban Metropolitan Area, in the KwaZulu-Natal Province of South Africa. Kwa Mashu has experienced high levels of criminality and gangsterism since the early 1990s.

Kwa Mashu Township is one of the oldest townships surrounding the Durban Metropolitan Area. It is now approximately 34 years old. The first people to occupy this area came from Umkhumbani (Cato Manor) in 1966. These people were forcibly removed and made to settle in Kwa Mashu. As a result, conflict was built into the fabric of the settlement, as each wave of forced resettlers resulted in a further disruption of the community and community leadership and governance structures.

Kwa Mashu snapshot: attitudes to the Kwa Mashu and other neighbourhoods

Living and growing up in a township like Kwa Mashu (or some of the settlements of Lekoa-Vaal) is difficult. Basic services and amenities are often absent and entertainment facilities are non-existent. Being on the streets at night is unsafe owing to the lack of street lighting and the absence of safe pedestrian walkways. The built environment is conducive to criminal activities and the risks of victimisation are high. (Residents in Tsolo-Qumbo are faced with similar problems to those in Kwa Mashu and Lekoa-Vaal; moreover, in a rural context these problems are exacerbated by the large distances between residential properties, making it more difficult for people in trouble to be heard or seen by neighbouring households.)

The Kwa Mashu youth respondents were asked whether they felt that the township was a good or a bad place in which to grow up. The respondents largely agreed that the township offered a vibrant environment for young people. Although some of the responses seemed romanticised, the respondents had, on the whole, positive opinions of Kwa Mashu, although they admitted that there were advantages and disadvantages.

"A bad place - young ones grow up only knowing that is to be in possession of a gun and being indulgent in deviant behaviour." - Female school dropout.

"Sometimes it is good and in other times bad." - Female, ordinary young person

"A good place to grow up." - Young female, involved in shoplifting

"You do not have to bother about other people, just do your own things and live the way you like." - Female fashion-conscious young person

"Township life is good but nowadays it is not a good place to grow up." - Male youth, ordinary young person

"There are no restrictions." - Male school dropout.

"Group association counts a lot - because for youth it is easy to be influenced by the other team members." - Male school-going pupil

Kwa Mashu snapshot: growing up and living in Kwa Mashu

The Kwa Mashu youth snapshot provides a background on 20 respondents. It is useful to understand who the respondents are and how family life impacts on their attitudes and perceptions of firearms. By all accounts the respondents had a typically South African childhood.

In the Kwa Mashu snapshot, the youth respondents described their home life. Most of the respondents came from families that ranged in size between five and nine household members. The type of house and the number of rooms in these houses varied. Most respondents lived in four-roomed houses - consisting of a two-roomed brick house with two backyard rooms. The accommodation was seen as too small for the household requirements and one respondent complained of the lack of privacy of living in such small quarters. One respondent lived in an informal shack, which he complained leaked when it rained.

The level of employment amongst household members varied. On the whole, it appeared that more female household members were employed than male household members. The forms of employment mentioned included domestic work, nursing, teaching and dressmaking. Some households relied on the pension of grandparents. At an economic level, some respondents felt that the household could not afford the things they needed and that they lived below the poverty line, relying on a single household pension. While some respondents came from more extended household structures, other households comprised nuclear families. For example, one respondent was an orphan being cared for by grandparents, another respondent's parents were divorced and yet another respondent's one parent had died.

Overall, 85% of the respondents (17 of 20) described their background as good. The reasons cited for this included the fact that they had been taught how to tell right from wrong, that they knew how to love and respect people, and that there was open communication in the household. Those respondents that felt they had a 'bad' background gave reasons that included the type of house they lived in, living in poverty and a lack of privacy.

Growing up with a 'bad' background did not necessarily translate into the perception of having had a sad childhood. Four of the 20 respondents said that they had had a sad childhood. Only one of these respondents felt that his background was bad and that his childhood was sad, which he attributed to growing up as an orphan with his grandparents. Of the remaining three respondents, one attributed the sad childhood to alcohol abuse in the household, one to poor housing and the third did not cite a reason.

The prevalence of violence in the household was high. In seven households violence occurred at some stage. In some cases it was a regular feature, and in others it occurred only under certain predictable circumstances. In three of the cases these were alcohol related.

Kwa Mashu snapshot: sense of responsibility to the household

Poor households usually rely more heavily on the assistance of younger household members for survival than do relatively wealthier households. This was demonstrated in the Kwa Mashu youth snapshot, where the youth generally showed a heightened sense of responsibility towards supporting the household.

Bearing in mind that all the Kwa Mashu youth snapshot respondents were under the age of 18, it was with considerable surprise that we found that 15 of the 20 respondents felt that they were responsible for the well-being of their family. In response to the question, "What does looking after your family involve?", there were a number of responses, as follows:

"Whatever I get I bring home to my family." - Female involved in illegal activities

"It involves doing domestic work like cutting the grass, planting flowers and trees. Cleaning the surrounding as such. And contributing financially if one is doing casual work." - Male, ordinary young person

"Doing whatever one is expected to do." - Male, ordinary young person

From the survey, it was evident that looking after the family was not the sole responsibility of any of the respondents, but a shared attitude held amongst most of the family members. In some of the cases this meant undertaking domestic chores at home if unemployed, in others paying the instalments and rent if employed or doing ad hoc casual work. There were different expectations of the male and female respondents in terms of domestic responsibilities.

There was a strong sense that being responsible in the family meant being able to contribute money. Three male respondents felt that they could not claim to be responsible if they did not have money to contribute to the household. All three of these respondents had previously been involved in criminal activities, and two had served prison sentences.

"One has got to have money in order to be a responsible person." - Respondent involved in illegal activities (selling marijuana)

"[Looking after your family] that means money. Without it you can not claim to be responsible for the well-being of your family." - Respondent who had served eight years for armed robbery. Two respondents were still attending school and explained that they were only responsible to the household after school hours, and would be once their education was completed. The one female respondent explained that after she had completed her education she would be expected to provide significantly for the family, as cited:

"[Looking after your family] means to extend or buy a house which will be sufficient for the whole family. To buy furniture, food, clothes and pay rent and other instalments." - Female school-going pupil

Interpretation of findings

The overview of the case-study communities provides an appreciation of the context in which the respondents were located. Throughout the reading of the monograph this information should be borne in mind when conceptualising strategies to reduce firearm proliferation. Dealing with firearms cannot be done in isolation from the socio-economic context within which people are located. The life experiences of individuals within households and within communities strongly inform the extent to which the proliferation of small arms can be curbed.

CHAPTER 2

INDICATORS OF FIREARM PENETRATION

Chapter overview

The chapter explores indicators of firearm penetration. Looking at both direct and indirect trends, evidence suggests that the communities of Kwa Mashu, Lekoa-Vaal and Tsolo-Qumbo do indeed have grounds for concern about the level of firearm penetration. Within these settlements, different types of area have deeper levels of firearm penetration than others.

The prevalence of firearms in the case-study communities is increasing. This is directly indicated by the frequency with which gunshots are heard as well as by the perceptions of the respondents. The focus groups indicate that the youth are those responsible for the increase in firearms as they are the main users of these weapons, as opposed to the women and very young or old men. The main reason cited across the sample for the increase in the number of firearms was the high level of accessibility.

Violent crime was considered commonplace in all three of the case-study communities. In Kwa Mashu, the most prevalent violent crime was murder. Although no information was collected on whether or not a firearm was the tool used for this crime, national murder statistics suggest that firearm-related murders are increasing as a proportion of the total number of murders. In Lekoa-Vaal and Kwa Mashu, mugging is also a significant crime involving a firearm.

What is firearm penetration?

Firearm penetration is the measure of both the extent to which a firearm culture is entrenched within the community and the extent to which the community itself depends on firearms. There were a number of indicators in the survey that provided a useful indication of the level of firearm penetration within the three communities. Some of the indicators provided more direct verification of firearm trends than others.

National crime trends suggest that firearms are more readily used in crime nowadays than in previous years. The associated increase in the use of firearms in crimes such as murder implies that information on the nature of crime in a community would provide a useful indicator of firearm penetration. Indirect indicators of firearm penetration, such as the levels of violence, gang-related activities and household victimisation, would provide similar signals.

The direct indicators of firearm penetration include the frequency with which gunshots are heard, perceptions of the change in the number of firearms in the community, the level of associated (indirect) firearm possession and the level of direct firearm access. The measurement of these would provide a gauge for determining the extent to which firearms are commonplace in the community, as well as whether or not the prevalence of firearms is an increasing phenomenon.

It is necessary to use such indicators of firearm penetration, as direct questions about firearm ownership are often not answered truthfully. This is linked to the sensitivities surrounding firearm ownership within South Africa, as well as the fact that illegal firearm ownership is common. Some people do not want to admit to the illegal possession of firearms. Others may feel that there is stereotyping or stigmatisation linked to firearm ownership, while others fear, amongst other consequences, prosecution.

Property Crimes	Housebreaking and theft	62.2	58.0	45.2	59.6	33.7	47.2	50.0	48.2
	Stock theft	4.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.9
	Sub-total	66.2	58.0	45.2	59.6	33.7	47.2	50.0	49.1
Violent crimes	Rape	4.8	7.2	11.1	6.4	9.9	6.8	4.5	7.9
	Murder	11.9	6.1	13.4	6.4	25.8	21.6	20.5	16.4
	Child abuse	0.6	1.6	1.5	0	4.0	7.4	2.3	2.6
	Mugging/armed robbery	4.4	15.2	19.5	25.5	22.2	11.9	18.2	15.7
	Car-jacking	2.5	11.0	2.7	0	4.2	5.1	4.5	5.0
	Shooting	0	0.5	4.2	2.1	0.1	0	0	0.7
	Stabbing	5.8	0	1.1	0	0.1	0	0	1.5
	Assault	1.4	0.2	0	0	0	0	0	0.4
	Sub-total	31.4	41.8	53.5	40.4	66.3	52.8	50.0	50.2
Other crimes	Sub-total	2.3	0.2	1.1	0	0	0	0	0.6
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	n =	479	429	261	47	730	176	44	2166

The symbol 'n=' is used to indicate the number of responses to a particular question.

The ratio of property crime to violent crime indicates how the misuse of firearms manifests itself differently in the various settlement areas. The table above indicates the proportion of property crime to violent crime.

Generally the ratio of 1:1 held in Lekoa-Vaal informal area, Kwa Mashu informal area and the Kwa Mashu hostels. This implies that for every one property crime that occurs, there is one violent crime. If firearms are commonplace in violent crimes, then the property crime to violent crime ratio can be used as an indicator of a change in firearms.

When analysing the answers to "What one crime occurs most in your area?", it was realised that there were a number of other questions that could have been asked to enhance the analysis, which could be included in future studies. These include the following:

- For what one type of crime do you think that you are most at risk?
- Is firearm-related crime a problem in your area? Why?
- What type of method is most commonly used to commit murders in your area?

Although there was no indication of what proportion of violent crime was committed with firearms, for the purposes of this study it is assumed that it is a significant and increasing proportion.

Levels of violence and crime

Respondents were asked to indicate whether they felt levels of crime and violence had changed compared with those in previous years. Comparatively speaking, more respondents felt crime had increased (67.3%) than felt violence had increased (42.8%).

Those respondents that felt that crime had increased the most significantly were (in descending order) the Kwa Mashu urban informal respondents (96.0%), the Kwa Mashu hostel respondents

(93.3%) and Kwa Mashu urban formal (85.8%). The lowest recorded perceived crime increase was amongst the respondents from Tsolo-Qumbo. Only 43.2% of the respondents from Tsolo-Qumbo felt that crime had increased in their area compared with previous years.

In response to the question, "Compared to previous years, do you think the level of violence has changed?", the answers closely reflect the changes in the levels of politically motivated violence. The most significant increase in violence was experienced by the Lekoa-Vaal urban formal sample (54.2% of these respondents felt violence had increased). The most significant decreases in violence were experienced by the Lekoa-Vaal hostel sample (55.6% of these respondents felt violence had decreased) and by the Kwa Mashu urban informal respondents (56.3% of these respondents felt violence had decreased).

Table 3: Change in the level of crime by settlement area

Compared to previous years, do you think the level of crime in your area has increased, decreased or stayed the same?	Tsolo-Qumbo Rural homestead	Lekoa-Vaal Urban formal	Lekoa-Vaal Urban informal	Lekoa-Vaal Hostels	Kwa Mashu Urban formal	Kwa Mashu Urban informal	Kwa Mashu Hostels	Total
Increased	43.2	67.7	61.7	62.5	85.8	96	93.3	67.4
Stayed the same	56.8	8.5	10.8	7.1	10	2.3	4.4	23.1
Decreased	0	23.8	27.4	30.4	4.1	1.7	2.2	9.5
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
n=	755	470	277	56	748	176	45	2527

Table 4: Change in the level of violence by settlement area

Compared to previous years, do you think the level of crime in your area has increased, decreased or stayed the same?	Tsolo-Qumbo Rural homestead	Lekoa-Vaal Urban formal	Lekoa-Vaal Urban informal	Lekoa-Vaal Hostels	Kwa Mashu Urban formal	Kwa Mashu Urban informal	Kwa Mashu Hostels	Total
Increased	41.6	54.2	41.2	22.2	42.6	27.3	42.2	42.8
Stayed the same	58.4	12.7	15.9	22.2	8.7	16.5	22.2	26.2
Decreased	0	33.1	43	55.6	48.7	56.3	35.6	31
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
n=	755	472	277	54	748	176	45	2527

Kwa Mashu snapshot: acceptability of violence

In response to the question, "Under what circumstances is it acceptable to hit another person?" most of the Kwa Mashu youth (15 of 20) interviewed in the one-on-one qualitative interviews indicated that it was never acceptable. The other five respondents said that it was justifiable under the following circumstances: for self-defence or protection; in sports such as boxing, wrestling and karate; and as a form of punishment.

It is a matter for concern that violence is acceptable to a quarter of these respondents, and it is important, given that this would strongly inform the type of response they would manifest in a situation of conflict.

Level of household victimisation

Household victimisation is the extent to which household members have been victims of crime within a certain time period. In this study, it was measured as a 'yes' response to the question, "Have you or has someone in your household been a victim of crime in the past year?" here was a high prevalence of household victimisation amongst respondents from Kwa Mashu: 52.0% of the Kwa Mashu urban formal respondents; 46.7% of the Kwa Mashu hostel respondents; and 46.0% of the Kwa Mashu urban informal respondents. The lowest levels of victimisation occurred amongst the respondents from Tsolo-Qumbo rural homestead (22.1%) and amongst the Lekoa-Vaal urban informal respondents (19.9%).

Household victimisation provides a useful indicator of firearm penetration. Like crime and violence levels, it can imply a number of different scenarios, since individuals and households respond in different ways to victimisation: by, for instance, increasing the level of household security through target hardening; joining community structures (such as community policing forums); and obtaining other forms of self-defence (including firearms). Further research into what proportion of victims obtain firearms in response to household victimisation would greatly enhance the overall understanding of firearm proliferation.

Table 5: Level of victimisation of household by settlement area

In the last year, have you or has anyone else in your household been a victim of crime?	Tsolo-Qumbo Rural homestead	Lekoa-Vaal Urban formal	Lekoa-Vaal Urban informal	Lekoa-Vaal Hostels	Kwa Mashu Urban formal	Kwa Mashu Urban informal	Kwa Mashu Hostels	Total
Yes	22.1	34.2	19.9	30.4	52	46	46.7	35.3
No	77.9	65.8	80.1	69.6	48	54	53.3	64.7
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
n=	755	473	277	56	748	176	45	2530

Level of gang-related activity

In response to the question, "Are there gangs in your area?", 16.4% of the respondents felt that

they "did not know" whether or not there was gang-related activity in their area. Considering only those respondents that answered positively, it was felt that overall gang activity existed in 59.7% of the cases, while in 40.3% of the cases there was no gang-related activity.

It was found that gangs were most prevalent in the Kwa Mashu urban informal areas (96.4%) and Kwa Mashu urban formal (83.1%) and in the Kwa Mashu hostels (56.8%). There was a correlation between the level of gang-related activity and household victimisation and a perceived increase in crime. This was demonstrated by the fact that the same rank order occurred for the level of gang-related activity, household victimisation and those who felt that crime had increased in their areas. Often, the increased level of gang activity is also closely associated with an increase in the level of firearms within the community, since firearms are one of the most common tools used by gangs for conducting their activities.

Not only the prevalence of gangs, but the strength of gangs within a specific area is important in assessing the level of gang activity. In order to appreciate the strength of gang activity, the mean score attributed to the question, "How strong are the gangs in your area?" needs to be analysed. A mean score of 1 indicates the highest gang strength and a mean score of 4 indicates the lowest gang strength.

Table 6: Prevalence of gangs by settlement area

Are there any gangs in your area?	Tsolo-Qumbo Rural homestead	Lekoa-Vaal Urban formal	Lekoa-Vaal Urban informal	Lekoa-Vaal Hostels	Kwa Mashu Urban formal	Kwa Mashu Urban informal	Kwa Mashu Hostels	Total
Yes	33.9	45.6	52.9	50	83.1	96.4	56.8	59.7
No	66.1	54.4	47.1	50	16.9	3.6	43.2	40.3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
n=	584	364	223	50	692	166	37	2116

Table 7: Strength of gangs by settlement area (mean score)

1 = Very Strong 2 = Strong 3 = Weak 4 = Very weak [Max = 1; Min = 4]	Tsolo-Qumbo Rural homestead	Lekoa-Vaal Urban formal	Lekoa-Vaal Urban informal	Lekoa-Vaal Hostels	Kwa Mashu Urban formal	Kwa Mashu Urban informal	Kwa Mashu Hostels
How strong are the gangs	2.4	2	2.2	2.1	1.7	1.4	1.2

Comparatively speaking, the greatest strength of the gangs was in the Kwa Mashu hostels (mean score of 1.2), Kwa Mashu urban informal areas (mean score of 1.4), and Kwa Mashu urban formal areas (mean score of 1.7). This would support the qualitative finding that gang activity in Kwa Mashu is on the increase and is a fairly recent phenomenon gripping the township. The lowest strength of gangs was found in Tsolo-Qumbo (mean score of 2.4).

Kwa Mashu snapshot: attitudes to gangs

There were divergent views on the issue of gangs in Kwa Mashu. The majority of the youth respondents (13 of 20) had negative attitudes towards belonging to gangs. They felt that joining a gang to make a living was foolish. In response to the question, "Describe what it is like to be part of gangs", the following statements were made:

"It is mostly concerned of killing innocent people." - Female, ordinary young person

"What I can say is that they [gang members] are not living free and happy life." - Female school-going pupil

"One feels big and feared by the community." - Female employed in the informal sector

"They seem to think that they are the gods of this world." - Female, unemployed

"It is a funny lifestyle living under threats." - Male, ordinary young person

Most of the male respondents were reluctant to put any value judgements on record about gangs. They stated they could not comment since they had never been members of gangs. Two of the respondents felt that they personally would not join a gang, but conceded that it was the free choice of other people to pursue that line of engagement.

Four of the respondents were in favour of gang lifestyles. All four of these respondents stated that being part of a gang was a nice way to make a living. Three of the four respondents felt that gangs were a relatively big phenomenon in Kwa Mashu. All those respondents that were pro gangs were either currently involved in illegal activities or had been in the recent past. In response to the question, "Describe what it is like being part of a gang", the following were said:

"It is an enjoyable thing. You feel the sense of belonging." - Female involved in shoplifting

"First, you do not run short of money and luxurious items. In the area you are a boss of your own." - Male involved in illegal activities (car thefts and taxi owner)

"You feel like a man. And you do not fear things because you have your own people." - Male involved in illegal activities

"To be part of a gang is [the] same like to be among your work mates. You plan things and do them together." - Male who had served time in prison for armed robbery

Frequency of hearing gunshots

Gunshots are heard most frequently in Kwa Mashu, slightly less frequently in Lekoa-Vaal and the least frequently in the area of Tsolo-Qumbo.

Table 8: Frequency of hearing gunshots by settlement area

Percent	Tsolo-Qumbo Rural homestead	Lekoa-Vaal Urban formal	Lekoa-Vaal Urban informal	Lekoa-Vaal Hostels	Kwa Mahu Urban formal	Kwa Mashu Urban informal	Kwa Mashu Hostels	Total
How often do you hear gunshots in your community?								
Often	10.9	39	54	57.1	71.4	72.7	72.7	68.2
Sometimes	53.3	32.8	36.3	21.4	20.3	9.1	9.1	15.9
Seldom	18.9	21.4	7.6	10.7	6.1	17.0	15.9	13.9
Never	16.9	6.8	2.2	10.7	2.2	1.1	0	7.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
n =	715	472	278	56	733	176	44	2474

Across the entire sample, it was found that 45.5% of the respondents heard gunshots 'often', 33.2% heard gunshots 'sometimes', 13.9% heard gunshots 'seldom' and 7.4% 'never' heard gunshots in their community. As reflected in the mean scores, a greater proportion of respondents from Kwa Mashu 'often' heard gunshots than in other areas. It was found that 72.7% of the Kwa Mashu urban informal area residents, 71.4% of the Kwa Mashu urban formal area residents and 68.2% of the Kwa Mashu hostel residents heard gunshots 'often'.

The highest frequency of hearing gunshots occurred in the Kwa Mashu urban formal setting (mean score 1.4), Kwa Mashu urban informal area (mean score 1.5) and Kwa Mashu hostel areas (1.5). The frequency of hearing gunshots was lowest in the Tsolo-Qumbo area (mean score 2.4). The frequency of hearing gunshots may, however, be an unreliable indicator when comparing settlements from urban and rural contexts. In Tsolo-Qumbo, the large and uneven distances between homesteads could influence the ability of respondents to hear gunshots, while in the urban context respondents are located in close proximity. In addition, it is difficult to determine to what extent the respondents can distinguish gunshots from a car back-firing, especially given that car ownership and the movement of cars moving is lower in Tsolo-Qumbo than in Lekoa-Vaal and Kwa Mashu. There is a correlation between the frequency of hearing gunshots and perceived changes in the number of firearms. In those areas where firearm shots were heard most frequently, respondents indicated the greatest increase in the number of firearms.

Table 9: Frequency of hearing gunshots by settlement area (mean score)

1 = Often 2 = Sometims 3 = Seldom 4 = Never								
Mean Score [1 = Max; 4 = Min]								
How often do you hear gunshots in your community?	Tsolo-Qumbo Rural homestead	Lekoa-Vaal Urban formal	Lekoa-Vaal Urban informal	Lekoa-Vaal Hostels	Kwa Mashu Urban formal	Kwa Mashu Urban informal	Kwa Mashu Hostels	
	1.5	2.4	2	1.6	1.7	1.4	1.5	

Change in the number of firearms

It would seem that the number of firearms had increased in comparison with previous years,

with 77.3% of the sample indicating this, as opposed to 13.3% indicating a decrease in firearms and 9.5% indicating that firearm levels were stabilising.

The answers to the question, "Do you think that there has been an increase or decrease in the number of firearms compared to previous years?" is indicative of both the actual experiences of the respondents and of their perceptions. In terms of their actual experience, the respondents could have personally seen more firearms in their neighbourhood, bought a firearm themselves or had a family member buy a firearm. On the other hand, they could have heard rumours of firearm-related activities, or directly linked firearms to the increase in gang activities or specific types of crime.

Table 10: Changes in the number of firearms by settlement area

Do you think that there has been an increase or decrease in the number of guns compared to previous years?	Tsolo-Qumbo Rural homestead	Lekoa-Vaal Urban formal	Lekoa-Vaal Urban informal	Lekoa-Vaal Hostels	Kwa Mashu Urban formal	Kwa Mashu Urban informal	Kwa Mashu Hostels	Total
Increase	64.9	74.2	75.8	61.2	86	94.8	86.4	77.3
No Change	13.8	6.7	6.4	8.2	9.9	4.1	13.6	9.5
Decreased	21.3	19.1	17.8	30.6	4.1	1.2	0	13.3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
n =	581	445	264	49	730	172	44	2285

Table 11: Change in the number of firearms by settlement area (mean score)

1 = Increase 2 = No change 3 = Decrease [Max = 1; Min = 4]	Tsolo-Qumbo Rural homestead	Lekoa-Vaal Urban formal	Lekoa-Vaal Urban informal	Lekoa-Vaal Hostels	Kwa Mashu Urban formal	Kwa Mashu Urban informal	Kwa Mashu Hostels
Do you think that there has been a change in the number of guns compared to previous years?	1.6	1.4	1.4	1.7	1.2	1.1	1.1

The number of firearms in Kwa Mashu appears to have increased the most significantly in comparison with previous years. It was found that 86.0% of the urban formal, 94.8% of the urban informal and 86.4% of the hostel respondents from Kwa Mashu felt that firearms had increased.

In contrast to the Kwa Mashu hostels, 30.6% of the Lekoa-Vaal hostel respondents felt that firearms had decreased in comparison with previous years. Similarly, 21.3% of the Tsolo-Qumbo rural homestead, 19.1% of the Lekoa-Vaal urban formal settlement respondents and 17.8% of the Lekoa-Vaal urban informal settlement respondents indicated that firearms had decreased. The reasons given for this perceived decrease are indicated in the table below. The main reason cited amongst those respondents (13.2% of the sample) that felt that the number of firearms were decreasing was the stabilisation of and/or decrease in crime and violence levels.

On the other hand, the main reason attributed to the perceived increase in firearms was the high

availability of firearms (39.7%). This does not necessarily imply that there were greater firearm numbers, but that they were more easily available - especially illegal or unlicensed weapons. At the time of the survey, as is currently the case, the new firearm control legislation for South Africa has not been implemented. In addition to this, confusion created by the debate on the new firearm control legislation resulted in a saturation of the legal second-hand firearm market, as many firearm owners expected the new law to limit the number of legal firearms that could be licensed.

The second reason cited for the increase in the number of firearms was the rising crime and violence levels (as indicated by 30.3% of the respondents). This implies that people are obtaining firearms in reaction to both experiences of victimisation and perceived crime. The third reason for the increase in firearms was associated with the need for firearms to carry on criminal activities (as indicated by 13.4% of the respondents).

Table 12: Reason for decrease in the number of firearms by settlement area

Percent	Tsolo-Qumbo Rural homestead	Lekoa-Vaal Urban formal	Lekoa-Vaal Urban informal	Lekoa-Vaal Hostels
" Due to increased stability, declining crime & violence"	74.8	61.3	65.1	73.3
Better controls on firearms	10.4	8.8	16.3	0
High level of firearm accessibility	4.3	15	14	20
In reaction to perceptions of rising crime & violence	4.3	7.5	2.3	0
Alternatives to violence conflict resolution exist	3.5	1.3	0	0
Use of firearms for criminal activities	2.6	5	2.3	6.7
Lack of awareness on firearms	0	1.3	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100
n =	115	80	43	15

Table 13: Reasons for the change in number of firearms

What do you think is the main reason for the change in firarms number?	Do you think that there has been an increase in the number of guns compared to previous years?			
	Increase	No change	Decrease	Total
Reasons				
High level of firearm accessibility	44.5	35.6	11.9	39.7
In reaction to perceptions of rising crime & violence	34.4	26.7	6.3	30.3
Use of firearms for criminal activities	14.6	15.6	5.3	13.4
Lack of awareness on firearms	2.7	2.2	0.7	2.4
Due to increased stability, declining crime & violence	1.1	14.4	64.9	10.2
Better controls on firearms	1.9	2.2	9.1	2.9
Alternatives to violence conflict resolution exist	0.7	3.3	1.8	1

Total	100	100	100	100
n=	1757	90	285	2132

Amongst only those respondents that felt firearms had increased compared to previous years, the main reason given was high levels of firearm accessibility. This implies that increased availability of firearms, reduced costs of firearms and ease of access to firearms all contribute to firearm proliferation.

Respondents from the urban formal areas (Lekoa-Vaal formal sample at 44.6% and Kwa Mashu formal sample at 46.3%) and informal areas (Lekoa-Vaal informal sample at 46.5% and Kwa Mashu informal sample at 49.1%) generally attributed the increase in firearms to the high level of accessibility. Similar reasons were given by the respondents from the rural homestead areas (39.7%) and hostels (Lekoa-Vaal hostel sample at 40.0% and Kwa Mashu hostel sample at 34.2%).

There is no doubt that rising crime and violence also contribute to the proliferation of firearms, both as a tool for criminals committing crime and violence, and by potential victims in reaction to feelings of insecurity as a result of crime and violence.

Unlike those from other areas, the respondents from the rural homestead areas attributed the rise in firearms equally to the high level of accessibility (39.7%) and to perceptions of rising crime and violence.

Table 14: Reason for increase in the number of firearms by settlement area

	Do you think that there has been an increase or decrease in the number of guns compared to previous years?						
What do you think is the main reason for the change in firearm numbers?	Tsolo-Qumbo Rural homestead	Lekoa-Vaal Urban formal	Lekoa-Vaal Urban informal	Kwa Mashu Urban formal	Lekoa-Vaal Hostels	Kwa Mashu Urban informal	Kwa Mashu Hostels
	Increase in the number of guns compared to previous years (Percent)						
High level of firearm accessibility	39.7	44.6	46.5	46.3	40.0	49.1	34.2
In reaction to perceptions of rising crime & violence	42.4	28.7	28.8	35.9	23.3	30.7	36.8
Use of firearms for criminal activities	12.9	17.4	21.2	11.3	23.3	15.3	18.4
Lack of awareness of firearms	0.5	4.0	0.5	3.8	3.3	1.8	10.5
Due to increased stability, declining crime & violence	1.6	1.2	2.0	0.5	0	1.8	0
Better controls on firearms	1.9	3.7	0.5	1.3	10.0	1.2	0
Alternatives to violence conflict resolution exist	1.1	0.3	0.5	1.0	0	0	0

Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
n =	373	327	198	627	30	163	38

Kwa Mashu and Tsolo-Qumbo focus groups: extent of firearm penetration

The focus groups confirmed that the number of firearms in Kwa Mashu and Tsolo-Qumbo had increased in comparison with previous years. In Tsolo-Qumbo this was attributed to the rise in stock thefts and the inability of the police to effectively prevent this crime. In Kwa Mashu, the rise of gangs was closely associated with the increase in firearms in the community.

It was commonplace to see youths with firearms. The youth of Tsolo-Qumbo often saw their peers with firearms. It was uncommon, however, to see young children or old people with guns. The youth focus group felt that carrying a firearm in Kwa Mashu placed one at risk of victimisation. The young people of Kwa Mashu said that it was only the gang members who openly carried firearms. Other young people not involved in gang activities were too scared to carry guns openly, as the gangs would steal their guns.

Views of the youth in Tsolo-Qumbo

All participants in both Tsolo and Qumbo agreed that firearms had increased in the past few years because of the high rate of theft, especially of stock. This had led to the formation of the anti-crime organisation called Umfela Ndawonye, which was formed to curb stock theft. When cases of stock theft went unchecked by the police the people started to lose confidence in the police force and took the law into their own hands. This in turn led to revenge attacks and violence, as other anti-crime groups were formed to oppose this organisation. Crime also escalated because of this, as criminals took advantage of the unstable situation by committing armed robberies. The police seem to get little or no co-operation from members of the communities. The main reason for this is that the community does not trust the police; they believe that the police regularly 'lose' case documents and consequently cases are left uninvestigated and criminals walk free.

To all male participants in both Tsolo and Qumbo it is not shocking to see their peers with firearms. This makes them also want to own firearms, as they say they are for protection against criminals and some believe that firearms will gain respect.

Views of the youth of Kwa Mashu

All the young people in the focus group felt that the number of firearms in Kwa Mashu had increased over the last few years. Previously it had been individuals who owned guns but now it was mainly gangs that owned the guns. Most of the people who were seen carrying guns were criminals and gangsters. Although a significant number of the youth owned guns, most of them did not carry these guns openly because the gangs would disarm them if they found out.

It was generally felt that gunfire was heard regularly at night and could often be heard as much as three times per night, depending on what area you lived in.

Of the 20 young people present, five said that they had friends or family who had been shot by a firearm. One young member's father had been shot and killed at his home, while another youth

had seen his friend shot and killed at school. In both incidents gangs had been responsible for the killing. One youth said his brother's business had been held up by armed gunmen and his sister-in-law shot and injured. One youth spoke of his close friend accidentally shooting himself while cleaning his gun, and the last youth said his little sister had been shot in a shoot-out at the nearby shopping centre.

Views of women of Kwa Mashu

All 15 of the women felt that there had been a significant increase in the number of guns available in Kwa Mashu. Most women felt that it was rare to see young children or older people carrying guns, but that guns were very popular among the youth, who carried guns around all the time. Most young people, they felt, liked to carry guns. Most women did not carry guns and it was unusual to see a woman carrying a gun.

All the women in the group said that they often heard gunshots at night. One woman respondent said that the previous night she had been kept awake the whole night because a gunfight was going on. She went on to say that the next day one person was found dead.

Ten of the 15 women said they knew a friend or family member who was shot by a firearm. One woman present spoke of how she and her sister had been attacked by gangsters; her sister had got away but she was shot by the gangsters, one of whom was no older than 14 years. She spent two months in hospital and her back still hurts when it is cold.

Interpretation of findings

Comparatively speaking, this chapter provides the information with which to identify those areas most impacted upon by firearms. The areas are selected in terms of where the most violent crime occurs, where crime is on the increase, where victimisation is greatest, where gangs are most prevalent, where gunshots are most frequently heard and where the community perceive firearms to be increasing.

Using these indicators of firearm penetration, certain areas are singled out as being more negatively affected than others. These are the following:

- The highest ratio of violent crime to property crime was evident in Kwa Mashu formal settlements, followed by the Lekoa-Vaal informal and the Kwa Mashu informal settlement areas.
- The highest increase in violence was perceived in the Lekoa-Vaal formal settlement.
- Crime increased in all settlement areas by more than two-thirds compared with previous years, except in the Tsolo-Qumbo settlement area.
- The highest level of victimisation, increase in crime and level of gang activity occurred in the Kwa Mashu township (as witnessed in the formal settlement, the informal settlement and the hostel areas), as well as the highest frequency of hearing gunshots.

Thus it is no surprise that respondents from Kwa Mashu indicated the greatest perceived increase in firearms compared with the other areas.

The aim of this section was to demonstrate how indicators of firearm penetration could be used to assess the comparative extent of the problem and to gain some insight into how these indicators could be interpreted. Caution has to be exercised in interpreting the indicators, as the correlation between firearm penetration indicators and the increase in firearms is not necessarily causal or direct. Within the various settlement areas analysed, there was another aspect that came through strongly from the focus groups. The youth are seen - both by their peers and by the adult women in the community - as the group carrying firearms. Within the youth category, certain young people, such as those involved in gang activities, were singled out as more likely to carry firearms.

The main reason given for the increase in firearms was the high level of accessibility. This is particularly conducive to meeting the needs of the youth. Firstly, the youth want firearms and, secondly, they can get the firearms. Although the study did not focus attention on whether the firearms are licensed or not, it is probable that large proportions of these firearms are not licensed. This implies that the users of the weapon were not screened in any way for their suitability to carry a firearm, or for their ability to use the weapon with competence.

The second reason given for the increase in firearms was that they were obtained in reaction to the perception of rising crime and violence. It is probable that should the crime trends continue to show an increase, women in the community could start to carry firearms too - especially in the light of the feeling that the police in these settlements are not doing an adequate job.

Finally, this chapter provides a spatial dimension to firearm penetration. A higher penetration was found in the Kwa Mashu built environments than in the Lekoa-Vaal and Tsolo-Qumbo area. This chapter has demonstrated where the problem of firearm proliferation is located and how it is measured. The next chapter will explore who it is, within these localities, that possesses firearms.

CHAPTER 3 LEVELS OF FIREARM OWNERSHIP

Chapter overview

People are reluctant to admit to owning a firearm in quantitative surveys. For this reason, it is necessary to obtain this information in another manner, such as through the indicator of associated firearm ownership. Associated firearm ownership is based on the premise that people live and interact largely with other people of similar values and outlook on life. As a result of this, what is an acceptable norm to one person is usually an acceptable norm to their friends and family (that is, their social circle, peers and significant others). The extent to which this assumption holds across all communities is questionable, but as a rule it generally holds.

In this chapter we consider levels of firearm ownership. Although it is difficult to pinpoint it on an individual level, we are able to link levels of ownership to settlement areas. The chapter also considers the reasons why people own guns. Drawing on both the quantitative and the qualitative findings, the chapter delves into some of the factors underlying firearm ownership. These factors, quite naturally, closely mirror the factors informing the increase in firearm

penetration as discussed in the previous chapter.

Associated firearm possession

A useful indicator of firearm penetration is that of associated firearm possession. One of the measures of this indicator is gained by asking the question: "Do you have a close friend or family member who has a gun?" In response to this question, it was found that associated firearm possession was highest in the Lekoa-Vaal urban formal area (55.5% of this sample indicated they knew a close friend or family member with a firearm) and in the Tsolo-Qumbo rural homestead area (40.1% of the respective sample). Firearm possession was lowest amongst the Lekoa-Vaal urban informal settlement respondents (19.4%) and in the Lekoa-Vaal hostels (11.3%).

What was immediately obvious was that associated firearm possession was highest in the two areas that in the previous section showed relatively low firearm penetration. The reason for this could be that associated firearms possession usually refers to firearms largely in the possession of residents, and firearm penetration to people from both within and outside the area for criminal purposes, as well as the existing residents.

Table 15: Associated firearm possession by settlement area

Do you know of a close friend or family member who has a gun?	Tsolo-Qumbo Rural homestead	Lekoa-Vaal Urban formal	Lekoa-Vaal Urban informal	Lekoa-Vaal Hostels	Kwa Mashu Urban formal	Kwa Mashu Urban informal	Kwa Mashu Hostels	Total
Yes	40.1	55.5	19.4	11.3	29.1	26.3	35	35.8
No	59.9	44.5	80.6	88.7	70.9	73.8	65	64.2
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
n=	669	456	268	53	673	160	40	2319

Although the respondent was asked whether or not the firearm considered in the 'associated firearm possession' was licensed or not, little confidence was placed in this finding. It is generally believed that the level of honesty with regard to such a question is low, given the fact that it is illegal to possess an unlicensed firearm in South Africa. For similar reasons, the respondent may not know the licensing status of a firearm in the possession of a friend. There is reason to believe that in some of the cases the respondents may be speaking about their own firearm status (as opposed to that of a friend or family member) when answering this question. However, of this there is no way to be certain.

Ease of access to a firearm

The ease of access to a firearm as indicated by a 'yes' response to the question "Do you have easy access to a gun if you need one?" is shown in the table below.

Table 16: Ease of access to a firearm by settlement area

Do you have ease access to a gun if you need one?	Tsolo-Qumbo Rural homestead	Lekoa-Vaal Urban formal	Lekoa-Vaal Urban informal	Lekoa-Vaal Hostels	Kwa Mashu Urban formal	Kwa Mashu Urban informal	Kwa Mashu Hostels	Total
Yes	27.2	32.2	22.1	20	23.5	32.7	15.8	26.6
No	72.8	67.8	77.9	80	76.5	67.3	84.2	73.4
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
n=	593	451	258	55	620	156	38	217

The highest accessibility to a firearm was amongst people from the Lekoa-Vaal urban formal areas (32.2%) and Tsolo-Qumbo rural homestead areas (27.2%). Ease of access was lowest amongst the respondents from the Kwa Mashu hostels (15.8%), the Lekoa-Vaal hostels (20.0%) and the Lekoa-Vaal urban informal areas (22.1%)

Access to a firearm was also correlated with gender and age. It was found that men (31.5%) have better access to firearms than women (21.8%). Similarly, respondents between the ages of 20 and 29 years have higher access to firearms than respondents of other age groups. There was no difference between the levels of access of respondents under 30 years old (27.0%) and those over 30 years old (26.3%). However, when the age categories were broken down in more detail, a clearer picture emerged, showing that ease of access to firearms varied by age. Respondents between the ages of 20 and 29 years have higher access to firearms than respondents in the other age groups. The highest willingness to own a firearm was expressed by the 20 to 29-year-old respondents, while respondents under the age of 20 and over the age of 60 were the least willing to own a firearm across the entire sample.

Table 17: Ease of access to a firearm by age

Do you have easy access to a gun if you need one?	< 20 years	20 - 29 years	30 - 39 years	40 - 49 years	50 - 59 years	60 + years	Total
Yes	17.3	30.7	27.4	27.4	28.3	20.4	26.6
No	82.7	69.3	72.6	72.6	71.7	79.6	73.4
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
n=	298	760	571	377	255	290	2551

Table 18: Ease of access to a firearm by gender

Do you have easy access to a gun if you need one?	Male	Female	Total
Yes	31.5	21.8	26.6
No	68.5	78.2	73.4
Total	100	100	100

Kwa Mashu snapshot: ease of getting a firearm

All 20 respondents felt that it was easy to obtain a firearm. Some of the reasons given included:

"You can even hire [firearms] from other people at cheaper price." - Male school dropout

"[Obtaining a firearm] is as easy as buying sweets." - Male, ordinary young person

"There are many guys here who are firearm dealers." - Male who served time in prison for armed robbery

"[Obtaining a firearm] is as easy as peanuts. Even from the police or military force members it just a minor task." - Male school-going pupil

Ease of access to a firearm often closely mirrored the pattern of the associated firearm possession.

Table 19: Relationship between ease of access to a firearm and associated firearm penetration by settlement area

Percent	Tsolo-Qumbo Rural homestead	Lekoa-Vaal Urban formal	Lekoa-Vaal Urban informal	Lekoa-Vaal Hostels	Kwa Mashu Urban formal	Kwa Mashu Urban informal	Kwa Mashu Hostels
Access to a firearm if in need of one (n=2171)	27.2	32.2	22.1	20	23.5	32.7	15.8
Close friend or family member has a firearm (n=2319)	40.1	55.5	19.4	11.3	29.1	26.3	35

The willingness of respondents to own a firearm is indicated by a 'yes' response to the question "Would you personally own a gun?" On the whole, respondents from Lekoa-Vaal were the most willing to own a gun, as indicated by 51.3% of the Lekoa-Vaal informal settlement respondents, 50% of the Lekoa-Vaal hostel respondents and 49.9% of the Lekoa-Vaal formal settlement respondents. Respondents from Tsolo-Qumbo (43.8% of the sample) were also willing to personally own a gun.

Table 20: Willingness to own a firearm by settlement area

Would you personally own a gun?	Are there any gangs in your area?	Tsolo-Qumbo Rural homestead	Lekoa-Vaal Urban formal	Lekoa-Vaal Urban informal	Lekoa-Vaal Hostels	Kwa Mashu Urban formal	Kwa Mashu Urban informal	Kwa Mashu Hostels
Yes	43.8	49.9	51.3	50	25	34.1	26.7	39.4
No	56.2	50.1	48.7	50	75	65.9	73.3	60.6
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
n=	714	457	271	56	716	170	45	2429

Table 21: Willingness to own a firearm by age

Would you personally own a gun?	< 20 years	20 - 29 years	30 - 39 years	40 - 49 years	50 - 59 years	60 + years	Total
Yes	28.2	47.5	39.8	41.9	36.1	28.5	39.4
No	71.8	52.5	60.2	58.1	63.9	71.5	60.6
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
n=	280	737	548	363	244	274	2446

Male respondents (44.9%) were more willing to own a firearm than the female respondents (34.3%).

Table 22: Willingness to own a firearm by gender

Would you personally own a gun?	Male	Female	Total
Yes	44.9	34.3	39.5
No	55.1	65.7	60.5
Total	100	100	100
n=	1185	1261	2446

The main reason for this willingness to own a gun was given as the need 'for self-defence or protection' (77.2%) and the secondary reason cited for this was 'for security reasons' (12.0%).

The main reasons for not wanting to own a firearm were given as the 'fear of firearms' (33.8%), the 'lack of necessity to have a gun' (17.2%) and the 'temptation of unintentional injury to oneself and others' (15.0%).

Table 23: Reason for willingness or unwillingness to own a firearm

Reason:	Yes I would	No I would not	Total
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Reason	Own a gun (%)	Don't own a gun (%)	Total
For self-defence / protection	77.2	6.5	34.4
Fear of firearms	3.2	33.8	21.7
Unnecessary / no need for gun	1.6	17.2	11
Temptation of unintentional injury to self & others	1.8	15	9.8
Security reasons	12	1.1	5.4
Lack of resources to afford a firearm	1.1	7.1	4.7
A principled dislike of firearms	1.1	7.1	4.7
Lack of knowledge of use of firearm	0.1	6.9	4.2
Limitations of physical disabilities of respondent	0.3	4.5	2.8
As a deterrent to criminals	1.7	0.7	1.1
Total	100	100	100
n=	947	1455	2402

Kwa Mashu snapshot: the necessity for a firearm

In South Africa, it is more and more commonplace for households to obtain firearms. Often this is a choice made in reaction to rising levels of crime. A concept that was raised on a number of times in the research process was 'whether or not it was a necessity to carry a firearm'. What was immediately evident was that some people obtained firearms in response to a fear that the police were not going to assist should they be victimised. In the Kwa Mashu snapshot, this theme was explored.

Four of the respondents claimed that it was necessary to carry a firearm in their community. Only one respondent felt that it was only 'sometimes' necessary. The remainder of the sample felt that carrying a firearm in Kwa Mashu was unnecessary and risky. Carrying a firearm was seen as risky since it made the person with the firearm a target.

"[Firearms are] not necessary if only carried as a show-off or to intimidate innocent citizens." - Male who served time in prison for armed robbery

"It is unsafe in my area to be known as having a gun." - Male involved in illegal activity of selling marijuana

"[Carrying a firearm] is risky even for the police officers. Once you are identified as carrying a gun you are a target. The attackers just shoot and make it a point that you are dead and the gun is gone for good." - Male school-going pupil

"[By carrying a firearm] you are risking your life because the hooligans are hunting for them at whatever cost. Even if it means death and blood." - Female school-going pupil

"[Carrying a firearm] is not necessary because once you get angry you just shoot to kill, and once you have a gun you play big and undermine others."

Kwa Mashu and Tsolo-Qumbo focus groups: nature of firearm penetration

Negative connotations were always used to describe the nature of firearm penetration within the Kwa Mashu and Tsolo-Qumbo areas. It was felt in Tsolo-Qumbo and Kwa Mashu that firearms create problems. The main problems were identified as follows:

- Firearms are used to solve small conflicts that could otherwise be solved without violence.
- Firearms are carried by people who are not responsible enough.
- Firearms create instability in the community.
- Guns are used when there is in-fighting.
- People carrying guns are not good role-models for children.
- Bullets hit even passers-by.
- Guns are used to commit crimes.
- Guns are used by people seeking revenge.

Different people in the community carry firearms for different reasons:

- Self-protection or the protection of property and business and the guns carried by ordinary residence and business people (often as a result of a loss of confidence in the police);
- For criminal or violent reasons as carried by criminals and violent people;
- People who think they are 'big shots' in the community and use their guns to show off (for status reasons);
- Some people are forced to own firearms because of the situation they find themselves in and the violent environment in which they live (out of a lack of choice);
- Some people own guns because they see people carrying guns on television (because of the examples set by role-models).

The youth in the Kwa Mashu focus group continually demonstrated a level of tolerance and sympathy towards the carrying of firearms. This was shown when they listed the different types of people that carry guns. According to the Kwa Mashu youth, there are a number of different types of people who own firearms, although most no longer carry these guns openly because of

the gangs. The different types of people who own guns and were mentioned by the youth included:

- Youth in general
- People seeking popularity
- Business people
- Gangsters
- Single parents
- Criminals
- People who have been victims of violence themselves

Those who obtained a firearm in response to crime

Also of interest to this research is which respondents obtained a firearm as a form of household crime prevention. It was indicated that the respondents from the Lekoa-Vaal formal area and Tsolo-Qumbo most readily obtained firearms for this purpose.

In order to further profile firearm ownership, it was interesting to see who obtained firearms as a crime-prevention strategy. Firearm ownership was one of the less frequent crime-prevention strategies identified, although in Tsolo-Qumbo (9.3%) and the Lekoa-Vaal formal settlement (13.7%) a proportion of the respondents did purchase firearms for this purpose.

Across the sample, the most common actions for preventing household crime were reporting crimes or criminals to the police or to the community or street committee, obtaining a dog to raise the alarm in case of an intruder, or installing a burglar alarm. Overall, a quarter of the respondents did not take any action to prevent crime.

The crime-prevention action varied sharply according to the type of settlement area. This is most evident in the proportion of the respective samples that did not take any action to prevent crime. It was found that 62.5% of the respondents from the Lekoa-Vaal hostel and 54.9% of the respondents from the Lekoa-Vaal informal area did not take any action to prevent crime.

Interpretation of findings

Certain communities have a higher level of associated firearm ownership and access to firearms than others do. The highest level of firearm ownership was evident in Lekoa-Vaal formal areas and the settlement of Tsolo-Qumbo. As in the previous chapter, ease of access is seen as a contributing factor to the increased firearm penetration. In the two focus groups, it was evident that accessibility was closely linked to an internal source of firearms within the case-study settlements.

The main reason why respondents would consider owning a gun was linked to issues of self-defence or protection. Looking at existing actions against crime, it was found that in the Lekoa-Vaal urban area (13.7%) and Tsolo-Qumbo (9.3%) a proportion of the respondents at a household level had already obtained a firearm as a crime-prevention measure.

One of the aims of this chapter has been to try to determine which of those in the sample own a

firearm. Starting from the premise that respondents do not always admit to owning firearms in a survey, it was intended that this information be gathered in another manner. The extent to which this was achieved is a moot point. If respondents have a friend or family member who has a firearm, they are more likely to have a firearm themselves. This statement does not, however, hold across gender or age lines, but it probably would hold across settlement area. Similarly, if a respondent has access to a firearm, this probably would imply that the firearm is held by the respondent himself/herself, or by friends or family living within a similar settlement area.

If respondents are willing to own a firearm, and they have friends or family who do own firearms, and they have a high ease of access to a firearm, this could also indicate that the respondents are existing or potential future firearm owners.

These categories of existing and potential firearm owners would both be high-priority categories of people to target in a public awareness or education campaign on firearm safety practices and responsible firearm possession.

Finally, up to this point in the monograph the focus has been on where firearms are located and who are likely to have a firearm in their possession. The following section considers the attitudes of these respondents to firearms. The reason for this is the belief that the decision to own a firearm is not always based on the 'choice', 'love' or 'want' to own a firearm, but sometimes out of a lack of choice.

It is hypothesised that the firearm proliferation may be occurring from a fear of crime belief that firearms are the only form of protection available in response to rising crime.

CHAPTER 4

THE NEED TO REDUCE FIREARMS

Chapter overview

The chapter considers the attitudes towards firearms within the community. There is strong support for the reduction of firearms within the community, but this is not necessarily translated into a willingness to take action to reduce firearms.

Desire for reduction in firearms

The starting point in trying to identify who would be willing to take action to address the current situation of small arms in their community is to identify those categories of respondents that wish to see a reduction in firearms: those who display sympathy for the cause. These respondents were identified by direct response to questions of this nature.

All the residents in the sample - considering the percentage responses by demographic information such as settlement area, gender and age - are supportive of a community where firearms are absent or better controlled. All the respondents expressed a great willingness to live in an area where they did not need a firearm. All the respondents from Lekoa-Vaal hostel wanted to live in an environment without firearms, as compared to the 77.6% of the Kwa Mashu urban informal respondents (the lowest settlement area responses to this question). The range

of 22.4% between the highest and the lowest response at this end of the spectrum is insignificant. There is no doubt that residents in the sample would prefer to live in a community where firearms were not needed. It was found that respondents from Lekoa-Vaal hostels (98.2%) were most sympathetic to living in a community without firearms, while relatively speaking the Tsolo-Qumbo respondents were least sympathetic (88.4%). More female respondents (95.3%) supported living in a community with no firearms than male respondents.

In response to the question, "Do you think there is a need for improved control over the number of guns in your area?" those respondents most supportive were people from Lekoa-Vaal hostel areas (98.1%), Kwa Mashu formal area (95.3%) and Lekoa-Vaal informal area (94.8%). Those people that felt the least need for improved control over firearms in their community were from Tsolo-Qumbo (76.6%).

Table 24: Level of sympathy for taking action by settlement area, gender and age

Percent		Would you like to live where you did not feel the need to have a gun?	Would you like to live where there were no guns?	Do you think there is a need for improved control over the number of guns?
		Yes	Yes	Yes
Settlement area	Tsolo-Qumbo Rural homestead	88.2	88.4	76.6
	Lekoa-Vaal Urban formal	96.8	91.3	88.7
	Lekoa-Vaal Urban informal	96	96.4	94.8
	Lekoa-Vaal Hostels	100	98.2	98.1
	Kwa Mashu Urban formal	95.7	96.2	95.3
	Kwa Mashu Urban informal	77.6	90.1	93
	Kwa Mashu Hostels	86.8	92.9	87.8
Gender	Male	90.1	89.5	83.2
	Female	94.5	95.3	93.7
	Less than 20 years	94.2	91.5	91.8
	20-29 years	91.8	93.3	88.7

Age	40-49 years	93	91.8	86.7
	50-59 years	89.7	89.7	84.5
	60 or more years	93.4	94.8	88.8

The respondents under the age of 20 (91.8%) felt more strongly than respondents in other age groups that controls over firearms should be improved. Respondents from all settlements, though to a lesser extent Tsolo-Qumbo, wanted to live in an area where there were fewer firearms needed and better control over existing firearm stocks was achieved.

The respondents under the age of 20 (91.8%) felt more strongly than respondents in other age groups that controls over firearms should be improved. Respondents from all settlements, though to a lesser extent Tsolo-Qumbo, wanted to live in an area where there were fewer firearms needed and better control over existing firearm stocks was achieved.

Kwa Mashu and Tsolo-Qumbo focus groups: attitudes to firearms

Attitudes to firearms are not necessarily clear cut. On the one hand, people recognise the negative impact of firearms in, but on the other hand, when it comes to issues of their own security they are prepared to own, or live in a household that possesses, firearms.

Firearms in a community perpetuate a cycle of firearm proliferation. Respondents felt that people obtained firearms in response to criminals obtaining firearms. There was a feeling that protecting oneself and one's family against an attack by a firearm was only possible with another firearm.

The attitudes of the male and female respondents were slightly different. The male respondents were less likely to condemn firearm ownership than the female respondents. However, in the final analysis, both male and female respondents approved the use of firearms for protection. Using women as disarmers of men would not prove a useful approach. Female respondents felt they had little influence over whether their husbands or partners carried firearms. They felt that the men in the community would only stop carrying firearms if the security improved.

Views of the youth of Tsolo-Qumbo

All the participants believed that firearms were dangerous, but several of these youths would like to own one. The main reason for this is that many rural villages in the Tsolo and Qumbo are unsafe.

The people in these areas feel threatened by people from surrounding villages, as well as by the so-called anti-crime organisations. The youth believe that a gun is the only thing one can use for self-defence.

Women in both areas are strong believers that prayer is the only solution to the problem of firearms. Most of the female participants do not like firearms. Female participants believe that the only thing that can stop their husbands or boyfriends from carrying a firearm is a peaceful

society. The males interviewed spoke more favourably of guns than the women and they seemed to advocate a more direct approach to the problem of guns than prayer. The male members of the community traditionally used sticks for self-defence, but men now believe that they cannot use a stick in self-defence when they are attacked with a gun. Male respondents felt that a stick was no longer safe for protection because people now used guns to fight and to protect themselves. It was argued in some groups that traditionally men used to feel proud when they were known as 'good stick-fighters'; now that respect was earned by owning a gun.

In both areas young boys and girls believe that using a gun is not very difficult - one simply has to aim and shoot. It seems that the youth see a gun as a toy for playing a game. This leads to the mishandling of guns and unnecessary shooting accidents.

Views of the youth of Kwa Mashu

The young people expressed a number of different attitudes and feelings towards firearms. Some of these feelings included:

- If one is properly trained to use the gun it can be used for protection.
- If you have a gun you can be brave and not scared of anything.
- Owning a firearm creates enemies.
- The difference between a licensed and an unlicensed gun is that unlicensed guns are used by criminals.
- Guns are something that criminals have and use to terrorise the community.
- Guns kill children.

Of the 20 young people, only eight said they would own a firearm and all these eight cited self-protection as the reason they would own a firearm. The other twelve said they would not own a firearm since guns do not offer good protection. The reasons they gave included:

- A firearm has many enemies.
- Guns make the owner a target of the gangs and criminals.
- Guns are a risk.
- Children can access the guns and hurt themselves.
- If you are not trained in its use a gun can be used against you.

Six of the 20 young people were female. The female young people all felt that an end to gangsterism and crime would dissuade their boyfriends from carrying firearms. Two of these young women said they would not allow their boyfriends to carry a firearm, and their boyfriends would stop carrying firearms if asked to.

The other four stated that they could not interfere in such matters. Two of the other four said that they doubted their boyfriends would stop carrying guns if asked. The other two did not know

what their boyfriend's response would be.

Views of the women of Kwa Mashu

There were differences within the group regarding how people felt about firearms. A number of the women said that they felt that firearms were needed for self-defence. One of these women said she herself owned a gun because she owned a business and could not rely on the police to protect her. At least two of the women said they were scared of firearms. Three women felt that firearms were dangerous.

All the women distinguished between legal and illegal firearms and felt it was acceptable to have a legal firearm but unacceptable to possess an illegal firearm.

The women felt that it was acceptable for their husbands or boyfriends to have firearms as long as they were licensed. In addition to this, the motivation for carrying the firearm must only be for self-defence purposes. However, the women cautioned that carrying a firearm makes one a target of crime. When the female respondents were asked whether they could stop their husband or boyfriend from carrying a firearm, the general response was that their partner would be unlikely to listen, especially if he was carrying the gun for security reasons.

Willingness to discourage firearm ownership

This section considers those questions from the survey that could be used to demonstrate willingness to take action to reduce firearm ownership. The highest level of support for taking action to discourage people from owning firearms was expressed by the respondents from Kwa Mashu formal area (90.8%), Kwa Mashu informal area (91.8%), Lekoa-Vaal hostel area (92.7%), and the female respondents (89.9%).

Interpretation of findings

The variations within the sample across settlement area, gender and age were not significant enough to single out one sub-sample as being substantially more convinced of the need to reduce firearms than any other group, with the possible exception of the female respondents, respondents from Tsolo-Qumbo and the respondents under the age of 20 years.

The overwhelmingly supportive response to this question on the need to reduce firearms gives a clear mandate for the provision of better control in the three case-study areas.

Respondents want to reduce the number of firearms in their areas, and they would be willing to take action to do so - if and when the security situation improves. Female respondents were more supportive of this than male respondents.

Table 25: Willingness to take action to discourage firearm ownership by settlement area, gender and age

Percent	If the security in your community improved would you consider encouraging people to stop owning guns?
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		Yes
Settlement area	Tsolo-Qumbo Rural homestead	89.7
	Lekoa-Vaal Urban formal	77.9
	Lekoa-Vaal Urban informal	84.9
	Lekoa-Vaal Hostels	92.7
	Kwa Mashu Urban formal	90.8
	Kwa Mashu Urban informal	91.8
	Kwa Mashu Hostels	87.8
Gender	Male	85.1
	Female	89.9
Age	Less than 20 years	87.5
	20-29 years	88.1
	40-49 years	86.3
	50-59 years	87.8
	60 or more years	88.8

CHAPTER 5

ACTION TO IMPROVE FIREARM CONTROLS

Chapter overview

The following section looks at possible recommendations for action to improve firearm controls. Some of the proposed options need community role-players and structures to provide leadership, both towards improving security in the community and ultimately addressing some of the problems associated with firearms in the community.

Looking at who the communities currently turn to for conflict resolution gives us insight into structures that could play a role in improving firearm controls. In the rural areas, respondents usually turn to the traditional authority for conflict resolution, while in the urban areas it is usually the police. Similar structures were identified for improving controls over firearms. The focus group boxes explore in more depth some of the causes of conflict in Kwa Mashu and Tsolo-Qumbo, as well as the recommended strategies to redress the situation.

Structure turned to for conflict resolution

Across all categories of respondents, the police were rated the most common organisation to turn to when dealing with conflicts. However, this was one of a number of different options

utilised by the respondents. Other key responses included 'resolving the matter ourselves' and 'turning to friends or family'. In response to the question, "If you and someone else in your community were to have a serious argument, who would you first approach to help you?" the two most popular sources of help were the police (by 23.7% of the respondents) and the traditional authority (by 21.4% of the respondents). The respondents from Lekoa-Vaal formal and informal areas were more inclined to turn to the police (42.3% of the formal sample and 31.3% of the informal sample) as opposed to the Lekoa-Vaal hostel sample, who would approach the block committee to resolve the serious argument.

Table 26: Source turned to for help following an argument

	Frequency	Percent
Police	587	23.7
Traditional Authority	530	21.4
Friends/relatives/neighbours	340	13.7
We resolve the matter ourselves	312	12.6
Street committee	240	9.7
Block committee	155	6.3
Community organisation	108	4.4
Local civic	90	3.6
Private Sector / business person	46	1.9
Local authority/government	39	1.6
Political organisation	33	1.3
Total	2480	100

The street and block committees are those structures formed to take care of the administration of issues relevant to people living on a specific street, or in a specific block. In larger settlements, many street committees fall under the jurisdiction of a block committee, though this is not always the case.

It was interesting that 26.7% of the respondents from the Lekoa-Vaal informal settlement also turned to their street committee to resolve serious conflict, as opposed to the police. This reinforces the notion that the police have a better relationship with the residents in the formal urban settlements than the informal settlements and the hostels. The source turned to for help in the event of a serious argument is usually a person or structure trusted by the community, who is seen as impartial and has a mandate to perform that role.

Unlike the Tsolo-Qumbo and the Lekoa-Vaal sample, who had clearly identified structures for turning to for the resolution of a serious argument, the respondents from Kwa Mashu identified a range of different structures. This was closely informed by the lack of trust the community had in the local police station, which resulted in the community's finding alternative structures to turn to for conflict resolution (although over a quarter of the Kwa Mashu sample still did in fact turn to the police).

The relatively high proportion of the Kwa Mashu community that resolve serious arguments themselves is a difficult indicator to interpret. The positive aspect of this is that it shows that the residents within the community are able to resolve problems amongst themselves. The negative implication within the Kwa Mashu context is that in the absence of the necessary conflict

resolution skills, and given the violent history of the township, this often results in violence.

Table 27: Person turned to for help by settlement area

	Tsolo-Qumbo Rural homestead	Lekoa-Vaal Urban formal	Lekoa-Vaal Urban informal	Lekoa-Vaal Hostels	Kwa Mashu Urban formal	Kwa Mashu Urban informal	Kwa Mashu Hostels
Local civic	0.9	1.6	1.5	0	8.6	4	4.7
Street committee	0.1	17	26.7	2.5	8.6	12.6	2.3
Block committee	0.4	2.9	11.6	57.5	6.1	14.3	14
Political organisation	0.1	0.3	2	0	2.8	2.3	2.3
Community organisation	0.5	1.8	2	2.5	8.2	14.3	11.6
We resolve the matter ourselves	9.6	10.7	4.1	2.5	16.9	25.7	25.6
Local authority / government	0.5	0	0.5	0	3.8	2.9	4.7
Friends/relatives / neighbours	8.4	21.3	19.2	10	16	1.1	7
Police	6.5	42.3	31.3	22.5	27.1	21.7	25.6
Traditional Authority	70	0.3	0	2.5	0.3	0	2.3
Private Sector / Business person	2.8	1.8	1	0	1.7	1.1	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

The majority of the respondents from the Tsolo-Qumbo area turned to the traditional authorities for assistance where they needed help to resolve an argument between two people in the community. The respondents from Tsolo-Qumbo would turn to the traditional authority (70.0%) should they have a serious argument with someone in the community; a smaller proportion would resolve the matter themselves (9.6%); or ask friends or relatives (8.4%) for assistance. The subject and gravity of the argument would determine which level of the traditional authority would be approached to deal with the matter.

The most significant difference between the male and female respondents was the comparatively higher proportion of male respondents (16.0%) that 'resolved issues themselves' as opposed to the female respondents (9.4%). Another interesting variation was the fact that respondents under the age of 20 years (24.7%) more readily turned to friends or family for the resolution of arguments than respondents over the age of 20 years.

It was interesting to consider those people that took the action of conflict resolution into their own hands. As a hypothesis, we thought that it would be interesting to see if those respondents that turned to 'friends, relatives or neighbours', or who answered 'We resolve the matter ourselves' were more or less likely to answer that 'they were prepared to encourage people to

stop owning firearms'. In the table below, this was explored and we found that the respondents who turned to 'friends, relatives or neighbours', or who answered 'We resolve the matter ourselves' were the least willing to take such action. This reflects their inward-looking approach and a low level of linkage with the community structures available.

Table 28: Person turned to for help by gender and age

	Male	Female	,20 years	20 - 29 years	30 - 39 years	40 - 49 years	50 - 59 years	60+ years
Local civic	3.9	3.4	4.5	2.8	3.9	4.6	3.3	2.8
Street committee	8.3	10.9	5.8	10.7	12	10.6	7.8	5.9
Block committee	7.3	5.3	2.7	6.2	5.9	9.2	6.1	7
Political organisation	1.1	1.5	1	1.9	0.9	2.2	0.8	0.3
Community organisation	4.2	4.5	5.8	4	3.8	4.3	4.9	4.5
We resolve the matter ourselves	16	9.4	8.2	13.8	13.9	12.5	15.9	8
Local authority / government	1.5	1.6	2.4	1.6	1.6	1.9	0.4	1
Friends/relatives / neighbours	12.4	14.9	24.7	16.2	10.2	10.3	8.6	11.5
Police	23.7	23.6	32.9	23.4	25.9	22.5	18.8	19.2
Traditional Authority	19	23.5	11	17.7	20	19.2	31.8	37.6
Private Sector / Business person	2.5	1.2	1	1.6	2	2.7	1.6	2.1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Kwa Mashu and Tsolo-Qumbo focus groups: conflict prevention

Economic woes were felt to be at the root of conflict in Tsolo-Qumbo. The youth felt that there were no job prospects in their areas for them, and that this feeling led people to crime. The youth felt that the traditional authority system was breaking down. This was a matter for concern, since the traditional authority was identified in the quantitative findings as one of the main vehicles for conflict resolution in rural areas.

Views of the youth of Tsolo-Qumbo

The majority of the participants in both areas believed that crime and violence could be decreased by the introduction of industrial sites so that people could be employed. There must be job prospects for the youth so that they did not feel that turning to firearms and violence represented their only future.

In both the areas of Qumbo and Tsolo, traditional leaders seem to be respected by their community. However, a breakdown in the traditional system is occurring in this province, though it has not yet affected the areas of Qumbo and Tsolo. The respondents felt that in many other areas the traditional leaders had lost their power in the minds of the people. Most crime and violence is still reported to the traditional structures first, and these structures would report the incident to the police if need be. A strong and strict authority also seems to play a large role in

keeping an area in a stable condition. The anti-crime organisations only flourish in those areas where they have been allowed to take root and where the traditional authorities did not do anything to combat their growth and intimidation from day one.

The majority of the participants believe that the community can end crime and violence by organising community patrols and random searches by the South African National Defence Force. Other participants in both areas believe that government can end crime and violence by implementing tough laws on illegal gun owners and by ending all anti-crime organisations.

Table 29: Source turned to for help bywillingness to discourage firearm ownership

Percent	If you and someone else in your community were to have a serious argument, who would you first approach to help you?			
	Yes	No	Total	n=
<i>If the security in your community improved would you consider encouraging people to stop owning guns?</i>				
<i>Local civic</i>	93.0	7.0	100	86
<i>Street committee</i>	85.0	15.0	100	233
<i>Block committee</i>	93.4	6.6	100	152
<i>Political organisation</i>	1..	0	100	31
<i>Community organisation</i>	94.4	5.6	100	107
<i>We resolve the matter ourselves</i>	82.2	17.8	100	298
<i>Local authority / government</i>	86.8	13.2	100	38
<i>Friends/relatives / neighbours</i>	82.8	17.2	100	325
<i>Police</i>	86.9	13.1	100	563
<i>Traditional Authority</i>	90.7	9.3	100	503
<i>Private Sector / Business person</i>	90.3	9.1	100	44
<i>Total</i>	87.6	12.4	100	2380

Views of the youth of Kwa Mashu

Violence and crime is very high in Kwa Mashu and gangs are on the increase. Respondents feel that community members can no longer move freely in Kwa Mashu because of violence. An example of violence was given: just the previous week a mother and her sick son had been shot and killed when R10 000 was being stolen from them. The youth felt that there were problems with the police and that a 'cold war' existed between the police and the community. The only way for the community to address the problem would be for the community and the police to work together to overcome this situation. Community initiatives could assist in addressing the problem of rising crime and firearms. Community initiatives suggested by the youth included:

- Community leaders in particular councils must be involved in solving crime.

- Partnerships were needed between the government and community.
- The youth needed to facilitate skills and employment programmes. | The community needed to build long-term projects.
- The youth needed to have a sports programme.
- The community needed to ensure that certain steps were taken with regard to the police. These steps should include making sure that one police officer did not stay too long at the police station. Police must not have sources who were criminals. Detectives must be deployed to ensure that outstanding cases were dealt with.
- An anti-crime campaign should be launched that would focus on illegal guns.

On the whole most of the respondents felt they would not go to the local police if there was conflict or violence, although some of the youth said they might go to the police station in town, as opposed to the nearer one in the community. In situations of violence and conflict, other community people would be contacted such as:

- Church leaders in the area;
- Political or local leaders and councillors;
- Youth leaders;
- Local people in some areas, such as local business persons, who could wield authority and help in a bad situation.

Views of the women of Kwa Mashu

When asked if there was a lot of violence in the community, the women said not. However, when asked if there was a lot of crime in the community, the women all said yes and went on to talk of the extent of violent crimes such as rape and murder. It became clear through the discussion that most women in the group equated the term 'violence' with political violence and used the term 'crime' to refer to all crime, including violent crime; this explains why the group felt violence had decreased and crime had increased. This perception explains the statement made that there was no violence at the moment but that crime had increased. The women felt that some of the community initiatives to deal with crime could include:

- Strengthening community police forums and co-operation between the police and community;
- Looking at education around violence and guns;
- Building strong community structures;

- Developing an approach to guns that would draw in the whole community and address the different needs of different sections of the community.

In response to the question about 'who the community turned to if there was a problem', all the women said that at some stage they had reported crime to the police. However, most of the women said they now felt that reporting crime to the police was a waste of time and that the Kwa Mashu police were corrupt. One woman said that even if you took a criminal to the police station the police took no notice. A number of women said they no longer reported matters to the police because the police would tell the criminals and then you would be attacked. One woman said that you would be lucky if the police arrived within two hours, by which time the criminals had gone. She spoke about a young boy being shot near her house and the community waiting the whole night for the police to arrive. Another woman said the police made a point of only arriving once the criminals had left the scene.

Structures identified for improving firearm controls

As far as the top-ranked structures went, there were no differences between what the respondents felt would be the best organisation to improve firearm controls in the short term and in the long term. In the short term, the police (27.9%) and the defence force (23.1%) were the highest ranking options, while in the long term these were also the police (40.9%) and the defence force (22.2%). In the lower-ranked choices of structures for improving firearm controls, there was more variation. In the short term there was support for the traditional authority (15.4%) or the community residents themselves (10.8%).

These short-term options were not seen as viable ones for addressing the problem in long term. In the long term only 2.7% of the sample mentioned the traditional authority and 8.5% of the sample the community residents themselves. A more popular option for the long term was the government (as supported by 16.2% of the sample). There was a significant difference by settlement area between the structures which the respondents identified for improving the problem of small arms in their community. The Tsolo-Qumbo residents in particular expressed support for letting the traditional authority deal with the issues of small arms in the short term (50.5%), while in the long term allowing the police to address the problem (51.5%). In most settlement areas, except Tsolo-Qumbo, a combination of the police and the defence force was considered as the best option for improving the control on firearms in the short term. Respondents also indicated that the community organisations and the community residents should also play a more significant role.

Table 30: Best structure for improving firearm control in the short and long term

Percent	Best structure for improved firearm control in the short term	Best structure for improved firearm control in the long term
Police services	27.9	40.9
Defence force	23.1	22.2
Traditional authority	15.4	2.7
Community residents	10.8	8.5
Community	0.1	1.2

organisation	7.4	4.0
Local, provincial, national government	7.9	16.2
Political organisation	3	2
Private security companies	0.9	1.2
Church organisation	0.7	0.7
Youth	0.5	0.3
Other	0.4	0.3
Total	100	100

There was a slight correlation between which structure the respondents identified for improving the problem of small arms in their community and their willingness to discourage people from keeping firearms and their level of organisation membership. The respondents from the different area types in Kwa Mashu demonstrated similar structures for conflict resolution across the formal, informal and hostel settlement areas.

Table 31: Best structure for improving firearm control in the short term by other variables

Percent	Would you like to live in a community where you did not feel the need to have a gun?	Would you like to live in a community where there were no guns?	Do you think there is a need for improved control over the number of guns in your area?	If the security in your community improved would you consider encouraging people to stop owning guns?	Belong to an organisation
	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Traditional authority	86.1	86.3	82.2	87.8	91.3
Political organisation	95.6	94.4	93.7	95.3	79.8
Community organisation	91.8	96.2	94.2	89.5	73.9
Community residents	98	96.7	90.7	87.5	72.4
Church organisation	94.1	91.9	100	79.1	91.9
Local, provincial, national government	93.1	93.4	93.5	92.1	75.4
Police services	93.5	92.5	85.7	86.4	77.7
Defence force	92.1	93.2	89.6	85.7	82.1

Private security companies	90.8	71.2	91	70.5	87.4
Youth	100	99.6	100	90.6	81.4
Other	99.5	89.8	100	99.5	75

Kwa Mashu snapshot: attitudes to the police

Twelve of the respondents viewed the police in their area in a negative light. It was felt that the police did not protect the community and were in actual fact involved in some of the criminal activities in the Kwa Mashu. Some of the quotes indicating this include:

"[The police are] helpless and hopeless." - Female school dropout

"[The police are] are as good as nothing." - Male, ordinary young person

"[The police are] the most corrupt force in the world." - Male who served time in prison for rape.

Four of the respondents felt that the police in Kwa Mashu were satisfactory, since they undertook responsibilities such as law enforcement and they protected the citizens. Another four respondents felt that sometimes the police did a good job and at other times they did not. Some of the quotes indicating this include:

"Partly [the police] are helpful and partly not." - Male employed in the formal sector

"[The police] try to do their work, but with little success." - Female, ordinary young person

"Some [police] do their job and some do not." - Male school-going pupil

Actions to improve firearms controls

Respondents were presented with the open-ended question, "What things would you recommend [should be done] to control the use of guns or reduce the need for guns in your community?" The responses were coded into fourteen different actions for improving firearm controls in their community. Respondents could give more than one answer to this question.

The most commonly given option was to increase the number of police and police stations, as well as for the community to assist the police in their work (41.6% of the respondents). The second most common response was to involve the community in actions to improve firearm controls as well as social crime prevention actions (30.2%). The third most common response (as given by 24.8% of the respondents) was also in support of the police, but more specifically to ensure that the police investigated and/or confiscated unlicensed firearms. The three actions most favoured by the community demonstrated a balanced outlook in that the solution to the resolution of small arms was conceptualised as a combination of community and police initiatives. There were fluctuations across the different settlement areas in the type of recommendations for action to improve firearm controls. There was a high level of support for increased police presence from the majority of the Kwa Mashu respondents as well as the Lekoa-Vaal hostel and formal residential respondents, while the remainder of the sample did not as significantly support this. In the Lekoa-Vaal sample, it was found that the opinions of the

respondents from the formal area and the hostel areas were similar in that they both highly recommended more police (37.5% and 42.5% respectively) and community involvement (32.2% and 30.0%). This was in contrast to the respondents from the informal areas, who most highly recommended better investigation of unlicensed firearms. Perhaps this is because in the informal settlement the problem of small arms is one of unlicensed firearms. In contrast to the respondents from the Lekoa-Vaal informal and formal areas, the respondents from the hostels also showed significant support for better prosecution or implementation of the laws.

Table 32: Recommendations for action to improve firearm controls

	Count (n=2452)	Percent
More police, more stations / assist police	1021	41.6
Community involvement / social crime prevention	740	30.2
Investigate / confiscate unlicensed firearms	608	24.8
Prosecution / implement laws	369	15.1
Restrict who can own guns	356	14.5
Better general law enforcement	313	12.8
Employment / job creation	222	9.1
Stricter firearm licensing	213	8.7
Tighten gun laws	192	7.8
Restrict unnecessary gun use	126	5.1
Remove corruption / introduce fair practice	122	5
Ban all firearms	87	3.6
Restrict manufacturing	75	3.1
Limit firearm sales	67	2.7

What was also interesting was that respondents from Tsolo-Qumbo did not show as much support for community involvement as the other settlement areas did. This is a matter for concern, as it implies that perhaps a community-based action to address firearm proliferation would not be widely supported in these tribal areas. Actions in conjunction with the tribal authority might be more widely supported. The four main actions identified by the Tsolo-Qumbo respondents for the resolution of small arms were: increased police (as supported by 25.4% of the respondents); improved investigation or confiscation of unlicensed firearms (as supported by 25.6% of the respondents); better prosecution or implementation of the law (21.2% of the respondents); and a restriction on who could own a firearm (as supported by 20.8% of the respondents). It is interesting that a similar proportion of the Lekoa-Vaal urban formal respondents also identified a restriction on who might possess a firearm (21.0% of the respondents) as an option.

The Kwa Mashu sample provided an interesting profile on recommendations for improved firearms control. Across the three settlement areas, the rank order was similar and the proportion of respondents that supported these actions was within a narrow range of the other settlement areas. It is unusual in the South African context to find a community not divided in opinion across residential lines.

The most significant range between the responses of the male and female sample was evident in the recommendations on restrictions on who can own a firearm (17.9% of the female respondents supported this, as opposed to 10.8% of the male respondents). The life

experiences of the female respondents would strongly underwrite this opinion. The women in the sample may have witnessed many situations in which the holder of a firearm acted in an irresponsible manner; this would inform their support for restrictions on who might own a firearm. Perhaps from the perspective of the male respondent these actions could have seemed appropriate.

The second most significant range between the responses of the female and male respondents was the greater support given by the male respondents to community involvement or social crime-prevention actions. This was interesting, as it is often the female members of the community who show a higher level of support for community-based actions than the male respondents. In this case, however, there was an unexpected show of support for community involvement by the male sample. More male respondents were also in favour of stricter firearm licensing (11.2% of the male respondents as opposed to 6.4% of the female respondents), while fewer male respondents supported better investigation or confiscation of unlicensed firearms than did female respondents (22.8% of the male respondents as opposed to 26.6% of the female respondents). The survey did not explore the opinions of the sample towards firearm licensing. In this question, the omission was sorely missed, as qualitative evidence suggested that the female respondents were more in favour of firearm licensing than male respondents.

The male and female respondents had a slightly different emphasis on what type of action to take to improve firearm controls. Besides those actions already mentioned, slightly more female respondents than male respondents supported the idea of employment or job creation (10.2% as opposed to 7.8%) and investigating or confiscating unlicensed firearms (26.6% as opposed to 22.8%). The male respondents showed greater support for restricting unnecessary gun use (6.8% as opposed to 3.6%).

There were few significant variations between the actions recommended by respondents of the different age groups. Two small differences that emerged were as follows. It was found that 13.5% of the under 20-year-old respondents supported tightening of the firearm legislation; and just over 10% of the 30 to 49-year-old respondents supported job creation mechanisms to improve control over firearms.

Table 33: Recommendations for action to improve firearm controls by settlement area

	Tsolo-Qumbo Rural homestead (n = 708)	Lekoa-Vaal Urban formal (n = 468)	Lekoa-Vaal Urban informal (n = 268)	Lekoa-Vaal Hostels (n = 55)	Kwa Mashu Urban formal (n = 737)	Kwa Mashu Urban informal (n = 173)	Kwa Mashu Hostels (n = 43)
More police, more stations / assist police	25.4	37.5	22.3	42.5	60	65.9	60.5
Community involvement / social crime prevention	17.7	32.2	29	30	38.9	38.2	39.5
Investigate / confiscate unlicensed firearms	25.6	22.1	42.5	12.5	20.2	26	20.9

Better general law enforcement	10.2	10.4	12.5	5	16.4	16.2	16.3
Prosecution / implement laws	21.2	12.5	14	40	11.7	5.2	14
Remove corruption / introduce fair practice	2	2	5.2	5	8.1	9.8	11.6
Ban all firearms	4	4.9	4.1	2.5	2.3	2.3	7
Stricter firearm licensing	16.2	5.3	6.2	7.5	6	2.9	7
Employment / job creation	11.6	7.1	15	5	5.8	11	4.7
Restrict who can own guns	20.8	21	16.1	15	6.6	4.6	4.7
Limit firearm sales	3.5	1.7	6.2	2.5	1.5	2.3	2.3
Restrict manufacturing	2.1	3.3	4.1	5	3.3	3.5	2.3
Restrict unnecessary gun use	10.2	4	2.6	2.5	3.4	1.2	0
Tighten gun laws	2.4	14.5	5.2	0	10.9	7.5	0

Table 34: Recommendations for action to improve firearm controls by gender

Percent	Female (n=1280)	Male (n=1172)
More police, more stations / assist police	41.2	42.1
Community involvement / social crime prevention	27.3	33.3
Investigate / confiscate unlicensed firearms	26.6	22.8
Restrict who can own guns	17.9	10.8
Prosecution / implement laws	14.1	16
Better general law enforcement	13.3	12.2
Employment / job creation	10.2	7.8
Tighten gun laws	7.7	7.9
Stricter firearm licensing	6.4	11.2
Remove corruption / introduce fair practice	4.5	5.4
Ban all firearms	4.3	2.8
Restrict unnecessary gun use	3.6	6.8
Restricting manufacturing	3	3.2
Limit firearm sales	2	3.5

Kwa Mashu and Tsolo-Qumbo focus groups: firearms as a community problem

Views of the Tsolo-Qumbo youth focus groups

When the word 'gun' was mentioned most participants said that the first thoughts that came to their minds were of death, shooting and bloodshed. Yet most of them indicated that they would use a firearm for protection although they knew that it would bring death and bloodshed. Most of the participants in Tsolo felt that reporting all unlicensed guns to the traditional structures and not the police could reduce the number of guns. They saw the police as very corrupt and working hand in glove with the criminals.

Qumbo participants felt that there was nothing they could do to reduce the number of guns; only soldiers and the government could do this, but not the police. They also did not trust the police; they felt that they were very corrupt. To female participants, especially those between 35 and 50 years, it became a sensitive issue when one talked about reporting to the police, as they said that the police did not do their job properly. The participants felt that only thing the police officers knew how to do was to fall in love with their daughters and end up causing trouble within the community and between them, parents and boyfriends. The majority of the participants in both areas felt, however, that the government could be of great help by introducing tougher laws and longer jail sentences for criminals and illegal gun owners.

In both the areas of Qumbo and Tsolo the participants agreed that people had become very dependent on firearms for solving their problems. They no longer had confidence in the police and they felt that the police sometimes deliberately halted investigations by 'losing' documents. They believed that military soldiers, chiefs or the other tribal structures were much more effective than the police in solving this problem. The majority of the participants in both areas believed that the seizing of all unlicensed guns by soldiers and the conducting of random searches could alleviate the problem of firearms. The parents could also help by not allowing their children to bring guns home. Participants were generally uncertain of what other community-based initiatives could assist in solving the problem of firearms in these communities.

Views of the Kwa Mashu women focus group

All the women in the group felt that people too quickly turned to guns to solve their problems and that this was a major problem within Kwa Mashu.

Most of the women felt that the local councillors and community structures like the community policing forum had taken initiatives to address crime, but that these had been obstructed because the police did not want to do their work. All women felt that despite these initiatives firearms were still a problem.

There were a number of suggestions regarding steps that could be taken to address the problem of firearms; these included:

- All the local police should be transferred and new police brought into KwaMashu because the local police were working with gangs.

- The government must change the local police every two years.
- Spray guns should be used for self defence rather than firearms.
- Government must stop the supply of guns.
- The question of the media promoting guns through adverts and programmes must be addressed because these promoted a positive image of firearms.
- People should only be allowed to possess one gun and this must be licensed. A few women spoke of some criminals owning two guns, one licensed and one not. The unlicensed gun would be used in crime and violence. But even when this was not the case, most of the women felt that there was no need to own more than one firearm.
- The government must take strong action against people who violated legislation regarding guns and the government should introduce stronger legislation.

Almost all the women felt that if a community-based strategy were to be developed it would need to include all sectors of Kwa Mashu and must address the lack of provision of a safety and security service and the problem of gangs.

This community initiative would need to look at the different people who made up the community in Kwa Mashu and then develop a campaign that would focus on the different perceptions held by different sectors of the community. There should be more focus on these different sectors so that this campaign could involve the whole of Kwa Mashu.

Views of the Kwa Mashu youth focus group

Most youth felt that the community relied on guns to sort out problems, particularly because the police were so ineffective. This reliance on guns was, however, a problem as it only led to more violence.

All the youth felt that there were at present no effective means of addressing the problem of firearms, and that initiatives like the joint police and military initiative, Operation Ventilation, were just temporary and had no long-term effect on guns and violence.

None of the young people knew of any effective initiatives that had been launched by the community to deal with the problem of guns. All of them felt that in order to deal effectively with the problem of guns there were three areas that needed to be addressed, as follows:

- There was a need to deal with security measures and in particular the local police station; this would also include arrest and prosecutions of gangs.
- The community needed to form strong community policing structures and structures to deal with youth and the harnessing of the vision and talents of the youth.
- There was a need for job-creation schemes.

Interpretation of findings

The first aspect that this research reveals is that there are significant variations between the rural sample (as represented by the Tsolo-Qumbo respondents) and the urban sample (Kwa Mashu and Lekoa-Vaal). This should be a caution against generalisation in terms of the approach that would engage the different communities for addressing firearm proliferation.

Reflecting both cultural, political and geographic locality, the respondents from Tsolo-Qumbo supported the traditional authority. This was reflected in the structures they identified as conflict resolution mediators and as the best structure for improving firearm controls. However, the question of which structure could better spearhead firearm controls did not impact too significantly on which actions were actually recommended. Moreover, apart from the fact that they shied away from community-involvement type initiatives, the recommendations of the Tsolo-Qumbo respondents were pretty much on a par with those of the Lekoa-Vaal respondents.

In the urban environments of Lekoa-Vaal and Kwa Mashu, the police were used to resolve arguments, or alternatively the matter was resolved by the respondents themselves with the help of family, friends and neighbours. The police and defence force were seen as the main role-players in action to improve controls, in conjunction with the community and existing community structures.

The respondents identified a range of recommendations for action. These would be a useful guide for policy makers by showing what these communities would support. In fact 30.2% of the actions recommended were for community-based initiatives. While the policy was being drafted and implemented, little grass-roots impact would be felt. During this period, the community would need to design and implement its own strategies to control firearms.

CHAPTER 6

FORMS OF COMMUNICATION AND INTERACTION

Chapter overview

It might appear to a community that there is actually very little they can do to address the issue of small arms. In South Africa, until the firearm legislation is in place with appropriate implementation mechanisms and the process has gone through its teething phases and is functioning correctly, the situation will not improve at a community level. There are, however, a few options available to the community. These would include raising awareness about the problem and providing information to other members of the community. This chapter provides information on which method of communication would most directly access the community, by looking at where people obtain information, and which community structure they belong to.

Frequency and forms of communication

A series of questions were included in the questionnaire to determine how frequently the respondents obtained information from various sources, such as the radio, television, newspapers or pamphlets. This would assist in the design of the public awareness campaign by

determining which respondents could be targeted through which forms of media. The data were cross-tabulated by settlement area, gender and age. These were considered the most significant demographic variables for designing the public awareness campaign.

What is clearly demonstrated, not surprisingly, is that electronic forms of communication are used more regularly than printed media. It was found that 72.1% of the respondents listened to the radio daily and 50.5% of the respondents watched television daily. Only 14.5% of the sample read newspapers daily, 15.8% read the newspapers a few times per week, and 12.1% read the newspapers weekly. Pamphlets were utilised the least as a form of media. However, this would be influenced by the areas of distribution used by the media companies.

Quite often certain suburbs are targeted for this purpose - and in South Africa, traditional rural areas and informal settlements are less frequently targeted for pamphlet distribution. The frequency of listening to the radio varied across the different settlement areas. Respondents from the Kwa Mashu urban informal area listened to radio most frequently (81.8% listened to the radio daily). Television watching was highest in the Lekoa-Vaal formal areas (77.2% watched television daily) and in Kwa Mashu formal areas (72.3% watched television daily).

On the whole, printed media were least frequently used. It was found that respondents from Lekoa-Vaal formal areas more frequently read newspapers on a daily basis (26.0%), followed by the respondents from Kwa Mashu formal area (18.9%) and Kwa Mashu hostels (17.8%). The type of media used by the sample was linked to the level of access to electricity, as well as the level of permanence attached to the residential location and to the economic standing of the household. Considering the demographic variables of age and gender, it was evident that the main difference was that more male respondents (18.1%) read the newspapers on a daily basis than did female respondents (11.1%). There was no difference in terms of the frequency of watching television between the male and female respondents, although the viewing patterns probably varied. Male respondents were slightly more exposed to different forms of communication than the female respondents.

Table 35: Frequency of exposure to different forms of communication by settlement area

Percent	Frequency	Tsolo-Qumbo Rural homestead	Lekoa-Vaal Urban formal	Lekoa-Vaal Urban informal	Lekoa-Vaal Hostels	Kwa Mashu Urban formal	Kwa Mashu Urban informal	Kwa Mashu Hostels
Listen to the radio	Every day	68.3	73.5	68.8	67.3	74.3	81.8	73.3
Watch television	Every day	12.6	77.2	38.1	54.5	72.3	63.6	64.4
Read newspapers	Every day	6.9	26	8.7	5.5	18.9	9.1	17.8
Read pamphlets	Every day	4.4	8.2	1.1	5.6	8	2.8	2.2
		n=755	n=472	n=279	n=55	n=748	n=176	n=45

Amongst male and female respondents, the radio still remained the most common form of communication - clearly more significant than the television. The highest radio usage was amongst those respondents between the ages of 20-39 years. Frequency of watching television

declined with age. On the whole, it is evident that radio and television are the most popular forms of communication. Should a campaign be designed for older people, radio should be considered above other methods of communication to influence the appropriate target groupings.

Table 36: Frequency of exposure to different forms of communication by gender

Percent	Frequency	Male	Female
Listen to the radio	Every day	73.6	70.7
Watch television	Every day	51.9	49.2
Read newspapers	Every day	18.1	11.1
Read pamphlets	Every day	5.4	5.9
		n=1218	n=1312

Table 37: Frequency of exposure to different forms of communication by age

Percent	Frequency	< 20 years	20 - 29 years	30 - 39 years	40 - 49 years	50 - 59 years	60 + years
Listen to the radio	Every day	64.5	78.8	75.3	68.9	67.1	65.1
Watch television	Every day	64.2	55.1	51	51.2	42.2	29.3
Read newspapers	Every day	6.7	16.9	18	17.8	12.5	7.2
Read pamphlets	Every day	3.4	7.9	6.7	5.6	5.1	2.1
n=		280	737	548	363	244	274

Generally these forms of communication are expensive. Other forms of affordable communication could include notices in public transport and announcements at sports events, places of recreation and church meetings.

Membership of different structures

It was found that 20.0% of the sample did not belong to any structures or organisations, while 45.3% belonged to one structure and 23.2% belonged to two structures.

For the analysis, it would be interesting to see whether people who belong to organisations are more willing to take action to discourage firearm ownership, and whether this aspect is sensitive to the number of organisations the respondent belongs to. As shown below, it is evident that a greater proportion of respondents who belonged to more organisations were willing to discourage other people from firearm ownership.

Table 38: Level of membership

Number of organisations belonged to	Count	Percent
0	507	20
1	1146	45.3
2	588	23.2
3	188	7.4
4	68	2.7
5	18	0.7
6	6	0.2
7	3	0.1
8 or more	5	0.1
Total	2530	100

The greatest level of membership was to a church or choir group (43.7% of the respondents). The second highest membership was to a savings or burial society (at 22.3% of the respondents), followed by the 15.7% that belonged to a sports club and the 15% that belonged to a political organisation.

On average the respondents from traditional rural homesteads, the KwaMashu urban formal and the Kwa Mashu informal areas belonged to more organisations than respondents from other areas.

Table 39: Number of structures belonged to by willingness to discourage firearm ownership

Number of organisations belonged to	If the security in your community improved would you consider encouraging people to stop owning guns?							Total
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6-13	
Yes	86.2	85	90.9	92.8	93.9	94.1	100	87.5
No	13.8	15	9.1	7.2	6.1	5.9	0	12.5
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
n=	485	1113	549	181	66	17	14	2425

The proportion of the respective samples by which organisations they belonged to shows which sectors of the community could be accessed through which structures. It demonstrates that 53.4% of the Tsolo-Qumbo sample belong to a church or choir group, as opposed to 43.8% of the Lekoa-Vaal formal area residents and 43.6% of the Kwa Mashu formal area residents. It shows that a greater proportion of women (56.9%) as opposed to men (29.7%) belong to church groups.

Table 40: Level of membership by settlement and gender

Proportion of	Tsolo-	Lekoa-	Lekoa-	Lekoa-	Kwa	Kwa	Kwa
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sample belonging to the organisation	Qumbo Rural homestead (n=755)	Vaal Urban formal (n=473)	Vaal Urban informal (n=278)	Lekoa-Vaal Hostels (n=56)	Mashu Urban formal (n=748)	Mashu Urban informal (n=176)	Kwa Mashu Hostels (n=45)
Church group / choir	53.4	43.8	29.5	17.5	43.6	36.4	37.8
Cultural organisation	3.8	1.6	1.5	0	4.9	5.1	2.2
Hobby group	0.7	1.6	1	0	6	4	4.4
Local civic / community organisation	5.8	3.8	3.5	0	12.7	12.5	4.4
Political organisation	16.3	6.5	4	5	20.5	29.5	11.1
Professional body	0.9	2.2	0	0	4	1.7	2.2
Recreation / adult centre	0.8	2.3	0.5	0	2.1	1.1	2.2
Sports club	18.7	11	9	10	19.5	11.9	13.3
Stokvel / savings burial society	34.3	19.6	12.5	10	19.1	15.3	15.6
Trade union	4.2	6.1	3	2.5	8	2.8	13.3
Welfare society	0.9	2.1	0.5	0	4.1	1.1	4.4
Youth group	13	3.2	4	0	13.1	15.9	15.6
Other group	1.2	2	0.5	0	0.8	0.6	2.2

Interpretations of findings

Radio is an effective form of communication. However, radio has cost considerations, such as the cost of travelling to urban centres for radio interviews. But perhaps the most accessible method - especially within a rural context - would be through 'word of mouth', using existing organisations and structures. The church has a high level of membership, as do sports organisations.

CONCLUSION

The willingness to own a firearm (as evidenced by half the Lekoa-Vaal respondents, just over two-fifths of the Tsolo-Qumbo and Lekoa-Vaal respondents, and approximately a quarter of the Kwa Mashu respondents) and the ability to gain access to a firearm (just over a quarter of the respondents) were all relatively similar across the three communities.

The first aim of the research was to measure significant indicators of firearm penetration. This information would provide a baseline against which the nature of firearm proliferation could be understood.

The firearm penetration indicators would help to identify which areas were most impacted on by firearms. Kwa Mashu township, across all settlement types, was the community which was most

significantly impacted upon by firearms. It displayed the highest violent crime to property crime ratio, and the most significant increase in levels of victimisation, crime and gang-related activity. This by no means diminishes the devastating role that firearms play in the other two case-study areas, as all the communities in the case studies were selected because of their violent histories, recorded gang and vigilante activities, high levels of personal insecurity and their location on existing and historical illicit firearm smuggling routes.

Across all three case-study communities, firearm penetration is increasing. This is linked to growing accessibility of firearms and occurs in reaction to rising crime and violence, which indicates that firearms are demanded because of insecurity and fear for safety.

In contrast to the fact that KwaMashu township was measured as the locality with the highest firearm penetration, associated firearm ownership was highest in Tsolo-Qumbo and the formal areas of Lekoa-Vaal.

Similarly, the respondents from these two areas had obtained firearms as a crime prevention measure, and the respondents from Tsolo-Qumbo and Lekoa-Vaal showed the greatest willingness to own a firearm.

The reason for this paradox is possibly a reaction by the Kwa Mashu respondents against firearms, as a result of seeing a situation develop in their community where firearm proliferation is escalating in an uncontrollable manner. The insecurity caused by the alleged corruption and inefficiency of the local police compounds this problem. The respondents from Kwa Mashu are well aware that in the short term they only have themselves as a community to rely on to address the problem.

The respondents from Lekoa-Vaal, especially those from formal township areas, indicate a high level of confidence in the police, while the respondents from Tsolo-Qumbo gain comfort from the knowledge that the traditional authority concerns itself with issues relating to the safety and security of the community. The Kwa Mashu community, alienated from existing safety and security structures, and having seen the devastating impact of firearms - as held by gangsters, vigilantes and criminals - have developed a culture of intolerance towards firearms. For this reason they show a comparatively low willingness to own firearms.

The respondents from all three case-study areas expressed the desire to live in a community in which there was no necessity to own a gun and where there were improved controls over existing stocks of firearms. But it appeared that as long as feelings of insecurity prevailed, firearm ownership would remain a characteristic of these areas. Once more all the respondents were in agreement that should the security within the community increase, they would encourage other people to stop owning guns.

Given that the prevailing situation appeared unlikely to change without considerable developments in enhancing the security within these case-study areas, the report investigated some of the recommendations made to improve controls over firearms. While exploring these recommended actions, it should be borne in mind that these are the opinions of the community respondents who understand their context, the limitations of the resources readily available to them and the capacity of the structures serving the community. We therefore believe that these are the minimum basic steps that could improve the situation in the case-study areas. At the same time, it must be remembered that the community only have limited control over their circumstances, especially since many of the recommendations would need to be implemented by government; such as policy recommendations, legislation implementation and resources

being made readily available to the police. In this conclusion, therefore, we are going to limit ourselves to those actions that are within the control of the community.

A third of both the existing structures utilised for conflict resolution within the community, and the structures identified for improving firearm control in the short term, consist of community organisations with elected representatives and volunteers from within the case-study residential areas. This implies that any actions to improve community security and firearm controls could, if given a community mandate, be spearheaded by structures already in place.

A bold 30.2% of the respondents made the recommendation that improved firearm controls should rely on community involvement and social crime prevention.

It is empowering to the community to identify themselves as the potential agents of action in curbing firearm proliferation.

It cannot be overlooked, however, that the other side of the coin is that the majority of the community identified legislative changes - tightening controls over access to firearms and better policing - as those actions which would best address the problem, implying that the majority of the respondents do not see themselves as agents of change.

The focus group discussions provided an in-depth understanding of the context, nature and extent of firearm proliferation within the case-study areas. They also highlighted some creative strategies that could be employed by the community to curb firearm proliferation:

- monitoring the police and ensuring that they work within the community and to the benefit of the community;
- looking for alternative forms of self-defence;
- questioning the role of the media, advertisements and entertainment in promoting firearm ownership as an acceptable social norm.

Any community-based strategies would need to be all inclusive and would have to have practical components to improve safety and security within the community. Such initiatives would have educative components that would attempt to change existing perceptions of firearms. Information was collected on existing forms of communication and on which structures community members belong to. This would help the structures in the case-study areas to design their own community-based strategies.

However, cost could be an issue with some of the types of communication. Strategies to assist with the resolution of firearms at a community level need to involve some aspect of reprogramming the behaviour and moral reference point of the individuals who make up the community.

Although all community-based campaigns would have to be inclusive, it also needs to be recognised that community resources are limited and for this reason it is necessary to target the campaign towards certain groups of people. If a respondent is willing to own a firearm, and has friends or family who do own firearms, and has a high ease of access to a firearm, this could

also indicate that the respondent is a potential future firearm owner, or an existing firearm owner. These categories of existing and potential firearm owners would both be high-priority categories to target in a public awareness or education campaign on firearm safety practices and responsible firearm possession.

The leverage points for community action are those aspects of the community that could be harnessed towards addressing the problem of firearms. In order to identify the leverage points, it is necessary to pinpoint those who would be sympathetic towards taking action and/or who have taken action in the past, both on the issue of firearms and in other community collective actions. In order to identify those people who would be best activated as 'leverage points' in the community, it would be advisable to look at the number of different organisations to which the respondents belong and their willingness to take action to discourage firearm ownership. It was found that those respondents that belonged to organisations were more willing to take action to improve firearm controls.

In addition to this, community levels of belonging to an organisation were higher in some areas, indicating that community-based actions would be likely to emerge first from those areas, such as Tsolo-Qumbo (where only 10.7% of the respondents did not belong to a structure), the Kwa Mashu urban formal area (where only 12.2% of the respondents did not belong to a structure) and Kwa Mashu informal areas (where only 10.8% of the respondents did not belong to a structure).

NOTES

1. V Gamba, The Southern African small arms control experience as a working model for the reduction of small arms proliferation, as contained in Governing Arms: The Southern African experience, Institute for Security Studies, 2000, pp 13-27.
2. Commissioned in October 1997 by the ISS and administered by CASE in the community of Lekoa-Vaal.
3. Meek, S The result of the Lekoa/Vaal Firearm Survey, chapter 6, as contained in Society Under Siege, Volume III, edited by Virginia Gamba, Institute for Security Studies, 2000, p 97-130.
4. Hansmann, C An Analysis of Community-based responses to Armed Violence, chapter 7, as contained in Society Under Siege, Volume III, edited by Virginia Gamba, Institute for Security Studies, 2000, p 131-204.
5. The following information is obtained from a viewing of the Special Assignment programme on Tsolo and Qumbo, as well as interviews with Makubetse Sikhonyane.
6. Unpublished report, Project: Towards Collaborative Peace Fieldwork Report and tabulations, December 1997, CASE cited figures provided by the Lekoa/Vaal Metropolitan area.
7. The police records mugging involving a firearm as armed robbery. In the three case study areas, at a community level, mugging is used inter-changeably with armed robbery. No information was collected on the proportion of firearms used in these incidents.

8. E Hennop, 2000, Illegal Firearms in Circulation in South Africa, chapter contained in Society Under Siege, Volume III, edited by Virginia Gamba, Institute for Security Studies, 2000, p 18.
9. The discourse in South Africa reflects over thirty-years of politically motivated violence in South Africa. In this survey, research references to violence imply 'political violence'.
10. Similar information was elicited from the respondents on which actions they took to assist in community safety. However, it appeared that the responses were artificial as most respondents took action for their household, as opposed to their community.