

Session 6.5: Notes

Fieldwork Exercise

Introduction:

The purpose of this fieldwork exercise is to practise some qualitative data collection which will highlight the importance of effective research design and the use of pilot surveys before undertaking a full scale data collection exercise.

Course participants will be split into five groups, practising qualitative data collection through the use of participatory appraisal approaches (namely mapping and mobility charts) and checklist interviews, as per the following table:

Checklist Interviews			Participatory Approaches	
Local residents	Market traders	Transport operators	Mapping	Mobility Chart
6	6	6	6	6

The process of undertaking mapping, mobility charts and checklist interviews have been discussed in Session 6.3: Qualitative Research Methods and Participatory Approaches. These are popular approaches to use with participants because they do not require any numeracy, and only limited literacy. The intention for this fieldwork exercise is to facilitate discussion amongst a community group on the location and importance of different resources within the community, and the utility of different modes of transport service in relation to cost, trip duration and effectiveness under different seasonal weather conditions.

Background:

The fieldwork exercises will be undertaken in a village near Blantyre, following a short briefing during which participants will be split into five groups of six. During the field exercise itself, course participants will be able to approach respondents and ask whether they can spare some time (up to 1 hour) to answer some questions about their experiences of using transport services, and about their trip-making activities. Please thank each respondent you speak to for their time.

Course participants will be given up to 2 hours to practise their data collection exercise, and will then return to the university to feedback their experiences to the rest of the group.

A packed lunch will be provided to eat on the minibus on the way to the village, and it is recommended that participants take tea/coffee while feeding back their experiences to the rest of the group. Consider the following:

- How easy was it for respondents to understand the questions?
- Were there any sensitive questions that people did not want to answer (such as income and expenditure)?
- In the group work was it difficult to explain how to do the mapping exercise?
- What were the advantages/disadvantages of each type of data collection method?
- How much information were you able to gather in the time available?
- Did you gather any interesting findings/observations from the exercise?

Relevance to Course:

The purpose of the exercise is to understand how different data collection methods work and what their pros/cons are for use in transport research. In the time available, participants are not expected to collect any meaningful data for analysis. However, they will put into practise some of the theoretical elements of data collection from the morning session, and highlight how the data collection methods can be tailored to suit different research objectives.

Equipment and Resources:

Participants will be provided with the following equipment for conducting the fieldwork, depending on which group they are in:

- Copies of the checklists
- Flip chart paper
- Marker pens

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this practical demonstration the participants will be able to utilise a range of qualitative data collection methods and appreciate their advantages and disadvantages for use in transport research, as well as being able to develop their own bespoke material to address a transport research question or hypothesis.

1. Mapping

Begin the exercise by asking the respondents to draw their village on the flip chart paper highlighting the location of the following:

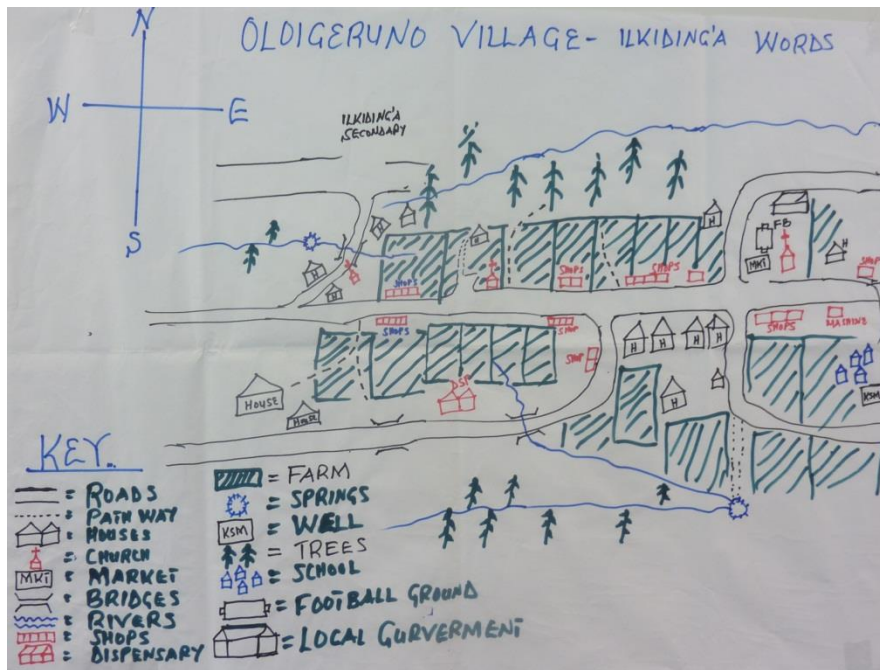
- Roads, tracks, footpaths, bridges
- Rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, wells
- Schools, health facilities, place of worship, taxi and bus stations
- Farms, fields, firewood etc.

Encourage the whole group to participate – have all the key characteristics of the community been captured on the map?

Ask open ended questions to facilitate discussion, such as:

- Where do low, middle and high income households live?
- Who in the household collects water and firewood? How far do they have to travel?
- How far do children travel to school? How long does it take them? How do they get to school? Do all the children in the village go to school? If not, why not?

Sample Map:



2. Mobility Chart

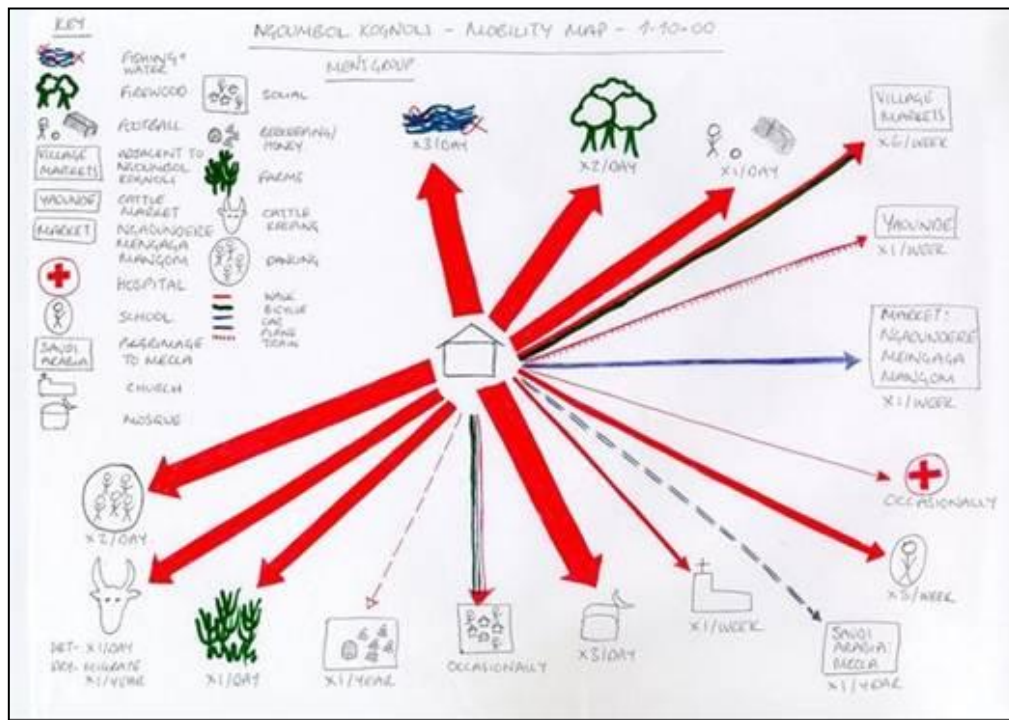
Ask the respondents to draw a mobility chart on a separate piece of flip chart paper.

The mobility chart should be representative of the group, with the household at the centre of the spider diagram, and participants drawing arrows outwards in different thicknesses and colours to denote frequency of trips and transport mode. The arrow points towards a drawing which represents the trip purpose.

The diagram itself does not have to be accurate, but to give an impression of the most frequent trips, the mode used and trip duration. While the mobility chart is being drawn, ask open ended questions about the types of trips being made and their relative importance.

Ideally one person will ask questions related to the responses they give, while another enumerator takes comprehensive notes about the responses, including verbatim comments from respondents.

Sample Mobility Chart:



3. Checklist Interviews

Interviews are ideally conducted individually on a one-to-one basis. However, if there are only a few fluent Twi speakers in the group, we may have to assign one Twi speaker to work with each person who is unable to speak Twi i.e. interviews run by pairs.

Each individual interviewer/ interviewer-pair will be assigned a key informant type for interview (e.g. market trader, transport operator etc.). Additionally, each individual interviewer/interviewer-pair should try to find a local resident who is willing to be interviewed. The checklists are provided in the Session 6.3 handouts, and copies will also be provided to the individual groups.

Ideally one person will ask questions related to the responses they give, while another enumerator takes comprehensive notes about the responses, including verbatim comments from respondents.

It is not necessary to discuss every theme on the check sheet with every key informant: if the respondent is only willing to give limited time, obtain the basic information you need, then focus on questions where the person concerned may have key knowledge. If an area of new information/insights opens up that looks promising, then explore this, even if it means omitting some other issues. It is better to make sure that you give the informant enough time to respond fully to your questions, and to make sure you understand the responses fully, rather than try to rush through to fit everything in. *It is NOT necessary to stick to a rigid schedule.* Write two to three sentences after the interview about how this interview takes forward our ideas about rural access and raises new questions. Add any new issues to the checklist.

Take as full notes as possible during the interview, probing where appropriate to get more detail. However, do not prompt unless it is necessary. If you don't manage to get everything the respondent says written down, leave space for additional detail then review and revise as necessary, immediately after the interview and before you start the next interview.