

CONDUCTING A COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

A Practical Community Handbook

[With examples from the Railton Community Assessment Project conducted in Railton, Swellendam, South Africa in 2010: A collaborative project between Railton Foundation and Stellenbosch University]



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WHAT IS THIS BOOKLET ABOUT?

This booklet is about sharing our process with other people so that they may be able to do the same in other communities. We have realised how valuable this kind of research is in the process of community development and we would like to help share our experiences of collaborative and community participative research. We hope that this handbook will serve as a guideline for any community leader, teacher or researcher who would like to undertake similar research projects. We realise that there are other ways of doing this, but you may find it helpful to see how we went about the community assessment process. In this booklet we will be providing background information that will help to create a context for doing this kind of research, and we will be outlining various steps in the process. To help bring life to this research process, we will give real lived experiences and examples from the Railton Community Assessment Project (CAP) team. Please consult the Railton Community Assessment Project Report for a comprehensive description of the research processes and findings referred to in this booklet. We hope this handbook is helpful to you and your community.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page Number
Community Assessment	4
Case Study: Railton Community Assessment Project	6
Phases in the Research Process:	13
PHASE 1: Preparing for the Research	13
PHASE 2: Building a Picture of the Community	17
PHASE 3: Community Asset Mapping Workshops	21
PHASE 4: Conducting a Survey	31
PHASE 5: Interviews with key informants	35
PHASE 6: Community Walk-About and Photo-story telling	37
PHASE 7: GIS Mapping of Community Assets	38
PHASE 8: Making sense of all the data	39
PHASE 9: Sharing the research findings	41
PHASE 10: Writing up the research	42
Using the research: The Challenge of Action	43
Acknowledgements	45

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

What is Community Assessment?

Community assessment is a way of doing research in order to promote community development. In its simplest form, community assessment is making a list of what strengths already exist in a particular community, noting the identified needs, and identifying what needs to happen in order to promote change and development.

There are various **principles** that should guide any community assessment process. These include to:

- Enhance community trust, spirit, unity and pride
- Promote community involvement
- Organise and mobilise people to address community issues
- Build on what is already happening in the community (e.g. organisations, clubs, community events) and help create social capital
- Build a belief that the local people in the community are able to solve the community's problems
- Help people to see possibilities for change and development
- Enable people to see themselves differently – as contributing citizens
- Foster a willingness to reach out to others
- Develop a sense of hope
- Mobilise capacities to produce concrete outcomes, including economic development

Social Capital: A sociological concept used widely to refer to the connections or networks and relationships in society

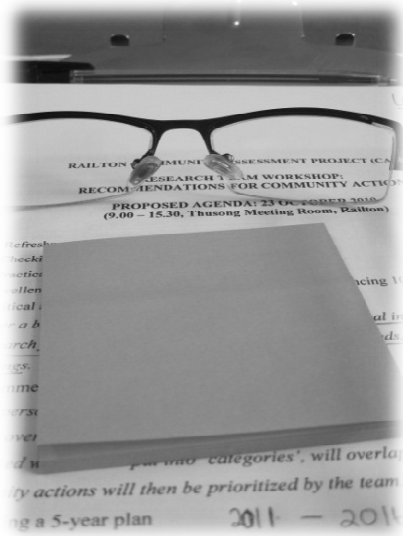
Participants: People who take part in the research process, whether it is by attending a workshop, completing a questionnaire in a survey, or participating in an interview.

Community assessment is an inclusive process, and the aim is to get relevant information from various sources and participants such as:

- Key informants or individuals who understand the communities concerned, such as community leaders
- Specific groups (e.g. youth, adults, seniors, people with disabilities, unemployed)

- Associations and organisations (e.g. Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO's), Community Based Organisations (CBO's), religious institutions (Faith Based Organisations), cultural organisations, clubs)
- Institutions (e.g. parks, libraries, schools, police, hospital, clinics, government departments)
- Community economy (e.g. local vendors and shops, businesses, credit institutions)
- In the case of Railton/Swellendam, we also consulted professionals who now live and work in the city, but still have an interest in their community and want to invest in their home-town's development.

Our Approach



There are different types of “glasses” that researchers can wear when it comes to doing research. In many ways the aims and objectives (what one wants to achieve with the study) influences the type of “glasses” researchers put on. The glasses we put on in the Railton Community Assessment Project (CAP) was a **Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR)** Approach.

“CBPR is a collaborative approach to research that equitably involves all partners in the research process and recognizes the unique strengths that each brings. CBPR begins with a research topic of importance to the community with the aim of combining knowledge and action for social change” (Duran & Wallerstein, 2009).

Principles of a Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) Approach

- This approach aims to keep a *balance* between research and action.
- The research that is conducted is *relevant* to the community, and *informs development*.
- A *partnership* is fostered between the main stakeholders (e.g. University and community members). Each partner's contribution is recognised and valued.
- Some members of the community *participate* in conducting the research – on a continuum of '*minimal participation*' to '*full participation*' in the research activities.
- As the process unfolds, participants *learn* and *grow* together.
- This approach aims to build on *strengths* and *resources* of the community.
- The research findings and knowledge are *shared* with all concerned.

CASE STUDY: RAILTON (SWELLENDAM) COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT PROJECT (CAP)

Motivation for the Railton CAP

The Railton CAP was a joint initiative between the Railton Foundation and Stellenbosch University. The Railton Foundation, which was started in 2006 by a Dutch benefactor, assists the community in various ways. A representative of the Foundation approached the University to assist the local community with active support in identifying priority areas for community development. A Project Advisory Committee (PAC) was formed to oversee the project. This committee consisted of researchers, representatives of the Railton Foundation, and community members. The role of the PAC was to give advice and clearance on ethical issues, the aims of the study, the research design (what and how the researchers were planning to do the research in the community), as well as to oversee the project's finances. The PAC held regular monthly meetings in order to stay on track with the research process. After interviewing local students receiving bursaries from the Railton Foundation, the CAP research team was developed, including eleven members in total, with six members being local youth.

Railton's unfolding story ...

The CAP research also focused on understanding the history of Railton as part of its objectives. The information received from Elders (workshop), youth (school essays), interviews, and documents, resulted in the following summary of the unfolding story of Railton ...



Between 1922 and 1925 a small group of families settled in an area now known as Railton in Swellendam. One of these families was the Bloemfontein's. A few years after the passing of the Group Areas Act in the 1950's and Railton being declared an area for people of colour, many other people who lived in the Swellendam town were forced to move to Railton. The community was very close-knit in the early 1960s until the 1980s and events such as concerts, beauty pageants, athletics, rallies and drum majorettes were the order of the day.

Over the years the community grew in size and is currently inhabited by over 20 000 people. Some people left Railton to live else-where and others moved in, so there is a lesser sense of unity than before. Although the community experienced great heart-ache due to incidents such as a bus accident in 1975 which claimed 28 lives and more recently drug addiction and physical

violence, it also has much to celebrate. Over the years many developments have taken place such as the building of two schools, a library, crèches, many churches a community hall and Thusong multipurpose centre, to list but a few of the positive contributions to community development. In addition to this, many individuals have achieved great heights in sports, education and in the business world. Railton is truly a very strong community and continues to strive towards a better life for all its residents.

Railton CAP: Aims and Objectives

The main *aim* of the Community Assessment Project (CAP) was to conduct a community assessment of Railton (within Swellendam) to assist the local community and the Railton Foundation to identify priority areas for community development. This was pursued through a mapping of community assets (including strengths and resources) and a priority needs assessment process.

Specific *research questions* included:

- What are important historical events and information that need to be taken into account in understanding the socio-cultural-economic context of Railton?
- What are the strengths, assets or resources that currently contribute to community development and building in Railton?
- What is the perceived priority needs relating to community development in Railton?
- On the basis of the above, what are the priority strategic areas for community action in the next few years, and how can current assets and strengths be used to address the needs identified?

Research Approach and Design

The team members worked together on the research design. The design was thus developed within an academic-community context, and was informed by the focus of the research, namely a community assessment, including the identification of community assets, priority needs and actions. These 10 phases will be discussed later in more detail.

PHASES IN THE RESEARCH DESIGN

The CAP research design consisted of ten phases namely:

1. Preparing for the research
2. Historical and current context of the community:
Building a picture of the community
3. Community Asset Mapping Workshops
4. Conducting a Survey
5. Interviews with Key Informants
6. Community Walk-about and Photo-story telling
7. GIS Mapping of community assets
8. Making sense of the data (Data analysis)
9. Sharing the research findings.
10. Writing up the research

Key Findings

The 295 community members who participated in this research identified various **assets** that currently exist in the community. These assets were grouped into certain categories to help the researchers narrow down the information gained from different participants and different methods. The assets that ended up in the grid below were mentioned by many people who participated in the workshops (66 elders, adults, youth and service sectors), community survey (200 youth/adults), individual interviews as well as a focus group discussion (29 key informants).

Assets	Examples mentioned
Buildings/ Structures	Community hall; Thusong centre; Sports fields; Streets; Houses
Health services	Hospital; Clinic
Human strengths	Talents; Human potential
Educational services and projects	Schools; Adult Basic Education Training (ABET) classes
Community groups and organisations	SPCA; Love Life project
Governmental structures and –services	Library; South African Police Service (SAPS); Post Office
FBO's (Faith Based Organisations)	Different churches
Entertainment	Sport fields; Sport clubs; Dance groups
Natural environment	The Mountain; Nature reserve (E.g. Bontebok park)
Economy/ Business/ Work	B&B's; Hotel; Shops



There were many **needs** mentioned by the research participants in this study. As with the assets, the needs that ended up on the grid below were mentioned by many of the participants of the workshops, community survey, individual interviews as well as a focus group interview.

Needs	Examples mentioned
Food security	Soup kitchens or Feeding schemes
Youth development	Youth Centre; Youth projects; Training opportunities for youth
Cultural activities	Include Railton in Swellendam’s history; Community celebrations
Business/ Work	Job opportunities; Shopping Centre
Faith	Church choirs; Church activities
Health services	Health Centre; Counselling unit and advice office
Education	More schools and crèches in Railton; More teachers
Human related needs	Training opportunities; Leadership development
Entertainment	Leisure facilities; Dance, drama and art lessons; Music Centre
Community facilities	Swimming pool; Home for the elderly; Upgrading of sports facilities
Community infrastructure	Tar roads; More and better quality houses; Use old prison building for various purposes (e.g. Training Centre)
Social services	Better police services; Better care for elderly people; Rehabilitation (alcohol and drugs)
Moral development	Respect for self and others; Parenting workshops; Encouragement toward dreams and goals

Participants were also asked to identify or suggest priority action steps to promote community development over the next five years. The actions were directly related to the needs that people identified. As with the assets and needs, the suggested action steps that ended up in the grid below were mentioned by many participants who took part in the workshops, the community survey, individual interviews as well as a focus group discussion.

Actions	Examples named
Educational and skills development	More schools; Better equipment in schools; Skills development courses
Entertainment and Sport facilities	Swimming pool in Railton; Leisure facilities; Better play and sport fields
Youth development	Youth centre; Youth projects; Opportunities to showcase youth's talents
Cultural activities and –facilities	Music, dance and drama classes; Develop clubs and societies; Collaboration between churches
Health services	Rehabilitation centre (alcohol and drug addiction); Holistic health services;
Governmental services and social development	Tar roads; Build speed bumps; Electricity for all; Home for the elderly
Business opportunities and economic Development	Shopping centre in Railton; Create job opportunities; Factories in Swellendam
Food security	Feeding scheme
Housing	More houses and better quality houses; Make squatter camps smaller
Moral development	Programmes that promote values such as respect and unity; Parenting workshops
Safety and security	Satellite police station in Railton



Lessons learnt: Reflections from the CAP team

The CAP research provided many areas for growth and learning for the research team. We asked each member of the team to reflect on the process and to write down three things that they had learnt. Here are some of the answers...

- Learning to work within a team was mentioned by almost all of the team members. *“We have come to learn the value of pulling our weight and doing our share of the work for the benefit of the project.” “We have realised the value of drawing on the group members’ talents and abilities and distributing the roles and responsibilities accordingly.”* For example, one of the Railton members of the team studies GIS (Geographic Information Systems) and has a passion as well as the skills for this subject. Many of the tasks related to this area of work were therefore given to him.
- The team members felt that *“We have developed more confidence, especially in public speaking since there were many opportunities to present our work and conduct research with community members, such as conducting the workshops and the questionnaire survey.”*
- *“We have learned how valuable the “plans of action” are in planning and conducting research, and in helping the team members to be accountable.”* The ‘plan of action’ is a document that the research team leader created and updated regularly in order to keep track of how the research process developed; what needed to happen and whose responsibility was it!
- The team members developed various skills that were related to their different study fields. For example, presentation skills, planning and conducting workshops, and specific research skills. Doing research within a community based participatory research (CBPR) approach, and getting exposure to the community asset mapping process, was especially valuable for members who want to continue doing research in this field.
- *“We have become aware of the value of action research as a vehicle for promoting social change and community development.”*
- *“We have also discovered how much fun it is to do research and also analysing data together. Research does not have to be a lonely process” 😊*



- We have learned to be flexible and *“making the most of what we have”*. For example, not knowing exactly how many people will show up for workshops or members having to walk long distances through the community to complete the survey and conduct interviews with key informants.
- Members gained valuable experience in working with the local community through the interviews and survey. For example, *“learning to be patient, listening to what the people say, and expressing oneself in a very clear and simple way.”*
- *“We have realised how valuable it is to have an inclusive approach (have as many people participate as possible) and to keep the community as the focus.”* The team constantly revisited the aims and objectives of the research to help keep the focus. *“It is easy to become distracted and lose focus; therefore it is necessary to revisit the original reason for doing the research in the first place.”*
- The research team members, especially the local members, became aware of the many needs in the community, and *“developed a deep gratefulness for what we have.”*

The CAP research process was very valuable and did not go without various challenges...

One of our biggest challenges was limited time in that the team could not work together besides the Saturday meetings, and that some of the team members could not work beyond the weekends due to study and work commitments. It resulted therefore that a lot of the decision-making could happen when the team was together and in some instances delayed the process or resulted in limiting the scope of the project. The limited time issue links with one of our other big challenges which is money. This meant that we could not go ‘broader’ (that is, to include more key informants in the study), and ‘go deeper’ (that is, to follow up on key issues brought up in the community assessment). Some of the research members mentioned that it was emotionally challenging to go into people’s houses, listening to their stories and not being able to give them a guaranteed response that something will be done to address their problems. The challenges were nevertheless dealt with as it came up, and the team managed well to support each other and filled gaps as it was needed.

In the next sections of this handbook, steps in the community assessment process are outlined, drawing from the experience of the Railton CAP experience.

PHASES IN THE RESEARCH PROCESS

PHASE 1: Preparing for the Research

This first phase is to sort out various issues in order to prepare for the research. These practical matters may include finalising the research proposal and design; obtaining ethical clearance; developing a consent form; providing training for team members; doing initial interviews with key informants; as well as marketing the project. It is also important to ensure that funding is secure for the completion of the research project including all the products or outputs flowing from the research process.

The research proposal was developed by the research team and approved by the research advisory committee, and then submitted to the University's ethical committee for approval. Ethical clearance is needed in any research study in order to ensure that the research is done in a proper way and is not harmful to anyone involved. A consent form was developed for the research participants to sign, stating that they participated voluntarily; would not be paid for participation; no harm is foreseen in the research process; they do not give up any of their rights by participating in this study; and that they can stop participation at any given time if they wish to. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was also developed between the University and Railton Foundation. This included a summary of the research proposal, clarity about responsibilities, ownership of the research data obtained from the research, the management of project money, and ensuring that the community members are acknowledged in all publications.

Research proposal:

A document that includes the motivation for the research, the research aims and objectives, the methodology, and practical details such as proposed time-line, budget, and so on

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU):

Formal agreement between two parties involved in the research. It helps to clarify roles and responsibilities relating to various aspects of the research process

CAP Research Team Training Programme

In the Railton CAP research, the training of research team members took place over a period of three Saturdays, and was led by the two project leaders. The training programme consisted of the following topics:

- Day One:** *Introduction to research methodology, located within CAP research process*
- Day Two:** *Development of data collection methods and preparation for the research*
- Day Three:** *Development of marketing strategy and data collection methods*

Day One

Overview of programme

Introduction to research:

- The what, why, who and how of research
- What is Community-Based Participatory Action Research?
- Ethics (how should we behave?)

Railton CAP research:

- What and Why? Aims and objectives of CAP research
- Who? Identify boundaries and participants
- How? Brainstorm of possible data collection methods for CAP

Document Analysis:

- Input: Team leader
- Brief discussion

Interviews:

- Input: Team leader
- Brief discussion

Community Assessment Methodology

- Input: Team leader
- Brief discussion

Community Asset Mapping:

- Input: Team leader
- Brief discussion

Day Two

Reflections on previous training day and homework

Developing a Self-Railton map:

Each person was asked to draw (A4) a sketch of her/himself in relation to Railton

CAP research: Boundaries and Participants

- Check GIS map of Railton and surrounds
- Proposal for CAP research boundaries
- Decision about boundaries
- Identification of participants (sectors):

Making sense of the data (Analysis)

- Input on analysis of data: Team leader
- Brief discussion

Planning the Data Collection:

This process occurred in little groups. Each group had to (a) Identify the purpose of the particular method, in the context of the research objectives; (b) suggest specific methods to be used, and processes to be followed; (c) identify who the participants would be for this method(s); and (d) identify specific questions to be asked in/ through this method. Groups

included:

- (1) History of Railton/Swellendam and Document Analysis
- (2) Community Asset Mapping (including Walk-about in Railton and Workshops with sectors)
- (3) Interviews and questionnaires

Sharing of ideas on Methods:

Each group presented their ideas, followed by discussion

Who does what? (Team Responsibilities):

- Sharing of 'skills and wishes' lists (the 'skills and wishes' list was an opportunity where research team members could list their main skills and give an indication of those skills they want to develop more during the research process)
- Identification of specific responsibilities for the research

Day Three

Sharing of drawings of Self-Railton picture

Finalising the Research Design:

1. Marketing (inviting participants to take part in the research)
2. Document analysis and historical research
3. Community mapping workshops
4. Community survey and key informant interviews

Preparation for the Research:

List of Tasks and Responsibilities

Since a community asset mapping process was decided on, we obtained three aerial maps of Swellendam town and Railton from GIS (Geographic Information Systems) at Stellenbosch University - to help us get a better view of the community geographically. We could clearly see the community's borders and sub-sections or areas. This map was also used later when we divided the community into zones for the questionnaire survey.

Two of the local team members had interviews with members of the advisory committee. The reason for these interviews was to ask for their input about people and organizations that should be invited to participate in the research. Another two local team members, as well as the project manager, were mainly responsible for developing a strategy to market the project in the community. Proper marketing of the research project is very important as it directly influences how many people will attend research sessions or workshops. These two team members were chosen as they lived in the community and would thus be able to follow up where needed. The research project was marketed by word of mouth, short articles in local newspapers, posters at local shops, as well as Stellenbosch University's Community Interaction website.

[Note to reader: A summary of the Railton CAP Research design will be given after the discussion of the different research phases]

Railton CAP Example: RESEARCH DESIGN: PHASE ONE - Preparation

<i>Aims: To finalise the research proposal and design; and to prepare for the research, including research training for the team.</i>		
<i>Time-Frame: February to March 2010</i>		
<i>Responsibility: Two research team leaders – coordinating</i>		
	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Details</i>
1.1	Ethics clearance	The proposal and instruments were approved through the University’s Ethics Committee
1.2	Development of consent form	A consent form was developed, and checked through the University Ethics committee.
1.3	Memorandum of Understanding	Railton Foundation and the University of Stellenbosch developed a Memorandum of Understanding for the project
1.4	Research training and detailed development of research design	This occurred through three Saturday workshops in February and March.
1.5	GIS maps	Three maps of Swellendam town and Railton were obtained from GIS at Stellenbosch University.
1.6	Interviews with PAC members	Two local team members interviewed Railton Foundation members of the Project Advisory Committee (PAC), mainly to obtain input on participants (people and organizations) for the research.
1.7	Development of Marketing strategy	Two local team members and project manager led in the development of a marketing strategy (ways of inviting and including key stakeholders in the research, especially the workshops).

PHASE 2: Building a Picture of the Community

It is important to gain an understanding of the community where you are conducting research. It is therefore necessary to talk to people who live in the community and to find and read documents that tell of the community's history and current context. These documents can be found in key sites such as local libraries, museums, municipal offices, and so. The Internet may also provide you with helpful sources of information. In the case of the Railton CAP research, we visited one of the Elder society's regular meetings and conducted a workshop with them. The aim of the workshop was to listen to their stories of the community, how it 'used to be in the olden days', and how they experience life in the community now. We created a time-line on which the elders could indicate important dates for both positive (happy) and negative (sad) events. (See the box on Time-line exercise after the Elders Workshop outline)

We also launched an essay competition at the local schools. The learners were asked to complete various tasks depending on their age group/grade (see table on History Narrative Essay Instructions). Through the essay writing, many more people became aware of the research project that was taking place in the community, and therefore more people could participate. We also had a focus group session with young professionals from Railton who are now living and working in Cape Town. These people have a strong interest in their home town and wish to be

CAP History Narrative Essay Instructions

Grades: 4 and 5

- Draw a picture or pictures of the oldest building/s in Railton.
- Write as many sentences as you are able to, about the story of that building.
- Make sure that you tell the story in the correct historical order.

Grades 6 and 7 learners

- What do you think is the most important building in Railton?
- Draw a picture of what you believe to be the most important building in Railton.
- Tell the story of that building.

Grades 8 and 9

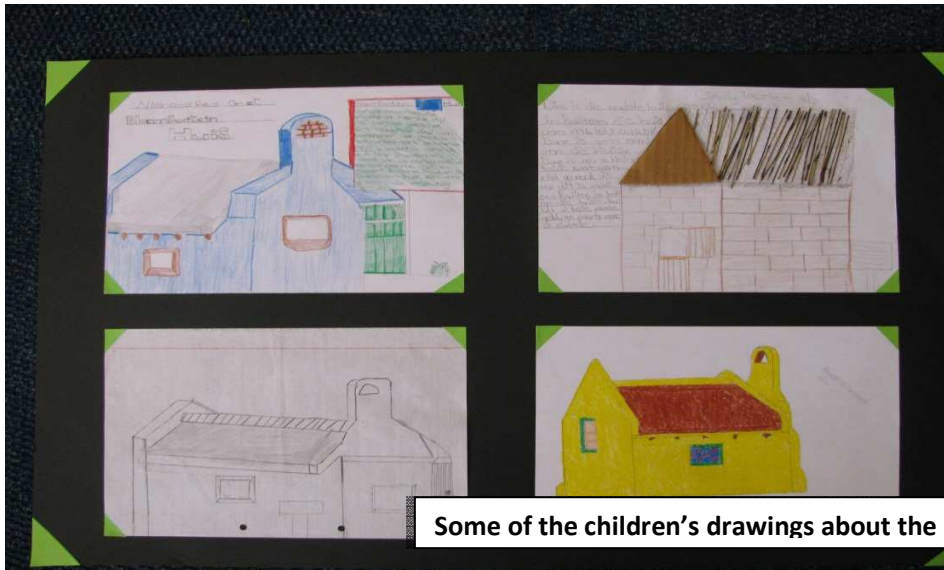
- Find out who of your relatives have been living in Railton for the longest period of time.
- Draw a picture of that relative.
- Write an essay in which you tell that relative's story about how he or she experienced life in Railton.

Grades 10, 11 and 12

- Find the oldest pictures you can, of people and/or buildings in Railton and
- Tell the story/stories linked to that picture/s.
- Interview the owner of the picture/s to obtain as much accurate information about Railton as you can.

involved in various ways. Very meaningful information was shared by these individuals. This helped us to paint a more colourful picture of Railton, and it also gave them an opportunity to revisit their own childhood days growing up in Swellendam.

The history part of the overall research project was aimed at helping the researchers to obtain a clearer picture of the Railton community, but it was also a platform for people to speak about the past, to revisit very sad occasions, to pay tribute to those who have lived and gone before them, as well as to remember ‘the good old days’!



Below is an outline of the Elders’ Workshop and specific focus will be given to the timeline activity afterwards...

Time	Activity
10:00 – 10:30	Team meeting: Check-in and briefing regarding the day’s program, processes and roles: Workshop leader/ main facilitator
10:30 – 10:45	Coffee and Muffins for the team
10:45 – 10: 58	Introduction of project, the team and the workshop. Process the informed-written consent forms.
10:58 – 11:00	Open in Prayer: a volunteer
11:00 – 11: 45	Introductory/ Ice-Breaker: Time-line activity – One team member facilitated and others help where needed
11:45 – 12: 00	Refreshments for everyone
12:00 – 12: 45	Focus Group Interviews: using the main research questions as the schedule One member facilitated others helped where needed and taking notes
12:45 – 13:00	Debriefing Activity: Check-out – One team member facilitated
13:00 – 13:05	Word of Thanks and Closing the session

Timeline Activity – Railton CAP: Elders Workshop

Team members: Main facilitator assisted by other team members acting as scribes, photographer and translators where needed.

Duration: 45 minutes

Step One (3 minutes)

- Place the time-line which was prepared in advance, on the floor.
- Place a container with stones and paper flowers at each end, which will be used as markers.
- Ask the participants to arrange the seats in a semi-circle
- Ask the photographer to take a photograph to record the process as it unfolds.

Step Two (5minutes)

- Invite the *youngest person* in the room to place a *paper-flower* on the time-line indicating his or her birth date. This information is recorded by the scribe.
- Invite the *oldest person* in the room to place a *paper-flower* on the time-line indicating his or her birth date. This information is recorded by the scribe.

Step Three (10 minutes X 2 = 20 minutes)

- Participants are requested to think of any painful or negative event in the history of Railton and to mark this with the placing of a *stone* on the time-line. This information is recorded by the scribe as people place their *stones* and explain its significance.
- Participants are requested to think of a very positive event in the history of Railton and to mark this with the placing of a *paper-flower* on the time-line. This information is recorded by the scribe as people place their *paper-flowers* and explain its significance.

Step Four (5minutes)

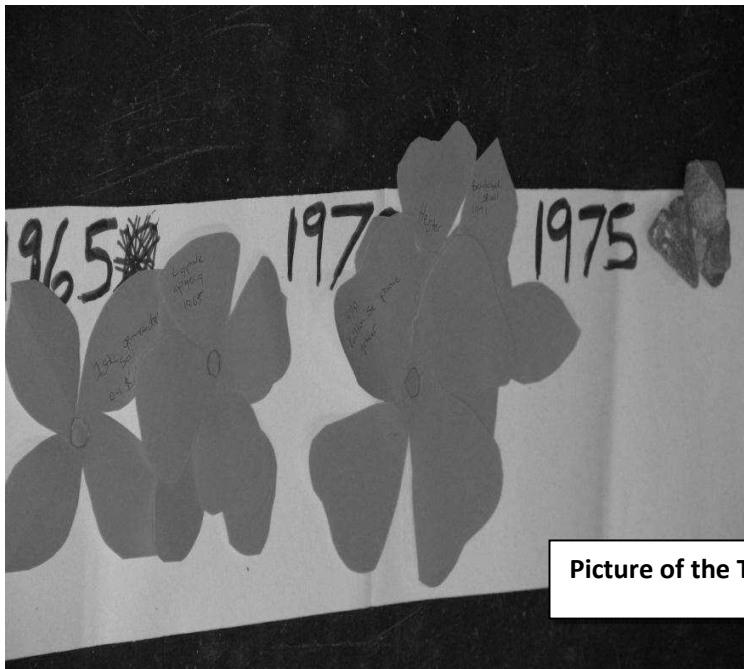
- The facilitator then asks if people wish to symbolically mark anything-else of significance on the time-line, using a stone, or a flower. This information is recorded by the scribe as people place their *objects* and explain its significance.

Step Five (2 minutes)

- The exercise is concluded by thanking the participants for their contributions.

CAP Example: RESEARCH DESIGN PHASE TWO – Historical and Current Context of Railton

<i>Aims: To begin 'The Story of Railton' as a way of providing a historical and contemporary context to the community assessment</i>		
<i>Time-Frame: March to August 2010</i>		
<i>Responsibility: One team member coordinating</i>		
	Activity	Details
2.1	Document collection	<i>Local team member collected some documents from central areas in Swellendam during February. Further document collection occurred during the research period, and a document analysis was done.</i>
2.2	Essay competition in two Railton schools	Essay competition (using essay template) to obtain oral histories from adults in the community from Secondary and Primary schools. Prizes presented at Community Meeting in September.
2.3	Elders workshop	Workshop, including time-line and other assets/needs exercises, with elders from the community.
2.4	Focus group discussion with young professionals	Focus group with young professionals from Railton who now live and work in Cape Town.



Picture of the Time-line with flowers and stones on it

PHASE 3: Community Asset Mapping Workshops

Community asset mapping is a process of identifying and listing existing strengths in the community. These assets, strengths or resources are not just buildings and structures in a community but can also include individuals, associations, clubs, institutions (including churches or other faith-based organisations and schools), community events, as well as good relationships and dynamics in the community. Community assets are then plotted onto a geographic map of the community to give a picture of where the strengths are located. This method is done through a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping process.

Who should be involved?

Certain groups of people need to be invited to participate in the community asset mapping workshops. It is important to get diverse groups of people in order to represent the whole community, for example youth, adults, elders, and service providers to the community. The different sector workshops would have the same focus areas or key questions but could be presented to the different groups in ways that are most appropriate to that particular group (e.g. youth). In order to find people to come to the workshops, institutions such as churches (or other faith-based organisations), schools, political groups, societies, sport clubs, and local businesses could be contacted. In the case of the Railton CAP research, the team decided to do separate workshops for the different groups of people (youth, adults elders, and service providers). This method allowed us to present the workshops in a relevant format for the different participants, for example, using drawings with the youth, and a time-line with the elders.



What do you do in the workshops?

The content of the workshop should be focused around the main research questions. Therefore activities conducted with the participants should be geared towards gaining information that is relevant to the research topic. Workshop activities are practical ways of helping participants to identify, think about and discuss an issue. For example, in the Railton CAP research, we used different coloured “post-its” in some of the activities. Participants could write one asset per page then paste it on the map of Railton. This exercise served as a visual way of identifying the assets in the community.

Below you will find some guidelines in setting up your workshop programme...

Workshop Programme Guidelines – (From Railton CAP Research Youth, Adults and Services Workshops)

Workshops for all three groups contained the following information, instructions and sessions:

- Practical details: Place, Date and Time, Names of facilitators
- Description of the roles of group facilitators and scribes – who does what
- Introduction to research and the specific workshop aims
- Registration procedure – where people write their names, contact details and receive notes
- An outline of each session together with an estimated time allocation
- Break times (e.g. tea break, lunch break, energizer between sessions)
- Sessions may include:
 - ✓ Welcoming and introductions
 - ✓ Orientation to research and the specific workshop
 - ✓ Signing of consent forms
 - ✓ Drawing a map of the community as you see it – Participants can include buildings, symbols, words, little pictures or any other form.
 - ✓ Sharing of maps
 - ✓ Mapping the needs and assets of the community (using coloured “post-its”)
 - ✓ Talking about the needs and assets (why these were mentioned)
 - ✓ Creating an index of needs and assets
 - ✓ Prioritizing needs and assets
 - ✓ Developing an action agenda for Railton and prioritizing action steps
 - ✓ Closure/ checking out
 - ✓ **In Services workshop only:** We conducted a Spidergram exercise to give a visual presentation of the current organisations in Railton that contributes to community development, as well as participants’ views of the strength of relationships between organisations.

The Workshop Process

Below is an outline of the steps followed in all three of the CAP workshops. It should be noted, however, that the Spidergram exercise (session seven) was only included in the Services Workshop.



Tables: Community Asset Mapping Workshop Outline

Session One: Welcome		
Time	Activity	What? (Resources)
30 mins	Registration Refreshments (tea/coffee) on arrival	Name tags, participant list/contact details, kokis and pens, big orange post-it, workshop hand-outs, 5 different kinds of sweets (for group formation) Two maps of Railton/ Swellendam on wall. PowerPoint with photos, and microphone system.
5 mins	Formal welcome	

CAP research team members welcomed participants at a table where there were lists and name-tags to be completed on arrival. Each participant received the hand-outs on the project and workshop, an orange post-it, and a sweet (which indicated which group they were allocated to e.g. Crunchies, Smarties). The groups sat in circles, with a maximum of 8 per group.

Session Two: Introductions		
Time	Activity	What? (Resources)
15 mins	Introductions of all workshop participants (including an icebreaker)	Big orange post-its Pens

Instruction: *On the post-it handed out to you, write one or two words that express how you see or feel about Railton community. Then, in the workshop, introduce yourself: (a) Give your name, and (b) share what you have written on the post-it.*

Session Three: Orientation to Research and Workshop		
Time	Activity	What? (Resources)
15 mins	Introduction to the research	Workshop Hand-out
	Overview of the workshop	Workshop Hand-out
	Signing of consent forms	Consent forms – collected by scribes

The workshop facilitator explained the aims of the research (hand-out), and went over the workshop outline. Participants were then asked to read and sign the consent forms.

Instruction: *We will be handing out forms for you to sign as you need to participate willingly and be assured that we will respect your participation in every way. (Forms are handed out, and explained.) Is everybody clear? Any questions?* (Once forms were signed, group scribes collected them.)

Session Four: Drawing a Map of Railton		
Time	Activity	What? (Resources)
20 mins	Formation of groups	Sweets
	Participants draw map of Railton – as participants see it: Individual exercise	A4 paper (in groups) Kokis and pens (in groups)
	Sharing of individual maps: Focus group discussions	Note-taking by scribes, and scribes collect all individual maps

The facilitator asked participants to go into their groups (identified by the sweet given at the beginning). As a group ice-breaker, participants individually drew a map of Railton, using kokis and pens.

Instruction: *Using kokis and pens provided, draw a picture of Railton AS YOU SEE IT. You can include places, symbols, words, little pictures or any other form.*

Instruction: *In your groups, take turns to talk about what you wrote or drew.*

Members in the group talked about what they drew/wrote on the A4 paper, facilitated by a CAP team member. Another team member took notes when participants spoke about their contributions.

Session Five: Mapping the Needs and Assets of Railton		
Time	Activity	What? (Resources)
45 mins	Mapping of needs and assets: Group exercise	Newsprints (for each group) with Railton boundaries on them. Big yellow and green post-its. Kokis and pens
	Sharing the maps: Focus group discussions	Note-taking by scribes
	Identifying 'good practices; Focus group discussions	Note-taking by scribes

In this exercise, participants wrote on the big yellow post-its the name of major needs in the community (one need per yellow post-it). These yellow post-its were then placed on the group map. Then, on the big green post-its, the names of the assets were written (one asset per green

post-it). The green post-its were then placed on the group map. CAP facilitators helped where needed.

Instruction: *On the big yellow post-its handed out to you, write down important needs in Railton. Place these post-its on the map, in a place that links to that need in some way. Then, on the big green post-its, write down important assets (strengths or resources) in Railton. Put these post-its on the map too.*

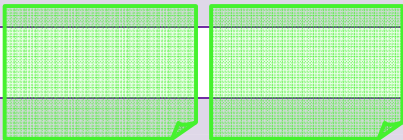
In groups, participants then ‘talked’ to their needs and assets, saying what they were and why they placed them there. One CAP person facilitated, while the other took notes.

Instruction: *In your groups, take turns to talk about what **needs** you wrote down, and why you chose them.*

Group members were then asked to identify specific ‘areas of good practice’ and say why they were proud of these assets. One CAP person facilitated, while the other took notes. Instruction: *In your groups, take turns to say why you chose the **assets**, and say why you are proud of them. Why are these good things to have in Railton?*

(Facilitators of next session prepared the outline of the Index of Assets on newsprint – during refreshments)

The index used looked as follows (on big sheets of newsprint):

Asset identified	Space for Prioritizing (next exercise)
(E.g. particular church)	In this space the participants could place their ‘votes’
	

The session on listing and prioritizing assets then followed.

Session Six: Listing and Prioritizing Assets		
Time	Activity	What? (Resources)
20 mins	Creating an index of assets: All	Large newsprint space in front of workshop – with matrix for index ready to fill (see above)
	Prioritizing the assets: Individually/All	Little <i>green</i> post-its to be used – two per person
	Summary of trends (frequency of assets noted)	

In the full workshop group, the workshop facilitators created an index/list of the main assets noted in groups. The assets were then checked with the participants, allowing additions if needed.

Instruction: *We will now list the **main** assets (strengths and resources) identified in the group. (Once the list was completed on newsprint) Does any group or person want to add any main assets that are not listed?*

Each participant was then given two green post-its. Participants placed their post-its on the two most important assets in Railton, on the big newsprint in the front.

Instruction: *Two green post-its will now be handed out to you. You must choose the TWO most important assets listed on the newsprint, and put your post-its in that column. This exercise will help us to see which assets in Railton are seen to be very important for the well-being of the community.*

At the end of the exercise the facilitator asked the participants ‘*what they see*’ on the newsprint: What seem to be the most ‘popular’ assets noted in the workshop? (This draws them into the analysis process.)

Session Seven: Identifying Community Relationships and Collaboration		
<i>Note: This exercise was only included in the Services Workshop</i>		
<i>Time</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>What? (Resources)</i>
20 mins	Developing Spidergrams: All	Newsprint Kokis, prestick Pre-cut circles/ovals
	Reflecting on the Spidergrams: All	Scribes do note-taking

In the Services Workshop, green circles were handed out to all participants. The following process was followed:

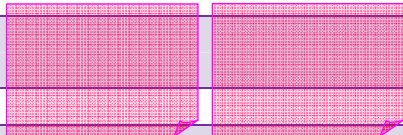
1. Participants identified specific organizations that contribute to the positive development of Railton, placing the names of these organizations on the green circles (one per circle).
2. Participants were then asked to stick their circles on the large newsprint on the wall.
3. After the facilitator had read out all the organizations listed on the newsprint, participants were asked to come up to the newsprint to draw lines between organizations that they know work together. A black (koki) line was used to represent strong relationships, a green (koki) line was used for some links between the organizations concerned, and a red (koki) line was used where there were problematic or no links between organizations.
4. Once the drawing was completed, and the participants had a chance to ‘analyse’ the spidergram picture for themselves, the facilitator summarized what appeared to be (a) strong links and collaboration between organizations in the community, (b) some linkages emerging between organizations, and (c) where there appear to be gaps and therefore possibilities for new relationships in the future.

The following instructions were given for this exercise:

- (1) On the green circle handed out to you, write down (one per circle) organizations that you know of that provide some kind of service to Railton and thereby contribute to its positive development.
- (2) Come up to the big empty newsprint and stick your circle on it. (If someone has already identified that organization, stick your circle on top of theirs.)
- (3) (After the organizations have been read out) ... Come up to the newsprint again and draw lines between those organizations you know work together in some way or another. Place **BLACK** lines between the circles where you think there is already a strong relationship between the organizations; place a **GREEN** line between circles where there is some, even small, links between the organizations concerned; and place a **RED** line between circles where there is no link or problematic links.
- (4) (Before the facilitator summarizes an analysis of the spidergram, s/he asks the following question of the participants): *When you look at the spidergram picture on the newsprint, what do you see?*

Session Eight: Developing an Action Agenda for Railton		
Time	Activity	What? (Resources)
20 mins	Identifying action for the next five years	Newsprint with pre-printed index to note actions, and to allow for prioritization. Big <i>pink</i> post-its
	Prioritizing action	Small <i>pink</i> post-its – two per person
	Summary of trends (frequency of actions recommended)	

Using big pink post-its, participants wrote down actions (one per post-it) they thought should be taken to meet the needs of Railton – over the next five years. The post-its were then placed in the first column. If an action was repeated, it was put on top of the other(s) that were the same. Instruction: *What do you think are the most important actions that need to be taken over the next five years to meet the needs in Railton? Write your answer on the big pink post-its handed out to you. When you are ready, place your post-its in the first column in on the newsprint.*

Action needed to address needs	Place for prioritizing (next exercise)
E.g. Develop youth centre at Thusong	

Once the workshop facilitators ‘cleaned up’ the list, and read it out to all, participants were given two small pink post-its to place next to the actions that they considered to be the most important for Railton over the next five years.

Instruction: *Using your two small pink post-its, place them next to the two most important actions to be taken in the next five years – in the second column on the newsprint.*

At the end of the exercise the facilitator asked the participants ‘*what they see*’ on the newsprint: What seem to be the most important actions to be taken to develop Railton further? (This draws them into the analysis process.)

Session Nine: Closure		
Time	Activity	What? (Resources)
15 mins	Checking out ... (exercise)	An exercise to help bring the workshop to a close
	Closure of workshop	
	Lunch!	Lunch and cool drinks

Participants were given a chance to ‘check-out’: *We are now going to close the workshop with a ‘check-out’. This is a process that allows each of us to say something and to say goodbye to each other. We are going to do this by ...* (Different exercises were used in the four workshops)

The workshop facilitator then formally closed the workshop, thanking everyone for their participation: *As we close, we (the research team) would like to thank you very much for taking part in the workshop. The feelings and views that have been shared here will be included in the research – so, your voices will be heard when we share, with the whole Railton community, what community members feel are the most important needs and strengths in the community, and what action should be taken to build Railton into a caring, exciting place in which to live and work!*

Making sense of the data from the workshops

In the Railton CAP research, the team worked together on the workshop data analysis process. This was done within a four-day workshop which covered the following steps and activities:

1. Preparation for *analysis of data* (guided by the research aims and questions, and input on data analysis). This included going through the various stages of *thematic content analysis*.
2. Identification of small teams to manage certain sections of the analysis (three teams: assets, needs, and priority actions).

Data analysis:

A process of making sense of the data that is obtained from participants in the research process.

Thematic content analysis:

A method of analysing data by identifying core themes that emerges from the data. It is often done with a coding system.

3. A first level analysis of the four workshops, using the original typed up documents from each workshop as a basis, with separate teams putting the data on three sets of newsprint (assets, needs and priority actions) was then conducted. This level of analysis included *all* data generated from each of the workshops (elders, youth, adults and services).
4. A second level analysis was then done on newsprint, comparing the data across workshops in each of the three areas (assets, needs and priority actions), noting frequencies for each item noted.
5. A third level of analysis was then done, where the three teams re-organised the data under categories, placing each of the 'themes' under a relevant category. This resulted in a final summary of findings for each area (assets, needs and priority actions), across the four workshops (elders, youth, adults and services).
6. A fourth level of analysis was then pursued, including a 'standing back' from the data to identify any underlying themes underneath or across the data generated so far.
7. The full research team also conducted an analysis of the Spidergram developed within the Services Workshop. With the large newsprint (with the names of organisations and the lines joining them) in front of them, the team brainstormed their understanding of the Spidergram, noting (a) what organisations had been named, (b) which organisations had not been linked to others, (c) where there were some links between organisations, (d) where there were strong links between organisations, and (e) anything else interesting!
8. The team then 'pulled it all together' – around the main research questions.
9. This summary of the findings was then used as a basis for developing the questionnaire.



Railton CAP Example: RESEARCH DESIGN: PHASE THREE – Community Asset Mapping Workshops

Aims: To obtain the views of key community stakeholders (key informants) on (a) resources, strengths or assets of the community, (b) priority needs, and (c) recommendations for future action to promote community building and development.

Time-Frame: March to June 2010 (Workshops: 8 May, 22 May, 5 June)

Responsibility: One team member coordinating

	Activity	Details
3.1	Planning the workshops	Most of this occurred through the research training workshops
3.2	Translation of workshop guide for team members	Translation into Afrikaans where needed (e.g. instructions).
3.3	Accessing people to come to the workshops	Identifying people and organizational channels (e.g. schools, churches, political groups, sport groups, other groups) to identify and nominate key people to attend. Follow up with SMSs and visits if needed.
3.4	Workshop 1: Youth	4-hour workshop (10.00 – 14.00), including various exercises and focus group discussions (FGDs) around assets, priority needs and future action.
3.5	Workshop 2: Adults	4-hour workshop, including various exercises and focus group discussions (FGDs) around assets, priority needs and future action.
3.6	Workshop 3: Service Sectors	4-hour workshop, including various exercises and focus group discussions (FGDs) around assets, priority needs and future action.



PHASE 4: Conducting a Survey

A survey is a process of obtaining information from *big groups* of people in order to get a more representative sample. You therefore have more people involved in the research process who can give their opinions on the matter concerned. It also promotes *ownership* of the research project, as more people feel that they have contributed to the process. A survey is also a good platform for marketing or creating awareness of the greater research project and its aims. A survey can be very effective when done on a *door-to-door* basis and especially if local people are involved in the data collection process. Researchers and participants should both be involved in the survey, especially in areas where people struggle to read the questionnaire. The researcher can then explain each question and tick or fill in the participant's response.

In the Railton CAP research, it was decided that the data obtained from the workshops with various groups of people would form the basis for a questionnaire to be completed by community members. Based on statistical expert advice from Stellenbosch University, it was agreed that we would target 25 households from each of the eight zones in Railton, ensuring a representative youth/adult distribution. The research team was also asked to ensure that there was a gender balance. Race and social class classifications were not considered as it was assumed that, by targeting the eight zones, this would be covered.

Steps in the survey process

- Determine the aim of the survey
- Decide on a sampling method and sample size
- Divide area into zones to ensure that whole community is covered
- Develop the instrument (e.g. questionnaire)
- Develop consent forms
- Pilot the instrument
- Translate the instrument (if community members have different home languages)
- Decide on practical arrangements (E.g. How will all the households be reached, door-to-door method, walking or driving)
- Collect the data
- Decide on how will the survey data be analysed
- Share the findings with the community, funders and other key role players.

The Railton Questionnaire

The questionnaire was developed around the key questions of the research, and included lists of **assets**, **needs** and **priority actions** already identified in the four research workshops – providing members of the community to ‘tick’ according to their rating (on a 5-point scale).

- 0 = I’m not sure
- 1 = Not important at all
- 2 = Important, but I can do without it
- 3 = Important
- 4 = Very important

The first section of the questionnaire included **demographic information** (gender, age group, marital status, home language, how many people in household and employment status). The second section focused on **assets/resources/strengths** in Railton. This section started with a general question (*What would you consider to be important assets/strengths/resources in Railton and Swellendam as a whole*), followed by a table of assets (drawn from the workshops analysis), providing participants with an opportunity to tick on the 5-point scale. This was followed by the instruction to *list any other assets/strengths/resources in your community that is not on the list*.

The third section of the questionnaire focused on **needs** in Railton. The section began with the question: *What do you think are the most important needs in Railton*, followed by a similar table, listing various needs (drawn from the workshops analysis) which could be ticked on the 5-point scale. This was followed by the instruction to *list any other needs in your community that is not on the list*. This section concluded with the question: *What would you suggest are the most important needs (resources, facilities or services) for the following groups of people in Railton: Children (younger than 13 years), youth (13-25 years), young adults (26-40 years), adults (41-59 years) and Elders (60 years and older)?*

The final section focused on **priority action** in Railton over the next few years. The first question in this section was: *What do you think are the priority actions needed to develop Railton as a community over the next few years*, followed by a table listing various proposed actions (drawn from the workshops analysis) which could be ticked on the 5-point scale. This section concluded with three further questions or instructions:

Please feel free to list any other actions that could be taken to develop Railton over the next few years.

Of these recommended actions listed above (or those added), which of these are your top two recommendations?

Do you have any further suggestions that you want to add regarding development in Railton?

Once the research team had collectively developed the questionnaire (based on workshop data), members of the team *piloted* the draft questionnaire with five people in the community. A number of changes were made to the first draft, based on the feedback received from the piloting process. Once the questionnaire was finalized, it was translated from English into Afrikaans and IsiXhosa.

Piloting:
Testing of an instrument (e.g. questionnaire) in order to find out how participants experience the instrument in terms of length, structure, content, and language use.

To obtain a representative sample for the survey, a map of Railton was used and the community was divided into eight distinctive zones. Households were then randomly selected and care was exercised to ensure that youth and adult participants were included in the sample for each zone. While the participants provided the necessary demographic information for their household, they responded in their individual capacity to the rest of the questions referring to the assessment of the reported assets, needs and action of the community.

The research team carefully planned how to reach 200 households in a short space of time. They teamed up like Noah's animals (two by two), walked and drove around the different zones of the community to complete the questionnaires with the people of Railton. Each interview took approximately 30 minutes to complete. As the researchers were working in couples, one person took responsibility to help with the completion of the questionnaire, while the other facilitated the conversation. Over a period of a week, the research team members conducted 200 structured interviews, 25 in each of the eight zones. As language was a concern in the one area (Machoks), an additional IsiXhosa speaking researcher was brought in to help. The data from the 200 completed questionnaires was *analysed* using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). A data template had been prepared prior to the analysis. This template allowed for quantitative analysis of all four sections of the questionnaire.

Railton CAP Example: RESEARCH DESIGN: PHASE FOUR – Community Survey (Questionnaires)

<i>Aims: To obtain the views of a wider sample of community stakeholders on (a) resources, strengths or assets of the community, (b) priority needs, and (c) recommendations for future action to promote community building and development.</i>		
<i>Time-Frame: June to August 2010</i>		
<i>Responsibility: Two members of the team</i>		
	Activity	Details
4.1	Development of questionnaire	The workshop data informed the development of the Questionnaire, which covered: (a) biographical and demographic information, (b) community assets/strengths, (c) priority needs, and (d) proposed future action.
4.2	Piloting of questionnaire	Questionnaire was tested with a small sample of Railton community members.
4.3	Checking questionnaire with Statistics at Stellenbosch University	The instrument was checked and the data-base developed.
4.4	Translation of questionnaire and consent form	The questionnaire was translated into Afrikaans and Isi-Xhosa.
4.5	Community members complete questionnaires	Questionnaire were completed (within a structured interview framework) by individuals (youth and adults) from 200 households (based on estimated 20,000 inhabitants from 2001 Census), in all geographical regions of Railton. Railton was divided into 8 zones for this purpose. The research team conducted the structured interviews.

PHASE 5: Interviews with key informants

Interviews are widely used in social research. It is a method of communication between two people with the aim of gathering information. Both people involved (the interviewer and interviewee) make use of verbal and non-verbal communication styles in order to boost understanding, build rapport (connection/empathy), and eventually gain the relevant information.

INTERVIEWS AS RESEARCH METHOD

TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

- **Structured:** Requiring a carefully formulated interviewing schedule
- **Semi-structured:** Requiring guiding questions, or topics, with flexibility to cater for other information that may arise
- **Unstructured or In-depth Interview: Allowing** the participant to talk about what he or she considers to be important to the topic

THE INTERVIEWER

- Must be clear about the research topic
- Must have one to one communicative skills and group facilitation skills
- Must be able to make notes and/or use equipment to record the interview
- Must know which kind of interviewing technique to use in a given context, and for a specific purpose
- Must be able to set up an interview, including selecting a suitable location
- Must have some prior knowledge of the interviewee/s
- Must, understand and abide by the prescribed ethical practices

INTERVIEWING TECHNOLOGY

- Audio-recording equipment (tape or digital recorder)
- Audio-visual recording equipment (video camera)
- Pen and paper
- Typing skills (if involved in transcription of interviews)

Each of these requires certain skills, and has advantages and limitations

In the Railton CAP research, *initial interviews* were held with members of the project advisory committee (PAC) at the beginning of the research process. The aim of these interviews was to get their opinion on the proposed focus of the study; what they consider as strengths, assets, resources in Railton and the greater Swellendam; their view on the priority needs and action for Railton; as well as identifying key informants to invite to participate in the research. Key informants are those people who know the community well and may even serve the community in various ways. These may include political leaders, teachers, municipal officers, social development personnel, police officers, religious leaders, business people, and so on.

Interview schedule:
A list of questions that gives direction to an interview.

A number of people or sectors that were not yet involved in the research process or who could not attend the workshops were included in *follow up interviews* held on a one-on-one basis. The community questionnaire (that was used in the survey) acted as the *interview schedule* in the follow up interviews with key informants.

The interview notes were typed up by the researchers who conducted the interviews. The data from the initial interviews, as well as follow up interviews, were then analysed using a thematic content analysis process. Themes around the research questions were highlighted and grouped.

Railton CAP Example: RESEARCH DESIGN: PHASE FIVE – Key Informant Interviews

Aims: *To obtain the views of key informants and stakeholders, not represented in the above mentioned processes, on (a) resources, strengths or assets of the community, (b) priority needs, and (c) recommendations for future action to promote community building and development.*

Time-Frame: *August 2010*

Responsibility: *Two members of the team*

	Activity	Details
5.1	Identification of key informants	Using the list of people invited to and attending the workshops as a basis, key informants and sectors not yet included in the research were identified.
5.2	Interviews with key informants	Using the Questionnaire as an Interview Guide, key informants were interviewed.

PHASE 6: Community Walk-About and Photo-story telling

The community walk-about is a very exciting process as the researchers get to walk or drive around the community to take pictures of buildings, structures, nature and so on. In the Railton CAP research, the community walk-about was like a fresh breeze in the research process! It is a process that makes the data come alive because you can actually see the assets, resources and needs that people talk about in the workshops and survey. Various tools can be used to capture the images, including a digital camera, video camera, sketching, and the GPS machine (to obtain coordinates of assets on the map).

In the Railton CAP research two team members went on the walk-about, one taking pictures of the assets and another taking GPS coordinates.

Some of the sites photographed included churches, nature reserves, shops, parks, the library, community centre and hall, schools, children playing, and so on. The photos were used to create posters and used in the PowerPoint presentation at the community meeting in September. GPS coordinates were used to plot the assets on a map of the community.

Key Points in Photo-Story-Telling

- * Decide on what equipment to use
- * Make sure you know how to operate the equipment used (and have extra batteries on hand)
- * Create a list of the key objects or entities (e.g. assets) to capture
- * Select your best shots for presentation
- * Develop the stories around your pictures
- * Decide on how to present the photo stories (e.g. PowerPoint slides, posters, etc.)
- * Create your photo presentation

Railton CAP Example: RESEARCH DESIGN: PHASE SIX – Community Walk-About & Photo-story telling

Aims: To visually capture and describe identified assets and priority needs in Railton		
<i>Time-Frame: August 2010</i>		
<i>Responsibility: Various team members, coordinated by GIS expert on team</i>		
	Activity	Details
6.1	Walk-about/Photo shoot	Two members of the team walked around with a camera, GPS, and notebook to take photos of entities (particularly assets) identified by participants in the workshops.
6.2	Photo/Story-telling	Stories were developed around key photos
6.3	Creative compilation of photo stories developed	Research team developed posters to present the photo-stories – for presentation at the September Community Meeting, and for the final presentation of the research.

PHASE 7: GIS Mapping of Community Assets

GIS (Geographic Information Systems) mapping of assets in the community is a visual way of telling people where the strengths or resources are located in the community. Through this visual aid people are made aware of the assets that already exist in the community. The mapping process starts with obtaining aerial maps of the community concerned, which can be obtained from the local municipality, GIS department or Google Maps. Coordinates are taken from those assets or other things that need to be shown on the maps, as well as photographs to present a visual picture of the asset when people click on a link/object (e.g. an asset). The coordinates are put into a GIS mapping system using the relevant software.

In the Railton CAP research, team members obtained maps from the GIS department of Stellenbosch University. The maps were used in the workshops to present a visual picture of the community during the mapping (assets and needs) exercises. In further preparation for the mapping process, one of the team members who studies GIS consulted relevant software programmes as well as assistance from Stellenbosch University personnel. The created GIS map of community assets is thus another output or product of the overall research project.

Railton CAP Example: RESEARCH DESIGN: PHASE SEVEN: GIS Mapping of Community Assets

Aims: To locate the main community assets identified by the community (through the various research methods described above), on the Railton/ Swellendam map – using a GIS software package

Time-Frame: February-September 2010

Responsibility: GIS expert member of the team

	Activity	Details
7.1	Obtain relevant aerial photos of Railton (and Swellendam)	Based on the feedback on the initial maps obtained, 3 maps were obtained for the workshops: (a) Railton, within Swellendam; (b) Swellendam town; (c) Railton (including Cooper Street). The latter was the main map used in the workshops.
7.2	Prepare for GIS mapping	Expert team member consulted relevant programmes and assistance.
7.3	Develop GIS maps	This process entailed identifying the physical assets on the GPS, inserting this into the relevant GIS software, and inserting qualitative data for each of these assets.

PHASE 8: Making sense of all the data – Data Analysis

Data analysis is the process of “making sense” of research data. How you will make sense of your data will be influenced by the type of data (quantitative or qualitative) obtained in the research study. For quantitative data, and especially with a large sample size, it is best to use a statistical package (e.g. SPSS). A widely used qualitative analysis method is thematic content analysis. In this process themes that emerge around different questions are highlighted and grouped together. Before analysing your data you need to get it in a format where it can be easily analysed, for example, notes from interviews, typed up newsprint sheets from the workshops, and summary of quantitative analysis results.

When data from different methods (survey, interviews, and workshops) are analysed separately, it is necessary to “pull it all together”. This process is called *triangulation of data*. In the Railton CAP research, we did this together!

Railton CAP Example: Doing it together

The overall **analysis framework**, which was guided by the research aims and questions, included the following categories:

1. Railton context (history/ now)
2. Priority needs
3. Assets/strengths/resources
4. Priority actions
5. Final Recommendations

The **data sets** used included:

- Document analysis (including school essays)
- Elder workshop
- Adult workshop
- Youth workshop
- Services workshop (including Spidergram)
- Notes from interviews with key informants
- Survey questionnaire analysis
- Feedback sheets from Community Meeting
- Community walk-about/photos and GIS
- Team analysis and recommendations (at team workshop in October 2010)

The collective analysis procedure followed by research team included the following steps. First, the raw data was handed out to research team members divided into four teams: (a) document analysis data team, (b) workshop data team, (c) questionnaire data team, and (d) interview data team.

Then the four little teams provided the summarized data from their documents to answer the following research questions: (a) Railton history story, (b) community assets, (c) community needs, and (d) priority community actions. These summaries were captured on separate newsprint sheets and typed up.

Railton CAP Example: RESEARCH DESIGN: PHASE EIGHT – Making sense of all the data (Data Analysis)

Aims: To pull all the analyses together (triangulation of data) around the research aims and questions		
Time-Frame: August -September 2010		
Responsibility: The team		
	Activity	Details
8.1	Context of Railton: *Document analysis *School essays *Elders workshop	Data relating to the history of Railton (from all the noted methods) pulled together. Data relating to ‘Railton Today’ also put together.
8.2	Community assets: *Workshop notes *Focus group discussion (FGD) notes *Questionnaire analysis *Individual interviews	The assets identified through all of the methods noted were compiled in a central list, with rank ordering being used where appropriate. Findings from the ‘Spidergram’ exercise (in Services Workshop) were summarized, highlighting where collaboration is happening, and where it could still be developed in Railton.
8.3	Priority community needs: *Workshop notes *FGDs (in workshops) *Questionnaires *Individual interviews	Needs identified were listed, and prioritized, based on the findings from the various methods. The rank-ordering helped to highlight ‘priority needs’ areas for action over the next few years.



PHASE 9: Sharing the research findings



Sharing your research findings is an exciting process. It is the team's chance to show off their work and to inform others about the research process and results. There are many ways of presenting your findings; however they are determined by the audience, the purpose and the setting. Some of the settings to present your research may include public or closed community meetings, meetings with the funders, conferences, and in scientific journals. Creating reports, PowerPoint presentations, photo-stories and factsheets

are some ways of presenting your data to various audiences. In the Railton CAP example, the team presented the preliminary findings to the community on Heritage day and offered people a chance to give their input. This feedback was then included in the final analysis process in order to make recommendations for community development. The team also did a presentation at a Community Interaction Conference hosted by Stellenbosch University. The focus of this presentation was on the research approach and process and not on the findings.

Railton CAP Example: RESEARCH DESIGN: PHASE NINE: Presenting the Findings and Recommendations

Aims: To present the findings from the research, focusing on the three main areas of the research: (a) assets/resources/strengths of the community; (b) priority needs identified; and (c) proposed areas for future action (recommendations). This process was also used to receive feedback on the recommendations developed.

Time-Frame: August – September 2010

Responsibility: The Team!

	Activity	Details
9.1	Writing up the research for community presentation	This included a community Factsheet, posters, PowerPoint presentation (including GIS mapping), TV coverage, and photographs.
9.2	Heritage Day Event	The community meeting was held on Heritage Day, from 12.00 – 14.30, on 24 September, at the Secondary School in Railton.
9.3	Presentation of list of recommendations from the research: For community engagement	A summary of the findings and the recommendations emerging from the research was presented to the community at the meeting in September, and community members were asked to respond (using the Factsheet provided).
9.4	Development of final list of recommendations	The input from the community was then analysed by the research team, and the team's recommendations were then integrated into the research reports.

PHASE 10: Writing up the research



The process of writing up your data is to put the information gained through the research process into an accessible format for people to read. How you write up your data will depend on who you are writing it for, i.e. who needs to read it. When writing for the broader public more accessible language is used than when you write for the academic environment. What you include or the depth of writing up your data will also depend on your audience. In that sense you will write more elaborate on the research process in one context and in

another your audience might only be interested in the research results. The outputs that were created from the Railton CAP included a detailed research report; a specific report with the focus on recommendations to the Railton Foundation; a community guideline on community assessment (this booklet); factsheets that were handed out at the community feedback meeting; and a DVD that contain all the relevant documents as well as interviews with the team members and aspects of the research process done by Swellendam TV.

Writing a Research Report

Who are writing it for
your audience

Language used in the report
to "fit" the reader
your due dates and
likely
time for editing the

Railton CAP Example: RESEARCH DESIGN: PHASE TEN – Writing up the Research

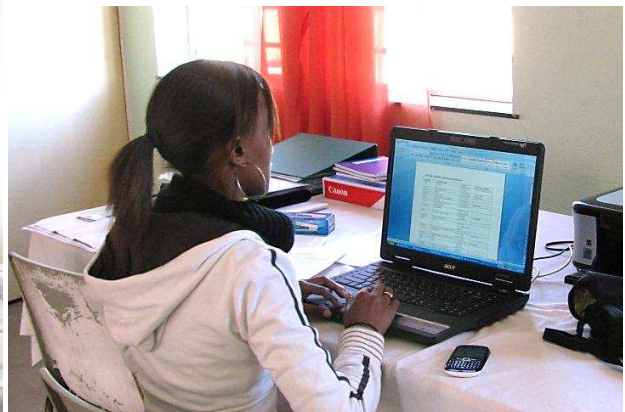
Aims: To present the findings from the research in written format, focusing on (a) the research process, (b) assets/resources/strengths of the community; (c) priority needs identified; and (d) proposed areas for future action (recommendations).

Time-Frame: September - November 2010

Responsibility: Team leaders, supported by the team

	Activity	Details
10.1	A formal Research Report	A full (100 page) Research Report was developed.
10.2	A Report for Railton Foundation	A shorter, specific Report for Railton Foundation was developed, with specific recommendations relating to the Foundation's work in Railton.

10.3	A Community Handbook	An accessible Handbook was developed on the basis of the actual research <i>process</i> pursued during this project. (<i>This booklet!</i>)
10.4	A DVD with local SwellendamTV and a number of other documents	A DVD with all central documents and presentations, including a local TV film capturing the research process, was compiled.



Using the research: The Challenge of Action

A central aim of a Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR) approach is to use research for the purposes of supporting community or social action. The findings emerging from any research conducted within this approach should, therefore, be linked directly to some form of action that will support the further development of the community concerned.

What does this mean? Some ideas of how the ‘action’ part of this type of research can be pursued are suggested below.

- The **CBPR approach** to research is *action* in itself as it includes development of all involved in the process. This includes developing skills of all who were involved in the research team, and those who participated in the workshops and other forms of data collection and analysis.
- In CBPR research it is important that the process of following up with action is built into the **research proposal** so that funders of the research, and those involved in the process, are aware of and remain committed to the actions recommended from the findings.

- **Documents** written to record the process and findings of the research can act as a resource to identify and find funding for community projects.
- It is important to follow some kind of process, involving all relevant role players, to develop a **plan of action** to follow up on recommendations made from the research.

In the case of **Railton CAP**, action was pursued in the following ways:

- The *CBPR* approach used in the CAP research was, in itself, a form of community action in that its process included building the research skills for some local people and it helped many people to focus on understanding the strengths and needs of the community, and included them in a process where they could say what action needed to be taken.
- The *process* of the research has been captured in a practical way in *this* Community Handbook. Hopefully this will make it possible for others, in and outside of Railton, to draw on these ideas and guidelines to do similar research.
- The *findings* of this research can be used by the community to identify projects and to motivate for funding for these projects, based on the research that has been done.
- A special Report for the Railton Foundation was written from the CAP research, aimed specially at making practical *suggestions on 'how to take this further'*. This links the research directly with action. This was then used as a basis for developing a *plan of action* for the next five years.
- The *partnership* between Railton Foundation and Stellenbosch University formally started through the CAP research. This partnership will continue, and will ensure, in one way or another, that action is pursued as a result of the research.

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- Prof Tony Naidoo (Co-Research Team leader)
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- Ms Frances Petersen (Manager of Thusong Centre)
- Ms Deidré Sauls (Administrative Assistant: Research Team)
- Ms Margaret Lotz (Life Orientation: Swellendam School)
- Ms Mary-Anne Juries (Life Orientation: Bontebok Primary School)
- Ms Kosie Sefoor (Community Leader)
- Ms Agnes Mbatyaswa (Community Leader)
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