

Chapter 7

An Analysis of Community-based Responses to Armed Violence

Clare Hansmann

Introduction

To be effective, community-based responses to the proliferation of firearms have to be informed by a sound understanding of the attitudes to, perceptions of and associations between firearms and the levels of crime, violence and victimisation within the specific locality. Community-based responses to the proliferation of firearms are those actions initiated and implemented by a community to reduce the damage caused by firearms. The nature and extent of the firearm penetration, as well as an understanding of the causes and effects of these factors, determine the type of community initiatives adopted. Firearm penetration is not only the extent to which a gun culture is entrenched within the community, but also the extent to which the community itself depends on firearms.

The typical community that implements an action programme to address the proliferation of firearms has few resources, a multitude of development priorities – all of which are critical – and little political influence. With this in mind, a quantitative survey was conducted in a typical South African residential geographic complex: the Lekoa/Vaal region, south of Johannesburg. This area comprises a number of settlements ranging from formal townships to informal settlements, hostels and smallholdings included. The level of service delivery throughout these localities varies from areas benefiting from a full range of services (such as electrification, water-borne sanitation, purified piped water and refuse removal), to those settlements without basic services and amenities. The constructed environments of these settlements reflect the socio-economic position of the residents. The dilapidated housing, overcrowding and lack of infrastructure in the Lekoa/Vaal area are characteristic of the lives of vulnerable groups of people whose most basic concern is day-to-day survival and who are beset

by many pressing concerns, including the high levels of unemployment, the lack of adequate education facilities, the lack of primary health care and sustained levels of crime and violence. Firearm proliferation therefore is just one of the numerous concerns that the community is seeking to address.

What this means, is that the time and resources available for redressing the firearms issue vary from context to context. Given the different priorities and resources, this research survey was designed to maximise the utility of community efforts for redressing firearm proliferation. This contribution aims to outline a package of options that could inform the choice of the type of strategy, initiative or response a community might adopt to redress the penetration of firearms, as well as the possible implications these might have for the community. General responses, as opposed to the actual design of an initiative, will be examined, since the specifics of the response adopted need to be undertaken by the community in question.

The ISS conducted a survey of people living in the Lekoa/Vaal area in order to obtain a better understanding of the community's attitudes to and perception of firearms so that these might inform the design of community-based responses to firearm proliferation. The survey of the Lekoa/Vaal area was designed to provide different types of information:

- an assessment of the existing penetration of firearms within the community;
- an assessment of the attitudes to, perceptions of and associations with firearms;
- the establishment of the link between victimisation and firearm ownership;
- the establishment of the link between the fear of crime and victimisation;
- the community's analysis of what should be done to combat crime effectively;
- the nature and type of firearm-control mechanisms identified by the community;
- the existing community-based structures and their level of membership; and
- the channels of information dissemination within the community,

From this information, a number of community-based options have emerged to inform possible approaches to reduce firearm proliferation.

Survey Methodology

The Arms Management Programme (AMP), based at the ISS, commissioned the the Lekoa/Vaal survey in November 1997. The residential survey in Lekoa/Vaal Metropolitan Area had a sample size of 1 500 people. The data was weighted to reflect the demographic profile of the Lekoa/Vaal Metropolitan Area. The survey was conducted by Community Action for Social Enquiry (CASE) from 5 to 25 November 1997, and checkbacks were made on 25% of the sample.

The field team was recruited and trained by CASE, which undertook community liaison to obtain the permission of the local authorities to conduct the survey. The survey was done on a household level and respondents were randomly selected using appropriate selection procedures. Although there were a few qualitative responses, it was largely a quantitative survey, taking between 40 to 50 minutes to administer. The methodology took account of the need for sensitivity with regard to questions about firearms, for instance, the possession of an unlicensed firearm is illegal in South Africa. Thus questions about gun possession were carefully formulated and located within the survey schedule – usually among a cluster of crime or home security questions. For instance, the questions relating to firearm ownership were placed within a context of perceptual information about crime and violence. This was an effective technique for minimising the respondent's reluctance to answer the questions about firearms.

Demographics

Demographic information is useful in ascertaining the attitudes and perceptions of the residents in a sample area. The nature of the community-based response to firearm proliferation is variegated on demographic lines and hence, central to the analysis. This section provides a profile of who comprises the community and who the potential stakeholders are in the design of a firearm campaign. Throughout the analysis, the demographic characteristics of the sample are used to determine the implications of the survey with regard to substantive and design issues. A demographic profile of the weighted database is presented.

Gender

In the Lekoa/Vaal area, there was a gender bias with a significantly larger female than male population. Overall, 40% of the sample were male and 60% female. The gender ratio was consistent across race groupings.

Given both the historical and economic necessities of many households in South Africa, adult male members often find employment as migrant workers. This, coupled with the sustained political violence of the past decades, largely accounts for the lower male population in African and coloured households. It is interesting to note that, in the Lekoa/Vaal area, white and Indian households also had a significantly larger female than male population. Since women comprise a more significant component of the sample, every effort needs to be made to ensure that women participate effectively in the design and implementation of community-based responses to redress firearm proliferation.

Table 1 – Gender distribution of sample by race categories (n=1 500)

PERCENTAGE	AFRICAN	COLOURED	INDIAN	WHITE	TOTAL
Male	40.1	42.9	44.4	38.5	39.9
Female	59.9	57.1	55.6	61.5	60.1
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Race

In the Lekoa/Vaal area, African people comprise the majority of the total population (84%). Whites are the second largest group of people in the area (14%), while coloureds and Indians comprise just over 1% of the population. Race is a significant socio-economic indicator. In South Africa, race is one of several factors determining the life experiences and opportunities of people. Changes in legislation and the constitution will ultimately redress the imbalances of the past. In the interim, race has to be considered in both research and policy formulation. A person's cultural expression is stratified, in many cases, along racial lines. A person's cultural identity is both informed by and impacts on factors such as religion, history, preference of recreation, style of dress, customs and traditions. Culture is not static, but evolves over time, largely determining the manner in which

an individual would react to a situation. The type of response adopted to curb the proliferation of firearms, for instance, could be influenced by the culture of both the individual and the community.

On a geographic level, the segregated residential land-use patterns that were legislated in South Africa are being eroded, as a result of the repealing of the relevant laws. However, the rate at which this desegregation is taking place is slow and, in terms of residential land-use, there appears to be a certain element of retained racial segregation. This is influenced by the limited choice available to low income households in terms of residential location. It is also the result of considerations of choice. For example, a person may be reluctant to leave a community where his or her place of worship is located, or where his or her family history is defined.

Area

The Lekoa/Vaal area comprises four types of settlement areas. The largest is the urban formal area where 65% of the sample resided. The entire coloured and Indian sample resided in urban formal areas, while only 61% of the African and 84% of the white sample lived in the urban formal areas. The second largest residential type is made up of the urban informal settlements where a further 30% of the sample resided. It was found that 35% of the African and 2% of the white sample resided in urban informal settlements. The remainder of the sample resided on smallholdings (2%) and in hostels (3%).

In South Africa, hostel dwellings formed a cornerstone of the apartheid system. These residential complexes were designed to prohibit workers from establishing household units close to economic opportunities. Instead they were made to leave their households on long-term contracts, returning bi-annually. The result was a high degree of mobility among migrant labourers and a high turnover of occupancy. Such conditions were conducive in fostering criminal activities and, more especially, firearm smuggling.

Age

Overall, 40% of the sample is between the ages of 16 and 30 years. The largest age category of the sample is between 31 to 40 years old, comprising 26% of the sample. The remaining 34% is above the age of 40 years.

Table 2 – Settlement type by race category (n=1 500)

PERCENTAGE	AFRICAN COLOURED	INDIAN	WHITE	TOTAL
Urban formal	61.3	100.0	100.0	65.0
Urban informal	35.3	0.0	0.0	30.0
Hostels	3.4	0.0	0.0	2.9
Smallholdings	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.1
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 3 – Age distribution of sample by gender (n=1 500)

AGE GROUP	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
16-20 years	13.6	11.4	12.3
21-25 years	15.6	14.0	14.6
26-30 years	8.7	15.7	12.9
31-40 years	28.6	24.8	26.4
41-50 years	14.6	14.7	14.7
51+ years	18.9	19.4	19.1
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0

When the age profile of the sample is considered, there are relatively fewer male respondents, compared to female respondents between the ages of 26 to 30 years. This could be attributed to the violence that occurred in the late 1970s in the area, as well as to the propensity of male persons in this age category to leave their households in search of employment opportunities in other areas.

Education

The urban informal and hostel residential areas had the greatest proportion of people with no education (9% and 11%, respectively), while 6% of respondents from the urban formal areas had no education. The

smallholding and urban formal areas had the highest proportion of people with tertiary education (14% and 7% of the sample, respectively).

Employment

The distribution of employment based on demographic information indicates that greater proportions of male respondents (64%) were employed than female respondents (37%). Similarly, greater proportions of white (95%) and Indian (95%) respondents were employed than coloured (55%) and African (44%) respondents.

Table 4 – Education level by settlement type (n=1 500)

SETTLEMENT TYPE	URBAN FORMAL	URBAN INFORMAL	SMALL-HOLDING	HOSTELS	TOTAL
No education	5.6	9.1	0	11.4	6.7
Primary school	19.2	31.3	0	34.1	22.9
Junior secondary school	34.3	33.7	48.4	34.1	34.4
Senior secondary school	33.5	23.7	37.8	15.9	30.1
Tertiary education	7.4	2.2	13.8	4.5	5.9
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Considering the level of employment by residential area, approximately half of all respondents in the urban formal, urban informal and hostel sample were employed, as opposed to the entire smallholding sample. The proportion of people employed increased with age. Only 28% of the respondents aged 16 to 20 years were employed, as opposed to 68% of the respondents above the age of 50 years.

With regard to education, 91% of the respondents with a tertiary education were employed. The level of employment among respondents with either no education, primary, junior and/or secondary school education was consistent at between 45 to 46%, respectively.

It is important to note the proportion of the sample in each settlement area who are employed. Employed people are expected to have comparatively

less time available to run a community-based initiative to curb firearm proliferation, although they have the skills and resources to do so. Since 1994, many communities have experienced a decline in the number of activists in their communities – on a microscale this could be referred to as a ‘brain-drain’. Under the new economic dispensation, those to secure employment first were often the activists from each community, followed by those with skills and experience. People in the community who remain unemployed, are usually those who are marginalised and without wider

Table 5 – Proportion of the sample employed (n=1 500)

PERCENTAGE OF SAMPLE EMPLOYED		
GENDER	Male	64.0
	Female	36.8
RACE	African	44.4
	White	94.7
	Indian	95.0
	Coloured	55.0
SETTLEMENT TYPE	Urban formal	50.2
	Urban informal	44.1
	Hostels	50.5
	Smallholdings	100.0
AGE	16-20 years	27.9
	21-25 years	30.3
	26-30 years	35.9
	31-40 years	56.1
	41-50 years	55.4
	51+ years	67.9
EDUCATION	No education	46.3
	Primary	45.1
	Junior secondary	46.3
	Senior secondary	46.0
	Tertiary	91.0

experience or formal skills. Yet, these are the very people who may well have to initiate and sustain the community-based campaign. Thus, there is a need to draw on their existing pool of skills, knowledge and resources while, at the same time, building awareness around firearms and the need for action.

A high proportion of employed people were found within this sample – more so than is reflective of the broader South African society. However, this does not significantly skew the analysis, since the demographic information is variegated.

Frequency of going hungry

All of the respondents from coloured and Indian households felt that they never went hungry, compared to 98% of white households and 37% of African households. Among the remainder of the African sample, 10% of these respondents felt they often went hungry, 42% felt they sometimes went hungry and 12% felt they seldom went hungry. In the formulation of this question, recognition was given to its sensitivity. Respondents are reluctant to admit to their impoverished household conditions and, in some cases exaggerated household income often. Due to the usefulness of an economic indicator in the analysis, the question on the frequency of going hungry was formulated as a means of measuring the comparative wealth of the respondent's household. It is often difficult to assess the well-being of a South African household from a reported household income level. Respondents often do not define the intricate survival strategies impoverished households must practice in quantifiable terms and there is, moreover, a large discrepancy in terms of self-defining non-monetary contributions to the households.

Length of residency in the area

It was found that 58% of the sample had been resident in their areas for more than five years, while 17% of the sample had resided in the area for between three and five years and 11%, between one and two years. The remaining 14% of the sample had been resident in their area for less than a year. People with a short residential history in an area may well hold a different perception of the level of crime and violence in the area, as a result of their limited ability to make an accurate long-term projection of trends in crime and violence for the area.

Table 6 – Length of residency in area by settlement type (n=1 500)

YEARS	URBAN FORMAL	URBAN INFORMAL	SMALL-HOLDING	HOSTELS	TOTAL
Less than a year	13.6	14.7	10.0	13.6	13.9
1-2 years	8.4	18.0	3.3	18.2	11.4
3-5 years	13.5	25.3	13.3	11.4	17.0
6-10 years	17.6	15.8	10.0	13.6	16.8
10 years	46.9	26.2	63.4	43.2	40.9
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Existing Penetration of Firearms in the Community

The existing penetration of firearms into the community is measured by a number of indicators. Some provide a more direct indication, others less so. The different types of indicators of firearm penetration considered here are:

- *The level of crime:* This is a significant indicator to measure the existing penetration of firearms within a community. The level of crime may well impact on the propensity of people within a community to carry firearms.
- *The level of political violence:* This acts as an indicator of change in the number of firearms, because of the close association between political violence and firearms in South Africa. Firearms are often both a causal and concomitant factor in the cycle of violence.¹
- *The frequency of hearing firearm shots:* This provides a pertinent indicator of the level of firearm penetration within a community, as it shows how the extent of firearm usage changes over time. Hearing gunshots places residents within a community under psychological strain and may condition their activities within the community.
- *The respondents' perceptions of the change in the number of firearms in the community over a period of time:* These provide reliable indicators of the level of firearm penetration within the community.
- *An admission regarding the presence of a firearm within a household, correlated with the ease of access to a firearm:* These provide useful indicators of the level of penetration of firearms within a community.

The above indicators of the level of firearm penetration into the Lekoa/Vaal community are considered in greater detail below.

The Levels of Crime and Violence

The levels of crime and violence in the Lekoa/Vaal community have increased since 1994. Relatively speaking, crime had increased to a greater extent than violence. Overall, the sample felt that, since 1994, the level of violence had increased by 40% and the level of crime by 71%. In the context of this survey, the community understood violence to mean political violence.

Demographic factors (as identified in the previous section) impact on the attitudes, perceptions and experiences of the respondents. Some demographic factors impact more significantly than others. This is clearly illustrated in the analysis of the perception of the various desegregated responses of the samples in response to questions on changing levels of crime and violence. Gender, race, age, education level, settlement type and length of residency in the area all affect the perception of crime and violence.

Comparatively speaking, there were relatively insignificant differences of opinion across the disparate subsamples with regard to the perceptions of the crime level in the community. However, there was a variation in the perception of the level of violence experienced. The African respondents felt violence had decreased in their area, while the remainder of the sample felt it had increased. South African historical factors are a significant determinant in this regard. Historically, African and coloured communities have been affected to a greater extent by political violence than white and Indian communities. Relatively speaking, the African sample was the most positive about the decrease in the level of violence, in comparison to that of crime. Of concern is the fact that coloured respondents have not felt the same reduction in levels of violence as African communities, more specifically because of the widespread rise of firearm usage and gang culture in coloured communities. Interestingly, there was no significant variation between the perceptions of the male and female respondents in terms of the changing levels of crime and violence since 1994.

Frequency of Hearing Firearm Shots

Hearing firearm shots is a frequent occurrence in the Lekoa/Vaal area, with 57% of the respondents *often* hearing firearm shots and 26% of the

Table 7 – Perceived change in the levels of crime and violence since 1994 (n=1 500)

GROUP		LEVEL OF CRIME			LEVEL OF VIOLENCE		
		Increased	Same	Decreased	Increased	Same	Decreased
Gender	Male	71.2	13.7	15.1	42.4	10.4	47.2
	Female	70.8	14.1	15.1	38.5	11.3	50.2
Race	African	71.1	11.9	17.0	32.7	9.6	57.7
	White	50.0	37.5	12.5	42.9	42.9	14.2
	Indian	100.0	0	0	100.0	0	0
	Coloured	70.1	25.4	4.5	80.1	17.6	2.3
Settlement type	Urban formal	68.7	15.2	16.1	37.9	11.7	50.4
	Urban informal	75.2	10.6	14.2	41.3	8.4	50.3
	Hostels	80.0	20.0	0	83.3	16.7	0
	Smallholdings	71.1	17.8	11.1	46.7	13.3	40.0
Age	16-20 years	66.5	18.9	14.6	37.0	14.7	48.3
	21-25 years	73.1	10.5	16.4	36.8	6.8	56.4
	26-30 years	72.3	8.7	19.0	29.4	9.3	61.3
	31-40 years	72.4	13.2	14.4	37.0	11.9	51.1
	41-50 years	70.9	15.5	13.6	44.8	11.3	43.9
	51+ years	69.0	17.1	13.9	53.0	10.8	36.2
Education	No education	70.7	11.1	18.2	36.0	4.0	60.0
	Primary	70.1	10.5	19.4	35.6	10.6	53.8
	Junior secondary	71.0	15.9	13.1	41.1	11.2	47.7
	Senior secondary	72.9	12.8	14.3	39.4	11.2	49.4
	Tertiary	67.8	20.7	11.5	54.0	14.9	31.1
Length of residency	< 1 year	68.3	17.3	14.4	31.7	13.0	55.3
	1-2 years	76.6	11.7	11.7	36.3	9.4	54.3
	3-5 years	69.2	15.6	15.2	35.3	11.8	52.9
	6-10 years	76.6	7.5	15.9	37.9	7.9	54.2
	> 10 years	68.8	15.5	15.7	46.8	11.6	41.6

respondents *sometimes* hearing firearm shots. In terms of designing a community-based strategy, it is important to recognise that the frequency of hearing gunshots shifts across residential settlement areas. Residents of urban informal areas and hostels hear firearm shots more often than residents of urban formal areas and smallholdings. Respondents who more frequently hear gunshots, may be more readily sympathetic to the campaign, since the reality of firearms in their community is more stark. At the same

time, the frequency of hearing firearm shots may also inhibit their willingness to take action against the proliferation of firearms – particularly if participants are concerned about how participation might affect their safety.

Table 8 – Frequency of hearing firearm shots in Lekoa/Vaal area (n=1 468)

FREQUENCY	URBAN FORMAL	URBAN INFORMAL	SMALL HOLDINGS	HOSTELS	TOTAL
Often	53.8	65.7	23.1	70.4	57.4
Sometimes	25.6	27.5	23.1	18.2	25.9
Seldom	12.8	4.5	34.6	11.4	10.6
Never	7.8	2.3	19.2	0	6.1
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Perception of Changes in the Number of Firearms since 1994

Firearms are more prolific in the Lekoa/Vaal area than in previous years. Since 1994, 79% of the respondents have noted an increase in firearms in their area, 15% feeling that the number of firearms had decreased and 5% that there had been no change in the number of firearms.

In response to the question, *Do you feel there has been an increase or decrease in the number of firearms since 1994?*, significantly more Indian respondents indicated that they believed the number of firearms had increased in their community, as compared to African, white and coloured respondents. Similarly, respondents on smallholdings and in urban informal and formal settlements felt there had been an increase in the number of firearms. There was no significant difference in the perception of male and female respondents with regard to the increase in the number of firearms (see Table 9).

There are three main reasons cited by respondents who felt that the number of firearms had actually increased since 1994. It was found that 50% of this sample attributed the increase in firearms to the greater ease of acquisition,

the connection between availability and corruption regarding how people secure firearms, and the low cost associated with firearm procurement. A further 31% of this sample felt this was in reaction to a perception that there was an increase in crime and violence in South Africa, and that firearms were required for self-defence or as a deterrent. Finally, 15% of this sample

**Table 9 – Perceived change in the number of firearms since 1994
(n=1 500)**

Group		Perceived change in the number of firearms since 1994			
		Increased	Same	Decreased	Total
Gender	Male	80.0	7.9	12.1	100.0
	Female	78.7	3.6	17.7	100.0
Race	African	78.8	4.1	17.1	100.0
	White	81.9	17.3	0.8	100.0
	Indian	99.4	0.6	0	100.0
	Coloured	77.0	14.9	8.1	100.0
Settlement type	Urban formal	78.4	5.4	16.2	100.0
	Urban informal	81.5	5.0	13.5	100.0
	Hostels	71.1	6.4	22.5	100.0
	Smallholdings	85.7	14.3	0	100.0
Age	16-20 years	76.5	4.8	18.7	100.0
	21-25 years	75.2	3.8	21.0	100.0
	26-30 years	82.0	2.7	15.3	100.0
	31-40 years	79.4	6.0	14.6	100.0
	41-50 years	82.7	7.6	9.7	100.0
	51+ years	79.6	6.7	13.7	100.0
Education	No education	75.1	0	24.9	100.0
	Primary	77.7	5.0	17.3	100.0
	Junior secondary	79.2	5.6	15.2	100.0
	Senior secondary	81.3	5.4	13.3	100.0
	Tertiary	78.6	12.0	9.4	100.0
Length of residency	< 1 year	76.2	4.4	19.4	100.0
	1-2 years	87.0	3.3	9.7	100.0
	3-5 years	79.9	6.1	14.0	100.0
	6-10 years	79.1	4.8	16.1	100.0
	> 10 years	77.8	6.3	15.9	100.0

saw the increase in the number of firearms as linked to the demand for firearms by criminal elements operating within South Africa.

From the reasons cited by the respondents, it could be argued that, as long as people have easy access to firearms, feel insecure as a result of crime and want to take part in criminal activities, there will be a demand for firearms. The responsibility rests both on the state and the individual to address the problem.

Table 10 – Reason believed to be associated with the increase in firearms (n=993)

CATEGORY REASON	%	MOTIVATION	%
High level of firearm accessibility	49.7	Firearms are easily available	34.4
		Corruption	9.8
		Firearms are cheap	5.5
In reaction to perception of rising crime and violence in South Africa	31.1	Reaction to an increase in crime	20.1
		People do not feel safe	4.9
		A firearm is a deterrent	4.0
		Increase in conflict	2.1
Use of firearms for criminal activities	14.7	Unemployment	9.2
		Gangsterism	5.0
		Firearms guarantee a living	0.5
Other reasons	4.5	Lack of awareness	1.8
		Other	2.7
TOTAL	100.0	TOTAL	100.0

Firearms in the Household and Ease of Access to a Firearm

In the community, just under one-fifth of the households had a firearm in the house, while a similar proportion of respondents had easy access to one should they require it. When asked whether there was a firearm in the household, 14% of the respondents admitted to having one in their household. Assuming that those respondents who had a firearm in the household had relatively easy access to that firearm, they were excluded from the next question about the level of access to a firearm.

Among respondents who did not have a firearm in the household, it was found that 15% had easy access to one. The implication of this, combining the above two findings, is that 29% of the sample had relatively easy access to a firearm should they require the use of one. Given the earlier finding, where 50% of those respondents who felt firearms had increased in the community attributed this to the high level of firearm accessibility within the community, it can be concluded that ease of access to firearms informs the level of firearm ownership in the community. More specifically, firearm ownership is made legitimate through the ease of firearm access, especially among young people who have limited life experience and are at a stage in their development where they are easily influenced by external impressions.

Table 11 below outlines the level of access to a firearm, as determined by the presence of a firearm in the household correlated with the ease of access to a firearm. Of paramount concern is the fact that, on the whole, the sample had relatively easy access to a firearm. The following category of respondents had the greatest access to a firearm: tertiary or post-school education; employed people; male respondents; people that seldom go hungry; and coloured people. The profile of people who have a firearm in their household or have personal access to a firearm cuts across existing stereotypes of firearm ownership. Overall, 17% of the respondents had a firearm in the household. Of these, 96% of the sample that had a firearm in the household claimed that it was licenced. A low level of confidence is placed in these findings on firearm ownership, more especially as the respondents believed mistakenly, or knowingly lied – given that it is illegal to possess an unlicensed firearm – about the firearm in the household being licenced. It is felt that there is significant underreporting of both firearm possession and firearm licencing in the survey.

Comparatively, a greater proportion of white and Indian households had firearms, than African and coloured households. It was found that 67% and 47% of the white and Indian households, respectively, had at least a single firearm in the house, as opposed to 21% of the coloured and 5% of the African households. Similarly, it was found that people residing on smallholdings and in urban formal areas had a greater proportion of firearms than households situated in urban informal settlements and residential hostels. Overall, 73% of the households on smallholdings and 18% of the people residing in urban formal areas came from environments where one

or more firearms existed in the household. There were fewer households with firearms in urban formal areas (3%) and hostels (3%).

It appeared that the relatively more affluent households had more firearms than the less fortunate households. In those households that never go hungry, it was found that 27% had a firearm, while in those households that

Table 11 – Presence of a firearm in the household and ease of access to a firearm			
		FIREARM IN HOUSEHOLD	EASY ACCESS TO FIREARM*
Gender	Male	15.6	21.1
	Female	13.4	11.4
Race	African	4.7	15.6
	Coloured	20.8	23.6
	Indian	46.7	9.8
	White	67.1	10.0
Settlement type	Urban formal	18.3	15.0
	Urban informal	2.7	16.4
	Smallholding	73.3	0
	Hostels	2.9	11.2
Age	16-20 years	12.9	11.9
	21-25 years	8.2	17.6
	26-30 years	10.2	15.9
	31-40 years	11.6	18.8
	41-50 years	14.3	16.1
	51+ years	26.1	8.6
Education	No education	2.6	7.7
	Primary	2.0	13.0
	Junior secondary	13.6	14.7
	Senior secondary	20.5	19.1
	Tertiary	39.7	21.9
Frequency of going hungry	Often go hungry	3.1	6.1
	Sometimes go hungry	2.9	14.3
	Seldom go hungry	3.7	20.0
	Never go hungry	27.1	16.9
		n=1495	n=1181
*excludes those respondents who had a firearm in the household			

often, sometimes and seldom go hungry, between 3 and 4% had a firearm. Similarly, in those households where the respondent was employed, there were more firearms than in those where the respondent was unemployed. It was found that 16% of the households where the respondent was employed and 3% of the households where the respondent was unemployed had at least one firearm in the household. There was a similar correlation between the level of employment of the respondent and the proportion of households with a firearm. It was found that, in those households where the respondent had a higher qualification than secondary school, 40% of the households had a firearm as compared to only 3% and 2% of the households where the respondent had no education or only primary school education. What should be borne in mind is that, among respondents, the frequency of going hungry and the level of education are indicative of the socio-economic standing of the entire household structure.

Attitudes to, Perceptions of and Associations with Firearm Ownership

The attitudes to, perceptions of and associations with firearms and firearm ownership are significant determinants of the nature of a community-based response to firearm proliferation. A community that views firearms in a positive light is less likely to adopt a campaign to reduce the proliferation of firearms than one that has a negative attitude to, perception of and association with firearms. In order to maximise the utilisation of the resources of the community-based strategy, a sound understanding of the dominant view on firearms and firearm ownership needs to be reached.

From the outset, the link between attitudes and perceptions is fluid, and the link to firearm ownership is inconsistent. For instance, it was found that people in possession of firearms had negative attitudes to firearm ownership in some cases. The possession of the firearm was not determined through choice, but through lack of choice. For example, the lack of alternative means to address crime informed the respondent's choice to obtain a firearm for protection. The following section probes a number of linkages between firearm ownership and attitudes, perceptions and associations as a means of identifying the leverage points within the sample for the design of a campaign message. Leverage points are those attitudes,

perceptions and associations that, if changed, could affect the level of firearm ownership.

This section will consider the following issues:

- *Attitudes to firearm ownership:* Just under half of the sample had positive attitudes to firearm ownership, informed by a perception that firearms provided safety. Just over a half of the sample had negative attitudes to firearm ownership based on the perception that firearms were dangerous and redundant. Moreover, respondents felt that possessing a firearm places one at risk.
- *Perceptions of firearm ownership:* Four-fifths of the sample supported the idea of restricting those who should be allowed to possess and carry a firearm, as determined by age, level of responsibility and the geographic locality of a licence holder.
- *Associations with firearms:* Firearms were associated by four-fifths of the sample with images of death and danger.
- *The link between victimisation and firearm ownership:* Within the sample, just over a fifth of the respondents, or a member of their households, had been a victim of crime. Among this sample there was a higher level of firearm ownership and willingness to own a firearm than among those who were not victims of crime.
- *The relationship between firearm ownership and the perception of trends in crime and violence, as well as the fear of crime and violence:* Perceptions of the levels of crime and violence differed among those respondents who were willing to own a firearm and those who were not prepared to own one, as well as among those who had been victims or crime.

Attitudes to firearms ownership

Overall, 45% of the sample felt that they were prepared to own a firearm, while 52% felt that they were not prepared to own one and 3% of the sample remained undecided. This holds implications for a community-based campaign design: broadly speaking just under half the target sample is overwhelmingly for firearms. This needs to be borne in mind in the design of the campaign, which should include objectives that provide the community with a wider range of choice before individuals take the decision to become firearm owners. It is believed that firearm ownership will not resolve certain of the factors that inform the choice for possessing

a firearm. Consideration of the demographic profile of those who would be prepared to own a firearm provides valuable insight into the question of who a community-based campaign should target. It was found that certain categories of people were more inclined to own a firearm than others: most notably, people on smallholdings, whites, males, people with a tertiary education and people between the ages of 26 and 30 years. This follows a

**Table 12 – Are you personally prepared to own a firearm?
(n=1 500)**

PERCENTAGE OF SAMPLE PREPARED TO OWN A FIREARM		
Gender	Male	57.3
	Female	38.8
Race	African	43.4
	Coloured	42.9
	Indian	50.0
	White	62.2
Settlement type	Urban formal	45.2
	Urban informal	47.3
	Smallholding	64.3
	Hostels	43.6
Age	16-20 years	38.8
	21-25 years	48.4
	26-30 years	52.9
	31-40 years	48.8
	41-50 years	44.9
	51+ years	41.9
Education	No education	28.9
	Primary	41.0
	Junior secondary	46.1
	Senior secondary	52.6
	Tertiary	54.1
Employment status	Employed	52.9
	Unemployed	43.8
Frequency of going hungry	Often go hungry	37.2
	Sometimes go hungry	42.3
	Seldom go hungry	43.9
	Never go hungry	51.3

trend similar to the pattern of current household ownership of firearms. It appears that those with the means to own a firearm usually do, as do those with assets to protect or those accumulating assets or property. The people least likely to own a firearm are those who sometimes or often go hungry, are over 51 years of age, have a low level of education (either no education or only primary education), female respondents and young respondents between 16-20 years.

The main reason for owning a firearm is concern over safety. It was found that 45% of the sample was prepared to own a firearm. Among those respondents who felt they would carry a firearm, the main reason (98% of this sample) was for purposes of safety. The other 2% of this sample mentioned the links between firearms and family tradition, hunting and the status related to carrying a firearm.

A number of reasons why respondents would not own a firearm were cited. These related to the perception that the possession of a firearm was dangerous and redundant, as well as placing the owner at risk. A community-based campaign could outline these limitations of firearm ownership. It was interesting to note that other factors, which would historically be seen as influencing the desire to own a firearm, such as family tradition, hunting and status, largely fell by the wayside. That is, these are not significant underlying or contributory factors.

There was a gender difference with regard to two main categories cited as reasons for not owning a firearm. Firstly, more female than male respondents listed a 'fear of firearms' as their reason for not owning a firearm. It was found that 21% of female respondents and 11% of male respondents were of this opinion. Conversely, 27% of the male respondents, as opposed to 18% of female respondents, felt that a firearm was *unnecessary or of no need*. This demonstrates that male respondents are more likely to believe in their physical strength as a means of self-defence than the female respondents.

The African, coloured and Indian samples were of the opinion that having a firearm increased the possibility of accidents, as indicated by between 30 and 33% of these respective sample categories. Only 6% of the white sample cited this as a reason for not owning a firearm.

Table 13 – Reason for not owning a firearm (n=770)

REASON FOR UNWILLINGNESS	%	SPECIFIC REASON FOR	%
Firearm perceived as dangerous and redundant	65.6	Might have an accident	27.8
		No need	17.8
		Fear of firearms	17.3
		Do not offer security	2.6
		Spouse has a gun	0.1
Possessing a firearm places a person at risk	21.8	Makes trouble	15.0
		Makes a person a target	6.8
Other	12.6	Hate firearms	5.5
		Religious beliefs	3.5
		Do not know how to use it	2.6
		Too expensive	1.0
TOTAL	100.0	TOTAL	100.0

Among those people who come from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, there was a stronger opinion that firearms *make trouble* (as demonstrated by the indicator *frequency of going hungry*). Among those who often or sometimes go hungry, 17% of the respective samples felt firearms made trouble, as opposed to 13% among the sample that seldom or never went hungry.

Perceptions of Firearm Ownership

Perceptions of firearm ownership differed throughout the sample. Overall, there was strong support for some form of restriction on who should be allowed to possess and carry a firearm. The principle of restricting firearm ownership is not a new concept in South Africa. Under the current firearm legislation, there are regulations defining the conditions of firearm ownership and, on application to the Central Firearm Registry, people complying with the existing regulations and laws are issued with firearm licences to certify their eligibility to possess a firearm.

The mixed perception of whether or not women should carry firearms correlated more strongly with the response given by respondents regarding

Table 14 – Perceptions of firearm ownership (n=1 498)

	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	TOTAL
Not everyone older than 16 years should be allowed to carry a firearm	8.3	2.7	89.0	100.0
Criminals should not be allowed to carry firearms	10.5	8.0	81.5	100.0
People in bars should not be allowed to carry firearms	11.4	1.5	87.1	100.0
Women should carry firearms	45.1	12.6	42.3	100.0

their attitude to firearm ownership, than to the gender of the respondent. Gender stereotypes were relatively insignificant in this regard.

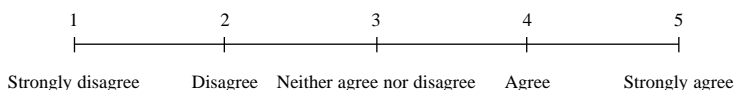
Opinions on firearm ownership varied according to the demographic profile of the respondent. In the table below, the mean score was calculated as an indicator of agreement with various statements on firearm ownership. The smaller the mean score (to the value of 1), the higher the level of disagreement and the larger the mean score (to the value of 5), the greater the level of agreement of the respondent with the statement. There is no significant difference in opinion among male and female respondents with regard to the selected conditions of firearm ownership. There were, however, differences among the various race groups. Most notable was the caution expressed by coloured respondents with regard to whether or not firearms should be allowed in bars. Historically, bars in coloured settlements are violent, and this could inform the conflicting opinion on whether or not to oppose firearm possession in such places. Respondents between the ages of 16 and 20 years held no definite opinion whether or not firearms should be allowed in bars.

People living on smallholdings were more supportive of the idea that everyone above 16 years of age should be allowed to carry a firearm. This could have been informed by the fact that in smallholding settlements, as in farming communities, the possession and use of a firearm are often seen as necessary and acceptable norms from a young age.

Table 15 – Views on firearm ownership by demographic profile

Mean score value		Everyone older than 16 years should be allowed to own a firearm	Criminals should not be allowed to carry a firearm	People in bars should not be allowed to carry a firearm	Women should be allowed to carry a firearm
Gender	Male	1.74	4.10	4.09	2.95
	Female	1.66	4.23	4.19	3.01
Race	African	1.57	4.13	4.16	2.99
	Coloured	1.82	4.03	3.96	3.17
	Indian	1.97	4.41	4.21	2.90
	White	1.95	4.26	4.15	2.97
Settlement type	Urban formal	1.70	4.23	4.19	2.95
	Urban informal	1.62	3.99	4.01	3.11
	Smallholding	2.10	4.48	4.20	2.93
	Hostels	1.86	4.4	4.18	2.75
Age	16-20 years	1.74	4.11	3.99	3.02
	21-25 years	1.60	4.09	4.21	3.07
	26-30 years	1.60	4.13	4.21	3.22
	31-40 years	1.71	4.23	4.18	2.98
	41-50 years	1.70	4.25	4.15	2.84
	51+ years	1.75	4.18	4.13	2.88
Education	No education	1.63	4.40	4.32	2.75
	Primary	1.63	4.04	4.16	2.84
	Junior secondary	1.67	4.13	4.08	3.09
	Senior secondary	1.69	4.24	4.21	3.02
	Tertiary	1.92	4.19	4.03	2.95
Employment status	Employed	1.76	4.27	4.19	2.98
	Unemployed	1.50	4.02	4.16	2.98
Frequency of going hungry	Often	1.49	4.02	4.31	2.99
	Sometimes	1.59	4.12	4.12	2.96
	Seldom	1.49	4.18	4.49	2.92
	Never	1.80	4.22	4.10	3.01

Mean score value



Association with Firearms

When respondents were asked what their associations with firearms were, strong feelings of death and danger were identified by over four-fifths of the sample. These associations firmly demonstrated the negative connotations with firearms. It would be interesting to see whether this conclusive association between death and danger influenced respondents' willingness to own a firearm.

As a means of informing the design of a firearm reduction campaign, respondents were asked to name the first thoughts that came to mind when they heard the word *gun*. This provided insight into what their understanding of a firearm was, and showed that the sample knew the capabilities of a firearm. Overwhelmingly, 67% of the sample directly associated a firearm with an end to life. A further 16% of the sample identified strong negative emotions associated with danger, while 7% directly associated firearms with crime.

	PERCENTAGE
An end to life (death or kill)	67.3
Strong negative emotion associated with danger	15.6
Crime	7.0
Positive emotion associated with safety	3.6
Injury	3.6
Immediate threat to life	2.4
Legal justice issues	0.5
TOTAL	100.0

Relatively more female than male respondents associated a firearm with an end to life, with 64% of the male and 69% of the female respondents associating *gun* with the words *death* or *kill*. Similarly, 72% of the African respondents, as opposed to 46% of the coloured, 41% of the Indian and 36% of the white sample, made this association. The higher prevalence of firearm

violence in coloured and African communities appears to form the basis of this association, reflecting the life experience of the individual.

It was found that 73% of the younger respondents (that is, respondents under the age of 31 years) associated *gun* with the end to life, as opposed to

Table 17 – Word that comes to mind on hearing the word ‘firearm’ by demographic profile (n=1 500)

Group		Legal justice issues	Crime	End to life (death/kill)	Strong negative emotion with danger	Positive emotion associated with safety	Threat to life	Injury
Gender	Male	0.8	9.8	2.4	14.9	3.9	64.2	4.0
	Female	0.3	5.2	2.3	16.1	3.5	69.2	3.4
Race	African	0.4	5.8	2.1	16.4	2.1	72.3	0.7
	Coloured	0	15.5	18.6	9.3	7.2	46.3	3.1
	Indian	0.5	13.6	2.7	17.9	7.1	41.3	16.7
	White	1.1	14.6	3.2	9.2	13.5	35.7	22.7
Settlement type	Urban formal	0.6	8.1	2.7	17.9	4.4	62.0	4.3
	Urban informal	0.3	4.6	1.7	11.6	1.7	79.2	0.9
	Smallholding	0	11.1	0	11.1	11.1	37.1	29.6
	Hostels	0.1	6.0	2.3	9.0	2.9	79.5	0.2
Age	16-20 years	0.7	6.2	1.3	13.5	2.0	72.7	3.6
	21-25 years	0	6.3	1.3	15.2	3.9	73.2	0.1
	26-30 years	0	7.1	2.1	11.3	3.0	74.0	2.5
	31-40 years	0.8	6.7	2.7	17.3	3.1	67.1	2.3
	41-50 years	0.6	8.1	4.1	9.7	4.8	67.0	5.7
	51+ years	0.5	7.7	2.3	22.4	4.9	54.6	7.6
Education	No education	0	6.6	1.3	22.0	1.3	68.8	0
	Primary	0	5.3	2.3	18.2	2.3	71.1	0.8
	Junior secondary	1.2	5.4	2.6	15.4	3.0	66.8	5.6
	Secondary	0.2	8.5	2.7	12.4	4.5	68.0	3.7
	Tertiary	0.1	15.5	1.6	12.3	9.5	54.1	6.9
Frequency of going hungry	Often	0	6.2	0	33.0	5.2	54.6	1.0
	Sometimes	0.7	6.3	2.2	14.2	1.2	75.2	0.2
	Seldom	0	6.8	0.9	21.7	1.5	69.1	0
	Never	0.5	7.7	3.3	12.1	5.8	63.0	7.6

67% of the 31 to 50 year-olds and 55% of the 51 or more year-olds. Once more, the life experiences of the younger respondents would inform this opinion, as firearm injury and murders are more frequent among younger people.

Firearms are strongly associated with causing violence in society, as demonstrated by the 84% of respondents who agreed with a statement to this effect. This is significant for the design of a campaign to reduce firearm dependency: since firearms currently have negative connotations for the sample, the campaign would not need to utilise resources to convince the sample of this. It is interesting, moreover, in the light of the high level of willingness shown by certain components of the sample for firearm possession – both on an individual and a household level. Here the strength of the association between perceptions of firearms and the reality of firearm ownership is thrown into question. This is an important issue to be addressed in the design of a firearm campaign, in that the latter will aim to change perceptions about firearms which, in turn, will affect firearm ownership, or certainly, responsible firearm ownership.

CATEGORY	DO YOU BELIEVE THAT GUNS CAUSE MORE VIOLENCE?
Disagree	5.9
Neutral	9.7
Agree	84.4
TOTAL	100.0

Table 19 below outlines the mean score associated with the statement of *guns cause more violence*.

Link between Victimization and Firearm Ownership

People who have been victims of crime, or have a close household member who has been a victim of crime, are more likely to own a firearm and less likely to forfeit it, given the opportunity to do so. This section considers these, and other dynamics of the link between victimisation and firearm

Table 19 – Views about firearms by demographic profile

GUNS CAUSE MORE VIOLENCE		
Gender	Male	4.19
	Female	4.18
Race	African	4.39
	Coloured	4.11
	Indian	3.7
	White	3.7
Settlement type	Urban formal	4.12
	Urban informal	4.38
	Smallholding	3.63
	Hostels	4.36
Age	16-20 years	4.23
	21-25 years	4.20
	26-30 years	4.19
	31-40 years	4.14
	41-50 years	4.28
	51+ years	4.12
Education	No education	4.38
	Primary	4.37
	Junior secondary	4.21
	Senior secondary	4.11
	Tertiary	3.86
Employment status	Employed	4.09
	Unemployed	4.30
Frequency of going hungry	Often	4.33
	Sometimes	4.42
	Seldom	4.37
	Never	4.02
<p>Mean score value</p> <p>1 ————— 2 ————— 3 ————— 4 ————— 5</p> <p>Strongly disagree Disagree Neither agree nor disagree Agree Strongly agree</p>		

ownership. Victimization is used in this section to describe those people who have either personally been a victim of crime, or have personal experience of a household member who has been a victim of crime. There is no distinction made between the nature of the crime, for instance property

crime and violent crime. It should be acknowledged, however, that the nature of the crime is a significant determinant of the level of victimisation. Overall, 24% of the sample had been victims of crime between 1994 and 1997, either personally, or through the experience of a household member.

The table below outlines a profile of the percentage of the sample that have been victims of crime, personally or through the experience of a household member. Given the household definition of victimisation, only those demographic characteristics that are applied at a household level are used in the analysis. Consequently, the race, settlement type, frequency of going hungry and length of residency questions are applied. Overall, white and Indian respondents were more victimised than African and coloured respondents. However, it is expected that the nature of the crimes differ accordingly: white and Indian households are more significantly affected by property crimes (such as theft), while African and coloured respondents are affected by violent crimes (such as murder and assault) (see table 20).

Table 20 – Victimization between 1994 and 1997 by demographic profile (n=1 500)		
PERCENTAGE OF THE SAMPLE THAT VICTIMISED BY CRIME – EITHER THEMSELVES OR A HOUSEHOLD MEMBER		
Race	African	20.1
	Coloured	18.4
	Indian	27.8
	White	44.1
Settlement type	Urban formal	25.2
	Urban informal	20.2
	Smallholding	30.0
	Hostels	22.5
Frequency of going hungry	Often	15.4
	Sometimes	22.5
	Seldom	16.3
	Never	27.7
Length of residency	< 1 year	22.0
	1-2 years	14.9
	3-5 years	25.4
	6-10 years	24.5
	> 10 years	25.7

Victimisation is affected by and, in turn, affects an array of actions, attitudes to and perceptions of firearm ownership, as indicated below. Households that have experienced a crime between 1994 and 1997 are more likely to possess a firearm for home protection than households that have not been victimised. The main limitation of this analysis is that the time when the firearm was obtained, cannot be determined from the survey. Given this, it is difficult to determine whether households with a firearm were victimised before the purchase of the firearm, or after, and further, whether or not the victimisation was linked to a household or individual crime type.

Table 21 – Relationship between buying a firearm for the house and victimisation		
	HOUSEHOLD VICTIMISATION n=356	NO HOUSEHOLD VICTIMISATION n=1 145
Firearm obtained for home protection	12.1	5.5
No firearm for home protection	87.9	94.5
TOTAL	100.0	100.0

Comparatively, there is a higher level of victimisation among the sample who have a firearm in the household than among those who do not. What cannot be determined, however, is whether the possession of the firearm has

Table 22 – Relationship between the presence of a firearm in the household and victimisation		
	HOUSEHOLD VICTIMISATION (n=356)	NO HOUSEHOLD VICTIMISATION (n=1 139)
A firearm in the household	22.5	11.7
No firearm in the household	77.5	88.3
TOTAL	100.0	100.0

directly affected the level of victimisation or not; and whether the firearm was purchased in reaction to, or as a consequence of, the victimisation.

However, given the fact that there was no difference in the victimisation levels between respondents who had easy access to a firearm, it is felt that there is a stronger correlation between firearm ownership and victimisation than was previously indicated.

Table 23 – Relationship between easy access to a firearm and victimisation		
	HOUSEHOLD VICTIMISATION (n=258)	NO HOUSEHOLD VICTIMISATION (n=923)
Easy access to a firearm	14.7	15.4
No access to a firearm	85.3	84.6
TOTAL	100.0	100.0

In addition to this, respondents who had either personally experienced a crime, or had a household member who had experienced one, were more willing to own a firearm than those respondents who had not been victimised. What should be borne in mind is that the information about the willingness to own a gun closely reflects existing firearm ownership patterns.

Table 24 – Relationship between willingness to own a firearm and victimisation		
	HOUSEHOLD VICTIMISATION (n=352)	NO HOUSEHOLD VICTIMISATION (n=1 109)
Willing to own a firearm	53.4	43.9
Unwilling to own a firearm	46.6	56.1
TOTAL	100.0	100.0

The Relationship between Firearm Ownership and the Perception of Trends in and the Fear of Crime and Violence

Generally, there is a low correlation between the fear of crime and the level of victimisation. This complicates matters in the process of trying to understand the relationship between firearm ownership and fear of crime and the actual incidents of crime.

Crime Types Perceived as Most Common and Most Feared correlated with Willingness to own a Firearm

The crime type perceived as the most common in the Lekoa/Vaal area was identified by 46% of the respondents as housebreaking. This was followed by murder (as identified by 16% of the respondents) and rape (12%). The most common crime type identified here differed from the most feared crime type. Overall, rape was feared the most, as identified by 31% of the respondents, followed by murder (24%) and housebreaking (21%). This is a general trend as people more strongly fear crimes against their person, while property crimes are more common. In South Africa, there are approximately three violent crimes for every seven property crimes.

Table 25 – Crime type perceived as most common and crime type most feared		
	CRIME MOST COMMON (n=1 284)	CRIME MOST FEARED (n=1 443)
Housebreaking	46.4	21.2
Murder	16.0	24.2
Rape	12.2	30.5
Car-hijacking	9.9	7.8
Mugging/stabbing	8.9	6.2
Child Abuse	1.9	4.6
Other	4.7	5.5
TOTAL	100.0	100.0

The crime perceived as the most common in the area varied according to the demographic profile of the respondent. In terms of crime type,

housebreaking was the most common on smallholdings (where 62% of the smallholding sample perceived this to be the most common crime type in the area). There was a lower, yet similar, level of housebreaking reported among urban formal and urban informal areas, where 47% and 49% of the respective samples identified this as the most commonly perceived crime type.

Table 26 – Most commonly perceived crime type by demographic profile (n=1 500)

Group		House-breaking	Rape	Murder	Child abuse	Mugging/stabbing	Car-jacking	Other
Gender	Male	45.0	6.4	16.6	1.7	12.9	13.0	4.4
	Female	47.4	16.3	15.6	2.0	6.1	7.7	4.9
Race	African	41.9	14.1	18.4	2.2	10.0	9.9	3.5
	Coloured	53.1	6.2	2.5	1.2	13.6	8.6	14.8
	Indian	96.2	0.5	0.5	0	0	1.6	1.2
	White	73.1	0.6	1.8	0	1.8	10.2	12.5
Settlement type	Urban formal	46.7	12.3	15.4	2.0	8.1	11.7	3.8
	Urban informal	48.9	13.2	14.2	2.0	11.5	6.6	3.6
	Smallholding	61.9	0	0	0	0	14.3	23.8
	Hostels	7.2	6.4	54.8	0	6.4	2.6	22.6
Age	16-20 years	40.4	19.8	14.5	2.3	11.5	7.3	4.2
	21-25 years	40.3	13.2	17.6	1.3	11.9	12.4	3.3
	26-30 years	49.2	13.8	12.2	2.3	9.1	10.6	2.8
	31-40 years	47.0	10.6	16.5	2.6	9.9	8.9	4.5
	41-50 years	53.2	7.9	17.3	2.0	3.4	8.5	7.7
	51+ years	47.3	10.6	16.7	0.6	7.6	11.8	5.4
Education	No education	27.7	24.2	24.1	3.4	8.6	8.6	3.4
	Primary	38.0	13.6	24.6	2.2	11.4	4.9	5.3
	Jnr secondary	49.9	11.2	14.3	2.0	7.7	12.0	2.9
	Snr secondary	50.1	11.3	12.2	1.6	8.7	10.9	5.2
	Tertiary	56.8	6.9	6.9	0	8.5	14.1	6.8
Frequency of going hungry	Often	29.7	14.9	21.0	6.2	22.1	6.1	0
	Sometimes	42.0	17.2	18.6	1.6	7.8	8.6	4.2
	Seldom	54.1	12.1	13.1	3.0	8.0	7.9	1.8
	Never	51.2	7.7	13.7	1.1	7.6	12.0	6.7

Table 27 – Crime most feared by demographic profile (n=1 500)

Group		House-breaking	Rape	Murder	Child abuse	Mugging/stabbing	Car-jacking	Other
Gender	Male	25.6	10.5	28.8	3.3	10.3	12.8	8.7
	Female	18.4	43.7	21.3	5.6	3.5	4.1	3.4
Race	African	21.0	30.3	24.8	5.2	6.1	7.6	5.0
	Coloured	22.6	24.7	16.1	2.2	14.0	10.8	9.6
	Indian	57.2	18.2	16.6	1.1	1.1	4.3	1.5
	White	21.1	32.4	22.1	2.0	6.4	7.4	8.6
Settlement type	Urban formal	21.9	31.1	22.6	4.8	5.5	9.0	5.1
	Urban informal	20.5	30.5	25.8	5.3	7.6	5.3	5.0
	Smallholding	34.5	31.0	13.8	0.0	6.9	6.9	6.9
	Hostels	6.6	17.1	52.7	0.1	5.9	0.0	17.6
Age	16-20 years	14.7	37.1	23.0	7.2	7.1	6.8	4.1
	21-25 years	19.8	32.9	24.2	2.2	5.8	12.9	2.2
	26-30 years	16.3	40.4	20.4	9.2	4.7	4.6	4.4
	31-40 years	22.8	29.1	24.4	5.0	6.9	6.1	5.7
	41-50 years	26.9	22.5	25.3	4.7	5.4	7.6	7.6
	51+ years	23.7	25.4	27.0	1.4	6.5	7.9	8.1
Education	No education	18.5	31.6	34.2	0.0	5.3	1.3	9.1
	Primary	20.8	27.3	27.7	5.8	8.6	3.9	5.9
	Jnr secondary	19.1	30.1	25.7	4.6	6.2	8.9	5.4
	Snr secondary	24.3	31.6	21.7	5.0	5.0	7.9	4.5
	Tertiary	20.5	37.1	7.4	5.7	5.4	17.6	6.3
Employment status	Employed	25.7	23.7	23.4	3.5	7.0	9.1	7.6
	Unemployed	17.9	32.7	26.7	7.0	6.6	5.5	3.6
Frequency of going hungry	Often	16.5	23.1	23.0	7.7	16.5	5.5	7.7
	Sometimes	18.3	34.0	28.0	5.5	5.0	6.0	3.2
	Seldom	27.1	30.4	23.9	6.0	2.6	5.1	4.9
	Never	23.1	29.1	21.8	3.3	6.1	9.6	7.0
Length of residency	< 1 year	17.0	38.7	25.1	5.7	6.2	4.2	3.1
	1-2 years	22.1	34.1	17.8	7.2	6.4	6.4	6.0
	3-5 years	26.7	25.6	26.7	3.8	5.0	7.2	5.0
	6-10 years	23.4	27.8	25.9	5.1	7.0	6.5	4.3
	> 10 years	19.3	29.9	24.1	3.9	6.3	9.5	7.0

Rape and murder were identified by equal proportions of the urban formal and informal sample as the next most commonly perceived crime types. Car-hijacking was lower in urban informal settlements than in urban formal

settlements. The respondents from urban informal settlements identified the levels of car-hijacking at 12% (which was similar to the perceived levels of rape and murder), compared to only 6% of the respondents from urban informal areas.

It would be expected that low levels of car ownership in urban informal settlements would more strongly inform the low level of car-hijacking than improved safety conditions (when compared to urban formal settlements). Throughout the various settlement areas, the highest level of mugging or stabbing was identified among those respondents living in urban informal areas (at 12%), opposed to 8% in urban formal areas and 6% in hostels. Respondents living in hostels identified murder as the most commonly perceived crime type (as identified by 53% of this sample). The role of firearms in these murders should not be underestimated. In 1998, 49% of all murders in South Africa were committed with firearms.²

The most feared crime type varied, as did the most common crime type, according to demographic profile. More female respondents (44%) feared rape than male respondents (11%). Similarly, among the respondents residing in hostels, it was found that 53% feared murder, compared to 23% of urban formal respondents and 26% of urban informal respondents.

In considering the differences between what is perceived by the sample as the most common crime type in the area and the crime type that is most feared, there are a number of interesting findings. Firstly, the respondents did not always fear the most common crime type, which was found to be property crime. The type they most feared was violent crime, or crime against their persons.

Secondly, some respondents feared certain crime types more than others. With regard to violent crime, female respondents feared rape disproportionately to male respondents. On the whole, younger respondents (under the age of 31 years) feared rape more than older respondents. This could be linked to the higher mobility, social habits and the more irregular hours kept by younger people. Respondents living in hostels feared murder disproportionately to respondents from other settlement types. With regard to property crime, Indian people and people residing on smallholdings feared housebreaking disproportionately more.

Thirdly, it is not clear how the crime most feared influences the willingness of the respondent to own a firearm. For example, in the previous section on attitudes to firearm ownership, it was found that male respondents were more prepared to own a firearm (57% were personally prepared to own a firearm) than female respondents (39%). Yet, marginally more male respondents (26%) feared housebreaking, as opposed to female respondents (18%). On the other hand, while more female respondents feared rape, males were more willing to own firearms. It is recommended, as a result of this finding, that further research should be undertaken to gain insight into factors (other than the perceptions of crime) which could play a significant role in determining firearm ownership. Other factors could include culture, access to firearms and involvement in criminal activities. In addition to this, the nature of crime and how it affects the respondent would play an important role.

Correlation between Firearm Ownership and the Perception of Trends in Crime and Violence

A greater proportion of people willing to own a firearm than those unwilling to own one felt that the levels of both violence and crime had increased since 1994. It was found, among the respondents who were prepared to own a firearm, that 44% felt that violence was increasing in their area, while only 36% of those who were not prepared to own a firearm felt

Table 28 – Correlation between willingness to own a firearm and perception of the change in levels of crime and violence (n=1 467)

		Prepared to own a firearm	Not prepared own a firearm
How do you feel the level of violence has changed since 1994?	Increased	44.0	36.2
	Stayed the same	10.5	10.8
	Decreased	45.5	53.0
TOTAL		100.0	100.0
How do you feel the level of crime has changed since 1994?	Increased	73.8	68.7
	Stayed the same	13.7	14.1
	Decreased	12.5	17.2
TOTAL		100.0	100.0

that this was the case. Similarly, among those respondents who were prepared to own a firearm, 74% felt that crime had increased in their area, while only 69% of the respondents who were not prepared to own a firearm felt this to be the case.

This indicates that firearm ownership is influenced by perceptions of crime and violence. However, as indicated in the prior section, the exact nature of this relationship is not clear, more especially since respondents are affected differently by crime, as is indicated by the difference in perception of the most common crime type and the crime type most feared.

Comparative Security Measures

To inform the design of a community-based response to curb the proliferation of firearms, comparative experiences are drawn from the current initiatives to improve the security of communities and individual households. This is based on the strong link identified between the rise in crime and the increased penetration of firearms in the community. This section will demonstrate that there is a clear mandate, as well as a need for a community-based strategy to reduce crime in the community. The plausibility of locating a firearm reduction strategy is also examined within this context.

Community and Home Security Initiatives

Throughout South Africa, the rise in crime is being headlined as a national concern. In reaction to this perceived increase in crime, both individuals and communities are taking action to secure their environments. This section considers those community and home security initiatives taken in the Lekoa/Vaal area.

The main type of action taken by respondents to secure their homes was to tighten up home security. This included actions such as installing burglar bars, alarms, increasing the number of people on the property and buying a dog to warn against intruders. Respondents often used a combination of different actions to improve security, such as simultaneously installing an alarm and hiring a security firm. The second major type of action to secure their homes against crime was reporting such activity to an authority,

followed by joining a community-based structure to patrol the neighbourhood.

Table 29 – Action taken by respondent to ensure home and community security (n=1 500)			
Category	Type of action	Home security	Community security
Tighten home security	Install burglar bars	36.9	0.3
	Bought a dog	15.9	0.3
	Install alarm	6.8	0.2
	Rent a room to someone	1.2	0.2
	Hired security firm	0.7	0.2
Report crime	Report crime to police	23.2	0
	Report crime to community	16.1	0
	Report crime to councillors	2.4	0
Join patrolling structure	Join street patrol	11.3	0
	Join CPF	1.3	6.0
	Join SDU	1.7	3.2
Purchase a firearm	Bought a gun	7.0	0.2
Other	Other measure	13.8	0.4
Nothing	No action taken for security	32.2	47.7

Comparatively, of the fourteen types of security actions for homes probed in the response, the purchase of firearms was ranked eighth. However, as an individual security measure, it was implemented by 7% of the sample. Significantly more white households obtained a firearm for security than African, Indian and coloured households, as did more smallholding and formal residential households. It was also the more affluent households and people with a long residential history in the area that opted for firearms for security.

Installing a burglar alarm, renting a room to someone and hiring a security firm, are actions undertaken at a household level and are largely independent of the gender, age, education and employment status of the individual respondent. In comparing these types of actions taken against crime at a household level, more significant insights are provided through

an examination of the demographic information on race, settlement type, length of residence in an area and frequency of going hungry. A similar finding emerges regarding actions taken at an individual level, such as

Table 30 – Actions taken by respondents to protect their households against crime

		Joined			Report crime to			Tighten house security					Firearm	None
		Street patrols	CPF	SDU	Police	Coun-cillors	Comm-unity	Burglar bars	Alarm	Secu-rity	Rent room	Bought dog		
DEMOGRAPHICS FOR INDIVIDUAL ACTIONS														
Gender	Male	11.3	11.3	22.3	22.3	2.1	16.2						7.8	32.4
	Female	11.2	11.2	23.8	23.8	2.5	16.1						6.5	32.0
Age	16-20 yr	8.3	8.3	25.7	25.7	2.1	20.3						5.6	36.7
	21-25 yr	15.2	15.2	27.5	27.5	2.9	15.7						3.0	32.0
	26-30 yr	11.3	11.3	22.3	22.3	2.0	13.3						3.2	35.9
	31-40 yr	14.1	14.1	23.2	23.2	1.9	16.4						4.3	30.3
	41-50 yr	8.1	8.1	22.5	22.5	4.0	15.8						6.8	37.0
	51+yr	8.6	8.6	19.7	19.7	1.7	15.5						17.6	25.8
Educa-tion	None	10.3	10.3	29.5	29.5	0.1	32.0						0	33.3
	Primary	11.6	11.6	28.4	28.4	4.5	15.7						0.4	41.5
	Jnr sec	11.5	11.5	25.0	25.0	1.7	18.1						7.0	32.0
	Snr sec	11.1	11.1	18.4	18.4	1.7	12.3						12.0	28.6
	Tertiary	11.6	11.6	14.2	14.2	4.5	11.0						14.6	17.0
Employ	Empl	13.1	13.1	21.6	21.6	2.1	16.8						7.3	29.1
	Unempl	12.1	12.1	25.2	25.2	3.5	16.1						0.4	40.8
DEMOGRAPHICS FOR HOUSEHOLD ACTIONS														
Race	African	12.7	12.7	26.6	26.6	2.7	18.8	2.7	18.8	0.3	1.0	7.9	0.7	36.6
	Coloured	2.0	2.0	8.2	8.2	1.0	2.0	1.0	2.0	0	0	8.2	3.1	52.0
	Indian	17.1	17.1	44.9	44.9	1.1	34.8	1.1	34.8	2.1	0	7.5	9.1	3.7
	White	3.2	3.2	3.6	3.6	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	3.2	2.7	62.3	43.2	7.7
Settlem	U/formal	14.0	14.0	25.5	25.5	3.2	17.0	3.2	17.0	1.0	1.7	19.3	8.6	24.0
	U/informal	5.7	5.7	20.9	20.9	0.6	15.8	0.6	15.8	0.3	0.3	6.1	0.8	48.7
	Smallhold	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.7	3.3	0	3.3	0	0	3.3	73.3	60.0	13.3
	Hostels	11.6	11.6	9.0	9.0	2.8	11.7	2.8	11.7	0	0	0	0	57.0
Frequen-cy of going hungry	Often	14.3	14.3	19.4	19.4	3.1	18.3	3.1	18.3	0	1.0	4.1	0	51.0
	Sometimes	10.4	10.4	28.1	28.1	3.6	17.4	3.6	17.4	0	0.7	7.0	1.0	40.2
	Seldom	6.7	6.7	37.7	37.7	4.2	24.3	4.2	24.3	0.0	0	10.4	0.7	34.3
	Never	12.4	12.4	17.1	17.1	0.9	13.0	0.9	13.0	1.6	2.0	25.9	14.2	22.3
Length of residency	< 1 yr	14.8	14.8	27.5	27.5	1.7	17.1	1.7	17.1	0.5	1.0	7.1	2.6	35.1
	1-2 yr	11.9	11.9	26.7	26.7	3.0	23.9	3.0	23.9	0.7	1.3	14.1	5.5	29.2
	3-5 yr	8.5	8.5	24.0	24.0	2.5	19.1	2.5	19.1	0.4	0	17.0	4.2	29.6
	6-10 yr	13.6	13.6	28.6	28.6	2.0	22.4	2.0	22.4	0.4	0.5	18.6	4.5	26.9
	> 10 yr	10.1	10.1	18.3	18.3	2.5	9.9	2.5	9.9	1.1	2.2	17.7	11.2	35.3

joining a street patrol, community police forum (CPF) or self-defence unit (SDU) for reporting crime to the police, councillors or community; and buying a dog or firearm.

There was no significant difference in the type of action taken between male and female respondents. This is primarily a result of the fact that many of the security actions are undertaken at a household, as opposed to an individual, level.

People are more willing to take action to secure their home environment than to work towards the improvement of the safety of their community. This was demonstrated by the fact that 32% of the sample did nothing to secure their home environment, as opposed to 48% of the respondents who did nothing to make their community secure. In addition to this, the quantities of support for community security initiatives were disproportionately small, compared to those to secure individual residential dwellings. With regard to security, it could be expected that concern for the household would most probably be placed before that for the community. What is disconcerting is the fact that the security of the individual household is seen as divorced from the security of the community. Moreover, increasing the security of individual homes does not necessarily lead to a more secure community. Given this, and the limited options available to the respondents to take community-based action, the public awareness campaign could be used as an information distribution tool to demonstrate to the community what its members are capable of. In addition, before the community is prepared to initiate a community campaign for firearm reduction, it may have to be convinced of how effective such an initiative could be. For this reason, the first demonstration of the campaign may be targeted to be undertaken by respondents already feeling sufficiently empowered to take the initiative to assist in community security. From Table 31 below, they could include those respondents who joined the CPFs or former SDUs.

A critical component of a firearm reduction strategy would be to impact on the prevailing household and community perceptions of crime, which are based on the link between the willingness to own a firearm and perceptions of crime. To this end, it is necessary to consider the existing attitudes to and perceptions of policing and crime prevention strategies.

Attitudes to and Perceptions of Policing and Crime Reduction Strategies

Crucial elements for consideration in designing and implementing a community-based strategy for reducing firearm penetration are attitudes to policing, crime reduction, the perception of crime reduction and the perception of whether or not respondents feel they can contribute to such a reduction within their community. All these factors could inform the willingness of the community to engage in a process to address the proliferation of firearms. A community that feels empowered to address its own crime situation, and believes that government strategies are complementing its efforts will most probably be more likely to believe in its ability to address firearm proliferation in the community. Conversely, a community that feels disempowered might well need extra encouragement or motivation to take up a campaign to reduce the proliferation of firearms with which it is faced.

The level of empowerment felt by respondents with regard to crime, which constitutes the control that the individual experiences with regard to the reduction of the crime level, is shown in Table 33 below. It was found that the Lekoa/Vaal community is divided over its ability to stop or reduce crime in the community. Clearly, 44% of the sample felt they could do something to stop crime, while 42% felt that they could do nothing. This is cause for some concern, since resources dedicated to information dissemination as part of the public awareness campaign might need to be rationalised or shared between education needs and convincing communities that their combined and individual efforts could affect the proliferation of firearms. However, knowing that communities feel disempowered to address crime is one of the key messages the campaign could be based on. The message might need to illustrate that the *individual does make a difference*, as well as *what the difference is that he/she needs to make*.

Stronger than the sentiments expressed, that the community itself can do nothing about crime, were those voicing the community's sense that the government does not care about crime, and that policing is not effective in the area. Yet, these very sentiments on the government's lack of concern about crime and the ineffectuality of policing can be used to the advantage of the campaign. They could be incorporated into the campaign message to remind communities that, if they do not help themselves, no-one is going to

help them. This could be a useful first step towards empowering the community, since it could build the realisation that members are partly accountable for the conditions in which they find themselves and that solutions to the problem are partly located in their own community. The less deterministic the outlook of a community, the greater its willingness to embark on a campaign to address the crime-ridden, firearm-wielding conditions in which it is located.

**Table 31 – Opinions concerning crime reduction and policing
(n=1 498)**

	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	TOTAL
Nothing I can do to stop crime	44.0	14.4	41.6	100.0
Government doesn't care about crime	29.2	17.7	53.1	100.0
Policing is effective in my area	51.1	15.9	33.0	100.0
Local people solve crimes better	27.2	20.1	52.2	100.0

In direct contrast to the sentiments expressed about the government not caring about crime, an equal proportion of respondents felt that local people solve crimes better. This strikes an optimistic note, in that the sample acknowledged that they were, in fact, better placed to address the problems of crime in the community.

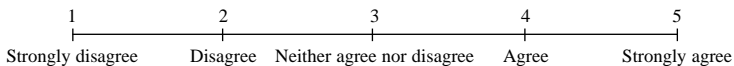
With regard to addressing this problem, male respondents felt more empowered to stop crime than female respondents. Similarly, African, coloured and Indian respondents felt more empowered to stop crime than white respondents. Respondents with a long residential history in the community felt more empowered to address the crime situation than others.

Indian and white respondents, as well as people living in hostels and on smallholdings, felt most strongly that the government did not care about crime. This was closely followed by respondents with tertiary education, a long residential history in their community and households that never went hungry. Conversely, African respondents, people between the ages of 21 and 25 years, people with a low level of education, who sometimes went hungry,

Table 32 – Opinions about crime reduction and policing by demographic profile

		Nothing I can do to stop crime	Government does not care about	Local people solve crimes better	Policing is effective in my area
Gender	Male	2.84	3.38	3.37	2.70
	Female	3.00	3.33	3.34	2.75
Race	African	2.97	3.2	3.33	2.81
	Coloured	2.82	3.34	3.10	2.57
	Indian	2.63	3.81	3.93	2.28
	White	3.07	3.66	3.09	2.82
Settlement type	Urban formal	2.91	3.36	3.34	2.76
	Urban informal	2.99	3.26	3.37	2.73
	Smallholding	2.87	3.6	3.23	2.73
	Hostels	2.98	3.73	3.61	2.23
Age	16-20 years	2.86	3.37	3.47	2.73
	21-25 years	2.84	3.2	3.38	2.87
	26-30 years	2.88	3.3	3.36	2.53
	31-40 years	2.87	3.41	3.47	2.66
	41-50 years	2.94	3.38	3.36	2.70
	51+years	3.17	3.37	3.09	2.91
Education	No education	3.06	3.15	3.17	2.96
	Primary	3.13	3.22	3.27	2.75
	Junior secondary	3.01	3.34	3.33	2.80
	Senior secondary	2.79	3.42	3.44	2.66
	Tertiary	2.66	3.51	3.54	2.53
Employment status	Employed	2.8	3.38	3.41	2.71
	Unemployed	2.96	3.25	3.37	2.67
Frequency of going hungry	Often	2.99	3.32	3.39	3.11
	Sometimes	2.9	3.16	3.32	2.76
	Seldom	3.1	3.17	3.19	2.72
	Never	2.92	3.47	3.39	2.68
Length of residency	< than 1 year	3.02	3.28	3.22	2.87
	1-2 years	3.08	3.24	3.44	2.70
	3-5 years	2.94	3.29	3.4	2.71
	6-10 years	2.77	3.5	3.43	2.72
	> 10 years	2.94	3.36	3.33	2.72

Mean score value



who were unemployed and had a short residential history in their community, felt less strongly that the government did not care about crime.

Indian respondents, people who lived in hostels, people with tertiary education and people aged between 31 and 40 years felt most strongly that local people solve crimes better. Finally, there was no significant difference among respondents from different settlement types with regard to how they viewed policing effectiveness. On the whole, it was felt that police effectiveness was poor.

Community Recommendations on Crime

As previously indicated, the sample does not view the police as being effective in reducing crime, nor does it perceive the government as being concerned about crime in the community. Respondents were presented with four policy options with regard to crime reduction and asked to indicate which they felt the government should implement. A relatively even distribution across the three categories of response emerged here, with 27% of the sample wanting the employment of a greater number of police, 27% wanting the police force to be rid of corruption and 27% opting for plans to encourage community involvement in the fight against crime.

Table 33 – Policy options facing government (n=1 500)	
PERCENTAGE	
More police	27.1
Rid police of corruption	27.1
Encourage community involvement	26.9
Ban all guns	18.9
TOTAL	100.0

The option to ban firearms was seen as a strategy for crime reduction by 19% of the sample. Relatively more female than male respondents were in favour of this option. Similarly, African and coloured respondents were more supportive of a firearms ban than Indian and white respondents. Comparatively, 16 to 20 year-old respondents felt strongly that the banning of all firearms was a policy option,

Table 34 – Policy options facing government by demographic profile

Group		More police	Ban all guns	Encourage community involvement	Rid police of corruption
Gender	Male	30.2	16.2	24.7	28.9
	Female	25.1	20.7	28.3	25.9
Race	African	26.2	22.4	26.2	25.2
	Coloured	35.7	11.2	20.4	32.7
	Indian	16.6	7.5	39.0	36.9
	White	32.7	0.0	30.5	36.8
Settlement type	Urban formal	28.2	18.6	24.7	28.5
	Urban informal	25.8	20.2	30.5	23.5
	Smallholding	13.3	0.0	53.3	33.4
	Hostels	25.8	25.6	20.2	28.4
Age	16-20 years	30.7	24.3	19.2	25.8
	21-25 years	24.5	18.1	31.2	26.2
	26-30 years	22.7	20.4	30.6	26.3
	31-40 years	28.8	17.1	25.8	28.3
	41-50 years	25.6	16.4	31.4	26.6
	51+ years	28.7	19.6	23.8	27.9
Education	No education	29.4	28.3	25.6	16.7
	Primary	27.7	24.7	22.8	24.8
	Junior secondary	31.6	19.2	23.9	25.3
	Senior secondary	23.4	15.0	30.4	31.2
	Tertiary	14.2	6.0	44.4	35.4
Employment status	Employed	22.6	15.5	29.1	32.8
	Unemployed	29.4	19.9	27.6	23.1
Frequency of going hungry	Often	27.5	25.6	22.4	24.5
	Sometimes	28.1	25.7	26.9	19.3
	Seldom	26.7	18.4	24.4	30.5
	Never	26.4	12.8	28.2	32.6
Length of residency	< 1 year	23.8	18.9	26.9	30.4
	1-2 years	32.5	18.6	23.8	25.1
	3-5 years	25.7	17.5	29.4	27.4
	6-10 years	26.2	20.7	23.3	29.8
	> 10 years	27.8	18.8	28.2	25.2

Clearly, only people who believe that firearms are a problem in their community and that they contribute significantly to crime that they are exposed to will be willing to participate in a community initiative to reduce the proliferation of firearms. Given this, those respondents sympathetic to the crime reduction option of banning firearms could be likely facilitators of a community-based response to firearm proliferation. Demographically, this could include the following: people with a low level of education; people who often or sometimes went hungry; people living in hostels or informal settlements; African people; young people; and unemployed people. The demographic profile of respondents sympathetic to firearms banning outlines the most marginalised people within South Africa.

Ironically, it is these people who are prepared to take a stand against firearm proliferation for the good of the nation. Given this, the strategy of a community-based reduction programme should be targeted appropriately, with tools for the design of such a programme being made available to these marginalised communities.

The Need for and Perceptions of Firearm Control Mechanisms

The following sections of this contribution consider the need for and perceptions of firearm control mechanisms. The extent to which the sample regards the control of firearms as necessary could condition the level of acceptance it might show for the implementation of such constraints upon themselves.

The Need for Firearm Control Mechanisms

Overall, 73% of the sample felt that there was a need to improve controls over firearms in their area. Given the overwhelming support for firearm control measures, it is more significant to consider those respondents who were not in favour of control mechanisms. Clearly, minority groups in South Africa are not in favour of such mechanisms. It was found that comparatively little support for these controls existed among white respondents (of which 40% supported firearm controls, as opposed to between 70% and 88% of the Indian, coloured and African respondents) and respondents from smallholdings (of which only 14% supported firearm

controls). In its own right, it remains significant that 40% of the white respondents do support firearm controls (see Table 35).

Table 35 – Do you feel there is a need for improved control over firearms? (n=1 500)		
PERCENTAGE OF THE SAMPLE WHO FELT THERE IS A NEED FOR IMPROVED CONTROL OVER FIREARMS		
Gender	Male	80.2
	Female	81.1
Race	African	87.5
	Coloured	81.4
	Indian	70.2
	White	40.2
Settlement type	Urban formal	77.5
	Urban informal	92.4
	Smallholding	14.3
	Hostels	85.8
Age	16-20 years	79.1
	21-25 years	83.3
	26-30 years	83.8
	31-40 years	82.7
	41-50 years	78.4
	51+ years	76.7
Education	No education	93.3
	Primary	91.0
	Junior secondary	78.3
	Senior secondary	77.5
	Tertiary	64.3
Frequency of going hungry	Often	88.8
	Sometimes	90.7
	Seldom	82.5
	Never	71.1

Type of Firearm Control Measures

A number of firearm control measures are available for policy formulation and policing. Respondents were asked to identify which they felt would be the most appropriate in addressing the firearms problem in South Africa. It

was assumed that the separate understanding of each individual concerning the nature and circumstances of crime and firearm-related problems would inform his/her choice of options.

The various control measures, arranged in the survey from the more tangible to the less tangible, are set out in Table 36 below. The success of certain control measures may be enhanced through the careful timetabling and implementation of other preceding measures. For more effective policing, as well as the enforcement of legislation, the promulgation of appropriate and enforceable legislation, awarding the police the powers they require for investigation, as well as providing for licence controls, are required. Similarly, education, as a part of a community-based project to curb the demand for firearms, needs to precede a firearm collection programme.

The greatest support was expressed by 41% of the responses for changes to legislation. This included, among others, restrictions on who could obtain a firearm licence: harsher penalties for contravening firearm licence conditions; and raising the age restrictions for obtaining a firearm. The second greatest support was shown for better policing and implementation of legislation (as indicated in 27% of the responses) and the third for the initiation of community-based initiatives to curb proliferation (as indicated in 16% of the responses), for example, through the involvement of the community, church and political organisations. A community-based initiative focused on responsible firearm usage and possession in order to reduce the demand for firearms could be supported by a national education strategy targeted at the public at large, and youth, in particular.

There was support for a firearm collection programme, as indicated in 9% of the responses. This included mechanisms to destroy illegal firearms that have been collected, encouraging the surrender of firearms, and strategies to disarm the community. The success of a firearm collection programme could hinge on the use of an appropriate programme designed in consultation with the community, and could follow on a community-based awareness and education programme to ensure that the people in the community understood the need for firearm collection and how it could benefit their situation.

Table 36 – What form of control measures do you think are required? (n=1 857)

Type of control measure	%	Detail of control measure	%
Change in legislation	41.1	Better laws and regulations	15.3
		Licences for some	10.7
		Harsher penalties for criminals	8.2
		Age restrictions	4.7
		Closing of gun shops	0.8
		Police have firearms for work only	0.8
		Limit the number of firearms sold	0.6
Better policing and implementation of legislation	27.2	More police	22.7
		Defence force to patrol	4.1
		Use private investigators	0.3
		Need police at local government level	0.1
Education	1.3	Education for youth	1.0
		Parents stricter on children	0.2
		Educate people	0.1
Community-based initiative to curb proliferation	15.9	Community involvement	15.0
		Church involvement	0.8
		Political organisations stop violence	0.1
Firearm collection programmes	8.5	Destroy illegal guns	7.5
		Encourage surrender of guns	0.5
		Organisations should disarm people	0.5
Complete ban on all firearms	5.2	Ban all guns	5.2
Other	0.8	Create employment	0.7
		Close shebeens and bars	0.1
TOTAL	100.0		100.0

Demographically, the greatest support for changes to legislation came from the Indian and white sample and people living on smallholdings, as well as people with a post-school level of education, all of whom would support better control mechanisms such as new legislation.

With regard to initiating a community-based activity, such as a public awareness campaign, the greatest support was shown by coloured and African respondents, people residing in urban informal settlements and those respondents from relatively poor households (as indicated by their frequency of often or sometimes going hungry). This correlates neatly

Table 37 – Type of firearm control measures by demographic profile (n=1 500)

		Change to legislation	Better policing and implementation of legislation	Community-based initiative	Educa-tion	Firearm collection initiatives	Ban all firearms	Other
Gender	Male	39.8	30.1	16.5	1.7	6.1	4.1	1.7
	Female	41.9	25.6	15.4	1.0	10.1	5.9	0.1
Race	African	38.3	28.6	16.6	1.4	8.9	5.4	0.8
	Coloured	43.1	22.2	29.1	1.4	2.8	1.4	0.0
	Indian	81.8	5.3	6.1	1.5	1.5	3.0	0.8
	White	91.1	6.7	1.1	0.0	1.1	0.0	0.0
Settlement type	Urban formal	43.3	27.4	13.9	1.3	7.7	5.4	1.0
	Urban informal	36.5	27.3	19.4	1.4	10.5	4.7	0.2
	Smallholding	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Hostels	43.5	29.4	17.3	0.0	2.5	4.8	2.5
Age	16-20 years	36.0	30.8	14.0	1.1	12.2	4.8	1.1
	21-25 years	36.4	27.2	17.7	2.7	10.0	3.7	2.3
	26-30 years	50.4	22.5	11.9	1.4	9.5	3.8	0.5
	31-40 years	40.9	27.9	16.9	0.8	7.3	6.2	0.0
	41-50 years	41.0	27.6	16.3	1.1	6.6	6.4	1.0
	51+ years	41.5	28.1	16.8	1.2	6.8	5.2	0.4
Education	No education	40.2	29.4	14.7	1.0	7.8	6.9	0.0
	Primary	33.1	33.6	18.8	0.5	7.1	6.4	0.5
	Jnr secondary	40.9	28.2	13.2	1.3	9.6	5.8	1.0
	Snr secondary	45.4	23.3	16.1	2.0	8.6	3.7	0.9
	Tertiary	58.0	10.0	19.2	1.6	9.5	1.6	0.1
Frequency of going hungry	Often	37.4	27.3	15.1	0.7	13.7	5.8	0.0
	Sometimes	36.4	30.4	16.0	1.4	9.3	5.3	1.2
	Seldom	49.8	22.6	13.2	0.6	7.5	5.6	0.7
	Never	44.3	25.6	16.6	1.6	6.6	4.7	0.6

with earlier findings that more marginalised people hold a stronger belief that firearms are a problem in their community and are willing to participate in a community initiative to reduce the proliferation of firearms.

Finally, as a possibility, a complete ban on firearms as a control measure was raised. The assessment of attitudes towards a complete ban on firearms differed according to the context where it was raised. When this concept was raised within a package of other firearm control mechanisms, there was less significant support demonstrated for a total firearm ban (as indicated above, an average of 5% of the sample supported this option), which contrasts significantly with the prior opinion (expressed in the previous section) by 19% of the sample that a ban on firearms is a viable crime prevention policy option. This is a typical indication of the dynamic state of opinions held by the sample on firearm ownership. The sample repeatedly indicated that it is not strongly polarised, either for or against firearms. This could be advantageous to the implementation of a community-based programme, as the targeted community may well be more receptive to the information, or message, disseminated about responsible firearm ownership.

Who Should Implement the Control Measures in the Short and Long Term?

A difference of opinion exists with regard to which structure, organisation or society should take responsibility for the implementation of firearm control measures in both the short and long term, as well as which structure, organisation or society should take responsibility for which specific type of control measure. Of concern was the reduced role awarded to communities for taking responsibility for firearm control and the large role identified for government and state security organs for the control of firearms – both in the short and the long term.

The perception that firearm control is the sole responsibility of the state needs to be addressed in a community-based response. Combating the problem of firearm proliferation, similar to the strategies for combating crime, requires a public-private partnership, that is, a shared responsibility between the state and civil society in addressing the problem (see Table 38).

Table 38 – Structures identified for short and long-term implementation of firearm controls

Structure	Specific structure	Short term (n=1 078)	Long term (n=1 079)
CBOs	Church Community organisation Local civic Residents Street or block committee	25.9	14.8
Government	Local government National government Provincial government	12.3	28.7
State security	Defence force Police service	57.2	50.7
Other	Private security Political organisation Other	4.6	5.8
TOTAL		100.0	100.0

Structures and Organisations to Which the Community Belongs

The significance of knowing which organisations a person belongs to for the design of a community-based response to firearm proliferation cannot be underestimated. Existing organisations with loyal membership are well placed to facilitate the distribution of information in both bottom-up and top-down directions. Organisations with a long history and loyal membership are usually both legitimate and experienced. These organisations are familiar with the dynamics of the community and their skills and expertise are critical in tailoring the community-based response to suit the context. Working with existing community structures also increases the scale of the campaign and the level of penetration of information to the community. Legitimate community-based organisations can also provide an administrative centre, or point-office, to which the community members can refer enquires and with whom they can lodge their support for the initiative. The distribution of information is facilitated through the involvement of

those organisations active in and representative of the community. The tried and tested community distribution mechanisms existing within the community are probably the most reliable and suitable way to share project information.

The survey outlined the various clubs, societies and political or community organisations that existed in the community. Overall, 80% of the sample belonged to one or more of these organisations. Considering only those respondents who belonged to clubs, societies and political or community organisations, it was found that 59% of these belonged to a single club, while 28% belonged to two structures and 10% belonged to three. The remaining 3% belonged to between four and six structures.

Table 39 – Membership of organisations		
NUMBER OF ORGANISATIONS	PERCENTAGE (n=1 500)	PERCENTAGE (n=1 203)
0	19.8	-
1	47.1	58.7
2	22.7	28.4
3	7.6	9.5
4	2.2	2.7
5	0.5	0.6
6	0.1	0.1
TOTAL	100.0	100.0

The utility of employing existing organisations in the process of information dissemination is limited by the fact that 20% of the sample does not belong to a particular structure. The demographic profiles of this sample are indicated in Table 40 below. What is evident is the fact that 21% of male and 19% of female respondents do not belong to any structure – further referred to as ‘non-members’. Within the racial categories, the greatest proportion of non-members occurred among coloured and Indian respondents, at 43% and 78%, respectively. It was found that 18% of African respondents and 28% of white respondents were non-members. Across the various settlement

Table 40 – Percentage of sample that does not belong to an organisation (n=1 500)

PERCENTAGE THAT DOES NOT BELONG TO AN ORGANISATION	
Male	21.1
Female	19.0
African	17.8
Coloured	42.9
Indian	77.8
White	28.1
Urban formal	19.4
Urban informal	20.0
Smallholding	20.0
Hostels	26.7

areas, respondents residing in hostels had the highest proportion of non-members.

There were four types of organisations that had significant membership. These were the church group or choir; *stokvel* (savings schemes) or burial society; sports clubs; and political organisations. In approaching these structures the limitations of each should be recognised – especially with regard to the regularity and nature of meetings:

- Church structures meet on a weekly basis, although there are smaller bi-weekly meetings for certain groupings.
- Sports clubs often meet as regularly as church structures. However, the meeting is often practice-oriented, with the business matters being dealt with on a less frequent basis, for instance, at annual general meetings. Sports competitions, or weekly matches, provide a good platform for distributing information to spectators and advertising the campaign.
- *Stokvel* or burial clubs usually meet on an annual basis to discuss business matters related to the club. During the year, members of the organisations usually make monthly financial contributions to the club. However, it is unusual for the members to come together at any other stage of the year.

- Political organisations are useful in a campaign, but to a limited extent. The issue of firearms is often one of a number of priorities being pushed by the party.

The other organisations, although having smaller memberships than those mentioned above, represented key constituencies in the community. These included women’s groups, youth groups, civic or community organisations and trade unions. These organisations were constituted specifically to advance the needs of marginalised groups in the community, women and the youth, in particular. Respondents from these categories have thus far been best placed in terms of their identification with the problems associated with firearm proliferation, as well as showing a willingness to initiate actions to address crime and firearm proliferation. However, whether they would have the capacity to advance a firearm reduction programme, with the relatively lower level of membership, is a question that might be asked.

Table 41 – Overall membership of an organisation (n=1 500)		
	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Church	912	60.8
<i>Stokvel</i> /burial society	370	24.7
Sports	162	10.8
Political organisation	154	10.2
Women’s group	70	4.7
Youth group	64	4.3
Civic/community organisation	45	3.0
Trade union	45	3.0
Hobby group	35	2.4
Cultural	14	0.9
Welfare society	14	0.9
Other	11	0.7
Recreation/adult centre	9	0.6
Professional body	8	0.5

The results on membership of community structures show clearly that any campaign, in order to be far-reaching, would have to include a combination of different organisations. Among the sample of people who belonged to one or more organisations, 68% belonged solely to a church organisation, which is significantly higher than the 14% of the sample that belonged to *stokvels*/burial societies only, or the 8% that belonged to sports organisations only. Thus, to ensure the success of such a campaign, it is critical to have church organisations on board.

Significantly, more female respondents belonged to church/choir groupings and *stokvels*/burial societies than male respondents. Relatively more male than female respondents belonged to sports clubs and political organisations. Indian respondents had the lowest level of membership of organisations. This is an erroneous representation, however, as there was no

**Table 42 – Profile of organisations by gender and race categories
(n=1 500)**

GROUP	GENDER		RACE			
	Male	Female	African	Coloured	Indian	White
Member of any structure	78.9	81.0	82.2	57.1	22.2	71.9
Church group or choir	53.7	65.5	60.7	42.9	0.0	64.3
<i>Stokvel</i> /burial society	20.7	27.3	29.2	0.0	0.0	0.5
Sports Clubs	17.9	6.1	11.4	0.0	11.1	7.7
Political organisation	12.7	8.5	12.0	0.0	0.0	0.9
Civic/community organisation	5.4	1.4	3.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
Youth groups	4.8	3.9	5.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Trade union	4.3	2.1	3.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
Hobby group	3.7	1.6	2.3	0.0	0.0	2.7
Cultural organisation	1.8	0.3	0.7	0.0	0.0	1.8
Welfare society	1.3	0.7	0.7	0.0	0.0	2.3
Other group	0.7	0.8	0.3	0.0	0.0	3.2
Professional body	0.5	0.4	0.2	0.0	0.0	2.3
Recreation or adult centre	0.3	0.7	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.9
Women's group	0.0	7.8	4.8	0.0	0.0	4.5

option in the survey for those people belonging to religious organisations other than church groups.

Table 43 – Profile of organisations by settlement area and age category (n=1 500)

	SETTLEMENT TYPE			
	Urban formal	Urban informal	Small-holdings	Hostels
Member of any structure	80.6	80.0	80.0	73.3
Church group or choir	62.8	58.1	63.3	42.2
<i>Stokvel</i> /burial society	24.5	26.2	0.0	28.9
Sports clubs	11.1	10.4	6.7	11.1
Political organisation	9.8	11.3	3.3	13.3
Civic/community organisation	2.6	4.0	0.0	6.7
Youth groups	4.1	5.1	0.0	2.2
Trade union	3.2	2.7	0.0	6.7
Hobby group	2.9	1.8	0.0	0.0
Cultural organisation	0.7	0.9	3.3	2.2
Welfare society	1.0	0.7	3.3	0.0
Other group	0.8	0.0	10.0	0.0
Professional body	0.7	0.0	3.3	0.0
Recreation or adult centre	0.7	0.2	0.0	0.0
Women's group	4.9	4.2	3.3	6.7

Hostel residents had slightly lower overall membership rates than respondents in other settlement types, while reflecting the highest overall membership to *stokvels* and burial societies, civics or community organisations, trade unions and women's groups.

Age is, generally, a significant determinant of the nature of membership of an organisation, though in certain organisations, membership is independent of age, such as in churches, cultural organisations, political organisations, professional bodies and adult recreational centres. For the following organisations, however, age influences membership:

- Hobby groups are only significant for people in the age groups of 16-20 and 21-25 years.
- Membership of civic organisations is the most for people in the age groups of 31-40 and 41-50 years.
- People between the ages of 16 and 25 years made up the largest age category of people belonging to a sports organisation. As could be expected, as the age of the respondent increases, his/her propensity to belong to a sports organisation decreases.
- People above the age of 26 years are more likely to belong to *stokvels*/burial societies. This is usually because domestic responsibilities increase. These organisations are survival strategy mechanisms.
- People who are economically active are more likely to belong to a trade union. In the sample, respondents between the age of 31 and 50 years were the most likely to be participants in trade unions.
- Membership to a women’s group increases with age. Most significantly, however, there was a turnout of predominantly 51+ year-old women.
- Where youth organisations were concerned, people below the age of 16-20 years were more likely to belong to these.

Limitations in the analysis were clear as people involved in ‘grey’ activities are marginalised by these structures, while those whose association with a structure is neither legal nor socially acceptable are not represented. Usually, members of criminal syndicates, or gang members, as well as illegal immigrants are not reflected in organisational profiles. In addition to this, youth often display a low organisational attendance.

Table 44 – Presence of gang by settlement area (n=1 500)	
PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO FELT THERE WERE GANGS ACTIVE IN THEIR AREAS	
Urban informal	59.2
Hostels	44.4
Urban formal	39.3
Smallholdings	36.0

As an indicator of the penetration of gangs into the sample area, respondents were asked whether there were gangs active in their areas. It is evident that, in the Lekoa/Vaal area, gangs are the most active in urban informal settlements. The associated memberships of gangs in these areas could form a correspondence. The geographic distribution of gangs is a necessary item of information in terms of designing a community-based strategy. In the sample, gangs were most prevalent in urban informal areas and hostels. These are the places which have traditionally been the most difficult to patrol, both from an urban design perspective.

Regardless of the utility of a community-based response to firearm proliferation, there is a need to target structures that are conventionally concerned with community security. The organisations are well-positioned to spearhead the community initiative. The sample was asked to outline whether there were street, block, or RDP committees in the community. Overall, 71% of the sample had one or the other. Individually, 54% of the sample had a street committee, 33% of the sample a block committee and 32% a local RDP committee.

Table 45 – Respondents who indicated that the following structures existed in their community	
	PERCENTAGE
Presence of street committee	54.1
Presence of block committee	33.4
Presence of local RDP committee	31.8
Are there any street, block or RDP committees	71.3

Block and street committees are formed to represent the needs of people living within a specific geographic locality, either at the level of a street or a residential block. The committee undertakes a policing function and deals with issues of security. In the event of serious criminal incidents, the suspects and information relating to the crime are handed over to the local police station, while, in less serious offences, the street or block committee may award its own penalties. The level of such activity by street and block committees varies from one community to the next.

Table 46 – Existence of community-based security structures by demographic profile (n=1 500)

Group		Street committee	Block committee	Local RDP committee	Any street, block or RDP committee
Gender	Male	51.6	37.4	31.1	71.3
	Female	55.7	30.8	32.2	71.3
Race	African	63.3	39.0	36.8	82.3
	Coloured	11.2	5.1	42.9	55.1
	Indian	26.7	0.0	0.5	27.3
	White	3.6	4.1	4.1	10.9
Settlement type	Urban formal	50.5	31.5	33.0	68.1
	Urban informal	68.3	34.4	31.5	81.2
	Smallholdings	3.3	3.3	0.0	6.7
	Hostels	22.8	85.4	28.5	85.4
Age	16-20 years	58.9	33.0	34.0	71.4
	21-25 years	57.4	34.8	39.1	78.5
	26-30 years	53.7	27.5	27.5	74.7
	31-40 years	59.4	36.3	31.9	74.5
	41-50 years	50.4	36.4	29.8	69.6
	51+years	44.2	30.5	28.9	60.3
Education	No education	59.0	32.1	32.0	76.9
	Primary	67.3	40.7	35.2	83.4
	Junior secondary	54.8	35.8	33.2	73.5
	Senior secondary	47.4	29.2	29.9	65.7
	Tertiary	35.3	19.3	25.0	44.5
Employment status	Employed	52.8	37.3	32.7	71.4
	Unemployed	61.5	37.9	33.7	82.4
Frequency of going hungry	Often	67.4	56.2	47.9	83.7
	Sometimes	66.8	36.5	33.4	84.2
	Seldom	60.3	36.7	37.6	85.2
	Never	40.8	26.3	26.4	56.3
Length of residency	< 1 year	42.1	26.3	33.5	60.9
	1-2 years	58.0	32.8	30.5	75.8
	3-5 years	60.6	34.3	24.5	74.6
	6-10 years	61.1	39.8	37.6	80.1
	> 10 years	51.5	33.1	32.1	68.6

The importance of street and block committees in a community-based response should not be underestimated. These structures usually have a sound understanding of the nature of the activities in which people in their geographic locality are involved. The implementation of an initiative to curb firearm proliferation could not be undertaken without the support of these structures (see Table 46).

Channels of Conflict Resolution within the Community

A consideration of the channels of conflict resolution within a community provides a profile of those people to whom members of the community turn for advice and whom they respect as leaders. The individuals and structures that are sought out as conflict mediators could be key individuals for spearheading or endorsing an initiative to curb firearm proliferation (see Table 47).

Table 47 – Community structures approached to resolve arguments (n=1 500)			
CATEGORY	%	STRUCTURE	%
Block/street committee	31.3	Street committee	25.9
		Block committee	5.4
Resolve differences ourselves	26.4	Resolve differences ourselves	26.4
Police	25.5	Police	25.5
No-one	4.1	No-one	4.1
Other	12.7	Friends/neighbours	5.5
		Civic	1.6
		Lawyer	1.1
		Church	0.8
		Community organisation	0.7
		Political organisation	0.3
		Local authority	0.3
		Landlord	0.2
		Induna/chief	0.1
		Other	2.1
TOTAL	100.0	TOTAL	100.0

Table 48 – Profile of sample according to who is approached to resolve an argument

Group		Block/ street committee	Police	Resolve argument	Friends/ neighbours	No-one	Other
Gender	Male	27.2	29.5	26.2	5.2	3.7	8.2
	Female	33.9	22.9	26.6	5.6	4.5	6.5
Race	African	37.0	22.7	24.2	5.6	3.4	7.1
	Coloured	2.0	46.9	19.4	12.2	10.2	9.3
	Indian	0.0	10.7	24.1	57.8	4.8	2.6
	White	0.9	41.8	39.5	2.3	8.2	7.3
Settlement type	Urban formal	28.5	27.3	27.2	5.6	3.9	7.5
	Urban informal	37.3	23.8	23.5	5.1	3.7	6.6
	Smallholdings	6.7	26.7	46.7	0.0	16.7	3.2
	Hostels	48.4	3.1	25.8	11.0	6.0	5.7
Age	16-20 years	31.1	25.2	24.5	6.6	6.4	6.2
	21-25 years	31.9	24.3	27.1	4.9	3.2	8.6
	26-30 years	32.2	23.0	28.1	6.9	2.6	7.2
	31-40 years	33.1	24.5	24.7	5.4	5.4	6.9
	41-50 years	30.0	24.6	28.8	6.7	1.8	8.1
	51+ years	28.8	30.4	26.5	3.4	4.7	6.2
Education	No education	43.5	26.9	21.8	4.0	0.0	3.8
	Primary	38.9	21.7	21.7	6.5	4.5	6.7
	Junior secondary	32.6	23.1	29.1	5.2	3.5	6.5
	Senior secondary	26.4	29.4	27.2	4.8	4.8	7.4
	Tertiary	10.3	27.1	32.6	9.3	6.2	14.5
Employment status	Employed	30.5	27.4	24.7	4.9	4.7	7.8
	Unemployed	38.1	22.2	23.8	6.3	2.5	7.1
Frequency of going hungry	Often	45.9	18.3	24.5	3.1	3.1	5.1
	Sometimes	39.4	23.5	22.8	5.6	2.4	6.3
	Seldom	36.0	19.8	26.7	4.2	4.2	9.1
	Never	21.4	29.6	29.5	6.1	5.7	7.7
Length of residency	> 1 year	24.4	30.2	26.0	8.1	2.2	9.1
	1-2 years	40.2	17.1	24.8	6.5	5.1	6.3
	3-5 years	28.4	30.0	24.7	5.8	4.9	6.2
	6-10 years	41.8	22.3	22.5	3.9	2.1	7.4
	< 10 years	27.9	25.8	29.3	4.9	5.1	7.0

The most popular organisations or structures undertaking conflict resolution within the community were street or block committees, as indicated by 31% of the sample. Thereafter, people either dealt with conflict themselves, or they referred the problem to the local police. It was only African respondents who would utilise street/block committees for intervention in disputes or arguments. Among the African sample, 38% turned to street or block committees, compared to the 25% who resolved crimes themselves, and 23% who turned to the police. Access to police stations could influence the comparatively low incidence of turning to the police, compared to other race subcategories. But other factors could also affect this, such as historical distrust of the police. This appears to be the case, particularly in the light of the fact that, among the coloured sample, 60% of the respondents turned to the police, compared to 23% of the African sample, 13% of the Indian sample and 46% of the white sample.

A consideration of those structures or people to whom subcategories of people turn to, in the event of their seeking to resolve an argument, reveals that those in hostels were the least likely to involve the police. This was significantly so, at 2% of the hostel sample as opposed to 32% of the smallholding sample, 25% of the urban formal sample and 28% of the urban formal sample. In a similar vein, people on smallholdings, compared to the rest of the sample, were most likely to resolve an argument among themselves without external assistance (see Table 48).

Community-based Responses to Firearm Proliferation

A community-based response to firearm proliferation could require the distribution of information to ensure the broad participation of the community. For this reason, the various sources of information – besides those directly accessed through organisational membership – are pertinent, such as radio, television, papers and pamphlets. From the information on the frequency of utilising the various forms of media, it is evident that the greatest proportion of respondents could be most affected by a radio campaign. This could be supplemented by a television campaign.

Broadly speaking, radio listening, followed by television viewing, was more popular in the survey than reading the newspaper and pamphlets. It was

found that 66% of respondents listened to the radio; 57% watched television; 22% read a newspaper daily; and 35% of the respondents read pamphlets at least twice a month.

The table below outlines the mean for each sample group, with 1 being the most frequent and 5 being the least frequent. Along a continuum, 1 was daily, and 5 was never.

Table 49 – Means of frequency of listening to the radio, watching television, reading newspapers and reading pamphlets

	RADIO	TELEVISION	NEWSPAPER	PAMPHLETS
Sample mean	2.05	2.58	3.81	4.61
African	2.05	2.67	4.00	4.77
Coloured	2.59	1.78	3.61	4.50
Indians	1.71	1.69	2.32	2.92
White	2.05	2.11	2.79	3.75
Urban formal area	1.99	2.44	3.59	4.47
Urban informal	2.20	2.76	4.31	5.00
Smallholdings	2.03	1.93	3.23	3.16
Hostels	1.81	3.24	4.08	4.70
16-20 years	2.00	2.18	4.08	4.74
21-25 years	1.90	2.49	3.42	4.47
26-30 years	1.09	2.80	3.83	4.62
Over 30s	2.12	2.62	3.84	4.63

Mean score value

1 2 3 4 5
 Daily 2-3 times/week 2-3 times/month 2-3 times per year Never

Overall, radio and television are the most frequent media reference points, as compared to newspapers and pamphlets. Radio is of slightly more significance than television in this regard (as indicated in the table below). Thus, in order to maximise the exposure to an information distribution campaign, radio, followed by television, are the preferred media forms. The survey does not take into account the relative length of time that the

respondent is exposed to the particular form of media (it only looks at the frequency of reference, as opposed to the length of reference). This could arguably influence the impact of the media chosen and should thus be borne in mind in designing the community-based strategy to curb firearm proliferation.

In order to effect a dynamic community-based response, a combination of media forms could be recommended. In the light of the information gleaned from questions on the frequency of referring to certain forms of information, the media form selected in the community-based campaign could be mixed, that is, a number of forms could be employed. Since the cost of each media type is usually a major factor in deciding which type of media to utilise, given the resource limitations, care should be taken not to give way to pressure to mix in a predominance of the more affordable types of media, to the detriment of the overall effectiveness of the campaign.

A consideration of the race of the respondent by means of frequency of referring to different forms of media, shows that the overall preference for radio and television, as opposed to newspapers and pamphlets, still holds. The Indian sample has a greater tendency, on the whole, to refer to various forms of media than do the other racial subsamples, while the coloured sample indicated that they are more likely to refer to television, as opposed to radio. This is an interesting observation, since it is contrary to the trend of other racial groups. Given the fact that the majority of South Africans are African, a cautionary note needs to be raised about providing too much of the media campaign in the written form of newspapers and pamphlets, since the African sample overall referred least frequently to these forms of media.

In the analysis of the age of respondents (namely, respondents under and over 30 years) by the various mean scores of the frequency of referring to different forms of media, it is evident that there is comparatively (ie, across age categories) no significant difference between the frequency of referring to any one media form. In referring to age of respondents (under five different age categories), by means of frequency of referring to different forms of media, however, it is evident that youth (between the ages of 16 and 20 years) watched television more frequently than any other age category, and were among those least likely to read pamphlets and newspapers.

In considering the various settlement types where respondents reside, by means of frequency of referring to different forms of media, it is evident that people on smallholdings are most likely to refer to pamphlets, newspapers and television than the remainder of the sample, although the respondents in urban formal settlement types display a similar tendency. There was no significant difference between the frequency of referring to the radio by any particular settlement type. Findings with regard to settlement type could be skewed by the fact that conventional media distribution companies tend not to distribute pamphlets in hostels and urban informal settlements, thus the respondents there have a lower propensity for receiving these in the first place. In similar vein, television ownership is lower in urban informal areas (based on lower household incomes and access to electricity), thus lowering the frequency with which respondents residing in these areas are able to utilise this form of media.

The exposure of the campaign could be maximised by having a relatively larger mix of radio and television, as opposed to newspapers and pamphlets. However, pamphlets remain an effective media form in formal urban settlement types and smallholdings. Additional research is required on television access and ownership in order to qualify this. It is recommended that careful attention should be focused on those times of the day when people listen to the radio and watch television in such a campaign. It is also recommended that future surveys include a question dealing with peak times, both during weekends and the week, when the sample watch television and listen to the radio. The only limitation on using existing community forms of media for the dissemination of information is that certain categories of people will be missed or by-passed if these channels of communication are used.

Lessons for a Community-Based Response to Firearm Proliferation

The aim of this contribution has been to provide information to guide the design of a community-based strategy to curb the proliferation of firearms. It has considered the data presented by the survey and drawn conclusions from these. Clearly, to base the campaign design on the survey data alone would be insufficient. It has to be complemented with qualitative

information, which could be gathered in participatory workshops, focus group discussions and open-ended interviews. The survey demonstrated the deep penetration of firearms into the Lekoa/Vaal community, supporting suppositions that firearms are entrenched in the day-to-day functioning of the community. Respondents established negative associations with firearms. However, both firearm ownership and the willingness to own a firearm remained of consequence to the respondents. Under these conditions, would the community support action, in the form of a community-based response, to reduce the level of firearm penetration in its midst?

To reiterate: a community-based response to the proliferation of firearms consists of those actions initiated and implemented by a community to reduce the damage caused by firearms. Usually, such a strategy would be appropriate in a community where there is a high level of firearm penetration. Firearm penetration (as was stated from the outset) is the extent to which a gun culture is entrenched in a community and to which the community is dependent on firearms. This dependence is manifest in a number of ways, such as the use of firearms for conflict resolution, self-defence, employment, and for criminal and cultural activities.

There are a number of factors that would influence the type of community-based response that might be adopted by a community. These would include substantial information about the nature and extent of the firearm penetration; the causes and effects of factors influencing the penetration; the nature of the community; and community-specific design elements.

With regards to the nature of the community, issues to consider would be whether it is homogeneous in opinion; whether it shares a similar outlook on firearms; and the level to which it currently participates actively in community-based initiatives and activities. Community design elements would be informed by the resources available to that community; the existing sources of information; the level of its experience and other such factors.

The characteristics of the community aiming to implement a community-based strategy would strongly influence the type of campaign it adopted. A consideration of a typical community aiming to implement such a strategy

for reducing firearm dependency would reveal it to have the following: few resources (such as time, financial backing and expertise); a multitude of development priorities; little political influence; and to be experiencing a deep penetration of firearms. These characteristics would influence the campaign on a number of levels. A community with few resources and a multitude of other development priorities usually seeks some form of trade-off against other priorities and resources. This situation could be approached on a number of levels. Either, the community-based response to firearm dependency could be broadened to include other priorities of the community, such as crime, or the campaign could be designed to use fewer resources, by making the community-based action less costly, or less extensive. On the other hand, the community could be taught how to raise funds for the new initiative, and how to administer its resources more efficiently, if these were necessary. For this reason, a manual providing design options for a firearm reduction campaign could be an appropriate option for a community that would elect to undertake its own campaign.

A community that has little political influence, typical of one that is marginalised and has firearm-related problems, often has to take a number of service-delivery functions and security responsibilities upon itself. Usually, communities like these are recipients of a lower level of service than more affluent communities and those with greater political influence. For example, such communities may experience high levels of crime and violence, and will have found, to date, that the police have largely been ineffectual in addressing the problem.

The problem is that, within a community that is experiencing deep firearms penetration, the solutions to the problem are often not straightforward. Communities aiming to address the issue face a high possibility of failure, especially as the relationship between such communities and firearms is complex. Thus, any strategy that is adopted, needs to be seen in the light of broader long-term objectives. Moreover, the idea of any one manual promising to contain all the solutions must be carefully reviewed. In the event of failure, the false hope that was initially engendered, could lead to the community's disillusionment and disempowerment. A manual allowing for flexibility, on the other hand, could shift the decision squarely into the community arena of which elements to combine in the community-based response. This would increase the initiative's potential for success.

When the package of conditions that could inform the choice of the type of strategy to be adopted, the nature and extent of firearm penetration, as well as the perception of firearms, was considered, the following emerged as significant. On the whole, respondents strongly agreed that firearms caused violence in society. There was no difference in opinion based on gender, age, employment status, and the frequency of going hungry or their length of residency in the area. However, Indian and white respondents, as well as respondents with tertiary education, were less certain of the strength of the link between firearms and violence in society. In the design of a public awareness campaign, these respondents would need careful consideration: their opinions differed from the norm and it could be expected that their life experiences would differ from those of the majority of people in South Africa.

Another aspect for consideration in a the community-based response would be the apparent contradiction between the sample's attitudes to firearms and their perception of and association with them: this demonstrates the difference between what people do and what they claim to do. The need to take cognisance of this human characteristic appears to be central to the design of a community-based response to firearm proliferation. On the one hand, half of the sample (50%) were prepared to own a firearm; on the other, two-fifths of the sample (40%) perceived that there should be restrictions on who should be allowed to carry a firearm, while a further two-fifths (40%) strongly associated firearms with images of death, danger and violence. Given that firearms are seen as overwhelmingly negative, and yet, at the same time, half the sample held positive attitudes towards them, the community-based response could aim to question the deep ambiguity underlying the attitudes of the sample and their perceptions or associations.

The correlation between firearm ownership and victimisation and the fear of crime could be relevant to the design of a community-based firearm reduction strategy. The relationship between attitudes to and perceptions of firearms is indirect and inconsistent. It is argued that the sample formulated their attitudes towards firearm ownership in reaction to victimisation and associated feelings of vulnerability and disempowerment. A community-based response to firearm ownership could aim to reinforce perceptions, rather than attitudes, as the former more strongly caution against firearm ownership and could therefore assist in curbing the proliferation of firearms.

It is expected that a community campaign to reduce firearm dependency would be initiated and managed by those people who believe that firearms are a problem and see themselves as being able to do something about the situation. In order to profile such people, it is useful to look at comparative examples from the community. In profiling those in the community who are more likely to participate in a community-based response to firearm proliferation, those who joined community-based patrolling structures are likely to be able to lead a campaign on community safety through to the reduction of the demand for firearms. Following from this, African and Indian respondents, as well as people residing in urban formal and informal settlements, were relatively active in the community in patrolling structures. In addition to this, people from medium to low socio-economic backgrounds could be expected to be active in the campaign. In contrast, wealthier households where highly privatised security area affordable, are less likely to take an active role in campaigning for neighbourhood security.

Underlying the recommendations made for a community-based strategy, is the strength of the assumption that the community will act in a manner similar to that in which it acted to provide household security to address the problem of firearm proliferation. At no stage was the sample asked directly whether they would like to participate in a plan of action of this nature. Rather, deductions on the level of expected participation were made from a consideration of the current initiatives and actions undertaken within the community. A popular form of ensuring safety in the community was to join a street patrolling structure – such as a street or block committee. These street and block committees were equally popular mechanisms for conflict resolution. The sample more readily acted in their own interest to secure the safety of their own individual households, as opposed to the safety of the community. The responses chosen by the sample to address crime, the chosen solutions to crime, and the type of firearm control measures differed widely from a demographic point of view. The background and life experiences of different people inform their choices. The community-based response could provide a range of the types of action that people interested in supporting the initiative could undertake.

A manual to guide and assist a community in the design of a community-based response to firearm proliferation needs to combine flexibility and

choice. As was demonstrated, the respondents had their own preferences for and individualised styles of addressing crime. It could be assumed that their approach to reducing firearm dependency would be no different. Whatever the type of initiative undertaken in the community, this should be kept in mind. In this way, an inclusive approach to combat the problem of firearm proliferation could be fostered. As previously mentioned, there is a need to limit the cost of the type of initiative adopted by a community. It was found that people from more disadvantaged backgrounds were more willing to participate in community-based projects. Given this, the campaign should be designed to rely on as few resources as possible and low technologies.

The management of a community-based initiative is crucial to the success of such a programme. To constitute new organisations to drive a community-based initiative to curb firearm proliferation may be unnecessary – especially given that most communities already have committees that are responsible for community safety and security. It may be better for communities to work within existing structures of authority to ensure that the community-based responses contribute to ongoing crime prevention and education efforts. The design elements of the campaign could be pitched at complementing the existing priorities in the community, in this way minimising the need for a trade-off between existing priorities. In addition to this, the organisational skills of community structures would be utilised and enhanced. Marginalised people within the sample were most supportive of a firearm campaign, yet had the least resources available to initiate one. A manual to guide the actions of these people would be necessary for this reason.

On the design of the message for the campaign, there are a number of issues that could be targeted, such as the easy access to firearms, perceptions of rising crime and violence and the tolerance towards criminal activities. Among those respondents who felt that the number of firearms had increased compared to previous years, the main reasons were attributed to these factors. It was found that, among the sample who felt that firearms had increased, 50% attributed this to the high level of accessibility, 31% of the sample perceived it as a reaction to rising crime and violence in South Africa, and 15% of the sample attributed it to the increased use of firearms for illegal criminal activities.

Firstly, redressing the high level of accessibility would include the main problems associated with firearm accessibility. These would need to be dealt with through government measures to control the supply of firearms and could include better policing of border controls and entry points, as well as licencing of firearms to ensure that owners manage their firearms responsibly. Clearly, the enforcement of these control measures could be improved through the co-operation of the community. The campaign could raise awareness and perform a public education role, highlighting the law on firearm licencing, encouraging the reporting of illegal firearms to the appropriate authority and outlining the broader implications of not licencing a firearm.

Secondly, redressing the perception of rising crime and violence in South Africa, and the need for a firearm for self-defence could be focused on in the campaign. Respondents were of the opinion that people obtained firearms in reaction to the increase in crime and violence in South Africa. Thus, the firearm is seen as a tool for self-defence. But, firearms are clearly not always effective for protection. Many people who have firearms are not able to use them during a hijacking situation; some become victims of crime merely because they carry a firearm. A public awareness campaign could establish the limitations of a firearm in providing safety and could point to alternative means of defence. The community-based strategy could outline how to look after a firearm so that it did not fall into the wrong hands.

Thirdly, the campaign could look at messages or strategies that would redress the tolerance shown towards criminal activities, which would mean engendering an intolerance for criminals and criminal activities. The high level of tolerance for people suspected of criminal activities by communities could be addressed in the campaign. For example, the simple communication of effective whistle-blowing techniques could be taught and used against criminals. Every criminal has a mother, a father, a sister and a brother. Pressure on criminals from significant others, and the loss of approval from the community itself, as a result of their activities, could provide a point of departure for showing criminals and the wider community that they and their associated firearms were no longer welcome in the community.

There were a number of areas probed in the survey on the Lekoa/Vaal area that require further research:

- It is recommended that qualitative research methodologies should be employed to strengthen the quantitative information. The depth of understanding required to fathom the essence of a community and to advise on a community-based responses to firearm proliferation requires active participation and a broader comprehension of the link between firearm proliferation and wider community development.
- It is felt that further research should be undertaken to deepen the understanding of the criteria that should be used to determine who should be allowed to possess a firearm. From the examples examined in the survey, evidence was gathered so that future areas of definition might be informed about possible appropriate limitations on firearm possession. These limitations are defined in government regulations, policy and law on firearms. However, communities need to consider whether they are in agreement with these conditions and, if not, contest them. This could add a useful dimension to the public awareness campaign, provide areas for research and generate civil society debate with regard to key policy control measures.
- It should be borne in mind that the increase in the level of crime and violence could inform the design of a community-based response to firearm proliferation. It is recommended that additional research should be undertaken to ascertain the extent to which crime and violence act as divisive elements in a community. This factor would affect the possibility of unifying a community around a common objective; perceptions of crime and violence influence peoples' willingness to relinquish their firearms; and finally, crime and violence have an effect on the mobility of people in the community, which, in turn, could impact on their ability to launch and sustain a campaign initiative. It was felt that the Lekoa/Vaal community would act against firearms, as long as the direct relationship between firearms and crime was and remained clearly defined.

The research reflected in this contribution has provided a glimpse into a community that is besieged by firearms. It has shown, moreover, that it is a community divided on its current approaches to crime. This limits the chances of the whole community coming together to address the problem of firearm dependency. It was found that certain respondents demonstrated repeatedly that they were sympathetic to ideas of addressing the problem of firearms through a community-based response. These were usually

marginalised people in the community, people with few resources and little political persuasion. It was on this basis that a design manual for guiding the actions of this community was recommended. The manual could provide the community with a package of options from which to choose, should they wish to reverse the culture of violence and adopt a community-based response to firearm dependency.

Endnotes

- 1 E Hennop, *Audit on governmental and non-governmental youth crime prevention projects in Gauteng*, Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria, 1999.
- 2 Crime Information and Analysis Centre, 1999, which cited 12 267 murders with a firearm in 1998 and 24 875 in 1998, in South Africa.