

TOOL SIX

URBAN TRANSECT WALK



Objective:

To describe different physical environments of the neighbourhood/community and their impression on the observer, including hotspots of the area. To identify and discuss visible and invisible factors that influence the sense of safety.



Aspects of Data Collection:

The aspects depend on the team, which defines them before starting the walk, and of course the objectives of the Transect Walk.

Typical aspects are:

Safe and unsafe places (as perceived by local people) and their characteristics, e.g., (lack of) street lighting, cleanliness of streets, graffiti, characteristics of gang territories, the atmosphere of everyday life on the streets, types and condition of different characters of housing/buildings, social aspects of the households along the transect.



Material needed:

Big brown paper, A4-size paper and pens. Digital cameras/mobiles to take photos (see observations) can be very helpful, if you have the means to print them, pins, glue and/or tape.



Preparation:

Ensure that people in the community/neighbourhood are informed about the time and objectives of the walk. Ensure that you have the agreement of those who need to be consulted.



Procedure:

This tool involves a systematic walk along a more-or-less straight line through as many areas of the neighbourhood as possible. This is done together with a team of local experts/people from the community (that is, the participants selected for the PUA). During the walk you discuss aspects relevant to the issue of violence.

The work begins with a preparatory meeting, which will include discussions and explanations. At the meeting, participants will consider:

- the method
- issues to consider
- “rules” (see observations) for the proceedings.

In this meeting you also define together with the participants five or six aspects to be observed during the walk. Then the working group prepares a map of the area. This can be a quick and rough map, and need not depict correct distances and proportions.

Then the group plots a transect on the map, taking in as many parts of the neighbourhood as possible, in order to effectively show its diversity. Hotspots already identified should be included. There can be two or three groups, and two or three transects.

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Figure 9: Transect Walk on 28.08.13 in Mogoba, numbers mark the spots referred to in the table on p. 26.



Figure 10: Group 1 during Transect Walk on 28.08.13 in Mogoba

Each group needs to copy by hand the map on an A4-size page, which the note-takers will carry during the walk. An example of the results of the urban Transect Walk carried out in Mogoba, are shown on the following page.

It is advisable to clearly define the roles within the group. You might need several observers, one or two note-takers, and of course the interviewer/s – no more than one or two persons. If you take photos, then you might have one or two people for that task. This distribution of responsibilities makes it easier to ensure that all important tasks are done well.

If there are specific places, like hotspots or places which you consider specifically relevant, then give a number to the place and describe it as one part of the transect. Make sure that every member of the group has the list of aspects to be observed.

Wrap-up-meeting after the Transect Walk:

After the Transect Walk, the groups meet at a previously agreed point. Here they share the results of their work and necessary clarifications are made. The spots of the Transect Walk/s are marked on the initial big map. This is most helpful, as it serves as good visualisation in future meetings or workshops.

Task for each group:

Each group follows the transect it has agreed on. It is important to identify clearly wherever the look of the neighbourhood or the impression of safety changes distinctly. Stop or halt at such places. Thus you might have 5-8 halts or 'stops' in different parts of the transect walk. When you make a halt, the group discusses all selected aspects (first column in table on page 26) and the note-takers document the main points observed. In order to identify the halts or 'stopping points' on the map, you mark and number each part of the transect route on the map) At each stop or halt you take note of all the relevant characteristics you observed between the stop before and the current stop).

If people from the community/neighbourhood participate who are not informed about the process, be sure to share the necessary in.

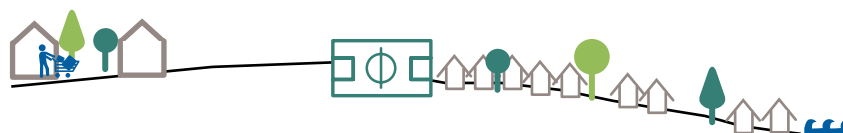
Note: Approximately 60 min for the preparatory meeting about 180 min. for the Transect Walk.

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Table 1: Results from Transect Walk of group 1, 28.08.13 in Mogoba



	Spot 1	Spot 2	Spot 3	Spot 4	Spot 5
Aspects	Junction at Bafana-bafana supermarket: A high activity road, intersection, frequent people, especially women	Open space: Road towards the open space: Road with no activity and no business	Football field, road to the football field: A high activity road, intersection, frequent people, many cars, trucks	Shebeen, Road to the Shebeen	Illegal dumping site in between RDP houses
Perception of safety					
The team's mood	Safe	At night not safe, day OK	Safe	Safe	Day OK, at night would not feel save
The mood of the local population	Safe	At night not safe, day OK	Safe	Safe	Do not feel save (interviewed males)
Environmental design: • Lighting • Housing	No lighting Brick houses	No lighting Brick, RDP + shacks	One light (also serving the football field) RDP + shacks	One light (not directly at Shebeen) Brick, RDP + shacks	One high light about 40m away. RDP + shacks
Vegetation	Some houses have small gardens with lawn, (fruit) trees, vegetables	No	Bushes, high grass around the football field	Some houses have small gardens with lawn, trees, vegetable	Some houses have small gardens
Litter, rubbish	Clean, people are taking care to live in a clean environment	Road is clean open space: dumped rubbish (rubbish truck)	Rubbish on the site of the field and on the road	Clean, people are taking care to live in a clean environment	Illegal dumping site, further from this site cleaner, distributed bins along the road A 50-year-old male complains that people don't use distributed bins and continue throwing their litter on the illegal dumping site
Use & maintenance of facilities	Official house numbers, well kept, burglar bars, gravel road, chickens running on the road	Road: bumpy, water meter outside the plots	Football field: well kept, but too close to road, no fence, used in the afternoon, informal 2nd hand shop, sweet shacks. Social control due to houses around the field, graded by councillor	Well kept, Small roads are very dirty, many small kids on the road	New houses seem clean with fences, and some have individual decoration and gardens/flowers

Open space at spot 3: There is a plan to install a crèche on this spot, but the place is full of rats, broken bottles. Full of rubbish from the environment. Someone is cleaning the place with his hands and a wheel barrow, no tools. The open space seems to be a party place for youth. In the rubbish you find only beer cans, no coke or other non-alcoholic drink cans. Around the open space are only shacks.

Main problems in the township expressed in interviews:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gangsters • Drugs (combination of drugs e.g., 'yahobe, which kills the fear') • Alcohol 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployment • Teenage pregnancy • Prostitution (including teenagers) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High HIV prevalence • Hotspots around Shebeens • The crimes happen mainly at night

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**Observations:**

- The Transect Walk is a very good way to start a more in-depth analysis and participatory process in the community.
- A Transect Walk illustrates only a selected cross-section. It does not provide a complete “picture” of the community/neighbourhood. And it illustrates only those aspects which can be observed at that point in time.
- A good possibility is to split into exclusively male and exclusively female working groups, and have different transects, or to have one group with purely young people. Such a separation enriches the results in the end.
- When the group has agreed on doing interviews with people on the street, it is advisable to agree on general “rules” to follow. Here are some recommendations:
 - Have just one or two people do the interviews, not the whole team. Those interviewed should feel comfortable with the situation.
 - Have a conversation with people – do not “interrogate”.
 - If people don’t know you: remember to introduce yourself first, and explain what your group is doing, so that they know who you are and why you are there.
 - Before taking photos, ask for permission.
 - Be sensitive and always show respect towards those you meet and talk to.
- Documenting the results of the Transect Walk afterwards is a challenge. It is therefore better to do the documentation during the walk.
- Documentation of aspects you consider important, with the help of photos, can be very useful for subsequent work and used at points in the future process. They might even form part of the baseline data, if you plan to do a monitoring and evaluation of the violence prevention work later on.
- Transect Walks can provide helpful information for safety audits. In general, safety audits provide a more detailed, in-depth view of the situation, and need much more time.
- Still, existing checklists for safety audits can be consulted if you want to get more ideas for aspects to observe⁷.
- There is no one correct way of doing a Transect walk. Keep in mind that the intention is not to get complete information. It is rather to get a first insight and contact with the people living in the area.

7. A helpful checklist can be found in CJCP (2011): “Learning Programme Learners Book” developed by CJCP in cooperation with the Department of Community Safety of the Gauteng Province, page 30 ff. Other checklists can be consulted under <http://www.toronto.ca/safetyaudits/process3.htm>; Safety Audit Checklist: http://www.toronto.ca/safetyaudits/pdf/edmonton_safety_audit_guide_extract.pdf. Note: this website contains concepts, which are not always consistent with the approach and concepts of this manual.

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End Product:

By the end of the activity, the objective set for this exercise will be achieved and will be reflected in the following:

- Main features of the community/neighbourhood have been described and documented.
- If planned this way, with the Transect Walk, a broader participatory process in as part of planning of violence prevention would have been started.

