

(Project title)

Information Sheet for Members of the Community of Participating Schools

My name is xxxxxxxx, a xxxx student in xxxxxxxxxx. My supervisor is xxxxxxxxxx. We are inviting you to take part in our research project "xxxxxxxxxxxxx".

We aim to xxxxxxxxxx (aim of the study). The reasons to focus on the xxxxxxxxxx (specific participants selected) are: i) xxxxxxxx; and ii) xxxxxxxxxx.

The project will begin with a rapid evidence assessment (REA) and participatory focus group and individual interviews with purposefully selected policy officials, school and community leaders, and other stakeholders (including parents) to scope and assess the research evidence and policy reports over the last decade. The results of the REA and interviews will inform the development of **a systems-oriented, multi-layered intervention to strengthen the organisational and professional capacities of schools** as enabling spaces for children's learning and development in socioeconomically disadvantaged rural communities. Multi-stakeholder, participatory and collaborative **child (family)-school-community partnerships** will be used to enhance the design and evaluation of the feasibility, applicability and sustainability of the interventions throughout the project.

The school in your community has agreed to participate in this research. We very much hope that you would like to take part. This information sheet will try and answer any questions you might have about the project, but please do not hesitate to contact me and/or xxxxxxxxxx if there is anything else you would like to know (see our contact details at the end of this information sheet).

Who is carrying out the research?

The research is led by xxxxxxxx with nine Co-Investigators from xxxxxxxxxx. xxxxxxxxxx at the University of Pretoria, is the lead investigator. There are also eight postdoctoral researchers on this project (six based at Pretoria) who will carry out school visits and fieldwork.

Why are we doing this research?

Inequalities in education and health are deeply rooted in social and economic disadvantage. In South Africa, 38% of children live in rural communities and are significantly more likely to be deprived of opportunities for quality education and health-related quality of life than those less disadvantaged. This research aims to address this persistent structural challenge and establish how schools can beat the odds and enable children to achieve and thrive despite their location in high-poverty communities.

The project is grounded in an ethic of social justice and led by a xxxxx and xxxxxx interdisciplinary team from Education, Health, Psychology, Sociology, and Health Economics. By examining how schools may be(come) enabling spaces to promote whole-child quality education (Sustainable Development Goal 4) (SDG), and through this, transform the health-related quality of life for children and adults (SDG 3) in rural communities in South Africa, the research will make a timely contribution to understandings of how different sectors may work more effectively with schools to unlock the **transformative power of education** for the achievement of the other 2030 SDGs systemically and sustainably.

Why are you being invited to take part?

We know from research that schools' capacity to establish healthy connections with their community (especially those serving disadvantaged communities) profoundly influences their ability to achieve and sustain the quality and effectiveness of practice at the classroom and school levels. In this research we will co-construct with school and community stakeholders a whole-child-focussed intervention which responds to the complex sociocultural and structural challenges facing children and their families, schools and rural communities. The intervention will create the optimal conditions to enhance the capacity and environment of schools as **hubs of quality learning and healthy development** in their locality.

The school in your community has agreed to take part in the research. As a valued member of the school community, we are keen to work you and other community leaders and members to pilot and implement this research-informed school-community-wide intervention that aims at improving the learning and health outcomes of young children.

Will anyone know me has been involved?

As this research involves schools and their immediate communities, individuals within your school community may be aware of your participation in the research. However, you or your experiences will NOT be identified in any form of reports or publications, or communications with members outside the immediate research team.

What will happen if you choose to take part?

A participatory approach will be used to pilot and implement the intervention over a period of 16 months in your school community (two research phases). ***A summary report outlining the impact of the intervention on school staff and children and the school community will be shared with you. No individual identity or data will be revealed in these two reports.***

- **Phase 1 Piloting the intervention: Six months**

Baselining: An **initial 5-day visit** will be carried out to collect baseline data at individual, school, and community levels. You will be contacted to take part in a participatory focus group interview by the research team to identify factors that affect schools' and children's capacity to improve over time. Training of the interventions will also take place during the visits.

Implementing: **Two rounds of 4-day visits** (allowing for follow-up training of interventions) and a **third round of 3-day visit** over the six-month period will be carried out to facilitate the implementation and process evaluation of the intervention. At each of the visit, the research team will invite you to participate in a **participatory focus group interview** to explore how the external (family and community) and internal contexts and environments have influenced both the fidelity and impact of the intervention.



- **Phase 2 Understanding impact: 10 months**

Two four-day visits and **one final three-day visits** will be paid by the research team over the 10 month period to facilitate the implementation of the intervention and assess its impact on Foundation Phase children and teachers, school conditions and culture, and the community.

Two community surveys will be conducted at the beginning and end of this phase. The surveys will be complemented by **three participatory focus group interviews**: one interview during each of the visit.

What will happen to the results of the research?

A confidential summary report outlining the impact of the intervention on school staff and children and the school community will be shared with you. No individual identity or data will be revealed in these two reports.

To maximise research impact on young children, schools and communities in rural areas, we will capitalise on our *proven track records of producing high quality academic outputs and our coordinating roles in national and international professional networks* to influence research use: **1) Building knowledge sharing platforms to sustain the legacy of the research**: these *reciprocal* platforms are central to our participatory research methods design and will enable the team to target *local participation, engagement and research dissemination* for knowledge exchange and transfer. Engaging local leaders and advocates in outreach visits to schools and other local, regional and national education and health services, networks and forums will pave the way for knowledge exchange and transfer. We acknowledge the lack of digital resources in rural communities, and will therefore use these locally embedded knowledge sharing platforms to influence dissemination. We will use WhatsApp groups per and across sites for synergistic sharing of knowledge with partners in schools and aligned communities (based on findings on this pathway as effective for connectedness and knowledge sharing in remote schools). **2) As with our previous research informing a SA National Rural Education Policy, and to sustain the national legacy of the project, we leverage the co-ownership of national education authorities** whose endorsement of the project is driven by a compelling desire for much-needed empirical evidence to support policy that mainstreams health education into general education agendas. Their collaboration is promising to both *craft policy* and to support subsequent *policy implementation*. **3) For regional and international impact, we capitalise on existing networks for dissemination**. The Centre for the Study of Resilience, UCL IOE and the Advisory Committee have established policy and professional networks with a diverse range of international associations (World Education Research Association), inter/intra-governmental organisations (e.g. UNESCO, OECD, UNICEF), regional and national NGOs (e.g. Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative). They are dissemination and impact platforms. **4) "Excellent" original contribution to knowledge through sustained academic and professional engagement activities**: publishing quality academic and non-academic outputs in high impact journals, professional magazines, NGO newsletters; presenting policy briefs to policy makers; engaging in roundtable discussions and knowledge exchange conferences; using a project website, regular newsletters, blogs and bulletins diffused via various social media to showcase dissemination.

Do I have to take part?

It is entirely up to you whether or not you choose to take part. You will be under no pressure to participate in the research. However, we hope that if you do choose to be involved then you will find it a valuable experience. You will be fully informed of the purposes and process of the research and of your right to withdraw from the study for any or no reason and at any time. Any actions or questions that may cause physical, psychological or emotional harm or discomfort to you will be avoided.



Data Protection Privacy Notice

All the data obtained will be coded anonymously, be strictly confidential and non-accessible to individuals outside the research team. All research data will be recorded in a durable form with appropriate references. They will be stored securely in their original form, and retained intact for a period of ten years after the study has been completed. We will archive and deposit anonymised quantitative and qualitative data in the UK Data Archive within 3 months of the grant ending.

The data controller for this project will be xxxxxxxxx (the institution). The xxxxxxxxx provides oversight of activities involving the processing of personal data, and can be contacted at xxxxxx (website and email address)

The legal basis used to process special category personal data will be for scientific and historical research or statistical purposes/explicit consent. *Your personal data will be processed so long as it is required for the research project.* If we are able to anonymise or pseudonymise the personal data you provide we will undertake this, and will endeavour to minimise the processing of personal data wherever possible. If you are concerned about how your personal data is being processed, or if you would like to contact us about your rights, please contact xxxxxxxxx (the institution).

Contact for further information

If you have any further questions before you decide whether to take part, you can reach me at:

Email: xxxxxxxxxx **Tel:** xxxxxxxxxx

Address: xxxxxxxxxx

Or xxxxxxxxxx at:

Email: xxxxxxxxxx **Tel:** xxxxxxxxxx

Address: University of Pretoria, Groenkloof Campus, Cnr of George Storrar & Leyds Str; Groenkloof 0027, South Africa

If you would like to be involved, please complete the following consent form and return to [*contact email/address of Project Administrator - tbc*] by [*insert date - tbc*].

This project has been reviewed and approved by the xxxxxxxxxx of Education Research Ethics Committee. If you have any questions about the above research project, wish to exercise your rights as a research participant, or wish to make a complaint, please send an email with details to the UP of Education Research Ethics Committee on xxxxxxx so that we can look into the issue and respond to you. You can also contact the UCL Institute of Education Research Ethics Committee by telephoning xxxxxxxxxx .

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this information sheet.

