

The Maunatlala Times

July 5– July 11, 2025



(clockwise) Kylie and Purva sorting survey materials, our community survey group volunteers, and a beautiful sunset.

Household Survey

This year we are undertaking a comprehensive household survey of Maunatlala, and have recruited a group of 11 youth from the community to go door-to-door to collect demographic information, assess community access to resources for sexual and reproductive health, menstrual health and hygiene, and gender-based violence. We completed a training for these students, outfitted them with OSU merch, and sent them out into the community! The findings will be instrumental for identifying the make-up of the community and continued needs for education or resources. Our volunteers have been working hard and have collected over half of the goal number of surveys!



Kylie and Purva with youth volunteers!

Working hard or hardly working?

We hit the ground running and have been deep into the hard work of data collection, transcription, and preliminary data analysis. Our research aides have been instrumental in finding willing participants and coordinating in-depth interviews and focus group discussions – which hasn't exactly been without hiccups. Almost every person Kylie has talked to about gender-based violence has emphasized the important role of the social worker, and appointing with her has taken a week and a half – just for Kylie and Bonshetse to get to her office and find that she had started a two week leave that day!

Emma was also taken by surprise when she arrived at one of the primary school ready (cont.)

Our research team hard at work (Ben, Kylie, Bonshetse, Tumie, Emma, OT, and Purva)



The team taking a break and attempting some puzzles (Ben, Kylie, Purva, Emma)

for two focus group discussions, but instead was faced by a total of four sessions with students from both the mainstream school and special education units. She took it in stride and had good conversations with each group.

All of these interviews and FGDs demand lots of attention and effort to facilitate meaningful conversation in the face of some significant language barriers, take detailed notes during the interviews, and then transcribe everything that was said – all of which is draining!

Purva has been doing lots of data entry from our household surveys, and Ben has been spending quite a bit of time traveling to other villages for interviews.

Our Weekend at Limpopo River

Our first week was exciting – and exhausting! Having in-depth conversations, facilitating focus groups, transcribing, working in a new and unfamiliar – and (usually) very sunny environment left all of us feeling a bit spent. We recharged with a trip to the Limpopo River – the third-longest river in Africa (what’s the second-longest? The Congo River!) where we saw tons of birds, some monitor lizards, crocodiles, and hippo tracks (but no hippos). Other ways we have been spending our downtime include working on two simultaneous 1,500 and 2,000 piece puzzles, doodling, playing Bananagrams, giving each other a hard time, keeping in touch with our friends and family back home, and trying to befriend the local dogs and stray cats – we have been successful with Snooty, but Cleopatra the cat eludes us.



Kylie and Ben recreating an iconic moment from Titanic. "Jack, I'm flying!!"

PhD student (and aspiring artist) Ben Roberts' drawing of the Limpopo River from the view of the balcony!



Thulani and Snooty, Ben celebrating his birthday with an improvised birthday candle (a match), and the blue Botswana sky

