# IMPROVING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN A RURAL SCHOOL THROUGH THE USE OF AN ASSET-BASED APPROACH AS A MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

By

**Phumlani Erasmus Myende**

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**Supervisor: Dr MM Nkoane**

**Co-Supervisor: Dr DJ Hlalele**

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# ACKNOWLDGEMENTS

# DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to five special people in my life:

- To my parents, Bonani Patrick Myende and Badingile Pauline Myende to whom I draw my inspiration. Baba no Mama, it is an honour to me that you did not receive formal education up to secondary and tertiary level but you persevered against all odds to ensure that I earn this PhD. Baba, you worked hard cutting sugar cane and you paid for my studies and for that I believe you are a Doctor yourself. Mama, you persevered, you worked as a domestic worker for another black woman just to make sure there was food on the table and for that this is yours too.

- To my Granny (Khulu), there were times where my father was injured and he could not work and my mother had to try and make sure there is money for us to go to school. You had no young child at that time but you took your pension money and ensured there is food on the table. Your support contributed to where I am today and I don't have words to express my gratitude for your everlasting support.

- To my two sons, Esihle Siphile Myende and Snakhokonke Wandile Myende, this work represents the least I could contribute to leave a footstep that will remain years after I have visited my ancestors. You may not pursue doctoral studies, but remember that "what you do for others will remain when you are gone". Through these words I challenge you to work selflessly to empower yourself to become contributing citizens to your country.

## ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to investigate how academic performance in a rural school can be improved using the asset-based approach as a school management strategy. In other words, the study anticipated developing an asset-based approach strategy through which the management in a rural school can improve academic performance. This was done through finding strategies of identifying and mobilising community assets. With this done, the study further sought to find out what the school management can do to set conditions conducive to the utilisation of the asset-based approach within the selected school. The last part of the study focussed on what could be the possible challenges for the approach and how the school management may address such challenges in order to use the approach to improve academic performance.

Arguing that the asset-based approach has gained currency and has worked in educational psychology, community development studies, HIV and AIDS research, and economics, this study couched this approach within educational leadership and management and it treats improvement of academic performance as one of the issues school managers have to address in their daily work. The study acknowledges that indeed rural communities are not deficit, but the researcher in the study argues that research that conscietise rural people about the huge roles they can play in improving academic performance through their assets lags behind. The study further responds to the call from the Department of Education that responses to rural education challenges should be multifaceted and bring the rural people to the centre as solutions providers.

The study was theoretically located within the critical emancipatory research (CER) and the asset-based approach as frameworks. The intentions were to conscietise and create a space for rural people to know their assets and further work with them in the process of establishing the strategies for using such assets towards improving academic performance in their secondary school. Through CER, there was hope that participants would be empowered by engaging in the research activities and so able to realise the capacities, skills and strengths that were found in the school and its immediate community, thereafter creating ways through which such assets are used meaningfully in the process of improving academic performance.

In understanding that CER promoted equity, social justice, transformation, closeness between the participants and the researchers, spaces for dialogue and questioning of unequal power relations in the society and the conventional research approaches, this study adopted participatory research (PR), as deemed relevant to empowering

participants and questioning distorted ideologies that have perpetuated deficit thinking amongst the rural people.

I worked with a group of participants made up of learners, teachers, SGB members, and the school management team (SMT) members (Principal and three Heads of Department). These participants volunteered to participate but they were also purposively targeted in that they were part of the school and poor academic performance was one of the problems experienced in the school. They were amongst the people affected by the problem being investigated. Not everyone could participate in the study. The school was understaffed and it only had 11 members of the teaching staff, including four members of the SMT. All these four members participated and four post level 1 teachers (PL1) were part of the larger group that participated. As part of the group there were four members of the SGB but they were not always present during research activities. In summary, the study participants included internal members of the school. While other participants were absent during sessions, at least all sessions had 15 or more, including the components mentioned above.

Different research activities were used. These included the introduction of the asset-based approach, conducting the school SWOT analysis, doing inventory capacities. After all these activities, DOI and FAI were used to facilitate discussions in order to generate data. The data was analysed using Critical Discourse Analysis.

It was found in the study that assets identification and mobilisation is a difficult process in a context where the problems that would be addressed through the assets are not identified. Thus a need to identify problems is argued to be the first step of the asset-based approach, this has been called agenda-setting in this study.

It was further found in this study that the SWOT analysis is not just a tool to understand the school in terms of its positive and negative features, but also a useful strategy in identifying the assets of the community. What makes it an acknowledged strategy is that it furthers the process of identifying the weaknesses and the threats towards the school and the assets identified. On understanding what each asset present in the context of the problems to be solved, the study found conducting a list of inventory capacities to be important in understanding what can be gained from all identified assets. The study therefore argues for the identification of assets through the SWOT analysis and to understand each asset's contributions through conducting inventory capacities. Based on the assets identified, the study presents school-community assets map seen to be

relevant towards improving the school in general and academic performance to be specific.

While knowing the assets and their different contributions towards improving academic performance is important, the study found that a relevant setting is required to have the asset-based approach utilised as a strategy in general in improving academic performance in particular. In ensuring this setting, a balanced relationship argued for under the asset-map should be created. Adding to this, the study found that the following are relevant in making the school environment suitable for the asset-based approach: Making the school and the community a single entity; (2) empowerment for potential contributors; (3) challenging inferiority and superiority complexities; (4) avoiding "singing a solo" (leading alone) approach. To achieve the above, the study further found that leadership should be invitational and participative in the school. Power imbalances and the "brain drain" challenges are identified as amongst the challenges for the asset-based approach.

Given the findings and informed by the data, the study proposes a strategy for using the asset-based approach. The strategy has four cyclical aspects that emerged in the research process and it is hoped that this can enhance the use of the asset-based approach. The study contributes into new knowledge in the form of the challenges to the asset-based approach and a simplified strategy for using this approach. Its limitation is that the strategy was not implemented and it is only based on what the participants identified as what can work in their context. Thus, I recommend action research that will try to put the strategy into practice in order to advance knowledge on its application.

**KEY WORDS:** Asset-based approach; needs-based approach; academic performance; academic achievement; rurality; rural school; critical emancipatory research; participatory research; school management; community assets; Critical Discourse Analysis.

## SAMEVATTING

Die doel van hierdie studie was om te ondersoek hoe akademiese prestasie in 'n landelike skool verbeter kan word deur die gebruik van 'n bate-gebaseerde benadering as bestuurstrategie. Die verwagting was dat die studie 'n bate-gebaseerde benadering sou ontwikkel waarmee die bestuurspan van 'n landelike skool akademiese prestasie kan verbeter. Dit is gedoen deur strategieë te identifiseer en gemeenskaplike bates te mobiliseer. Met dit gedoen, het die studie verder gesoek om uit te vind wat die skool bestuur kan doen om voorwaardes wat bevorderlik is vir die benutting van die bate-gebaseerde benadering binne die gekose skool, op te stel. Die laaste deel van die studie het gefokus op wat die moontlike uitdagings vir die benadering kan wees en hoe die skool bestuur sodanige uitdagings kan aanspreek ten einde die benadering te gebruik om akademiese prestasie te verbeter.

Die argument word gevoer dat die bate-gebaseerde benadering steun opgedoen het in opvoedkundige sielkunde, gemeenskapsontwikkelingstudies, MIV en VIGS navorsing, en Ekonomie en daarom het hierdie studie hierdie benadering binne opvoedkundige leierskap en bestuur en dit behandel verbetering van akademiese prestasie as een van die kwessies wat skool bestuurders in hul daaglikse werk moet aanspreek. Die studie erken inderdaad dat landelike gemeenskappe nie tekort skiet nie, maar die navorser in die studie argumenteer dat navorsing wat landelike mense bewus maak oor die groot rol wat hulle kan speel in die verbetering van akademiese prestasie deur middel van hul bates, sloer. Die studie het verder reageer op die oproep van die Departement van Onderwys dat die antwoorde vir uitdagings in die onderwys in landelike gebiede veelsydig moet wees en die landelike mense na die sentrum as oplossings verskaffers moet bring.

Die studie is teoreties gesetel binne critical emancipatory research (CER) en die bate-gebaseerde benadering as raamwerke. Die bedoeling was bewusmaking en die skepping van 'n ruimte vir landelike mense om hul bates te leer ken en verder met hulle saam te werk in die proses van die daarstel van strategieë vir die gebruik van sodanige bates tot die verbetering van akademiese prestasie in hul sekondêre skool. Deur CER, is daar gehoop dat die deelnemers bemagtig sal word deur hul deelname aan die navorsingsaktiwiteite en daardeur die vermoëns,

vaardighede en kennis wat teenwoordig is in die skool en sy onmiddellike gemeenskap te besef, daarna die skep van maniere waarop sodanige bates sinvol gebruik sal word in die verbetering van akademiese prestasie.

As ons in ag neem dat CER gelykheid, maatskaplike geregtigheid, transformasie, toenadering tussen die deelnemers en die navorsers, ruimtes vir dialoog en bevraagtekening van ongelyke magsverhoudings in die samelewing en die konvensionele navorsingsbenaderings bevorder het, het hierdie studie aangeneem deelnemende navorsing (Participatory Research, PR), as relevant geag om deelnemers te bemagtig en verwronge ideologieë wat minderwaardigheidsdenke onder die landelike mense in stand hou, te bevraagteken.

Ek het saam gewerk met 'n groep deelnemers wat bestaan uit leerders, onderwysers, lede van die Skool Beheer Liggaam (SBL/SGB) en die skool se bestuurspan (SBS/SMT) (Skoolhoof en drie departementshoofde). Hierdie deelnemers het vrywillig deelgeneem, maar hulle is ook doelbewus geteiken omdat hulle deel is van die skool, en die swak akademiese prestasie was een van die probleme wat ondervind word in die skool. Hulle was deel van die mense wat geraak word deur die probleem wat ondersoek word. Nie almal kon aan die navorsing deelneem nie. Die skool het nie genoeg personeel nie, daar is slegs 11 lede van die onderwyspersoneel, insluitend vier lede van die SBS. Al vier hierdie SBS lede het deelgeneem en vier posvlak 1-onderwysers (PL1) was ook deel van die groter groep wat deelgeneem het. As deel van die groep was daar vier lede van die SBL, maar hulle was nie altyd teenwoordig tydens navorsingsaktiwiteite nie. Opsommend het deelnemers aan die navorsing slegs  interne lede van die skool ingesluit. Terwyl ander deelnemers tydens sommige sessies afwesig was, was daar by alle sessie ten minste 15 of meer deelnemers, insluitend die komponente hierbo genoem, teenwoordig.

Verskillende navorsingsaktiwiteite is gebruik. Dit sluit in die bekendstelling van die bate-gebaseerde benadering, die uitvoer van die skool se SWOT-analise en 'n inventaris van vermoëns. Na afloop van hierdie aktiwiteite is DOI en FAI gebruik

om besprekings te fasiliteer ten einde om data te genereer. Die data is ontleed met behulp van kritiese diskoersanalise.

Dit is in die studie gevind dat identifisering en die mobilisering van bates is 'n moeilike proses is in 'n konteks waar die probleme wat aangespreek sal word deur middel van die bates nie geïdentifiseer is nie. Dus 'n behoefte dat probleme geidentifiseer word aangevoer as die eerste stap van die bate-gebaseerde benadering, wat in hierdie studie "agenda-setting" genoem word.

Dit is verder gevind dat die SWOT-analise is nie net 'n instrument  is om die skool in terme van sy positiewe en negatiewe eienskappe beter te verstaan nie, maar ook 'n nuttige strategie is vir die identifisering van die bates van die gemeenskap. Wat dit 'n erkende strategie maak, is dat dit die proses van die identifisering van die swakhede en die dreigemente teenoor die skool en sy geïdentifiseerde bates, bevorder.

By begrip van wat elke bate verteenwoordig in die konteks van die probleme wat opgelos moet word, het die studie bevind dat die uitvoer van 'n lys van bestekopname van vermoëns belangrik is om te verstaan wat verkry kan word uit alle geïdentifiseerde bates. Die studie pleit dus vir die identifisering van bates deur die SWOT-analise en om te verstaan wat die bate se bydrae is deur die uitvoer van 'n bestekopname van vermoëns. Gegrond op die geïdentifiseerde bates, bied die studie 'n skool-gemeenskap batekaart wat relevant geag word vir die verbetering van die skool in die algemeen en meer spesifiek die verbetering van akademiese prestasie.

Terwyl dit belangrik is om kennis te neem van die verskillende bates en hulle ondeskeie bydraes tot akademiese prestasie, het die navorsing gevind dat 'n relevante omgewing nodig is om die bate-gebaseerde benadering te gebruik as 'n algemene strategie om akademiese prestasie te verbeter. By die skep van so 'n omgewing moet die gebalanseerde verhouding wat onder die bate kaart bepleit word, gehandhaaf word. Bygesê hiermee, het die navorsing gevind dat die volgende relevant om die skoolomgewing geskik te maak vir die bate-gebaseerde benadering: (1) die skool en gemeenskap moet een enkele entiteit word; (2) bemagtiging van potensiële bydraers; (3) die bevraagtekening van minder- en

meerderwaardigheidskomplekse; (4) die wegbeweeg van 'n "solo gesang" benadering waar een persoon alleen leiding neem. Om bogenoemde te bereik, is daar ook bevind dat die leierskap van die skool uitnodigend en deelneemend moet wees. Magswanbalanse en die sogenaamde "brain drain" word gesien as uitdagings vir die bate-gebaseerde benadering.

Gegewe die bevindinge soos ingelig deur die data, wil hierdie studie 'n voorstel maak ten opsigte van die bate-gebaseerde benadering. Die strategie het vier sikliese fases wat in die navorsingsproses vorendag gekom het en die hoop is dat dit die bate-gebaseerde benadering sal versterk. Die studie wil 'n bydrae lewer tot kennis deur die uitwys van die uitdagings tot die bate-gebaseerde banadering en die vereenvoudigde strategie vir die gebruik van hierdie benadering. Die beperking van die studie is dat die strategie nie toegepas is nie en gebaseer is op wat deelnemers gesê het sal werk in hulle konteks. Ek stel dus verdere navorsing voor waar die strategie in werking gestel sal word om kennis oor die toepassing daarvan te bevorder.

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| **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS** | |
| ACESL | ACE school leadership |
| AIDS | Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome |
| ANC | African National Congress |
| CAP | Child Advocacy Project |
| CAPS | Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement |
| CDA | Critical Discourse Analysis |
| CDCP | Centre for Disease Control and Prevention |
| CER | Critical Emancipatory Research |
| COLT | Culture of Teaching and Learning |
| CPF | Community Capitals Framework |
| DBE | Department of Basic Education |
| DoE | Department of Education |
| DOI | Discursive Oriented Interviews |
| EFA | Education for All |
| FAI | Free Attitude Interviews |
| HEI | Higher Education Institution. |
| HIV | Human immunodeficiency virus |
| HoD | Head of department |

| IKS | Indigenous Knowledge Systems |
|---|---|
| IQMS | Integrated Quality Management System |
| KZN | KwaZulu-Natal |
| KZNDoE | KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education |
| MCRE | Ministerial Report on Rural Education |
| NMF | Nelson Mandela Foundation |
| NSC | National Senior Certificate |
| OBE | Outcome-Based Education |
| PL1 | Post Level 1 |
| PR | Participatory Research |
| RSA | Republic of South Africa |
| SASA | South African Schools Act |
| SADTU | South African Democratic Teachers' Union |
| SBM | Site-Based Management/School-Based Management |
| SMT | School Management Team |
| SWOT | Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats |
| TP | Transformative Paradigm |
| UDW | University of Durban Westville |
| USA | United State of America |

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

> *"Rural education in South Africa is also of a specific interest since there are a number of serious backlogs that the ANC government should address to prove its commitment to providing Black learners with basic and quality education which is a basic constitutional right"* (Soroto, 2004:10).

Debates about the low and unpleasing standards of education, especially in rural communities, began in the early years of South African democracy. In its several manifestos, the ANC has promised to improve the quality of education for all. Given that the right to basic and quality education is part of the Bill of Rights (*see section 29 of the South African Constitution*) (Republic of South Africa [RSA], 1996a) it is justifiable for the state to increase investment in education annually. However, what seems to be a losing battle for some communities and schools is the belief that the government alone is responsible for addressing rural education challenges. Despite increasing investment in education, achieving the goal of quality of education, especially in rural communities, has been a challenge (Gardner, 2008:8). While it is not denied that improving the quality of education should be the responsibility of the government, as the opening quote from Soroto (2004) suggests, this thesis posits that addressing rural education challenges will not succeed unless a rural people-centred approach is employed. This would allow local people to invest their strengths and capacities in improving academic performance in their schools.

The researcher argues that calculated rural education challenges have led to poor academic performance. Drawing on a recommendation from the Ministerial Report on Rural Education (MCRE) for the Department of Education (DoE, 2005), the study considers the argument that the deficits in rural education, including poor academic performance, are only challengeable provided deficit models for addressing backlogs are counteracted through the use of capacity-based models or asset-based approaches. These involve applying bottom-up approaches or moving away from considering the government as sole provider of all solutions, and acknowledging that rural schools and their communities have a vast quantity of their own assets to use in dealing with educational challenges (Nelson Mandela Foundation [NMF], 2005:vii). The asset-based approach is therefore suggested in this study as a school management strategy that could be employed in improving academic performance in rural schools. While the

approach is suggested and its benefits known, there are limited practical examples of how this approach might work in a real context, especially in the process of school improvement and academic performance in particular. The study therefore investigates how it can be used as a management strategy.

The focus is not on academic performance because it is a stand-alone challenge but rather one of many. The study is delimited on academic performance but through the research process it is assumed that other possible factors might be identified. The asset-based approach allowed participants to establish how school and community assets could be used to address those challenges. This chapter therefore presents the background to the study, a rationale, statement of the problem, the aim and objectives, and the significance. A brief explanation of the theoretical frameworks emerges with description of the research design and methodology, as well as a brief clarification of the concepts used.

## 1.2 BACKGROUND

Rural education in South Africa and in many other countries, such as China, the United States of America (USA), Malaysia, Iran, Ghana, Mali, Cambodia, El Salvador, Uganda, to mention a few, has faced great challenges, making it difficult to maintain quality standards in rural schools. Various scholars[1] agree that rural schools' in many cases are unable to create opportunities for learners to attain the quality education of their urban counterparts, but, as Muijs et al. (2004:149) state, this does not mean that they all offer education of a lower standard. What can be agreed upon is that many schools with the challenge of offering quality education are within disadvantaged areas, and these are mostly rural.

Studies conducted within the South African context have indicated several challenges for rural learners which are interlinked with the inability of the context to afford quality education to its learners. For example, in a study conducted by NMF in 2005, it was concluded that rural learners' constitutional right to education was not being realised and their rights within education and through education were very limited (NMF, 2005:138). Adding to the abovementioned study, a comparative study between China and South Africa showed that rural schools in the

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[1] (Gordon & Qiang, 2000:1; Moulton, 2001:ii; Kline, 2002:170; Muijs, Harris, Chapman, Stoll & Russ, 2004:149; Soroto, 2004:9; Harris, Chapman, Muijs, Russ & Stoll, 2006:410; Gardiner, 2008:9; Ngcobo & Tikly, 2008:1; DoE, 2009:8; Aref, 2011:499; Ebersöhn & Ferreira, 2012:31; Hlalele, 2012a:113, 2012b:269; Norviewu-Mortty, 2012:iii).

two countries face tremendous challenges which have an influence on academic performance. Such challenges include too few resources, high learner dropout rates, poverty, high pupil-teacher ratio, attracting qualified and quality teachers, poor educational infrastructure and shortage of other basic needs, such as water and electricity (Gordon & Qiang, 2000:24). The remaining question to be answered is whether these findings are still relevant today.

While the NMF (2005) and Gordon and Qiang's (2000) studies were conducted in 2000 and in 2005, which might suggest that the findings are no longer valid, recent studies confirm the challenges noted above, for example, Ebersöhn and Ferreira (2012:31). On the other hand, Hlalele (2012a:113) has documented the failure of rural schools to meet learners' needs, positing in another study (Hlalele, 2012b:267) that, due to several backlogs in rural schools, learners' academic attainment, especially in Mathematics, is not comparable with that of learners in urban schools. One can thus conclude that poor conditions in rural schools are linked with learners' academic achievement. To date, there is evidence that rural leaners still underperform academically in comparison to their urban counterparts, especially in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), where this study was conducted (See Table 1.1, below).

**Table1.1:** Performance of candidates in deferent schools ranked in quintiles (KZN 2011-2013) (DoE, 2011, 2012, 2013).

| Year | Quintile 1 | Quintile 2 | Quintile 3 | Quintile 4 | Quintile 5 |
|------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| **2011** | 59.47% | 63.8% | 63.67% | 71.73% | 86.89% |
| **2012** | 66.8% | 68.5% | 67.7% | 76.8% | 89.7% |
| **2013** | 70.19% | 72.56% | 73.06% | 81.12% | 90.29% |

Quintiles in the above table refer to the ranking of schools as used by the Department of Basic Education (DBE). Quintile 1 is regarded as the poorest of the poor whereas quintile 5 schools are those regarded as affluent (KZNDoE, 2013). Of note here is that most of the schools in quintile 1 are the most disadvantaged and are mostly located in rural and peri-urban areas. Although there is a continuous increase, the table shows that KZN schools in quintile 1 and 2 perform poorly in National Senior Certificate (NSC) compared to those in quintile 4 and 5. While the above table presents academic achievement as measured in numerical terms, a picture may

be generated to depict academic performance in rural schools and urban schools. I argue here that high academic achievement may be directly linked to good academic performance and low academic achievement may then be linked with poor academic performance.

While the school in this study has improved dramatically in terms of the percentage rate of NSC results, the learners are not accepted in universities or universities of technology. Most achieve matriculation passes but obtain insufficient points to be admitted at any university in South Africa. This means that achievement is low and justifies my argument that poor academic achievement may be linked to poor academic performance.

Although continuous dicourse indicates that more negative circumstances persist in the rural context, in the South African context several reform attempts have been made to address the challenges faced by rural schools. To access international support, South Africa has been part of Education for All (EFA) conferences and has accepted all EFA goals. Goal number six focusses on quality education and South Africa has declared that it intends making sure that by 2015 all children will have access to free and quality education (Howie, 2011:25). I argue that quality basic education should be characterised by its ability to offer learners opportunities beyond their basic education level. Indeed, the KZNDoE reports on NSC shows that learners from rural areas who obtain bachelor's and diploma status are increasing, and that many rural learners will not be able to access universities (KZNDoE, 2011, 2012, 2013). This raises questions about academic performance in rural schools.

In addition to sharing ideas with the international constituencies, the inception of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (SASA), (Republic of South Africa, 1996b) led to several reform initiatives, not meant only to democratise education but also to improve the quality of education. For example, SASA opened up participation to all stakeholders interested in the education of a child. The assumption was that the best education accountability mechanism was active and continuing involvement of communities, local educators, parents, students, and community members (Malhoit, 2005:8). According to Malhoit (2005:8), this was a way of ensuring that all students would be afforded an opportunity to receive high quality education. To further promote and enhance quality across all schools, the Integrated Quality Management System was implemented (IQMS) was designed to appraise and ensure that teachers performed their duties to their best (Myende, 2012:2).

These initiatives were not meant for rural schools but were designed as "one size fit all" initiatives. Through participative approaches it was assumed that all stakeholders would

participate and contribute meaningfully to improving schools. Moreover, through the employment of initiatives such as IQMS, it was assumed that teachers' increased accountability would serve as a solution for all schools. However, the initiatives have not worked to their potential, especially in the rural context where issues are beyond teacher accountability and devolved power structures that opened participation to a wider community.

Another early push for reform in all schools (urban and rural) was the reinstatement of a Culture of Teaching and Learning (COLT) and "more equitable basis for school finance including an index of need and efforts to rationalize and redeploy staff; and, wide-ranging curriculum reform including the introduction of outcome-based education (OBE)" (Ngcobo & Tikly, 2008:1), and more recently, the introduction of the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement [CAPS] (DBE, 2011). These curriculum reform processes have been accompanied by an acknowledgement that schools need effective and efficient leadership and management to perform their primary function effectively (Gretz, 2003:34; Ngcobo & Tikly, 2008:2). As a result, to improve leadership and management in schools, ACE school leadership (ACESL) was introduced. As also advocated by Ngcobo and Tikly (2008:1), this study acknowledges that reform initiatives have failed to raise academic performance of historically disadvantaged learners. Most of these learners come from rural communities. Given the above background, is important to conduct a study that seeks to establish how academic performance can be improved. As the DoE (2005) has indicated, these initiatives follow a top-down approach to education improvement without drawing from realities as understood by the people affected.

This study responds to a call by the report from MCRE released in 2005, which notes that the failure to improve rural education emanates from the employment of a deficit model toward rural education improvement (DoE, 2005:8). This may be identified from the few initiatives mentioned above. For example, training of principals through ACESL and putting in place accountability measures for teachers assumes that principals are not sufficiently skilled and teachers require monitoring as they are not sufficiently well- developed to perform their duties effectively. These assumptions are not disputed but, I argue, they are negative and only focus on the deficits. The few stakeholders within the education sector and voices of the rural constituencies are not included when these improvements are initiated.

In responding to the deficit models, the committee called for multi-faceted and integrated strategies, including acknowledgement that improving rural schooling requires building from capacities and assets of the rural community. This is also noted in the emerging voices report

(NMF, 2005:iii), whilst Gardner (2008:10) also confirms that a 'fixing up" approach towards solving rural community's challenges should be counteracted. He argues that there is now a need to promote social cohesion by encouraging collaborative problem-solving between people in rural communities. I argue here that in those collaborative initiatives assets of individuals and the community should be utilised for the benefits of the community.

To date, no studies have been conducted to establish if rural schools and their communities are aware of how they can use their assets to improve their schools. The only study that exists was conducted by NMF and its aim was mainly to identify issues and assets in rural communities without a focus on how they can be used to improve academic performance. Research that conscietise rural schools and their communities about the asset-based approach has dwelt mostly on the issues of HIV and AIDS, and learners with disability (*see* Eloff & Ebersohn, 2001; Ebersohn & Mbense, 2003; Ebersohn & Eloff, 2006; Khanare 2009; Loots, 2011; Chikoko & Khanare, 2012). In the international context, studies on the asset-based approach have also focussed on psychology and community development and dealt with education as an aspect of community development (*see* Kretzmann & McKnight,1993; 1996; Kerka, 2003; Kretzmann & McKnight, 2005; Bryant, 2006; Carter & Barrett, 2006; Boyd, Hayes, Wilson, Bearsley-smith, 2008). Also noted in these studies is that deficit models, as promoted by the DoE (2005), have dominated service delivery in disadvantaged communities.

Focussing on one secondary school, this study sought to investigate how assets and capacities of rural schools can be used to improve academic performance. To position the school management the study seeks to find out how it can create an environment in which the asset-based approach can be use and what might be the challenges for this approach. Possible solutions to these challenges are also investigated.


## 1.3 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

My interest in conducting a study that seeks to investigate how the asset-based approach can be used to improve academic performance developed from two different sets of experiences. Motivation came firstly from my personal journey as a former learner in a rural school that used to underperform, and secondly from my observation of the deficit syndrome within my community in addressing their educational challenges. I wished to seek ways through which rural communities could be aware of their assets and understand how they can be of great value in addressing their challenges, particularly to effective education.

### 1.3.1 My personal journey

I grew up in a deeply rural area in the South Coast region of KZN. I completed what is now called grade 7 (previously standard 5) in 1999. My parents could only afford to send me to a secondary school that used to be the last choice for parents and children, due to it negative reputation. There was another neighbouring school, known to be a "good school", and attending in this school was seen to be the genesis of a good future for children. My elder brother was going to migrate to this neighbouring school leaving the one with bad reputation. Considering that my parents could not afford to pay for my brother and me in a "good school" I was forced to do my grade eight, (previously standard six) in the "bad school". The promise was that when he completed his grade 12 (previously standard 10) I would be taken to his school. I excelled in my "bad school" because I knew that I needed good results to be accepted in grade 10 in the "good school".

While doing grade 9 in the "bad school" I applied for grade 10 in my brother's school. Having achieved position one in grade 9 I was accepted in the "good school" under the condition that I would agree to return and start in grade 8. Due to this unfair conditional offer I continued with my secondary education in the "bad school". The community compared the two schools and the bad one was characterised by lack of resources that were unable to enthuse learners to learn, unprofessional teachers, learners who did not progress beyond secondary education and had low attainment in Mathematics and Science. In many cases there was hostility shown by community members towards teachers and vice versa. The two sides used to blame each other for lack of quality in the school. In other cases both sides were justifiable on the basis that on one hand teachers were sometimes not committed to their work in the school, because learners were ill-disciplined, and on the other hand community members were vandalising the school property. Both teachers and the community would also blame the DoE for focusing only on the "effective" neighbouring school.

Continuously we were told by teachers and some community members that we would fail because our school had nothing and there was no external support from the DoE. Considering that I was stuck in this school I was worried about how I would manage to pass my grade 12 and change the bad conditions at home. In 2004, when I was in grade 12, together with my classmates, we were further traumatised by losing all three Commerce teachers. This meant we had no teacher for Accounting, Business Economics, and Economics. A plan had to be devised and unfortunately the school's plan had failed. At that time my brother was doing his B.Com

degree at university. I was forced to approach him to come and help us with Accounting during weekends and holidays. Together with my classmates we identified a primary school teacher who was teaching in the neighbouring primary school and was knowledgeable in Economics. We approached this teacher and he agreed to tutor us after school.

We suggested that a few of us would have to attend afternoon classes with this teacher and I was tasked by my classmates to return and teach the whole class from 6pm to 9pm. Later I was the only one tasked with teaching my classmates while I was also doing the same grade. However, the help of the primary school teacher and my brother benefited us because by June we had completed the syllabus of the three subjects. After that we realised that we could also attend the afternoon classes which were offered by the neighbouring school (good school) to its learners. As a group of students we approached the school and were allowed to attend. In addition, the "good school" offered its own sponsored venture to transport us to and from the school. While we were frustrated by commerce subjects, our Mathematics performance was also not pleasing and we identified one teacher who was a Head of Department (HoD) in another school and our community member. This teacher offered to teach Mathematics in the afternoon. The Mathematics performance changed and some learners were able to pass, having overcome earlier difficulties. From the 47% matric pass rate in 2003 our group managed to obtain 94.5% in 2004.

Emerging from the above personal journey is that the group of learners with whom I attended school were able to be at the centre of its success. They were able to utilise what their environment presented to them to enhance their academic performance. While the shortage of teachers impacted negatively on our studies it also taught us that we had at our disposal many assets in the form of people and institutions. We then understood that these were possible assets we could draw from to improve our academic performance in the school. This confirms Kretzmann and McKnight (1993:4), who state that in the proposition of the asset-based approach communities are made of people, institutions, businesses and organisations and all these entities are "the lifeblood" (Hlalele, 2012a:113) of rural communities.

It is also evident from the above personal journey that the community members did not see themselves as people who could improve their schools and teachers, but rather relied on government support, which seemed to be lacking. In other words, the community and its people were regarded as deficits with nothing to offer for the development of their own school. Surprisingly, this was not only from other people but also from the community itself, internalising

the half-truth that they are a deficit as they believed they could not offer any means to change the school. It appears above that the community and teachers in the school were only aware of their weakness and defined the school and its community from its weaknesses.

This leads me to a brief discussion of the needs-based approach (deficit model) as another factor that motivated me to conduct this study.

### 1.3.2 The Needs-based approach

My personal journey above has, to some extent, presented an indication that the rural community within the studied context believes that their educational challenges can only be addressed by government officials and teachers. To some extent, teachers have also pointed out that the community offers nothing to be used to ensure that academic performance of learners in the school is enhanced. Also evident from my personal journey is that parents and their children will chose schools they perceive to be better rather than work towards changing those perceived to be dysfunctional. The reasoning behind this is that they do not see themselves as sufficiently resourceful to address their educational challenges and only think external stakeholders such as government are positioned to address educational backlogs in their schools. I do not dispute that rural schools may not have sufficient resources, but it is evident that several strengths are available in rural communities and they can be employed to tackle hardships in rural schools (Witte & Sheridan, 2011:3; Hlalele, 2012a:11) Despite recognition of the strengths, rural dwellers have remained with the perception that they do not have what it takes to address their challenges. Kretzmann and McKnight (1993:2) call this approach a deficit or needs-based approach.

The needs-based approach presents half-truths about the community, that is rural community and their schools in particular have insufficient resources and therefore cannot address all the hardships they are facing (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003:475-476). This approach, according to Mathie and Cunningham (2005:177) may devastate the community and leave them helpless waiting for external providers to address their challenges. The full-truth is that despite challenges and lack of resources there are other assets in the form of people's capacities, skills, physical resources and other forms of capital available in these communities (Ebersöhn & Mbetse, 2003:323; Mathie & Cunningham, 2003:2005; Witte & Sheridan, 2011:3; Hlalele, 2012a:114; Green & Haines, 2012:143). Evidence that the needs-based approaches are currently being applied within the rural South African education context is presented by the DoE

(2005:8) in the MCRE report, citing the cause of rural education as persisting is the employment of deficit models towards addressing rural education challenges. This model has ignored the assets within rural communities and led to policies that are less responsive to community issues.

Denying the assets, as the needs-based approach does, creates communities which cannot take pride or ownership of solutions to their problems (Ebersöhn & Mbetse, 2003:323). I argue here that the lack of ownership may result in unsustainable initiatives and solutions. As indicated in my personal journey, the above approach is witnessed in the community under study. Thus, there is a need to conscietise the community under study that they do have assets they can utilise to improve their school's academic performance. To counteract this deficit model (needs-based approach) the study presents the asset-based approach as an alternative to the needs-based approach towards improving academic performance within a rural context it is acknowledged in this study that there is still a need for empirical research that will unearth the asset-based practicalities within a disadvantaged background.

## 1.5 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Despite several government initiatives aimed at improving rural education, learners in rural schools continue to receive education of low quality characterised by poor academic performance compared to their urban counterparts (Gordon & Wang, 2000; Department of Education, 2005; Gardner, 2008; Nkambule, Balfour, Pillay & Moletsane, 2011; Hlalele, 2012a). Given the above challenge, there is a continuous debate in which it is argued that improving education in rural schools will succeed if local citizens dedicate themselves and their assets in the form of skills and intellectual capacities towards improving their education. Developing from such debates, it is now believed that all those who attempt to address rural schools' challenges should build solutions from what rural citizens present as assets (Ebersohn & Eloff, 2006:463; Khanare & Chikoko, 2012: 26; Myende, 2012:28). A process whereby solutions are developed from inside-out (from what local citizens have to what external community can provide) is termed "asset-based approach" (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993).

Scholarship on the gains for the asset-based approach has increased. The gains noted include sustained improvement, empowerment of local citizens, and employment of non-deficit approaches to community challenges. Local citizens value themselves and are valued by external change agents as important contributors to solving local problems and development of

communities that take ownership of initiatives and strive for their sustainability (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993; 1996; Kerka, 2003; Kretzmann, McKnight & Puntenney, 2005; Bryant 2006; Carter & Barrett, 2006; Boyd, Hayes, Wilson, Bearsley-smith, 2008). The MCRE (DoE, 2005:8) suggests that the asset-based approach is an ideal approach in addressing rural education challenges, including poor academic performance. Noting the gains of this approach, I argue here that this should be the school management strategy for improving academic performance. However, there remains a gap between what this approach can offer and how it can be used as a strategy, especially within the rural context. In addition, I have observed in the rural community in which this study was conducted that learners, teachers, parents and other community members did not see themselves as people with assets that could be used to improve their schools, leaving government blamed for not making sure that academic performance is improved. This presents limited knowledge of the asset-based approach by the community.

## 1.6 AIM AND FOCUS OF THE STUDY

Given the problem presented above, the aim of this study was to investigate how the asset-based approach can be used as a school management strategy to improve academic performance in a rural school? It anticipates establishing ways through which the asset-based approach can be used for the purpose of improving academic performance in the selected secondary school. This is done through finding ways of identifying and mobilising community assets. With this done, it further seeks to find out what the school management can do to set conditions conducive to the utilisation of the asset-based approach within the selected school. The last part of this study focusses on what could be the possible challenges for the approach and how the school management may address such challenges in order to use the approach to improve academic performance.

## 1.7. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are:

- To examine possible strategies of identifying and mobilising assets that can be used to improve academic performance.

- To determine school conditions under which the asset-based approach can be utilised to improve academic performance.

- To establish strategies school management can use to create conditions conducive to the asset-based approach.

- To identify possible challenges for the asset-based approach and possible school management strategies to address these challenges.


## 1.8 KEY RESEARCH QUESTION

Building from the aim, the study seeks to provide answers to the following question:

- *How can the asset-based approach be used as a school management strategy to improve academic performance in a rural school?*


### 1.8.1 Sub-questions

**Sub-questions are:**

- How can community assets be identified and mobilised to improve academic performance within a rural school?

- What school conditions are conducive to the utilisation of the asset-based approach?

- What can school management do to create an environment conducive to the utilisation of the asset-based approach?

- What are the challenges to the asset-based approach and how can the school management address them?


## 1.9 SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS STUDY

The value of this study lies in two areas, based on the phenomenon, the research design and methodology employed. Firstly, this research may contribute to the understanding of asset-based approach and its applicability to the process of school improvement in general, and of academic performance in particular. Secondly, I have argued that the asset-based approach as a framework has been used in psychology and community development. This study may

contribute knowledge to the application of the asset-based approach within the discipline of educational leadership and management. It is anticipated that through participation this study may offer a platform for rural school stakeholders, especially rural school managers to reflect on available assets and how they may assist the schools in improving academic performance. In other words, it is anticipated that, through participation, assets will be identified and mobilised and this may contribute towards creating awareness about school and community assets. Methodologically, this study anticipates contributing knowledge about the practicalities of participatory research (PR), especially within the rural context. Through critical emancipatory research (CER) and PR, the study may also expose and challenge power relations that exist in rural schools by involving all stakeholders, particularly learners, teachers, School Management Team (SMT), and School Governing Body (SGB), in the research process.

## 1.10   OVERVIEW OF THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study is underpinned by CER and the asset-based approach as theoretical frameworks. These are discussed briefly in this chapter and presented at length in Chapter Two. The choice for using the two frameworks was motivated by the value that each gave to this study.

### 1.10.1 Critical emancipatory research (CER)

This study was researched through the lens of critical emancipatory research (CER), which building from phenomenology argues that understanding and interpreting human conditions or experiences should not be the end-product of any research process. While understanding and interpreting human experiences are undoubtedly important, proponents of CER advocate that research should also be critical about individuals and groups' lived experiences (Carr & Kemmis, 2005:353; Mahlomaholo & Natshandama, 2010:40). It should be considerate of how power and inequalities in societies have contributed to the way people see themselves in relation to their world. The process moves on to adopt a philosophy that attempts to free individuals or groups from repression of power and inequality (David & Keinzler, 1999:272).

Carr and Kemmis (2005:350) propose that to address these societal aspects through research one needs to be critical and CER stands to be one of the ideal research stances that can be adopted to achieve this purpose. Being critical goes hand-in-hand with the aim of emancipating by changing people's lives through ensuring dialogue and debates between different

participants in research (Ledwith 2007:591; Mahlomaholo, 2009:226). This study was conducted in a rural context, in which most communities were and are still disadvantaged, and whose voices have been marginalised (Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005:139). Through PR, this study opened space for stakeholders (learners, parents, teachers, SMT and SGB) in the rural school to have a voice on what they thought was their skills and capacities and how they could use that to contribute towards improving academic performance in their school. Identified above is the inclusion of the marginalised and a motive to improve academic performance, thus linking with CER.

### 1.10.2 Asset-based approach

As indicated above, the study sought to investigate how the asset-based approach as a management strategy can be used to improve academic performance in a rural school. The asset-based approach, together with CER, underpinned this study as a theoretical framework. The underlying principle of the asset-based approach is that individuals, and groups in the community, regardless of their context, have capacities and strengths to address societal challenges (Myende, 2012:26). According to Mathews and Theunissen (2012:90), each community should be perceived as either a half-full or half-empty glass of water. The authors suggest that focusing optimistically on the half-full profoundly enhances community-driven development. In other words the capacities, skills, talents and gifts of the people, if considered, will contribute positively to the development of the community by members themselves. In this study, it is believed that improving academic performance through the application of the asset-based approach offers opportunities to create community awareness of available assets. It is further assumed that drawing from what the school community possesses may promote reliance and community independence.

Ebersöhn and Eloff (2006:462) and Kretzmann and McKnight (1993:5) posit that a needs-driven approach, as an alternative for an asset-based approach, promotes a mental map of communities that denigrate their own capacities and strengths. This leaves communities thinking that only outside help may lead to local problem-solving as they see only what they do not have (Mathews & Theunissen, 2012:90; Myende, 2012:27). Challenging the needs-based approach, this study perceives rural schools and their communities as spaces with tangible and intangible assets. It is under the above belief that this study investigates how such assets may be used to improve academic performance in one selected school. The asset-based approach

as a theoretical framework links well with CER on the basis that the former considers people as powerful through the assets they possess and the latter believes that previously marginalised people or communities need to have their voice heard on the basis that it presents deep marginalised knowledge.

The two frameworks used in this study acknowledge that allowing the community to be part of their issues will empower them. For a study that sought to empower community and to address practical challenges, the asset-based approach and CER became relevant theoretical frameworks. The first section of Chapter Two discusses these theories in detail and the reason for using both of them is justified in detail.

## 1.11 LITERATURE REVIEW

The review of literature begins with the justification for the asset-based approach. This is done to advance an argument on the possibilities for an asset-based approach to improving academic performance. With an aim of providing an in-depth understanding of community assets, the tiers of community assets and community capitals frameworks (CPF) are discussed, and used to advance the argument of this study. An in-depth discussion of indigenous knowledge as a community asset follows the CPF discussion.

The components of the asset-based approach, namely asset mapping and mobilisation, are discussed and an environment conducive to it is presented. This is to give a present picture of what is known about its implementation in general. To locate the approach within educational management the unexplored link between school-community partnerships and school-based management (SBM) is explored. The section examines possible roles of school managers in the application of the asset-based approach. Given that this is not new, the chapter also provides challenges for using it. The reviewed literature is not categorised according to practices from different countries because there is no enough international evidence for the implementation of this approach, except on a theoretical level.

## 1.12 CLARIFICATIONS OF KEY CONCEPTS

The clarification of key concepts in this chapter provides a brief overview of what is discussed in Chapter Two. Thus, in this section I only provide the meaning of each.

### 1.12.1 Academic performance and achievement

Academic performance and achievement in this study are argued to be related but different. Guided by the work of the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDCP, 2010:10) and Naiker (2011:12), academic performance may be defined as a set of factors that influence learners' success in a school. These include cognitive skills and positive or negative attitudes, positive or negative academic behaviours and academic achievement. On the other hand, academic achievement only includes standardised test scores in subject areas such as reading, mathematics, and language arts; classroom test scores; and other formal assessments. In other words, academic achievement is treated as the end-product of academic performance. Poor academic performance in this case may result to poor academic achievement. For example, a learner who is highly motivated to achieve good results but not highly gifted may have better academic achievements than a learner who is highly gifted with low motivation to achieve good results. These two concepts are also defined and discussed in-depth in Chapter Two under 2.4.1.

### 1.12.2 Rurality and rural school

This study acknowledges that rurality and rural schools have been associated with several challenges, which have then been used to see urban areas and their schools as better than rural counterparts. The Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework of Act no. 41 of 2003 (RSA, 2003) and the KwaZulu-Natal Traditional Leadership and Governance Act no. 5 of 2005 (KZN Legislature, 2005) are used to give meaning to what rurality and rural schools are in this study. Guided by the above Acts, the term 'rural' may refer to any place that is under the leadership of traditional leaders. A rural school will then be any school found in a place led by traditional leadership. This adopted stance does not mean that I overlook other issues of rurality but they are explained in Chapter Two.

### 1.12.3 Management and Educational Management

Management in this study is defined as a process of planning, organising, controlling, leading, empowering self and others for the achievement of organisational goals (Hellriegel, Jackson, Slocum, Staude, Amos, Klopper, Louw and Oosthuizen, 2006:7; Naidu, Joubert, Mestry, Mosoge & Ncobo 2008:5). What emerges from the above brief conceptualisation of

management is that leadership is one of its important aspects. For this reason, debates about leadership and management as similar or different are addressed in Chapter Two, however, adopted in this study is a stance that sees leadership as one aspect of management. Although this is justified in Chapter Two, this study draws from Thurlow (2003:25) to argue that leaders may not necessarily be managers or vice versa.

### 1.12.4 Community assets

Community Assets, according to Green and Haines (2012:9), may be defined as the gifts, skills and capacities of individuals associations and institutions within the community. These may be of utmost importance to the community as they can be used to reduce or prevent poverty and injustice. As part of what is meant by assets, this study also draws from the work of Myende (2012:28) to argue that assets may be tangible or intangible. The former in this study include all community property, such as vacant land and buildings, while the latter include all those assets that individuals and institutions may have at their disposal. Examples can be skills of people, networks that individuals in the community have and other forms of capital at the disposal of the community. This is also discussed in depth in Chapter Three, however, Mourad and Ways' (1998) classification of assets, as cited by Chikoko and Khanare (2012:25), is used to classify community assets in this study.

### 1.13 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

To ensure that the research process of this study is in accordance with the basic tenets of CER and the asset-based approach as outlined in the theoretical framework section, participatory research (PR) was adopted. Baum et al. (2004) argue that PR is based on principles which could lead gradually to independence, equality, and cooperation, and effectively alter the policies of permanent exploitation which could possibly endanger every aspect of democracy. The study intended to conscietise a selected rural community that each community has its own assets, which can have a positive impact towards improving academic performance in their school (Ebersohn & Eloff, 2006:463; Khanare & Chikoko, 2012:26; Myende, 2012:28). The purpose was to allow a rural school and the community to work together in identifying and mobilising the available assets. It was hoped that through this process the school and its

community would be left empowered and so alter a needs-based approach which seems to leave communities not independent and less reliant on their own assets.

The study further acknowledges that leadership and management of each school is a great asset of that particular school, thus leadership contributions were identified. This was done through participatory methodologies as it relates to emancipatory research. Frisby, Crawford and Dorer (1997:8) contend that PR calls for involvement of the whole research community (the researcher and the beneficiaries) in defining the research problem, executing intervention and interpreting the results. They further argue that this helps in addressing power differences, leading the task of social change to be addressed easily. The CER and asset-based approach principles as highlighted in the theoretical framework section linked well with PR. For example, emancipation, social change and ability to address power that shapes knowledge production in society through consideration of multiple viewpoints underpin CER. Therefore, utilising the participatory research in this study is assumed to have the ability to close the gap between the research and the studied community. This in turn will possibly increase participation and ensure that different views of the studied community are considered for the problems identified (Baum, McDougall & Smith, 2004:855; Mahlomaholo, 2009:226).

PR in this study was linked to assumptions of the asset-based approach, for example, through a belief that rural communities are in a position to find sustainable solutions to their challenges if they are involved (Ebersohn & Eloff, 2006:463). Ensuring that they participate in the study through PR was seen as an ideal strategy for ensuring that the school that was studied became part of the debate in establishing how the asset-based approach can be used to improve academic performance. Moreover, through participatory paradigm it is assumed that leaders and managers in this school can identify their contributions to addressing the challenges for asset-based approach and create an environment conducive to this approach in the school.

To generate data, the study needed to adopt methods that were suitable for the research design adopted. Discursively oriented interviews (DOI) as recommended by Henning et al. (2004:57) were adopted. These interviews ensured that participants conversed with the researcher with openness and confidence. Supporting the use of DOI was free attitude interviews (FAI), as recommended by Mahlomaholo (2009:228), Buskens (2011:2-3) and Tsotetsi (2013:161). These scholars concur that this form of interview also promotes openness and confidence from the participants and allows the researcher to generate more depth as participants are not restricted by pre-determined questions. For this reason, these methods linked with the

theoretical frameworks of this study in that they promoted a process in which the research allows the participants to voice their views without influence from the researcher.

Asset mapping and capacity inventories, as recommended by Ebersöhn, Eloff and Ferreira (2007:139); and the Child Advocacy Project [CAP] (2009:22) were also used in this study to identify available assets. The collage as recommended by Chikoko and Khanare (2012) was further used to provide a pictorial depiction of other available assets and what issues needed to be addressed in order to make the asset-based approach work. This visual method was also suitable in that it enabled learners to state their experiences without fear. They only used pictures to describe what they thought could be done in the school to create an environment suitable for the assets of the community to be used in improving academic performance.

The research problem showed that the affected community in the study was the school, which was made up of teachers, learners, non-educator staff, parents and the SGB. The school cannot be separated from its community as it forms one of its important institutions, whilst the local community constitutes the secondary tier of assets which could possibly be used by the school (Chikoko & Khanare 2012:30). The participants in the study included teachers, learners, SMT and SGB. The SMT members, due to their school commitments, were not members of the groups that were used in this study for a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threat (SWOT) analysis, capacity inventories or other activities as outlined in Chapter Three. These members were interviewed using DOI. Post-level 1 (PL1) teachers were involved in groups with learners and SGB members and their sessions were then used to generate data through FAI.

The number of these participants was motivated by PR, CER and an asset-based approach. Although not all participants were present in all sessions, the three groups were consistently represented by five or more members during discussions and activities. This suggests that for every session there were at least 15 participants in the research process. The participants arranged themselves in groups to ensure that social change and emancipation occurred by means of making sure that the participants discussed the issues as teams. Although the SMT members were not part of these groups, the use of DOI contributed in allowing the members to talk freely without being restricted by predetermined questions. Differing from FAI, DOI allowed the researcher to ask questions freely, guided by responses from participants. In addition to group participation, three learners and three teachers were also interviewed as individuals. This was to fill some gaps identified in the data.

## 1.14 MAPPING THE CHAPTERS FOR THIS STUDY

**Chapter One** has served as the introduction and background to this study. It began with an introduction in which the purpose of the study was introduced. Following the introduction, the background to the study was presented. This background covered the conditions of rural education and some quantitative figures from KZNDoE's academic achievements of grade 12 learners. The background further highlighted the quest for multifaceted approaches to rural education and involvement of rural people as assets in one of these multifaceted approaches. From the background, the rationale for the study was presented through the researcher's personal journey as a former rural learner. Secondly, a brief account of the dangers associated with the needs-based approach was presented, thus arguing for the asset-based approach. The statement of the research problem, research aim and objectives as well as the research questions were presented. The chapter presented an overview of the theoretical frameworks, review of literature, research design and methodology, as well as clarification of the key concepts.

**Chapter Two** discusses the two theoretical frameworks that underpinned this study. CER and the asset-based approach are discussed and their relevance and application to this study is explained and justified. Before the discussion of the two frameworks, I discuss theoretical triangulation with an aim to justify the use of more than one theory in this study. After the theoretical frameworks, a critical discussion of operational concepts of this study is presented.

**Chapter Three** deals with a critical discussion of available scholarship on the focus of this study. The literature that draws on global perspectives of the asset-based approach's relevance to improving schools and their academic performance in particular is discussed in this chapter. To better understand the approach, the chapter further looks at what components make this approach work. Community assets through community capitals framework are discussed to provide a view of what possible assets are at the disposal of the school and its community. Drawing from the asset-based approach, the chapter establishes what could be a conducive environment for this approach within the school context. The asset-based approach and school management are discussed to make a link between the school management and the asset-based approach as their strategy for improving academic performance. At the end of the chapter, possible challenges are discussed and the lessons from the literature in the form of emergent themses are presented.

**Chapter Four** of this report deals with the research design and methodology that was used to conduct this research. The chapter presents a short debate around research design and methodology to justify the researcher's choice to develop in detail some of the sections in the chapter. This is followed by a discussion of participatory research (PR) as a research approach followed in this study. The participants, methods of data generation and analysis are discussed. Social validation and verification of data is explained in terms of how it happened in the research process to ensure quality. Details of adherence to ethical considerations of the study are provided.

**Chapter Five** focuses on the presentation, analysis and interpretation of data. It is more descriptive of what emerged in the field during interaction and working with participants. To some extent, the CER and the asset-based approach are used to interrogate what emerged, but these are mainly left out to be utilised in the discussion of findings. Five major themes are used to present data in this chapter, as follows: (1) setting the agenda for assets utilisation; (2) challenges impacting on academic performance; (3) key approaches for assets identification; (4) critical assets in the improvement of academic performance; and (5) the school environment and the asset-based approach utilisation. These themes may contain data that applies to different objectives and Chapter Five does not show the links of the data with those objectives. It is in the next chapter that objectives are presented and the findings discussed.

**Chapter Six** provides a critical presentation and discussion of findings, drawing from the emergent themes from Chapter Five. The aspect of CDA and CER are used to frame the discussion of findings. As argued under the theoretical framework, this chapter contextualises the issues discussed in Chapter Five within the CER. To foreground the findings within CER, a deeper and critical analysis of how findings seem to be confirming and challenging or further promoting the issues of oppression and inequality (power issues) is presented. This chapter builds from Chapter Five, but verbatim quotes use is minimised to move from a general understanding of the data to a level on which the theoretical framework and the CDA are applied to make critical meaning of the findings. The thesis of this study is presented in this chapter in the form of a strategy that highlights how the asset-based approach can be used as a management strategy towards improving academic performance in a rural context.

**Chapter Seven** concludes the dissertation by providing a summary of findings. A discussion of the contributions made by this study is presented, followed by limitations, implications for further research and brief final word where the whole study is concluded.

## 1.15 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has presented a summary of this report. The introduction highlighting what the study sought to investigate is presented, followed by a detailed discussion of the background to the study to provide a picture of why this study is conducted and what issues it tries to respond to. The rationale that covers my personal journey to the study and the section counteracting the needs-based approach is also presented. From the above sections, the statement of the problem, research questions, aims and objectives and the significance of this study were presented. Clarification of key concepts, overview of theoretical frameworks, literature review and research design and methodology were presented to introduce the reader to other key aspect of this report. The chapter ends with a clear map of all chapters making this Thesis. Given what the above chapter has presented, the next chapter (Chapter Two) deals with the theoretical frameworks, and the discussion of operational concepts.

# CHAPTER TWO

# THEORIES FRAMING THE STUDY

## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Rural education has been disregarded and where it has been prioritised, less attention has been given to the voices of the rural dwellers (DoE, 2005; NMF, 2005). According to the NMF (2005:139), the failure of rural constituencies to be more organised and vocal has resulted in a substantive success of urban areas to monopolise attention at the expense of rural communities. Therefore, in a number of initiatives as stated by DoE (2005:8), the focus has been more on what rural dwellers cannot do in order to improve the status of their schools than what they can do. As a result "the universal framework employed in the government and policy documents is insufficiently sensitive to the specific conditions and needs of the rural poor…" (NMF, 2005:139). This has left rural communities perceived as "underdogs" in championing their own interests, including improving their own education. In line with this, the DoE (2005:10) argues for research on rural education that moves beyond the "powerlessness" of rural communities, and this will need to acknowledge and cater for their needs. Such research may not be achievable unless it acknowledges the positive capabilities and assets of rural people and the inherent worth of indigenous knowledge and practices (DoE, 2005:8; Hlalele, 2012:113).

As stated in Chapter one, this research, in responding to the DoE's call, embarked upon the process of investigating the asset-based approach as a school management strategy in improving academic performance. However, concern was expressed about how the study would be sufficiently sensitive to the specific conditions and needs of the rural community and school in question, how the researchers could work with and understand the "neglected", and how the "powerlessness" of the community in question could be understood and addressed. The critical emancipatory research (CER) and asset-based approach appeared ideal frameworks to address the challenges noted above. Thus, throughout this chapter, these theories are discussed. The focus is on their relevance and their application to this study. I begin the chapter with a brief discussion of why two theoretical frameworks are used in this study. Secondly, each theory is discussed, with the focus on the development, claims, and application of the theory to the study, followed by possible shortcomings of each and how these are addressed. The second part of the chapter provides a critical discussion of this study's operational concepts.

## 2.2 THE CRITICAL EMANCIPATORY RESEARCH AND THE ASSET-BASED APPROACH

The study combines the perspectives of critical emancipatory research and asset-based approach. The application of multiple theories in understanding the phenomena, known as 'theoretical triangulation' (Thurmond, 2001:253; Ziyani & King, 2004:12), can be applied for multiple purposes. For example, Ziyani and King (2004:12) contend that it can be applied to drawing upon alternative or competing theories in preference to utilising one viewpoint only. In addition, Thurmond (2001:254) posits that the intent is to conduct the study within multiple lenses and questions in mind, to lend support or to refute findings.

The following are the benefits of applying the theoretical triangulation according to Thurmond (2001:255-256):

- Theoretical triangulation can contribute to increasing confidence in research data, creating innovative ways of understanding the phenomena, revealing unique findings and challenging or integrating theories.

- It enhances the researcher's ability in providing a clearer understanding of the problem.

- It helps to provide a broader and deeper analysis of findings.

- It can contribute positively if the intent of the researcher(s) is to avoid acceptance of plausible explanations.

- It might increase confidence in developing concepts or constructs in theory development.

While the application of theoretical triangulation carries more benefits it also has some challenges that need to be addressed. For example, failure to initially identify the frameworks or failure to adequately define the concepts within frameworks may lead to confusion (Thurmond 2001:257). In the discussion of CER and the asset-based approach in this study, the critical concepts are identified and adequately defined to address this challenge. It is also indicated that theoretical triangulation may be faulty and epistemologically unsound (Lincoln & Guba 2000:163). The epistemological contributions of the theories applied in this study are justified later to address this challenge. It is also crucial to note that the CER contribution is largely epistemological and ontological, whereas the asset-based approach benefits in providing a clear understanding of the phenomena and how leadership could be viewed as relevant in addressing the challenges for an asset-based approach.

As suggested by Thurmond (2001:254) and Ziyani and King (2004:12), this study utilised theoretical triangulation to ensure that the approaches lend support to each other. The 'how' part of this is also discussed and justified after both have been discussed and justified in relation to the study.

## 2.2.1 Critical emancipatory research

This section discusses critical emancipatory research as one theoretical framework guiding this study. The focus is on the origin and claims for this theory and the justification of the relevance of this theory to the study.

### 2.2.1.1 The origin and claims of CER

In providing the historical development of CER, Mahlomaholo (2009:224) states that it emanates from the work of Herbemas, Ardono, Horkheimer and the Frankfurt school. Considering what they regard as the shortfalls of positivism and interpretivism, that is "presenting incomplete accounts of social behavior by the neglect of the political and ideological contexts of much educational research" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011:31), they point out that research needs not only to acknowledge the lived experiences of the research participants and provide objective truth but also be critical of human conditions (Carr & Kemmis, 2005:353; Mahlomaholo & Natshandama, 2010:76).

A number of authors (Carr & Kemmis, 2005; Ledwith, 2007; Esposito and Evans-Winters, 2007; David & Keinzler, 2009; Mahlomaholo, 2009; Mahlomaholo & Natshandama, 2010; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011) provide a compatible and clear account of what it means to be critical of human conditions in research, and state that being critical means:

- Understanding how social injustices have oppressed individuals and groups within the society and striving for their emancipation in an egalitarian society.

- Avoiding giving an account of society and behaviour but realising a society that is based on equality and democracy for all its members.

- Going beyond understanding the phenomena and striving to change them.

- Being driven by emancipating the disempowered, to redress inequality and promote individual freedoms with a democratic society.

- Promoting a research enterprise that seeks to identify and break 'false' fragmented or distorted consciousness.

- Being reflexive, questioning our reflections and challenging our attitudes and prejudices.

- Challenging repression, dominant ideologies and dominant power, whilst promoting the neglected voices by ensuring reciprocity and shared learning, participation of all and catering for interests of the oppressed.

In addition to the above, Cohen et al. (2011:31) argue that at the heart of critical theory is the uncovering of interests that work in particular situations and interrogating the legitimacy of those interests, identifying the extent to which they are legitimate in their service of equality and democracy. They further state that its intention is transformative as it aims to transform society and individuals into a social democracy. CER draws its philosophical perspectives from critical theory and was considered appropriate for this study on the basis of its suitability to the context and aims of the study, and how the principal researcher was positioned in the entire research process.

### 2.2.1.2 The rural context and the CER

Following the end of apartheid in 1994, rural education has continued to be marginal (Balfour, Nkambule & Moletsane, 2011:342), and, as Hlalele (2012: 113-114) reports, "Rural places frequently face substantial economic and social challenges. For example, on average the rate of poverty in rural communities is higher than that of urban communities. Due to this, several positive aspects of rural communities are ignored and overlooked". Rather, the focus has been on what is negative in the rural context. As I stated in the introduction, urban constituencies are assumed to be more organised and vocal than rural ones (NMF, 2005:139). I argue in this chapter that the issues outlined above have contributed immensely to the perspective held by the same rural communities that someone should rescue them from the challenges, including poor or ineffective schools. One can logically establish how such economic and social powerlessness is belittling rural communities which even see themselves as powerless. I therefore argue that there is a need to conscietise these communities about how they can become role-players in improving academic performance in their own schools. CER connected

well with this study as it is driven by an understanding that the voice of rural communities has been marginalised, not because it is useless but because social, political and economic (NMF, 2005:140; Hlalele, 2012:113) conditions has made rural people internalise their powerlessness.

This study addresses this challenge and creates awareness that people within the rural context, despite their powerlessness, can contribute to deliberations aimed at improving their education. This was done in three ways: (1) the study engaged rural communities in the process of identifying their assets and how these may contribute to improving academic performance; (2) through the voices of the school community it examined how the school environment could be set to accommodate application of the asset-based approach; and (3) it looked at the challenges to the approach to improving academic performance and how these could be addressed through school management. The study was driven by an argument that local school management is better placed to address the challenges to an asset-based approach and thus it tries to identify the place of school management in addressing the challenges with an aim of benefitting fully from the opportunities. This process is clear as to how it listens to the voices of the people within the rural context and how it makes them realise that these may be useful in addressing their educational challenges.

Because of their inability to monopolise attention, unlike their urban counterparts, distorted ideologies of how rural education should be are dominating discourse, and even policies aimed at developing rural education have been drawn from those one-sided ideologies. This has also compelled the DoE to restructure funding for rural schools to match that of urban counterparts, without prioritising the voices of the rural people (DoE 2005: 8; NMF, 2005:139). Such decisions are informed by research that has utilised paradigms that ignore the voices of the people in question (*see* DoE, 2005).

The identifiable challenge of such research is that it fails to provide solutions that are sensitive to rural conditions. Such research can also be blamed for serving the interests of those concerned with finding solutions to rural schools' challenges with the marginalised voice of those who should utilise those solutions. The research process that marginalises the voices of the rural people fails to acknowledge that South Africans, rural communities included, have in their power the ability to change the environment in which they operate in the best interest of a better future (Mashego, 2012:41). Locating this study within CER acknowledged that identifying the challenges and opportunities for asset-based approach in improving performance in the school would be impossible without prioritising the voices of the community. The power of the

people in question may be used to identify such challenges and create an environment that could respond to them for the better application of an asset-based model in improving performance. According to Danieli and Woodhams (2005:284), research that is emancipatory in nature should try and produce knowledge that is relevant to the oppressed participants. I argued above how rural communities' voices have been marginalised and, thus, prioritising their voice tries to achieve the goal of producing knowledge that could possibly benefit them.

It is acknowledged that due to their rural experiences, which are shaped by political, economic and social repressions, the citizens have internalised their powerlessness. Thus, the features of CER indicate that the theory is relevant to studying rural communities as it tries to create equality through democratic spaces characterised by open deliberations, with an aim of addressing societal repressions (Carr & Kemmis, 2005:353; David & Keinzler, 1999:272; Mahlomaholo & Natshandama, 2010:76).

Democratic and open dialogue, as stated above, can create space to open participation from the rural communities in question and draw on their voices to produce knowledge that is sensitive to their needs. This could help in ensuring solutions towards challenges for asset-based approach is developed by the participants, in a process that can emancipate them through operationalising it. The open dialogue can prevent views I hold as the principal researcher from dominating, as this could lead to the production of one-sided perspectives. It can also challenge the internalised powerlessness that goes with rurality and create consciousness as to what the participants can do within their rural context to improve academic performance in their own schools. Through their contributions it is possible that this research will cater for the interests of my conversational partners (participants), then contribute to challenging the fragmented ideas that rurality equates one's inability to be a crucial contributor to deliberations aimed at changing unjust situations within his/her context.

### 2.2.1.3 The aim and objectives of the study and the CER

Noticeable in the aim and rationale of the study is the interest to realise improved academic performance through the asset-based approach. As stated within the origin and the claims of CER, the aim is not only to understand the societal issues but also to change them (David & Keinzler, 1999:272). Similarly, this study aims not to only understand challenges to the asset-based approach but also to address them in order to enhance the use of the approach by the school. Through participatory research (discussed in Chapter Four), the study brings the school

community in question to the centre of identifying community assets and determining how such assets may be used to improve academic performance. This is followed by a closer examination of how the school may use the approach to meet the challenges through effective management.

Mahlomaholo and Natshandama (2010:78) argue that social change can be achieved through dialogue, with its concomitant necessity for translating among multiple viewpoints as a potent means to attain enlightenment. Within the aim of this study is the goal to ensure that there is involvement of conversational partners (participants) in order to translate the findings from multiple viewpoints. Furthermore, the school management strategies in enhancing this approach can be sensitive to the needs of the school in question only if they are drawn from its wider community. CER, based on a concern for holistic involvement that tries to create collectiveness towards knowledge constructions (Ali, 2002:235), seemed ideal as a framework for this study. The next section examines the relationship between the researcher and the research partners.


### 2.2.1.4 Positioning of researcher and participants

According to Esposito and Evans-Winters (2007:225), any research that claims to be critical should be driven by an intention not to confirm or embrace privileged ideologies, but rather it should address power and injustices through questioning individuals' domination in the society. As CER is concerned with how one creates an equal society in which there are open debates with all voices prioritised, I had to understand how rural communities view academics, or at least those known to be educated. In general, academics are viewed as possessing 'bourgeoisie power', which they earn through their affiliation with higher educational institution (Mahlomaholo, 2009:225). According to Ali (2002:235), we cannot consider knowledge without also considering the power-based relations and mechanism of society that has constructed it. Thus, the intention of this study to produce knowledge that is relevant to all conversational partners (participants), so it became relevant to use a theory that could produce knowledge which "reveals the values and tendencies of a given society and can thereby elucidate the nature of the power/knowledge nexus" (Ali, 2002:235).

The study was therefore couched within CER in order to ensure that I addressed power that I might have as an academic member of a higher education institution (HEI). The relationship promoted proximity between me and all conversational partners (Mahlomaholo, 2009:225), whilst disempowered rural teachers, learners and community members could work against the silencing of their subjugated forms of knowledge and counteract any dominant form of

knowledge (Ali, 2002:236). The conversational partners could thus treat each other with mutual respect and recognition of equality (Mahlomaholo, 2009:226).

The process and practice of closing the gap between partners and the recognition of equality helps in addressing what Ali (2002:239) regards as the process of subverting power differentials in knowledge construction. CER was also adopted as it helped in explaining how, through equal relationships, one can acknowledge the power of teachers, learners, and other community members in knowledge construction. This was relevant in this case as the school in question was trying to improve performance and much has happened in its attempt to address performance. However, many suggestions have been following the top-down approach, whereby the DBE will make recommendations as to how the school can improve performance. For example, one suggestion was to have the principal mentored in another school, which reflected how the DBE, through its power domination, assumed the school could be turned around. This suggestion was rejected because it was not informed by the wishes of the people in the school, unlike this study, which sought to understand how issues could be addressed by the local people.

The relationship required here is the one that acknowledges the power that local people have over their context and how it can be changed. To create this relationship I believed that I needed to be trusted by all the research participants, so I decided to spend three months in the field and become part of the community through taking on some of the workload in the research school. This earned trust from most of the school members and allowed all members to regard me as part of the community. They were then able to treat me as an equal.


### 2.2.1.5 CER and the transformative agenda

Guiding this study was a process to raise awareness amongst people in the selected rural school of their assets and ability to find ways to improve academic performance by drawing on their own available assets before looking outside the community. From its transformative view, CER is used to examine ways of changing things from what they are to what they ought to be. Research that is transformative may better be illustrated through its basic beliefs and ontological, epistemological, methodological and axiological assumptions (Mertens, 2009:43, 2010a:470, 2010b:11). The driving force behind the above transformative agenda is to have a research outcome which is producing a more just and equitable world (Malcolm, Gobal, Keane & Kyle, 2005:1). According to Rivet (2006:578) and Trevors, Pollack and Saier (2012:118), at

the heart of the transformative agenda is the will to restructure, revolutionise and improve existing knowledge through communicative practice that allows for the emergence of transformative ideas reached through consensus (Kemmis, 2008:127). In the mind of the researcher there should be continuous caution that justice, equity and development of transformative ideas allowed for the nature of reality (ontology), the nature of knowledge and the relationship between the knower and that which would be known (epistemology), the beliefs about the research process to be followed (methodology) and the meaning and the nature of ethics (axiology) (Mertens, 2007:470; Mertens, 2009:43; Mertens, 2012:3).

Transformative ideas emerge through collaborative research processes based on the belief that there are multiple realities and they cannot be interpreted in isolation without social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic and gendered beliefs that influence their construction (Mertens, 2003:139; Ryan, 2008:36). Leaving these factors unchallenged in the research process, according to Oliver (1992:102), is to leave the task of research in the hands of "experts". Epistemologically, research that has the transformative or change agenda holds a view that all participants, including the researcher, are instrumental in framing the purposes, design and interpretation of research (Malcolm et al., 2005). This helps to locate the entire research with all those who are involved (Oliver, 1992), therefore, the creation of knowledge should be such that it recognises others that have been marginalised and try to create space for democratic practice that will ensure full participation of the marginalised groups (Mertens, 2003:140). The marginalisation of rural communities' voices in deliberations addressing how their education can be improved has been confirmed by the DoE in a report produced by the MCRE (DoE, 2005:8), which forms part of the rationale for locating the research process of this study within CER, also guiding its design and methodology along with participatory methods.

The process of knowledge construction, where there is an understanding that power should be subverted (Mahlomaholo, 2009:226) and formerly marginalised voices heard, will not take place unless there is deployment of a relevant systematic form of enquiry. As a result, participatory research conducted through discursive oriented and free attitude interviews and visual research methods is used as deemed fit to ensure participation, collaboration and to ensure that all voices are prioritised (see Chapter Three). Mertens (2009:48) argues that, methodologically, there should be an interactive link between the researcher and the participants in defining problem(s), and that methods should address cultural complexity and power issues explicitly. The participatory research as an approach is deemed fit to allow this research to cover the

methodological issues as highlighted in Chapter Four. It is this approach to the study that presented a platform on which to involve the least advantaged (Mertens, 2003:142) community, namely learners, teachers, SMT and the SGB from the rural context.

The inclusion of the "least advantaged" in this study goes beyond methodological demands but to also cover the ethical commitments of critical research. From the transformative agenda, ethical issues exceed the protection of participants' identity. The nature of ethics within this agenda is that research should be guided by beneficence which is the promotion of human rights and increase in social justice (Mertens, 2009:49). To promote human rights this study ensured participation for everyone in the school, and thus ensured that everyone's voice was heard. Moreover, the issues of improving academic performance would be socially unjust if they are discussed and concluded without learners' involvement as they are the ones who should improve academically, thus another part of promoting justice and equity was the inclusion of learners. For this study, the practice appeared benefiting and in line with the principle of participation as part of participatory research.

Interestingly, according to Mertens (2003:144), various frameworks dominated by the medical model have been used to explain poor academic performance of marginalised groups. The intentions of such studies are mostly aiming at "fixing" the problem. Mertens (2003) further indicates that these studies have linked the underperformance of learners with the "half-reality" (poverty) of rural communities. Such a medical model ignores the resources in rural areas and how rural communities have been made through deficit models to believe they are unable to play a key role in addressing their educational challenges. The transformative nature of CER, through its focus on participation and subversion of power, aims to change the deficit mentality. This study was conducted within a rural context and so as to avoid a deficit paradigm that tried to explain poor academic performance whilst linking it to poverty and other "half-realities" about rural contexts, CER was adopted. To ensure that the research process was participative, collaborative and benefiting, and shifting from deficit models, participatory research discussed below was adopted as a suitable design for this study.

## 2.2.1.6 Reflection on the use of critical emancipatory research

CER is an ideal framework for this study, however, like other theories it has some drawbacks. This section does not aim to counteract these but rather to bring them forth so as to acknowledge that CER is not a panacea to problems that are emancipatory in nature.

On one hand, Danieli and Woodhams (2005:287) raised concern that the process of subverting power and establishment of reciprocity is challenging. On the other hand, Ledwith (2007:600) states that becoming critical do not create any critical action, thus questioning whether issues identified are critically addressed. The issue of power in this study was not challenging, for simple reasons. Within a rural African context, one remains young and a child to all members of the community, despite any form of power one might have. Having grown up in the same community in which this study was conducted, the researcher also studied in the school in question. People in the school and community continued to regard me as their 'child' and this contributed positively to ensuring that they did not see me as powerful compared to them. This could then contribute to an ability to subvert power and create social trust required for participatory research to run smoothly (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014:47).

Through participatory research, this study identifies challenges and opportunities for asset-based approach, and then plans are devised to address these challenges, drawing from what leadership and management can do to improve academic performance. A level of critical action posited by Ledwith (2007) will be identified in the study process. In addition, a fundamental critique presented by Cohen et al. (2007:30), drawing from critical theory, is that this approach "has a deliberate political agenda, and that the task of the researcher is not to be dispassionate, disinterested and objective". As member of the community in which the school is located I am interested in ensuring that the school improves, however, I was careful not to dominate those members regarded as conversational partners in this study. The point is not fully to subvert my views, but for the process to be emancipating. My views were expressed in a way that they were but rather sought the support of others.

The motivation to ensure that local people become active participants also emanates from a belief that they have a deeper understanding of their environment and its assets. Through this understanding, it is then assumed that they can draw on their assets.

### 2.2.2 Asset-based Approach

An asset-based approach is used in the study a management strategy towards improving academic performance. Khanare (2009:23) asserts that "a strong correlation within the inherent capacities, skills and social resources found in each individual can be used to benefit the survival and social functioning of the whole school". As a theoretical framework, it acknowledges that local people (teachers, learners, SMT, SGB and other community members and

organisations in this case) have capacities required in identifying challenges for building schools from inside-out (asset-approach). Addressing these challenges as a problem noted in this study cannot be attained without building on the capacities of the school leaders and managers (McKnight & Kretzmann, 1993:1).

As a phenomenon, the asset-based approach is recommended by several scholars as a modern and reliable path to be followed in addressing rural community problems. Drawing from the same claims it is assumed that people, especially in rural communities, should be drawing from their inherent capacities, skills and social resources to attend to their problems (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1996:25; Khanare, 2009:23). This study investigates how the SMT can draw from the inherent capacities, social wealth and strengths within the environment to improve academic performance in their school.

The asset-based approach's first step challenges what is normally referred to as the medical model, deficit model or needs-based model that is deep-rooted in societies in general and rural societies in particular (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993:4; 1996:23; Ebersöhn & Mbetse, 2003; Keeble, 2006:2; Khanare, 2009:24; Venter, 2010:33; Loots, Ebersöhn, Ferreira & Eloff, 2012:58). The driving force towards challenging the deficit model emanates from the argument that this model conveys part of the truth on conditions faced by different societies (McKnight & Kretzmann, 1996:23). For example, the South African rural context is characterised by poverty, low literacy, and a large number of dysfunctional schools, leading to poor quality of education. The deficit model has been challenged for not regarding this as "part of the truth but regarding it as the whole truth" (McKnight & Kretzmann, 1996:23), a one-sided perception that leads to a failure to sustain projects aimed at changing conditions in the "partly devastated communities".

In responding to the deficit model, as the second step the asset-based approach proposes that there are many truths about conditions in deprived societies. One is that in all societies there are three sets of capacities, namely individual, neighbourhood, and institutional (Eloff & Ebersöhn, 2001:151). This is one of the truths neglected when the needs-based model is operationalised. As Eloff and Ebersöhn (2001) believe, psychology professionals should be driven by this truth when dealing with problems of society. Similarly, this researcher believes that rural school improvement should begin from what rural people can provide to improve their schools.

In further challenging the needs-based approach, proponents of the strengths-based or asset-based approaches (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993; Eloff & Ebersöhn, 2001; Bryant, 2006;

Khanare, 2009; Venter, 2010; Chikoko & Khanare, 2012) concur that the former creates unsustainable initiatives while the latter empowers communities and creates sustainable livelihoods. According to Venter (2010:13) and Ferreira and Ebersöhn (2011:64), the asset-based model "is for people in poor and marginalised communities to restore their physical well-being and happiness and to rebuild their social and political structures through a process of empowerment". This correlates with the CER as outlined above. I argue here that it could help in ensuring that the role of improving the quality of rural education (DoE, 2005:7) is not seen solely as the government's role, but rural dwellers see themselves as assets in the improvement of their education. However, this is possible if we are aware of what assets are found in the context and their potential for benefitting the local community in general and improving academic performance of the participants in particular.

The starting point is to understand that rural participants are more familiar with their context and the experiences as shaped by the same context. This is followed by an attempt to ensure they use their familiarity of the context in identifying assets and devise their own strategies as to how school management could address those challenges to enhance the application of the asset-based strategies in improving academic performance in their own schools. This is in line with the argument made by Venter (2010:13), that the asset-based models counteract the marginalisation of poor people through ensuring that they are at the centre of all programmes aimed at improving their life conditions. The same argument is made about critical emancipatory research that the intention is to counteract the distorted ideology that has marginalised others and left them believing they cannot deal with their challenges. Among other approaches to achieve this is to ensure that the research process creates a sense of community at every opportunity (Mahlomaholo & Netshandama, 2010:78). As stated above, the asset-based approach proponents posit that empowerment and restoring local people's physical and social wellbeing is prioritised, further linking CER and the asset-based approach.

Challenging the traditional path (needs-based approach) is undoubtedly the driving force of the asset-based framework. The remaining challenge is how to put the asset-based approach in into practice. Braithwaite (2009:9), through a description of an asset-based approach, provides a working idea as to how to challenge the traditional path:

> An approach that is driven by the community for their own local development. This approach focuses on the strengths of a community and can be community or outsider initiated as long as it is 'by the community, for the community'. Unlike other approaches to community development, asset-based community development seeks to build or release the capacity of community members to continue to drive their own development

by starting with what already exists in the community. Asset-based community development builds on a social justice approach by seeking to build inclusive and resilient communities.

This study sought to understand how the process of rural school improvement, focusing on the improvement of academic performance, can better be approached through assets readily available in the rural communities. This involves unpacking how the school concerned can improve academic performance using the asset-based approach as management strategy. School improvement is seen here as a process that could be better achieved "by the rural community" and "for the rural community" in question. This approach is not only ideal for sustained rural schools' academic performance improvement but may also be seen as an answer to the challenge of neglecting rural communities and finding locally developed solutions to rural education problems (NMF, 2005:137). It is the approach characterised by locally developed initiatives that are only generated through prioritising the previously taken-for-granted voices in rural education development (DoE, 2005:8). As a framework, the asset-based approach leads to a process of identifying the challenges and opportunities of building schools from inside-out. In other words, the same rural community under study becomes an asset in understanding how an asset-based approach can be used toward improving academic performance. It involves identifying the community assets, establishing what school environment is suitable for the asset-based approach and further identifying the possible challenges and how school management can address them. Having discussed the asset-based approach and CER, the next section examines the integration of both.

## 2.3   INTEGRATING CER AND ASSET-BASED APPROACH

The asset-based approach and CER, through their features share several aspects which are important in guiding this study and thus suitable to be used. It is indicated that CER is driven by an intention to emancipate the society and to change life conditions of those involved in research. This is achieved through critical prioritisation of the voices of the neglected, in this case rural communities. This is advocated for its ability to produce research findings relevant to the people concerned and useful in changing society. Moreover, within CER there is hope for sustainable livelihood since problems are solved *by* people and *for* people. On the other hand, the asset-based model appeared to link with CER in that it claims that improving the community should be done *with* the community and *for* the community. This in a way is calling for the

prioritisation of the neglected voices. As with CER, the asset-based approach has been presented above as a framework that ensures all research participants are partners in the entire research process. This challenges the power of researchers and the internalised powerlessness of rural communities. The asset-based approach further sees rural communities as partners in service delivery and advocates that professionals should engage in problem-solving not as experts but together with those facing the problems.

The above is seen as crucial in creating societies that are empowered to respond to their societal problems and also devise sustainable strategies in sustaining locally initiated programmes. It is therefore apparent that CER and the asset-based model share inclusion based on the assumption that all people are capable to drive their own process of change, equal power relations, sustainability, empowerment and people-centred problem-solving. Thus, theoretical triangulation of these two frameworks was regarded as an ideal approach for this study.

The next section provides a critical discussion of operational concepts to this study. The discussion is relevant in that most of the operational concepts used have contested understandings. The discussion leads to adopted definitions of these concepts for this study.

## 2.4   DEFINITION AND DISCUSSION OF OPERATIONAL CONCEPTS

This section elaborates upon definitions and discussion of this study's operational concepts introduced in Chapter One, notably academic performance and academic achievement, rurality and rural school, management and educational management, and community assets.

### 2.4.1   Academic performance and academic achievement

As I share my study with my "critical friends" I received many critiques on what I meant by academic performance and achievement. I had assumed both to be similar, however, the critiques caused me to reflect on their differences. Some of the examples below do not actually define the concepts but it is the manner in which they are used that indicates whether they are different or interchangeable:

> Academic achievement or (academic) performance is the outcome of education - the extent to which a student, teacher or institution has achieved their educational goals. Academic achievement is commonly measured by examinations or continuous

assessment but there is no general agreement on how it is best tested or which aspects are most important - procedural knowledge such as skills or declarative knowledge.

Bentley (1996:269) argues that "certain abilities might contributes to certain kinds of 'achievement' thereby allowing the creative but less bright students to equal 'performance' of less creative but more intelligent students" Although this does not define academic performance or achievement, indirectly we learn that these two concepts are treated interchangeably. In addition to the above two scholars, Rivkin, Hanushek and Kain (2005:418) suggest that performance and achievement may be substitutable:

> The models control for fixed student, school-by-grade, and in some cases school-by-year effects and then relate remaining differences in **achievement** gains between grades and cohorts to differences in school characteristics or teachers. This variation in academic **performance** cannot be driven by unchanging student attributes… (Rivkin, Hanushek & Kain, 2005:418).

A problem rising from these examples is that academic performance is less well-defined and used interchangeably with academic performance. For Niaker (2011:12), academic performance relates to how learners deal with their studies and cope with or accomplish tasks given to them. It also refers to the progress or the retardation of a child at school. The CDCP (2010:10) conceptualises it as a set of factors that may influence learners' success in a school, such as cognitive skills and attitudes, academic behaviour and achievement. In contrast, academic achievement is a component within academic performance. This confirms that these concepts are different but they are related.

A clear distinction is further created by the CDCP (2010:10) as it states that "academic achievement includes standardized test scores in subject areas such as reading, math, and language arts; classroom test scores; and other formal assessments". It can be measured quantitatively in terms of the number of subjects the learner is able to pass and the scores she or he is obtaining in each subject. This differs from academic performance if we draw from the work of Naiker (2011) and the CDCP (2010). For the purpose of this study the main focus is on academic performance, as a collective set of factors that drive learners' performance towards better academic achievement. These factors may include learner motivation, positive academic behaviour and attitude, self-regulation, self-concept, one's ability to manipulate the learning context for better academic achievement, and planning. The study thus creates a distinction between the two concepts whilst acknowledging that they are inseparable. Academic achievement in this study is further conceptualised as the end-product of academic performance, which if positive is assumed to be relevant in driving learners towards better

academic achievement. Within a South African rural context, it makes rurality and rural school other important concepts in this study.

### 2.4.2 Rurality and rural school

Rurality and rural school are conceptualised differently in different contexts, with no single agreed definition of either. Two perspectives are used to understand them, one is American and one is South African. They are shared by most continents, thus the study delimits itself within the two. However, this cannot be treated as a limitation as far as understanding of the concept is concerned as these perspectives are mostly shared.

From an American perspective, Redding and Walberg (2012:5) state that rurality is uniquely characterised by low population density together with family isolation and community remoteness. On the other hand, Malhoit (2005:11) and Redding and Walberg (2012:6) indicate that most rural schools are small and offer a narrow scope of curriculum and a less extensive course of study. Malhoit (2005:10) adds that:

> Rural schools are defined by isolation, long distances between places, and their sparse populations. These characteristics effect the cost of transportation, access to goods and services, the ability to recruit and retain teachers, the level of parental participation, the number and level of student participation in extra-curricular activities, and the proximity to entertainment, services, shopping, and other amenities that people in other communities take for granted.

According to Malhoit (2005) and Howley, Rhodes and Beall (2009), these small schools have better academic achievement. While within an American perspective, Howley, Rhodes and Beall (2009:516) also note that rurality is characterised by a continuously declining population both in schools and in the community at large. This decline in population mostly happens within the educated members of community and thus is regarded as a "brain drain" (decline in the number of highly educated members in a rural community) (Howley et al., 2009:516). Important characteristics that the above scholars also associate with rurality are poverty and low access to technology, which result in limited access to the Internet and library services for rural students.

The characteristics of rurality and rural school as discussed above are also pointed out by some scholars from a South African perspective, although there are differences which will be outlined later. Balfour, Mitchelle and Moletsane (2008:98) point out that poverty is one of the major characteristic of rurality in the South African context, accompanied by some aspects also noted in the first perspective provided. These aspects include lack of transportation, insufficient

infrastructure, and limited access to social services. "Poverty, fiscal incapacity, low levels of adult education, and low levels of learner achievement run in the same mutually reinforcing circles in rural areas" (Hlalele, 2012:113a). According to Malhoit (2005); Balfour et al. (2008); Hlalele (2012a) and Walberg et al. (2012), rurality and poverty are two inseparable issues. There is also an agreement that rural schools are the mostly impoverished schools in terms of resources, but the context of South Africa is different from that of America, not least in terms of enrolment numbers and the state of academic achievement:

> While declining enrolment remains a significant factor in some rural school districts, rural enrolment on the whole is growing while non-rural enrolment is declining. Most rural areas already face tremendous barriers to learners' high achievement and operate in less than favourable policy environments (Hlalele, 2012:113a).

Chikoko and Khanare (2012:24) also provide a detailed characterisation of rurality, positing it as "…a multi-layered concept encompassing the farming communities, peri-urban settings, informal settlements, and what is often referred to as the 'deep rural'". The concept of "deep rural" according to Chikoko and Khanare (2012:24) refers to some of the remotest parts of the countryside. They further indicate that, due to their location within marginalised placed, rural schools will therefore be marginalised and disadvantaged.

The features presented above suggest that rurality and rural school is only associated with negative aspects of life, such as backwardness, underdevelopment and poverty. Nelson Mandela pointed to rural communities having untapped potential to shape a better future for themselves (NMF, 2005:vii), presenting a different picture of rurality from the conventional one. Similarly, Hlalele (2012a:113-114) states that rural communities have unique attributes that make them attractive places to live and raise a family, and, in contrast to the way they are presented in the American context, they present the economic lifeblood of rural communities. This suggests that there are positive aspects to the rural context, critical to the survival of communities.

The different perspectives confirm differing views on which realities constitute rurality and rural school. In this study, both the negative and positive aspects are acknowledged, with a set of capacities to address their challenges. Discarding the negatives aspects presented above I take a different angle in conceptualising a rural area in this study. In line with the frameworks and aim of this study, I do not disregard scholars' views about rurality but to avoid a deficit understanding of rurality I conceptualise rurality in the South African context using the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework of Act no. 41 of 2003 (RSA, 2003) and the

KwaZulu-Natal Traditional leadership and Governance Act no. 5 of 2005 (KZN Legislature, 2005). According to these acts, rurality is not about lack of infrastructure development, backwardness or poverty, nor the gap between cities and settlement. Rather, for the purposes of this study, it may be understood as any geographical area that is under the leadership of traditional leaders (Amakhosi, Izinduna, Izibonda and Amaphoyisa Enkosi). This means the place can be developed in terms of infrastructure and may be closer to cities and towns, but if it is governed by traditional leadership it is regard as rural. Under this conceptualisation, I argue that there are strengths found in such areas and drawing from these, rural schools can improve their academic performance. Thus, the study investigates how an asset-based approach as a management strategy can be used to improve academic performance in a rural context.

### 2.4.3  Management and educational management

Megginson, Mosley and Pietri (1992:2) write that "The difference between a company that is a leader in its industry and one that is a follower is management- superior human performance", confirming Chapter One's location of the success of the asset-based approach within what school management could do to address its challenges and to further tap into its opportunities. However, the intention of this section (2.4.3) is not to provide a deep discussion of the concept of management as a crucial component of this study but rather to define and discuss the concept without a detailed account of management importance within the success of the asset-based approach towards improving academic performance.

In defining 'management' as a concept, I include the work of scholars who have looked at the evolution of the concept, particularly within the sphere of education. Thus, I draw from Bush (2011), Megginson et al. (1992), Ivancevich, Lorenzi, Skinner and Crosby (1994), Thurlow (2003); Hellriegel, Jackson, Slocum, Staude, Amos, Klopper, Louw and Oosthuizen (2006) and Naidu, Joubert, Mestry, Mosoge and Ngcobo (2008). I do not disqualify others who have written on management but conceptualisation of the selected scholars guided the lenses used to view management in this study.

The *Concise Encyclopaedic Dictionary* defines 'management' as a process of administrating a business concern or public undertaking. This process is undertaken by a person referred to as a 'manager', responsible for controlling the activities of others. Hellriegel et al. (2006:7) view management as a combination of tasks or activities involved in the managing of an organisation, notably planning, organising, leading, and controlling. Megginson et al. (1992:13), on the other

hand, they define management as a process of "working with human, financial, and physical resources to achieve organisational objectives by performing the planning, organising, leading and controlling functions". While Ivancevich et al. (1994:9) are not specific about functions in their definition, they also regard management as a process involving certain functions and work activities that managers must perform to achieve an enterprise's goals. Bush (2011) argues that "management is a continuous process through which members of an organisation seek to co-ordinate their activities and utilise their resources in order to fulfil the various tasks of the organisation as efficiently as possible".

All the above scholars share the view that management is a process of ensuring that organisational or business objectives are achieved, and call for managers to plan, organise, lead and control the activities of others. Achieving organisational activities through planning, organising, controlling and leading others' activities gives an indication that management is the process of fulfilling organisational tasks through other people (Bush, 2011).

There is no one agreed definition of educational management, however, Bush (2011) views it as a field of study and practice concerned with the operation of educational organisations. For Naidu et al. (2008:4-5) it involves dealing with systems, structures and the culture of a school for effective and smooth day-to-day operations: "the purpose of management in all areas of the school is to enable the creation and support of conditions under which high quality teaching and learning can take place". The core responsibilities of educational managers are not different from those of managers in other field such as business, and include leading, directing (controlling), and developing and empowering self and others (Naidu et al., 2008:7).

Drawing on the above literature, management in this study is utilised as a process whereby managers plan, organise, lead, control and empower self and others for the purpose of ensuring that organisations achieve their goals efficiently. School management on the other hand is utilised as the process through which school managers plan, organise, lead and control others to ensure the efficiency functioning of the school. Leadership as a concept has emerged in all the definitions above. A special brief focus needs to be paid to this since debates on whether management and leadership share meaning have occurred for a long time. This study treats leadership as one special component of management, and I do not dispute that the practice of leadership and management may be seen as distinct practices, as Bush (2007:392) argues. However, drawing on Thurlow (2003:25), it is acknowledged that leadership may not be a guaranteed skill of all managers and also management competency may not be a guaranteed

competence of all leaders. The above is also confirmed by Bush (2007:393), who argues that principals are often not aware whether they are leading or managing but they serve their schools and its learners. The importance of school management in improving academic performance through an asset-based approach is dealt with later in Chapter Three, to argue for its position in addressing challenges and tapping into opportunities.

### 2.4.4  Community Assets

The Concise Encyclopaedic Dictionary defines an 'asset' as possession or ownership of something with value. These possessions may include a useful quality or a skill that one possesses. The Dictionary also defines asset as an accounting concept which refers to land or property of a company or individual, or payment due from bills. There seems to be no difference between the way the concept is defined above and how scholars have defined it. For Kretzmann and McKnight (1996:25) it is a set of resources, capacities and abilities of individuals and organisations within one community, whilst according to Green and Haines (2012:9) assets may be defined as the gifts, skills and capacities of individuals associations and institutions within the community. These sets of skills and capacities may be of utmost importance to the community as they can be used to reduce or prevent poverty and injustice (Green & Haines, 2012:9). This study is grounded on the same premise that assets in the community can be used to improved academic performance.

In her discussion of assets, Khanare (2009:26-27) places them within the school context of broader categories of school, leadership and management, human resources, and infrastructure. To extend this list, a case study of school-community partnership conducted in KwaZulu-Natal which sought to investigate assets that were crucial in the partnership indicated that the historical engagement of schools in partnerships served as of their greatest assets (Myende, 2012:65). For Chikoko and Khanare (2012:25), community assets consist of non-material and material possession. In their categorisation of assets, the above scholars use Mourad and Ways' (1998) classification as primary tier, secondary tire and outside tire.

Drawing from the discussion above, assets in this study are defined in terms of all possessions of the community which are immediate (primary), semi-immediate (secondary) and outside the school. These are conceptualised to include tangible and intangible possessions of the school and those of its community. The study, therefore, sought to exhume how these assets may be used to improve academic performance in a rural context.

## 2.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The aim of this chapter was to present a critical discussion of the theoretical frameworks which underpinned this study and to present a critical account of literature with a special focus on what is known about the asset-based approach. The critical emancipatory research and the asset-based approach are presented as theoretical frameworks for this study. The overarching principle of CER as presented in this chapter is that it is a framework which promotes the emancipation of research participants in such a way that they are able to change their lives. This has been seen to be linking with the aim of this study which is conscietising one rural community as the driver of initiatives aimed at improving academic performance of its school through examining how an asset-based approach can be used to improve academic performance. On the other hand, the asset-based approach as a framework linked with the critical emancipatory research has an overarching principle of ensuring people-centred and sustainable rural community development, which again corresponded with the objective of this study. The discussion established a link between the two frameworks, followed by motivation for theoretical triangulation (using two theoretical frameworks) to understand the phenomena.

Following the theoretical frameworks was a discussion of academic performance and achievement, rurality and rural school, community assets and management and educational management as operational concepts of this study. The next chapter (Chapter Three) discusses local and international related literature on the asset-based approach and academic performance.

# CHAPTER THREE

# THE ASSET-BASED APPROACH AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT

## 3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I present review of related literature drawing from local and international scholarship. The asset-based approach as a school management strategy towards improving academic performance is discussed broadly. In discussing the asset-based approach, the focus on the need for it when researching academic performance within a rural context; the types of assets through the community capitals framework; the components for the asset-based approach; the conducive environment for the asset-based approach; and the challenges to this approach in other contexts. The place of school leadership and management in relation to improving academic performance is discussed. Towards the end, I present a brief outline of the emerging themes from literature, to show where the gap is and what this study is anticipating.

## 3.2 THE ASSET-BASED APPROACH AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

The need for asset-based approach stems from the shortcomings of the traditional path (needs-based approach) to community renewal. According to Kretzmann and McKnight (1993:2, 1996:24), Eloff and Ebersöhn (2001:149), Ebersöhn and Mbetse (2003:323), Keeble (2006:2), Boyd, Hayes, Wilson and Bearsley-Smith (2008:191), Burke, Murphy, Lanigan, Anderson (2009:9), Venter (2010:13) and Loots (2011:24), the needs-based approach involves agencies, universities, the government or other donor groups that intervene to remedy societal problems. The researchers mentioned above further posit that employing the needs-based approach firstly results in communities who are unable to acknowledge their strengths, capacities, assets and resources. Secondly, the needs-based approach has further resulted in social service providers who see communities in terms of the extent of their problems and needs. Thirdly, the needs-based approach creates communities who are consumers than the producers of their solutions. Thus, these communities will pay attention to their deficiencies instead of the possibilities for deploying their assets for the improvement of academic performance in schools. This will further lead to unsustainable intervention strategies and continuity, whilst sustainability depends on the long-term support from the external service providers.

The Ministerial Committee on Rural Education (DoE, 2005:8) confirms that the above approach has dominated the government's strategies to address rural education challenges, including the issue of poor academic performance. It has been argued that since 1994 the South African Government has dedicated efforts to improving the status of rural education through addressing social challenges connected to academic performance (Nkambule, Balfour, Pillay & Moletsane, 2011:341). However, the issue of academic performance is still a concern for many rural districts, especially in the province of KZN. Evidence, as provided above, shows that there is less to be gained if the needs-based approach is the adopted path in the process of trying to improve academic performance in a rural context.

In addition, an extensive enquiry conducted at the Northwestern University on successful communities by Kretzmann and McKnight (1996) gave an indication that the successful communities followed the asset-based approach, but the same enquiry acknowledges that the communities inadvertently presented a one-sided negative view, which compromised, rather than contributed to, community capacity- building (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003:476). The same can be argued about South African Government attempts to address rural education issues. According to Nkambule, Balfour, Pillay and Moletsane (2011:341), since 1994 it has been concerned with addressing connection between the social ills such as HIV and Aids, poverty, and underdevelopment, as well as the poor academic performance of learners in most rural schools. The National Senior Certificate schools' report for 2011, 2012 and 2013 (KZNDoE, 2011, 2012) shows that poor academic performance in South African rural contexts, especially in KZN where this study is located, seems to be prevalent to date, even after 18 years of attempts to address rural education challenges.

The Ministerial Report on Rural education (DoE, 2005:7) has indicated that part of the failure of the State to address rural education challenges is a result of employing deficit models (needs-based models) in dealing with challenges. These are mostly based on what the government assumes will better respond without an assessment of what rural people believe will serve them best. They also ignore that rural and deprived communities are characterised by resourcefulness that positions them as agents of change within their context (Mahlomaholo & Netshandama, 2010:77). For Gegeo (1998:289), development initiatives are developments in disguise and lack sustainability. As shown by Nkambule, et al. (2011) and the KZNDoE National Senior Certificate schools' report for 2011 and 2012, this has not led to sustainable solutions towards improving academic performance in the rural context. The major challenge which

remains after the needs-based approach has dominated is what communities can do in the absence of the external supporters. Thus, the need for an asset-based approach as a proposed management strategy towards improving academic performance in the rural context is defendable. The asset-based approach is premised on evidence that rural development is possible and sustainable when local community people are committed to investing themselves and their resources in the effort (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993:4). The asset-based approach further links with the notion of decentralised rural development. This does not ignore the deficits of the rural contexts but does acknowledge the importance of localised initiatives. The decentralised rural development is advocated on the basis that it calls for local management of resources which will in turn result in communities looking after those resources better (Scoones & Wolmer, 2003:7).

The South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 (SASA), (RSA, 1996b) acknowledges the role of all stakeholders (teachers, non-teaching staff, parents, SGB members and other members of the community) in the education of a child. This is not only based on the role these stakeholders play but it is assumed to be a rights-based approach to educational governance. This is also an approach that has been advocated since 1994 (Scoones & Wolmer, 2003:8). The need for asset-based approach towards improving academic performance also stems from its acknowledgement that a rural community, despite being neglected, can drive educational development initiatives and has a right to be part of what the schools are doing. This is in line with the decentralised educational governance, the SASA advocates and Rights-based approach advocated by Scoones and Wolmer (2003).

In summary, recognition that rural communities possess a set of assets which could contribute to addressing poor academic performance is both a policy and research supported argument. It is through the acknowledgement of local people's rights (RSA, 1996a) to participate in school governance and the possible assets that these people can provide that schools can start to build from their immediate (primary) and secondary tier of community assets (Chikoko & Khanare, 2012:29-30) in attempts to improve academic performance.

The asset-based approach is not only linking the rights-based approaches to school development, but may also be seen as another component of school-based or site-based management (SBM) (Midgley & Wood, 1993; David, 1996; Back & Murphy, 1998; Briggs & Wohlstetter, 2003; Rainey & Honig, 2012). In their conceptualisation, David (1996:2) and Briggs and Wohlstetter (2003:351) posit that SBM includes not only principals, parents, teachers and

non-teaching staff involved in decision-making but also other members of the broader community and local associations. Similarly, the asset-based approach transcends the school boundaries (primary tier of assets) and looks at what are important secondary tiers and outside tiers of assets in developing the school (Chikoko & Khanare, 2012:30). According to Rainey and Honig (2012:468), SBM shifts control of schools to a broader community level and is further linked to increased school capacity to attend needs. The asset-based approach therefore provides the means through which involvement of the local community will not be 'window-dressing' but will draw on what the community can provide as assets towards improving academic performance.

Moreover, the asset-based approach is a bottom-up approach to community development (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1996:4), accordingly, SBM uses it for decision-making (Midgley & Wood, 1993:246). It is shown above that the asset-based approach suits the current policy trend in terms of how schools should be controlled. This not only applies to controlling, but it is a more effective approach to addressing school challenges as it means more locally generated energy to improve schools (Briggs & Wohlstetter, 2003:352). In arguing for an asset-based approach as a school management strategy towards improving academic performance it is important to understand what assets are possessed by local communities in general and rural communities in particular.

### 3.2.1 Tiers of community assets

Under the definition of assets it is briefly indicated that there are three tiers according to Chikoko and Khanare (2012:29-31), drawing from Mourad and Ways' (1998) classification of assets. These include the primary, secondary and the 'outside' layer. In their study which investigated *"the evidence from South Africa on school management conceptualisation of school assets in addressing the needs of children orphaned and made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS",* the primary tier consists of those assets which are accessible with ease and they are mostly located within the school. The school management identified teachers, learners, class managers, the deputy principal and school infrastructure as components of the primary layer of assets. While Chikoko and Khanare (2012) were interested in how these assets were conceptualised in taking care of vulnerable children in the context of HIV and AIDS, this gave the impression that, beyond teaching, teachers can do more to address different situations in their schools. They can also contribute to other aspects important for improved academic performance, as human capital

beyond the teaching of their subjects. On the other hand, lack of time has been identified as a challenge to including teachers beyond their teaching responsibilities (Naidu, Joubert, Mestry, Mosoge & Ngcobo, 2008:35). Thus, this lack of time is one of the possible challenges in terms of asking teachers to contribute more than their teaching responsibilities.

In addition to teachers, learners and the school infrastructure, Chikoko and Khanare (2012) further identified the secondary layer of assets. According to these researchers the secondary layer consists of assets located within the schools' neighbourhoods but not controlled by the schools. The study reveals that community members, faith-based organisations and other organisations are important for the survival of the school. To confirm the above findings, research (NMF, 2005; Lemmer, 2007; Naidu et al., 2008; Myende, 2012) shows that charity organisations, faith-based organisations, local business, local government agencies parents and families form a crucial component of school community assets and they can contribute to improving learners academic performance. Again, this study attempts to ascertain what opportunities and challenges are there for these assets to contribute towards improving academic performance.

The last layer of assets is an 'outside' layer, which is described as those assets outside the community both in location and ownership. Chokoko and Khanare (2012:31) assert that these include private businesses, nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), national corporations, universities and research institutions. However, Chikoko and Khanare (2012) conclude that schools, especially SMTs proved unable to tap into these assets. This may pose another challenge for the asset-based approach as school management strategy towards improving academic performance. Based on the asset-based approach principles as outlined in the theoretical framework section, schools should be able to build from their primary layer, and be the ones who identify possible strategies to address their challenge. This should be followed by an attempt to include the secondary and outside tiers.

While Chikoko and Khanare (2012:29-31) provide a clear outline of possible assets as conceptualised by school management, the community capitals' framework of Emery and Flora (2006:20-21) further provide a concrete picture of other assets that exist in most of the communities. Whilst there are similarities between his framework and Mourad and Ways' (1998) classification, the communities capitals' framework outlines each community's capital and identifies assets found under it.

### 3.2.2 Community capitals' framework (CPF)

Figure 1. Community Capitals
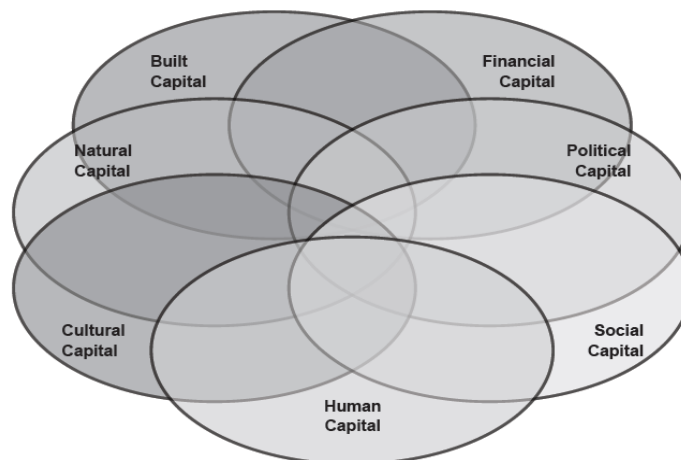


**Figure 3.1: Community capitals' framework (Emery and Flora 2006:21)**

1.      **Built capital** includes the infrastructure supporting the schools and their communities to perform different activities. This form of asset was also identified by school management as a primary layer in the study by Chikoko and Khanare (2012), which was also conducted in a South African rural context. On the other hand, Balfour, Mitchell and Moletsane (2008:98) assert that infrastructural support is one of the major deficiencies in the rural South African context. What we learn in the above contesting arguments is that infrastructure or built capital is found in other rural contexts, while it is a challenge to others. Although the conclusion at this stage cannot be made in relation to what participants in this study conceptualise as their assets, it appears that infrastructure is one of the assets found in communities. If this asset is found in the context of this study, the remaining question will be what opportunities and challenges are there for it to contribute towards improving academic performance.

2.      **Natural capital "**refers to those assets that abide in a particular location, including weather, geographic isolation, natural resources, amenities, and natural beauty" (Emery & Flora, 2006:20). In his conceptualisation of rurality, Hlalele (2012:112) maintains that "community capital present in many rural communities makes them attractive places in which to live and raise a family". With regard to the rural context in which this study was conducted, the place has attracted a large number of famers who specialise in agriculture and livestock. Moreover, other schools have large open spaces within the schools which have been turned

into gardens for parents and other community members. These gardens have closed the gap between parents, community members and schools, making it possible to create ties between all participants. This presents strong possibilities for extending these, parents' involvement in what is happening in the schools.

3. **Cultural capital** reflects an understanding that people have about their world and how they act within it. Cultural capital further influences what voices are heard and listened to, and which voices have influence in which areas (Emery & Flora, 2006). According to Kalmijn and Kraaykamp (1996:24), cultural capital is believed to be an asset in the schooling process on the premise that children exposed to it may be better prepared to master academic material and are motivated to stay in school. Although rural areas have been characterised by "brain drain" (Howley et al., 2009:516), these people as confirmed by Emery and Flora (2006) may possess strong cultural capital and this gives them an advantage of having their voices heard in their community (Emery & Flora, 2006:21). It is also argued that cultural capital assists students by facilitating interaction with high-status others, consequently increasing the frequency of such interactions may lead to increased academic performance of those with less cultural capital (DiMaggio & Mohr, 1985:1241).

While rural communities, decline in population, mostly caused by the "brain drain", does not mean that there are no educated people in rural contexts. For example, I come from the same rural community in which this study was conducted. In this way, learners might not come from families in which this form of asset is found, but through the school people with strong cultural capital can be mobilised to instil hope and motivation to learners. Hope and motivation in return may contribute to improved academic performance.

4. **Human capital**, according to Emery and Flora (2006:21), consists of skills and abilities of people they can use to develop and enhance their resources and to access outside resources and bodies of knowledge in order to increase their understanding, identify promising practices, and access data for community-building. The asset-based approach operates within the premise that people in all communities, inclusive of rural communities, possess human capital and through this they are able to be agents of change in their own contexts. Coleman (1988:100) maintains that human capital is less tangible and it is embodied in skills and capacities that make people able to act in new ways. The study by Chikoko and Khanare (2012) identified teachers, learners and parents as human capital and their roles in relation to

responding to learners made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS was acknowledged. This shows the importance of human capital in addressing issues affecting schools.

5. **Political capital** reflects the community's access to power, organisations, and connection to power brokers. Moreover, political capital as a community asset encompasses the ability of people to find their own voice and to engage in actions that will contribute to the wellbeing of their own community (Emery & Flora, 2006:21). The rural context does not lack the presence of people whose voice can be heard. For example, Mbokazi and Bhengu (2008:54) argued that traditional leadership in most rural contexts in South Africa may have both positive and negative influence on decision making. While they may also have a negative influence, traditional leadership that works may be able to influence other outside people who may bring resources into the schools. These resources may then be utilised towards improving academic performance. The influence of traditional leadership may be traced back to so-called Bantu Education (NMF, 2005:34), and continues in decision-making to connect rural communities to other powerful structures. Through this influence, traditional leaders may help schools to identify and mobilise possible assets relevant in the attempts towards improving academic performance.

6. **Financial capital** refers to the financial assets available to invest in school-community capacity-building. In discussion of community assets above it is indicated that the guiding principle of the asset-based approach is that schools should begin from the immediate assets (primary tier) before all other tiers are explored. With regards to the financial capital, one concern could be that rural communities are mostly characterised by poverty and this challenges their ability to possess financial capital. However, the democratisation of school governance in South Africa introduced the SGBs, one of their tasks as indicated under section 34 of the SASA being to supplement school financial resources through fundraising (RSA, 1996a). Therefore, this presents an impression that if SGBs are regarded as assets of the school this form of capital can be generated to some extent. This may be possible on the premise that the asset-based approach does not restrict schools to immediate assets but it argues that this should be the beginning. Thus, as assets, the immediate school community can use their skills to generate ideas as to how this capital can be strengthened. On the other hand, I do not ignore SGBs' challenges, such as the lack of capacity (Naidu et al., 2008:34), especially those mostly faced by rural schools.

7. **Social capital** may be understood as the connections among people and organisations that allow things to happen, positive or negative (Emery & Flora, 2006:21). While rural

communities are marginalised and described according to their deficiencies, one crucial resource rural people can invest in the efforts towards improving academic performance in their schools is social capital (Boyd et al., 2008:189; Mathie & Cunningham, 2003:479). It is described by the aforementioned researchers as constituted by social trust or reciprocity, social cohesion, sense of community and social participation. As an aspect of an asset-based approach, social capital is further regarded by Boyd et al. (2008:190) as the 'glue' that holds society together. According to Flora, Flora, Bastian and Manion (2004) and Emery and Flora (2006:21), bonding social capital refers to those redundant ties that build community cohesion. In other words, bonding capital refers to community members' attempts to 'get by', while there is also 'bridging social' capital which deals with how communities 'get ahead' after they have bonded (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003:479). These two constructs provide an indication that social capital transcends the level of boding and includes what communities can gain from their social trust and community cohesion.

Community cohesion may be crucial in insuring that community initiatives are sustainable. As an aspect of community assets (Saegert, 2006:276), social capital makes rural communities special as compared to other communities. This is also confirmed by Hlalele, (2012a:113) as he posits that "there is a strong bond that exists among rural community members which fosters a firm commitment to protect and support children" Hlalele further maintains that rural people are strong supporters of public education and community based schools". Boyd et al. (2008:189) have also regarded social capital as a key asset for rural communities in that it create hopes that one's needs can be met. As argued in Chapter One, the utilisation of social capital as an asset is lagging behind in the studied community, making it worth investigating the opportunities it can provide to school managers towards improving academic performance, and the challenges.

Social capital is crucial compared to all other forms in the community capitals framework. Mathie and Cunningham (2003:479) maintain that social capital's utilisation can bring together all other forms, as outlined above. According to these researchers, social capital is able to fuel positive social relationships between local individuals and associations as well as the formal and the informal networks. As with other forms of capital, Mathie and Cunningham (2003) posit that it is a talent asset and individuals can increase or deplete it depending on where they stand in the reciprocal exchange of social support and obligation. I argue here that, depending on how

school managers and other school stakeholders position themselves in the exchange of support between schools and communities, social capital utilisation can be boosted or shattered.

The community capitals' framework provides a clear understanding of what possible assets are found in communities and how these may be crucial in creating sustainable livelihoods using a bottom-up approach to community renewal. It is the same approach the MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON RURAL EDUCATION has suggested in approaching rural education challenges. Building on Hlalele's (2012a:114) argument, that rural people are strong supporters of public education, I also argue here that prior to my formal education I learned informally, from my parents through their indigenous knowledge. Such knowledge system cannot therefore be ruled out when exploring assets within the rural context.

### 3.2.3 Indigenous knowledge as a rural community asset

Mapara (2009:140) writes that:

> Indigenous knowledge systems are a body of knowledge, or bodies of knowledge of the indigenous people of particular geographical areas that they have survived on for a very long time. This is knowledge unique to a given culture or society which emerged locally and naturally.

Gegeo (1998:290) also describes indigenous knowledge as a cultural group's ways of thinking and of creating and reformulating knowledge using traditional discourses and media of communication. Similarities exist in the two perspectives, as naturally and locally it may be shared by people within the same cultural group or geographical area.

Although there is less research documenting tangible contributions of indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) in education, proponents have argued that there are gains attached to its utilisation. Thus, I argue here that indigenous knowledge constitutes an invaluable rural asset. To qualify this argument, Maila and Loubser (2003:278) view it as traditional capital found in both urban and rural communities, whilst for Chakwizira and Nhemachena (2012:187) it is relevant in creating community livelihood improvement and rural intervention strategies. Extending this view, Olatokun and Ayanbode (2009:287) believe that indigenous knowledge is a special knowledge with which rural African communities are endowed for a very long time, and progress has been made in different areas through this knowledge.

Chakwizira and Nhemachena (2012:188) posits that "using indigenous knowledge in entrenching and boasting rural development enterprises enables indigenous people and local communities to actively participate in the decision-making ". The important aspect is fostering rural people's participation, and by drawing on the indigenous knowledge in terms of how they have survived within the 'impoverished' rural settings, schools may find useful ideas. While this is not conclusive, from the asset-based approach principles, participation is also prioritised. As an asset, linked to cultural capital, indigenous knowledge (Maila & Loubser, 2003:276) could be a panacea for improving academic performance in rural contexts.

## 3.3 COMPONENTS OF ASSET-BASED APPROACH

The proposed asset-based strategy involves several procedures which are crucial in realising and making sure that the community assets are used to their maximum potential. The approach begins with the mapping of assets and mobilising of assets.

### 3.3.1   The mapping of assets

I have indicated that school community assets may be categorised into individual, associational and organisational assets. In relation to these categories, asset mapping is understood as a process of identifying a map or inventory of the resources, skills, talents, capacities and strengths of individuals, associations and organisations. This is undertaken to discover and collate the links between the different parts of the community and the agencies (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993:5; Improvement and Development Agency, 2010:20). The important purpose of asset mapping, according to Boyd et al. (2008:191), is to identify within each group the assets, expertise, equipment and economic power that can contribute to the initiative. In the case of this study the process of asset-mapping should then be the identification of assets that can contribute to improving academic performance inside and outside the school's immediate community (Chikoko & Khanare, 2012:25). According to Kretzmann and McKnight (1996:25), asset mapping is crucial in that it allows for asset mapmakers to identify a vast and often surprising array of individuals' talents and productive skills. Fuller, Guy and Pletsch (2002:5) state that asset mapping enables individuals and communities to think positively about the place in which they live and work. It is this positive thinking that can make rural communities conscious about what they can contribute in improving academic performance of their schools.

Thus, asset mapping is regarded as one of the special components of the asset-based approach to community development.

To ensure a fruitful mapping of assets, the Improvement and Development Agency (IDA, 2010:21) suggest the following steps for community led asset mapping process.

- The facilitator meets those people who become the core group that will take the lead.

- The group together with the facilitator contacts the individuals and groups who are active in the community. This will help to identify people who can extend the mapping outside the school.

- Using face-to-face conversations, door-knocking and other techniques, such as storytelling, these individuals collate the assets and talent of individuals in the community.

- The group and the facilitator identify the resources and assets of local associations, clubs and volunteers.

- The group and the facilitator map assets of the agencies, including the services they offer, the physical spaces and funding they could provide, and the staff and networks they have.

The process of asset mapping referred to above may extend to cover all forms of capital, as suggested by Emery and Flora (2006:21).

The above steps can better be understood and implemented if aligned with Ebersöhn and Mbetse's (2003:324) levels of community assets assessment, referred to as asset mapping in this study.

**Table 3.1:** Levels of community assets assessment

| Community assets level | Description |
| --- | --- |
| Community capacity inventory | Involves specific capacities, skills, talents and experience of stakeholders. |
| | Identification of the richness of personal resources that can be mobilised. |
| | Examples: actual work experience, volunteer work or life experience. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Inventory of local associations | Resources that may contribute to the solution organisation problems. |
| | Could be formal or informal Examples: support groups, church groups, youth groups, political groups, and business or sports organisations. |
| Inventory of local institutions | May contribute resources in terms of materials and services. |
| | Examples: libraries, schools, hospitals, human service agencies, banks, parks and community centres. |

According to Fuller, Guy and Pletsch (2002:9), the above steps can be followed by employing the three different approaches to asset mapping. The approaches are the *whole asset approach*, the *storytelling approach*, which is also recommended by Keeble (2006:21) for mapping social capital, and the *heritage approach*. These approaches are further described in Chapter Three as they are also included in the participatory research process followed in this study. However, asset mapping should be driven by clear goals (IDA, 2010:23). Furthermore, the cataloguing of skills and capacity inventory, which is also part of asset mapping, should be done for the purpose of linking up individuals and agencies for development of the whole community (Ryan, 2008:18). This exercise, according to Ebersön and Bhetse (2003:323), will be ineffective unless followed by action.

The asset mapping process in this study was not mainly used to understand what assets were found in the studied community but rather at understanding what opportunities and challenges could be anticipated in using an asset-based approach towards improving academic performance in a selected rural school.

After assets have been mapped, the connections between different forms are made, a process known as assets mobilisation.

### 3.3.2 The mobilisation of assets

Asset mobilisation as a process refers to "providing continuous support by means of relocating available and attainable resources so that innovations do not deplete resources needed by other initiatives in the school system" (Green, 2009; Chikoko & Khanare, 2012:25). The process of asset mobilisation helps in building the capacity of the community and a strong potential to

employ underutilised resources. The mobilisation of assets helps local residents become self-organised and active as they share knowledge and resources and identify common interests. This process is also important as it allows community residents to identify what the local assets cannot address (IDA, 2010:21), and they can devise strategies to stretch themselves towards finding outside interventions. Asset mobilisation is also referred to as 'asset-building' by Page-Adams and Sherraden (1997:424), for whom it is an important exercise in ensuring community wellbeing and happiness (Ferreira & Ebersöhn, 2011:64) and sustainability of programmes. The questions arise as to whether this approach can offer some strategies to ensure sustainable improved academic performance, and if it does what challenges are there to be addressed for it to work. How can school management address those challenges and create a school environment suitable for the asset-based approach?

## 3.4 SCHOOL CONDITIONS CONDUCIVE FOR ASSET-BASED APPROACH

Asset mapping and mobilisation have been identified above as major components for the operationalisation of the asset-based approach. A closer assessment of what is involved in each component makes it clear that the approach will not work unless schools become places for all stakeholders. As an approach towards making schools places for all, Bryk and Schneider (2003:40) assert that social trust is the key strategy to set connections between schools' immediate communities and outside communities. For Traverso-Yapez, Maddalena and Bavington (2012:1), and Hyman (2002), the process of setting these connections is community capacity building, whilst the asset-based approach calls for the collaborative involvement of the communities concerned (Chaskin, 2001:290).

The involvement of concerned communities requires a shift from the top-down approaches to community participation and a strong approach to build both social and human capital (Hyman, 2002:198; Oakley & Tsao, 2007:820). Therefore, for the schools to harness all the available assets they will need to set an environment in which social trust and human capital are built. Community capacity building needs to be facilitated in creating good conditions for using available community assets and to empower communities to be at the centre of any development (Chaskin, 2001; Hyman, 2002; Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Oakley & Tsao, 2007; Traverso-Yapez, Maddalena & Bavington, 2012). A detailed account was provided by Hyman (2002:2) of the clusters for community capacity building. Table 2 (below is adapted from

Hyman's (2002) detail account of the clusters of community capacity building. The table is used to describe what processes schools can follow to ensure as strong school community building.

**Table 3.2:** Clusters of community capacity building

| Cluster | Rationale |
|---|---|
| **School community engagement** | School community has to become more engaged with each other in ways that will facilitate relationships and the exchange of information. |
| **Agenda building** | School community must find or create forums for sharing and prioritising their concerns and their aspirations for their schools. |
| **Community organising** | School community must organize around trusted and capable leadership, taking stock of their social capital and other assets. |
| **Community action** | School community stakeholders must pool their assets into an action strategy and build bridges to other resources that will be needed for success in improving academic performance. |
| **Communication and message development** | Community builders will need to keep an open line of communications with residents and their community partners about all aspects of the change effort, but particularly as it relates to developing and communicating positive messages about progress and results. |

The table above provides a picture of community building which is a technique to ensure that all community members invest their capacities in ensuring that academic performance in their schools has improved. For well-coordinated activities towards improved academic performance, all members of the school community need to be engaged. This helps in building strong human and social capital which is crucial in generating local and community-centred solutions. The next aspect is to find out what inspires each member of community about the school and what he or she sees to be his role in ensuring locally generated solutions towards improving academic performance.

After community engagement and sharing of aspirations and interests it is necessary to organise strong community leadership which brings together the stock of social capital and other assets. In doing this, participating members need to be cautious of the influence of power

differences between all members (Mathie and Cunningham, 2003). The leadership required will be of strategic importance in ensuring community action, through which assets will be pooled for agreed actions towards improving academic performance. Green and Haines (2012:13) posit that connecting community assets is crucial for ensuring sustainable community initiatives which in turn will contribute to creating future benefits in the quality of life for residents. As argued in the findings of a study conducted by Myende (2012), effective communication serves as a catalyst for ensuring a strong connection between different assets. Community builders will need to make sure that there is a clear line of communication in the school community to ensure that all participants are abreast of all school activities aimed at improving academic performance. This was found in a study by Myende (2012) to be the role of the school managers. Below I discuss the place of school managers and leaders in the implementation of the asset-based approach towards academic achievement.

## 3.5 THE SCHOOL MANAGERS AND THE ASSET-BASED APPROACH

The literature study above has demonstrated a strong relationship between extended school community involvement and the ability of schools to draw from an array of different forms of capitals available within and outside the boarders of the school. The asset-based approach in other words calls for school community participation, and as Gretz (2003:34) asserts, "it takes strong leaders to initiate a collaborative partnership and maintain control". Beyond the application of the asset-based approach, school effectiveness has been linked with strong principal leadership (Coleman & Earley, 2005; Sanders, 2006; Fullan, 2007; Kamper, 2009).

The place of school managers can better be understood if the asset-based approach is linked with the availability of strong school-community relations. Chikoko and Khanare (2012:25) assert that the leadership role of school managers is of utmost importance in the process of identification and mobilisation of assets. There seems to be a connection between Gretz (2003) and Chikoko and Khanare's (2012) arguments, which gives an indication of the importance of school managers' leadership roles in using an asset-based approach as a strategy towards improving academic performance. While school principals are not expected to be asset identifiers and mobilisers alone, there is a great responsibility placed on their roles to ensure the establishment of connections with the community in order to channel resources that might not be available in the school (Glanz, 2006:xix). School principals appear to be the most important assets in the process of drawing from other available assets within and outside the school

community (Sanders & Harvey, 2002:1360; Glanz, 2006:16; Chikoko & Khanare, 2012:25; Myende, 2012:56). It is therefore crucial to have a deeper understanding of what makes school principals important.

Gretz (2003:34) posits that drawing from the participation of all school community stakeholders requires a delicate balance between delegation and control of members. This may suggests that the school management role will be to ensure that teams created to identify and mobilise assets are delegated, establish a form of control for the achievement of goals. This delegation is in line with the role suggested by Johns (2003:319), that leadership and school management should be focused on the process of developing and sustaining relationships between different stakeholders. This has been identified above as a catalyst is establishing social trust and reciprocity between different members who contribute the assets. Johns (2003) further highlights several important aspects of leadership which link with the principles guiding the asset-based approach and the CER. She indicates that drawing from different partners requires an understanding that leadership does not rest upon one individual and the role of the main leader is to identify different people who can serve as motivators, animators, and networkers. This is also confirmed and supported by Kolzow (2009:123) as he argues that effective leaders remain aware that their constituency require trust from their leaders. The principles of the two theoretical frameworks used in this study centre on the principals' understanding that these roles can be performed by different members of the school. This view of leadership fits within the distributed leadership styles, and as Spillane (2002:143) and Myende (2012) argue, distribution of leadership may assist those who lead schools to focus on other areas while teachers are being empowered. This may in turn contribute to teacher satisfaction and learner academic improvement. Similarly, Sanders and Harvey (2002:1362) identify the establishment of action teams as principals' strategy in ensuring that the capacity of other school members is built for them to run school collaborations. The building of teams is also a strategy which helps to give value to teachers and other school stakeholders' leadership capacities (Sanders, 2006:34), thus creating trust as argued for by Kolzow (2009).

The above scholars (Sanders & Harvey, 2002; Glanz, 2006; Chikoko & Khanare, 2012; Myende, 2012) provide an overview of school management's leadership roles in building the school community, as a prerequisite to mobilising community assets. A detailed account of these roles is provided by Glanz (2006:4), the first being to facilitate (establish and sustain) continuous, meaningful, and effective school-community relations. I argue here that this helps to mobilise

community capital and also to be able to understand school community aspirations and interests. The second role is that of planning and organising engagement of all school partners in school activities beyond academic confines. The third role is to model leadership in all aspects of schoolwork. The modelling of leadership may help in motivating and arousing interests of communities and contributors of assets, which will serve to sustain identified and mobilised assets.

Having identified the school management leadership roles as far as the asset-based approach is concerned, it is necessary to be aware that other challenges accompany it.


## 3.6 POSSIBLE CHALLENGES TO ASSET-BASED APPROACH

While the asset-based approach is proposed in this study as a beneficial management strategy towards improving academic performance, there are cautions found in literature that need to be considered in its adoption. Mathie and Cunningham (2003) and Mathie and Cunningham (2005) caution that sometimes it becomes difficult to decide who should lead community initiatives. There is confusion about the meaning of citizen-driven community development and this challenges the application of the asset-based approach. It neglects the class and power relations embedded in the social relationships and the community level, which may be the case at school level and thus requires a clear understanding of how an asset-based approach can be implemented and who should drive it, the teachers, principal, learners or parents and/or other individuals and groups in the school community. Mathie and Cunningham (2005:184) propose that clarity be established on how an asset-based approach fits within the institutional policy framework in order to address power sharing struggles between different participants.

In addition to the challenge of power sharing, Mathie and Cunningham (2005) assert that regardless of coherence and social trust in the community, citizens will still hold their own personalise interests and aspirations, or even become plagued by endogenous sources of incivility. As a strategy, they maintain that there should be strong attempts to uncover that strengths exist in the shadow of the obviously powerful in the community. While exposing the strengths of all participants, community collective participation is not guaranteed. In their research papers, Mathie and Cunningham (2003, 2004;2005) assert that fostering inclusive participation is not a simple task, as the success of the asset-based approach is largely dependent on local people's willingness to invest themselves and their capacities in initiatives aimed for their development. While this is an overall challenge, it is more prevalent in societies

in which there is hierarchy and marginalisation of other groups. In the discussion of political capital it is indicated that rural schools exist under strong traditional leadership. While this may be good in terms of attracting outside assistance it may also block participation from other community members as traditional leadership structures are usually male-dominated. To address the challenge noted above, the work of Kolzow (2009) teaches us that developing community leadership skills can help in addressing the challenge of hierarchy and marginalisation.

Domination in terms of leadership was also identified by Myende (2012) in a study into the possibilities for asset-based approach in school-community partnerships in the South African context. It was found that the school could not draw from other important community assets as the principal did not extend invitations to parents or other community individuals and groups. As well as the external community, some teachers were unaware of the partnership initiatives in the school. This study indicates that poor communication may block the identification and mobilisation of other important assets. School leadership was identified to be a challenge in this case. The same challenge is identified by Mathie and Cunningham (2002; 2003; 2005) in their three studies. They contend that external agencies are at arms' length, for leadership to sustain the asset-based approach which calls for local leadership to play its role.

In addressing the leadership challenge in the school context, Myende (2012) suggests that there be distribution of leadership to avoid expecting school principals to be the only leaders in community initiatives. Kolzow (2009) adds that developing trust for all individuals will also held address the noted challenge. Mathie and Cunningham (2005) argue that it is important to learn about the qualities of essential leadership both in terms of the particular individuals involved and in terms of the nature of leadership required in implementing the asset-based approach.

## 3.7 EMERGING ISSUES: LESSONS FROM THE REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature began with the justification of the asset-based approach to rural school improvement with a special focus on improving academic performance. What emerged in this section is that the asset-based approach is relevant in sustaining school initiatives aimed at improving academic performance. This became important in that rural education improvement in the South African rural context has been hindered by the marginalisation of the rural dwellers' voices on what they think can serve them well. This marginalisation has followed the external solutions which are not sustainable and are less sensitive toward rural schools challenges. The

externally generated solutions have not only excluded rural participants but also created a mentality that only external contributors can attend to rural education problems.

The second issue emerging in the literature is that the asset-based approach, which puts more emphasis on building communities from inside-out, links with some reforms in school management. The literature draws a handy connection between the asset-based approach and school-based management or site-based management. The latter is built on the premise that local school stakeholders may better manage their schools if they are entrusted with responsibilities to do so. It is also within the premise that local stakeholders will be in a better position to extend participation beyond the school boundaries and draw from the expertise of community members outside the school. This is the guiding principle of the asset-based approach which leads the approach advocating open participation and recognition of the skills map possessed by the locals. Moreover, this SBM has an ability to create a sense of ownership amongst different groups which then links with the asset-based approach as it also promotes a sense of ownership with a continued attempt by local people to improve their state of life.

The third emerging issue emanates from a historical belief that rural areas are characterised by backwardness, poverty and inability to provide their learners with quality education equitable to their urban counterparts. While this is not disputed in the literature study, the tiers of assets and the forms of community capitals indicate that rural areas have a vast array of assets which are mostly untapped. There is evidence that these assets have kept rural areas attractive places to live and raise a family. These assets are the same assets motivating the argument of this study that rural schools can draw from community assets to improve academic performance of their learners. Through Emery and Flora's (2006) community capitals framework, justification for the presence of these capitals in the rural context has been provided. In addition to these tiers of assets, literature has revealed that, like all other communities, rural ones have survived through indigenous knowledge, and this is presented as one of the important assets.

In identifying and mapping community assets, it emerged that social capital, which has been characterised as the "glue" that connects people, is the key in bridging the gap between assets identification and putting them into action. Community capacity building was then suggested as a strategy to bring assets together and to ensure that assets are converted into meaningful community action. Hyman's (2002) cluster of community capacity building provided a clear step-by-step approach towards building community capacity. The concepts of community building created a link between school-community relations and the asset-based approach. Through this

link it became easy to identify school management leadership roles in making sure that different communities are involved to tap into their assets.

The appealing school management leadership roles included an ability to delegate responsibilities accompanied by control measures. While it emerged that leadership needs to be shared, schools principals appear to be the centre of successful community building initiatives. Channelling of resources remained motivated by the principals' ability to connect different facets of the school community. The section on school managers and the asset-based approach called for school leaders to establish and sustain continuous, meaningful and effective school-community connections through establishing trust among stakeholders. The engagement of school partners beyond the confines of academic activities also seems to be a responsibility of the school principal. All the above may mean the school managers or leaders are able to model leadership which will keep all partners interested in investing themselves and their assets in the school activities.

Through the possible challenges, the literature further shows that the asset-based approach connection with the community participation presents some questions that need to be addressed. Leadership of initiatives becomes a challenge because of power dynamics present in communities, including rural communities. The roles of the external people or institutions remain unclear as their help is at arm's length. Identifying the space of the asset-based approach within the policy context of schools was thought to be a panacea in addressing leadership issues and the role of external assets.

The limited challenges against a vast number of the positives provide schools with possibilities to utilise the asset-based approach as a management strategy towards improving academic performance in a rural school. While this is the case, the gap appears in understanding how this approach can be used in the context of improving academic performance. The questions still to be fully researched are to how school managers can create a school environment conducive to this approach, what the challenges are of using this approach and how these challenges may be addressed remains. Thus, this study examines how an asset-based approach as a management strategy can be used to improve academic performance in the rural context.

## 3.8  CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has provided a critical discussion of the asset-based approach, with a special focus on its need, the types of assets, the components, the school conditions in which the approach can work, the management roles in the asset-based approach, then possible challenges and how schools may respond to them. The chapter ended with a concise discussion of issues emerging in the literature study and how those set the gap that this study aims to bridge. What has emerged in the chapter is that the asset-based approach presents several opportunities for schools and their communities to work together and that it is inline with a number of South African Educational innitiatives. Moreover, the chapter has dwelt on the assets available in the community and how they may be relevant towards improving academic performance. In discussing the conditions conducive to the application of the asset-based approach, the chapter has indicated the importance of community capacity buiding. Towards the end, challenges and the place of educational management were presented in the chapter. Shown there is that there appears to be limited challenges, presenting a picture that there are more opportunities for schools to draw from the asset-based approach to improve academic performance.

The next chapter presents the research design and methodology used in examining how asset-based approach as a management strategy can be used to improve academic performance in a rural school.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

## 4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter Two dealt with critical emancipatory research (CER) and the asset-based approach as two theoretical frameworks underpinning this study, to justify the need for this approach towards improving academic performance in a rural school, identify the components of the asset-based approach, examine the community assets and establish possible challenges in using it to improve academic performance. This chapter describes the research plan and the research processes (design and methodology) followed in order to understand how the approach could be used as a management strategy to improve academic performance in a rural school. It begins with a brief discussion of the meaning of concepts 'research design' and 'methodology' as understood in this study, as well as the research question and the aims and objectives.

After the above interrogation, the chapter begins with a discussion of the research design, focussing on the design choices and their relevance to a study of this nature. This is followed by a discussion of the methodological choices and their justification for this study.

## 4.2 INTERROGATING RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

As much as it is known that research design and research methodology are used to describe and justify what researchers do to understand and sometimes solve research problems, these concepts may be difficult to understand. This is because the research design and methodology appear in all postgraduate students' research reports and other books on research design and methodology, but it is unclear what constitutes the former and the latter. Babbie and Mouton (2001:74) confirm that researchers often confuse the two terms or use them interchangeably. For example, Maree (2007:70) defines research design as "a plan or strategy which moves from the underlying philosophical, to specify the selection of respondents, the data gathering techniques to be used and the data analysis to be done". Lapan, Quartaroli and Riemer (2012:71) see no difference between the two concepts, and regard research methodology as a set of strategies that researchers use to ensure that their work can be critiqued, repeated and adapted, such as sampling, data collection, and analysis.

To clarify the abovementioned concepts, Babbie and Mouton (2001:74) indicate that research design focusses on the end-product of research, that is, what kind of study is being planned and what kinds of results are anticipated. The genesis of research design is the research questions and the research aims. Baley, cited by Ngwenya (2013:72) states that in developing research design researchers should think about the purpose of the research, the paradigm in which it is embedded and the context within which research is carried out.

Unlike research design, research methodology is not about the plan but the processes and kind of tools and procedures to be used in achieving the anticipated results of the study. Its genesis is the point of departure needed to implement the research design the researcher(s) decided to follow (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:75). Methodology, according to Henning, van Rensburg and Smith (2004:36), should be understood as a rational group of methods that complement one another and have a "good fit for the purpose" of the study, which is understood and captured under research design. "Good fit" for the purpose of the study suggests that these methods should be compatible and coherent with the research question and the nature of findings required in the study, also captured in the research design. Bhengu (2005:58) concurs with Henning et al., as he argue that methodology goes beyond methods of research but covers the reasons such methods are chosen in relation to the nature of knowledge (ontology) that the research seeks to find.

Having drawn on various debates on research design and research methodology I adhere to the definitions provided by Babbie and Mouton (2001) and Ngwenya (2013), and I define research design as all strategies that the researcher opts for in conducting research. These include the approach the researcher uses in problem identification and description, that which the researcher believes is relevant to yield solutions to the problem, and the stance or the paradigm the researcher takes in understanding and solving the research problem.

Research methodology, as different from research design, is defined in this study following the footsteps of all the researchers mentioned above (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Bhengu, 2005; Maree, 2007; Lapan et al., 2012; Ngwenya 2013). Although Maree (2007) and Lepan et al. (2012) treated the former and the latter as similar, my definition draws on some of their understanding. I therefore define it as processes and procedures through which researchers implement the strategy (research design) to fulfil the research aims and objectives. These processes and procedures are made of a set of method(s) of sampling or selection of participants, data generation and analysis methods, and the researcher's attempts to follow the

ethics involved in the nature of research they are conducting. The research methodology is also inclusive of critical justifications as to why the methods were chosen and how they were utilised in conducting the research. Mostly, justification should link with the ability of those methods in fulfilling the research aims. This is what Babbie and Mouton (2001) refer to as the "fit for the purpose" of the study. The next section provides a critical discussion of the research design and methodology as adopted in this study.

## 4.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

As stated under section 3.2, the research design should begin with the question or the problem the study is trying to investigate, as this helps to judge if it is suitable to investigate the identified problem. As a result, below I reiterate the key question and the aim and objectives guiding this study.

### 4.3.1 The research question

According to Mouton (2001) cited in Ryan (2008:34), research problems are formulated in a form of questions in order to ensure that there is a clear and focused research problem". The key research question of this study was:

> *How can the asset-based approach be used as a management strategy to improve academic performance in a rural school?*

### 4.3.2 The aim and objectives of the study restated

The aim of this study was to investigate how the asset-based approach can be used as a school management strategy to improve academic performance in a rural school. The study anticipates establishing ways through which the asset-based approach can be used for the purpose of improving academic performance in the selected secondary school. This is done through finding ways for identifying and mobilising community assets. With this done, the study further seeks to find out how the school management can set conditions conducive to the utilisation of the asset-based approach within the selected school. The last part of this study focusses on possible challenges to the approach and how the school management might address them in order to use the approach to improve academic performance.

These objectives and the research question have largely influenced the worldview (paradigmatic perspective) which guided the plan and the process followed in conducting this study. Below I present the transformative critical paradigm with focus on what it is, why the research process of the study was guided by it, and how the research process followed the principles of this paradigm.

Given the aim of this study and the CER goals as discussed in Chapter Two, participatory research was considered a relevant design to achieve the study objectives.

## 4.4 PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH

The work of Lykes and Mallona (2008:109) give a clear historical background of participatory research (PR) and in their background it can be established how a study of this nature could best be conducted using it. According to Lykes and Mallona (2008:109), PR may be traced back to the early 1970s and 1980s. As a research design or approach it was first adopted to systematically amplify local knowledge and transform it into a social activist movement in order to contest the power of elites and push the struggle for economic justice. The goals of the struggle were assumed to be achievable through collaboration with agents of change that were normally affiliates of universities. The anticipated goal of such activist movements was to lead actors to self-consciousness and social consciousness for the achievement of social transformation.

Adding to the above background, Bertram and Christiansen (2014:47) state that PR aims to enable people in a community to solve their problems. For this, they regard this approach as a change-generating style of research. Grounding the works of participatory researchers, Paulo Freire states that "solutions should not come from the oppressors helping the oppressed but from the oppressed themselves" (Freire, 1993:165). This confirms the call for those who claim to be utilising PR to identify with the people affected by the problem and ensure that the research process is inclusive and promotes the voices of the oppressed (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000:568; Bertram & Christiansen, 2014:47).

Kemmis and McTaggart (2000:568) and Lykes and Mallona (2008:109) agree that researchers in PR may be people who have suffered the same problems experienced by participants, or they may be the people who are agents of change interested in the move for equal society and personal transformation.

This approach was identified as "fit for the purpose" of this study, firstly on the basis that the study is within the critical emancipatory paradigm or research. Within the CER as argued in Chapter Two is the will to strive for an equal and just society by ensuring that the voices of the voiceless are included in research. In this case the study is located within a rural context, with citizens suffering from a failure to have their voices taken seriously as they would be in research. In this way, using PR in this study ensured that participation of the community concerned was prioritised. , as the study was framed by CER, a research approach that will promote social justice and personal transformation was required, therefore PR became relevant.

Secondly, in the rationale of this study in Chapter One it is clearly shown that the researcher suffered the challenge of poor conditions in the school that resulted in poor academic performance. The chapter has further shown that people within the school internalised their challenges and did not visualise the school being improved by focusing on local capacities. In this case, PR suited the experience of the researcher as someone keen to see rural learners improve their academic performance and a context in which there are untapped resources that people need to be made conscious of. This study aimed to conscietise a selected school in a rural community that they were surrounded by many assets that were possible contributors to the process of improving academic performance. PR in this manner became the relevant approach to the study. This is not to argue that other research approaches could not fit the purpose of this study, but, on the basis that PR suits the aims and links well with the theoretical framework, it was adopted as a research approach.

The adoption of participatory research in this study is further based on its use of participative and collaborative enquiry (Ryan, 2008:38: Bertram & Christiansen, 2014:48) which linked well with what this study sought to achieve.

### 4.4.1   Six key features of PR and their application to this study

To further justify the adoption of this approach I utilised Kemmis and McTaggart's (2005:597-598) and Creswell's (2012:583-584) key features of PR. The purpose and the processes of this study linked with the key features as discussed below.

### 4.4.1.1 Participatory research is a social process

Participatory research was chosen to facilitate a social process whereby participants collectively generate ideas to improve academic performance in their school context, drawing from their assets in particular. Social relations are built and within the social context assets of individuals and the group are identified to establish how they can contribute towards improving academic performance. In the literature review, some areas relevant to identifying and mobilising assets were identified, and community building appeared to be the key towards building community assets. Participatory research through participants' social process allowed people to collectively identify assets, and this made them creative and transformational in the process (Lykes & Mallona, 2008:110). The process of learning to be transformational and collective confirms what asset-based approach proponents (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993; Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2006; Khanare, 2009; Chikoko & Khanare, 2012) state. These scholars in one way or the other shared the idea that drawing from the community assets could contribute to building social capital which would then contribute to collective actions by members of the community.

### 4.4.1.2 Participatory research facilitates participation

The study process was grounded in a process of engaging learners, teachers, SMT and SGB in examining how they could draw on existing assets to improve academic performance and how the school climate could be set to allow the utilisation of the asset-based approach as a strategy to improve academic performance. Participation allowed for local people to understand the process of asset identification and how each could contribute to the school's attempt to improve academic performance. Moreover, the participants in this study had to identify their assets and establish ways through which they could be used. This process was not done *on* them but *with* and *by* them, thus it was participatory. This did not only ensure that the study was participatory but it further linked the design of this study with CER through creating closeness between participants and the researcher (Mahlomaholo, 2009:225). Abiding by the principle of participation in this case was driven not only by research aims, theoretical framework and PR, but by making the discussion of CER transformative it remained within the confines of democracy, social equality and justice. According to Baum, MacDougall, Smith (2006:855), participation helps to overcome professional dominance, which may influence failure to promote justice and equality. In this way, participation as understood by Baum et al. (2006:855) is a tool to respect democratic principles of CER.

### 4.4.1.3 Participatory research is practical and collaborative

The research process in this study became practical in that learners, teachers, SMT and members of the SGB worked as individuals and groups to identify available assets in the form of skills, knowledge and other capacities which could be used to improve academic performance. This process was also conducted collectively by conducting a SWOT analysis conducted collectively by teachers, learners and the SGB. Kemmis (2008:124) argued that PR "must take into account the perspectives of the range of people involved or affected". It is through this involvement, that "participants can be or become" researchers. As result, for the purpose of conscietising internal and external school community about their assets and how they can contribute to improving academic performance, it became necessary to ensure a practical and collaborative research process, therefore PR was adopted. The asset-based approach, on the other hand, argues for working with those who are going to benefit from development and not treating communities as clients but as partners and drivers in improving and development of their society (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003; Mathie & Cunningham, 2005; Khanare, 2012). Thus, participatory research as collaborative process became relevant in this study.

### 4.4.1.4 Participatory research is emancipatory

As indicated in Chapter Two, this study aimed at emancipating learners, teachers, SMT and SGB to realise that everyone within the school community has a role and is capable to contributing towards improving academic performance. Participatory research became the ideal approach that could lead to emancipation. As indicated in Chapter Two, rural people have internalised the notion that their educational problem emanates from lack of resources and this can be addressed by the government and teachers alone. The Ministerial Report on Rural Education (DoE, 2005:8) points out that failure to address rural education challenges may be attributed to the use of approaches which are exclusive of rural people's voice on how they think these challenges can be solved. This has resulted in unsustainable solutions as people remain non-empowered to continuously address emerging challenges. According to the DoE (2005) and NMF (2005), this approach calls for approaches to rural education which are sufficiently responsive to the needs of rural people. Through his argument, Kemmis (2008:135) confirms that PR is indeed relevant in a rural context and that through praxis it is "informed, committed to action, and oriented by tradition that responds wisely to the needs, circumstances and particulars of practical situations". Similarly, Ozanne and Saatcioglu (2008:424) posit that PR

concerns itself with practical problems of people and it is driven by empowering them to develop capacity for general local ideas to be used in addressing those problems.

In accordance with PR principles, this study addresses academic performance, which is practical and a social problem. Secondly, through advocating an asset-based approach, the study is under the assumption that local assets should be a priority in addressing the problem of poor academic performance and, in this way, through PR there can be a process leading to a development of human capacity and awareness of local capacities.

### 4.4.1.5 Participatory research is critical

Again, as outlined in the theoretical framework section, CER was employed in this study. This required a research approach that will be critical of conditions in which human beings find themselves. Baum et al. (2008:856) argue that this critical component is central to PR, which as a critical approach resonates with CER in this way. Moreover, the transformative nature of CER requires us to be critical of how people's perspective of knowledge is influenced by the economic, political and social spheres. For Kemmis (2008:125) being critical means acting negatively against anything identified as untoward and irrational. In this study, PR allowed participants to explore ways through which they could contribute to improving academic performance in their rural context. This challenged the deficits associated with rurality and gave the participants an opportunity to see things differently. In order to be critical of these conditions there was a need for a research approach that is critical in nature. Being critical from a PR perspective does not end at the level of acknowledging that others have been economically, politically or socially oppressed.

The process of being critical in this study went beyond to a level on which participants were given space to develop what Lykes and Mallona (2008:110) call 'self-enquiry' and 'self-learning'. This process resonates with one of the claims of this study, which is the belief that rural people are surrounded by untapped assets. Through self-learning and self-enquiry participants developed confidence and capability to provide answers as to what assets they had and how they could be used to improve academic performance. However, this was not an easy goal to achieve. Due to other research constraints related to participation and gaining entry in the research it is only learners who were able to engage deeply in the process of self-enquiry and self-learning. This allowed them to think beyond teachers as the only source for improving their academic performance. During the reflections in one of the sessions few learners indicated that

their thinking had been blocked and they remained believing that there was nothing more than studying they could do to improve academic performance. Through the research process these learners indicated that they had been made aware that there was more they could do as learners.

### 4.4.1.6 Participatory research is reflective

As it appears under the aims of this study, another intention was to create awareness that improving academic performance was everyone's role. Through PR methods, participants were challenged to reflect on how they had previously seen themselves as outsiders in relation to improving academic performance. The kind of reflection mentioned above is conceptualised by Kemmis (2008:125) as 'critical self-reflection'. Through their participation, the aim was to make the participants reflect on how schools as institutions are structured and how power relations may constrain the contributions of their skills and knowledge and other capacities as far as improving academic performance is concerned. This critical self-reflection is important as it leads towards acting against untoward irrationality (Kemmis, 2008:125). The self-reflective practice, according to Babbie, Mouton, Vorster and Prozesky (2001:323) is the crucial path to be followed by participatory researchers.

In trying to conduct this study, the following processes, in line with participatory research, required me to continuously ask myself the questions proposed by Mertens (2005:244). The same questions guided the study conducted by Ryan (2008), who also used PR. These questions included the following:

- Was the problem identified by the research originally identified by the community experiencing the problem?
- Was the goal of the research to fundamentally change and improve the lives of the people who are marginalised or oppressed?
- Did the research process give power to participants?
- Did the research participants belong to the group - usually a marginalised or oppressed population that experiences the problem being studied?
- Will the participants experience increased consciousness, skills development and resources?
- Do researchers and participants share a peer relationship?

- Can the results be used and benefit the participants?

Most of the above questions can be answered in the affirmative, however the process of problem identification was approached differently. This study was conducted in a school in which teachers were currently working hard to ensure that academic performance was improved and sustained. As one of the participants, the researcher had matriculated in the same school and was a member of the school's local community, thus having an insider perspective into school matters. This does not mean the problem was initially identified by all participants but as a member of the same community I experienced the problem of poor academic performance in this school in a number of ways. Firstly, crime, drug abuse, and teenage pregnancy in the area had increased. Most of the young people did not perform well at school and as a result were unemployed and not furthering their studies. Secondly, as a university employee, I find myself having to help learners who did not perform well in their matric to be accepted by different universities. The problem affects me on a similar way that it affects the community and the schools, which through the principal are accountable to parents and the Department of Basic Education (DBE). While I initially had an interest in this study and thought about the problem, the teachers, learners, SMT and the SGB shared the experiences and their support for solving the research problem was achieved. They also accepted the proposed idea as to how we could try the asset-based approach as a strategy to improve academic performance.

Taking into consideration the envisaged research setting is this study, it appears that the research relationship needed some scrutiny as to how it fitted within the theoretical and paradigmatic perspectives of this study. There was a need to reject the bourgeoisie power that Mahlomaholo and Netshandama (2010) argue that academics earn through their affiliation to universities. Furthermore, I had to reject a positivist assumption of the participants as objects and interpretivist assumption of them as subjects (Ozanne & Saatcioglu, 2008:425). In rejecting these assumptions, I adopted the role of a facilitator, as recommended by Ryan (2008:38) and that of a collaborator, as recommended by Ozanne and Saatcioglu (2008:425) and Gergen and Gergen (2008:165). As a facilitator I guided the process of PR and facilitated the planning for research sessions as suggested by Kemmis and McTaggart (2005). As a collaborator, the intent was to ensure balanced participation from all participants including the researcher. The aim became to investigate how "we" can use an asset-based approach as a strategy to improve academic performance and thus show how research was conducted *with* the participants as opposed to *for* or *on* participants (Gergen & Gergen, 2008:165). This is in agreement with

Swantz's (2008:33) suggestion that there be an interchange of roles whereby the researcher and the researched collaboratively or mutually develop knowledge as to how problems can be solved.

While the intention was to subvert all power relations between participants and between the researcher and the participants, it is crucial to note that this was not an easy exercise. What was more challenging was to gain confidence of the participants as one of the things PR users need to gain (Swantz, 2008:42). This was a challenge in two ways. Firstly, the school principal whom I treated as a gatekeeper to the research site indicated in our first meeting that I was overwhelmed by my dream of including a group of participants who were representative of the school community. For the principal, rural communities did not understand what research entailed and including them was not sensible to him. He was not throwing this as a challenge I needed to overcome, but he wanted external school community (parents, organisations and other members of the community) to be excluded from the study. Through my persistence I realised that the principal did not trust me as a researcher. His assumption was that I selected his school with an aim of exposing their wrongs. Again, this confirms Swantz (2008:42), for whom the goals of PR can be achieved in a research environment in which there is mutual trust that the research encounter takes place to the benefit of people involved. Fortunately, the principal asked me to reschedule a meeting with the entire SMT. During the second meeting I was able to make clear the ethical principles which guided the research process and make it easier for the SMT to understand why the study was important.

The second challenge was to involve all participants in the mode of participation. My observation was that some lacked confidence and did not see themselves as possessors of sound knowledge relevant in improving academic performance in their school. This was mostly experienced by learners when they were expected to participate in a full group in which their teachers participated. They participated well in small groups which were given their own aspects to deal with. In the aspect in which the challenges for the asset-based approach were explored and the management approaches to address these challenges, there was a need to have different groups addressing the topic separately. The SMT was of the opinion that they would not mind taking suggestions made but, for them, it was easy to have those generated in an environment in which members of the same group worked alone. This was also not an ideal situation, however every participant appeared to be free and there was a sense of security and protection of identity that they enjoyed.

Another challenge was a need to revisit initial plans since I had indicated earlier that there was a point at which participants had to work separately as members of different groups. This revisiting of research plans resulted in the study taking more time. In the next section participants are described, followed by a discussion of how the research process began.

### 4.4.2 Selection of participants and the research Site

Participants and the research site in this study were selected because they were assumed to be "information rich", in other words they had continuously engaged in activities aimed at improving academic performance and achievement in the school. The research site was rural and this study dealt with improvement of academic performance within the rural context. The research site had special features making it "fit for purpose", intentionally selected on the basis that for the past 14 years (1999-2013) the school had been working towards improving and sustaining academic performance. This addresses one of the questions Mertens (2005:244) recommends should be asked if we are to operate within the confines of the transformative agenda, namely that there is a need to consider whether the participants are affected by the problem. In this case, as indicated, participants (teachers, learners, SMT, SGB and the community at large) were and are continuously in the process of improving academic performance in the school.

From the above description it can be established that participants were selected by purposive sampling, which according to Creswell (2012:206) entails the researcher intentionally selecting individuals or research site(s) in the study. Using this approach should also be guided by the "fitness of the approach" to lead to the identification of participants who are relevant to what the study is trying to achieve. As indicated above, the research site and the people who were selected are relevant in that they were affected by the problem being investigated.

Swartz (2008:28) writes that PR requires the creation of mutual trust between the facilitator and the participants. The research site above was located in an area in which I grew up and I have continuously worked with the school in other areas, such as the motivation of grade 12 learners. Due to this previous relationship, there was a developed mutual trust between me and the school stakeholders and as a result it was easy to establish a relationship for research that would work, especially with post level 1 teachers (PL1). However, the decision on who should be included in the research process was contested and power dynamics that existed in the school were noticeable as I was negotiating access with the school principal. This is discussed below.

### 4.4.2.1 Power and decision-making regarding participation

On several occasions it has been argued in this study that the voice of rural people has been marginalised in research and this has resulted in studies which are not sufficiently responding to their needs. Moreover, there is an assumption that rural people cannot be as organised or as vocal about their issues as can their urban counterparts (NMF, 2005:139). However, what emerged in the access negotiation process was that there is a notion of power that rural communities have and this is mostly known by those who lead schools. Unfortunately, this power may be suppressed in the research process by the same people.

I persuaded the principal to allow me to try to involve people, and seeing that I was convinced that it was easy to do so, the principal took the negotiation to another level, which I think was also important as I reflect on power and decisions on participation.

Some of what appeared in our discussion is important and cannot be disputed, as I indicated in Chapter One that some community members have blamed teachers for contributing to poor academic performance. Interestingly, there was a sense of fear that the principal had, based on his assumption that maybe I came to expose to the parents and other community members what was happening in the school. This fear carries the notion that the principal was aware that rural people have power and so it was not good for the school to be exposed.

Reflecting on this power issue and who should participate, one may assume that the principal is powerful because of his legitimate power (Du Toit, Erasmus & Strydom, 2010:213) as a school principal. However, his fear indicates that somehow power is located with other people within the school, and exposing them to the school may translate into contestations and conflict. The argument above may be linked to Bayeni's (2012:180) conception of power in the school context, he states that principals are somehow "caught up in a web of power relations within schools, where dynamism, contestations, bargaining and micro-politics feature most". I argue here that such contestations may not be between the school principal and the teachers, but may involve other stakeholders beyond the school boundaries. Due to his fear of contestations and conflicts, the principal made it clear that it was not a good idea to involve any member of the school who was not always within the school boundaries. This included parents, other community structures and individuals with no direct relationship with the school.

From a superficial level, the principal may appear to be making decisions in terms of who should be involved in the study and excluding others due to his power as the principal. This is suggesting that the principal is powerful over all other community members. According to

Gavanta and Cornwall (2008:173), the notion of power that claims that one group or individual is powerful because of the ability to exclude others is traditional and limited. Guided by this, one may argue here that the excluded groups might be powerful and could bring forth the views that challenge what is happening in the school. For these scholars, powerful knowledge is not only about who wins and who loses when issues are debated, but is a process of being able to keep issues and actors from getting to a table for discussion.

In closing this reflection, indirectly, the community here appears not to be powerless in the sense that the principal tried by all means to avoid the debates with community members on how community assets could be used to improve academic performance. The request by the principal to exclude other groups may indirectly show how powerful these groups can be, provided they are given a chance to discuss issues. What can be learnt in this study in relation to participatory research in practice is that participation on its own is influenced by power and how it is negotiated. Schools as entry points for most research conducted within the school context can directly drive participation and the relations between the school and the external school stakeholders (parents and other community members in this case) may or may not participate, depending on the willingness or unwillingness of the internal stakeholders to open participation.

As proposed by the SMT of the selected school and supported by the facilitator (the researcher), learners, PL1 teachers, the SMT and SGB participated in the study, all the above participants were involved in the study because it was assumed that they were stakeholders in the school and improved academic performance was in their best interest. On the other hand, participants mentioned above are the primary assets of the school (Chikoko & Khanare, 2012:30). As stated in the discussion of PR, these participants were affected by the problem under study and this created a need for their involvement. Although the list of participants was also proposed by the researcher, there was also a need to involve community members who were not represented in the SGB and other individuals who might not have had children in the school. This was driven by my personal understanding that everyone in the community where the school was located would benefit if the school performed well academically, and these members were also acknowledged by Chikoko and Khanare (2012:30-31) as secondary assets of a school. Unfortunately, other than participants in the school, parents and other community members could not be included as the gatekeepers were not approving it.

### 4.4.2.2 Teachers, School Management Team and the School Governing Body

The school had 11 teachers, of whom three of were permanent members of the SMT while one was an acting HoD. There were seven SGB members who helped with school governance. The initial plan was that a team made up of teachers, learners, SMT, SGB, parents who were not members of the SGB, and community members would participate in the study. The SMT and the SGB suggested that a team of learners should work separately from all other stakeholders and suggested that the parents' body and other community members would not be brought inside the school premises for the study. This was not an ideal situation for a participatory and CER study but, as indicated above, PR forces the researcher to solve a problem following the will of the people affected by it. In this case, I had to use discursive (conversational) interviews with teachers, SMT and the SGB in most cases but some extent, teachers, learners and four SGB members participated in groups that were formed.

While my decision to go with the SMT and the SGB's suggestions may be seen to be democratic, it further shows how gatekeepers within the rural context may sabotage the views of other people who are not gatekeepers. This goes back to what was discussed in Chapter Three, under the challenges of community-building as an aspect of the asset-based approach. It is indicated there that the process of community building will be disrupted by contestations as to what it means for an initiative to be community-driven (Cunningham & Mathie, 2003). This further poses the challenge in conducting participatory research within the rural context in which political issues are already thwarting community success. Nevertheless, the SMT, and the SGB members agreed to have discursive and conversational interviews with the facilitator while teachers were involved in a number of activities which were suggested by learners as guided by the asset-based approach stages.

### 4.4.2.2 Learners as participants

The SASA legislated that learners from any grade between 8 and 12 should be part of decision-making in their schools, and so were included in the study. The assumption was that they would have an idea of their community and the assets that existed. Secondly, improving academic performance in the school cannot be understood unless the views of learners are also listened to as the issue centres around them. For this reason they were included in the study. The inclusion of learners further ensured that the study involved the people who were affected by the

problem and it treated everyone in the school equally, regardless of their positions and this seemed to be inline with CER and the asset-based appraoch.

### 4.4.2.3 Description of the research site

One rural secondary school from Ugu District was chosen, and for the purposes of the study is referred to as Gezinqondo Secondary (pseudonym). The school was a quintile one school and had 435 learners, 11 teachers (inclusive of the SMT), one administrative clerk, one security guard employed by the state and four non-academic staff members employed in the nutrition programme. Quintile one schools, according to the DoE rankings, are the poorest and no-fee schools. In KZN, 32.7% (1938/5934) of schools were under quintile 1 in 2011 and 32.92% (1954/5947) in 2012 (KZNDoE, 2011 & 2012). These schools were ranked according to the poverty rate in the communities in which they were located. The area under which the school belongs is under the control of a tribal authority (traditional leadership) (*see the section of rurality in Chapter Two*) and the councillors (political leadership). The school is also described as a section 20 school, but was autonomous form the DBE when it came to control of the acquisition and application of funds (DoE, 2009). This suggests that the school would be given an amount of money normally called NORMS and STANDARDS. It thus controlled its own budget.

Guided by the asset-based approach principles, these schools did not lack means to address their challenges as posed by poverty levels. There were large assets in the form of people's skills, knowledge and other capacities they could draw on for their improvement. It is for this argument that the study investigated how such assets could be utilised towards improving academic performance.

## 4.5  THE RESEARCH METHODS

In this section I discuss the research methodological choices made in this study and justify why they were relevant in the study.

### 4.5.1 The process of the study

In this section the purpose is to give a clear and concise portrait to the reader about how the research was conducted and description of how different activities took place. The study process took place over a period of five months, with four meetings per month with learners, teachers, and the SGB. The SMT members, due to their school commitments, were only

interviewed through free attitude interviews (FAIs). The meetings were conducted after school for two hours and on Saturdays for two to four hours, to ensure that learners and teachers were not met during teaching and learning time.

In other cases, the SMT, SGB and teachers were met by the facilitator as they were not comfortable working with learners. However, the process followed with learners was less different from that with the above participants. For example, the SWOT analysis was conducted by all groups and an individual skills survey was also conducted by all the groups, as well as asset identification and a compilation of asset mobilisation strategies, as suggested by Kretzmann and McKnight (1993). To increase trustworthiness of the data generated through the meetings, the discursive oriented interviews (DOI) and FAI (these are discussed later) with all participants, the facilitator made sure that the voices were recorded verbatim using a digital voice recorder and sometimes a video camera. Participants' consent was obtained before recording. Data from previous meetings was transcribed before the next meeting to ensure that participants could reflect on what had happened in the previous meeting.

There were three groups used and each made by teachers, learners and SGB members. These groups are called Group A, B and C. For the sessions in which learners were alone, the groups did not change as the representation of learners in different groups was balanced. There was no regular number as some participants would excuse themselves from meetings. However, in all sessions in which group work activities were conducted, each group had a least five members, making 15 for each session.


**4.5.2 Stages of the asset-based approach**

The stages of the asset-based approach as outlined below made it possible to develop answers on how, as a management strategy, it could be utilised towards improving academic performance. Studies conducted by different scholars (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993; 1997; Fuller et al., 2002; Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2006; Ryan, 2008; Ferreira & Ebersöhn, 2011, Chikoko & Khanare, 2012) on the asset-based approach initiative served as tools to develop the stages followed in this study. The scholars mentioned above provide different tools and approaches to the utilisation of the asset-based approach and to develop relevant procedure for this study. The stages also ensured that the nature of this study was participatory, emancipatory and transformative, thus linking with the theoretical frameworks. While the stages are clearly

outlined below, due to challenges of participation as mentioned above there were some challenges which I reflect on under the limitations of the study.

### 4.5.2.1 Stage 1: Introduction of the asset-based approach

The goal of this stage was to introduce the asset-based approach to the participants and allow them to list the assets of the school and those of the individuals within it. Again guided by CER and the asset-based approach it was important that I did not go to participants with an attitude that they did not have an idea what assets were. A half-full and half-empty glass (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1997) analogy was used to introduce the concept of the asset-based approach. This was made on the first meeting, but participants were allowed to continuously add on the list of assets they thought they possessed. All the assets identified were listed on the charts.

### 4.5.2.2 Stage 2: Conducting the school and the community's SWOT analysis

A SWOT analysis can be defined as

"…an established method for assisting the formulation of strategy. It aim is to identify strengths and weaknesses of an organisation and the opportunities and threats in the environment. Having identified these factors strategies are developed which may build on the strengths, eliminate weaknesses, exploit the opportunities or counter the threats (Dyson, 2004:632).

Valentin (2001:54) regards it as a tool to yield strategic insights. With the above said, conducting a SWOT analysis seemed important for further identifying assets (strengths and opportunities) and also identifying internal and external unfavourable factors towards the utilisation of the asset-based approach towards improving academic performance. This stage was not drawn from the scholars I mention above, but for the purposes of this study conducting the SWOT analysis of the school and the community appeared to be important to further conscietise the participants about their assets in the school and the community. This was also conducted on the first meeting, but further reflections were made in the second and the third meeting to ascertain the possible contributions that each asset identified could contribute towards improving academic performance in the school. Learners, teachers and the SGB worked together and developed the SWOT analysis as they were working in three separate groups. Initially, I thought having separate groups would, at all times, be a disadvantage to this

study, but having these groups led to a detailed account of strengths and differing and fascinating views on how weaknesses and threats could be counteracted. Moreover, the SWOT analysis exposed the participants to issues which were possible barriers to the application of the asset-based approach towards improving academic performance in the school. These barriers are discussed in Chapter Five and Six.

### 4.5.2.3 Stage 3: Developing collage and capacity inventories

The collage was only used with learners to develop a pictorial depiction of what could be found as assets in the school and also to them as individuals. The pictures used by learners are not provided for ethical reasons and only the discussions of pictures were used. Chikoko and Khanare (2012:27) argue that visual methodologies are emergent participatory research methods and relevant in rural areas where there is a shortage of resources. A collage, as further observed by Chikoko and Khanare (2012), is one of these visual methodologies and it offers a forum for sharing and voicing experiences. This approach was mainly adopted to allow learners to have space to think critically about their school environment, teachers, the SMT, SGB and their community. For ethical reasons, the school principal requested that pictures generated from the school yard should not be used, except as a subject for discussion. For this reasons the pictures are not shown in this report. The collage was further used with learners because it was identified as a good tool to create a space for sharing and voicing experiences without fear.

For example, other issues which are barriers to the use of the community assets might be known by learners but they may not be able to talk about them when interviewed or grouped together in a forum. However, through pictures learners were able to share and voice their experiences. This was also in accordance with this study's approach (PR) to creating democratic spaces in which the view of the voiceless could be heard and be captured.

Learners suggested that their portraits be shared with their teachers and the members of the SGB to inform them of the issues they identified through these portraits. Coloured pens, chats, scissors, magazines and newspapers were given to learners, who were also allowed to use other resources they deemed relevant. Due to the lack of pictures in the newspapers and magazines, learners requested there be a discussion on other possible ways. They then suggested that pictures taken around the school be used to describe their thoughts. Using their mobile telephones, learners took digital images which were downloaded and printed to be used to develop a collage. Each group of four learners worked together to develop one collage.

According to learners, the use of cellphones in the school was not allowed, but through this research they realised that they could use them in a number of school activities if permitted. Through this exercise, possible assets were identified, possible ways to use those assets towards improving academic performance realised, possible threats recognised, and some strategies for management suggested by learners.

The capacity inventories were used for teachers, learners and the SGB. According to Kretzmann and McKnight (1997:22), using a capacity inventory could help in identifying unknown skills, talents and other capacities that people in the community possess. They further argue that this is not only relevant for knowing people's assets but it also helps in grouping people with similar assets to gain more from them. There were different capacity inventory surveys in this study. Participants as individuals were give capacity inventory forms (*see the appendices section*) and through learners the community members identified as assets were also visited to calculate their skills, talents and capacities, as well as how they thought the school and community could benefit from those assets to improve academic performance. While the exercise was not simple, participants (learners, teachers and the SGB) indicated that they did not know they could do more to improve academic performance in the school before they looked for external interventions. The development of a collage and individual capacity inventories were collected in meeting four and learners were than tasked to make a capacity inventory in their communities and report back to the next meeting (meeting five).

### 4.5.2.4 Stage 4: Reflections on collages and capacity inventories

This session was conducted for three hours in meeting five and two hours in meeting six. The intention for these meetings was to have critical and broad discussions of the collages as developed by different groups and to critically discuss what prevailed in different capacity inventories. The focus and the aim of the discussions was mainly to further understanding of the available assets, the people who possessed them, how they could be used to improve academic performance and what were envisaged as challenges towards using those assets and solutions thereafter towards improving academic performance. Each group was than allocated 10 minutes for presentation and 20 minutes for discussions. There were three groups in total, making 30 minutes for presentations and 60 minutes for discussions. A digital voice recorder and a video camera were used to capture the data from discussions and presentations. Data was transcribed verbatim to plan for meeting seven, which was going to be about addressing

some challenges in order to think about a conducive environment for the asset-based approach towards improving academic performance. Interestingly, some teachers and SGB members were present in this meeting as they had developed interest in the study and wanted to see what learners were doing.

### 4.5.2.5 Stage 5: Addressing challenges and enabling factors

The goal of this meeting was to work with the SMT, teachers, SGB and learners to identify possible solutions to the challenges identified at different levels. In the first session, the SMT identified their challenges. They then requested that I share the challenges which had been identified by learners. Pressing challenges were then identified (*See Chapter Five*) and the SMT -members voiced their own ideas on what they thought could be the challenges. The same process was followed with teachers and the SGB members. The groups also discussed the enabling factors to the asset-based approach. Two meetings were used for each group and ran for one to two hours. While this was empowering to the researcher, teachers and the SGB members reflected that it made them think critically about some of the neglected aspects in improving academic performance in the school. While the exercise was empowering to the participants and the facilitator (researcher), in terms of understanding the school and the community, getting support from the SMT was very difficult as the school was understaffed and all SMT members were usually busy. For this reason, ideas were mostly from the group of learners, teachers and the SGB, and suggestions from SMT members were only made through individual interviews.

### 4.5.2.6 Stage 6: Reflections on different stages of the research process

The aim of this stage was to reflect on the whole experience and develop a strategy that could be used as an asset-based approach and management strategy to improve academic performance in the school. The initial research plan was that all participants would be part of a meeting scheduled for this stage, but as indicated above, this could not be achieved due to constraints declared above. The participants in different groups suggested that ideas be grouped together by the facilitator and presented in each group during reflections. Ideas from reflections of different groups were generated and the strategy was developed using all ideas of the participants. Before the write-up stage of this report, the strategy was presented to all

participants for their approval. Reflections were recorded using digital voice recorder and a video was taken for learners only, since teachers, the SGB and the SMT did not give consent for videos to be taken.

## 4.6 DATA GENERATION METHODS

Several data generation methods were used in this study. These included discursively oriented and FAIs, collages, capacity inventories, SWOT analyses, and collaborative meetings with teachers and learners to identify possible assets. While all these methods were used, discursively oriented and FAIs were used to generate depth of meaning to the participants' thoughts on the topic.

### 4.6.1 Discursively oriented interviews (DOI)

In this same chapter I have used the work of Kemmis (2008) to argue that PR facilitates practical and collaborative work. I also argued that the PR process is social and reflective in nature. Discursively oriented interviews (DOIs) were used as one of the data generation methods, by which, according to Henning et al. (2004:57), "talk as social action" is investigated. They further posit that DOI is suitable for studies in which participants are seen as social actors who interact with the researchers and at the same time are involved in a discursive practice and communicative action. They are treated as co-constructors of knowledge.

This form of interview allowed participants to have an unrestricted conversation with the facilitator and linked well with Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a data analysis method (to be discussed in 4.7). PR as a social process and communicative action (Kemmis, 2008:127) required a form of an interview in which talk is also regarded as a social action, thus making DOI suitable for this study. Unlike FAIs, as discussed below, DOI allows several questions to be asked continuously, without disrespecting participants. The only similarity between these two is that they both treat participants as collaborators and in that way they are conducted in such a way that a participant will feel at ease and be able to talk beyond the question(s) asked by researchers. An added advantage as observed in this study is that DOI also allowed participants to reflect on their discussions and they were able to ask questions from the facilitator. The flexibility of being able to ask question by participants confirms Henning et al.'s (2004:58) view

of the advantage of using DOI to create a space in which participants openly talk to the researcher with confidence.

The discursively oriented interviews also presented conventions that could help in analysing how language is used by participants. These language conventions, according to Henning et al. (2004:57), can be explored in discourse analytical mode, in which the language patterns and their relation to social structures are used as ways of making sense out of data. CDA is also used in this study, and with DOI resulted in the generation of data that was not too complex to analyse through CDA.

DOI was mostly used at an early stage when the intention was to create a common understanding between participants on their understandings of the asset-based approach. They were also used when challenges and possible solutions towards using the asset-based approach were discussed with the three PL1 teachers, three HoDs, three learners and the school principal. The reason for using these interviews with the HoDs and the school principal is that their involvement in the study was not more participative than that of teachers and learners. However, there was a need to have a data generation method that would assist in facilitating in-depth discussion on the issues covered in this study without conventional research strategies. To ensure trustworthiness of data and to ensure that participants were encouraged to participate, the study was also conducted through FAIs.


### 4.6.2 Free attitude interviews (FAI)

Together with DOI, free attitude interviews (FAIs) were used to generate data in this study. They allow researchers to ask one question to start the conversation, then reflective summaries are used to avoid any deviation from the topic and to persuade participants to think carefully about what they have uttered (Mahlomaholo, 2009:228). In cases when the interview was stifled, as a facilitator I used clarifying questions to probe and encourage further conversation with the participants, as proposed by Mahlomaholo (2009:228). Tsotetsi (2013:161) used FAI in his Participatory Action Research study (PAR) and realised that these interviews helped in allowing participants to say more than they could have with a list of questions. I further noted that participants, especially learners, were able to speak without fear as to whether they were answering what was asked or not. Reflective summaries were there in order to contentiously help them to address the issues that were addressed in the study.

According to Buskens (2011:2-3) FAI can be conducted with two people or a group, in this study a group of teachers, learners and the SGB members were interviewed. This group format helped ensure that multiple views on how the asset-based approach could be used as strategy to improve academic performance were captured. To connect with the transformative agenda as an aspect of CER and the asset-based approach, answers to the main question were based on the views of the rural people who participated. This form of the interview was thus also in line with the theoretical framework of this study. The interviews were used in reflections during all meetings conducted with groups of learners, teachers and the SGB.

### 4.6.3 Mapping, collage, photo voice and capacity inventories

The above methods of data generation were used but to give meaning to the information they generated they were supported by DOI and FAI. Mapping involves an activity in which participants compile maps that illustrate special components (people, institutions and other important areas) in their community, and potential resources found in each component (Ebersöhn, Eloff & Ferreira, 2007:139; Child Advocacy Project [CAP], 2009:22). Participants were then engaged in a discussion about what they thought could be the assets found for improving academic performance, how they could be used, possible challenges in accessing them, and how such challenges could be addressed. The advantage of this process in the study was that participants were given a chance to think about their community and what it presented as assets. During the reflections some learners indicated that they had not thought their community had abundant resources they could use to improve academic performance.

 Charts and cookie-pens were given to three groups of learners, teachers and the SGB to use for drawing community maps. There was also a choice of using pictures (photo voice and collage) to illustrate the community maps. In addition to the above methods, a capacity inventory was used to further identify the richness of each of the assets in the community and in the school. According to my observations these methods conscietised the participants more about their assets and how these could be used to improve academic performance. Even the reflections indicated that participants were surprised that the area they had been neglecting and undermining had an abundance of important resources, in the form of people, and institutional and physical structures.

## 4.7 METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was used as a data analysis method in this study. It is a type of discourse analytical tool that primarily concerns itself with the way social power abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context (van Dijk, 2008:85). For Widdowson (2004:89), driving the CDA is an aim to understand, expose, and ultimately resist social inequality. Locke (2004:1) also argues that CDA will "systematically explore opaque relationships of causality and determination between discursive practices, events and texts and wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes". The main goals of studying these aspects are to determine how they are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power. The introduction and background to this study, as well as the theoretical frameworks used, have revealed different perspectives on rurality and rural people, especially in relation to the power that they have to take charge of their educational challenges.

The general idea presented in this study under the discussion of operational concepts is that rurality is mostly associated with powerlessness, backwardness and underdevelopment. However, the study takes a different stance and argues that it may be understood from the kind of leadership available in the community. This perspective does not ignore the challenges in rural communities but acknowledges that there are several assets to be used in order to address them. Studying how the asset-based approach as a management strategy can be used to improve academic performance in a rural school attempts to reveal that the rural community studied has power to address the issue of poor academic performance using available assets.

Through PR, such power is exposed and other perspectives that have counteracted these ideas are also exposed and resisted. This is done through awareness of available assets and attempts to conscietise teachers, SMT, SGB and learners that they have capacity to address poor academic performance. The nature of the problem in this study is social. What makes CDA relevant as a data analysis method in this study is that the problem studied is social, and CDA, among other problems, focuses on social problems (van dijk, 2008:86). The important part is how CDA was used in this study as a data analysis method. Moreover, Locke (2004:2) affirms that CDA should be seen as a political intervention driven by socially transformative agenda. Locke further posits that CDA is a critical practice that advocates self-reflective practice. For these reasons, it appears that beyond being an analytical approach, CDA aims to achieve similar goals with CER and the asset-based approach as theoretical framework used in this

study. The above is also supported by Liasidou (2008:487), as she argues that CDA is an emancipatory research tool.

This study adopted Fiarclough's (1992) critical approach to discourse analysis. Driven by his approach, analysis in this study took place on three levels. The first level was *textual*, focussing on how language text is used and what relationships exist between text, interactions and social practices. According to Fairclough (1992:97), text may be spoken or written in the form of transcribed text. Data in this study was transcribed verbatim to ensure that all participants had access to it and analysis at a textual level was descriptive. The second level focused on *language as discursive practice*. This level is concerned with how text is produced and interpreted by participants, to interpret the configuration of discourse practice. It is about how discourse at local level, institutional level and societal level is arranged or shaped. The third level considers *discourse as a social practice*. The main focus here is to describe and explain how social issues (gender, power, culture, religion, politics, contextual issues) may have influenced what people perceive to be knowledge and how the mentioned social issues impact on the construction of that knowledge. This level is concerned with an explanation of how and why social practices are constituted, changed and transformed in the ways that they are.

Embedded in CDA is the researcher's understanding that analysis at all the three levels mentioned above is interpretive, descriptive and explanatory (Rogers, Malancharuvil-Berkes, Mosley, Hui & Joseph, 2005:371). The levels presented above were not treated as separate activities, thus not all levels may be found under the analysis of each finding presented in Chapter Five. To better understand data analysis in this study, the work of Rogers et al. (2005) was used to design a simplified framework of CDA. The framework (Figure 3.1, below) as presented below provides a clear account of different levels of Fiarclough's three-tiered framework.

**Figure 4.1: The three-tiered framework of CDA**



| TEXTS | INTERACTIONS | SOCIAL PRACTICES |
|---|---|---|
| **1st level: Textual analysis.**<br>- Text: spoken or written<br>- Describing connections between texts, interactions & social practice<br>- Studying language structures in a discursive event<br>- Analysis of language at ideational, interpersonal & textual level | **2nd level: discursive practice.**<br>- Interpretations of discourse practices<br>- Production, consumption & reproduction of text<br>- Goal: how text is interpreted & reproduced or transformed<br>- Analysis is focused on the process | **3rd level: Social practice.**<br>- Use interpretation & description<br>- Goal: to explain how & why social practices are constituted, changed & transformed<br>- explore what happens at sociocultural framework |

## 4.8 SOCIAL VERIFICATION AND VALIDATION OF DATA

PR as a participative approach is used to make sure that findings are verified by or with the participants. This is known as 'social verification' and 'validation of data' and should be done before any research reports are written, to check if participants' views have been captured accurately and to ensure quality and trustworthiness of the data (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:328). In conducting this study I had to employ a rigorous process in making sure that my biases were controlled and allowing participants to verify and validate the findings of the study. This was not only to ensure that facts were recorded accurately, but I believed it was important for a study guided by inclusivity and empowerment. The involvement of participants in this process fulfilled the principle of making sure that participants are involved from the beginning to the end, which also ensured transparency (Swantz, 2008:43). This can be done in a number of different ways, for example, the researcher can use triangulation of methods, member-checking and diffusion of results to participants for their confirmation (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:329; Swantz, 2008:43).

SWOT analysis, mapping using assets map through collages, inventory capacities, and photovoice were used to generate data in this study and so achieve triangulation of methods. Secondly, at the beginning of every meeting the facilitator (researcher) presented transcribed data to check if it had been performed accurately. Given the period that was available to conduct this study, social verification approaches were followed but more actions were required. For example, I would have liked to share the written report with the participants before this work was submitted for examination, but it was not possible. This presents one of the limitations for PR.

## 4.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

PR, as indicate above, involved long processes of working with people whose lives are thus intruded upon (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:521). This requires researchers to be ethical in their research processes. In my opinion, although PR is one of several different social research approaches, its ethical considerations transcend those of other qualitative studies, which are participative. This is because full participation may mean more engagement with the researcher and also with the phenomenon under study, and this may involve more risk. Several ethical considerations were made in this study.

I wrote to the University's Ethics Committee and Committee for Title Registration (CTR) in order to obtain permission to conduct this study, and ethical clearance was granted. Permission to

conduct the study in the above school was also sought with the principal, and was also granted. I wrote to the KZNDoE to obtain permission to conduct the study in the selected rural school and permission was granted. Sample letters that were written to the above departments are attached as appendices. The permission from the KZNDoE did not arrive before this report was submitted for examination, however this was not a challenge given that the KZNDoE only grants permission if the researcher has received permission from the school principal and participants from the researched schools. The study was than conducted on the basis that the school principal gave permission to conduct this study. Having obtained the above permission, consent was obtained from all participants and they agreed to voluntarily participate in this study. In the case of learners, letters were sent to their parents seeking permission for their children to participate in the study. These letters were written in IsiZulu, the language used by all parents.

I also followed ethical guidelines provided by Babbie and Mouton (2001:251-526), as participants were informed that their participation was voluntary, and I also ensured them they would come to no harm as a result of the study process or the reporting of findings. Furthermore, I promised that the identity and confidentiality of participants would be ensured through the use of pseudonyms and by making sure that information given could not be linked with any of the participants. Before the commencement of the research project, as suggested by Esau (2013:4), I met with the participants and discussed the aim of the research and what it would mean for them. This was to involve the participants from the commencement of the research project. To further ensure that the study was within the confines of PR and CER, I also ensured that participants accepted the problem and took part in deciding how the research process should unfold. I also ensured that my biases were controlled by making sure that findings were presented according to the confirmations of participants.

While the entire section addresses technical aspects of ethics in research, PR should also be ethical by ensuring that the promise of emancipation, research that responds to societal needs and transformative agenda are kept (Mertens, 2009:45). The research process followed in this study ensured that participants were made aware of the richness of their school and its surrounding communities. Moreover, the research process was followed in such a way that it was educating to participants, for example, asset mapping can help one to understand what resources are useful in the community.

## 4.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, design and methodological choices have been discussed and justified. The chapter was introduced by restating the research problem and the objectives of the study with an aim to continuously show how design and methodological choices are guided by the research problem. PR as an approach was discussed and its relevance justified. This was followed by the profiling of the research site and the participants. Following the profiles, data generation methods and data analysis methods were highlighted, followed by a chapter summary, discussion of ethical considerations and how they were implemented in the study.

The next chapter (Chapter Five) comprises a presentation and analysis and interpretation of data. It does not apply the theoretical framework to the interpretation and the critical discourse analysis, as this is in Chapter Fix, where findings and their discussions are presented.

# CHAPTER FIVE

# PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTEPRETATION OF DATA

## 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to investigate how the asset-based approach can be used as a school management strategy to improve academic performance in a rural school. The study aimed to provide a strategy that explains how the asset-based approach can be used as a school management strategy to improve academic performance. Data was generated to respond to the four objectives of this study, which were linked to the main aim as articulated above. The analysis of data was completed through CDA, as discussed under Section 4.7. As part of the introduction it is important to explain that group A, B and C are used to refer to groups that were constituted by teachers, learners and school governing body members. The data presented as from group A, B or C is a collective voice of these participants.

## 5.2 DATA ANALYSIS: MAJOR THEMES EMERGING

Five major themes that emerged in the data analysis are used as headings to present data in this chapter. These themes are not presented according to the objectives of the study and this suggests that the reader may find the discussion mixing different issues touching to different objectives.

### 5.2.1 Setting the Agenda for Assets' Utilisation

Setting the agenda for assets utilisation as suggested by the participants in this study incorporates a process of identifying areas in which assets need to be deployed before relevant ones are identified and mobilised. While this exercise begins from what needs to be addressed, it is based on participants' acknowledgement that their school possesses assets in the form of the primary layer, secondary layer and outside layer (Chikoko & Khanare 2012:25). According to the participants, the available assets may not be suitable for all school challenges. It was therefore required that the research process firstly focus on what needed to be addressed in order to improve academic performance of the learners. Participants wanted to begin with the identification of factors that hindered good academic performance in their school, after which

they indicated that it would be easy to prioritise available assets according to the areas that required urgent attention. The utterances from the groups presented below explain this clearly:

> *"Mr Myende kuyiqiniso ukuthi isikole sethu kanye nomphakathi banamakhono, banolwazi kanye neziningi izinto abangazenza kuze ukuphumelela kwabafundi kube sezingeni eliphakeme. Kodwa la esikoleni kunenqwaba yezingqinamba and kungalula ukuthi sazi ama-assets angasetshenziswa ukumelana nazo uma sibheka zona kuqala".* ["*Mr Myende it is true that our school and its community have skills, knowledge, and many other things they can do to improve learners' academic performance. However, there are many challenges here in the school and it would be easier to know which assets could be used to address the challenges if we start by identifying them"*] **(Group A)**.

> *"Noma isikole kanye nomphakathi esiwakhele singakwazi ukuxazulula izinkinga zaso, angiboni ukuthi sinakho konke okudingekayo ekuxazululeni ezinye zezingqinamba eziba nomthelela omubi ekutheni abafundi benze kahle emsebenzini wabo wesikole"* [*"While our school and its community can address its challenges, I don't think it has all that is needed to address some backlogs impacting negatively towards learners performing their academic responsibilities"*] **(Group C)**.

For these participants, understanding the issues hindering the anticipated academic performance was going to make the process of asset identification easier as they would know which were required. While beginning from the challenging issues may lead to the identification of useful assets, it also confirms the argument of the DoE (2005:8) made in Chapter Three that sometimes the focus of rural dwellers is foregrounded on what is not available. When this is done, Hlalele (2012a:113-114) cautions in Chapter Three that people are left convinced that their context contains more challenges than assets. Nevertheless, the participants agreed that beginning from the challenging issues will provide the school with a clear plan as to what issues need to be addressed, what assets are there and how such assets may be relevant in improving academic performance. Therefore, participants engaged in the process of discussing what issues were to be addressed through available assets.

Drawing from the asset-based approach, it may be argued here that starting from the agenda for assets utilisation is following the earlier challenged deficit or needs-based model (McKnight & Kretzmann, 1996:23). However, from the perspective of the participants, especially the teachers and the SMT, setting the agenda for asset utilisation was important in providing a map

of relevant assets for all issues impacting on academic performance. Further, it was established that the issue of academic performance required critical attention as not all assets available could be relevant. For this reason, beginning from what needed to be addressed formed the key aspect of the asset-based approach towards improving academic performance. While participants were in favour of the above idea, the rural context and how it has been understood may have influenced the way they addressed the issue of assets. For example, the NMF (2005:vii), as argued above, presents the idea that rural areas have a large number of unexplored and untapped assets. For this reason, people in this context may be unaware of them, thus emerging from what seem to be their challenges.

There was a need to critically engage with participants and confirm if the idea for agenda setting was not influenced by how they had been socialised by available research and discourse about rurality. As part of the discussion, I asked them why they felt strongly about understanding areas of need before asset identification and mobilisation. A few participants in Group A and in Group B argued that they did understand that each community had its own positive aspects and people who might be used to make contributions to the school, but it was difficult to point to those people without knowing what they would do when mobilised.

> "*Mr Myende mina ngikuqonda kahle kamhlophe ukuthi kungani kungamele sizibukele phansi njengabantu abangenalutho, kodwa futhi angiboni ukuthi kulula ukuqala sibheke ama assets ethu sibe singazi sidinga wona maphi. Ngenze nje isibonelo: uma kuwukuthi sidinga ukukhanda izicabha siding uhlobo oluthile lwabantu; angeke ke sivele sibheke umuntu sibe singazi ukuthi sizokwenzani ngaye"* ["*Mr Myende I fully understand why we are not supposed to undermine ourselves and think we are needy but I don't think it's easy to look at available assets without knowing which ones we need. If I can make an example: if we need to fix the door, we need someone who can do that. We cannot just ask anyone"*] **(Group A)**.

> "*Ngiyavumelana nomlingani wami kuleliphuzu alishoyo lokuthi kungcono sibheke izinto ezidinga ukulungiswa ngaphambi kokubheka esinako esizolungisa ngako"* ["*I agree with my colleague in what she said, it is better to look for what needs to be fixed and then establish what can be used to fix it"*] **(Group B)**.

Surprisingly, the voices above were from the teachers and the meeting was constituted by both the teachers and the learners. Most of the teachers in the school were not from the same community. As much as their justification was that asset identification would be easy if hindering

factors were known, their powerful voice in this could also be understood from their ability to have their voices heard over the local people. This confirms what is stated in Chapter Two about rural constituencies being unable to monopolise their voices over urban constituencies (NMF, 2005:139). Most of these teachers came from other areas and it is possible that their voice was actually not portraying the reality about the rural context under study. Their association with areas " better" than the studied one could possibly make them think identifying problems first, before assets, was ideal, given that they thought rural communities in question were impoverished, as confirmed in page 39 under 2.4.2. Essentially, an asset-based approach, as confirmed in the literature chapter (Section 3.2), begins from what each community possesses and then evaluates what can be done through what is possessed (Ebersöhn & Mbetse, 2003; Keeble, 2006:2; Khanare, 2009:24; Venter, 2010:33; Loots, Ebersöhn, Ferreira, Eloff, 2012:58).

Despite beginning from the needs apparently being against the asset-based approach, the process appeared effective in addressing the challenge noted in this study. Participants were able to identify possible assets for improving academic performance because their agenda setting allowed them to engage with the issues impacting on academic performance and critically engage themselves in the process of identifying possible assets. From the CER with its transformative agenda, research should strive to understand and change how things are understood and done. The participants, through defining the agenda for assets utilisation, provided another asset-based approach perspective which seemed to be working in their context and also for the identified problem. With this stated, I argue here that beginning from what is needed may not necessarily mean that the approach is deficit. However, it is deficit if it is controlled by externals for the community and not by the community for the community. In the context of this study, it was the voice of teachers that led to the identification of challenging issues. However, the process of challenges and assets identification was undertaken by everyone who was involved.


### 5.2.2 Key Challenges Impacting on Academic Performance

A number of issues were identified by most participants as challenges impacting on academic performance in the school. Drawing from the nature of these issues, I categorise them into internal and external factors. Coming from most of the participants (learners, teachers, SMT) as challenging issues, were the lack of discipline amongst learners and teachers in school, poor

rapport between the school and its community, social issues such as crime in and outside the school, drug and alcohol abuse, teenage pregnancy, poverty, bullying inside and outside the school, lack of teaching and learning resources, as well as unwelcoming conditions in the school.

### 5.2.2.1 Lack of discipline amongst teachers and learners

As pointed above, lack of discipline in the school was an issue that needed to be addressed through available assets in the process of improving academic performance. Participants (teachers and learners) indicated that the school has discipline challenges. The learners and the school principal confirmed that the problem of discipline was found amongst learners and teachers.

> *"Inkinga yezingane zamanje kunzima ukuzikhuza. Ngesikhathi esidlule nakuba bebekhona abangezwa bekuncono ngoba abaningi bebelalela. Njengamanje sinenkinga lezingane azilalaleli futhi azisazi ngokuthi siyini kuzona [and] konke lokhu kwenza kube lukhuni ukuzifundisa"* [*"The problem of learners of today is that it is difficult to control them. In the olden days there were few learners who were ill-disciplined but at least many learners were cooperative. At present, we have a problem, these learners do not want to listen and they don't even know who we are to them. This makes it very difficult to teach in the school"*]. **(Teacher C).**

> [*"The culture of learning [Erasmus] has changed*]. *Lengane zalangakini azikho [motivated]. Zinenkinga yokungabi disciplined and loko kwenza zingazi kubaluleke ngani ukufunda. Enye inkinga ke eyokuthi nabanye bethu njengothisha asifuni ukuba disciplined siye kofundisa makumele siyofundisa. Ikona nje saze sayikhipha enye yamadepartment [hidden for ethical reasons] kwicurriculum inkinga yokungazinikeli kothisha kule department."* [*"… These learners are not motivated. They have a problem of being ill disciplined and it causes the lack of understanding of the importance of education"*]. **(Principal: Muzi).**

The issue of lack of discipline and learners' inability to respect and listen to their teachers when disciplining them also emerged from the groups discussions (group A, B and C). Learners in these groups during their presentations of the SWOT analysis all agreed that learner discipline

was an issue to be addressed if the school wanted to improve academic performance (*SWOT analysis is presented later)*. For learners the lack of discipline not only affected the internal activities of the school but also created a negative image of the school to the outside community. Learners further indicated that sometimes lack of discipline would be demonstrated by many learners in the presence of outside members of the school and they left the school with a negative picture about the school and its learners. It also emerged from the learners' groups that this had happened in the presence of possible contributors in the school and may in one way or another thwart the contributions of assets by external people in the school.

> *"Thina kweyethu [igroup] Sithole ukuthi ukungabi [disciplined] kwabafundi kumele kulungiswe kuze sikwazi ukuba nezinga lokuphumelela kwabafundi. Kwesinye isikhathi uthola ukuthi kunabantu bangaphandle abafike lesikoleni bayabona indlela esingaziphethe ngayo kahle. Labo Bantu kungenzeka bahambe naleso sithombe esingesihle abasificile. Abanye balabantu basuke bengasiza ngezinto ezining lapha esikoleni kodwa bangabe besakwazi ngenxa yokungabi disciplined kwethu." ["In our group we found out that lack of discipline in our learners should be addressed so that we can achieve improved academic performance. Sometimes you find out that there are external visitors in the school and they can see our lack of discipline and when those people live the school they live with that negative picture. Some of these people may have some contributions into the school but because of the lack of discipline in the school they may not contribute"]* **(Group C).**

Adding to the issue of discipline were group B members who stated that the issue of lack of discipline was not only the learners' problem. They stated that some teachers also needed to be disciplined for the success of the school. They agreed in their group and with other groups when they were presenting that some teachers would not come to class and learners would find space to misbehave. For improved academic performance, the group stated that discipline by both teachers and learners needed to be observed.

> *["Best behaviour in learners, teachers and parents… In our group we thought there is need for learners and teachers as well as parents to be disciplined"]. Sisho lokhu ngenxa yokuthi akuzona izingane kuphela ezibuye zilahlekelwe idiscipline. Kwesinye isikhathi uthola uthisha engekho eclassin ngeperiod yakhe bese ke nezingane zigange" ["we say this because it is not only learners who lack discipline. Sometimes teachers do not pitch in class for their periods and learners will find space to misbehave"]* **(Group B).**

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For all the above mentioned participants, discipline, if not addressed could go a long way to destroying the image of the school. The important and crucial part was that it could even destroy the school relationship with other external stakeholders who are possible assets contributors. The above discussion demonstrates that assets, after they are identified, need to be deployed towards addressing the issue of discipline, and this related directly to academic performance.

### 5.2.2.2 Rapport between the school and the local community

To tap into untapped assets, learners, the school principal and a group of teachers also suggested that there was a need to change the kind of relationship that existed between the school and the local community. What seemed to be thwarting this process was that from all participants there was an aspect of indecisiveness in terms of who is responsible for creating such relationships. In a discussion with one of the HoDs during our meeting, when I was asking for permission to use the school, she stated that there was a poor relationship between the community and the school. For her, this poor rapport was contributing negatively in the school. For example, she stated that because the community looked at them as outsiders and strangers they did not see any value the community could bring to the school. However, she did note that the local community were possible contributors, but a strong relationship needed to be established for the school to tap into those assets the community might contribute.

> *"Ngokwami mina ziningi kabi izinto umphakathi ongasisiza ngazo ekukhuphuleni izinga lokuphumelela kwabafundi. Inking isekutheni umphakathi wala kulendawo awusazi ngokuthi singobani. Usibuka njengezihambi bese nathi sigcina singenandaba nayo lendawo kanye nesikole uqobo lwaso. Ngicabanga ukuthi kungakuhle ukuthi kuqale kulungiswe ubudlelwano. Mhlawumbe uThishanhloko angahambela umphakathi uma kunemicimbi ukuze akhulume nomphakathi ngesikole ngokuthi kungaba kuphi ukusebenzisana". ["From my opinion there is a lot the community can help us with in improving academic performance. The problem is that the local community takes us as outsiders and we end up not caring for the community and the school. I think it will be better if this relationship can be fixed. Maybe the school principal can attend community events and talk to the community about the school and possible collaborations"]* **(HoD: Magalela)**

There are two key issues in the above utterances. The first is about building relationship with the community to understand and establish possible areas of collaboration. The second is about

who should fix the relationship between the school and the community. Mattessich (2009) and Green & Haines (2012) argue that community development requires community building. It is also argued in Chapter Three (see Bryk & Schneider 2003:40) that easy identification and mobilisation of assets require strong community building that is driven by social trust, and it has been confirmed in the data above that the school principal needed to build positive relationship with the local community, as advocated by Mattessich (2009:52) and Hyman (2002:2). As stated in Chapter Three, as part of harnessing community assets leaders need to facilitate community engagement that will result in the sharing of information available from all sides.

Essentially, the second aspect of who is responsible for meeting the community and establish the relationship as it emerged above has been a challenge in community improvement. In this case, the HoD suggested that the principal should meet the community. When asked why, she pointed out that the principal as the leader in the school has power and is known in the community for his leadership position. While the HoD may be blamed for pushing the responsibility to the principal it needs to be acknowledged here that there are two aspects of power at play from views. In the context in which this study was conducted, leadership positions are mostly held by man, except the position of the counsellor, which is political and voted on. Secondly, in most of the events it has become a norm that community leaders will be male. Being socialised in this context, the HoD's suggestion that it is the school principal's responsibility to meet the community and build a sound relationship with them is understandable, on the basis that leadership in the community is associated with power gained through positions and also that men dominate as leaders in the area. In the literature (Chapter Three), amongst the possible challenges to the asset-based approach, I drew from Mathie and Cunningham (2005:184) who argue that sometimes the aspect of community building as a process of asset identification may be difficult due to power relations. It is shown in the data above that power issues may pose questions as to who should lead the process of meeting the community. However, given the culture of the community, the principal as an appointed manager of the school is tasked with creating rapport between the community and the school. The creation of the rapport as witnessed above is seen to be amongst the first key steps towards using the asset-based approach for the improvement of academic performance.

### 5.2.2.3 Social issues and academic performance

The study identified social issues such as crime in and outside the school, drug and alcohol abuse, violence in the form bullying, teenage pregnancy and poverty, as issues that had a critical influence on academic performance in the studied school. Most participants reached consensus that assets in the school and from the community will need to be deployed in addressing the mentioned social issues as they regarded them to be amongst the hindrances towards improved academic performance. In their presentations all groups (group A, B and C) pointed out the following:

> *"Thina okunye esikutholile ukukhulelwa kwabantwana (kwabafundi). Ngemicabango yethu ukukhulelwa kuyamphazamisa umfundi akakwazi ukugxila Ezifundweni zakhe. Lokhu kungaphinda kuphazamise abanye babafundi". ["Another factor we identified in our group is learner pregnancy. In our opinion, learner pregnancy disturbs a learner as she try to concentrate on her academic work. This may also disturb other learners in the classroom"]* **(Group A).**

> "*Okunye esithe masicabanga ngesikole esikutholile ukuthi abafundi esikhathini samanje bagxile kakhulu ezidakamizweni. Iningi lalaba bafundi sinabo lapha esikoleni kanti uma sebezisebenzisile izidakamizwa abakwazi ukulalela othisha*". *["What we have also found when thinking about the school is that at this time learners are using drugs. Many of these learners are found here in the school and they cannot cooperate when they have used drugs"]* **(Group C)**.

> *["In our group we have discussed and we reached an agreement that if we can address bullying by ensuring more security in the school, address learners' pregnancy, the carrying of weapons and the use of drugs academic performance can be improved"]* (**Group B).**

During the discussion with the school principal, several issues identified by learners also emerged. According to the school principal, issues such as violence and drug abuse in the school were amongst the ones that disturbed the school as it attempted to improve and sustain academic performance. This emerging issue has been identified by other scholars. For example Kamper (2009) identified social ills similar to the ones above as issues school principals have to deal with as they manage their schools. Surprisingly, some members of the community were noted by the school principal to be perpetuating violence in the school by being frightened to act against those learners who had misbehaved. When asked what factors he thought would need

to be addressed in order to improve academic performance, the principal's utterances were as follows:

> *"Yabona Erasmus enye inkinga esinayo lesikoleni inking yodlame nezidakamizwa. Ngelenye ilanga ngiphume leoffice ngabona omunye Umfundi egwaza omunye omfundi. Ngamsukela loyo mfundi ngaze ngambamba ngamvalela la eoffice ngabiza abazali bakhe kanye nabomfundi owayegwaziwe. Okwangimangaza, abazali yibo abavimba ukuba lomfundi owegwaze omunye angaboshwa."* *[You see Erasmus, another problem we have in the school is violence and drugs. One day I saw one learner stabbing another learner with a knife I managed to catch that boy and locked him in my office. I then called the parents of the victim and the victimised. What surprised me is that parents were the ones who did not want the boy to be arrested"]* **(Principal: Muzi).**

The challenges noted above are not prevalent only in the rural context, but the media has shown that social ills are prevalent in schools. However, in Chapter Three, it was indirectly stated that rural schools' assets should not only be focussed on teaching learning, but also need to be channelled towards social ills and other infrastructural challenges (Balfour et al., 2008:98) that these schools face. For example, drawing from Hlalele (2012a:113), rural schools face tremendous barriers that hinder learners' high academic achievement. What is different between the findings and the literature is the case of the principal. There appears to be no consensus on the decisions to be taken with regards to disciplinary issues. The school principal on one hand wanted the learner who stabbed another learner to be arrested, while the parents had a different view. At a surface level, one may argue that there is poor relationship between parents and the school, however, on another level this can be analysed from the social capital perspective, as argued for by Boyd et al. (2008:189). Due to the social cohesion that exists between different people in rural communities, the parents may not opt for opening a criminal charge against the boy who stabbed another learner. In this case, social cohesion may lead to the exploration of several indigenous ways of addressing school issues as they are argued for by Mapara (2009:140); Olatokun and Ayanbode (2009:287) and Chakwizira and Nhemachena (2012:187). While trying to use homemade solutions is also an asset-based approach principle, the issues of relationships have been pointed out in this chapter (*see Sub-section 5.2.2.2*) and Myende (2012) as cited in Chapter Three posits that inability to create sound relationships is one of the challenges of the asset-based approach.

### 5.2.2.4 Shortage of teaching and learning resources

The shortage of teaching and learning resources in schools and rural schools in particular is not new. Several scholars, such as Balfour et al. (2008), Hlalele (2012a) and Walberg et al. (2012), have noted it and it has been argued by Myende (2012) that it has a negative impact on the success of rural schools in meeting their goals. The findings from the participants confirm that the shortage of teaching and learning resources continues to pose a threat to schools as they attempt to improve academic performance. According to the participants in the study it was crucial to identify those relevant assets that could be used to address the shortage of teaching and learning resources.

In their presentation, Group B indicated that there was a persistent shortage of stationery and furniture in the school, caused by an unexpected increase in enrolment. For this group, this was disturbing some learners as they could not have all needed stationery to do their academic work. Another important resource seen to be lacking, yet important for learners' improved academic performance, was computer equipment. The point was raised by Group B but the other two groups (C and A) agreed that there was much they could do with computers to improve their academic performance. The principal added on this point that the school had recently attracted learners from different areas such that enrolment had increased against lack of both physical and human resources in the school. He stated that they had not had sufficient teachers, books or classrooms since enrolment had increased. Surprisingly, the principal and other two HoDs indicated that some resources had been stolen by some community members.

> *"Enye into esiyobonile kweyethu igroup ukushoda kwezinsiza kufundisa ngengestationery kanye namacomputer. Okunye okushodayo njengefinisha kwenziwa ukuthi kade sibancane manje sesibaningi. Kwesinye isikhathi uthola uthisha efundisa abanye beme ngezinyawo ngenxa yokuthi azikho izihlalo namatafula okuthi bahlale. Ngokwethu sicabanga ukuthi lokhu kumele kulungiswe ngoba awukwazi Ukufunda ume ngezinyawo". ["What we have also identified in our group is the shortage of teaching and learning support resources such as stationery and computers. What is also deficient is furniture and this is caused by the recent increase in enrolment. Sometimes you will find a teacher busy in class while other learners are standing because there are no chairs and table for them to sit. From our view this needs to be solved since you can learn while you standing"]* (**Group B).**

The above condition in the school was also confirmed by the school principal and the two HoDs, and they were also concerned that the situation was not conducive to teaching and learning.

> *"You remember when I asked you to try and find the chairs and the tables at the University; we have a problem in the school. We have attracted learners from Emalangeni and from our neighbouring schools. The previous year we had few learners and now we do not have sufficient furniture due to the increased enrolment. We even have shortage of stationery we ordered based on last year's enrolment. Unfortunately some of resources like chairs get stolen by the community"* **(principal: Muzi).**

On the same point, two HoDs complained about a shortage of resources that made it difficult for learners to learn. For the HoDs the shortage of stationery and furniture was caused by lack of planning on the part of the principal. The HoDs said:

> *"One of the things we experience here in the school is the shortage of resources for teaching and learning. Some of the resources, especially the furniture is always identifiable in some neighbouring houses and you see that this is a school chair."* (**HoD: Zikode).**

> *"Mr Myende we have a problem with resources, as we about to write examinations I don't even know where learners will sit because as we speak some learners are standing in the classrooms because chairs and tables are not sufficient. The problem is that 'umphathi' seem to be doing nothing about this. Yet this is the third month schools have opened."* (**HoD: Nxamalala**).

Two important aspects emerge from the above extracts that are beyond the shortage of resource. While literature has shown that rural schools have a shortage of resources, it emerges above that some community members become a liability to the school as they are the ones who steal resources from the school. Secondly, the accusations appear to be levelled at the school principal for not organising resources in advance. The blaming of the school principal can be justified from literature in Chapter Three (Section 3.5), that school effectiveness is linked to strong principal leadership (Coleman & Earley, 2005; Sanders, 2006; Fullan, 2007; Kamper, 2009) and school principals are key assets in the success of their school (Chikoko & Khanare, 2012). However, from the asset-based approach, the notion is that everyone should be seen as a resource to his or her community development (Braithwaite, 2009). Thus, this challenges the HoDs' views that the situation could have been addressed by the school principals alone. Moreover, that principals have been entrusted with power for driving their school forward, the

HoDs' thinking and reasoning can be related to this notion. On the other hand, in Chapter Three (Sub-section 3.4) it is argued that site-base management (SBM) sees it as the responsibility of everyone (principal, HoDs and teachers) to ensure that schools are managed in the ideal direction (Briggs & Wohlstetter, 2003; Rainey & Honing, 2012). This will then question the reasoning behind HoDs distancing themselves from the running of the school. From my point of view there appear invisible barriers that hinder other people, in this case HoDs, from contributing their assets to the school.

The second issue that emerged in the discussion of the shortage of resources is that community members have sometimes become a liability by stealing from the school. As stated above, one HoD did perceive unfriendliness between the school and the community, with the community looking at teachers as strangers or outsiders, and thus teachers were not acknowledging the community. In Chapter Three (Section 3.4) it was argued that for schools to harness community assets towards improving academic performance there would be a need for building social capital (Emery & Flora, 2006), which is further characterised by social reciprocity and trust between members of the school and members of the community. Hyman (2002:2) has proposed that relationships characterised by exchange of information are required to achieve meaningful school-community engagement.

As I argue in Chapter One, the school in this case has remained at a distance from the community. It has hardly identified the positive aspects to be gained from the community, whereas on the other hand the community has not identified its role in the school. This was also confirmed by learners' voices during their presentations, as they stated that they would appreciate if the SGB could build a sound relationship between the school and the community. They also emphasised that parents needed to play a role in making sure that their children were doing their academic work. Moreover, learners stated that collaborative culture and caring for the school by school and community members could help in improving academic performance. Below are extracts from their brainstorming charts, which were also voiced during presentations:

> "…*SGB.: Ngokuthi banake abafundi baphinde babheke ukuthi isimo sesikole siyahambiselana yini nesimo sokufunda esilungile…kumele baphinde baxhumanise isikole namazali ngendlela..*" [*"…SGB: by paying attention to learners and observe if the school conditions are conducive and also connect the school to the community…"*] (**Group C**).

*"…ukubambisana komphakathi nokuthanda iskole sabo kungaba wusizo ekulungiseni imiphumela yabafundi…"* *["…collaboration from the side of the community and love for their school can be helpful in the improvement of learners' results…"]* (**Group B**).

In their classification of assets, Chikoko and Khanare (2012:29-31), as indicated in the literature review, there are three important tiers of assets which present different contributions to the school. Their classification shows that there is interrelationship between the three layers. This is demonstrated above, where it is shown that the school also relies on secondary assets (parents and other members of the community). For this interrelationship to materialise it is important that schools and their communities develop social cohesion, sense of community and social participation, as suggested by Boyd et al. (2008:189) and Mathie and Cunningham (2003:479).

As presented by the voices of HoDs and the principal, the theft of school resources by community members and the culture of hostility that existed shows that before assets are mobilised for academic performance there is a need to draw from assets to perform what Flora, Flora, Bastian and Manion (2004) refer to as 'bonding social capital'. These scholars define this as a process whereby community members try to foster community cohesion. I argue here that knowing what each partner in the school and in the community may contribute as an asset towards improving academic performance will require community cohesion, as presented above. In other words, the asset-based approach may require social trust and reciprocity before the school can be in a position to know what assets are there and how they may be utilised to improve academic performance.

## 5.2.3 Key approaches for assets Identification

In the previous sections, setting the agenda for assets utilisation which is fundamentally the identification of priority areas for assets' deployment was presented. In this current section approaches for assets identification are presented. Three approaches were used to identify the assets, namely a SWOT analysis, capacity inventory, and collages. The SWOT analysis and inventory capacities were used by all participants, while collages were only used by group of learners. These approaches not only served as means to assets identification but also presented participants with an opportunity to learn more about their school, community and themselves. This was revealed during the reflections in which some of the participants reflected on and appreciated the use of the above tools of asset identification.

Commenting on the use of capacity inventories and the SWOT analysis, all three groups of learners indicated that they were not aware that their value in the school was beyond them being learners. While the utterances below came from one group, all other groups and their members concurred with the view:

> *"Besingazi ukuthi ngaphandle kokufunda njengabafundi kukhona izinto esingazenza ukuqinisekisa ukuthi abanye abafundi bayazinikela emsebenzini wabo wesikole. Ngokwenza ama-activities esiwenzile sibone ukuthi abafundi uqobo kuningi abangakwenza ekukhuphuleni ezinga lemiphumela lapha esikoleni". ["We didn't know that besides being learners there are other things we can do to ensure other learners are dedicated to their academic work. By doing the activities (SWOT analysis and capacity inventories) we noticed that there is a lot learners can do to improve their academic performance"]* **(Group B).**

The voice of learners above also confirms the argument made in Chapter Three, as cited by Valentin (2001:54) and Dyson (2004:632). These scholars argue that conducting a SWOT analysis is crucial if the intention is to harness the strategic insight of individuals and organisations. Moreover, conducting a SWOT analysis fulfilled the goal of CER, which is to challenge distorted ideas that have been spread through traditional research procedures (Mahlomaholo 2012).

In this case, participants within the rural context, as I argue in Chapter Two, have been blinded by half-truths with a claim that rural communities live within areas characterised by unfavourable social, political, technological and economic conditions (NMF 2005:140; Balfour, Nkambule et al., 2011:342; Hlalele 2012b:113). Importantly, the SWOT analysis not only revealed that the above claims provide half-truths about the rural context, but also suggest that rural schools and their communities have a potential to take charge in addressing their educational challenges. This also confirms the asset-based approach principle that rural people, if treated as partners along the path, can realise their potential (Chikoko & Khanare, 2012; Myende, 2012). Essentially, the surprises that these learners have shown in this study cannot be divorced from how they have been marginalised and only viewed as learners who cannot contribute to the improvement of their own academic performance.

In addition to the SWOT analysis, teachers and learners as well as the SGB, commented about the overlooked potentials that exist amongst them as members of the school. Their comments were mainly associated with the capacities identified through capacity inventories.

They also commented about other potential assets that have been overlooked outside the school. These were former learners, unused community buildings and local business owners, and well as parents who are not members of the SGB. This corresponds with the tiers of assets described by Chikoko and Khanare (2012). In their categorisation drawn from the findings of their study, they acknowledge that the primary layer consisted of those assets that are immediate to the school. As far as this study is concerned, these were learners, teachers, and non-teaching staff and SGB members. On the side of secondary assets, the participants acknowledged that contributions could be sought from local business owners and parents of learners and other neighbouring schools. These were the thoughts of different participants based on his view of available capacities:

> *"The school has produced several professionals and other local business owners. If these people can be willing they can contribute in the school but few of them are always around."* **(Principal: Muzi).**

> *"Nathi singabafundi singaqinisekisi ukuthi abalingani bethu bayawenza umsebenzi wesikole futhi bayayilandela imigomo yesikole ukuze Ukufunda kuhambe kahle okungadala ukuthi izinga lemiphumela libe lihle". ["We, as learners we can ensure that our school mates are doing their school work and ensure that they are following the school policies so that teaching and learning takes place and this will result in improved academic performance."]* **(Group A).**

> *"Our former learners can contribute in improving academic performance in many ways…izingane zamanje (current learners) azifuni Ukufunda and abantu abanjengani Erasmus (researchers' name) can come and motivate learners so they can understand the value and meaning of education"* **(HoD: Magalela).**

While the contributions from different assets were noted, it also appeared that there was a need to create a culture of sharing and collaboration between the school and the community. From the perspectives of Emery and Flora (2006:21); Mathie and Cunningham (2003:479) and Boyd et al. (2008), establishing a culture of sharing and collaboration contributes to the establishment of social capital. On the other hand, this forms the establishment of social trust as advocated by Bryk and Schneider (2003:40). Moreover, the principal's view is in line with that of Traverso-Yapez, Maddalena and Bavington (2012:1), who argue for community capacity building as established by collaborative involvement of all stakeholders. Chaskin (2001:290) also supports

this, and argues that the asset-based approach can only work in the presence of collaborative work from all parties.

The sentiments above were not only voiced by the Principal, but were seconded by one HoD and two teachers who felt that local people and former learners could be drawn closer to the school if their contributions were valued. While the principal felt that former school learners who were successful did not value contributing to the school, learners did provide a sound reasoning for this challenge. From learners' perspectives, they knew many former learners with potential to serve as crucial assets in the school but they were now living far away, in cities, due to work and higher education needs. The view of learners was presented in literature through the concept of "brain drain". It is indicated in Chapter Three that one of the challenges for rural communities is the decline of a population that could serve as a potential asset. More challenging is that the decline mostly happens amongst the informed and educated members of the community (Howley, 2009; Rhodes & Beall, 2009).

In summarising the aspect of key approaches for asset identification, it appears above that the SWOT analysis presented the participants with an opportunity to make a deep and critical reflection on their school in relations to the assets needed for improving academic performance. It also provided a general picture of the school, the community and its members, while the inventory capacities allowed individual participants to take a critical look at their skills as individuals and how they could be of value to the school in improving academic performance. Importantly, all the tools presented participants with an opportunity to identify key challenges (threats and weaknesses) that existed in the school and needed to be addressed if the asset-based approach were to be used to improve academic performance. The approaches used above provided a clear picture of the critical assets in the improvement of academic performance.

### 5.2.4 Critical Assets in the Improvement of Academic Performance

Through the SWOT analysis, capacity inventories and the collages, several assets that are critical in the improvement of academic performance were identified. These were notably from the school boundaries (mainly the people), beyond the school boundaries (local community members, institutions and built capital) and those beyond the school and its community. The diagram below presents the aforementioned critical assets using the conception of three tiers of assets as adopted by Chikoko and Khanare (2012:29) from Mourad and Ways (1998).
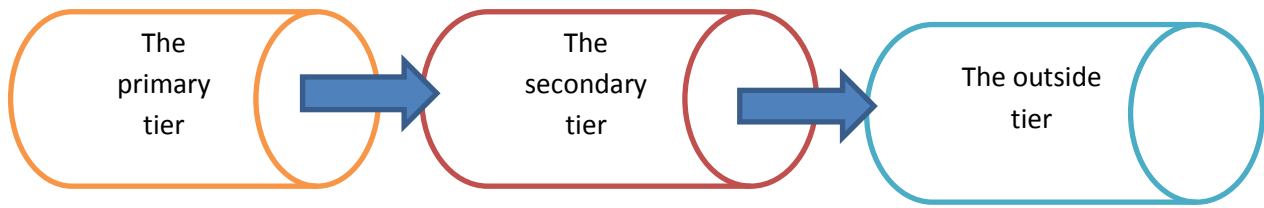
**Figure 5.1 (three tiers of assets) adapted Chikoko & Khanare (2012)**

Within the primary tier, the teachers who participated identified themselves as assets in the school. Further, they identified the school principal, the SGB and learners as other key assets. On the other hand, the school learners who participated mentioned the principal, SGB and teachers as critical assets in the improvement of academic performance. Learners further identified built capital in the form of unused classrooms as other assets in the school that could be used to improve academic performance. The school principal also identified teachers, the STM, SGB, learners and the school library as critical assets for improving academic performance in the school. The assets identified above confirm those found by Chikoko and Khanare (2012:30) and Myende (2012:46) in their studies to be assets within the school boundaries.

Within the secondary tier, the built capital in the form of community halls was identified as critical assets by learners. On the other hand, all participants identified local businessman and women, especially taxi owners, as critical assets. Government institutions such as the local clinic and other neighbouring schools, parents, traditional leadership, the ward counsellor and former school learners, were regarded as critical assets towards the improvement of academic performance.

Within the last tier, few assets were identified, notably the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and the Department of Social welfare (DoSW). From the asset-based approach perspective, identifying a few assets from the outside tier is advantageous because it confirms the participants understanding that they have to build their schools from inside-out, meaning they have to draw from the primary tier and move to the secondary tier before they consider the outside tier as proposed by the asset-based approach proponents. Some of the above assets are discussed below to provide an in-depth analysis of why they were regarded as important for improving academic performance.

While several assets were identified, the section below only discusses the few that were given prominence by participants.

### *5.2.4.1. The principal*

The school's principal was identified as a key role player and asset in ensuring that academic performance of learners would be improved in the school. For both the teachers and the learners, improved academic performance depended on whether the principal was able to perform some responsibilities, such as ensuring that the school had sufficient teachers and that they taught in the way they should. For all the participants (learners, teachers, SMT and SGB) these two issues (availability of teachers and effective teaching) were amongst the critical ones in improving academic performance. Although both the teachers and the learners were present at the meeting in which the above issues were raised, learners seemed to be more vocal about them. Participants in their groups spoke of the principal:

> *"UThishanhloko kungaba kuhle mangase asizamele abanye othisha ngoba bayashoda"* [*"We would appreciate if our school principal can get us more teachers because we don't have enough"*] **(Group C).**

> *"UThishanhloko angasiza ngokuthi abheke ukuthi othisha bafundisa izingane ngendlela efanele yini"* [*"Our school principal may help with monitoring teachers to ensure that they teach learners accordingly"*] **(Group A)**.

> *"Umphathi wethu mina ngicabanga ukuthi konke kuqala ngaye. Uma ngase aqikelele ukuthi sinevision of njengesikole ngokuthi wonke umuntu kanye naye umphathi usebenza ngokwevision yonke into ingalunga". ["I think that everything begins with our leader. If he/she can ensure that we have a vision and everyone (including him/her) works according to the vision things can be better"].* (**Teacher A**).

> *"Mina ngicabanga ukuthi kuningi esingakuthola kumalungu ahlukahlukene esikole kodwa loko kudinga ukuthi umholi wethu aqikelele ukuthi kunomudlelwano phakathi kwesikole nezingxenye ezehlukene nomphakathi" ["I think there is more we can gain from different school members but it requires our leader to ensure that relationships exist between different school-community members"]* **(Teacher B).**

The above responses not only point to the school principal as a key asset in addressing some issues that may impact on academic performance, but they also expose how learners have

become observant of the issues affecting their education. In an environment such as the rural context, this may be a shock as the assumption is that learners will be less vocal as they may be assumed to be powerless within the school context. However, the introduction of the SASA (RSA, 1996b) has offered space to learners to be part of the decision-making process in the school. Therefore, this may justify their apparently being vocal about what they think the principal should do in order to improve academic performance.

Given the above discussion, there was a need to critically engage with the aspect of employing and monitoring teachers. This discussion resulted in the identification of another important asset for improving academic performance, namely ex-school learners, and their possible contributions, to be discussed in greater detail below.

The school principal was further seen as crucial in ensuring that relationships inside the school were such that everyone would feel valuable and willingly dedicate his or her skills and capacities to the improvement of academic performance. As stated in the literature review, building working reciprocal relationships is a key aspect of community building (Oakley & Tsao 2007:820) and also of strengthening social capital (Saegert, 2006:276; Boyd, 2008:189; Hlalele, 2012a:113). Some of the teachers who participated in the study and one HoD indicated that the principal needed to create a culture in which every member of the school was concerned about the welfare of learners and that of other teachers. For these participants, this would ensure that people are willing to support one idea of improving and sustaining academic performance through their skills and capacities.

While the aspect of ensuring a reciprocal relationship is important to be addressed by school leaders to ensure that the asset-based approach works, the discussion above also present what may be regarded as a challenge to the asset-based approach. For example, the school principal is acknowledged as a crucial asset but of surprise is that he is now seen to be the only leader in the school. This is contrary to what is reported in the literature with regards to motivation for the asset-based approach. From Briggs and Wohlstetter (2003:351) and Rainey and Honing (2012:468), it is not justifiable to point fingers at the school principal as these scholars demonstrate that school management and leadership should be localised and made a responsibility of everyone with a vested interest in what is happening in the school. However, on the other hand, is it also confirmed in Glanz (2006:16); Johns (2003:319) and Myende (2012:56) that principal leadership becomes crucial in building relationships, particularly for the asset-based approach.

The CER as reported in Chapter Two is committed to addressing unequal power relationships (Carr & Kemmis, 2005; Mahlomaholo & Netshandama, 2010; Cohen et al., 2011) and as a result there was a need to gain depth on why participants, especially teachers, only accused principal, thus giving more power to one person. In probing for depth it appeared that other participants in the school felt that their ideas were sometimes being sabotaged by the school principal and this hindered them from willingly contributing from their skills and capacities. The participants' views can also be corroborated by the principal's voice during the time when the researcher was asking permission for access to the school. Initially, the access was denied and after it was granted the involvement of everyone was questioned by the principal, under the claim that people in the community were not educated and thus had no contribution to make towards improving academic performance.

> "*I understand Erasmus (facilitator' name) that you are using participatory action research and you want to involve people but abantu bakulendawo abafundile (people in this community are not educated). Ayikho into abangasiza ngayo (there is nothing they can help with) in improving academic performance.*" **(Principal: Muzi).**

From the above it is therefore not surprising that the principal is viewed in this way by other participants in this study. Additionally, the discussion in Chapter Three (3.8) shows that those entrusted with legitimate or positional power (Du Toit et al., 2010:213) are sometimes able to block participation by others. This will then justify why participants felt strongly that many decisions and responsibilities remained within the powers of the principal. Traditionally, organisations are structured such that power is located within one person or a group of people. Gavanta and Cornwall (2008:173) confirms this and argues that it presents limitations to organisations which may be related to this study, as confirmed by participants. Although participants (teachers) agreed that they needed to have their voice heard, they did indicate that sometimes they had been discouraged and decided to withdraw their extended skills and capacities. In other words there was a perceived non-existence of the invitational leadership aspect, which leads to potential contributors withdrawing their assets.

### 5.2.4.2 The School Governing Body

The importance of the SGB as an asset in the school was raised by most participants. There are two roles that appeared crucial for it in the process of improving academic performance. According to the participants, these were creating partnership between the school and the

community and ensuring that learners are always prepared for learning. In their collages, different groups of learners identified the SGB as one of the key assets for improving academic performance. For learners, creating the partnership between the school and community will ensure that the school community is involved in all school activities that are aimed at improving academic performance. In the discussion of the collages these were the utterances of learners:

"*amaSGB members angabamba iqhaza ngokuthi anakekele abafundi ngokuthi babheke ukuthi basesimweni esifanele sokufunda". ["SGB members can contribute by ensuring that learners are prepared for learning".]* **(Group A).**

*"Isigungu sabazali singaphinda siqinisekise ukuthi abafundi bawenza ngendlela efanele yini umsebenzi wabo wesikole…siphinde siqikelele ukuthi kungaba isikole sinezinsiza kufunda ezifanele yini." ["The parents' body can also ensure that learners are doing their school work accordingly and also ensure that required teaching and learning aids are available in the school"]* **(Group C).**

*"…Ngokubona kwami kumele ngabe sinobudlelwano obusebenzayo kanye nomphakathi walapha kwaQoloqolo and kuwumsebenzi kaThishanhloko kanye namalunga esigungu sabazali ukuqinisekisa lomudlelwano…Ngicabanga ngokuthi lobu budlelwano uma bungaba khona kungaqgugquzela nezingane ukuthi zifunde kokuzimisela ngonga zingabe zibona ukuthi wonke umuntu uyakhathaza ngemfundo kanye nempumelelo yabo" ["In my opinion there should be a working relationship between **us** and the community from KwaQoloqolo and I think it is the school Principal's and SGB responsibility to create this relationship… I also think if the relationship can be established it can motivate learners as they will see that everyone cares for their education and academic performance"]* **(HoD: Magalela).**

Several issues touching the importance of the SGB in the school life are depicted by the above responses. Rightfully, it is within the SGB's mandate to create a link between the school and different school stakeholders (RSA, 1996b), and therefore the claims that the above participants make concerning the work of the SGB as a school asset are justified. One of the participants emphasised the importance of the SGB by arguing that the school only survived from a budget that is drawn only from the NORMS and STANDARDS (*name used to describe the money allocated by DBE to South African schools).* The participant indicated that the SGB needed to ensure that more funds were acquired by the school in order to ensure that there were sufficient resources in the school. While this was an indication that the SGB is a crucial asset in the

school, teachers further acknowledged that most SGB members were also employed in the school as non-teaching staff and this made it difficult for them to perform their designated responsibilities. In the discussion of possible school assets the participant stated the following:

> *"One of our important assets in the school is the SGB structure. You know, this school only operates from the NORMS and STANDARDS and it is the role of the SGB to fundraise so that the school has all the resources needed…What I have seen to be problematic is that most of our SGB members are employed here in the school and they end up forgetting their responsibilities…"* **(HoD: Nxamalala).**

Within the scope of the SASA (RSA, 1996b), SGBs are mandated to raise funds for the school, which means they are, by law, required to play an important role in their schools as human assets. The views of the participants may be understood as emanating from the legal context of a school's operation. Unfortunately, several participants agreed that some potential contributors, SGBs included, were not empowered and were unaware of their potential contributions to the school.

> *"…Mina Ngicabanga ukuthi amalunga eSGB akazi ukuthi iyiphi indima angayidlala esikoleni ekulekeleleni othisha kanye nabaphathi besikole…" ["…I think that SGB members are not familiar about their role in helping teachers and the school managers…"]* **(Teacher A).**

> *"…I-SGB yalesikoleni ayinalo ulwazi lokuthi yini engayenza noma iliphi iqaza engalibamamba ekuqikeleni ukuthi impumelelo yabafundi Ezifundweni zabo ibhekelelwe. Okunzima kakhulu ke ukuthi nomphathi wethu uyakujabulela ukuthi uneSGB engazi lutho…" ["The SGB of this school lacks knowledge about what they can do in helping to improve performance of learners. What becomes difficult is that the school leader is happy to have SGB that lacks knowledge…"]* **(HoD: Nxamalala).**

From the decentralised school governance and management which had led to SBM (see Section 3.2), the principal alone cannot be given all the powers to run the school. However, the burden of the SGB in this study seemed to be left on the shoulders of the principal. Participants lamented that the principal was happy that the SGB lacked knowledge and did not take responsibility for empowering its members. Commenting on the lack of knowledge on the part of the SGB, one of the HoDs stated that the SGB was a great asset of the school, and if the SGB were able to hold the principal accountable he would work hard. This was not happening as the principal was aware that the SGB could not hold him accountable.

*"…for things to go well in the school the SGB must be knowledgeable. This will also make the principal to work hard… in this school the principal is happy because the SGB members cannot hold him accountable"* **(HoD: Zikode).**

While the above discussion is only about SGB members, it has painted a picture of a school with several potential contributors, but ones who cannot contribute due to the lack of knowledge regarding their potential contributions. Within the community capitals framework (Emery and Flora, 2006:21) [*see Table 3.2*], it is evident that human capital is a crucial asset in any community. Section 3.3.1 showed the need to map different available assets from individuals. The process of asset mapping can be a tool to acknowledge that everyone has the potential to contribute and everyone's skills, capacities and talents are identified and used accordingly. The above exercise largely depends on the school's ability to ensure that there is community capacity building, as advocated in Section 3.4 of the review of related literature. Through community capacity building it could be possible for the school and its community to pool their assets into an action strategy. Section 3.5 creates the link between the asset-based approach utilisation and the effectiveness of management. The discussion shows that empowerment of the SGB as an asset of the school could be achieved, provided the principal takes responsibility for empowering the SGB members. This responsibility is also advocated in the review of related literature where it is argued that the school leadership must develop others and understand that leadership does not rest within one individual in the organisation (Johns, 2003:319). However, the notion that the principal is the one who should authorise the participation and development of others shows how leadership is conceptualised, especially within the context of this study. It appears here that principals are internalised as the only powerful individuals, without whom nothing is possible. Contrary to this internalisation, Mashego (2012) has argued that everyone within the rural context has in their power the ability to challenge all sources of power that repress his or her participation (Section 2.2.1.2). It may be argued therefore that the SGB in this case can take the issues of empowerment in their hands.

Also portrayed through the above utterances are views that SGB members within the rural context lack knowledge to contribute to the academic performance of learners. This may indeed be justified, however, from the CER as argued in Chapter Two (see Section 2.2.1.1) this may also present an ideology influenced by incomplete truths. Similarly, the asset-based approach discussed in the literature (see Section 3.2) affirms that what is regarded as rural realities are not full realities but half realities built on distorted ideologies. The views of HoDs and teachers,

that those SGB members are less knowledgeable, may not present the full truth but may be influenced by how rural people have been seen. For example, it is argued in the literature (NMF 2005:139) that rural people are seen to be less vocal than their urban counterparts.

The above discussion about SGB members is mainly about the representatives of parents in the structure of the SGB and does not include all parents. During the discussions it appeared that all parents, in addition to those in the SGB, are crucial assets in the improvement of academic performance in the school. Below is a discussion of how such parents are crucial and all the issues affecting their contributions as assets are exposed.

### 5.2.4.3 Parents as assets and their contribution

The idea that parents play a pivotal role in the education of their children is not a novel idea, however, in the light of CER as used in this study, new dynamics from the ground emerged that brings the issue of parents as assets of the school under more scrutiny. As also discussed in Chapter Three, under the tiers of community assets, parents as community members were examined by Chikoko and Khanare (2012). The study further confirms that parents are crucial assets in improving academic performance in the school. Importantly, the study of the participants' voices moves further to revisit the conclusions made about rural communities being unable to be vocal about their educational issues, leading to urban ideologies being prioritised (see Sub-sections 2.2.1.2 and 2.2.1.3) in the theoretical framework.

Demonstrated in this study from all participants (learners, teachers SMT and SGB members) is that they are aware that parents are crucial assets and their contribution is pivotal in different areas that are related to the improvement of academic performance. This was shown in the responses below:

> *"The school cannot operate effectively if parents are not participating. Also this school belongs to the parents because it provides service to their children. Mina (I) think they have a lot they can do inside and outside the school… one of the things we face is high level of learner absenteeism and this affects learners academic performance negatively and parents are better placed in ensuring that learners do come to school at all times"* **(Teacher C).**

*"Our parents can help with making sure that we do our homework. They can also come to school and supervise of extra classes since some teachers are not from this area and they travel everyday"* **(Learner: Ngcobo).**

*"Abazali bethu yibo abasiqonda kancono ukuthi njengezingane zabo sinjani and uma bengabambisana nothisha basebenze nabo kuze nabo othisha basiqonde kahle. Lokhu kungasisiza ekufundeni kwethu ["Our parents have better understanding a better understand of who we are as their children and they can establish good relationship with teachers and work with them to ensure teachers understand us. This will help us in our studies"]* **(Learner: Notshakaza).**

*"…Likhulu kabi iqhaza mfethu abazali abangalibamba ekutheni izingane zabo ziphumelele. Phela vele isikole esabo esokusiza umphakathi. Inkinga ekhona ukuthi umholi wethu akakholelwa emihlanganweni. La esikoleni uba munye umhlangano ngonyaka noma ungabi khona kwayikona loku kwenza ke abazali bangabambi iqhaza"* *["A huge contribution can be sought from parents for their children to succeed. In reality the school belongs to them. The problem we have is that our leader does not believe in meetings. In this school we hold one meeting a year and sometimes we will not have even one meeting"]* **(HoD: Nxamalala).**

*"…Abazali bala kulendawo baneqhaza elikhulu abangalibamba… kuzanyiwe ngaphambilini ukubabiza kodwa uma befika bebefika bathule uthishanhloko akhulume yedwa uze uphele umhlangano angabaniki ithuba lokukhuluma. Lona ke esinaye manje akababizi nhlobo."* *[Parents from this area have a huge role to play… it has been ensure before that they get invited in meetings but they will not talk and the principal will be the one talking for the entire meeting without giving them a chance. The one we have does not even invite them"]* **(HoD: Zikode).**

*"In reality Erasmus, parents are important in the school and they have a very important role to play but people here are not educated and they have nothing they can offer…"* **(Principal: Muzi).**

*"…Abazali bethu bangaqikelela ukuthi siyawulandela umthetho wesikole. Mangenza isibonelo nje: Umfundi uma eza esikoleni kunendlela elandelwayo yokuqgoka umfaniswano. Umzali angaqinisekisa ukuthi Umfundi uyawulandela umgomo wesikole ngasekugqokweni komfaniswano". ["…Our parents can ensure that we abide by the*

*school rules. If I can make an example: a parent can ensure that if a learner comes to school he/she is wearing the school uniform accordingly with the policy that stipulates how learners are supposed to wear their school uniform"* **(Learner: Mkhabela).**

As indicated above, the study confirms the role of parents. Within the voices several uses of words demonstrate that parents are sometimes blocked from contributing, despite the school's understanding that they are important assets to the school. For example, it was indicated by one HoD that parents are not often called to meetings and when they are called they are not given an opportunity to contribute to discussions. Moreover, the school principal was rightly cited as stating that the school had uneducated parents and who had nothing to contribute. Two issues are essential to put into scrutiny in the above discussion, namely parents not being given a space to participate and parents being regarded as uneducated and thus having nothing to contribute.

In my earlier discussion of power and participation (see Section 4.4.2.1) it was revealed that principals are caught in web of power relationships, in which dynamism, contestations, bargaining, micro-politics feature most (Bayeni, 2012:180). As argued there, this may lead those holding power to block any one who present these contestations. As a result, rural parents as members of the community possess indigenous knowledge systems that are relevant and related to the progress that has been made in rural areas over time (Maila & Loubser, 2003; Olatokun & Ayanbode, 2009; Chakwizira & Nhemachena, 2012). From their knowledge, these parents have an understanding of what is needed by their children as far as education is concerned and this may be blocked for fear of contestations. This suggests that parents, as shown by the principal, may not necessarily be less important because of their education level. However, they may be marginalised to avoid dynamism that brings about contestations as far as schools are led and managed. I therefore argue here that despite the low level of education of these rural parents, their contribution as assets is guaranteed, provided it is acknowledged and space created for them to contribute. The argument mainly emanates from the views of participants that parents have a significant role to play in the school.

Secondly, the notion that rural parents are uneducated is justified in the literature chapter, however this does not make them less important when participating in the education of their children. As demonstrated through the voice of participants, especially learners, teachers and the HoDs, the parents may not necessary be involved in the actual teaching but they can ensure that learners follow the school rules and play supervisory roles when teachers are not present.

The notion that rural parents or rural people are not educated has been influenced by the power of the urban context to attract the most educated group of rural people ("brain drain"), as posited by Howley et al. (2009:516) and Rhodes and Beall (2009:516) [see Section 2.4.2]. From the asset-based approach the notion above does not present the full truth about rural parents. Some parents, who are educated, may be in cities for economic reasons but if they can be invited, as one HoD pointed out, they may put forward crucial contributions towards improving academic performance in the school. This contributed to the notion of the principal as understood from the power debates, and also from the distorted notions that have been created by the needs-based approaches on rurality (See Section 2.2.3.1) in the theoretical framework chapter.

### 5.2.4.4 Neighbouring schools and their contributions

The school involved in this study is positioned around another two secondary schools. This was shown in the SWOT analysis under the opportunities section and all the three groups that were involved in the formulation of the SWOT analysis agreed that their school had great opportunities to utilise other neighbouring schools in improving their academic performance. The main reasons fuelling this belief was that one of these neighbouring schools was known for best academic performance in the community. Furthermore, the two schools had a history of working together, especially in the process of helping learners to improve their academic results. During the discussion and compilation of one SWOT analysis, participants revealed that neighbouring schools were important assets as they could be used by the participating school as a benchmark when it comes to the best practice. In addition to the use of neighbouring schools as a benchmark, learners in the three groups were very vocal about the issue of resource sharing between their school and the two neighbouring schools. Leaners made an example about their school not having Physical Science as a subject because of the shortage of resources and also not having a Life Sciences' laboratory. They argued that, given that one of their neighbouring schools had these resources, it would be possible for their school to establish ways of sharing resources so that they could access what was not found in their school.

> *"…Kuningi esingakuzuza ngokuba nobudlelwano nalezi zikole ezingomakhelwane. Njengokuthi nje la esikoleni asinayo iPhysical science ngenxa yokushoda kwamaresources futhi nelab yeLife Sciences kani ikhona kulezi ezinye izikole* ezingomakhelwane". *["…There is a lot we can gain if we can have a* relationship *with our*

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*neighbouring schools. For example, here in the school we do not have Physical Sciences because of the shortage of resources. We also don't have a Life Science Laboratory and our neighbouring schools have."]*

During the discussion with two HoDs (Nxamalala and Magalela) and with three teachers, the issue of neighbouring schools as assets in the studied school was discussed. There were multiple differing perspectives that emerged. One HoD (Magalela) regarded neighbouring schools as important potential contributors to the improvement of academic performance in their school. This HoD indicated that she had formed a strong working relationship with the neighbouring schools and the partnership helped her to source resources from these schools when necessary:

> *"I have developed a strong relationship with the two neighbouring high schools and I get resources from them for my department if they are needed"*

Contrary to this one HoD was the experience of another HoD who argued that working with neighbouring schools was a challenge. Instead of becoming assets, the teachers in the neighbouring schools appeared to be competing, and this caused the cutting of relationships. The HoD used to take some work to be moderated by one teacher from the same department in one of the neighbouring schools, but the treatment received was not pleasing so the decision was made by the HoD that another cluster in another school needed to be joined in order to cut ties with the neighbouring schools. The HoD stated:

> *"I have worked with one our neighbouring schools and my experience was not good. I cannot regard them as an asset to us on the basis that I have seen that they are competing with us and they are not happy as we are improving… I use to belong to a cluster with them and I will take my work to be moderated by them until I received bad treatment in one of the moderations and then I decided to join another cluster in a ward where our school doesn't belong"*

The views of the above HoD were corroborated by the view of the principal that neighbouring schools could be used as assets, but competition between them appeared to be blocking the potential contribution that these schools could make to one another. From the principal's opinion the tensions between teachers in these schools had been caused by political camps fuelled by the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU). In this way, a point was reached at which teachers of different schools did not work together unless they were in one cabal. Moreover, the principal also stated that because the neighbouring schools were known for their

good results, and his school had exceeded their level, there were now tensions because everyone wanted his/her school to be better. This hindered the culture of resource sharing between their schools. Below are extracts from the principal's discussions:

*"…Erasmus you know that our school has been at the lowest in this community when it comes to matric results. As we start to perform and achieve better than them, completion has started and we end up being divided…another thing, because of SADTU (our union) we have different cabals and camps and if teachers in two different schools belong into different camps can hardly work together and that has happened to us with our neighbouring schools"*

The sour relationships and competition appear not only from the HoD and the principal. While learners agreed that they could utilise their neighbouring schools for their academic work as assets, they indicated that they were usually undermined by their fellow learners from these schools. In their groups (A and C), learners stated that this was because their school looked more disorganised than the other schools, and one learner was of the view that the past performance of their school caused the learners from other neighbouring schools to look down on them:

*"…Isikole sethu sibukeka singahlelekile kunesabo… noma uhamba nje la engaqweni uhlangana nabo ubona befake i-uniform kahle kunathi and bahlelekile…ngicabanga ukuthi yiko besibukela pansi." ["…our school looked disorganised than theirs'… if you come across them (neighbouring school learners) they were their uniform better than us and they are always presentable… I think that is why they look down at us"*

Supporting the view of one HoD, which is contrary to all the extracts presented above, were the two teachers whom I also interviewed through FAI. These teachers acknowledged the relationships they had with the teachers from their neighbouring schools at a personal level and they agreed that neighbouring schools could serve several opportunities for their learners to improve academic performance. For them this could happen through knowledge sharing and subject's resource sharing, which could enhance performance of their learners. However, these teachers added that the challenge was with their leadership in both schools. For them there was a need for shared vision in which they all acknowledged that they were serving one community, and in that way they could learn and work together. This could only happen provided relationships were built between these schools by school leaders:

*"…Mina personally I have a good relationship with many teachers from our neighbouring schools and I think we can share resources and knowledge on some issues of subjects. The problem is that our leaders, I don't think they have a common vision to serve this community…"* **(Teacher C).**

*"…Colleagues from (mentioning the school names) are friends with us outside the school and I think we can share knowledge and resources, especially because in our school we have a challenge of resources… This is not happening because our leaders have weak working relationship with leaders from these schools…"* **(Teacher A).**

In the light of the asset-based approach, it is known that the school under study has less control over resources from neighbouring schools, thus it is recommended that they build from their resources first (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993, 1996; Loots, 2011; Khanare & Chikoko, 2012). Of interest in the above phrases are the issues that are actually hindering the asset-based approach application and what kind of environment exists in the school for the asset-based approach to be used as a school management strategy to improve academic performance.

The issue of building social trust between the school and the community has appeared to be prominent in the review of literature in Chapter Three. The literature in Section 3.4 shows that the key to drawing from all assets is building social trust and a strong relationship with potential asset contributors (Hyman, 2002:198; Oakley & Tsao, 2007:820). Earlier in this study, under the shortage of resources, I indicated that the school had few learners but they were increasing slowly. The issue of learners has implications for budget allocation by the DBE to each and this has caused neighbouring schools to compete over learners. This competition goes beyond learners to touch the aspect of schools competing over everything. The better the other school performs the more it attracts new learners from primary schools and those migrating from poorly performing schools. This, I argue, can cause competition between different schools, although they serve one community. However, where social trust and strong communication (Hyman, 2002; Myende, 2013) exist between the leaders of the schools, this competition can be a challenge and each school can draw from the assets of another school.

Presented from the views of the principal is the idea that political dynamics within the school and its community can cause hindrances towards harnessing available assets. In the literature review, under political capital (Emery & Flora, 2006) (see Section 3.2.2) I argued that rural schools are found within communities that are very rich in terms of people who can have their voices heard, and these people have power to unite the community. What appears contrary to

the above notion is one powerful organisation (SADTU) which is seen to be fuelling differences rather than uniting. While this is a challenge, it provides further evidence that the "powerful" can help in creating a vision that may lead to a culture of sharing and collaboration. In this way, I argue, resources from all potential contributors can be harnessed and utilised to improving academic performance. On the other hand, more power is placed upon leaders (in this case the principal). It appears that through the leaders' actions, assets will not only be known but there is also an opportunity to pool them into an action strategy, as suggested by Hyman (2002:2), in clusters of community capacity building.

The leadership role of the principal did not only draw criticism about relationships with other schools, but another key asset was seen to have been pushed away by some leadership challenges in the school and these general people from the community. These were former school learners and other unemployed members of the community, which I discuss below.

### 5.2.4.5 Former learners and unemployed members of the community

The challenge of the "brain drain" that Howley et al. (2009:516) regard as one of the challenges in rural communities has been experienced in the community in which the studied school is found. The school has produced an educated group of people who are now residing in cities for economic reasons. However, what was noted by participants is that not all educated former learners of the school were employed. All participants (learners, teachers, HoDs and the principal) during the SWOT analysis identified several unemployed former learners as knowledgeable people to contribute towards the improvement of academic performance in the school. Some of these former learners had become parents as their own children were learners in the same school. For participants these former learners could play a crucial role in the success of the school if they were to be involved.

Even for those former learners who reside in cities, there was an acknowledgement that they were alumni of the school and in that case could be involved. One important role identified by most participants was that former learners, both employed and unemployed could motivate current learners of the school and give some tips on dealing with academic work matters. For those who were employed, it was also agreed that some were employed by companies committed to improving education in society. Participants were of the opinion that if they could be involved they would be in a better position to influence their employers to invest in the school. This could possibly address the challenge of infrastructure (Balfour et al., 2008), and the

problem of resources, as pointed out by Malhoit (2005); Hlalele (2012a) and Walberg et al. (2012). For teachers and learners, this has possibilities to go beyond resource provision, and further motivate learners to be career-oriented, which helps in boosting their academic performance in the school.

> *"…Lapha esikoleni sikhiqize inqwaba yabafundi abangenza omkhulu umehluko ngeqhaza abangalibamba. Nawe nje (referring to the researcher) ungomunye wabo. Inkinga lekhaya umholi wethu angiboni enayo inhloso kwenza ke ukuthi angazi abantu abahlukene bangasiza ngani ekuyiseni isikole phambili…" ["Here in the school we have produced many learners who can make a huge difference through their contributions. You are also one of them. The problem is that I don't see our leader having a vision which makes him not to be aware of different contributions different people can have in taking the school forwards"]* **(HoD: Nxamalala).**

> *"…Izingane eziningi lana vele nazo zizalwa ezinye izingane ezifunde lapha ekhaya. Kululula ke ukuthi lezo zingane zibambe iqhaza. Inkinga yami angikaze ngizwe kuthiwa zibiziwe zanqaba…Inkinga ikukona ukuthi umholi wethu akasixhumanisi isikole nomphakathi. Manje ke ubani ongavele azophosa umubono wakhe nalapho kungekho zimpawu zokuthi uyadingeka…" ["…Some former learners are now parents in this same school. It is very easy for these former learners to participate. I have never heard that they have been invited and refused. The problem is that our leader does not connect us with the community. There is no one who can just make suggestions without being invited"]* **(Teacher C).**

Learners and the principal shared the idea that former learners were invaluable potential assets of the school. However, they also acknowledged some challenges relating to their utilisation as assets. Both the learners who participated and the school principal noted that those former learners who were unemployed wanted to be compensated if they offered some of their services to the school. On the same note, both the principal and learners shared a common view on the "brain drain", as taking away some potential contributors. In the discussion of former learners (both employed and unemployed) as assets of the school, learners and the principal revealed challenges:

> *"…Inkinga Erasmus (researcher's name) the learners we have produced are working too far from the school and those that can be accessed abasebenzi [they are not working].*

*Once you bring them in the school they will want ukuholelwa [to be paid] kani isikole asinamali [the school does not have money].* **(Principals: Muzi).**

*"…Abafundi abafunde lapha eskoleni bangabamba elilkhulu iqhaza ikakhulukazi ngokusiqguqguzela njengabafundi bamanje kuze sense khale umsebenzi wesikole. Nokufika nje basitshele ngemikhakha ethile esingayilandela. Okulikhuni ke abatholakali ngoba abanye bafunda ezikhungweni ezikude asikwazi ukubathola kani abanye basemaThekwini ngokomsebenzi. Abanye bakhona lemakhaya kodwa abaqashiwe manje bangafuna ukuthi baholelwe ngosizo lwabo kani izimali azibonwa…"* *["Former learners of our school can play a huge role in motivating us as learners so we can focus on our academic work. They can also come and give information on what careers we can take. The challenge is that you can access them because others are studying far away and others are working in cities. Others are found around and they are unemployed so they will demand payment for their services"]* **(Learner: Mapholoba).**

The above confirm not only the declining educated members of the society (brain drain) but also the unemployment that causes some to experience poverty. While these people are crucial assets, they cannot be utilised as they will demand payments for their services. Poverty is one of the realities found within the rural context (NMF, 2005:139; Balfour et al., 2011:342). However, in this study, this cannot be seen as the real cause for less involvement and contributions by the unemployed group of people. From the teachers and the HoDs it appears that there is no established relationship between the school and members of the community.

I have posited that harnessing potential assets is only achievable through building relationships that are based on trust and reciprocity. On the other hand, from discussion of clusters of community capacity building (Hyman, 2002) the issue of communicating the vision across the community is emphasised as an important aspect if all people are to support one vision (see Section 3.5.). What appears above is that blame is directed continuously against the principal for not demonstrating a clear vision that will see everyone participating. Therefore, I argue that sharing vision with others and inviting them into leadership can create a sense of community that could create a space for sharing of skills, knowledge and other capacities of all members of the school community towards improving academic performance.

### 5.2.4.6 Teachers of the school as assets

The argument that teachers are the key assets of the school is common since recent empirical studies (Myende, 2011; Chikoko & Khanare, 2012; Myende, 2013; Chikoko & Myende, 2014) have arrived at this conclusion. It also emerged in this study that teachers in the school possessed important ideas, capacities and knowledge that were beyond teaching their subjects. For learners, teachers were very important in serving as a motivation for them to be dedicated to their academic work. Teachers were also identified as very important in creating relationships between the school and other neighbouring schools in order to benefit learners from accessing resources they did not have at their school.

In their groups of discussion and in the SWOT analysis teachers were identified by learners as very important in making sure that learners were motivated to learn. They were also seen as relevant in creating a parent-teacher-learner relationship.

> *"…OThisha babalulekile ekuqikeleleni ukuthi sihlezi sigqugquzelekile ngokuthi yibo futhi abangenza kube khona ubudlelwano phakathi kwabazali bethu nabo kanye nathi…"* *["…Teachers are very important in making sure that we are motivated to learn. They are also important as they know us. They are the ones who can also create relationships between our parents, teachers themselves and us…"].*

Teachers themselves also confirmed that for a long time they had wished for the improvement of academic performance in the school, and they regarded themselves as having a variety of knowledge, skills and ideas relevant to achieving improved academic performance in the school. However, several challenges seemed to be preventing teachers from making their contributions. These factors were multifaceted and were caused by some members of the SMT, the community and the kind of learners who enrolled in the school.

The SMT comprised four members, namely the principal and three HoDs. There was a vacancy for HoD of the Languages department and one for deputy principal. There was only one female within the SMT and she was an acting HoD for the Commerce department. Teachers mentioned several contributions they had tried to make but they stated that ideas from most female teachers were not respected by the principal or the male HoDs. They indicated that sometimes they would have a discussion with the principal and he would support their ideas and promise that they would be implemented. During the time of implementation something else would be done or no decision would be taken. The principal would return and indicate that other members of the SMT who happened to be males indicated they would not be told by *"Abafazi"* (*Zulu word*

*referring to woman*) what to do in the school. One teacher cited an example of female teachers requesting the researcher as University staff member to address learners on some possible careers they could take, and male teachers refusing to be part of the address, as the suggestion came from female teachers. Below are some extracts from the discussion with teachers:

*"…Kuningi esike sibone ukuthi singakusuggesta ukuze izinga lokufunda kwabafundi libe ncono kodwa sezaze sayeka ukubeka imibono ngenxa yokuthi ivele icindezelwe ubuholi bethu khona lapha esikoleni. Kwezinye izikhathi besike sivumelane noThishanhloko kodwa abuye esezositshela ukuthi amanye malunga obuholi akubeke ngembaba ukuthi angeke batshelwe yithina [sabafazi]…" ["…There is a lot we think we can do to improve academic performance but we have stopped to make suggestions because the get sabotaged by our leaders. In other times we have made suggestions and the principal will come back and confess that some male members of the SMT indicated they cannot be told by women what to do…"]* (**Teacher B)**.

*"…Akusizi la esikoleni ukwenza into ocabanga ukuthi ukuthi izosiza abafundi ekutheni benze umsebenzi wesikole ngendlela encono… uyakhumbula nje nawe (referring to the researcher) ngelanga sikucela sithi hamba uyokhuluma nabafundi…bonke othisa besilisa bathi angeke baye entweni ecatshangwe [abafazi] bengekho bona…" ["It doesn't help in this school to do something you think will help learners in their academic performance…you (researcher) when we asked you to go and motivate learners…all male teachers did not attend and indicated they cannot go in something organised by abafazi (women)…"]* **(Teacher A).**

The above represents the blocking of potential contributors who are assets in the school based on their gender. This confirms power dynamics between some members of the SMT as males and some teachers as females. Moreover, power struggles are based on who manages the school and who is being managed. What is demonstrated above challenges the school-based management (SBM) approach which argues for devolved power to all those who are members of the school in order to make sure that they are managed successfully (Briggs & Wohlstetter, 2003; Rainey & Honig, 2012). In section 3.5, in the review of literature, it is postulated that applying SBM will ensure that different people have a share in how schools are run, thus giving them an opportunity to make contributions towards improving academic performance. Considering teachers' suggestions is very much related to the asset-based approach as it is

argued that this promotes decisions that are taken from the bottom (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1996:4).

In addition to gender issues, the relationship between the teachers and local community resulted in teachers not caring for the school or its learners. Arguing from the point of being a teacher from another community, one teacher was seconded by others when she indicated that the community did not respect them as teachers, and they were taken to be outsiders. This was also noted in earlier by one HoD, as creating teachers who only came to school because they had no other option, but still did not see their value in changing the school and learners. This was also caused by learners who did not respect them as teachers and no intervention was made by community members:

> *"…Abukho ybudlelwano esinabo nomphakathi walapha. Uyasixwaya ngendlela yokuthu usibuka njengezifiki. Ngenxa yalokhu isizathu sethu sokuza lapha ingoba siyawudinga umsebenzi. Nezingane azihloniphi azifuni ukufunda okwenza ke nathi sigcine singenandaba…" ["…There is no relationship between us and the community. They alienate us and look at us as outsiders. Because of this we have we come here because we want the job. Learners are also disrespectful and they don't want to learn and we end up not caring…"]* **(Teacher C).**

I have argued for social trust and reciprocity as aspect of social capital (Emery & Flora, 2006; Saegert, 2006), and, drawing from the literature in Chapter Three, that the existence of social trust appears to be a prerequisite for all other assets to be harnessed. It appears above that the relationships are crucial if the school is to tap into the assets of all members. While asking who is responsible for ensuring that there was a relationship between the school and the community, one teacher said *"It is us who have not made the community see that they are valued and we form one community by virtue of being in the school"* **(Teacher C).** This, I argue, will not only allow learners to use assets in the school but also will broaden the scope of assets utilisation beyond what is found within the school boundaries. Participants confirmed this by mentioning other important assets that were crucial in improving academic performance.

### 5.2.4.7 Other potential assets

Through the SWOT analysis learners identified the clinic (Department of Health) and social workers (Department of Social Welfare) municipal built capital which was made up of underused

community halls and training centres as important for activities aimed at improving academic performance. This built capital could be used by learners for evening classes to avoid long walks to the school. As a quintile one school, most if not all learners were from a poverty-stricken community. Learners indicated that there was a need to address other social challenges if they were to improve academic performance. For this they identified social workers as crucial assets towards the improvement of academic performance. They indicated that some of them were in child-headed families and so had the additional responsibility of filling the role of parents. For this they needed to be strong emotionally, and social workers were then identified as potential assets in the school. This is shown under the SWOT analysis and the charts or charts that were used for discussions.

Secondly, they indicated a need to run their own group's extra studies after school and during weekends. Noting that the school was not close to all of them, they identified community halls (municipality built capital) as possible venues. Learners from different sides of the community could form their own study groups and use available community buildings around their homes. This would save learners time and was also a way of addressing security issues as it was not always safe to attend school for evening classes.

Evidence for the above claims is found under the charts and the SWOT analysis (see Appendices). While Balfour et al. (2008:98) and Ebersöhn et al. (2012) posit that built capital is one of the deficiencies in rural context, through the voices of learners it appears that these claims are more relevant is some contexts than in others. Built capital is also identified as one of the crucial assets available to the community for use in the community capital framework (Emery & Flora, 2006:21). In addition to the built capital and social workers, the SWOT analysis shows that the local clinic was also very important, especially in practical work for Life Sciences and Life Orientation. For learners and teachers the clinic played a role in improving academic performance by creating space for learners to conduct research within its premises if required.

Figure 5.1 showed that schools need to start from the primary tier, followed by the secondary tier, and then look for those assets that are not in their immediate and secondary community as they try to address their problems. To confirm findings of Chikoko and Khanare (2012), learners also pointed out that the challenge of there being no local Department of Social Welfare, which made it difficult for them to access social workers. They also indicated other threats of the SWOT analysis, in that the school did not have control over the mentioned departments and this is was very difficult to access their services. However, they argued that school leadership

needed to forge relationship with these departments so they could visit the school once or twice a month. With regards to the community's underuse of built capital, learners, as did the teachers, indicated that the lack of relationship between the school and the community could hinder the possible benefits that the built capital could have.

This section has demonstrated the key assets identified by participants as important towards improving academic performance in the school. Through the discussion, I did not only focuss on the key assets but also captured what seemed to be the challenges hindering the school's access and ability towards harnessing those assets. To provide a clear discussion of these hindrances, below I present two sections which will further show the challenges and how the school environment conducive to the asset-based approach as drawn from the participants' voices can be set, as well as how the school management can create such an environment.

### 5.2.5 The School Environment and the Asset-based approach utilisation

The interaction with and between the participants resulted in the identification of several issues that needed to be addressed in the school in order to create an environment suitable for the asset-based approach. The participants raised issues that touched on the school as a whole, and some issues that affected the school leadership in particular. These issues are discussed under the themes of promoting invitational and participative leadership, making the school and its community one entity, and empowerment of all potential contributors.

### *5.2.5.1 Promoting invitational and participative leadership approaches*

Following the process of identifying pivotal assets, participants were taken into their groups (A, B and C), and through brainstorming they were guided to think about what was required from the SMT in order to make the asset-based approach work. Emerging from this were views that suggested that the SMT members, especially the principal, needed to promote invitational leadership practices in the way they led the school. From the participants (especially teachers), invitational leadership meant the principal encouraged innovative views from everyone as leaders in the school, and he also put himself in the space of others to see how they did things and what they would like to see happening in the school. One teacher representing Group C stated that sometimes it was not even easy to suggest innovative ideas because they were sabotaged:

*"…Futhi kuze kube nzima nje nokuthi ukungaqhamuka ne idea ephusile ngoba izinto eziningi ziyanyatelwa…"* *["…It also becomes very difficult to come up with innovative ideas because they are sabotaged…"]*

Supporting the views of **Group C**, one teacher from **Group D** pointed out that sometimes one ended up saying nothing and doing things one's own way because what was suggested was not welcome. One example about school uniform was used to explain the need for the promotion of invitational and participative leadership approaches:

*"…Uyazi ukuthi mengingakutshela iqiniso kwesinye isikhathi ugcina usuyekile vele. Ugcina usuthi ngizokwenza engeza ngakho la. Angike ngenze iexample nje ngeuniform, khona izikhathi la esizotshela izingane ukuthi I uniform kumele igqokwe kanjani and ubone ukuthi ubuholi abuyamukeli i-idea…"* *["...You know if I can tell you the truth, sometimes you end up not making suggestions. You end up saying I will do what I came here for. I can make an example using school uniform. There is a time where we had to tell learners about the way they needed to wear their school uniform. You could see that our leaders did not accept our idea…"]*

For the above groups, if peoples' ideas were accommodated, their innovative ideas could add value to the school as they were going to enhance the way the SMT led other teachers. The views on the school leadership adopting invitational leadership practices were also recommended by two HoDs. These HoDs were also concerned that there was a gap between themselves as leaders of the school which challenged the functioning of the school. The extracts below explain this position:

*"…Thina njengobuholi sidinga ukuhlangana siqale sibheke kuthina ngamunye ngamunye ukuthi yikuphi esingakuvuna. Kodwa ke loku kungenzeka uma umholi wethu engasifaka naye ekuholweni kwesikole aphinde amukele uvo lwethu…"* *["We as leaders, we need to come together and look to each other and see what we can harvest from each and every one of us. This will happen if our leader (Principal) can include us in leadership and also listen to our views…"]* **(HoD: Zikode).**

*"…Ngicabanga ukuthi indaba iqala lakuthina [as] abaholi besikole. Abanye bethu banemibono emihle kodwa engakutholi ukwamukelwa. Uma ubuholi bunganikana ithuba buphinde busekane emibonweni konke kungahamba kahle…"* *[…"I think it begins with us as leaders of the school. Some of us have good ideas but they don't get accepted. If*

*we can give each other a chance and support one another all can be well…"]* **(HoD: Magalela).**

In the introduction to this study I argued, drawing from the SASA (RSA, 1996b) that school leadership is no longer a sole responsibility of the school principal but it is a shared process amongst those who are members of the school. It is therefore justifiable that teachers and HoDs are calling for a more invitational and participative approach to leadership. This has been witnessed elsewhere by other scholars. For example, Grant (2006:511) posits that the SASA has promoted a shift from centralised control and decision-making to a school-based system of education management. I argue here that this is in line with the asset-based approach as it advocates an approach in which everyone is believed to be empowered, skilful and resourceful to participate in decision-making. Moreover, this addresses power imbalances that exist in centralised school governance and management. Should leaders be invitational and promote participative leadership approaches, ideas, skills and capacities, what is emerging above can be utilised in the process of improving academic performance. The literature in Chapter Three also showed that for the asset-based approach to work, those leading schools would be tasked with creating an environment in which all members of the school would feel valued (Sanders, 2006:34).

It has been further shown that "...improving the interactions among and between teachers and principals is a significant factor in the school improvement process..." (Eagley & Jones, 2003:14). These scholars rightly posit that invitational leadership approaches enhance leaders' ability to harness potential from others and it will further defeat those factors thwarting potential. This is inclusive in nature and connects with CER as well as the asset-based approach. The former challenge suppressing others and the latter promotes drawing from potentials of different members of the school. The invitational and participative approaches to school leadership needed not only to accommodate those within the school boundaries but also to go beyond and touch those in the community. Due to this, the next section addresses the aspect of making the school and the community a single entity.

### 5.2.5.2 Making the school and the community a single entity

The data from the participants repeatedly demonstrated that the school is found within an environment in which people have the potential to make invaluable contributions towards the improvement of academic performance. What appeared is that harnessing the assets found in

the community has been made difficult by the school's failure to create connections between the school and the community. The division that existed between the school and the community was firstly identified by the principal, as follows:

> *"Now tell me don't you want to expose us to this people (school community)? You know they don't like some of us here in the school and while you might say you came here for good, some people may use this opportunity to raise their agendas and how are you going to act on that…"*

From the extract above it appears that there is "them'' and "us" (the school and the community). The way this is interpreted from the principal's point of view was that the school is a separate entity from the community. From the SASA (RSA, 1996b) and the Site-Based Management as indicated in Chapter Three (Rainey & Honig, 2012:468), schools belong to the people where they are found and for this reason a need to have inclusive governance was identified as a way to ensure that the voices of the people where schools are located are used to take the school forward.

To corroborate the picture created by the principal, three groups that worked to explore possible strategies to make the asset-based approach work in the school indicated that the school was confronted with a situation in which it existed in isolation from all other structures in the community, and no relationship was formed. Participants agreed that this was not an ideal situation and it needed to be addressed. The presentation from **Group A**, stating that the school and the community had no mutual understanding or support, was supported by **Groups C** and **B**. Adding to this was one HoD and two teachers who felt that the school leaders needed to bring the community to the school and vice versa. These participants stated that there was no mutual relationship between the school and different members of the community.

> *"…Igroup yethu ibone ukuthi kumele kwakhiwe ukuxhumana phakathi kwesikole kanye nabantu bomphakathi ukuze bazibone ukuthi nabo banendima abangayidla…Ngokubona kwethu kukhona igebe elikhona phakathi kwesikole kanye nalabantu esibabone bengama assets…" ["Our group identified that there should be connections between the school and the people from the community for them to see that they have a role to play… In our opinion there is a gap between the school and the people we identified as assets…"]*

> *"…Abukho ubudlelwane obukhona, ubudlelwane obukhona ukuthi siyabaqhasha mekukhona okumele kwenziwe esikoleni kuphela…" ["…There no relationship that*

*exists, the only one that exists is that we hire them if there is something that needs to be done in the school only…"]* **(Teacher A).**

*"…Umphakathi awusazi nokuthi singobani akukho ukuxhumana…mina ngicabanga ukuthi umphathi uye okumele asixhumanise ngokuthi ahambele imicimbi yomphakathi kanye nokuthi alethe abantu bomphakathi lapha esikole…" ["The community don't know who we are… I personally think that our leader (Principal) needs to connect us with the community by attending community events and also bring people from the community to our events…"]* **(HoD: Magalela).**

In Chapter Three (review of literature) it is further posited that building one community is the prerequisite for tapping into assets that the groups and individuals possess in the community. For Hyman (2002), building the community will create members who have well-developed relationships and create a space in which concerns and aspirations are shared. This will further lead to an ability of the community to pool their assets together as a strategy and building of bridges to other resources required for academic performance. Glanz (2006:4), on the other hand, supports the creation of one entity made by the school and the community by arguing that leaders will need to establish and sustain continuing, meaningful and effective school-community relations if the school is to tap into the community assets. Ebersöhn and Mbetse (2003:324) in their levels of community assets assessment (see Section 3.3.1) identify community capacity inventory as the first level. At this level, as earlier above, the intention is to generate specific capacities, skills, talents and experiences of stakeholders from the community. I argue here that this will not take place in an environment in which the people possessing the assets are divided. While my argument is based on what the asset-based approach can offer, I also acknowledge the "half realities" about the rural context and these realities emerged from the data. One of these realities was that people in the rural context can offer much towards improving academic performance, but they need to be empowered.

### 5.2.5.3 Empowerment of potential contributors

The argument that there were possible contributors both inside the school and outside the school did not get advocacy without noting challenges. With regards to community participation, it was noted that due to "brain drain" the existing population within the rural context was dominated mainly by people who needed empowerment or awareness in order for them to realise their possible contributions. The voices of teachers and learners confirmed the above:

*"…Enye inkinga esinayo weZitha (researcher's name) nakuba abantu lapha esikoleni kukhona abangakwenza, abanye babo ikakhulukazi umphakathi wangaphandle awazi ukuthi ungenzani kudinga kuqali ukuthi bafundiswe ngokubaluleka kanye neqhaza abangalibamba…" ["…Another problem we have Zitha (researchers' name) is that while people in the school can have contributions, some of them especially the outside community are not aware what they can do and there will be a need to educate them about their importance and the role they can play…"]* **(Teacher B).**

*"…Abazali bethu baneqhaza elikhulu abangalibamba kodwa inkinga iningi labo alifundile loko kwenza ukuthi bangabi nalo ulwazi lwezinto abangazenza mayelana nemfundo yethu. Igroup yethu ibone ukuthi kungakuhle uma bengafundiswa noma baziswe ngeqhaza abangalibamba…" ["…Our parents have huge role to play but the problem is that most of them are not educated and this causes them not to be aware of things they can do about our education. In our group we thought it will be a good idea to educate them about the role they can play…"]* **(Group B).**

While the participants' views above are confirmed in the literature (see Section 2.2.1.2), what seemed to be untapped by the participants in the study is that rural people have survived within the rural context for years and have managed to lead their lives against all odds. I do not underestimate the value of formal education, but what is most forgotten is that rural people have indigenous knowledge (Maila & Loubser, 2003: 278; Mapara, 2009:140; Olatokun & Ayanbode, 2009:287; Chakwizira & Nhemachena, 2012:188) that has equipped them to traverse all the rurality challenges. From the asset-based approach perspective this kind of knowledge sets rural people aside as important contributors in their own issues, including educational challenges. Taking the viewpoint of the participants, one may then argue that the problem is not that they have less knowledge to contribute, but it is the lack of awareness that their ways of knowing can play a pivotal role in improving academic performance of their children.

Emerging in the main theme above (5.2) is that the closeness between the community and the school may result in homemade solutions since all available assets for improving academic performance are found both in the school and the community. From the participants' views as discussed, there is gap that has caused the school leaders to appear as if they "sing a solo" (leading alone). The gap especially between the community and school is mainly attributed to the lack of empowerment of stakeholders. On the other hand the gap between the SMT and post level one is mainly attributed to the SMT's inability to practice participative leadership and

invite other into the leadership terrain. As a means for addressing this gap, promotion of invitational and participative leadership approach, creation of oneness between the school and the community and empowerment of all potential stakeholders were suggested by participants.

## 5.3 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The current chapter has presented and analysed the data from the field. The data is presented and analysed under five major themes with four themes having their own sub-themes. The first section (5.2.1) addresses the theme of setting the agenda for assets utilisation. This section driven by what participants regarded as the first process before relevant assets are identified and mobilised. The second section also addresses the priorities identified after agreeing that agenda setting is important in identifying relevant assets. So, in this section challenges that needed to be addressed through assets are identified and discussed. Thirdly, key approaches for assets identification are discussed. This section looks at the SWOT analysis, capacity inventories and collages as tools for assets identification. The fourth section takes the reader closely to the key assets towards improving academic performance. The last section brings to light the school conditions that wIll ensure that the asset-based approach can be used.

This chapter has mainly used literature to understand the data that emerged from the field without bringing the theoretical framework and the critical discourse analysis into the picture. Given this fact Chapter Six presents the findings and their discussions guided by the objectives and the sub questions of this study.

## CHAPTER SIX

## A STRATEGY FOR APPLYING THE ASSET-BASED APPROACH: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a discussion of findings drawing from the emergent themes from Chapter Five. The aspects of CER are used to frame the discussion of findings. The aim of this chapter is to pull together the data as presented in different themes in Chapter Five to indicate how they inform what is identified to be the findings. To foreground the findings within CER, a deeper and critical analysis of how findings seem to be confirming, challenging or further promoting the issues of oppression and inequality (power issues) is presented. This chapter builds from Chapter Five, but verbatim quotes are used less in order to move from a general understanding of the data to a level where the theoretical framework is applied to make critical meaning of the findings. The thesis of this study is presented in this chapter in the form of a model that highlights how the asset-based approach can be used as a management strategy towards improving academic performance in a rural context.

### 6.2 THE STUDY OBJECTIVES REITERATED

The study sought to investigate how academic performance in a rural school can be improved using the asset-based approach as a management strategy. To yield at the answer(s) to this question, the study was guided by four objectives, the first of which was to examine possible ways to identify and mobilise assets that can be used to improve academic performance. The second was to determine what school conditions are conducive to the asset-based approach to be used. The third was to establish the strategies for school management to create conditions conducive to the asset-based approach and the fourth was to identify challenges the asset-based approach and possible school management strategies to address such challenges. The findings are presented and discussed under each objective presented above.

## 6.3   STRATEGIES FOR ASSETS IDENTIFICATION AND MOBILISATION

The findings of the study as far as the identification and mobilisation of assets are concerned reveal some contestations or an extension of the views on how an asset-based approach works. The asset-based approach operates under the premise that there should be a shift from focusing on the problems and needs. The shift should move to a point at which people focus on their capacities rather than on their deficits (Haines, 2009:40). The findings suggest that acknowledging the capacities and strengths available may not be an easy affair unless the school concerned is aware where such capacities are required and for what purposes. This approach of beginning from what needs to be addressed was pushed based on the participants' claim that their context was faced with several challenges that lead to poor academic performance. As a result, for them it was crucial that such challenges are discussed first so that those that need high priority in the attempt to improve academic performance are known. For this reason, on the aspect of identifying and mobilising assets, the study reveals that agenda-setting becomes the initial stage of operationalising the asset-based approach in general and to improve academic performance in particular.

Agenda-setting as emerged in the study shows the asset-based approach's notion of beginning from the strengths being extended and/or contested. At the level of extension one acknowledges that participants in this study did not refute that they were surrounded by a plethora of assets but they were of the idea that they needed to begin from what challenges the improvement of academic performance. As explained in Haines' (2009) work, from the above finding there is also an element of looking at the deficits (needs related to the improvement of academic performance) which will then suggest that one can still acknowledge his or her assets in the school but to know those relevant assets there is a need to look at the most challenging issues to be addressed through available strengths and capacities. Crucial here is that the participants identify their priorities (needs) themselves. This is not done by the external service providers on behalf of the school community. With this being stated, it is argued in this study that the asset-based approach may begin from the needs or deficits of the community. However, if this is not done by external service providers on behalf of the school community one cannot regard it as needs-based approach. Moreover, if beginning from the needs is not done with the intention of looking for outside help after, it cannot be argued to be within the frame of deficit models. Emerging in this study therefore is that the process of assets identification and

mobilisation may begin from the deficits identified by community members concerned with an understanding that resolving those deficits will be done using assets found from within.

Arguing within the theoretical perspective (CER), the asset-based approach in itself has been suggested by scholars who have identified rural communities as communities with many resources, and they have then suggested that such resources are useful for communities to resolve their challenges. Having done this, scholars such as Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) have then made claims on how this approach works. Their views are indeed not disputed but the aspect of prioritising the voice of the participants which leads to emancipation and uncovering of interests that work in particular situations (Cohen et al., 2011:31) was identified in the study. Beginning from the needs of the school is contrary from what the proponents of the asset-based approach have suggested in Chapter Three, but this has worked in identifying relevant assets in the context, thus confirming some of the principles of CER.

Although the process of the asset-based approach needed to follow the will of the participants, and this is argued to be favourable for operationalising the asset-based approach in the studied context, much can be said from a critical discourse perspective about the approach participants advocated. From their voice (see Section 5.2.1*),* the participants seemed to be confirming the half realities that have been told about rurality. It appeared from their voices (*…however there are many challenges here in the school… while our school and its community can address its challenges, I don't think it has all that is needed…)* that they still believed that as rural schools, much work needed to be informed by the challenges they face. Although beginning from the challenges enhanced their thinking about relevant available assets, this practice may perpetuate the school community giving more power to the weaknesses found in the community than the strengths. Socially and economically, rural schools and their communities have been argued to be deprived (NMF, 2005:140; Hlalele, 2012:113b) and this has contributed to people within this context internalising their powerlessness. Thus, I argue here that agenda-setting is indeed capturing the interest of the local people and what they wanted to see happening, but since agenda-setting prioritises the problems, it may be argued on the basis that rural people have internalised their challenges.

Regardless of agenda-setting being regarded as an approach that begins from the needs, the findings of the study show that as an initial stage it gives the community an ability to think critically about the problem, in this case poor academic performance. After priorities in the form of factors impacting on academic performance are addressed (*see Sub-section 5.2.2)* the

participants engaged in the process of identifying available assets. This process was enhanced by participants' understandings of issues that led to poor academic performance in the school. The SWOT analysis and capacity inventories were two approaches to assets identification were found very helpful and informative in the process of this study.

## 6.3.1 SWOT analysis and capacity inventories

The SWOT analysis and capacity inventories in the study emerged as effective tools in identifying assets that are available in and outside the school. Moreover, it gave a picture of possible challenges towards utilising those assets. The main finding in this section is that the SWOT analysis is crucial beyond the identification of the strategic insight (Valentin, 2001:54) of the school but it also allowed the participants to see the school and its environment as a single system. Through identifying opportunities and threats outside the school, the participants indicated that they had realised that the outside community presents more assets than threats it provides. However, during the process of doing the SWOT analysis the participants, especially teachers, further demonstrated their internalisation of powerlessness of rural people. This was witnessed during the discussion of the SWOT analysis. As much as the participants identified key assets in the form of organisations and people outside the school, there were more threats identified hindering working with the people from local community. One of those threats which are also confirmed by literature is the level of education of the rural people who make structures identified as assets. For participants, the low level of education could hinder the participation of people from the community. As a way to address this threating issue, empowerment for all partners was identified during the discussion of the SWOT analysis.

The worries of participants about the level of education of local people may not be understood only from the perspective that they have not undertaken an in-depth analysis of the skills that people have in their community. These worries may also be understood from the point that both local people and those who work with them have been made socially to believe that in the lack of formal education achievement for rural people they remain clueless of the contributions they can make towards improving academic performance in their schools. The beliefs internalised above may thwart the progress of rural people and present what Mahlomaholo and Natshandama (2010:76) regard as social repression, as participants claim that the lack of formal education means that the local people will hardly make relevant contributions. Moreover, the

account that due to lack of formal education rural people cannot participate presents an incomplete account (Cohen et al., 2011:31) of how rural people need to be viewed in relation to their context. The people may not be formally educated but they possess indigenous knowledge as indicated in the literature review chapter and this knowledge as also identified in the same SWOT analysis was seen to be crucial towards improving academic performance. Thus, I argue here that the participants' beliefs may be emanating from the socially created picture about people from the studied rural community. This picture ignores the good aspects of them and the positives related to their choice of remaining in rural areas, as stated in the literature review by Hlalele (2012b).

Despite the internalisation of powerlessness, the SWOT analysis served as an empowerment tool for the participants to understand what is found in their society and it also empowered them to be able to identify their own issues rather than someone else doing it for them. The aspects of empowerment through spaces in which dialogues are encouraged (Mahlomaholo & Natshandama, 2010:78), participation and reflexivity (Babbie et al., 2001:323; Kemmis, 2008:124) as principles of critical emancipatory research and participatory research are identifiable above.

Through the SWOT analysis, the participants were able to identify assets but a school-community assets map (figure 6.1, below) that shows what assets are important towards improving academic performance was developed. The school-community assets map is crucial in this study in that it provides a critical thought about the asset-based approach application which has not been identified in existing studies. The assets map shows the assets available in relation to the improvement of academic performance and further explains what affects the positive relationship and maximum utilisation of available assets for the school to improve academic performance.

On the left, the assets map displays the primary assets that need to be utilised first within the school. As discussed in Chapter Five these assets are primary and immediate to the school. The primary assets include the SMT, SGB, teachers, non-teaching staff and learners. In the presentation and analysis of data in Chapter Five, the SMT was seen to be crucial in making sure that all resources required to improve academic performance are available in the school. Secondly, members of the SMT, especially the principal, were seen to be crucial in ensuring that teachers are monitored and curriculum delivery is in accordance with what needs to be taught. The SGB was seen to be crucial in making sure that the school did not survive on the

budget allocated by the DBE, but its members are committed to acquiring sufficient resources required for the improvement of academic performance. To revisit the data, one HoD believed that the principal and the SGB were fully liable for making sure that the school did not only depend on the norms and standards: "*you know this school only survives from the norms and standards and the SGB and our principal are doing nothing to ensure that we have extra resources"* (see Section 5.2.4.2).

While the onus of fundraising for the school to acquire additional resources lies within the SGB supported by the school principal (RSA, 1996b), the discourse demonstrated in the HoD's words is that acquiring additional resources is mainly for the SGB and the principal. Structurally, section 34 of the SASA leaves the responsibility of acquiring additional resources with the SGB, thus the voice of the HoD can be said to be influenced by this structural arrangement within the school's system as per the South African School Act. This, I argue, may hinder other people to utilise their skills and capacities in generating additional resources in general. In addition to the task of ensuring enough resources, the SGB was also seen to be important in creating a school environment that is conducive to teaching and learning and also in the creation of a sound relationship between the school and other community members.

In addition to the SMT and the SGB, teachers were seen especially by learners to be a very important asset in ensuring learner motivation and ensuring effective teaching and learning. The teachers were also argued to be important in creating the relationship between the school and other neighbouring schools (see Section 5.2.4.6). The creation of a relationship with other schools was seen to be crucial to resource sharing between the school and its neighbouring schools. This could contribute towards improving academic performance in the school. Despite the challenges that teachers, especially female teachers faced, they also indicated that they had more ideas than just teaching only. Their ideas were not sufficiently utilised in the school due to some gendered sabotage from male teachers in the SMT. These cannot be separated from how leadership in this school is organised. For example, it was revealed that there was only one female teacher in the SMT and she was acting as an HoD, while on the other hand there were four dominant male teachers in the SMT. The gender sabotage may be attributed to this imbalanced representation of females in the SMT which causes power imbalances, an issue the critical emancipatory research tries to address.

Learners and non-teaching staff were made part of the assets map. Learners as assets were seen to be crucial in modelling to other leaners good behaviour that would ensure effective teaching and learning, thus leading to the improvement of academic performance. Such behaviour is relevant for the school to be governable and the more governable the school the more teachers and learners will be engaged in effective teaching and learning.

The left hand side of the school-community assets map shows secondary assets. These assets are not immediate and the school has less control over their utilisation. These assets were revealed during the SWOT analysis and the interviews. Community leaders, other schools, local government institutions, former learners and parents and other community members were identified as crucial assets within the secondary assets. Community leaders were argued to be important in supporting school initiatives although less was said about their contributions towards improving academic performance. One HoD was of the view that they could play a role in ensuring discipline of learners in the community, which was seen to be crucial for discipline in the school as the issue of lack of discipline was identified.

Added to community leaders were local government institutions. Due to its remoteness from the cities, it was revealed that the school could only rely on those few available departments in the area. One of those which were easily accessible was the local clinic. It was identified as crucial for learners to conduct research and to provide healthy awareness. These were noted by participants as crucial to improving academic performance as they affected learners' academic performance indirectly.

Further displayed by the school-community assets map model are former learners, parents and other community members. Chapter Five (Sub-sections *5.2.4.3* and *5.2.4.5*) provides a detailed discussion of the voices of participants with regards to these assets. However, given their potential role identified in this study, I regard them as crucial. Parents were seen to be important in ensuring that their children commit themselves fully in their academic work and they are always found obeying the rules set by the schools. Learners and teachers argued that parents needed to form collaborations with the school and to enforce respect for school rules before learners enter the school. On the other hand, former learners were said to be crucial in increasing the level of motivation amongst the current school learners. Their role was also emphasised in providing extra classes during holidays or weekends as teachers were not from the local community, making it hard for them to be in school to provide extra teaching services. In the principal's opinion some former learners were also in the position to influence their

employers to sponsor the school and thus he regarded them as important assets. This could help the school in acquiring the resources which were identified as one of the issues that thwarted good learner academic performance in the school. However the challenge of the "brain drain" was identified as a great challenge. Further shown in the school-community assets map model are the outside assets in the form of government and private institutions. These were seen to be important but from the asset-based approach perspective the researcher argues here that they should be seen to be the school's last resort, as they may not be accessible at any time and the school has no control of them. Moreover, relying on these assets is a challenge in that when it happens, local assets may be seen to be less important. The challenging question is what happens when the school is unable to access those far assets in the form of government support and private institutions distant from the school.

The assets map as shown below not only explains the assets available but moves further to explain how the relationship between the school and the community is affected by different factors. Thus, in the next section I give a brief explanation of the assets-based approach utilisation as explained in the map. The focus is mainly on the utilisation of assets from the secondary level and the outside level.

**Figure 6.1: school-community assets map**
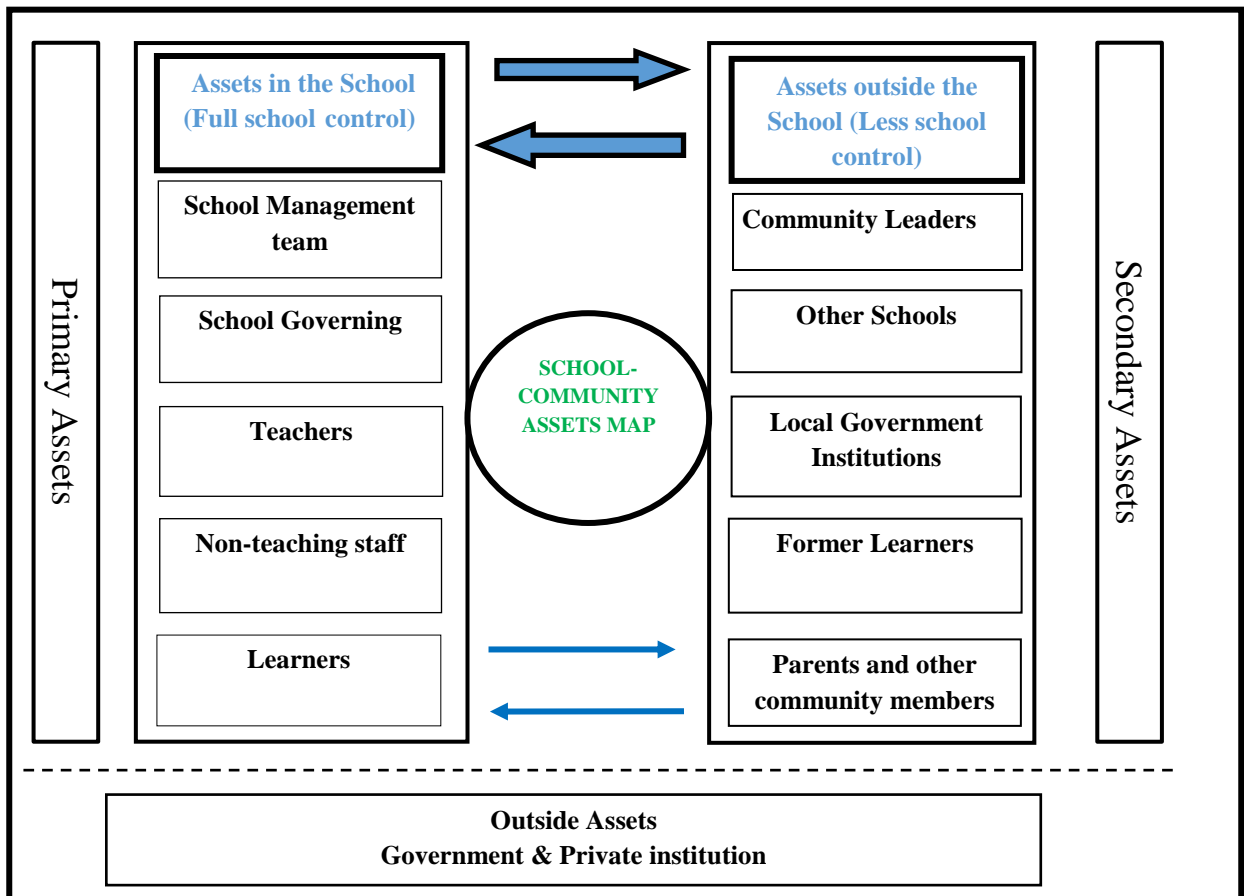
## 6.4. EFFECTING A BALANCED RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STAKEHOLDERS

The school-community assets map is not only depicting the assets found in the school, secondary and outside community, but it further explains what influences the kind of relationships the school will have, especially with the secondary community. The issue of relationship building has emerged in several cases in this study. In the Chapter Three (see section 3.4), the discussion of school conditions conducive to the asset-based approach shows that social trust and school environment that welcomes everyone is relevant for the success of the asset-based approach (Chaskin, 2001:290; Bryk & Schneider, 2003:40; Traverso-Yapez, Maddalena & Bavington, 2012:1). The findings of this study also depict that utilisation of the asset-based approach for improving academic performance is largely dependent of the kind of a relationship that exists between all school stakeholders.

For participants a balanced relationship between the stakeholders was required for the school to tap into the secondary important assets. The holders of secondary assets will form their relationship with the school based on how the school welcomed them as members of the community. The more the school connected with the secondary community the more the secondary community will avail its members in the school and vice versa. The model shows two bold arrows with one pointing at the assets in the school and another at the assets outside and secondary to the school. The two arrows indicate that if the school connects with the community at the secondary level better, the community will also connect with the school and there will be more possibilities for using assets from the community. However the lower part of the map shows two thin arrows, which indicate that if the school connects less with the community it will also limit its interaction with the school. In Chapter Three, I argued, drawing from Hlalele (2013a) that the school has become the lifeblood of some rural communities and this forces the schools to connect with the communities in which they are located. While the communities may rely on schools, the map shows that the school's connection with the community is the main determinant of the level of community's engagement in the school activities. Utilising the assets found in the community again is then determined by how the school appears to be welcoming to other stakeholders outside the school. It is ideal however to strengthen and sustain relationships because the collective contributions can help the school to address its issues without difficulties.

The findings of the study, especially through the voices of teachers, indicate that there was a challenge of the lack of connection between the school and its community. For this reason, the school was unable to make people aware of their potential contribution towards improving

academic performance in the school. The lack of communication between the school and the community caused by the school principal's unwillingness to hold school meetings resulted in an inability to draw from the ideas of parents and other community members.

As far as the asset-based approach is concerned, external services should be the school's last resort. The participants did indicate that the solutions from the provincial and regional department of education had been failing in the school and sometimes officials had made empty promises in such a way that they decided to take full responsibility for improving academic performance in the school. The map above has a dotted on the bottom which shows outside assets in the form of government and private institutions. From the map's point of view the outside assets should be treated as part of the solution if the asset-based approach is used. However, the process begins from the primary assets over which the school has full control. The second focus should be the secondary assets over which the school has control but it is less and guided by how the school appears to be welcoming from the people in the secondary level. This, if used, will ensure homebrewed solutions, as argued elsewhere (Myende & Chikoko, 2014), which can be trusted and easy to use. The government and private institutions services are avoided as the first solution in the asset-based approach as they may promote societies who perceive themselves as powerless to address their challenges and leads to unsustainable initiatives and further put the community concerned at the receiving end (Bryant, 2006; Khanare, 2009; Venter, 2010; Chikoko & Khanare, 2012). Indeed, in their SWOT analysis, the participants showed less reliance on the outside assets. This shows some level of empowerment and priority of what could serve the school and its community well.

The discussion above, of the process of assets identification or mapping (IDC, 2010) and mobilisation, has shown that agenda-setting which is a process of setting priorities is crucial in using the asset-based approach. The SWOT analysis and capacity inventories have been discussed as tools for assets identification. Through the SWOT analysis, assets in the school and the community were identified and the capacity inventories became crucial in understanding what each aspect identified as assets could contribute towards improving academic performance in the school. The contributions ranged from learner motivation, resources for sharing, creation of a school environment conducive to teaching and learning and enforcement of school rules to learners. Each asset identified was associated with a particular contribution and inventory capacities were then used to identify the capacity of each asset identified to ascertain what contributions could be expected from each.

With regards to assets mobilisation as conceptualised by Chikoko and Khanare (2012:25) and asset-building by Page-Adams and Sherraden (1997:224), creating a balanced relationship between the school and the community became the solution for assets mobilisation. I have indicated in the discussion above that participants were of the view that they needed strong relationship with the community in order for them to gain access to the assets that were possessed by community members. In other words, this is suggesting that to ensure that the school can tap into and mobilise primary, secondary and outside assets, there is need to form balanced relationships between all the players in the running of the school. The establishment of sound relationships is also advocated by Myende (2012) as an important tool to sustain partnerships between school communities and here it emerges as an import aspect in building school assets that are crucial towards improving academic performance. As guided by SBM (Briggs & Wohlstetter, 2003; Rainey & Honing, 2012), role players in the school life in this study are understood to be transcending the school boundaries, thus justifying the argument for sound relationship with all stakeholders, both primary and secondary. Teachers in the study also stated that their relationship with the SMT did not promote an environment in which they felt their ideas welcome and for this reason they withdrew their contributions. This is therefore suggesting that a balanced relationship must exist between the school's internal stakeholders and the secondary community.

## 6.5 CREATING CONDITIONS FOR ASSET-BASED APPROACH UTILISATION

The presentation of data in Chapter Five showed a close link between the second, the third and the fourth objectives (school conditions, SMT's strategies to create such conditions and challenges for the asset-based approach) of this study and therefore they are addressed concurrently. This section focusses on the school conditions conducive for utilising the asset-based approach and the SMTs strategies in creating such conditions. The challenges are indirectly noted and they will be synthesised later as section 6.6. Several issues emerged as findings in these three sections, including making a school and the community a single entity, empowerment for all potential contributors, challenging inferiority and superiority complexities, avoiding what I have termed "singing a solo" (leading alone) approach of leadership and establishing a culture of sharing and collaboration amongst stakeholders.

### 6.5.1 Making a school and the community a single entity

Schools remain the places of hope in rural communities. Through my observations, schools in rural communities are the only institutions trusted with the role of empowering rural young people so they can contribute to developing and changing unfavourable conditions found in their communities. If rural schools are failing to exercise this role, people will often complain about the dire future of their community and the school's failure to educate children. This is also supported by Hlalele's (2013a) argument that schools remain the lifeblood of rural communities. While they are given such a prestigious status in rural communities, it emerged in this study and supported by CER and the asset-based approach that rural schools can only be responsive to the community's needs if they understand such needs and rural communities. The chances of achieving this are high, provided rural schools and their communities are seen to be single entities.

This move was seen to be crucial in this study because of what the participants have stated. Learners and teachers and members of the SMT, including the principal, indicated that the people in the school and the community were alien to each other. Use of words like "*us*" and "*them*", especially by one HoD and the principal, painted a picture that the school was built in the community but it did not belong to the community. The finding on this aspect is that the school is in the community, but there is "the school" and the "community". This is not incorrect, however I argue here that the community is made up of both the people and the institutions found in those communities, including schools. This calls for treating the school and its community as a single system of different units rather than two single systems.

As presented in Chapter Five, the data shows that the alienation between the internal members of the school and the community members presented some challenges in tapping into the assets that each could present for the benefit of the whole. This leads to the argument that there is a need to make the school and the community a single entity. This is also in accordance with the school-community asset-map which shows that the extent at which the school connects with the community will determine the level of community's engagement in the activities of the school. This aspect again as presented in Chapter Five (see Section 5.2.5.2) emphasises the need for a strong social cohesion between the school and the community. The argument for the creation of strong school-community relations made in the literature by Glanz (2006:4) can be argued to be also advocating the creation of this one system but with different units. If this is achieved the assets found in each system will be utilised for the improvement of academic

performance, as this will make the process of assets assessment as termed by Ebersöhn and Mbetse (2003:324) more easy to undertake.

While I have argued that leadership in the asset-based approach is devolved amongst all those who are members of the school, the study emphasised the role of the principal in translating the school and the community into one single system. This also concurs with literature as it shows that strong principal leadership enhances and boost all school initiatives, including the success of the asset-based approach (Coleman & Early, 2005; Sanders, 2006; Fullan, 2007; Kamper, 2009; Chikoko & Khanare, 2012; Myende & Chikoko, 2014). Teachers and learners suggested that the principal must continuously interact with the community and inform them of what is happening in the school. For these participants this was going to ensure that a working and sustainable relationship with the community is formed. From the CER perspective and the school-based management there was a need to challenge participants to think critically about who should create the anticipated system.

The argument for the principal as the main player obviously confirmed where power resides within the school. Teachers and learners did not perceive themselves as potential contributors to the creation of this one system because, structurally, the principal is the ambassador of the school in the community. As much as participants critically reflected on this belief they argued that their level in the hierarchy meant there was less they could do without the principal's approval, but there was a level of agreement that creating a single entity had a collective role to play. This agreement may be seen to be a sign of the participants' awareness of power and such awareness may lead, if reflected upon, to changing the way things are done, which is the goal of CER (Ali, 2002; Esposito & Evans-Winters, 2007).

The creation of one single system does not guarantee the school that skills, capacities and strengths found in the system will be utilised for the improvement of academic performance of learners in the school. This, according to participants, created a need for empowerment of all potential contributors.

### 6.5.2 Empowerment for all potential contributors

The findings of the study further show that participants in the study, except the principal, acknowledge and understand the important role that all school stakeholders (internal and

external) can play as assets towards improving academic performance in the school. While this is the case, there is an agreement that lack of contributions are informed by stakeholders' lack of understanding of how crucial their role can be towards improving academic performance and their lack of capacity to make relevant contributions. Based on this lack of understanding it emerged in the study at several levels that the empowerment of all potential contributors is crucial for the utilisation of the asset-based approach as a management strategy towards improving academic performance. The kind of empowerment suggested here is not confirming rural people's incapacity to make contributions towards improving academic performance, but it is rather suggesting a need for creating awareness that everyone counts and everyone can offer something.

From the voices of the participants it appeared that they saw themselves and others as potential contributors, but awareness and understanding of what each person can contribute are the issues to be addressed. Therefore, a school environment in which people are informed and made aware of what potential they have to contribute towards improving academic performance is required. This is also confirmed by NMF (2005:iii), citing Nelson Mandela's belief in the untapped potential that rural communities have in themselves to improve the quality of education. Thus it appeared in this study that the untapped potential may be tapped if people are made aware and empowered to understand what contributions they may have. The empowerment of individuals is the key to community building (Chaskin, 2001) and it will enhance a process of assembling or mobilising the school and community assets together for the benefit of the school. This was also supported by Hyman (2002:98) and Oakley & Tsao (2007:820) as an important aspect in strengthening the school and the community's social and human capital. Contrary to the creation of one single system, teachers regarded the empowerment of all stakeholders, especially parents, as their responsibility, while empowerment of the SGB was seen to be the responsibility of the SMT, especially the principal.


### 6.5.3 Challenging inferiority and superiority complexities

It emerged during the study process that several inferiority and superiority complexities needed to be challenged if people both from the school and the community were to be treated as assets and have their potential tapped into by the school. In Mathie and Cunning (2003) and Mathie and Cunningham (2005) the issues of power and class have been seen to be hindering the

asset-based approach. Due to this challenge, these scholars argue that it remains unclear who should do what within a group of community developers. This was found in different aspects in this study.

Teachers internalised their subordination and indicated that their ideas were withdrawn due to the challenge that they were seen as inferior and none of what they suggested was accepted or implemented. This remains a challenge for the asset-based approach. Significant here is that teachers themselves understood the importance of their skills and capacity as assets for improving academic performance in the school and they were aware of what prevents them from making contributions, but this has remained unchallenged for many years.  The power that was gendered and resided mainly within the SMT was seen by teachers to be a hindering factor, concurring with Mathie and Cunningham (2003, 2005) on the issue of power. In Chapter Five, participants were cited as stating that they have had their ideas turned down by other male SMT members under the notion that they were woman *"abafazi"* and the male SMT members could not be told by *"abafazi"* what to do in the school. I therefore argue here that for the asset-based approach to work as a strategy of the SMT towards improving academic performance there is a need to address this power dynamic at play. Due to gender repression the ideas of some female teachers were withdrawn. Appearing above is the challenge of male SMT members appearing to be superior to female teachers.

Adding to the issue of power, the school principal was cited as indicating that people in the community were not educated and so had nothing to offer for the improvement of academic performance in the school. It will be noted that the principal even questioned the involvement of community members in a study that was addressing the school issue. Emerging here is the inferiority status attached to the rural people in this context by the principal and the superiority he attached to the members of the school based on their formal education. This is a class and power issue that also requires attention of the school if the intention is to create an environment in which the school can draw on the skills, capacities, strengths and knowledge of the broader school community. It will be impossible for the school to draw from the community assets if due to their illiteracy and lack of formal education they are perceived as less of crucial contributors. Essentially, the literature review (Chapter Three) has pointed to some challenges of rural people (*see* Balfour et al., 2008; Hlalele, 2012a; Walberg et al., 2012). Amongst the challenges, I have also noted the issue of the "brain drain" (Howley et al., 2009), which sees the decline of the educated population in rural areas due to their movement to urban areas. This however does

not counteract the indigenous knowledge that rural people possess. Therefore, the argument for challenging the inferiority status attached to rural people should be based on the understanding that they have survived overtime within their communities and this survival can be attributed to their indigenous knowledge as their asset. The rural people have maintained discipline and unity in their community while discipline was noted to be one of the hindering factors towards improving academic performance in the school. This may suggest that they can play a role in ensuring that learners are disciplined. Possible contributions could be drawn from ways they have maintained discipline and unity in their own community.

### 6.5.4 Avoiding "singing a solo" (leading alone) approach

> *"Our principal doesn't believe in meetings […], the school has produced many learners and I am sure they can contribute if they can be involved […], It also becomes very difficult to come up with innovative ideas because they are sabotaged […], in this school, the cleaners, kitchen team for the feeding scheme, he tuck-shop operators are the members of the SGB and these people are clueless of what is happening in the running of the school and the principal is happy. It makes him happy to run the school alone […].*

The above extract was taken from the voice of one HoD who was of the opinion that the principal was leading the school alone and ideas of others were not accommodated. The views of three teachers who also participated in this study also added that they would suggest things to be done but their suggestions would be ignored and something contrary would be undertaken. For the participants above, this meant the principal was running the school alone and it hindered the contribution of their skills, capacities and strengths beyond teaching and learning to the realisation of improved academic performance.

The avoidance of "singing a solo" (leading alone) approach is indeed challenged by the current promulgations as made in the SASA (Act no. 84 of 1996) (RSA, 1996b). The Act makes the inclusion of other stakeholders in the running of the school a compulsory practice. The notion is not only to push democratic practice in school leadership, but it is also argued that participation of all stakeholders may boost academic performance of learners in the school (Myende, 2012), since the leaders will also be able to draw from a variety of skills of the people involved in the running of the school. The call by participants to ensure devolved leadership as a way of

tapping other capacities is in line with CER, which also questions the practices that are "not-so-useful" (Mahlomaholo, 2009:226).

In promoting useful practices, the study finds adoption of invitational and participative leadership approaches *as discussed in Section 5.2.5.1* relevant in creating a school environment that is conducive and supportive to the application of the asset-based approach. The findings suggest that promoting invitational and participative leadership is not mainly about allowing others to see themselves as leaders, but it will also help the principal to learn how others would like things to be done. In a process of empowerment which is theoretically advocated in this study it is relevant to create spaces in which the potential of all members in valued and utilised accordingly. This is in line with what Mahlomaholo (2009:225), who argues for treating people equally and not as "mere objects in the laboratory". In other words, participants' suggestions for a kind of leadership that is invitational and participatory is a way towards acknowledging that people are equal and they can only make sound contributions towards improving academic performance in the school if they are treated equally and given space to excersise their leadership potential. The adoption of invitational and participative leadership is ideal for the empowerment for all in that it was further seen to be relevant in harnessing other participants' ideas (Eagley & Jones, 2003:14) towards improving academic performance. Creating this kind of leadership environment will enhance the school's ability to promote the culture of sharing and collaboration, which was also seen to be crucial for the success of the asset-based approach as school management strategy towards improving academic performance.

The discussion above has focused on the process of identifying and mobilising the assets, the approaches for assets identification and building. Furthermore, the school-community assets map has been presented to show a clear outline of what assets are there for the school to improve academic performance of learners and how a balanced relationship can be affected between the assets in the asset map. The discussion has also focused on the conditions under which the asset-based approach can work and what leadership strategies are relevant in creating such conditions. Noted in the discussion above are some challenges for the asset-based approach in this context with regards to the improvement of academic performance. I now pull together these challenges as drawn from the discussion above.

## 6.6     CHALLENGES FOR THE ASSET-BASED APPROACH

The study findings presented several challenges that needed to be addressed if the asset-based approach is to be used to improve academic performance in the school. Despite the principles of SMB (Briggs & Wohlstetter, 2003; Rainey & Honing, 2012) and the call by the South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996b) to have leadership dispersed to all stakeholders in the school, leadership in the studied school seemed to be still residing within the principal only. This was identified as the challenge for the asset-based approach in that other people with potential could not have space to contribute their skills and capacities to move the school forward. While leadership was sometimes dispersed, it appeared that the approach was very gendered and hierarchical in that only the views of those who were males and were in the SMT could have their words considered in what would be done. This hindered the ideas of those not in the SMT and who happened to be females in the school. From the participants' voices, this was a challenge to drawing from the assets found in the school, in that they had made a decision to withdraw their ideas and only dealt with teaching and learning.

While I acknowledge the indigenous knowledge possessed by people in the rural context, it should be noted also that the assets of the studied rural school in the form of former learners are difficult to access because of the "brain drain" (Howley et al., 2009:516) effect. Very influential former learners of the school were regarded as major assets towards motivating learners and securing additional resources for the school but they were difficult to access as they had left the rural context for job opportunities in urban areas. It was found, however, that these learners can be great contributors if a sound and sustainable relationship can be formed between them and the school. Because of the "brain drain" challenge the school has remained with the uneducated members of the community. While their IKS is regarded as an asset, the challenge from lack of awareness and lack of understanding of the contributions makes it difficult for the school to tap into their skills, capacities and strengths to improve academic performance.

Another major challenging factor to the asset-based approach is the power imbalance between different stakeholders due to inferiority and superiority being internalised. Teachers have withdrawn their ideas because they have either perceived themselves as inferior based on their gender and their positions in the school's structure. Secondly, the principal has been found arguing that less can be obtained from the community as he perceived the local community to be inferior because of lack of formal education. This has created the gap and alienation

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between the school internal members and members of the community, thus limiting engagement between the two. Due to these challenges the study has argued for the creation of a single entity made of the school and the community, empowerment for all potential contributors, avoiding of one person to be the only leader of the school and a creation of the culture for sharing and collaboration.


## 6.7    A STRATEGY FOR APPLYING THE ASSET-BASED APPROACH

Based on the discussion presented above I propose a strategy that explains clearly how the asset-based approach may be used to improve academic performance in a rural context. It must be noted that the strategy was not proposed by participants but it is informed by their voices as they engaged in the discussion and all the processes of this study. Above, I presented the school-community assets map, which is descriptive in that it is mostly informed and based on the presentations made by the participants during data generation. Contrary to the asset map, the strategy for asset-based approach utilisation (Figure 6.2) attempts to take together all the discussions presented in Chapter Five and in this chapter to create meaning as to how the asset-based approach may be utilised. This is indeed a proposed strategy but it is not separate from the voices of the participants as it covers all the aspects that were presented in the study and other issues that were identified as challenges. The strategy below further highlights the process of understanding the school issues (agenda-setting), asset identification and mobilisation approaches, the cautions to be kept in mind (environmental analysis) and the formulation of the plan to use the assets towards improving academic performance.

**Figure 6.2: A strategy for asset-based approach utilisation**



Priority areas identified
- By the School for the school
- Analysis of priority areas and their effect on the issue

Agenda-setting

A strategy for asset-based approach utilisation

Formulation of the Plan

Assets Identification

Environmental analysis

- Mobilising of the key assets
- Implementation of the plan
- Set clear roles for all individuals and groups
- Clear plans on how each asset will be used

- Internal affected groups
- External affected groups
- Relevant skills and capacity audit
- Areas of possible contributions

- Identification of possible threats
- Identification of key threating issues
- Identification of possible strategies to address the threats

**6.7.1 Understanding the strategy**

The strategy above is a four cyclical stage strategy comprising of agenda-setting, assets identification, environment analysis and formulation of the plan.

Agenda-setting is informed by *Section 5.2.1* which deals with agenda-setting for assets utilisation. As discussed in Chapter Five the main idea at this stage is that the problem (poor academic performance) in this case is important to understand. This is because one problem may have existed because of other problems in the school. For example, the issue of poor academic performance in the studied school was associated with lack of discipline, as discussed in *Section 5.2.2.1*, rapport between the school and the local community, as discussed in *Section 5.2.2.2*, social issues as discussed in *Section 5.2.2.3*, and shortage of teaching and learning resources, as discussed in *Section 5.2.2.4*. These were problems identified by participants to be the key areas that needed to be addressed to improve academic performance in the school.

As I argued above, agenda-setting may appear to be following the need-based approach in that it also begins from the problems. However, as part of the asset-based utilisation it is mainly about the affected people identifying their own problems rather than the external experts identifying problems on behalf of the local people. In this study the identification of problems as an initial stage was proposed and followed by participants to understand the problems that led to poor academic performance in the school. In other words, agenda-setting in this study is a process of identifying priority areas that are contributing to the major problem and this must be done by the school and for the school for it to fit within the asset-based approach principles. It is also important that each area identified is analysed and its effect on the greater problem is understood. It was through agenda-setting that participants in this study were able to identify relevant contributors and the assets.

Once the agenda is clear, participants may then engage in the process of assets identification and mobilisation. This is the second stage of the model and mainly addresses questions such as who is affected by the problem? How they can be part of the solution? What skills, capacities and strengths do they have? And how do they fit in the problem? These questions will also guide the process to remain within the confines of the asset-based approach (see Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993; Ebersöhn & Mbetse, 2003; Venter, 2010; Loots, Ebersöhn, Ferreira & Eloff, 2012) in that it focusses on the people affected by the problem before it extends to external support. The SWOT analysis in this study was used to identify the individuals and groups that were seen as crucial in addressing the problem of poor academic performance in the school. An asset map was developed and capacity inventories were compiled to establish what each asset within the asset map could

contribute towards improving academic performance. This level focusses mainly on the strengths and opportunities section of the SWOT analysis. Once the assets have been identified, environment analysis should be made.

Environmental analysis as used in this study is mainly about looking at the school environment and analysing it to see if there can be threats that will thwart the process of tapping from everyone's assets. This was mainly done by focusing on the weaknesses and the threats sections of the SWOT analysis. The threats identified for the asset-based approach are discussed in this chapter under *Section 6.6 (challenges for the asset-based approach).* The people using the model at this stage must be cautious of what the environment presents as threats, identify key threats and possible strategies to address them. Once this is completed, a clear plan for using the asset-based approach towards improving academic performance should be developed.

Formulation of the plan as used in this study encompasses the process of pulling together all the assets, a clear list of cautions and strategies to address those cautions, set roles of individuals and groups involved in the process. The formulated plan must also be responsive to the needs and priorities set in the first stage. The formulated plan can then be used to address the identified problem. In the process of implementing the plan it may happen that the priorities set were not the only issues resulting from the problem, and if this is the case the cycle can be repeated to ensure that the problem is solved. Thus, the strategy shows four cyclical stages that are proposed to utilise the asset-based approach towards improving academic performance in the school.

## 6.8    CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has demonstrated how the researcher has responded to the objectives of this study by presenting and discussing the findings. After the introduction of the chapter, the objectives of the study were restated in order to remind the reader of what the findings should respond to. The findings were thereafter discussed and there was a backward movement to Chapter Five, Chapter Three and Chapter Two, which was done to ensure that the findings are informed by the data, the literature and the theoretical framework. As the key elements of this study, the chapter has presented the school-community assets map and the strategy for asset-based approach utilisation.

The next chapter (Chapter Seven) synthesises the findings, contributions made by this study and further presents the limitations and implications for future research as informed by the findings of this study.

# CHAPTER SEVEN

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONTRIBUTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

## 7.1 INTRODUCTION

This study was aimed at investigating how a rural school can improve academic performance using the asset-based approach as a management strategy. The study looked at how the selected school can use its own immediate assets in the form of individuals, groups and organisational strengths, knowledge, skills and other capacities to improve learners' academic performance. To achieve this major aim, the study asks how community assets can be identified and mobilised to improve academic performance within a rural school. Secondly, it asks what school conditions are conducive to the utilisation of the asset-based approach. It further asks what school management can do to create an environment conducive to the utilisation of the asset-based approach and what may be the challenges fore the asset-based approach and how the school management can address them. Chapter Six presented and discussed the findings of this study.

Given the process of the study and the aims as stated above, the purpose of this chapter is to provide a summary of the findings and state the contributions the study makes. Implications for for further research are also discussed but to discuss them I first present the limitation(s) of this study as they inform the implications.

## 7.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The summary of findings is presented under each sub-question to which this study responded. These sub-questions are referred to below as research questions 1 to 4 (RQ1 to 4). The summary of findings is based on the findings as presented both from the literature and the data. The aim of this approach is to ensure that the discussion of the contributions made by this study is clear and can be evaluated based on what the literature and the data provide as findings.

**RQ1: How can community assets be identified and mobilised to improve academic performance within a rural school?**

The literature study presented two main areas of assets identification and mobilisation. From the work of Kretzmann and McKnight (1993:5); Kretzmann and McKnight (1996:25); IDA, (2010:20); Fuller, Guy and Pletsch (2002:5); Boyd et al. (2008:191) and IDA (2010:20) asset mapping was found to be a crucial aspect of assets identification and mobilisation. The process of asset-mapping as articulated in Section 3.3.1 involves identifying a map or inventory of the resources, skills, talents, capacities and strengths of individuals, associations and organisations. The purpose of this process is to discover and collate the links between the different parts of the community and the agencies and establish how each may be resourceful in addressing the identified problem. Another important aspect of assets identification as found in the literature (Ebersöhn & Mbetse, 2003:324) is conducting community assets assessment. This involves creating a community capacity inventory, inventory of local institutions and local businesses. Table 3.1 provides further details of this process but of importance is that it gives a picture of the richness of the resources found, the community, and which can be used to address societal current challenges. From the work of Fuller, Guy and Pletsch (2002:9), it was argued in this study that the storytelling, whole asset mapping, and the heritage approaches can enhance the assets assessment and identification process.

The findings of this study do not contradict the above processes and approaches but through what is termed 'agenda-setting' the data revealed that assets identification and mobilisation processes need to begin at a level of understanding why assets of the community are required and how they will be utilised. This in the study was found to be the process of setting priorities that are directly and indirectly leading to the continuity of poor academic performance in the school. The participants agreed that the school and its community is rich in terms of assets but they argued that relevant assets to the current problem can only be found easily if the nuggets of the major problem are known. After the priorities were found the assets identification process was found to be easy and responsive to the problem because not all assets were put on the assets map, but rather only those deemed to be offering some remedy to the issues set as priority areas. The agenda-setting may seem to be following the needs-based approaches or deficit model if evaluated based on what the proponents (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993) of the asset-based approach proposed. However, the findings showed that for this to move from deficit approach to the asset-based approach it needs to be done by the school and for the school. This suggests that

establishing challenges leading to the major problem should not be carried out by external experts but by local people and for themselves.

Adding to assets assessment and mapping as proposed in literature, the SWOT analysis emerged as a crucial tool for assets identification. While asset mapping and community assets assessment as found in the literature help in assets identification, they may not spread beyond the people involved in the process of assets identification. However, in this study conducting the SWOT analysis helped in transcending assets identification beyond what participants knew existed in the school. The process further moved to the other aspects of this study which were challenges for the asset-based approach. In basic terms the SWOT analysis involved identification of strengths and weaknesses and this focused on understanding the internal dynamics of the school. The second aspect was opportunities and threats, which are the external dynamics. These two areas were critical in knowing which assets were in the secondary community and which in the primary community (Chikoko & Khanare, 2012). Internal challenges in the form of weaknesses and external challenges in the form of threats were further identified. In this way the SWOT analysis provided an in-depth assessment of the school's assets.

While the SWOT analysis provides understanding of what assets are found in the school and the community, conducting inventory capacities was found relevant in that it was key to identifying the richness of each asset, especially with regards to the improvement of academic performance. For example, the learners were found to be key players in ensuring that other learners were motivated to do their academic work and abide by the school rules. Secondly, parents were found to be important in supporting the school by ensuring that school rules were respected by learners and that there were working relationships between teachers, leaners and parents. Moreover, parents were seen to be relevant in supervising extra lessons in the absence of teachers. The teachers and former school learners were identified as important in instilling motivation amongst learners in the school. Furthermore, the school principal was seen to be important in ensuring that there was discipline and accountability in the school and that teachers were committed to teaching. The SGB and former learners were seen to be crucial in finding additional resources for the school. The aspects identified above were identified as issues of priority if the school wanted to improve academic performance. Understanding what each component could contribute was impossible to be achieved through the SWOT analysis only and inventory capacities were found to be useful in getting a deeper understanding of what could be gained from assets identified.

As far as the mobilisation of assets is concerned, both the literature and the data show community building as the only approach in ensuring that assets are mobilised. Community building is mainly a process of ensuring that the community is self-organised (IDA, 2010:21), which will then make it possible to have a group of people and organisations with a common purpose. As found in the literature, community building also encompasses the process of creating social trust that will enhance the ability of people to work together (Green & Haines, 2012:13). This was seen to be crucial for assets mobilisation. The study also found it preferable to treat a school and its community as one system rather than two different ones. This appeared to be important in that it enhanced the chances of the school tapping from available assets in the community.

## RQ2: What school conditions are conducive to the utilisation of the asset-based approach?

The major finding from the literature on what conditions are conducive to the utilisation of the asset-based approach is that the "school must be a place for all stakeholders". This means whether one forms the external component of the school community or the internal component, he/she must feel welcome in the school. This further connects with making the school and the community a single entity, which is one of the ways to ensure that relevant assets are mobilised. Building from the work of Bryk and Schneider (2003:40), it was argued in the literature chapter that this will further enhance the creation of social trust among different school stakeholders and so make it easy to work collaboratively. Community capacity building, as termed by Hyman (2002), will also be enhanced if the school is a place for all stakeholders. The literature, for example Hyman (2002:198) and Oakley and Tsao (2007:820), further suggests that discouraging top-down approaches to decision making in the school and the community will create better conditions for everyone involved to contribute their skills, knowledge and strengths to the initiative.

From the data it emerged that as much as rural communities and other school internal stakeholders are capable to make contributions, they remain unaware of what contributions they can make. The findings are that empowerment for all potential contributors will help in making different stakeholders contribute. Further to the empowerment of potential contributors, creating a balanced relationship which is explained through the community assets map was seen to be crucial in creating conditions that will make it easy to use the asset-based approach. The creation of a single entity between the school and the community was also found to be important in creating the conditions for the utilisation of the

asset-based approach. This was argued for on the basis that there was alienation between the school and the community which made them lack that "glue" which should stick them together for the creations of social and cultural capital (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003; Emery & Flora, 2006; Boyd et al., 2008:189). The data further suggested that within the school some stakeholders were treated as inferior and others as superior, based on their positions and their gender. The findings are that challenging inferiority and superiority will enhance the use of the asset-based approach because people will feel they are equals and in that way they will not withdraw their ideas. On the side of the external community (secondary assets), they were regarded as inferior on the basis of their lack of formal education, and this seemed to be blocking the school's potential to identify possible contributors from the secondary community. Creating a school environment that is free of inferiority and superiority complexities is therefore found to be an important condition for enhancing the use of the asset-based approach.

**RQ3: What can school management do to create an environment conducive to the utilisation of the asset-based approach?**

From the literature, level leadership was argued to be the component of management in this study. The findings posit that the asset-based approach calls for strong school-community collaboration (Myende, 2012). From the work of Gretz (2003), Coleman and Earley (2005), Sanders (2006), Fullan (2007) and Kamper (2009), effective school collaboration depends on the leadership demonstrated by the school leadership. Glanz (2006:xix) argued that the assets beyond the schools call for leadership to create those connections that will help the school to draw on assets found beyond the school boundaries. A delicate balance between control and delegation is found to be crucial in ensuring that different people's ideas are accommodated in the school, and this in seen in the literature as an important aspect in making the asset-based approach work. Spillane (2002) found that the school management's ability to distribute power will enhance the principal's ability to draw from other people's assets, thus making it easier for him or her to focus on other school matters while empowering others to lead the school and take initiatives that will make it possible to improve academic performance.

Establishing teams has been further found in the literature to be a school management's role in making asset-based approach work. From the work of Glanz (2006:4), as discussed in Chapter Three several school management roles were found, for example developing and sustaining working relationships between all stakeholders and identifying different people who can serve as motivators and networkers. This is also in accordance with agenda

building as an aspect of creating social trust in community capacity building proposed by Hyman (2002).

The avoiding of "singing a solo" (leading alone) approach through promoting invitational and participative leadership approaches in the data was found to be the key role of leadership in making the asset-based approach work. Promoting invitational leadership in this study was described as a process of making others see themselves as leaders and allowing them to participate in the process of leading the school. As discussed in Section 5.2.5.1, promoting invitational and participative leadership is in line with the school-based management system (Grant, 2006) and is the key to empowering others and drawing from the multifaceted skills that individuals provide. Moreover, it is argued in the data presentation that promoting invitational leadership is important if the management is interested in drawing from the potential of the group and harnessing the group's assets. The approach has thwarted many ideas from others in the school but has also revealed that school leadership is not an individual pursuit but needs to be conducted collaboratively.

Another role of school management was attempting to bring the school to the community and vice versa. This was well justified in the section "effecting a balanced relationship between the school and the community" which explains the relationship building between the two. As suggested in the assets map, the school's ability to strike a balanced relationship determines the extent to which the community will avail itself to the school. It was then suggested by participants in the study that the SMT, especially the principal, must work towards creating a balanced relationship between teachers and the community. This was not only crucial for the asset-based approach to work but for teachers to see themselves as part of the community and willingly teach the learners for the empowerment of the entire community. Further, as argued under conditions conducive to the asset-based approach, the empowerment of all potential contributors was found to be the main role of the SMT. One important aspect that made some participants suggest this was that SGB members were not all empowered or involved in personal moneymaking activities in the school without performing their roles. This was argued to be favoured by the school principal and it was therefore suggested that the SMT, especially the principal, must empower the SGB and other stakeholders for them to realise their potential and how they can contribute towards improving academic performance.  I argue here that empowerment can take place if delicate balance between delegation and control, as suggested above, is established. Bringing others into the leadership space may also enhance the process of making them realise their potential and see what issues of improving academic performance may be dealt with when building from their skills, capacities and strengths.

**RQ4: What are the challenges to the asset-based approach and how can school management address them?**

The asset-based approach has received much advocacy in community development studies in working with devastated communities. However, the challenges for this approach remain undisclosed because of the nature of the studies that have been conducted thus far. While this is the case, literature found some challenges as presented by Mathie and Cunningham (2003) and Mathie and Cunningham (2005), in that power and class have been neglected when community developers argue for citizen-driven initiatives. This has created lack of clarity as to who should lead the asset-based approach initiatives. A second challenge is that despite attempts to establish social trust different people will still have their own personalised interest, causing them to have endogenous sources of incivility. Another important aspect noted in literature by the same scholars is that fostering inclusive participation, which is the key to using the asset-based approach, is not a simple task since people's willingness to participate is difficult to guarantee.

The data of this study has extended the challenges, showing them to be unique to the school and based on the dynamics of the rural context. The first challenge that was found through the data is the "brain drain" (migration of educated people from rural to urban areas) effect, seen to have stripped the school community of its valuable assets and made them rely on the few people still residing there. This was also found in the literature as an aspect of rural challenges, but it was not identified as a challenge for the asset-based approach. Learners and teachers argued that more could be gained from former learners towards improving academic performance but due to job opportunities they have migrated to urban areas, making it difficult for the school to harness their potential.

Also found from the data are the challenges of inferiority and superiority complexities which are based on education level, position in the school hierachy and gender. The perception from some of the school members is that there is less if anything that can be gained from rural people, since most in the context of this study are uneducated. This perception has caused those who see themselves as educated to think they are superior to those who are seen to be uneducated. Secondly, gendered favouritism of ideas has thwarted the success of the asset-based approach. Male teachers who also happen to be SMT members were found to be unaccommodating of the ideas suggested by female teachers who happen to be PL1s. The argument was that they cannot be told by *"abafazi"* how things needed to be done in the school. Within this finding there is also an aspect of power at play. Male teachers happen to be in the SMT and female teachers happen to be PL1s and this was therefore

found to be beyond gender. The inferiority and superiority complexities were found thwarting the asset-based approach in that those who were seen to be uneducated were either not invited to contribute to moving the school forward or would not be empowered to see their potential. The ideas of female teachers in most cases were suppressed and they ended up willingly abiding by the rules of the powers that be and withdrawing their participation from all other additional activities that were meant to improve academic performance in the school. These were seen to be the challenges to the asset-based approach. The study therefore argues that the SMT has to make it their responsibility to avoid inferiority and superiority complexities, to empower all potential contributors and to promote leadership that is invitational and participative. In addition, the study argues that indigenous knowledge is possessed by rural people and this makes it possible to contribute despite the reality that they have not achieved much in the form of formal education.

Having provided the summary of findings drawing from the data and the reviewed literature, I now present the contribution that this study intends to make.

## 7.3 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

It is intended that this study will make contributions to the asset-based approach as theory and its application in general, particularly within the rural context. Secondly, the study makes methodological contributions as far as research into the asset-based approach is concerned within the South African context.

### 7.3.1 Contributions to the asset-based approach

Firstly, it is important that I indicate that several studies have been conducted on the asset-based approach within the South African context in order to position this current study. These studies include those conducted by Emmet (2000); Eloff and Ebersöhn (2001); Ebersöhn and Mbetse (2003); Ebersöhn and Mbetse (2006); Ebersöhn and Eloff (2006); Ryan (2008); Khanare (2009); Venter (2010); Ferreira and Ebersöhn (2011); Chikoko and Khanare (2012); Ebersöhn and Eloff (2012); Loots, Ebersöhn, Ferreira and Eloff (2012); Myende (2012) and Myende and Chikoko (2014). They have been reviewed thoroughly in this current study and I posit here that not one of these has revealed any depth challenges to the asset-based approach. I argue here that the current study has contributed to disclosing challenges to the asset-based approach, especially within a rural context. Secondly, the

studies identified above have tended to argue for the asset-based approach and have not gone into depth in providing guidance on what will be a suitable school environment in which this approach may work. This study has made contributions in arguing for the establishment of school and community as a single entity; empowerment of all potential contributors; awareness and avoidance of superiority and inferiority complexities; and invitational and participative leadership as aspects of a suitable environment for the asset-based approach to work.

In extending scholarship on the asset-based approach, I acknowledge the above studies' acknowledgment of the asset-based appraoch in completely challenging the process of building from the needs of the school and the community. However, this study has also contributed to the claim that beginning from the needs may be crucial in ensuring effective assets identification and mobilisation. Adding to that was the argument that this is not actually deviating from the principles of the asset-based approach but rather it depends on who is doing the needs analysis and for whom. I have argued that if the needs analysis is done by the school for the school the process is still within the asset-based approach. This has not remained at an argument level, but evidence has been shown that needs identification may lead to effective assests identification.

The most important and unique contribution of this study is the explanation of relationship building as explained through the community assets map and the formulation of the strategy for the asset-based approach to utilisation. Several studies (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993; Hyman, 2002; Sanders, 2006; Mbokazi & Bhengu, 2008), including some that I identified earlier, have argued for building a strong relationship between the school and the community, but this study has extended the understanding of building this relationship by further explaining what will enhance or destroy such relationships. This was accomplished through the community assets map as presented in Chapter Six.

The study makes a further contribution by developing a unique and non-existing strategy for using the asset-based approach. The strategy is not mainly based on how I have interpreted the findings but there is very close link with what participants said in the study and what is entailed by the strategy. I argue here that the proposed strategy can channel the school's action towards using the asset-based approach without an external intervention or support. While the strategy has also been developed by understanding some components of the asset-based approach, it is unique in that it does not reproduce what has been argued in the literature.

### 7.3.2 Methodological contributions

This study was participative in nature and gave rural people space to talk about their issues and propose solutions to problems. I cannot claim 100% success in the utilisation of participatory methodologies but I can argue here that the experience has exposed several challenges for conducting participatory research, specifically within a school in a rural context in which power is contested and is very positional. As I discuss the research design and methodology in Chapter Four I present some challenges I had to overcome in order to give momentum to the study process. Analysis of such challenges may inform knowledge on using participatory research in general and within the rural context specifically.

For example, one of the methodological contributions drawn in this study is the use of a variety of non-conventional ways of doing research. The methods used in this study were discursive oriented and free attitude interviews as wells SWOT analysis, mapping, collage and inventory capacities. In a study that is emancipatory, a challenge of how the research becomes emancipatory may arise. Given that emancipation is a personal choice (Nkoane, 2002:146) and dependent on whether people are willing to emancipate themselves makes emancipatory process a challenge. However, the contribution of this study lies in its research processes that were grounded in making sure the participants are fully involved and they are drivers of the data generation process through discussions. I argue here that as much as I cannot fully claim emancipation of participants, the methodology of this study exposes different research approaches and how a space for open dialogue and communicative practice can be created through those approaches which will make findings relevant to the participants.

Although literature is increasing on participatory methodologies, giving meaning to the data has remained at an interpretive level which gives power to researchers as affiliates of universities to decide what is worth reporting without exposing and questioning powers that drives experiences of participants. This study, through participative and critical reflections, has tried to put participants at the centre of the research process and moved beyond interpretive level to a level of understanding power dynamics at play and how they serve as repressive tools and challenge the way things ought to be. As much as the report itself follows university guidelines on what forms the thesis, there was an attempt to represent the views of participants by doing research in their indigenous language (IsiZulu) and also by reporting their voices in their own language.

## 7.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

It is important to provide a critique on several issues presented. The first limitation of this study is that the proposed strategy is based on data generated but it has not been tested on the ground to establish its applicability within the rural context. Secondly, the study was conducted in one small school, making it difficult to apply the findings in different contexts. In defence of this, I argue here that the intention was not to generalise the results, because school challenges may be unique, and the results may be applied in a context with similar features, regardless of the small number of participants in this study. The study has argued for the asset-based approach as a management approach for improving academic performance but the main intention was to investigate how this may be used. The limitation found here is that there is no direct action in which the approach is used to challenge aspects of improving academic performance. I have examined ways in which it can be used by focusing mainly on the approach. The above limitations lead to implications for further research.

Another limitation of this study is that its intention was to involve members from the community and parents who are not representatives in the SGB but this was not achieved due to the gatekeepers' (SMT) unwillingness to involve people external to the school. This makes the data to be mainly from the SMT, teachers, SGB and learners. To address this challenge issues that were going to be addressed through parents and community members were directed to the SGB members as they carried the status of being parents and also possessed the understanding of the school relations with the community. The decision to cover parents and community issues through the SGB made it possible to have broader views than just views of SGB members on their status as part of school governance.

 While this was a challenge, the gatekeepers' decision of who will be involved challenges the notion presented in Chapter One. It was argued drawing from NMF (2005:137) that rural people are not vocal about their issues. In my opinion, the SMTs decision of who was supposed to be involved shows the power that rural schools have pertaining issues affecting them.

## 7.5 Implications for further research and for asset-based approach

Given the limitations of this study I recommend further research on the asset-based approach. Such research may work if it includes action to implement the asset-based approach utilisation strategy to establish what works and what will not work. I recommend

the use of participatory action research that will put into practice the suggested aspects of this study and establish the merits and demerits of the proposed strategy. Furthermore, issues impacting on academic performance need to be identified and the strategy applied to those issues to further link the asset-based approach with improving academic performance. This recommendation is based on the third limitation of this study.

I have also observed that poor academic performance is not only a challenge for rural schools and the same challenge of waiting for government intervention remains a bottleneck for both rural and township schools. I therefore believe that a study of this nature can be conducted within township schools to ascertain what assets are there and how they can be harnessed to improve academic performance. This will create a platform to ascertain whether challenges and leadership approaches required from a rural context can be compared to those of a township schools. Furthermore, there is a possibility that the strategy to utilise the asset-based approach as proposed in Chapter Six will be improved or altered to cater for both contexts.

## 7.6 A FINAL WORD

The study challenges the discourse that rural schools can only address their challenges through external support. This discourse is challenged by arguing that the asset-based approach presents an opportunity to benefit from homemade solutions. The asset-based approach proposes a shift from depending to the state and external support to a process whereby rural schools address their challenges for themselves. While this discourse is challenged, it was found in this study that research has not revealed how this approach may be used, it has not exhumed the school conditions conducive to this approach and how SMTs can create such an environment. Further, research has not revealed in-depth challenges for the asset-based approach.

The study has therefore investigated how the asset-based approach can be used in a rural school to improve academic performance. The study was located within the CER and the asset-based approach with an aim of shifting from conventional research processes and creating space for the affected rural people to have their ideas shape what they think will work in their context. To ensure that the study was emancipatory and to give space for dialogue with the rural people, I utilised participatory research methods to generate data. It is these methods that link with what emancipatory researchers intend to achieve. On the empowerment of participants, I concur with Nkoane's (2006:146) argument that

empowerment is not what the powerful can give but rather it is personal choice by individuals to be empowered. Although throughout the study process I have endeavoured to create space for participants to be empowered, a full claim that they were empowered can only be made when the participants decide to take the results of this study and willingly implement them in their school.

While I do not claim the empowerment of participants I can argue that conducting research with and for the participants is the first move away from conventional research methods that are not benefitting to the rural people and are not prioritising the voices of the same rural people (NMF, 2005). This study has attempted to create a space for open dialogue characterised by communicative practice and it is hoped that it can add value to the process of empowering rural participants, especially in findings ways to benefit from locally and homemade solutions.

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Faculty of Education 12
Winkie Direko Building
Faculty of Education
University of the Free State

P.O. Box 339

Bloemfontein 9300

South Africa

**APPENDIX A: Ethical Clearance Letter from the University**

UNIVERSITY OF THE
FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE
VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA
FREISTATA
UFS
UV

1 June 2012

Ethical Clearance Application:

***Improving academic performance in a rural school through the use of an Asset-Based Approach as a management strategy***

Dear Mr P Myende

With reference to your application for ethical clearance with the Faculty of Education, I am pleased to inform you on behalf of the Ethics Board of the faculty that you have been granted ethical clearance for your research.

Your ethical clearance number, to be used in all correspondence, is:

**UFS-EDU-2012-0029**

This ethical clearance number is valid until June 2015. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension in writing.

We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your research project be submitted in writing to the ethics office to ensure we are kept up to date with your progress and any ethical implications that may arise.

Thank you for submitting this proposal for ethical clearance and we wish you every success with your research.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Barclay

Faculty Ethics Officer

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA FREISTATA

# APPENDIX B: Permission from the Department of Education

**education**

Department:
Education
**PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL**

Enquiries: Nomangisi Ngubane          Tel: 033 392 1004          Ref.:2/4/6/289

Mr PE Myende
15 B Kings Road
PINETOWN
3610

Dear Mr Myende

**PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS**

Your application to conduct research entitled: "IMPROVING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN A RURAL SCHOOL THROUGH THE USE OF AN ASSET-BASED APPROACH AS A MANAGEMENT STRATEGY", in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 01 March 2013 to 30 May 2014.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Connie Kehologile at the contact numbers below.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report / dissertation / thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education (Ugu District).

**Nkosinathi S.P. Sishi, PhD**
**Head of Department: Education**
**Date: 17 October 2014**

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

POSTAL:     Private Bag X 9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200, KwaZulu-Natal, Republic of South Africa   ...dedicated to service and performance
PHYSICAL:     247 Burger Street, Anton Lembede House, Pietermaritzburg, 3201. Tel. 033 392 1004beyond the call of duty
EMAIL ADDRESS: kehologile.connie@kzndoe.gov.za / Nomangisi.Ngubane@kzndoe.gov.za
CALL CENTRE: 0860 596 363; Fax: 033 392 1203 WEBSITE:     WWW.kzneducation.gov.za

## APPENDIX C: Consent form for SMT and teachers

Dear Participant

Thank you very much for your agreement to participate in this project investigating how can the asset based approach be used to improve academic performance in a rural school. This project is part of my doctoral degree under the supervision of Drs Nkoane and Hlalele, University of the Free State (South Africa). It is important that you read and understand the explanation for the study before signing this consent form. By signing this consent form you agree to the following:

1. You understand that participating in this project offers no financial benefits, but that participation in itself may provoke your critical thinking about issues affecting your school and how they can be addressed.
2. Activities of this study may take place after school and there is no guarantee that a meal or light refreshments will be provided.
3. Your choice to participate is only voluntary and you can withdraw at any time and there will be no negative consequences for withdrawal.
4. The information you will provide will be treated with confidentiality and your identity will be protected.
5. Transcripts of all sessions will be made available to you and you are allowed to withdraw some of or all the information you will provide in the case of second thoughts.
6. The information gathered in this study will be kept for five years in a secured and safe place at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Should you have questions and problems related to the study, please feel free to contact me by email: myendep@ukzn.ac.za or my supervisors by email: Nkoanemm@ufs.ac.za or Hlaleledj@qwa.ufs.ac.za. You can also call me on 073 991 2392 or 031 260 2054.


Name of the Participant_____

Contact details_____

Signature_____

## APPENDIX D: Incwadi yokucela abafundi kubazali (consent for learners)

Igama lami ngingu Phumlani Myende owenza izifundo zobuDokotela kwezemfundo eNyuvesi yase Free State. Ukuze ngihlanganise iziqu zalezi zimfundo engizenzayo kumele ngenze ucwaningo lapho ngibheka khona ukuthi ngabe singalinyusa kanjani izinga lokuphumelela kwabafundi esikoleni sisebenzisa amakhono, ulwazi, izinsiza Kanye nako konke okuwusizo okutholakala emiphakathini eyakhelene nezikole ezisendaweni yasemkhaya. Isikole somntwana wakho siqokiwe ukuba sibe yinxenye yalolu cwaningo. Ngokuzithoba okukhulu, uyacelwa ukuba uvumele umntwana wakho ukuba abambe iqaza kulolu cwaningo.

Uma uvuma, uyaziswa ukuba abukho ubungozi umntwana angangena kubo ngenxa yalolu cwaningo kani futhi ayikho imikomelo eyonikezwa abantwana abazobamba iqaza. Kuyophinde kuqinisekiswe ukuthi igama lomntwana wakho livikelekile ngokusebenzisa elinye ingama ayolethiwa umbhali walolu cwaningo. Uyaziswa ukuthi uma uvuma kungenzeka umntwana wakho acelwe ukuba eze esikoleni kuwuMgqibelo noma acelwe ukuba asale isikhashana esincane emva kokuphuma kwesikole. Uma umntwana esuka kude zikhona izinhlelo ezihleliwe zezokuthutha ukuze asheshe afike ekhaya.

Ngingabonga kakhulu uma lesi siscelo siphumelele, ngiyathembisa nokuthi kuningi umntwana angakuzuza kukuba yinyenxenye yalolu cwaningo nakuba engeke akhokhelwa imali. Uma uvuma sicela usayinde isivumelwani esinikeziwe kuyo lencwadi. Ikhophi yesivumelwano esisayindiwe iyobuya nomntwana emva komhlangano wokuqala.

Mayelana neminingwane eminingi engabalwanga ngaphezulu ungathintana nomcwaningi (Phumlani Myende) enombolweni enikeziwe ngezansi kuyo lencwadi.

Ozithobayo
uPhumlani Myende
Cell no. 073 991 2392
Office.  031 2603490


**Isivumelwano**
Mina ………………………………………………(amagama nesibongo oMzali) ngiyagunyaza ukuba umntwana wami u………………………………………(amagama omntwana) abe yinxenye yocwaning njengoba kuchaziwe ngenhla. Ngiyakuqonda ukuthi angeke kube khona mikomelo eyonikezwa. Ngiyavuma futhi ukuthi abizelwe esikoleni kweminye yemiGqibelo ezobe ibekiwe.


-------------------------------------------------                              ----------------------------------
Umzali makasayine emgqeni ongenhla                              usuku
Inombolo yeCell………………………

## APPENDIX E: Letter requesting consent from the school principal

Dear Principal

**PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

I am currently studying for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy with the University of the Free State, Faculty of Education. As part of the requirements for this degree, I am conducting a research project in which I investigate how the asset-based approach can be used as a management strategy to improve academic performance in a rural school. This letter serves as request to conduct this research in your school.

The study is titled "improving academic performance in a rural school through the use of an asset-based approach as a management strategy". The main aim of the study is to establish how the asset-based approach as a management strategy can be used to improve academic performance.

There will be interviews with the principal of the school which are expected to take a maximum time of 45 minutes. Secondly interviews with teachers will be conducted on their available time in which they will be not supposed to perform any of the school duties. Teachers, the SMT, Learners and the SGB will also be requested to work together after school or during weekends to conduct some activities for this study.

Participants' anonymity and confidentiality throughout the research project, as well as in the reporting of the findings is assured. Schools and individuals will not be identified in the in the report as I will use fictitious names. Participation is purely voluntary therefore participants are at liberty to withdraw from the study at any given stage and there are no negative consequences they will face for their withdrawal. For any further information, I have enclosed herein the contacts of my supervisors. It is also guaranteed that the information you provide will only be used for the research purposes and it will be stored safely in the University for five years and be destroyed after.

Please note that to participate in the study does not equal to any rewards and it is only on voluntary basis. Please also note that date, time and venue for the discussions will be arranged in consultation with participants and the researcher will ensure that the participants are not supposed to be on duty during the time of the interviews.

Should you have questions and problems related to the study, please feel free to contact me by email: myendep@ukzn.ac.za or my supervisors by email: Nkoanemm@ufs.ac.za or Hlaleledj@qwa.ufs.ac.za. You can also call me on 073 991 2392 or 031 260 2054.


Yours Sincerely

Phumlani Erasmus Myende

**APPENDIX F: Consent from the school principal**

Dear Mr Phumlani Myende

I have received your request to conduct research in my school and it is with pleasure to inform you that the SMT has decided to grant permission to you to conduct the study at the school.

You hereby advised that no research activities must be conducted during teaching and learning hours and participants must be protected at all times. You are further informed that the school management holds rights to withdraw this consent should the research disturb teaching and learning in the school.

Kind regards

( Bamanseka )

1. Ngaba ethuzi wenesa engaketsi wenz sine akimasa

2. ( Cethisexawblake )

Ngabakuhle umangese asilamele
abanye othisha ngoba bayashodo

3. ( Akukhulelwamabantwana )

Kuyamphamisa yena umfundi ngoba njalo ngoba
Ngabakhaku eze estatau entega abanye abatund wayi Abbu eyena
Esewze kanti zokusibu sike sifunda ubbie uyezabanga azabuaga
zakhe ezgineni kuphazamisha yena ukajandani

( Othisho )

- Siyacela Othishe bayena ukushila abafundi ngoba abafundi bayofu
zanitha ngababoki unifundi kafaole afunde ukhitho ublini umnitba
iku ncala ngaba unifundi khene ktreng khene kabra ublithe ukubo
kube niyiki komke ngcineni mameezofunza oldak austem ezbe umya
Ngoba ujuaye eza kahle. Bbo anwachwana enphaaztni wahle

( Izidakamizwa )

Abafundi sicela bayeke Izidakamizwa
Ngoba ekucacineni kuphazamisa bona
abaliboni ikusasalabo.

IZINGA LEMIPHUMELA EBHOLENI

① OTHISHA (NGOKUTHI BAYQUGLUZELE ABANTWANA UKUthi BABE NGAWS BAKWANE)

* S.G.B's (NGOKUTHI BANAKEKELE ABAFUNDI NOKUBHEKA UKUthi BAKHISTSWENA ZOIFANELE YINI)

* ABAZALI (NGOKUTHI BANAKE/BABHEKE UKt ABANTWANA BAWENZA KAHLE AMA – Homework BASIZE NANGU NGesikfundA)

* MUNICIPALITY (NGOKUTHI UKHASE ISKOLE KULABO BANTWANA ~~ABANTULAYO~~ EZINtweni ZOKUFUNDA)
  Abantulayo

* ~~SEU~~

* SECURITY ( lingasiza ukuthi Ume ingane zingena emaulcu likwozi ukugoela ingane ZHOG zivikeela

* Othisha NHloko ( Babheke ukuthi ~~ba~~ othistre bofundiso ngendlela izingane

* UKUBAMBISANA KOMPHAKAthi NOKUTHANDA isikole SABO

*

# THe Assets-Based Approach



Do Not take us
As Nothing But
add on what we
have.

THeRe is some-
thing We have

# Interview with the Principal

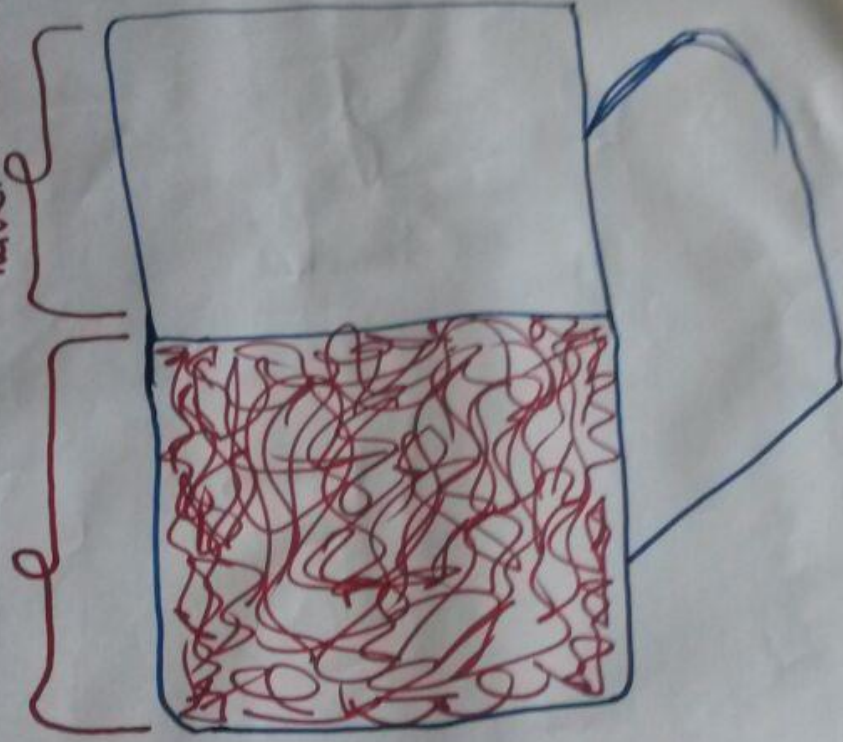| | |
|---|---|
| **Interviewer** | ….Why is that people who are close to the school do not take ownership from the school. My interest has developed from seeing a possibility between the school and the community. There should be a relationship between the school and the community…My focus is on how we can use the asset based approach to improve academic performance….today can we focus on the different assets and the contributions they can make. |
| **Principal** | Let's start here. Umuthi le interest ya developa years ago, ya developa nini? |
| **Interviewer** | Ngangizo funda ugrade 10 la. |
| **Principal** | Who was the principal? |
| **Interviewer** | It wasn't you. In grade 9 it was Shangase and in grade 10 it was Mam Mbhele. |
| **Principal** | Ngalesosikhathi ngangingakabi uPrincipal. Ngithola izindaba ezingiphatha kabi as umuntu owayekhona la esikoleni, nganzi nabanye othisha bangaphandle. Ngibona ukuthi izinto azihambi kahle. Manje name ngangikwazi ukuveza imibono. Ngangithi mengiyiveza lana kwi SMT ekade icomprise kakhulu abantu besifazane, so ngalesosikhathi ngangisa thola iHonours… |
| **Interviewer** | Kwakuwuwena wedwa umuntu wesilisa |
| **Principal** | Futhi nakuma qualifications, ngangi qualifaya kudlula bonke. So no matter ini engangiyiveza towards ekhwakheni isikole kwakuvele kuthiwe no, you are an opportunist. So kwakunaleyonto sengathi isabotage, thina ususbona sengathi siyinto engayilutho. So kwacine sekuyinto enjalo. Ngacina sengingenako ukuzi force. Kwakuthi mese kufika ama officials' eDepartment abize ismt, abuza ukuthi in indaba isikole si under perfome? Uacting principal wayemane akhombe kothisha othisha bakhombe kuyena. So mina ngoba zaziningi izinto engangizifunda ngibeka futhi ukuthi isokole singasizakala kanjani ngathola ukuthi enye imbangela inkinga yezincwadi. Esa phethe lo owayekhona wasithsela ukuthi imali yezincwadi ingena Kanye ngonyaka kanti imali ingena kabili. |
| **Interviewer** | So the information was hidden. |
| **Principal** | Okwesibili if wena uqamuka ne contribution ngalesosikhathi, no matter how constructive yayinyatheleka. Kwaze ngangibizelwa ama psychologist, yabo . Inkinga yakwa bhavu lapha kunodonga , asikaze siyilungise. Kwaze kwafika no circuit manager, ngapoxheka kuze kufika umuntu o academic ezo clearisha into enjengalegaleyo…ngaze ngathi cha Dr, wena uyayibona inkinga ikuphi la esikoleni manje uyasaba ukusho uqonde ukuthi nangu umuntu owrong. Ngathi mina kulungile ngichargeni ningikhiphe phandle kwesikole anginakinga nalokho. Kodwa manje naye wangafuna ukungi charga ngoba wayembona umuntu owrong esaba ukusho. Kuningi nje…So neperformance yesikole ingahambi kahle . Mhlampe ngake ngithi ngibuya ukuyo attenda ngibuya uMam uyakhala la…uxhabana nomunye uthisha..ngifike ngithi Mam enza kanje kanje. Uma esenkingeni avume kodwa izinto mezihamba kahle angikhohlwe. Nawa la amapolicies esikole ayebalwa imina wonke. Imina owahlala phansi wawadrafta. Sengiwadraftile kuthiwe ngiwakhopele kwenye indawo . |
| **Interviewer** | It doesn't matter. Uma eapplaya kwi context akusho lutho . Ukuthi ama policy amaningi vele enziwa kanjalo… |
| **Principal** | …kade ekholelwa kakhulu ngesikhathi ephethe kulento ekuthiwa idivide and rule. .. |
| **Interviewer** | There should the side yothisha the side ye SMT. Whether othisha ba right… |
| **Principal** | …and most people ama henchman ache lawa iwona amadayisa. Isikole samphunyuka..so when I stepped in ngo 2006 ngahlala phansi ne staff ngathi bafethu, im sure wonke umuntu is sick and tired indaba kaBhavu njengoba silobe siba nezinkinga as if asinayo inqondo. By that time sonke sasiyi union eyodwa uSADTU. Ngathi comrades… |
| **Interviewer** | Sezimbili manje? |
| **Principal** | Cha isayodwa ngoba phela nacho lokho kune effect ebhedayo mekunezihlangano eziwu 2. Kubakhona ifriction. Ngoba ayikho ekumele idominate enye. .. so u.. so uyzai umuqhala ukuacta othisha banalakho ukuthi sifuna ukumuzwa lomuntu uthini, uzokwenza kanjani. Futhi othisha bangisupporta. But what I realised ezindaweni ezikuma rural areas, I'm not quoting from somebody's source or argument …njengoba sikwi 21$^{st}$ century kwi new dispensation, ezindaweni eziningi zasemakhaya , zingakabi khona izikole kuqala, kwakukhulunywa ngamaqweqwe, nemshado, namacala asenduneni izinto ezinjalo. Kwase kubakhona izinti ezinfika nemphucuko. Kwabakhona ama institutions njengama sonto nezikole mhlampe nezinye izinto ezikhona endaweni. So labantu abanyo into abangakhuluma ngayo. Bakhuluma ngezinto ezazenzeka kudala so ama institutions, njengezikole, izona zinto abangakhuluma ngazo ngoba abanako okunye abangakhuluma ngako… |
| **Interviewer** | Nalezinto ekwakukhulunywa ngazo azisenzeki njalo … |
| **Principal** | So the only thing abanayo abanga khuluma ngayo ama instituitions njengama sonto nezikole … |
| **Interviewer** | Bakuluma ngazo , ngolwazi abangenalo… |
| **Principal** | Whether italk ipositive they don't care about that. But what is important kubona is that they are meant to talk and communicate. ..so izikole zaba amaeasy target. Whether isikole sinjani sinjani abajabuleli bona ukuthi kuyalunga ngoba mese kulungile ayikho into abazokhuluma ngayo…noma iskole sibheda bafuna kuqhubeke kuye phambili. Siyabheda lesikole , bakhiphe izingane zabo ….njengalento eyayenzeka ngo 2000 |
| **Interviewer** | Mina ngafunda uGrade 8 ngo 2000. Ngangaya eMthwalume ngoba imali yayingekho ukuthi siye sobabili no Khumbulani. Kwakuwukuthi uma ephuma yena kuzoya mina. Then ngaqhaba sebethi angiye ka Grade 8. |
| **Principal** | Wawupassele uGrade 9? |
| **Interviewer** | Ngangipassele uGrade 10 ngiphume uposition 1…then ngacina ngingayanga. Kodwa okwakungi phatha kabi ukuthi mengisesikoleni ngizothola uthisha eblama umphakhathi. Mengisemphakhathini, |

| | |
|---|---|
| | ngizothola wona ublama uthisha . Kakhulukazi uma uhamba ngamatekisi… |
| **Principal** | Yabonake etekisini ikho la abantu abakhuluma khona ngama instituitions…asikho isidingo sokuthi udinwe umphakhathi uma ukhuluma ngesikole sakho, ngoba this is the only instituition abanayo. Ukube mhlampe khona iuniversity la ngabe iyona abakhuluma ngayo . ..ungabasoli |
| **Interviewer** | Njengama poyisa , bakhuluma ngawo bathi awagijimi uma ebizelwa icase kodwa uwafica emile namantombazane emthunzini … |
| **Principal** | So izikhungo ezikhona …ayi ngoba be targeta uBhavu per se , into ekhona nje le … |
| **Interviewer** | No Ndosi nje lapha uya targetwa.. |
| **Principal** | Uphelile ke loyo . Baze bafika la kumina …umakhelwane wakho indaba ungamtsheli afeke ugesi afake amanzi ….uNdosi is running hos own instituition. If efika edinga iconsultation uke afike la kumina …so labantu ungabazondi…umzali la e South Africa kusakhona I high level ye illiteracy. Ngike ngisho naki thisha ngeke uthi wena ufundile uzodinwa ukuthi umphakhathi uthini ngawe. Wena keep on trying wenza into enhle…so ngawaqeda indaba yezimpi nama friction lawa ayekhona la esikoleni nokungahlonipani. Asenzeni isikole sibe isikole esiphambili. Zabuya izinto. Kuthena after all these years …sesithola ukuthi izincwadi zokufundisa izingane azikho kanti imali ingena kabili ngathi , bathi thisha omkhulu we didn't know that. Ngathi ayibakwethu leyonto asiyibuyisele eceleni. So into eyenzekile imali ingena kabili …so igenile le sakhokha ngayo izikwelethu…Yathi iSGB akuvulwe icala ngathi no no umuntu okumele avule icala uPrincipal …Futhi ngiyobe ngiyokhuluma into engingayazi … |
| **Interviewer** | Into engeke isakuyisa ndawo… |
| **Principal** | So sihlangane ke , sathenga umshini kuqala unyaka , ne system, ne TV. ..the following year kwasebenzeka. Sasuka ku  47 % saya ku 57%. The following year sashaya u 67%...Siyibambe khona ngempela. Then ke into ekhona la esikoleni ekufanele uyazi ukuthi …if you are managing a school, managing othisha, izingane , iSGB … |
| **Interviewer** | Yes isikole sakho you extend it.. |
| **Principal** | So into eyenzeka la ngo 2008 sibuka ama results. KunoMiss la owayefika efundisa iLO. Eqhala qha ukufundisa, efundisa  iSS ne LO la ka matric njalo. uMiss la engawa attende amaworkshop. Indaba na, wayehamba nabantu ababesasele kwinsele yakudala…Cabanga asuka la nomuntu oyi HOD angayi kwi workshop ahambe aye ekhaya, amuvumele naye …Futhi loMiss engazwani ne HOD yakhe . Ethi ngeke yena atshelwe iHOD yafika la ngomatric. Enesitifiket sokhuthi Shalala…so into enjengaleyo. Kuthiwa la sekufika kuma marks eseconvertwa kuma percentage wayebona amanye esuka ku 400 kodwa iLO ayivumi. I LO kumele uyishiye iwu 400. Because isifundo esisha iHOD ithi ifuna ukusigna ayinike . Mese name ngifika ngikufuna ngithi aphi amamarks ezingane athi nanka , ngisigne. Kanti kumaworkshops kwathiwa ayiconvertwa. .. Yena uyisusile ku 400…Mese kuyiwa kuma marking kuma assessor kube nenkinga. Zalimala izingane ngoba ngomthemtho zazipasse zonke. Ezinye zagcina izingane zithole amamarks amancane. Ayi ngoba izingane zazi underperformile. Zazainga thola noma u 50% average kodwa ngenxa yale LO amamarks ashona phansi. U2008 loyo. 2009 zateleka …into eyasuka kanjani umfana owagwaza omunye. Ngabamba ngamvalela ngafonela amaphoyisa. Afika athi ngoba u under age Acela ukumyisa kubo nakubo kwalomfana…Afice umkhulu we victim athi umfana ucela angaboshwa uyisihlobo…ukuthi |
| **Interviewer** | ngicela ukukumisa lapho kule case la wena as uPrincipal uthathe idecision ukuthi ubize amaphoyisa, umzali amane a cancele icase . In other words upromota ukuthi lomuntu ogwazayo esikoleni vele sokuprotecta e khaya. Its one of those things lu engiyikhulumayo, if mengabe ngenza into ewrong esikoleni kumele ngazi ukuthi ayipheleli la esikoleni. Kumele ngazi ukuthi nala engihlala khona izothathwa njengento ewrong…There is this case esasenza khona iresearch. Indaba ye research isikole sasesingasa deali nayo. Iziduna nenkosi eyayideala ne discipline….but ke into enguyi acknowledgayo manje ukuthi amaresults aseright. Lento oyishoyo yokuthi kusakhona umuntu osahleli entweni eyodwa ayixhekayo …into engifuna ukubuyela kuyona ukuthi uke washo ukuthi lento ye illiteracy isakhona. ..Noma kuvela ama opportunities abanye abawasebenzisi…Awucabange ukuthi bakhona la around abanga bamba iqhaza lokuthi amaresults ahlezi eright nanokuthi I involvement yabo is of the benefit of the learners and the school. Mengabe bekhona ini abangayi contribute nokuthi iziphi iziqhinambi ezingaba khona. |
| **Principal** | Before uze lapho khona iphuzu engifuna ukuliveza…acine elungile amaresults from 2011 to 2013…lelifu ebelikhona kuBhavu lasuka la laya khona emMthwalumeHigh School. Kusukela 2012 kwasuka izingane ezila ko 35 from eMthwalume zeza la. Last year sawushaya uMthwalume sawu number 1 la ecircuit la ka Bhavu . Izingane ezisuka eMthwalume zeza la manje ziko 98. And khona ezizayo ezinye… Ezinye ngazimisa….so uyabona ke manje kukanje…ezinye zazifika nalast week. Zifuna ukuza ku Bhavu manje. Into ehlekisayo, uyabona ngaleyo mnyaka kwakuthiwa layikhaya akufundwa….kodwa lezingane ezifika la zithi thisha omkhulu sizwa kuthiwa labothisha abafikayo lapha kade befunda emaTech …so manje ke abekho good ekufundiseni. Bafika lapha bahlale staffroom mese befika lapha bakhipe ama activity alukhuni. Mese bethi asiye elibrary . Mekuphela unyaka uthole ukuthi awukutholile ukuchazeleka kahle …so izingane zinga understand… Angizange ngizikholwe izingane…that was a tip of the iceberg… |
| **Interviewer** | Okunye kusuke kuyiqiniso. Mina engike ngayizwa ngalengane yasekhaye ithi, akusafani nakuqala…uthi la ngaphambili ufika isikole siclean izingane zingaphakhathi kantu ngemuva kuncolile izingane zicwela ngaphandle. Kodwa leyothisha…othisha abaningi vele abasasuki kwa teaching. Basuka koPGCE naninani… Mina sengike ngayeka ukublame othisha ngoba mina ngike ngifike ngizokhuluma nezingane, ngibuke ukuthi mengase kuthiwe mina angifundise labantu ngingabaqhalaphi. Kahle kahle inking enkulu ehlasela ieducation manje izingane…Thina uzokhumbula igroup yethu. We didn't need constant looking after because we were motivated. We took ownership for our education. So ngihlezi ngithi I issue izingane but kukhona ke labo thisha abangafundisi vele… |

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| **Principal** | Still nezakini lezi zala eskiloni. Zixhoshwa ini? |
| **Interviewer** | Lona olana waxhoshwa ukuthi uyafaila kakhulu. |
| **Principal** | Ini isizathu? |
| **Interviewer** | Angeke ngize ngazi ngoba uyagula. ..Ubungathola ukuthi kubhalwa amatest akhekho, mese ebuyile bengamubalisi. Ngayilwa indaba yakhe ngoalowa nyaka. Ngaya kubona ngaba nemeeting nothisha omkhulu. Ngacele ukuthi umekade engekho ngicela anikwe isikhathi abaliswe. Ngathi udokotela ngicela amenzele incwadi. Bamnaka ka Grade 10 wapassa kahle. Waya kwa Grade 11 kushuthi uSkhakhane wakhohlwa ukuthi ngangitheni. Babuyela back kulento ababeyenza before…bathi sebembalisa kunezinkulumo agadwe uthisha ozokhuluma noma ini kuyena ebhala ….so wase wafaila futhi last year. Wathi useyasi yeka isikole. Samutshela ukuthi lokho akuzumsiza sathi ungaya noma ikuphi la othanda khona . wase eyahlala. Efika la wayezobhalisa uMatha..wabuyela ekhaya wabesethi usezobhalisa la . Kodwa into eyambuyisa la kakhulu ukuthi ubesefailile …. |
| **Principal** | Kodwa ke Mr Myende zonke izikole zinama challenges azo. Uyabona nje uBhavu akanawo ama resources kodwa we are trying. |
| **Interviewer** | Kahle kahle izikole manje eziperformayo ziproduce amaresults, currently,  azinayo nale computer onayo eooficini lakho . Mengabe kuwukuthi khona into edinga ukutypwa uthisha omkhulu uya kwi internet café. But izikole ziyashintsha kancane kancane . Kwezinye uthola ukuthi izingane ziyabheda, othisha baright. Kwezinye uthole ukuthi izngane zizimisele ngokufunda othisha abekho right. |
| **Principal** | Into ebalulekile inking ilele enganeni. Uma ingane izimisele iyapassa. |
| **Interviewer** | …uwufakazi wami . Sagulelwa uMiss Mngoma, iPPN yathatha uMiss Thabethe. June waya kwimaternity leave uMiss Nzimande. Bobathathu othisha becommerce asisenabo. Nangu umam ezesilethela uMiss Jiba…samxhosha…but ngoba sasizimisele, saphusha. Izingane noma kungathiwa awunaso istaff awunawo ama resources uma zizimisele. Manje ngike ngibona lapha ekhaya izincwadi zibhekwa nje …ubona ukuthi ayikho lento. Indaba isezinganeni. Uma ukhumbulakwi group yethu iqwaba yabantu abengahlaniniphile bapassa. Sahlushwa ukuthi vele khona ababengenayo ivision… |
| **Principal** | Mesibuka emphakhathini nakhona ayikho inkinga.Bakhona abantu esingabasebenzisa… |
| **Interviewer** | Ibaphi mhlampe labobantu? |
| **Principal** | Njengalomfana owafaila iengineering.Uhleli ekhaya simsebenzsisa kwa Maths and Science. |
| **Interviewer** | Kukhona omunye we BCom |
| **Principal** | Eseke wafika la esikoleni wazosiza loyomfana |
| **Interviewer** | So kushuthi ngenye indlela abantu abama former learners ibona abantu abakhona emphakhathini … |
| **Principal** | Oh uyazi la,osomabhizinisi basendaweni . Uyazi nawo lendawo inekinga ye rural urban migration. People are moving from ama rural areas to ama urban areas. |
| **Interviewer** | Ngicela ukukubuyisela emuva khona iconcept oyisebenzisile |
| **Principal** | ….irural urban migration |
| **Interviewer** | Uyabona ku right kanjani ukudeala nomuntu ozaziyo izinto ngoba usungi conceptualizele yona lento . |
| **Principal** | Nawe you one them. Futhi la enikhona nikhuma institution aright. ..uyabona la ka Bhavu ize yavalwa iPhysical Science ngoba asinayo laboratory nama facilities, nestaff , so izingane aziperforme kahle. Sagcine sithi kumhloli asiyivale ngoba izingane aziperformi kahle. Inkinga ama kahla kahla ihuman resource. We do have a person who is supposed to be teaching this but seemingly icapacity ngeke. |
| **Interviewer** | In terms of the human resources |
| **Principal** | Ya ya ya we do have a person I HOD kodwa icapability aayikho kahle. |
| **Interviewer** | Ngenxa yama physical resources. |
| **Principal** | Ayi ayi akhona wona futhi ayekhona, kodwa ngangibona ukuthi inking lomuntu ufunde iengineering manje weza la kwa education, kunaleyo gap leyo. |
| **Interviewer** | Kakhulukazi ukufundisa ingane into wena oyaziyo … |
| **Principal** | Kunaleyo gap |
| **Interviewer** | Maningi amafactors athintekayo ekufundeni komuntu. Le issue le oyithintayo yokuthi ama ex learners khona izinto angasiza ngayo esikoleni… |
| **Principal** | Iyona phela into enonile leyo |
| **Interviewer** | Yavela nakuma learners. Ama learners' ayethe kwi side lawo uthola ukuthi othisha abanele uthisha usefundisa izinto eziningi. Babethe bona kwinto enjalo mhlampe bangabizwa bazosiza kulezozifunda. But into abayinota eyenza ukuthi ngobona ukuthi izingane ziyacabanga, ungaze ungazi naki, bathi abanye balabantu bayasebenza so khulukhuni ukuthi ungaba thola noma inkanjani. Kodwa basho futhi ukuthi abanye abasebenzi bayaqena futhi ukwenza umsebenzi wamahala. But le yama resources abashi=ongo ukuthi isiphi isifundo exactly esingasekho, nalezi ezinye ezikhona bathi baya funda kodwa they do not get that practical aspect. |
| **Principal** | Othisha abafuni ukuwenza ipractical part kulezifundo zeScience. Isizatho salokho imfundo. Uyabona imfundo  neChristian education  ihluke kakhulu. Leyethu ibased kulento ye Apartheid ukuthi umuntu omyama ungamu exposi ezintweni eziningi |
| **Interviewer** | Mufundise the basics khona ezoba idomestic worker eright. |
| **Principal** | Ya …so lento ine effect yokuthi uma ufunda izinto ezinjengo Science wena uya theoriza. Khona kuma instituition ,ema college la so kuze kucine wena ungenayo ipractical part …kanti  ipractical work iyona eyenza izingane ziunderstande kahle. Othisha abaningi balacka lapho. Kuzikole ezinawo amaresources isikhathi esiningi acwele idust ,awasebenziswa |
| **Interviewer** | Umuntu ekufanele sengabe uyawasebenzisa akawazi ukuthi asebenziswa kanjani. |
| **Principal** | I lack of know and attitude towards the practical part. Mhlampe omunye acabange ukuthi lento ngeke isize ngoba naye wafunda ngaphandle kwayo…bengihlale ngibabona one by one but bengifuna ukuthi one day sibe nemeeting nabo bonke sibone ukuthi ukaBhavi singawulungisa kanjani. Ayi mhlampe ukuthi from your own pocket , but ukucela icompany , usho im from a rural area , kunesikole esikhona kanje kanje…mhlampe nokunye okudala kukhona okungasisiza |

| Interviewer | Nanokuthi mhlampe mese sihlala phansi sikhuluma singaba masomething esingakuhlanganise, ukuthi mhlampe asizameni ukuthi collectively. Ya mengase sihlangane kungavela amaplans amaningi ukuthi singenza kanjani. Then into eyavela ezinganene kulento ye practise zona zazi ukuthi amaresources awekho… |
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| Principal | Akhona azazi… |
| Interviewer | Ya ukuthi azazi. Isuggestion ezaba nayo it was responding ekutheni uthisha akekho nama resources awekho. Zase zathi zona mhlampe into esingayenza through the taxi owners, kungakhulunywa nama taxi owners, adiscountele eskile ukuthi mhlampe for le session ye practical, mekukhona umuntu owaziwayo mhlampe eKhanya banaye umuntu oyifundisayo namaresources, noma eMthwalume, like something efana naleni esake sayenza ngo 2004 yokuthi sisuke la …they suggested into enjalo ukuthi mhlampe kungakhulunywa namataxi owners mhlampe abathathe ngoR3 abayise khona to learn that section babuye bazoqhubeka nothisha wabo for the other section. Nakhona lapho kwakuyinto eyayiqhamuka nabo. Ichallenge abayinota with one of the schools ukuthi mhlampe kungaba nenkinga ngoba they were complaining about the same challenge esasinayo ukuthi, if sihlangana nalesosikole izingane zakhona zisibhuka njengabantu abangafundi, abayizinyoni…they noted that challenge. Base benota enye yokuthi sometimes uthisha akafuni ukusizwa omunye umuntu …izinto ezaziphuma kubona. If bona becabanga leyonto wena uyibona kanjani nokuthi ubona ukuthi imaphi amanye amachallenges angakhona entweni enjalo. |
| Principal | …Labantu siba out performile. Mengase sithi sifuna ukuya kubona manje sekungaba inking. Nokuthi indaba yokuthi izingane ziye kwenziye izikole lento ugulumeni uke wayiproposa kodwa manje inezikinga ezinkulu. Uyabona manje uzosuka la uye kwesinye isikole izingane zakho ngeke zifunde kuleyo period. Uthole ukuthi uthisha walapho uzobe esekhathele, abe esenza nje. Okwesibili uzothumela izingane laphana , kanyi mhlampe into ekade adlula kuyona noma akakafiki kuyona kuncine sekunama discrepencies. Okwesithathu mengingasuka la ngiya kwesinye isikole mina ngibukeke njengomuntu onjani? Kunezinto ezincane ekusamele sizilungise thina njengabantu. |
| Interviewer | Akengenze isibonelo khona lomfana wasensanzi owawuke umbize eze for iMaths nala Geometry elula. Ssaigaina nakuyena. Angazi kwa triggerishwa ini ezinganeni ukuthi uma uthisha engekho angeza noma uthisha umengekho right entweni ethize kusuke uthisha kwesinye isikole aze kuzona. But into engangiyibuka it worked loyamfana eseza la. But it didn't work kumina ngesikhathi siya eMthwalume. That is why one of the day ngatheleka ngazo bhala iexam emini kade beyihlehlisile oMam Mbhele la bathi ayibe ekuseni. Ngafika ngo 10 beqale ngo 9 ngathi ngizobhala ntambama. Its because ngangingasiboni lesosidingo ukuthi ngiye lapha enzansi ngoba babephambili kunathi and uthole ukuthi siyalapha uthisha kumele aqhale phasi and ubone ukuthi inking kulothisha and nasezinganeni kuya iritata but its one of those thing abayi suggestile ukuthi there can be a relationship nezikole ezihlukene. And then base befaka lecomponent yama taxi owners' engifuna sikhulume ngayo. Those are the only business people abakhona emphakathini. Ya and also nabob a operata endaweni ene market engekho. |
| Principal | …mese kuya kwi taxi industry nabo bayi product. Abanye bangena ematxini ngoba bengenayo imali yokufunda . bona izinto bazibuka superficially. Mhlampe mebebona izingane zihamba zijola …leligama obulisho uyabona. Kodwa angiphiki nakubona singakhuluma nabo mhlampe sibaqashe bahambise izingane . mhlampe kubekhone leyo discount. |
| Interviewer | Like khona lento eyenzekayo ekukhalwa ngayo kwezinye izikole, nala esikoleni ngizwile ukuthi iyenzeka. Like uthole ukuthi ingane icela imali yokuya elibrary iyokwenza something. Mhlampe kunga contactwa abambalwa kube nobudlwelwane ukuthi bazozi discountele izingane uma ziya elibrary kufonelwe bona baphinde bazibuyise. Okunye okwaqhamuka ezinganeni. Luckily ama discussion abo benzeka ngingekho ngifike sengithole ifeedback. Okunye they identified is irole yabazali ebengingazi stheli ukuthi bangayi identifaya kalula kanjalo. Bakhala ngokuthi imost yabo they don't follow the school rules. What they said ukuthi mhlapme abazali can be made aware of that nane role yabo ekumele bayidlale . Mhlampe noma bengezi esikoleni bangenza abazali ukuthi izingane zilandele umthetho ngokuthi mhlampe ingane ingaphumi iqhoke iuniform noma ikanjani . Izinto ababezi notice. But mina nawe we are aware of challenges. Bathi kumele kube khona that learner-teacher-parent meeting la khona umzali azokwaziswa khona ngengane yakhe, kungabi kwaGrade 12 kuphela. They suggested that as ispace sokuthi kwenziwe abazali babe aware of irole abangayidlala. For sure inawo amachalenges akhona. Imaphi ama challenges akhona uma uzama uku organiza izinto ezifaka abazali nokuthi iziphi izindlela ezingalungiseka ngayo. |
| Principal | ..uyabona mekuqhala unyaka sikhuluma nabazali bkwa Grade 12. Sibatshele ama suggestions esinawo nabob a contribute. But into esingiyibonile uma sinezingane eziwu 35 kufika abazali abawu 40 %. Sibuze izingane ukuthi baphi abazali zithi, basethekwini, ugogo uyagula akakwazi ukuhamba into enjengaleyo. Nabanye abaneleyo attitude yokuthi awungiyeke ngento yakwa Bhavu wena. |
| Interviewer | Omunye uletha ingane mese kuyikuthi useqedile. Mhlampe omunye akayilethile izifikele yona. |
| Principal | But kulama Grade angaphansi obuthi ubhize iparents meeting….Abazali bala bafika mekukhona into eyisigha. |
| Interviewer | Sekonakele |
| Principal | Bafuna ukuzwa izindaba. Njengoba kade sikhuluma ngama instituition kunjalo nje endaweni engaphuculukile. Mekukhona isimo eskhonake nje ayo bayacwala kodwa mekuthiwe ubize iparents meeting abezi. Usakhumbula kusakhona uMiss Mbhele kwakuze kushaywe imbobho la kodwa bangezi. ..Mhla kuthiwa khona isiteleka izingane zifuna ukushaya uthisha omkhulu bacwale. |
| Interviewer | Bafuna ukuzozwa ukuthi zimshayelani , nabo benze sengathi bangakuyena kanti cha. |
| Principal | ilevel ye illiteracy. …nansi la le attitude. Yonke into abayikhuluma kabi nama negative comments… abafundile abazi. |
| Interviewer | Ake siyenze nje, ake sishift kubona siyenze mina nawe nawowonke umuntu olana esikoleni enze abaone ukuth ini irresponsibility yabo. Ngoba mhlampe njengoba usho nje nge level ye illiteracy, mhlampe bona abekho aware ukuthi ini kahle kahle esile abangayenza. Thinake mesizi bheka |

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| | ecentre what is it that we can actually do in the school to make them babone ukuthi they can do something. For example, njengoba kade ubusha , what if uvele ubavulele lapha balime. Mhlampe that is the thing engenza ukuthi babuyele esikoleni babone nabo irole. Why im saying this, I know of a school where bekunenkinga yokuthi abazali they do not want to participate . Kusuke uthisha omkhulu, sivundile isikole sakhe njengalesi. Wababhiza emhlanganweni wathi siskole sizovula indawo yokutshala. Izingane zizicelele bona bazoza bezovuna kuphela |
| **Principal** | Ngaphandle kwesikole? |
| **Interviewer** | No ngaphakhathi. Uyazibona lezindawo ezibushwayo njalo , bazofika balime amacabishi noma ini afuna ukuyilima. Mefuna ukucelela izingane zesikole ezizokwenza kodwa mese evuna angasipha isikole amaveg methanda. Yena uzofika ezolima mese kunakekelwa izingane , zilekelele kanjalo. Its one of the things they use to get abazali esidini labo. Im such a way ukuthi izingane eziningi zase zidisciplined ngoba zazi ukuthi nangu umzali lapha ubusy uyalima. Uyazi ukuthi uma ebheda kuzobhizwa umzali la ekhona immediately. Isimo saqhala sashintsha kwabakhona irelationship eright kubazali nothisha. So that's why ngichecka ukuthi ikhona ini into esingayenza from the side of the school sibenze babe aware ukuthi nidingakala kakhulu la, nala, nala. |
| **Principal** | …Ikhona enginayo isuggestion. Endaweni isikole asinayo…inamtshe ngeke utshale lapha…kune garden esinayo. Nakhona kwafika lengenge yama China nama Japenese bathi abona sengathi isikole asinawo umthunzi ..so indawo asinayo. Khona umama owayetshala …. |
| **Interviewer** | Ngiyakhumbula umbila wakhe wawucina woma |
| **Principal** | Mhlampe uthole ukuthi abantu bayawudla.,, Enye inking ke la endaweni icrime iningi , izigebengu ezibhoshwayo ziphume futhi manje… kusabelwa nento enjengaleyo. |
| **Interviewer** | Yazi lento ye crime yavela ezinganeni zase zithi zingakukhombisa nendawo esihlukunyezwa kuyona mesiza la esikoleni . Umjondolwane lo olapha emgwaqweni bakhoma wona…Ngasi ngithi mina asicele kumnikzai wawo ukuthi siwushoote ngona ngifuna ukureporta ngayo nale aspect ye crime . Sometimes uthola abantu abangafundi beme na ngemuva bezophazamisa izingane. |
| **Principal** | Izigebengu ezaziwayo, ezisatshwayo emphakhathini. Uyabonake umuntu uma esatshwa emphakhathini wena owangaphandle uyini ke lapho. Kodwa la esikoleni asiba sabi labafana siyabxhosha sibatshele ukuthi izingane ziyafunda kodwa nje asiphephile. ..Izolo ngeweekend kuqhekeziwe lapha. Kwaqhekezwa etuchshop. Mese ngizwa la ngitshelwa omunye uthi sengathi ikuwona lomjondolo lo kuphethwe istock…Manje bona babuye babhema abalazi ibusiness…so sekukhona ipoyisa lasebusuku. Khona phela irisk ngoba khona nama computer nje so sesilibuyisile elasebusuku…mengase kufike omunye uPrincipal la angathwala kanzima. Izigebhengu zala sengiyazazi. |
| **Interviewer** | Kuyakusiza ukuthi usuhlale kakhulu … seneyakwazi…kuthishe ukuthi sebekuthata njengomuntu wendawo. |
| **Principal** | Nokukhombisa ukungaba sabi …bafika la befuna ukushaya uX one day luckily lomfana ekuthiwa uCilo , bafika beba ningi. Becabanga ukuthu uzobe ekhona u X |
| **Interviewer** | Kodwa kunento engiyitholayo la, awucabangi ukuthi ukungaqini kobudlewane phakhathi kweikole nomphakhathi ikhona okunga dala ukuthi umuntu aze acabange ukuzokweba esikoleni. Ngoba noma isikole sibalulekile yena unaleyo qondo yokungaboni ukuthi sikole sibaluleke kanjani. |
| **Principal** | Umphakhathi walana endaweni uhlala ovalweni. Uyabona nje mhlampe wakewezwa ukuthi kwabizwa imeeting la, bethi bafuna ukushaya lezigebhengu. Kuthe sebehlanhene abantu la bahluka phakhathi …bathi ayibho izigebhengu zalana thina siyazi saba … The following day lwathiwa kuzongenwa ezindlini bayoqhuywa abaphindanga bahamba…Izingane zona are the first victim… |
| **Interviewer** | Kuneto eyodwa …ngesikhathi be identifaya abafudi ezinye izinto ezingawusizo bathi …when I shared with them my story ise ibe nabatu abaningana ….i told that them ukuthi sasenza kanjani and all that and then basebethi bona (Grade 10) , basho lento oyishoyo ukuthi kuyingozi manje ukuza la esikoleni ebusuku uzofunda, siyezwa ukuthi nina naniza ebusuku. Ngase ngithi mina nina kodwa niyathanda ini ukufunda ebusuku basebethi bayathanda. Ngase ngithi mina since kuyingozi ukuza esikoleni ayikho mhlampe enye indawo abangahlanganele khona. Mhlmape kube ukuthi endaweni ethize sine nendawo nakwenye kanjalo. Base baqhala bona baodentifaya otraining centre, icreche…. |
| **Principal** | Basafe ini khona? |
| **Interviewer** | Now that was the question . Ngase ngibuza ukuthi mekuyikhuthi nisebenzisa lama community centres nisafe ini? Bathi now that is one of the roles engadlalwa umphakhathi , ngoba othisha ngeke bakwazi ukuza kulezindawo ngoba abekho safe , futhi mhlampe ngoba kade besebenza emini. Base bathi bona what can be done is each centre inga allocatwa abantu bomphakhathi kube ibona abaresponsible for ukuguarda izingane. Ngase ngithi mina obani bona labo bantu bomphakhathi? Enye isuggestion kwakuwukuthi kungathathwa bona labatu ababonwa njenge zigebhengu to give them iresponsibility bazibone sengathi bathembakele mese kube ibona abagada ukuthi izingane azihlukunyezwa lapho. Well kungasebenza umuzo khuluma nabo, uzothola indlela yokuba sondeza kuwena…kungasebenza but how do you get them closer to you that can be an issue. But into engizama ukuyi identifaya ukuthi they pointed to those community centres and other schools. Mhlampe kubekhona iagreement ukuthi izingane ezihlala ngase Khanya zingaya estudy sakhona…ukuze kuavoideke ukuthi bahambe indawo ende bazebazithole bama victim ecrime. Enye issue eyavela ukuthi lama community centres awanawo ugesi, so kwenziwa njani ke. But bengithi angikutshele one of the things abazi suggesta. |
| **Principal** | …lento ingenzeka. Ingenzeka mekuthiwa la endaweni khona ama police forum. |
| **Interviewer** | Ikhona |
| **Principal** | Kodwa ayisebenzi. |
| **Interviewer** | Yama gwala |
| **Principal** | Ayi ngoba yamagwala. Babhuka ivulnerability ukuthi kulungile singenza kodwa zinamandla kakhulu izigebhengu. Nansi into embi, lana akukho izigebhengu zalana kuphela kunezisuka ethekwini |

| | |
|---|---|
| | ezigangile so lento yecrime inzima…Sekuqhala ukuba ncono emalokshini ngoba sekwafakwa izindawo eziningi zamaphoyisa …la kwathiwa kuzovulwa isikhungo samaphoyisa kodwa kuze kube imanje asikaze sivulwe… |
| **Interviewer** | Ezizela la ukuzoganga… |
| **Principal** | …uyabona indawo ekuma rural areas mekustrong itribal authority leyondawo iyakhekha. Uma iweak, njengale ehlale ixhabane yodwa iwubukhosi …usakhumbula ngo 94 kwakhukhona amaphoyisa enkosi kwabungekho ubugebhengu obungaka… |
| **Interviewer** | Bake bafika nalana esikoleni bashaya ingane… |
| **Principal** | Uyabonake mengase kube khona strong tribal, kubekhona amaphoyisa enkosi ingaphela yonke le crime…Mese necouncillor libe strong |
| **Interviewer** | Kwavela nalokho ezinganeni |
| **Principal** | Manje lei weak leli elikhona … Umfana omcane |
| **Interviewer** | …ubheka iphuzu elibalulekile leli le strong tradition leadership, awuboni ukuthi laba akhona as much as bexhabana awuboni ukuthi ikhona into engenziwa to bring them closer to isiskole… |
| **Principal** | Baphi? |
| **Interviewer** | Wona lama camps awutwo…. |
| **Principal** | Bezela bengazwani bazolwa la esikoleni |
| **Interviewer** | Iya kubona wenze sengathi awazi ukuthi abazwani. You see sometimes ufika ebantwini obaziyo ukuthi abazwani, mhlampe by doing that ungabe usuthola something ezobahlanganisa, you make them aware of their role esikoleni, and bonke bazibone bedlala indima ethize esikoleni. Emva kwalokho bazohlangana la but mese bebodwa they will continue with their fight. |
| **Principal** | …let me recall iclosest incident. Uyabona uChairperson we SGB ushiyile owakaMabhuyakhulu. Ngamutshele ukuthi manje Babu Sihlala oMabhuyakhulu bangasiza kanjani? ..wathi lapha kuhlupha lezindaba zobukhosi. Into yalapha ayazeki ngoba manje labantu …and sekukhona abantu asebebzama nokuyobulala…angifuni ukudlala ngawe ngikumoshele isikhathi sakho, into yalapha izinto eziningi…so uyabonake mengase labobantu ngibalethe lamanje mese bexhabana la kungathiwa lomuntu wenzani...maningi ama challenges. Kodwa mengase kube khona lama structures, itribal authority, kube ipolicing forum kube icouncillor…uma lama structures estong kunga ncono…Kodwa manje wonke lamastructures awasebenzi… |
| **Interviewer** | Ngiyayizwa lento oyishoyo mhlampe sobuye sikhulume ngelinye ilanga ukuthi noma sesingatholi itraditional leadership, icouncillor ini esingayenza as umphakhathi ukuze sithole ukuthi ngisho zikhona izigebhengu zazi ukuthi isikole sihloniphekile… |
| **Principal** | Ngikuzamile, izinto zavela zabuya ezimbalwa… |
| **Interviewer** | Zilwandwe ubani? |
| **Principal** | Izingane nabazali engangibathumelelile…Kodwa azibuyanga zonke ngoba kwezinye izindawo zafihlwa….kodwa khona la engabizwa izingane zathi angizobheka ukuthi izihlala ezesikole ngempela ini , kwase kuyimpi sizabo kuthiwa umuzi wasekhaya ubukelwa phansi….Ngo 2010 kwakune SGB ngathi azilanswe sizikhipha daily kungenwe umuzi nomuzi. The following day kwasekufika bona bethi, thisha omkhulu sicangile asifuni ukushaywa izulu …sesizwile …uyabona uthisha omkhulu waye riska… |
| **Interviewer** | Thank for your time. You have been a great help. If I had spoken with you first I would have gone to the children more awre of things. Theres one more thing…Izingane zathi unomuntu oyedwa osebenza ukucleana…. |
| **Principal** | No ufika zonke izinsuku nokhona akufanele angabe ngiyauqhasha. |
| **Interviewer** | Ugholelwa isikole noma idepartment? |
| **Principal** | Isikole. Uyabona uHayma une GA, une security, une clerk …Kwabhavu ngabuza kwathiwa kuhanjwa ngelist. uMkhize lapha une GA naya akanalo iclerk naye usalindile. Ayafika njalo ama GA aqhashwa zonke izinsuku kodwa thina asinawo la. Khona nalento ekuthiwa icorruption…Ngabuza wathi uMtshali inkinga ikwi National …khona umama owashaywa inyoka la kwathiwa ngimuqashe kanjani, uBabayo lo ongena ebusuku la izigebhengu zimubulele. Ngaba biza ngathi nina nobabili nginiqashe ngenkani yami …nilana at your won risk. |
| **Interviewer** | Noma bengenza iaffidavit bona…Nansi into eyavela ezinganeni which is interesting. Zathi enye into eyenza zingathanda ukuza esikoleni ukuthi ienvironment ayivumi. Itoilet lazo alicleaneki kangako ngoba akezi njalo umuntu olicleanayo futhi uyedwa. |
| **Principal** | Ziqinisile. |
| **Interviewer** | Zase zithi uthisha omkhulu kumele aziqhasele umuntu. Ngathi mina niyazi ini ukuthi ukuqasha umuntu akuyona into uthisha omkhulu avuka ekuseni athi ngizoqasha umuntu kwenzeka? Zathi zona ayi asazi. Ngathi mini …saqhala kwi issue yothisha, ngathi niyazi ukuthi othisha baqashwa kanjani? Ngenhlanhla khona owayazi, ngasi ngithi akesikhiphe uthisha omkhulu nina ningenzani, angithi vele sibhuka kwi asset based approach. Sezithi zona lezi ezikwi group, thina singazicenga …since kwathiwa isikole siyi no fee… |
| **Principal** | Ngabiza imeeting. Ngabatshela ukuthi noma kuthiwa isikole siyi no fee kodwa kuya donatwa. Ngaba thintha emsileni…ever since |
| **Interviewer** | Kodwa is issue esezindaweni eziningi. Mekwathiwa no fee school ngisho kungathiwa abakhokhe into ezosiza izingane zabo abafuni …it seperates izikile eziright nezikole ezistrugglishayo…Zathi zona into ezingayenza to get an extra person each chile can contribute R2 or R1 lokho kwenza close to R500 ekungatholwa ngawo umunto ozosiza. Ngase ngibuza ukuthi nithi abazali abafuni ukukhokha bazoyazi nje lento ngoba ziningi izinto ezixhoxhwayo nabazali. Bathi no, vele ngeke ilunge imifakwa ngoline wabazali ngoba abazali abaziboni lezinto ezibonwa ibona. Bazi volunteer bona bathi bona njengezingane into abangayenza mengase banikwe ispace bangaconvinca ezinye izingane ngezinto abangakwazi ukuzenzela zona as izingane for isikole. Nathi it's a good idea engeke iqhamuke name…babheke lokho…it was a good idea kumina iqhamuka ezinganeni but I know mese I involva |

| | imali ke … |
|---|---|
| **Principal** | It's easier said than done. Kusamele ngibhale incwadi eya eSezela. Umoba wabo… |
| **Interviewer** | Uma ushisa uncolisa isikole… |
| **Principal** | Okwesibili abantu abasebenze eSezela basuka la …uSezela akaze anakekele izikole zalana endaweni…so lama institiution akhona anjengoSezela awazi naki izikole. Kodwa ngake ngakhuluma nomunye ubhuti wakhona wathi angibhale incwadi ngiyithumele khona ngicele basi sponsorishe ne lab. Ngizoke ngizame…ngabhala iqwaba yezincwadi ngicela kuma institution…ayi |
| **Interviewer** | Unawo amacopies azo? |
| **Principal** | Yes nginazo…Ngaze ngayeka …Kodwa ke sengizoyibhala le ngiyiyisi kulobhuti wakwa Khwela….. |
| **Interviewer** | Ngiyabonga kakhulu. |

# Discussion with learners, teachers and the SGB

Researcher : ok. Ngamandla enginikezwe wona, anginawo amandla inina eninamandla yokucontrola

Yonke lento. But ngicela sidluleni maje kuma-ex-learners siye kumasocial workers.

Nakhona sizokwenza into efanayo. Siqala ngazo zonke izinto esingazithola kubona.

Facilitator  : Ja amasocial worker ayasisiza. Amasocial worker asisiza ekuthenini asiphumi

emindenini efanayo. Kunabafundi abake bafike nezinkinga zakubo like

ukuhlukumezeka kwabo mabefika eskoleni abakwazi ukuconcentrater emsebenzini

wabo weskole, so isocial worker kumele liyingene, libe ingxenye yaleyo nkinga yalowo

muntu ukuthi lizame ukulungisa inkinga yaleyo ngane ekutheni umfundi akwazi ukuthi

agcine eseconcentrata emsebenzini wakhe weskole. So social worker helps in that regard

kodwa ngicabanga ukuthi ningabeka nani ngokwenu.

Participant : Amasocial workers angasisiza ngokuthi basifikele nokudla masisele after school coz

Sisuke sesilambile. Sizodla sihambe siyojima, siqhubeke nokufunda

Facilitator   : Ja uqinisile, uyazi le nto iphindisa emuva. Kunento ebekumele ilistwe la ngendlela asho

Researcher : Kulungile sisazobuyela kulezo zinto ezama-after thoughts ayikho inkinga.

Ngayo.

Facilitator  :Ja amsocial worker afana nabazali kithina, njengomfundi ofundayo eskoleni

kuyakuphoqa ukuthi ube ngaphansi kwesandla sakhe, bayahamba bayobheka ukuthi

**weskole** uziphethe kanjani esikoleni, ibehaviour yakho nokuthi umsebenzi wakho

uwenza kanjani. So leyo nto ikusiza ekutheni wena njengomfundi kufanele

**sure** uzigqugquzele ubone ukuthi kunenkinga eza emva kakho, so you have to make

ukuthi kukho konke okwenzayo esikoleni kuba kuhle kuyancomeka, so leyo nto

iyayikhuphula ipossibility yokuphasa kwakho.

Reseacher   : Ngisacela ukubuyele facilitator kulelo point okhuluma ngalo, libe lifushane, liqonde libe

Specific ukuthi yini esingayithola kubona.

Facilitator : Kumasocial worker singakuthola ukuthi basigqugquzele ukuthi kumele sibheke

Umsebenzi wesikole siyeke ezinye izinto.

Reseacher: Ok, imaphi amanye ama...., izinto esingazithola? Ngizoqala ngala manje ngithi (ekhomba)

Participant: Nokuthi amasocial worker ayakwazi nokuthi mhasimpe uthole ukuthi izingane azinabo

Abazali zihlala zodwa, bazithathe bayohlala nazo,zenze kahle nomsebenzi wesikole, zihlal

Kahle.

Facilitator : Mfwethu (ekhomba)

Reseacher: Ungabakhombi bengidlala. Okay, but on a serious note, let's just be free, the more you

talk the more you'll ukuba la.

But if you can't talk, ungomunye walaba okuzothi uma ngibuya next week **wednesday**

Ngingabafici. It might not be related to into oyifundayo but if i'm not mistaken **kaLife**

Orientation there is a, le nto ingakusiza ngelinye ilanga in the work of different **people**

Wazi ukuthi uma unenkinga le uconsult bani and use this information kwezinye **izindawo**

Ezinjenga lezo but kuright ukuthi ukhulume, ungesabi uma bekuhleka, ngeke **bakuhleke**

Futhi coz mabekuhleka ngikhona ngizokhumula ibhande leli. Ngeke uze uhlekwe **umuntu,**

So just be free. But obviously, makungekho into ocabanga ukuthi singayithola akunanking

But nikhulume nje ningesabi. So, yini enye esingayithola kumasocialworkers? Sesinakho

Ukuthi they can help with food masinama-evining classes, sakuthola ukuthi they can help

Learners with social challenges, they can also help learners with no parents, kuyacaca-ke

Laphaya ukuthi kanjani, kuchaziwe. Iziphi izinto esingazithola kubona ikakhulukazi

Ezingasisiza ukuthi izinga lokuphumelela kwethu njengabafundi likhuphuke.

Facilitator : Zalo ngibone uphakamisile.

Participant : Er,....(bamnquma ulimi)

Researcher: Ngicela uqale laphaya.

Participant : Ukuthi uma unezinkinga eziningi ungakwazi ukuthi uye kubona bese beyakwazi ukuthi

Bakusize.

Facilitator : Zalo ubuphakamisile

Participant : Okunye ukuthi bangeza nasesikoleni futhi bayakwazi nokuyobheka emakhaya ukuthi

Sihleli kanjani. (Ubuye angazwakali kahle)

Participant : Asithathe ngokuthi babuye basi-motivate. Kungenzeka ukuthi mhlambe ngingumfundi

Ngenza umatric kwenzeke izinto ezibuhlungu empilweni yami mhlampe ngishonelwe

Abazali.

Researcher: So they can help with counselling.

Participant : Yes, lapho sengizibona sengathi ngixakeke ngedwa emhlabeni, bese bona beyafika

Bezongixolxela le story esinzima bese ngizibona ngingcono ukunale story abasishoyo.

Bese ngiyaqala ngityakhululeka nami njengabanye abantwana, ngiqhubeke nje nempilo.

Facilitator : Ja, that's a good point m fwethu.

Participant : Nanokuthi uthole ukuthi nabazali unabo noma ngithi nje ubaba kuphela, wintombazane,

Mhlasimpe ubaba wakho ajike aku-rape enze yonkinto kuwena, mhambe-ke uxhumane

Nothisha othize akusize ukuthi uyichaze kahle inkinga yakho kuma-socila worker.

Amasocial worker bese eyakusondeza ube sesandleni sawo.

Participant : Futhi engasisiza ngokusiyala as abafundi, mhlampe kukhona othanda umkhakha lo

Abakuwona, bakufundise ngawo ukuthi uma ufuna ukuba isocial worker ungenza kanjan

Researcher: Okay, some of the carriers, some of the social workwers ayakwazi ukuthi enze icarrier

Guidance njengoba esho nje umfwethu, abanye bengasisiza ukuthi imiphi imikhakha

Esingayithatha njengoba siqhubeka sifunda.

Participant : Nanokuthi uthole ukuthi unabo abazali mhlawumbe ayikho indlela yokuthi nikwazi

Ukuphila bayakwazi ukusisiza, njengezingane zesikole mhlasimpe ngiyakwazi ukucabang

Kuze kweqe ukuthi ekhaya ngingaxhumana kanjani nabo ukuze bakwazi ukuthi basisize.

Reseacher : Asibhekeni amachallenges manje.

Facilitator : Ichallenge yokuqala enginayo ile yokuthi amasocial worker okokuqala nje:

Ave kuthiwa isocial worker lizohlala libheke umuntu oyedwa kuphela ngaso sonke

Iskhathi, ngeke lihlezi libheke mina. So lizobe li-dealer nabanye abantu bangaphandle,

So kunezinto mina ebengifisa ukuthi lona lingenzele zona ngaleso sikhathi, uthole ukuthi

Alikhoni ukuthi lingisize ngenxa yokuthi lise-busy nabanye abantu. Or ngingayibeka ngithi

Kuna lento okuthiwa kuthathwa ama-off, umuntu uma ethatha i-off as isocial worker

Uyahamba ayohlala nomndeni wakhe bese mina ngibe busy ngixakeka coz akasekho

Umuntu ebengithembele kuyena ngithi konke lokhuya nalokhuya ukhona umuntu owbab

So, enye ichallenge leyo.

Participant : Enye ichallenge esingahlangabezana nayo ukuthi uthole ukuthi kugcwele abantu

Abahlukahlukene (akazwakali kahle ngenxa yokuwiliza mayekhuluma)

Reseacher : Ku-possible yini ukuthi mhlambe singaba namasocial worker azodealer nabantu

Ngokwehlukana?

Participant : Cha ukuthi into eyenzekayo noma kuye ngezibongo, kube ukuthi naba abasohlelweni

Lwakhe azoqala ngabo mhlambe uthole ukuthi wena awukho.

Researcher : Okay, sengiyayizwa-ke manje.

Facilitator : Enye into eke yenzeke ukuthole ukuthi leli social worker lazi zonke izinkinga zami from

Ekuqaleni lize liyogcina. Into ezokwenzeka uma esethathe i-off mina ngiyasuka ngiya

Komunye, lo omunye ngeke akhone ukungi-attender coz akanayto ifile ene-information

Yonke ngami, so sekuzofanele ngiqale phansi ngikuxoxele sonke le story, siyahamba

Iskhathi.

Participant: Nokuthi enye into mina as umuntu womphakathi ngiyanqena ukuthi ngitshele

Umakhelwane wami as isocial worker, ngimtshele izinkinga zami ngoba engakuhleka

Noma ahambe ehleba ngawe emgaqweni.

Reseacher: Okay. Alright, imaphi amanye amachallenges? Nikhumbule ngithe sifyuna ukucabanga

Ngawo wonke, kungaba awesocial worker uqobo, what about us getting those social

Workers? You are not talking about yourselves accessing those. Currently makungathiw

Nidinga isocial worker niyazi ukuthi ningayaphi? Niyazi kufanele nenzenjani?

Facilitator: Ja, child welfare.

Researcher: Child welfare, okay. Will it be easy to get there?

Facilitator: Transport.

Researcher: Ok, ngithe sibheka izinto esingazithola from our ex learners as assets, bese sibheka

Izingqinamba esingahlangabezana nazo noma ezingasivimba ekusebenzisaneni nabo. So

Mina ngeke ngisakhuluma mina ngishiya kunina, inina esenizoxoxa nibuzane kanjalo,

Mina okwami kuzoba ukulalela kuphela, ngizobuza uma kungukuthi nginemibuzo.

Ubani ozo-facilitator ingxoxo yethu noma okuyena ozophatha ingxoxo yethu?

Participant : I can do it.

Researcher:  Ok,  over to you angsekho mina.

Facilitator   : Ok labafethu sikhuluma ngama-ex learners njengoba kade sesishilo sibheka ukuthi izona

Ziphi izinto esingazithola kubona, nokuthi izona ziphi izingqinamba njengoba usir kade

Kade esebekile. Okusho ukuthi umuntu uzoba namaview akhe, noma ubani ozokusho

Sizokwemukela. So ngicela nje sicabange, umutu lohu asekutholile bese siyakusho.

Nanoma ubani uvumelekile ukusho into esuka ekhanda lakhe. So okuningi sengikushiya

Kunina-ke. Sesizozwa ngomuntu uma esefuna ukuphendula.    Umfwethu ngigcine kade

Esho something la.

(kwabakhona okhuluma engezwakali kahle)

Researcher:   Sonke sifree ukukhuluma njalo bakwethu. Feel at home, noma yini ofuna ukuyisho

Uzikhulumele nje ukhululeke.

Facilitator    : Uma ngingaphazami kuye kube kuhle ekuthenini ubuze, angithi izingqinamba izinto

Ezingadala inkinga?

Researcher : Yes, amachallenges ongahlangabezana nawo.

Participant : Amachallenges ongahlangabezana nawo mhlawumbe ungalutholi usizo?

Reseacher : Kungaba noma mhlambe into engadala ukuthi ungalutholi usizo kubona, kungaba noma

Yinto engadala ukuthi ungakwazi ukuxhumana nabo, kungaba into engadala ukuthi bona

Bangakwazi ukukunika usizo olufunayo, noma yini nje mhlambe... ake ngenze isibonelo :

Ake ngithi I'm an ex-learner in this school, ngihlala ePinetown ngiqashiwe

Ngiyasebenza. So, no matter what you want from me kungenzeka ungakwazi

Ukukuthola ngenxa yokuthi ngiyasebenza, ngihlala epinetown, so idistance noma igap

Evuleke phakathi kwami nesikole inkulu kakhulu mhlampe ku-expensive ukuthi

Ngingatravela sonke isikhathi. That is one of the challenges. Kodwa okwamanje

Asingabheki amachallenges, asicabangeni sigxile kwizinto esingazithola kuma-ex-learners

Ezingaba usizo ekuthenini izinga lokuphumelela kwethu lenyuke. Then emva kwalokho

Sizobe sesiya kumachallenges.

Facilitator : Mina ngibeka something as ama-ex-learners okumele niyikhumbule, siyikhumbule ukuthi

1) Akuchazi ukuthi sizohlala sifuna kubona usizo, yebo kona siyaludinga usizo kodwa kunezinto nabo abangazazi abazozithola kuthina. Ngicabanga ukuthi niyakwazi nani lokho coz even uthisha imbala for exampe; uthisha uyafundisa esikoleni, kuyenzeka
Kube nezinto othola ukuthi akazazi sezishiwo umfundi. So i-ex-learner iyafunda kubafundi, kuyafundiswana, so kuyasizwana ngamanye amazwi ngingayibeka kanjalo ==coz ama-exlearners singathola ulwazi from izinto abanazo akade bezifunde thina singakafundi okukanye kube ukuthi noma sesifundile kodwa abephambili ngamagrade, ilokho engingase ngikusho==. Mfwethu (*ekhomba ozobamba iqhaza*)

Participant : Ngicela ukuya kulokhu kwezingqinamba. kungenzeka mhlambe singalutholi usizo...

Researcher : (Emhlala emadevini) Ngicela ukukuvimba kancane. Asingayini kukuna, asiyeni kuna

Sesiqedile ngokucabanga ukuthi yini esingayithola. Angithi thina si-operatha from the

Positive side, asithi kunezinkinga but we say kunezinto ezinhle ezikhona mhlampe

Lezo zinto, nazi izinto ezincane eziyizinkinga. So that is why ngsuggeta ukuthi siqale

Kokuhle that we can get. Not ukuthi thina singabanikezani noma bona bangatholani

Kuthina, thina yini esingayithola from our ex-learners? Noma engabe yini engadala

Ukuthi izinga lokuphumelela kwabafundi likhuphuke. (*kuthuleke*) Mhlambe we can even

Go back ukuthi masikhuluma about ex-learners siwachaze wona ukuthi

1) Siyvumelana ukuthi abantu abakade befunda lapha esikoleni. Mhlambe we can even look ekuthenini bebonke abantu abebefunda lapha, yibona bonkeni abangakwazi ukusisiza. Mhlambe nalapho singaya ekuthenini sibheke uhlobo oluthile lwama=ex-learners lolu esiluregard (er) as ama-assets. Uma sithi i-ex-;earner iyi-asset, i-ex=-learner ekanjani? Inoma ubani noma uhlobo oluthile lwama- ex-learnes? Mhlambe nalokho singakucabanga. Once sacabanga lokho syobe sesiyakwazi ukuthi senzenjani, sicabange kuthi yini eingayithola kubona.

Facilitator: But ama-ex-learners baf wethu without ukuthi size sithole iknowledge yabo kunezinto

Okumele ukuthi nizikhumbule,

1) Kunale nto yokuthi thina sifunda uCAPS kanti bona babefunda...(Aphonse umbuzo)
Ngicela ukubuza ukuthi wena wawufundani la eceleni kwami?

Reseacher : Mm, Ey, mina angiwufundanga uCAPS, angiyifundanga i-OBE njengani....

Facilitator : (Emngena olimini) So kukhona oma-OBE noCAPS, uthole ukuthi yonke into esiyaziyo sazi

into ehlangene noCAPS, bona bayofika nama-obe basinikeze because noma kufana

kodwa akufani, ya umehluko, kunomehluko. So ezinye izinto esingazizuza kuma-

ex –learners, ngingazi-ke noma niyangivumela kodwa angisiboni isidingo sokuthi

niphikise coz i-obvious, iyazichaza le nto.

Researcher : Asizwe nabanye, bathini abanye (kuthuleke) Sithe labantu bama-assets, yini

Esingayithola kubona?

Participant : <mark>Nanokuthi uma ufuna usizo kumuntu kusuke kungasho ukuthi ufuna usizo lwayo yonke</mark>

<mark>Into kodwa ngesikhathi ufika kuye kuba khona lolu sizo, ulwazi lwezinye izinto eziningi</mark>

<mark>Ogcina sewuzithola.</mark>

Reseacher : Yini enye esingabuye siyithole kuma-ex-learners? Nizishilo lezinto izolo and ezinye zazo..

Facilitator : (emngena emlonyeni) And ezinye izinto without ukuthi uze usebenzise ingqondo,

Amacircuits, umsebenzi wezandla, ama-ex-learner angasisiza ukuskhombisa ukuthi

Enziwa kanjani, as long kungumuntu onolwazi ngokomsebenzi wezandla. Singaluthola

Futhi usizo mangingaphazami ngalokho.

Reseacher : Angifuni njalo ukukhuluma nomuntu oyedwa noma laba bobabili.

Participant : Ake ngilinganise, angithi usisi wami ubefunda la esikoleni, kumele mina ngibheke

Amaquestion papers akhe ezinto akade ezifunda yize ngingakafiki kuleli klasi akulona

Yena. Ngizenzele mina ngipractize, angichazele ukuthi lana bakhuluma ngani futhi

Kwenziwa kanjani. Lokho kungasiza ukuthi iphakame imfundo.

Facilitator : ya..

Reseacher : So in other words, we can access the resources they were using and we can also ask

Them questions.

Participant : Yes

Reseacher : ok, yini enye esingayithola kuma-ex-learners?

Participant : Esingakuthola kuma-ex-learners singathola idiscipline.

Facilitator : idiscipline?

Reseacher : Sicacisele, sikhanyisele sizwe.

Participant : Njengokuthi asifani sabantu, uthole ukuthi njengoba silapha esikoleni kunabantu

Obungafisa ukubona omunye umuntu osenyuvesi mhlambe ongafisa ukufana naye,

Indlela oziphatha ngayo mhlambe kungenzeka usizakale entweni oyiyona la esikoleni,

Ushintshe ibehaviour yakho ebingekho right. Mhlambe ubuhlupha esikoleni wenza

Yonke into kodwa uma usubone yena, ekuchazela yonke into ethi yena ufunde lapha...

Reseacher : Ok, kusho ukuthi ngenye indlela singathola ukugqugquzeleka?

Participant : yebo .

Facilitator : And okunye futhi esingakuthola....(kwanokuphazamiseka kuqhamuka uthisha )

Reseacher : Konje ubani obekhuluma?

Participant : (Amusho ngegama)

Facilitator  : Ya, ey...

Reseacher : Angifuni njalo u (Amusho ngegama) akhulume yedwa. Okwakhe ukuthi abe uchairperson

Wethu asifacilitathe ukuthi sikhulume, so kusuka la ngizogcina ngala, sonke asikhulume

Participant : <mark>Ama-ex-learners angasisiza ngokuthi lapha esikoleni mekukhona uthisha okade</mark>

<mark>Ekhulelwe e...(bamphazamisa ngokuhleka)</mark>

Facilitator  : Bafwethu sikhuphule ivoice singesabi, bawukhuluma ukhulume nje uvuleke nje.

Participant : <mark>Oh, ama-ex-learner indlela angenza ngayo ukusisiza ukuthi kukhona uthisha okuthi uma</mark>

<mark>Efundisa eklasini angezwakali ngenkathi uma ekuchaza into ungayizwa nje, ungaya kuye</mark>

<mark>Mhlambe akuchazele.</mark>

Facilitator  : And enye into ebesengikhohliwe, bengifuna ukuthi kulesi sikhathi sakuqala bekuphilwa

Impilo ngicabanga ukuthi nani. So ufoundawthe ukuthi inhlonipho oni, so izinto ayisefan

Reseacher : I am just asking a curious question ukuthi wazi kanjani ukuthi azisefani izinto. Ake ngithi

Ngizalwe ngo-1980, ngazi kanjani ukuthi izinto zazingenje ngo-1970 coz nganginngekho?

(Participant : Baphendul babaning  kodwa abangezwakala)

Facilitator  : uma siqhatha ibehaviour ysmsnje neyakudala eyakudala yayinesithunzi futhi even

Naseklasini ububona ukuthi makungene uthisha ubani kumele simunike indawo yakhe

(Bahlebe, bahleke)

Reseacher : Unganaki, i'm just challenging you ukuthi ungacabangi yena kuphela. When you say

Something, try to think about it ukuthi mawuqhamuka nayo ngala omunye umuntu

Uzothini, iuzoyichallenga kanjani?

Facilitator  :ya, bathi this is a new generation. Why bathi this is the new generation? Ingoba bebona

Ushintsho, dat's why ngicomparisha  ilife yamanje nelife yakudala. So uthisha uma engabe

Engena eklasini wawubona ukuthi kunerespect, uyabona manje kulesi sikhathi samanje

Uyabona ukuthi, ah-a, eish, so inhlonipho ibalulekile.

Reseacher : So yini N (embiza ngesibongo) esingayithola kuma-ex-learners?

Facilitator  : Ukuthi sazi ukuthi eklasini kambe kwakubanjiswene kanjani.

Researcher :  Ok , so we can find out ukuthi how they used to work together with teachers?

Facilitator   : Yes. Omunye umfwethu eceleni kwami (emnika ithuba lokuthi akhulume)

Participant : Mina ngivumelana nawe...(Wakhuluma into engezwakali kahle)

Researcher :  Ok nampa abanye ngala.

Facilitator   : Dadewethu (Emnikezela inkundla)

Participant : Ngicabanga mina ukuthi ama-ex-learners engasisiza ngokuthi mhlampe mangihlala

Nosisi wami engakwazi ukuthi angisize ngalokho akwaziyo ngokuthi mhlambe

Angelekelele mhlampe uthole ukuthi usezongifundisa.

(*Kwaba khona okhulumela phansi sakuncokola bavele bahleka bonke.*)

Researcher : Asizwe futhi ukuthi yini enye esingayithola kuma-ex-learner...

Facilitator   : (Ngokukhulu ukushesha) Nangu umfwethu ngala

Participant : Ukuthi uma uyi-ex-learner kubalulekile ukuba nerole model. Mengithi irole model

Ngisho umuntu ofisa ukuba uyena. So....

Researcher :  Ok.

Facilitator    : Ja, Ja, ja, ja. So thina besibheka ukuthi iziphi izinto eziright esingazithola kuyena lowo

Muntu thina.

Researcher : So singathola ukuthi engaba irole model yethu. I think livela kanjalo ipoint lakho. So yini

Enye esingabuye siyithole? Ngiyaxolisa ukubuye ngikulekelele.

Participant : Okunye esingakuthola kuma-ex-learner ukuthi njengoba singenaye umuntu ofundisa

i-computer la eskoleni kodwa ekhona ama-ex-learners, singakwazi ukuthi simcele

asilekelele.

Researcher :   So, kucishe kufane naleliya point lokuthi they can help where there is no teacher.

Faci/Partic  : Ja

Participant  : Kubalulekile ukubhekisisa ngoba angeke nawe uthathe noma imuphi, kunalomuntu

Owenza izinto ezinhle obonayo nawe ukuthi ngingamlandela lo muntu.

Researcher :  Ok. So uqonde ukuthini? (embiza ngesibongo)

Facilitator   :

Participant  : Ngiqonde ukuthi lowo muntu uyena ongabukelela kuyena izinto ezinhle azenzayo.

Researcher :  So ngenye indlela some ex-learners are known for doing good things, neh? So

Singabonelela kule zo zinto.

Facilitator   : kukhona omunye obesafisa ukuqhubeka naye abeke okwakhe?

Researcher :   Ok, mhlampe makukhona obuye futhi ukukhumbula esingakuthola kubona sizobuyela

Kubona kodwa through usihlalo wethu asidluleni siye kumachallenges.

Facilitator    : Sesikhuluma ngezinto-ke, ububi manje esingahlangabezana nazo. Ngabe ibona buphi?

Ibuphi lobu bubi?

Researcher : Mhlambe not exactly ububi ngoba uma sesithi ububi esingahlangabezana nabo...

Mhlampe izinto, let's say we want them to come here and motivate learners or we want

Them to teach where there is no teacher or say maybe we just want them, we want

Something from them, we want to connect with them, we want something, yini le

Engaba inkinga noma ichallenge ekutheni sisebenzisane nabo? Iziphi izinto ezingaba

Izingqinamba? Not exactly ezimbi but mhlambe zikhona ezizovela ezimbi but what we

Want is to find out ukuthi ngempela yini engadala ukuthi this relationship esikhuluma

Ngayo iphazamiseke? Yiziphi izinto esingavimba thina ukuthi sikwazi ukufinyelela kubo

Sithole usizo kubona? Noma iziphi izinto ezingavimba ukuthi bona as assets bacontribut

Ezintweni ezenzeka esikoleni?

Participant : Ngokucabanga kwami ngicabanga ukuthi as bekhona abantu abangama-ex-learner

Emphakathini singaya kubona, abanye abasebenzi bahleli. Bangadinga ukuthi uma

Sibacela bafune ukukhokhelwa imali.

Facilitator : That's a good point.

Researcher : So, some ex-learners are unemployed. Qhubekani ningangilindi mina. Uwena uchair,

Mina okwami ukuzibhalela la.

Facilitator : Ukhona omunye mhlambe obesafisa ukuveza amachallenge esingahlangabezana nawo?

Okunye engingase ngikubeke ukuthi uma i-ex-learner ihlala nathi eroundini, around, so

Siyahamba siyozifunela usizo kuyona, ngenkathi sithi siyofuna usizo isitshele idue date

Ithi ngosuku oluthile wozani, niyithathe. Uma senifika nithi after that nizoyithatha

Seniyafika animfici mhlampe usehambile naye waya esikoleni coz naye mhlambe

Uyafunda like for example e-university, so like izifiso zakho azisaphumelelanga,

Sekwenzeke into okade ungayilindele ukuthi ngase yenzeke coz lo muntu usehambile

Wanishiya, right? So, ja.

Researcher : Awusqoqele nje kube ichallenge emfushane ongathi mawubeka ichallenge uthi nayi.

Facilitator : Noma ngingeke ngisayibeka exactly as it is, ukusizana nomuntu ohlezi unaye but not

Close, anibi naye ndawonye but niyakwazi ukuba nezingxoxo. Uhlala kwenye indawo

Sometimes uyafika sometimes uyahamba, ngingaybeka kanjalo. Bafwethu (esededela

Abanye) noma ubani okhulumayo, asikhuphule ivoice.

Participant : Okunye singathola ukuthi sinayo i-ex-learner emphakathini, uthole ukuthi siyazi ukuthi

Kukhona isfundo asaziyo, kakhulu futhi kodwa manje inkinga yakhe ukuchaza akakwazi.

Njengokuthi nje umuntu uma esefunde kakhulu uye akuchazele ngendlela ezoba lula

Kuyena kanti asifani mhlampe uzongichazela kanti ingqondo yami iyislima, uthole ukuth

Uyachaza angiyizwa le nto ayishoyo, kuyena ubona kulula kodwa ukuchaza kwakhe

Iyona nto engadala ukuthi ugcine ungalutholanga usizo lwakhe.

Researcher : ok.

Participant : Okunye mina engicabanga ukuthi angasisiza ngakho ama-ex-learners ukuthi asifundise

Noma agqugquzele irespect kubafundi ngoba singaya kuyena, eze yena kodwa ngenxa

Yokuthi eklasini noma nina niyigroup ningamrespect, uthole ukuthi munye phakathi

Kwenu omlalelayo agcine ese-attender yena yedwa, kuthi uma eyikhipha leyo

Information abanye abasezwa.

participant : Ja, okunye esingakuthola, singaya thina kulona siyofuna usizo. Uma sesifikile lapho

Lizofike libone intombazane and then bese bethandana bona thina (bahleke kakhulu)

Bese enaka le ntombazane aseyitholile, thina asisakwazi ukuthola lolu sizo esiludingayo.

Facilitator : Kona it's a good point, ja, ja uqinisile. And futhi enye into ave kubuhlungu uthole ukuthi

Uzofundiswa umuntu icomputer.....

Researcher : Sorry, ngicela ubuyele emuva epointini lakho ngifuna ukulicapturisha kahle.

Participant : Ukuthi i-ex-learner ingafika izosfundisa ifike ibone intombazane and then bathandane.

Researcher : What about intombazane ebona umfana? (kuqhunywe insini) i-ex-learner

Eyintombazane ifike ibone umfana, akwenzeki?

Participant : (kuqale kuvungame indlu) Kuyenzeka kodwa akuvamile ezindaweni zasemakhaya

Facilitator : Ungathi akuvamile, kuyenzeka noma akwenzeki? Yebo noma cha?

Researcher : Simple. Ok. Kodwa kukhona into eyodwa esele kuleli point olishoyo, ngiyalizwa futhi

Libalulekile, then if it happens ukuthi this person uyi-ex-learner came to the school to

Help learners and then fall in love nentombazane, you did not explain ukuthi kuyi-

Challenge ngani lokho. Ake ngenze isibonelo nje, somebody ophase last year la eskoleni

Owathola o-A abayi-6 noma aba-5 i'm not sure, uma engase abuyele la eskoleni manje

Ngalo nyaka it is possible ukuthi angabona umuntu othile, ubani isbongo, (ebuza

Umfundi). Uzobona yena-ke lo mfundi kanti vele wayezishaya ngaye, so mayesebone

Yena bathandane still aqhubeke asisize, ikhonani ingqinamba engaba khona ngenxa

Yalokho?

Participant : Ingaba khona, abaye abantu banamahloni, uma echaza into kunzima ukuthi afundise

Ebe evele ethandana naye

Researcher : So uzoba nechallenge yokumfundisa noma yokufundisa uwonkewonke?

Participan 1 : Wonke umuntu. Uzoba namahloni okukhuluma ngoba engathi mayekhuluma mhlambe

Uyalahla kuleyo ntombi (bahleke) bese esaba.

Participan2 : Angiboni kanjalo mina ngoba lo muntu sizobe simbuza imibuzo yento esiyidingayo,

Esine-sure ukuthi sizoluthola usizo lwayo. Noma engabe kuthiwa unamahloni, ngeke

Abe nawo ngoba uzobe esitshela ngento anolwazi ngayo...

Participant 1: Hhayi, imani bafana (bahleke), ngisemncane nakhu mina nguthisha ngithandana nawe

(Amusho ngegama), uzophakamisa mangikubuza laphay phambili? (kube nomsindo

Kuphikiswana ngemibono eyahlukahlukene kungavunyelwana)

Researcher : It's ok, we don't have to agree but sonke siyavumelana ukuthi it maybe one of

Challenges, right? It might be not a challenge, kungenzeka kube ichallenge kungenzeka

Kungabi yiyo but the fact is, iqiniso into ayishilo in a case where umuntu eba in a

| khona | Relationship nomunye wabantu, it's either umfana noma intombazane kuzoba |
| umuntu, | Lokho kodwa it depends kumuntu ngamunye ukuthi yena ukanjani. Omunye |
| wengan | Othi ngenze isibonelo ngami: e-University ngike ngafundisa eklasini elinomama |
| mephendula, I | Yami. Bengimfundisa and I would teach and ask her questions aphendule |
| wena | Would say whatever I want to say kuye eklasini lapho. So it depends ekuthenini |
| ebenilufuna | Ukanjani but I think it can be a challenge njengoba nisho ekutheni usizo |
| sinani? We | Lutholakale ngendlela. Imaphi amanye amachallenges? Asingacabangi, lana |
| they | Are saying some ex-learners are unemployed and they would want to be paid if |
| the | Offer help, some ex-learners may be living far from the school making it hard for |
| ekhona, | Learners to access njengoba uthe omunye umuntu ungathola ukuthi akahlali |
| abanolwazi | Some ex-learners may be very knowledgable and be unable to teach others, |
| unable to | Uthole ukuthi abakwazi ukuchazela abanye, some learners at school may be |
| ofikile, some | Respect ex-learners, so ildiscipline eskoleni inga-affect (a) umuntu omunye |
| disturb | ex – learners may start having relationship with current learners and this may |
| So | the  level  of help each ex-learner will give. So ilokho esinakho njenga manje. |
| kungaba | asicabangeni ngawo wonke nje amachallenges angaba khona. Mhlambe |
| ngenxa | amachallenges angaba kulowo muntu qobo, kungaba amachallenges enzeke |
| nesikole | yokuba khona kwethu, kungaba mhlambe amachallenges enzeka ehlanganisa |
| ahlangana | sona qobo, kungaba mhlambe amachallenges ahlanganisa nabanye othisha, |

ne-SGB, ahlangana nabazali, ahlangana ne-SMT (School Management Team), any

challenge engadala ukuthi.....(Angenwe omunye emlonyeni)

Facilitator : Ok nanka ngiwaphethe, kwenziwe i-example nge-ex-learner ehlakaniphile kodwa

1) I-quiet eklasini, ayphenduli,ayiphakamisi kodwa ize iqede namaresults Agood kagrade 12. So angithi lowo muntu niyamthatha ukuthi azofundisa kodwa niyabona ukuthi uyahluleka ukuchaza into. It's not like...(wanqanyulwa).
Umfwethu ubephakamisile?

Participant : Bengizoshointo ethi ayifane nale.

Researcher : Ok, sesikhavile lapha sithola ukuthi umuntu unolwazi but akakwazi ukulufundisa abanye

And that one yokuthi mhlambe vele ingoba ubequiet eklasini, then it comes in lapho

Ekutheni akakwazi ukusiza abantu ngolwazi lwakhe. Ninani ngala kukhona

Engingakawezwa amazwi, angikalizwa elakho (ebakhomba ngokubabala bonke)

Participant : Okunye mhlambe nginezibonelo ezicishe zifane nezabanye kodwa..(akangezwakala)

Researcher : In other words some parents may not allow ex-learners to help. Ngzokhumbula ngoba

Ukuchazile nala kurecordekile ukuthi ukubeke kanjani ukuze, ngizama ukukwenza kube

Kufishane la. So wonke amachallenges esisenawo arelat (er) kuwona ama-ex-learners.

Ngithe mhlambe singacabanga ngamachallenges aseskoleni, akwi-SMT, akwi-SGB,yonke

Nje into engaba ichallenge. Ake ngenze isbonelo: Mhlambe mina ngifisa ukuzonisiza

Esfundweni esthize kodwa kanti mhlambe uthisha waleso sifundo akathandi ukusizwa

Omunye umuntu, that's one of the challenges engikhuluma ngayo mangithi asibheke

Amachallenges siwabuka at a broader level singawabheki nje kumuntu yena kuphela.

Facilitator : And kunokuthola ukuthi lo muntu niyamazi ukuthi uhlakaniphile kodwa yena uyasixway,

Nisho ukuthi as i-ex-learner sicela uzosfundisa into ethize uthole ukuthi uyasaba,

Uyexwaya, uthi eish ngeke ngikhona. Kodwa sibheka ubuyena isimo akusona, ngeke

Akhone ukusisiza. And enye into as i-ex-learner sicxele ukuthi izosfundisa life science

After that lowo muntu useyayeka ukusfundisa, sekulethwa omunye umuntu ukuthi

Azosfundisa. So leyo nto ike ibenzima coz ezinye izinto abazichazi ngokufana. Kunalo

Othi mekuchazela into uthole ukuthi uyazkhulumela njengami njengoba ngizikhulumela

Bese kuba nalo othi mekakhuluma uthi yazi uyanensa, uyanilalisa eklasini, leyo nto

Leyo iyanilimaza.

Participant : Uyanilalisa eklasini...(ngqoklo, behleka)

Researcher : (Sakuhleka) Yeka ichallenge ka.(amusho ngegama)isho eyakho ichallenge. Ichallenge

Yakhe, i-opinion yakhe, right?

Participant : Okunye kuba ukungazethembi kwakhe, uthole ukuthi mhlambe uyamazi that uperfect

Kodwa ngenxa yokungazethembi kuze kube sengathi akekho good kodwa uyamazi

Ukuthi ugood. Mhlambe seningahlangabezana-ke nenkinga nithi nicela usizo athi

Akayazi leyo nto.

Researcher : So kubuyela back lapho ekutheni omunye engaba nolwazi kodwa angakwai ukufundisa

Abanye abantu noma uthole ukuthi uyakwazi kodwa une-low self-esteem, ukuzethemb

Kwakhe ngenye indlela kusezingeni eliphansi, so angcine engkwazi ukuthi azosiza. So,

Imaphi amanye ama-challenges akhona?

Facilitator : Kanti kunabanye abantu othola ukuthi as ex-learner afear ukuzosebenzisa izinto ngenxa

Yokuthi mahlambe kunama-enemies, so ngeke akhone ukuthi eze eskoleni azosisiza

Kulezi zidingo esizidingayo coz unovalo lokuthi ngizothi ngiyaya la ngihlangabezane

Nobani, kwenzeke izinto ezinjeya...

Researcher : Unama-enemies kuphi mhlambe?

Facilitator : Maybe it's either ku-local akuyo noma eskoleni.

Researcher : Ok, there are cases where ama-ex-learners anama-issues nabantu abangaphakathi

Eskoleni mhlambe nangaphandle.

Facilitator : Mhlambe akesithi as ngifunda ugrade 12, sengiqedile kunabantu abenza ograde 10&11

Abama-enemies ami, manje ngiyazazi ukuthi ngizofundisa bona labo bantu, so eish

Ngiba nalokho ukuthi ngiyanqena, into noma engabe bengifisa ukuyenza kodwa

Angikhoni ngenxa yabo.

Participant : Into engasivimba ukuthi, ngiqale ngenze i-example: la eskoleni kunecomputer room,

Amacomputer agcinwa esebenza kodwa manje amanye awasebenzi, ngenxa yokuthi

Mancane asebenzayo kungasivimba lokho ukuthi sifunde sonke thina.

Researcher : So kusho ukuthi asingakhulumi ngama-computer kuphela kodwa asikhulume ngama-

Resourcesongathola ukuthi umuntu uza uzosisiza kodwa amaresources esinawo thina

Awenele ukuthi lowo muntu akwazi ukusisiza. Ok.

Facilitator : Futhi enye into ukuthi menimazi ukuthi umuntu uhlakaniphile niyahamba niyomcela

Ukuthi abuye azosifundisa kodwa akafuni uhleze efuna ukuncengwa. Ile nhlobo efuna

Ukuncengwa yabo. Silokhu simguqela phansi simncenga, leyo nto leyo iyasilimaza.

Researcher : Kuke kwenzeka kuwe (emusho ngesbongo)?

Facilitator : Ngingathini, kunabantu aba-selfish, kuyenzeka but aksinto elike always but izinto

Ezenzakalayo.

Participant   : Omunye uze afune ukuncengwa, mhlambe ubonile indlela izingane zeskole eziziphatha

Ngayo and ungumuntu ola endaweni, useyazi ukuthi zinjani. Angishoukuthi izingane

Zakhona zibuhlaza kodwa nje uyazi ukuthi indlela eziziphethe ngayo ukuthi ikanjani, so

Akulula azosiza ngisho engabe siyazi ukuthi lowo muntu...(aphazamseke angazwakali)

Researcher :  So  in that case, singamphikisi i-opinion yakhe, ngyadlala siphikisane ukuze sizo

Understander more ipoint.

Facilitator    : Ya kona uqinisile umfwethu kodwa manje abafanani abantu, for example: ngizokwenza

Ngami i-example ngiyaba selfish. Makzokuthi ngenza umsebenzi wami wena uqhamuke

Usuzothi angikusize futhi kade ungawenzanga umsebenzi futhi ufune ukukopela as it is

Le nto yami njengoba ngiyenzile, so ngisuke sengifuna ukuthi ningincengeke, uyayibona

Leyo nto...so ja,ja, ja.


Researcher : Bathini abanye?, kukhona engingakabezwa ngempela. Ngeke ngikujabulele ukuhamba

Ngingabezwanga.

 Participant    : Okunye futhi okungasivimba ukuthi sizohamba thina siyofuna umuntu ongasisiza, uma

Ethi uyafika, uzofica umntwana wakamakhelwane mhlambbe eklasini noma mhlambe

Ake ngithi ayifundi le ex-learner mhlambe ngenxa  yokuthi umakhelwane odala ukuthi

Angafundi, manje usezothi angzukwazi ukunifundisa ngenxa yalo mntwana angezwani

Naye. Angithi yena unenkolelo yokuthi uthakathwa kamakhelwane manje ubona ukuth

Mayefundisa kuzobe sekukhuphuka nalo mfundi ozalwa kamakhelwane.

Researcher : Ngicela uphinde leli point.

Participant  : (waliphinda linjengoba linjalo baze bamhleka)

Facilitator   : Asingayibeki kanjalo mhlambe asithi ukungaboni ngaso linye.

Participant   : Kodwa mina ngicela ukuyisho le nto sisebancane niyezwa, mangabe kithi singezwani

ngoba      Umndeni whi mawungezwani nowakithi, yinto angadingile thina leyo siyizingane
akuzwanwa   ekugcineni sigcina sesizondana, uthole ukuthi ungizondela ukuthi kini

Nakithi.

Researcher : But akengibuze-ke, lo ungena ekhaya udubula ubaba or ubaba wakhe ungena ekhaya

Adubule ubaba, kumele mina nawe sizwane?

Facilitator   : Yazi wavele washo le nto, yazi njengoba ngithi ngifuna ukukhuluma.

Participant  : Ngeke mfethu sizwane.

Researcher : Singazwana masizohlangana nawe sikhulume ukuthi wenzani ubaba wakho (bahleka)

Participant  : Kunezinto othola ukuthi zixatshanelwe imindeni yethu kodwa azisdingi thina

Researcher : Ehhe

Participant  : Okungafanele engabe siyazingena thina.

Researcher : Njengokuthi kubangwa ukuthi inkomo yakho ibidla ubhontshisi wasekhaya.

Facilitator   : Ixove amadumbe.

Researcher : Into engenamsebenzi nje leyo

Facilitator   : Imani bafwethu, into ekumele siyikhumbule ukuthi asiphumi emakhaya afanayo.

Kunezinto okubone kahle ukuthi, uyazini kuyenzeka kwenzeke into abazali
bakho....

Researcher : (Engenelela) Ngiyanimisa-ke manje sizobuye sibuyele kule. Imaphi amanye

Amachallenges? Sike sakhuluma la ngamachallenges where sithi idiscipline
eskoleni,

Uzothola ukuthi umuntu ngoba unqena ukuthi ibehaviour yezingane eskoleni is
not

Good, let me before ngiqhubeke ake ngincenge nina, ake nehluke nje
kwabanye abant

Do you know ukuthi there is no need yokuthi uthisha uma engekho eklasini
uhambe

Uyodlala emnyango coz unazo izncwadi zakho, you can do a lot eklasini
noma engekho

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| And it | Engathi noma efika uthisha efundisa into wena usuyayazi le nto ayifundisayo. |
| asikho | Always work for your side ukuthi wazi izinto. So uthisha mayengekho eklasini |
| asikho | Isidingo (wabiza umfundi ngegama)nsokuthi uhambe uye emnyango (bahleke) |
| izolo | Isidingo sokuthi ugibele phezu kwetafula uhlale kulona njengale engiyibone |
| wena | Kwenye igroup ka-10B izolo ngyokhuluma nabo. You can change isimo sakho |
| bazi our | Uwedwa. So we are sayinga abanye abantu bayenqena ukuzosisiza ngoba |
| | Behaviour engekho right. Akhona amanye amachallenges mhlambe? |

Participant : Akhona, uthola ukuthi uzomthola umuntu avume kahle, afike esikoleni. Inkinga yakhe

ufuna            Azoba nayo ufika abe nehliziyo encane, akakwazi ukuncenga, umntwana

Umlandele ngapha nangapha. Yena uzolokhu efuna kuqhutshekelwa phambili

eyayeka.            Basithi asizwanga  endaweni ethile, usecikekile bese singaphasi kahle bese

Researcher : Ok

Facilitator   : Mfwethu.

Participant   : Kwesinye iskhathi siya-behaviour eklasini bese mhlambe ephazanyiswe izingane

Zamaye amagrades egcine esecikekile esethetha-ke.

_____

**DISCUSSIONS WITH HOD**

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| **INTERVIEW WITH MAWHEELS** ||
| Mawheels | What is the main focus of your PhD? |
| Interviewer | I'll explain to you now… Firstly I will just tell you where it is coming from. When I developed an interest in doing my PhD I thought of the place where I come from. My interest in doing the type of PhD I am doing started from me thinking about this school. I was a student here in Grade 8, but my plan was that I would go to Umthwalume high in Grade 9. Due to the reason that my parents did not have money I had to come back here in Grade 9. In Grade 10 my parents were then able to afford to take me there but when we got there they said I must start from Grade 8 yet I had passed for Grade 10. When  my parents decided to remove here, their  argument  and the argument others was that  this is not a good school ( kuyabheda ka bhavu, uzofundelani  kabhavu ngoba kuyabheda) |
| Mawheels | So that is why they wanted to remove you? |
| Interviewer | Yes that's why they wanted to remove me. That was the argument at home at that time, and the argument from the community in general. So when I came back here for Grade 10 again, the argument was that other clever kids from other families were learning here but they were wasting their time because they would not amount to anything because they are in a bad school. I personally won't take a side and say whether the school was a bad school or whether it was not. But what developed my interest is, as were talking about the issue of the hall and saying that if the child is doing wrong what |

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| | they have done on the outside? So what has really developed my interest is that, if an outsider can say that the school is not good and even go as far as pointing fingers at the children and say that they bunk school, they sit outside and they are no good. I look at it like this, it is everyone's role in the community, the teacher even the person walking to ensure that things are going well within the school. So that is the first thing that developed my interest in doing this study of this nature. But when I looked and read other things, I found out that sometimes it is the people in leadership in schools that do not have knowledge of what help and support they can get from the community to ensure that everything goes well within the schools. At other times if the school leaders do have knowledge you find that it is the people from the community who distance themselves from the things happening at schools. At other times when the community does try to establish a relationship with the school you find that there are other challenges that are encountered in trying to establish this relationship. I have taken my study and focused it one area. At this school there was previously a problem with poor matric results. The results have improved but this improvement is due to the commitment and efforts of the teachers on their own. There is no one from the community who offered to make any contribution to try and help the teachers in any way and make things right. Instead, even though things have improved, if you go outside the school you will still hear negative talks which shows that there is no appreciation from the community even though things are changing. What I have decided to do with that is …Even though the results have improved my study looks at …Let's take a Mr X who teaches history. Apart from him being a history teacher what other skills does he have that can influence and cause sustained improvement in academic school performance. Which other stakeholders, be it the leaders, the SGB or any other person at the school who can use the skills that they have to ensure that there is sustained improvement. Also, outside the community, who do we know or who can we identify who can be of help to the school. If there are people what help can they offer to make sure that improvement is sustained. And also, if those people are there, what are the challenges that are there in them working with the school. So my study looks those things. |
| Mawheels | It is clear |
| Interviewer | What I wish to start with is to first acknowledge that the results of the school are good, in comparison to many schools that were regarded as good schools. But, the important point is that, I know, even though I don't have the complete information, the people who are responsible for improving the results are the teachers. There was no one like myself or other people in the community who played a role in this. Maybe the first thing we can talk about is your perspective as an HoD, Do you think there is a role that community members can play? Do they play this role? If they don't play it, what do you think are the problems or things that are causing them not to play it? |
| Mawheels | Firstly I want to know if we are directing this specifically to this school. |
| Interviewer | I think it can be general or you can personalise it. It is up to you. |
| Mawheels | Yes because I can end up talking about things I do not know about. Ngokomthetho ngibona ukuthi mina kufanele ngoba isikole esomphakathi futhi sisuke sizosiza emphakathini ,not necessarily othisha. Kubalulekile umphakathi ube neqhaza ongalibamba, but iproblem engiyibukayo kulomphakathi, since 1996 ngifika, usakholelwa kuleyandaba yakudala yokuthi bayobona othisha. Ilokho nami engafika ngaku notica ngifika nje ukuthi bayobona othisha. Ayive ihlupha leyonto layikhaya yokuthi bayobona othisha phambili. Right ke ngama skills lawa nathi esiwatholile siyakwazi ukuzama. |
| Interviewer | Niyakwazi ukubona |
| Mawheels 08: 47-09:00 (not clear-verify) | Siyakwazi ukubona njengoba sebeshilo. Kuzanyiwe izindlela kwabanye oPrincipal abakade bekhona ukuthi kuxhunywane nomphakhathi, nabazali/parents ngezinkinga eziba khona. Kodwa ebengike ngikunotice ayikho inkulumo ebeyibe evela ngaphakhathi lapho mekuxhoxhwa let's say ipolicy meeting ….Akukho ke engike ngikubone mina okokukhombisa ukuthi umzali unayo into anganikelela ngayo, kulabo ababelapho. Kwesinye isikhathi wayekhuluma impela umhlangano uze uphele wonke bengashongo lutho, baphume bahambe |
| Interviewer | Baphume bahambe |
| Mawheels | Kushuthi sekubuyela kuleyonto yokuthi bayobona bona. Even abanye uma uhamba endleleni uyabona nje njengoba mina ngiwu muntu wangale…banifundisani othisha menenza nje? |
| Interviewer | Exactly that is the question ukuthi… |
| Mawheels | Izinto ezinjalo . Bakhona abantu oke ubabuke emphakhathini, obanayo ukuthi umungase usebenzisane nabo mhlampe ikhona into engenzeka. Kodwa uma usuthi uyayibona omunye umuntu uke umjudge elaphaya ubone ukuthi Uziqhelanisile. Uziqhelanisile nawe ungazike ukuthi ukukunyanyana kusukaphi. Uziqhelanisile ayikho into azoyi admita. Kodwa ubone ukuthi lomuntu angakwazi ukuthi asisize abakhona la endaweni. Okunye mhlampe engikubonayo ukuthi kushaye lesikole ukuthi mhlampe babebaningi othisha ebengabona base roundini. Ngesikhathi kunama job conditions bezikhona ezinye izinto ezifana nalezo ukuthi izingane zethu zise makhaya kanti phela phambilini ngifika mina ubekwazi ukuqhasheka umuntu nango matric. |
| Interviewer | Akusanjalo manje |
| Mawheels | Akusanjalo. Abantu abanayo iunderstanding yalokho. Mese kwenzeka leyonto encane leyo yokuwukhuthi izingane zingaphumeleli mese be capitaliza kuleyondawo , yokuthi mhlampe ingoba abantu bokuhamba |
| Interviewer | Mhlampe abantu bokuhamba kushuti abanendaba |
| Mawheels | Ya abanendaba mebe thole imali kugulumeni. Mese kuba inqhinambi enkulu yokuthi uzoxhumana nobani uma uphuma ngoba wena uyisilwane . |
| Interviewer | Uyisilwane, ubane yena lo? |
| Mawheels | Uma ufika futhi la umubizile umzali ingane ihluphile ubuyela ngakuyona. Lengane ihlonipha , ngiyithuma amanzi angazi kwenzekeni. Ucine uwuthisha ubone ukuthi uwena owrong ngoba umzali …ngeke uyixhosheke kuzoqhutshekwa kufundwe. Then amaresults uma sekuzofikwa lapho ke ewa |

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| | ephinda evuka sekuzasala kulokhu okushoyo ukuthi sekuwukuzabalaza kwathisha. Ngoba iDepartment ihleli la kuyena. |
| Interviewer | Uma ewile uthisha ubhedile . Uma enyukile… |
| Mawheels | Siyakumukela futhi ukuthi ubhedile ngoba akekho ozongisiza ngaphandle… |
| Interviewer | Khona le Meneer, le yokuthi useyobona uthisha. Ngaphandle kokhuthi uthisha usuka kwenye indawo, umucabanga ini edala ukuthi abazali bala babe naleyo attitude yokuthi useyobona uthisha , ngoba kwezinye izindawo kuma interviews engibe nawo nezingane khona la ziyayikhuluma ukuthi abazali babo bathi sometimes useyobona uthisha. Ucabanga ukuthi baconscious bona ukuthi ngaphandle kothisha ini bona abanga yenza. |
| Mawheels | …haayi no…kodwa sekuya ngokuya sebekhona ..nezingane sezaba izingane manje. Ngifika bhebhe ignorant abantu. Bhebhengekho concerned ngokufunda. Bhebhe ngazi ukuthi ukufuna ini abantu bala, abanye. Kodwa kukhona futhi izinfundiswa into ebefika ingixhake, nawe ozaziyo. Kunothisha la inqwaba. |
| Interviewer | Nabanye izingane eziphume khona la esikoleni. |
| Mawheels | Mese ngixhakeke ukuthi kwenzakalani mase uthole ukuthi kuyobonwa uthisha. Kushuti nje ngikuphendule lapho nje kushuti abazi. Abazi ukuthi ini abangase bayenze. |
| Interviewer | Ikhona ini thina mhlampe, nami ngiyazibula ngoba since ngahamba la Kabhavu cishe akekho umuntu ofika kaningi njengami ngaphandle kwa DM ngoba uhlezi esekhaya. Ngabe ikhona mhlampe into esingayenza ukuthi sibenze bayibona ngempela ukuthi, noma ngingaqhali ekutheni ikhona yini into esingayenza , sengidlula ke Mam Mbhele ngoba uke washo ukuthi ubenakho ukuthi ababize njalo abazali ezama ukuthi abakhombise ukuthi khona nabo izinto abangazenza. Ngengamanje ikhona mhlampe into eyenzakalayo ewumzamo wokuthi babone ngempela ukuthi ikhona into abangayenza nabo ewusizo esikoleni? |
| Mawheels | Ngizobheka kanje. Angifuna ukuthi mhlampe ngibaphendulele njengamanje kulesimo esikusona. Noma ngingazi ukuthi wena uzokuthatha kanjani lokho. Njengamanje isimo esibhekene naso la sinzima, njengoba ngithi umzabalazo wothisha. Njengamanje kunoshintsho kubuhholi. Naloyo uqhamuka namaskills ache. Njengamanje I SGB ekhona kumnyama kuyona…phela izindaba zisuka kwi SGB whatever ungathini uthini . Kumnyama kuyona ayinendaba ngoba yonke isebenza la ngaphakhathi esikoleni . |
| Interviewer | Isebenza yona esikoleni? |
| Mawheels | Yebo yonke le ila, ekitchen iyadayisa. Kumnyama kubantu ,kumnyama kubona. Osesitolo ubheke ukuthi umnotho wakhe uyangena ini , osekitchen ubheke ukuthi usupplier uyangiholela ini. As a result, mhlampe umholi wethu ngingazike mhlampe noma kuzofika ini kuyena … |
| Interviewer | Cha ngeke kuze kufike nakuyena |
| Mawheels | Umholi wethi angimazi noma uyabuka noma akaboni ini.Angisho ukuthi ngikhuluma kabi ngaye kodwa ngike ngingamboni ukuthi uyabona noma akaboni ini ngoba akuhlaleki naye. Umuntu ohlale eme ngezinyawo. Mhlampe nawe ngeke umfice eoffice lakhe manje. |
| Interviewer | Haayi ngisho kade une appointment usuke umlungile. Kodwa ukhululeke Meneer lento esiyikhulumayo eyethu akuyona eyomunye umuntu. |
| Mawheels | Akanyo indlela yokuthi….ngoba ukuphatha I instituition ngicabanga ukuthi iphathwa ngama meetings. Ama meetings lana akuyona into ekhonzakele. SGB meeting akuyona into ehlanganyo noma ikanjani. Parents meeting uyaphela unyaka ingahlelwanga. Ngingathini…othisha ke ngifuna ukubashayela ihlombe ,laba osuke wahlala nabo obaziyo |
| Interviewer | Laba ababengifundisa nami |
| Interviewer | Bayakwazi ukuthi let's forget about this lady, let's work. Njengoba usubona nama results. Sahlangana thina sathi, bafwethu sisuka kude nalomuntu. The only thing we can do let us forget about her, let us work. Sikhathele iDepartment … |
| Mawheels | Ngoba ngeke… |
| Interviewer | Ngoba ngeke aze ayenze lento esimtshela yona ngoba yena akaliboni…Nawe uyamazi ufundile nawe. Umuntu ongalazi iphutha |
| Interviewer | Ungifundisile |
| Mawheels | Umuntu ongalazi iphutha, umuntu ongayazi into embi awazi ungamthini. Manje the problem is uyena oruna |
| Interviewer | Ngoba ne SGB ukuze ibe active idinga yena ukuthi…. |
| Mawheels | Idinga yena futhi ke uyakujabulela kuleyaya engazi. Umuntu oyijabulelayo into yabantu abangazi. Uyayibona leyonto. Manje na umuntu ojabulela umuntu ongazi , ungazike ukuthi ini le esuke ingemuva. Mina angikujabulell ngokwami ukusebenza nomuntu ongazi |
| Interviewer | Kulikhuni ukusebenza nomuntu ongazi ngoba wena mhla uphelelwa amandla it means yonke into imile kushuti sekubheda kwasani. Mekuphele iplan kuwena ne plan nakuyena isilokhuzile |
| Mawheels | Ezinye yezinto, as a result, izingane zike zipin pointe la zithi uyabona la mengase kuhambe usibanibani nosibanibani lesikole singafa. Ziyakusho lokho phela khona izingane ezihlakaniphile |
| Interviewer | Ngoba phela izingane nazo ziya observa. |
| Mawheels | Ziyabhuka…Nami ke ileyonto engiyibhukayo, ngeke ngithi njengamanje basha abantu abazela izingane zethu umengabe benga involvwa nabo ngendlela manje, ukuthi haayibho nina nimila …uma ngingaku involve kunga eyakini uma ngingaku involve uzothini. |
| Interviewer | Ngake ngezake mina la… |
| Mawheels | Futhi ngeke ngisuke ngiku involve mina kungaphethe mina uyabona |
| Interviewer | Ngake ngezake ngomunye unyaka ngangisase tertiary ngaxhoshwa ubabu Duma, wathi kade ufuna lana wena asiz                                                                   funi izingane ekade zifunda lana. Ngahamba ngashiya kanjalo. Mhlampe sesishiya kwi involvement yabazali Meneer ngoba as much as nabo, isibonelo nje, ngesikhathi ngixhoxha nezingane izingane zaveza ukuthi enye into engenziwa abazali abangayenzi kodwa, ukuthi uma iphuma ingane iphume umzali eyenze yaqonda ukuthi iya esikoleni . Ingavele iphume kuyena mhlamphe, benza |

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| | nesibonelo sokuthi ingane iphuma phambi komzali iqhekeze ishirt yonke into. Izingane zaveza ukuthi abazali iningi irole abangayidala kwi discipline. Ekudisciplineni izingane. Kodwa nabo they pointed kulento oyishoyo yokuthi ke noma bengakweni lokho emakhaya , zibabona kancane abazli babo lana esikoleni. Azazi noma ababizwa ,noma ibona abangafuni ini, zakuveza lokho. Mese kuba khona, angilinganise ngami, abantu abafana name abafunde lana esikoleni , noma singabaningi, kodwa baningi abantu abafunde lana esikole abasezindaweni abangathi mebenga xhumanisa isikole nalezozindawo zibe zininigi izinto ezilungayo. Mhlampe ngakulabobantu ucabanga ukuthi iziphi izinto ezidala ukuthi kungabikhona I interaction between isikole nalabobantu abanjalo. |
| Mawheels | Noma ngingabakhulumeli mhlampe nabo banakho, njengoba sesibekile ngama ukuthi kuncane ukubona amaparents, kubukhuni ukuthi nina ngakithi ngoba nifundile, naba abantu ekungabona abendawo bayasebenza, niqhamuke nento. In mind ngathi there is some sort of politics. Mhlampe bayasaba. Bazothi bathi bayokhuluma mhlampe kube khona izinto or sebezama ngoba base ndaweni sebenfuna ukususa mina. Ngicabanga kanjalo I'm not saying so. Mhlampe they can come… |
| Interviewer | Ngiyakuzwa kahle |
| Mawheels | They can come, kodwa mhlampe bathi into enobhavu , angeke ngazi ukuthi ibaphethephi |
| Interviewer | On our side mhlampe noma esindini lenu njengothisha ayikho into oyicabangayo mhlampe engadala ukuthi, ngona bakhona abantu angilinganise ngo Sindy …Indawo akuyona inama resources ayiqwaba. Uhlezi uCocaCola uphuma uyonikeza izikole izinto ezithize. Ayikho mhlampe into oyibonayo ocabanga ukuthi mekungathiwa manje kuhlalwa phansi iyenziwa , bonke labantu, ngoba ekucineni babantu besikole, baphuma la, so babantu besikole. Ayikho mhlampe into ocabanga ukuthi ingenziwa , they can come come, ukuze ekucineni kungabi umzabalazo kathisha kube iwona wonke umuntu. |
| Mawheels | Kukhulu kukhulu mekunga xhumaneka nabo as beyi zingane zethu. Angiboni ukuthi bangakucasukela lokho. Kukhulu mengase kune khona imi zamo kodwa imizamo iyosuka kuhlanganiwe ngaphakhathi. |
| Interviewer | Mekungahlanganiwe ngaphakhathi |
| Mawheels | Ngeke ngisuke ngedwa ngiyokhuluma no Sindy. Mina angiyona ileader |
| Interviewer | Mese fika la uzothi ubuthunywe ubani kuyena? |
| Mawheels | Ngiyothi bengithunywe ubani , uzama ukungenzani, ngoba ingenzeka into efana naleyo . akulula ngoba phela ngempela ileader yethu angazi ukuthi ngingayichaza kanjani . Ningafike nihlale phansi kwi meeting, le mekwenzekile yabambeka, nivumelane ngayo yonke ionto kodwa ithi ngeke kodwa niyenze leyonto. |
| Interviewer | Awucabangi ukuthi uma sama leaders sobabili kodwa kuwuwena okumele wenze sure ukuthi amadecisions a implementiwe kuyenzeka ngesinye isikhathi idecision eqhamuke nomunye umuntu mekumele uyi implemente mese ubona ukuthi uzonikeza iglory kulowo muntu. Awucabangi ukuthi izimo ezinje ngalezo mhlampe |
| Mawheels | Zikhona , ziclear lezo. It's there. |
| Interviewer | So ngendlela yokuthi umuntu uma enama skills athile ucina ehleli nawo ewalokhuzile. |
| Mawheels | Ewacindezelekile . |
| Interviewer | Ewacindezelekile . |
| Mawheels | Akufanele ukuthi sithi do away ukungabakhona, okukhona… |
| Interviewer | Ngizwakahle Meneer ,bengithi sothatha isikhathi eside but ngicabanga ukuthi idiscussion yethu iyalokhuza iyaziveza ilokhuzana izinto eziningana. Mese mhlampe sibeka la emphakhathini , noma abantu abaningi bengasebenzi kangakho, kodwa kuna bantu aba local , local businesses, ngabe kukekubekhona ubudlewana obuncane phakathi kwalabantu nesikole? |
| Mawheels | Haayi, angibukhumbuli, akukaze. |
| Interviewer | Ngokubona kwakho awekho mhlampe ama contributions abangawenza esikoleni if kuthiwa khona ubudlelwane obukhona phakhathi kwesikole nabo. |
| Mawheels | Abanye bangenza, abanye mhlampe ngeke. Ngicabanga ukuthi bangahlukana phakhathi . Khona abangazama ,khona abangahluleka. Uma kodwa phela beceliwe. |
| Interviewer | Bekwazile ukuthi bathinteke ukuthi … |
| Mawheels | Bekwazile ukuthi sinento esiyidingayo ekanje kanje , abantu laba abangasiza kakhulu. |
| Interviewer | Kushuti kafushane, ungasho ukuthi kwesinye isikhathi noma bebonakala abantu abangasiza benze I contribution, iside elikhulu eli lackayo is on the side of the main leadership ,ngaphathi esikoleni, ukuthi how is he creating ubudlelwane phakathi kwalabantu. |
| Mawheels | Ya ngingasho kanjalo ngoba ngazi kuthi umesebenzi womhholi kakhulukazi esikoleni,ngisho sizafunda, kwakukhona ukuthi uma uwumphathi awuconcentratile ekufundeni namaresults kuphela. Isikhathi esiningi awukho esikoleni , wena isikhathi esiningi uhamba ezi kompanini … |
| Interviewer | U drive initiatives azothatha isikole asibheke kwenye indawo |
| Mawheels | Awulindile iDepartment. Lesikole lesi sirunwa ngama funds ama Norms and Standards only, ayikho enye into eke iqhamuke mhlampe nangu u Sasol wenza ukuthi. Ngiphumile ngaya khoma. And mina ngeke ngikwazi . |
| Interviewer | Kade ngithi ngisazobuza ukuthi uMeneer ngoba yena uyiHoD ini engeke akwazi? |
| Mawheels | Uya authorizwa phela. Mangifika kuwena. Phela umuntu umubuka ekude evutha ukuthi ngicela ungiauthorize ngiphuma. Phela kulula wena umuwumphathi. Haayibho uzofundisa nini wena. Yena unesifundo esisodwa mina ngiqala kwa grade 8 ngya kwa 12. Ngempela futhi uqinisile. And then mese ngingasekho mina ngizama lezinzinto I departmenti. Akeke ilunge ke let's say ikhipha two hundred thousand or five hundred thousand, ayi uyakuketula. |
| Interviewer | Ukwazi ukungenisa imali engaka… |
| Mawheels | Nawe ungasho futhi uma umuntu onga councelekile . Sengisho wena uma uwumuntu onga councelekile. |
| Interviewer | Ungasho ukuthi lomuntu ofaka imali engaka … |
| Mawheels | Imina umfaki mali, ngoba ngizobiza umphakhathi mese ngiyenzile lento , nifike nani nibone , manje kulikhuni. |

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| Interviewer | Kushuti iqinambi enkulu ilele ekutheni ,uthola ukuthi abantu banawo ama skills abaningi, ngaphakhathi manje , kodwa ama skills acindezelekile ngoba ngeke akwazi ukuvela ,ngoba umuntu ekufanele ukuba ufacilitata leyo process yokuthi abantu bakwazi uku applaya lama skills abanawo ,uyicindezele yonke leyo process. |
| Mawheels | Ngingakuvemela kodwa ngingafuni ukuthi uyicindezele. Fanele ngithi uyicindezele ngibuye ngithi mhlampe akazi. Ngoba ngingazi ngithi uyicindezele kanti yena akazi ubona yonke into inormal. Nami ngihlezi la uyayibona icomputer room uma uyayibona uyayazi  umungangena khona ukhala izinyembezi, umunga buka lesikole wena kufikani kuwena? |
| Interviewer | Ngaphandle kokuthi amaresults aphezulu, I environment ayikhombisi ukukhula nokuba conducive ukuthi umuntu ohlala endaweni enjengalena ohlala kuyona for example, angaba nomdlandla ukuthi uzosuka kubo eze la. Ayikho into othi uma uphuma  nje  ilokhuze… |
| MaWheels | Ngoba ivision , but bakhona abanye abantu abangozakwethu, noma bengabaningi ,obabonayo ukuthi bane vision banayo yonke into. Mese kubakhona futhi abanye kwi staff obabonayo ukuthi lomuntu uma engena eclassini ngafundisi zingane zami , ngihmabe ngemoto yami…after that ukuthi ngihambe ngaphandle , ngibuke ukuthi kwenzekalani , haayi … |
| Interviewer | Kodwa ucabanga ukuthi icourse akuyona le ye alienation yokuthi umphakhathi sometimes uthatha othisha wabenza njengama strangers ngalendlela ukuthi abanye babo sebanakho lokho ukuthi ngize la ngizosebenza mese ngiqedile ngiyahamba |
| MaWheels | Nalokho futhi ya, njengoba sishilo nje ekuqhaleni ukuthi we are the strangers. |
| Interviewer | And then mhlampe sibuyele ngase zinganeni mengikhumbula ngonyaka wami, I don't think ikhona igroup eyahlupheka njengeyethu ka Matric in terms of othisha bengekho kakhulukazi ka Commerce. Kodwa thina nathi sizingane we took I initiative yokuthi silekelelane nothisha ukuze senze into encono. Salekelelana nothisha, not futhi ka Grade 12 kuphela kusukaka Grade 9. Sasiqhala istudy sasebusuku senza uGrade 9. Khona la umamShangase asiqhabela khona but sasiza ngenkani sacina sesivumelekile ukuza saze sayofika kwaGrade 12. Ngase sidini lezingane ngabe zona zinayo ini leyondlela yokubona ukuthi nathi phela irresponsibility yethu ukuthi sense sho ukuthi izinto zohamba kahle esikoleni. |
| MaWheels | Alikho iclass elingaba iClass of 2004. Nalawa asezamile alikho elisafinyelele ku Class of 2004 and Class of 1996. |
| Interviewer | Ya u 1996 nami ngiyakhumbula |
| MaWheels | Those 2 classes. Alikho iclass elekulelo zinga. Uma ubona kunestudy siforcwa othisa |
| Interviewer | Akekho umuntu…Umnikazi wesifundo… |
| MaWheels | uMiss Mngoma…ibona abantu abake babe nalezozinto. Izingane uma ukhuluma ngokufunda njengamanje kusukela kuma class alandela u2004 , haayi uma ukhuluma ukufunda kunokungazwanwa. Azazi, nalapha futhi ungaze ubheke kwaBhavu kanti cha konakele ema Primary la abasuka khona. |
| Interviewer | Kahla kahle ayi emaPrimary kuphela. Ngenhlanhla ukuthi umsebenzi wethu udala ukuthi siye ezikoleni, kuncono mhlampe la ka Bhavu. Ziningi izindawo ezonakele. Mhlampe into ehlasele izingane yonke indawo …asinakinga vela sama Born Free sothola negrant. Angithu negrant seziyithola zize ziyofika ka Grade 12….Ngikuzwa kahle ngicabanga ukuthi mekukhona la engingazwanga kahke noma kukhona amagap ngiyobuya ngicele iappointment, ngiyokufonela…ngiyabonga kakhulu ngesikhathi sakho ngiphinde ngiqiniseke ukuthi idiscussion  was confidential. Uma isiphumile ireport uyayifuna icopy it will be available to you…Your identity will be protected and confidentiality is guaranteed. |

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| **INTERVIEW WITH 2 TEACHERS** | |
| Interviewer | Kodwa ngizoqale ngichaze ukuthe estudyini sami ngenzani. Sisukela ngesikhathi ngisafuna ngahluleka ukuya eMthwalume High ngoba ngathi ngiyakhona ngipassele u Grade 10 bathi angiphindele ka Grade 8 ngikade ngiphume unumber 1 la. Ngaqhaba. Ini eyayidala ngifune ukuya eMthwalume High ekhaya babethi kuyabheda la. Kodwa leyonto yayingashowi ekhaya kuphela. Noma uhamba la emgwaqweni abantu babekhuluma bethi lesikole senu esibhedayo. Nathi sasisenze isikole sibhede ngoba saseqha, siqhobhoze ucingo, sihlale ngaphandle mesivalelwe sidlale. Kodwa into eyayingi phatha kabi ukuthi uma umuntu eyilunga lomphakhathi kubheda esikoleni yena wenzani ukuthi kulenge isikole. Kodwa into oyithola ukuthi uyenzeke meku khona into engahambi kahle kuzokonjwa othisa noma uthisha omkhulu kuthiwe ngeke kulunge isikole kunjeyayaya kothisa. Kodwa mina iview yami ukuthi uthisha, yes uqhashiwe ukuthi asebenze, kodwa isikole esawo wonke umuntu. Mengabe ingane ikuhlaza esikoleni kushuti emphakhathini, iyekiwe nakhona, abekho abekho abantu abadlala indima yokuthi ingane ifike esikoleni ibonakale ukuthi iphuma emphakhathini. Istudy sami sibheka ukuthi ngabe yini abantu bomphakhathi abangayi contribua, noma abantu abasesesikoleni othisa, nezingane nabantu abaphethe isikole, babona ukuthi ini noma ikhona ini into enga contributwa umphakhathi ekuphumeleleni kwesikole nasekutheni iskole sibe iskole esiright. Ngoba abantu mebekhulume bakhuluma sengathi bona iskole sakhiwe endaweni kodwa bona abahlangene naso. Mina iview yami ukuthi njengoba silana endaweni uma kukhona inkinga fanele angabe bayabambisana nothisha kube khona into abayenzayo. Kodwa ukuze kube ikhona into abayenzayo kudinga ukuthi esikoleni kuqala kuqala kubonakale ukuthi ikhona into abangayenza. So into engifisa ukuyizwa kunina ngokombono wenu, ngokwenu ikhona ini into umphakhathi ongasiza ngayo ekutheni isikole sibe ilento ekudinga sibe iyona. Mhlampe nje ngingaqhala lapho. |
| Teacher 1 | <mark>**Like, akengithi abazali mengase nje nabo bafundiseke ngokubaluleka kwabo esikoleni, indima abangayidlala esikoleni. Nabo babalulekile akusho ukuthi ingane mese isesikoleni ilahliwe yabona.**</mark> |
| Interviewer | U Miss uthe mengase bafundiseke ngokubaluleka. Ubona ukuthi irresponsibility kabana ukubafundisa ngokubaluleka kwabo? |

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| Teacher 1 | Ithina bho thisha |
| Interviewer | Why uthi othisha? Ini bona bengazi bonele ukuthi |
| Teacher 1 | Kushuthi ngendlela abenza ngayo bona uyababona ukuthi abana idea vele. **Thina mesinga basondeza ngendlela thize, mhlampe kuma meeting kanje. Baze babe aware ukuthi inkulu indima …Bona ngokwabo indima yabo iphelela ekhaya. Once ingane yaphuma isisesikoleni ayi sekukhuphelile.** |
| Interviewer | Mhlampe mengase sibe specific iyiphi iarea abangasiza kuyona? Asenze isibonelo, ngesikhathi ngikhuluma nezingane zathi zona abazali bazo bangasiza kwi discipline ngoba isikhathi esiningi zisuka kubona before zifike la esikoleni. Zathi zona kwidiscipline bangasiza. |
| Teacher 1 | **Yebo iyona idiscipline nokusisiza ingane. Asike sithi ingane uyinike ihomework, umzali uyisiza kanjani ingane ekhaya, iyasithola isikhathi sokwenza umsebenzi wesikole.** |
| Interviewer | Okay, nawe kukhona onakho. Ngiyaxolisa ikwenza kanjalo…. |
| Teacher 2 | Enginakho mina mhlampe iqhaza abangidlala kakhulu mmh ukubuka mhlampe into engingathi ibulala isikole, izingane ngendlela ezilova ngayo. Abazali angibaboni bekukhathalele ukufunda kwenzingane. Ngoba uthola ukuthi ingane iyalova namhlanje ilove nakusasa isizathu esinekezayo. Akekho umzali oke afike azobhuza ukuthi ingane ilovile ngoba kuwukhuthi kaBhavu, kowa kuphelela lapho. Mhlampe mebengalandela lapho ngoba iabsenteesim iphezulu. But abazali abakhombisi ukuthi khona into ebakhathazayo ngalokho. Mhlampe futhi nendaba yama meeting, izingane ziningi la esikoleni uthole ukuthi kuzofika abazala abala ko 20. Okukhombisa ukuthi uma isila esikoleni yena useyilahlile. Ayikho nje into afuna ukuyilandelela ngendaba yengane yakhe nenqhubela phambili. |
| Interviewer | Enye into evelile ngikhuluma nomunye uthisha, ngesikhathi nikhala ngokuthi abezi babebaningi lona ekade ngikhuluma naye ukhala nokuthi ngesikhathi esidlule ningangafiki nini, babefika babebaningi kodwa uthisha omkhulu owayesuke ephethe umhlangano wayekhuluma aze aqede, abanike ithubha lokhu khuluma kodwa bangasho lutho. Anicabangi ukuthi mhlampe isizathu sokuthi bangezi ukuthi vele abanalo ulwazi lokuthi yini mhlampe bona abanga yenza. |
| Teacher 1 | Ngicabanga ukuthi abayazi irole yabo, yokuthi esikoleni iyiphi. Kungenzeka. |
| Interviewer | OKAY asibadlule abazali. Ezikoleni esengike ngaya kuzona ubuthola ukuthi kunama instituitions akhona emphakhathini, mhlampe kungaba ubuholi bendawo, be politic, icounciller, induna, amalocal business, taxi owners etc babanayo inxhenye ethize abayidlayo esikoleni. Ngabe la esikoleni kukhona ubudlwane okukhona nabantu abanjalo. |
| Teacher 1 | Abukho engikhumbulayo. Onkungangokuthi isikole sike sanga performa kahle kodwa kuthe kulonyaka ngoba sesiperformile kahle kwafika I ANC ngo January izobonga. Ithi ibilobe ikhathazekile yonke leminyaka. But bebengakaze bafike before kube khona into abayishoyo. |
| Interviewer | Ngokwenu ukubona into ke kodwa into abangasiza ngayo ukube, lets say, before besakhathazakile, ikhona into enibona ukuthi bebengayenza? |
| Teacher 1 | Ngicabanga ukuthi ikhona. Ngoba izingane ziyababona la emphakhathini, iorganisation ikhona la emphakhathini. Mhlampe nabo mebengeza izingane zibone bona kungenza umehluko nakuzona izingane. |
| Interviewer | So kodwa laba abanye (taxi owners, amasonto, nobuholi etc) abukho ubudlelwane njengamanje? Kodwa ngokwenu ukubona lukhona usizo abangaba nalo? |
| Teacher 2 | Abukho ubudlelwane obukhona. Ubudlelwane obukhona ukuthi siyabaqhasha mekukhona la ekumele sihmabise khona izingane kuphela. Bona njengabantu ababuye babe nezimali, mhlampe kungakhona ne support, financial support abangayiletha esikoleni. Mhlampe ngoku supports izingane ngama uniform. Ungathola ukuthi khona ongenayo nento yokuqhoka. Mhlampe nabo mebengaveza isandla kube khona …mhlampe izingane kungakhona lelothando. |
| Interviewer | Isibonelo, uthole ukuthi khona ingane epasse kahle ayinayo imali yoku regista…njengalo nalomfana last year ikhona into abebengayi phonsa lapho |
| Teacher 2 | Even noku motivate izingane ekupheleni konyaka. Mhlampe sinike izingane ama trophy manje asinayo nemali yokukwenza lokho. Ngale kokhuthi size thengelani ukuzi motivate nje ithole into eyikhuthi. Kungaze kube izizumbule zemali. |
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