

**ENHANCING A SCHOOL ENRICHMENT PROGRAMME FOR  
SUSTAINABLE LEARNING AT A RURAL HIGH SCHOOL**

**BY**

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## DECLARATION

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Only birds could make sweet melodies and flowers make beautiful scent to express my deep appreciation better than I do, but my poor self can only say ‘Thank you’.

## **DEDICATION**

This Dissertation is dedicated to the most important people in my life

My late mother Keletso Christina Mokoena

My lovely wife Makatleho Nonhlela Esther Mokoena

My dearest daughter Katleho Naledi Mokoena

## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AA	Afterschool Alliance
ANAs	Annual National Assessments
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CER	Critical Emancipatory Research
CM	Circuit Manager
CT	Critical Theory
DoE	Department of Education
DoBE	Department of Basic Education
ELA	English Language and Art
EMOs	Educational Management Organisations
FAIs	Free Attitude Interviews
HoD	Head of Department
HRFP	Harvard Research Family Project
ICTs	Information Communications Technologies
IKS	Indigenous Knowledge Systems
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
LF	Learning Facilitator
NSC	National Senior Certificate
OBE	Outcomes Based Education
PAR	Participatory Action Research
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SA	South Africa
SCP	School Change Project
SEP	School Enrichment Programme
SGB	School Governing Body
SI	Supplementary Instruction
US	United States
USA	United States of America
WCDE	Western Cape Department of Education

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## **A PREVIEW OF THE STUDY ON ENHANCING SEP FOR SUSTAINABLE LEARNING AT A RURAL HIGH SCHOOL**

*This study is aimed at recommending the strategies for enhancing SEP for sustainable learning at a rural high school. To achieve this, the study was guided by the following objectives.*

- 1. To justify the need for enhancing SEP for sustainable learning at a rural high school.*
- 2. To identify and discuss the components and aspects necessary for the enhancement of SEP for sustainable learning at a rural high school.*
- 3. To determine the conditions for the enhancement of SEP for sustainable learning at a rural high school.*
- 4. To identify the barriers against the enhancement of SEP for sustainable learning at a rural high school.*
- 5. To recommend strategies for enhancing SEP for sustainable learning at a rural high school.*

*Critical Emancipatory Research was used as the theoretical framework anchoring this study. At the school in which I work learners are excluded from the process of designing and implementing SEP. Consequently, the design and implementation of the programme is based on the assumptions of the educators rather than the needs of the learners, who are often marginalised as they are not included in decision-making processes. Employing CER in this study helped to eliminate this one-sided and authoritative way of viewing and addressing issues. The dialogical methods of collecting data used in CER enabled participants to express views through dialogue. In addition, CER encouraged the co-researchers and I to work together to address the objectives of the study, as opposed to my assuming and imposing my views on them. Moreover, as explained above, there existed a power struggle between principals, teachers, parents and learners regarding the design and implementation of SEP. In this case,*

*employing CER not only created a space for discussion but also empowered the marginalised learners by giving them space to contribute to their own emancipation.*

*I then reviewed both international and national literature on Afterschool programmes (School Enrichment Programmes). This enabled me to understand the nature of these programmes in different contexts. In this regard, while literature revealed many challenges facing SEP, it also provided the strategies used in circumventing those challenges. Furthermore, the reviewed literature revealed the conditions which contributed to making these strategies flourish in some cases while they were hampered by many threats in other cases. The intention in this regard was to understand the reasons for some strategies to work effectively while others failed. In the same vein, to understand how these strategies tend to work effectively.*

*Data was collected within the Participatory Action Research (PAR) paradigm. In addition to advocating both meaningful participation and emancipation of marginalised communities, PAR recognises the strengths of both individuals and community members in effecting social change and growth. It further recognises the experiences that co-researchers bring to the research process and how these shape the outcomes of this process. It is the duty of the researchers to participate in these experiences or include in their studies co-researchers who have lived and undergone these experiences. In this study, the workshops (meetings) were held at the same school, situated in the same area in which most participants resided. In addition, during these workshops the co-researchers spoke about the issues which they had experienced within their own contexts. By creating for them a platform to speak openly about their experiences, both the co-researchers and I were able to share perspectives on the issue at hand. Not only did this solidify our relationship but it also allowed us to create new knowledge based on multiple perspectives.*

*This empirical data confirmed the existence of challenges in both the design and implementation of SEP. These include: lack of diversity in the activities offered in the programme; ambivalent roles of parents and lack of their involvement in the programme; negative attitudes of learners towards the programme; the rural location of the school; and poor quality of leadership and management in the programme.*

*To circumvent the above-mentioned challenges, the study proposed the following strategies. These strategies could be divided into both school and community levels. At school level, they include effective leadership and management, learner participation, and the provision of diverse and varied activities in the programme. At community level the strategies involve formation of partnerships between the school and the community. Also, the partnerships between the school and local business people proved to be useful strategies.*

*In short, this study revealed that consultation, equal participation, communication, collaboration, positive relationships, and partnerships amongst all relevant stakeholders at different levels help in enhancing SEP for sustainable learning at a rural high school.*

**KEYWORDS:** school enrichment programme, sustainable learning, rural, high school, afterschool programmes, enhancing

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTORY BACKGROUND

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The terms 'learning support' (Bojuwoye, Moletsane, Stoffile, Moolla & Sylvester, 2014); extracurricular classes (Byun, Schofer & Kim, 2012); 'supplementary tuition' (Mogari, Coetzee and Maritz, 2009); and 'school intervention strategies' (Department of Education (DoE), 2012) are used interchangeably in the literature. This study refers to such as 'school enrichment programme' (SEP) and further distinguishes between private supplementary tuition and supplementary or extra tuition. While the former is often carried out for financial gain by tutor(s), the latter is provided freely at schools and is aimed at helping learners with curriculum-related activities (Ireson & Rushforth, 2011:2). This study therefore focuses on the latter. Mogari *et al.* (2009:36) and Aurine and Davis (2013) define supplementary tuition as "...extra tuition given to learners outside the normal school time which can be in the form of private tuition, vacation school and problem-solving classes." On the one hand, Bojuwoye *et al.* (2014:2) conceptualise SEP as "...education support services directed to learners" and the Western Cape DoE (2012: 1 of 10) defines SEP as "... school programmes, both curricular and extracurricular, that are not used for assessment and, or promotion purposes for the learner."

High schools around the world employ this programme for various reasons. Firstly, SEP is used as a means to cope with curriculum overload, a lack of financial resources, and educational corruption that teachers often experience (Brehm, Silova and Mono, 2012:4; Mogari *et al.*, 2009:38). Secondly, the learner-centred teaching and learning methods require much time (Lithuania, Budiene & Zabulounis, 2006:213; Bray, 2012:361). In the South African context, the implementation of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) underpinned by the principles of Outcome Based Education (OBE) requires teachers to use learner-centred methods. Thirdly,

Mogari *et al.* (2009:37) note that the shortage of qualified teachers is another contributory factor for a country to employ SEP. This is particularly true in South Africa where many teachers teach without the appropriate teaching qualifications (Pandor, 2005).

The success of SEP internationally is well documented. Mogari *et al.* (2009:37) argue that studies by Posner and Vandell in 1999 and MacBeath, Kirwan and Meyers in 2001 found that SEP in Great Britain benefited learners from disadvantaged backgrounds. Similarly, Hof (2014:2) states that a study by De Paola and Scoppa in 2014 using regression-discontinuity design, reported an improvement in academic performance among Italian learners. In another study seeking to investigate the effectiveness of educational management organisations (EMOs) in the United States of America (USA), Toson (2011:664) found a significant increase in the academic performance of learners.

In South Africa, high school learners still do not perform consistently throughout the period of high school education. In 2008 the pass rate was 62.5% (Moloi, Dzvimbo, Potgieter, Wolhuter & van der Walt, 2010:475). In the same year, the *Mail & Guardian* (2008) reported that 50% of grade 12 learners in the Eastern Cape failed in the final examinations. Brown (2011:2) adds that 28.7 % of grade 12 learners in the Free State failed the final examinations between 2007 and 2009. Furthermore, in 2011 only 24.3% of learners exiting the education system qualified for university entrance (*Mail & Guardian*, 2012). In addition, less than a third of 562,112 full-time learners who wrote the National Senior Certificate examinations in 2013 qualified to study towards a bachelor's qualification at university (*Citizen*, 2014).

Despite having implemented SEP in 2012 the high school under study has seen limited improvement in learner academic performance and the sustainability thereof. Many studies on the SEP have been longitudinal in the USA and other countries while there are a limited number of studies on SEP carried out in South Africa (Taylor, Shindler, du Toit, & Mosselson, 2010; Bradley, 2012). While some of them focused on the

successes and the extent of a school enrichment programme (Mogari *et al.*, 2009; Byun *et al.*, 2012; Toson 2011), other scientific studies have focused on how this programme can be enhanced (Moloi *et al.*, 2010; Prinsloo, 2008; AA, 2014).

Different from these studies, this one follows the Participatory Action Research (PAR) methodology and design and uses critical emancipatory research (CER) as the theoretical framework to ensure partnership and equal participation of parents, teachers, learners and other officials in the Department of Basic Education (DoBE) in finding ways to enhance SEP. This meaningful participation is further enhanced by the use of Free Attitude Interviews (FAIs) and workshops (discussion sessions). These are helpful in assisting us to engage in meaningful conversations and collaborative activities necessary for developing these strategies needed for the enhancement of SEP for sustainable learning at a rural high school.

### **1.1. RESEARCH QUESTION AND AIMS**

On the basis of the foregoing background and arguments, the question central to this study was:

*How can we enhance SEP for sustainable learning at a rural high school?*

The study was guided by the following objectives to realise this central aim:

1. To justify the need for enhancing SEP for sustainable learning at a rural high school.
2. To identify and discuss the components and aspects necessary for the enhancement of SEP for sustainable learning at a rural high school.
3. To determine the conditions for the enhancement of SEP for sustainable learning at a rural high school.
4. To identify the barriers against the enhancement of SEP for sustainable learning at a rural high school.

5.To recommend strategies for enhancing SEP for sustainable learning at a rural high school.

## **1.2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The guiding theoretical framework of critical emancipatory research (CER) is founded on Adorno, Habermas and the Frankfurt School in 1924 (Higgs, Trede, Loftus, Ajjawi, Smith & Paterson, 2006:68;Mahlomaholo, 2009:225), one of the objectives of which is to empower the powerless and give voice to the voiceless in the midst of their marginalisation and poor conditions (Nkoane & Mahlomaholo, 2002:73). Owing to its emancipatory nature, CER focuses on the role of the researcher, as well as the relationship between the researcher and the researched. Nkoane and Mahlomaholo (2002:73) state that CER is more about the liberation of both the researcher and the researched,with the former not superior but everyone equal to the latter, having the sole purpose of emancipating the entire community (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2013:37). The researcher does not treat the researched as mere objects on which to conduct research but as equal and meaningful co-researchers whose participation is for the benefit and emancipation of the whole community.

At the school in which I work learners are excluded from the process of designing and implementing SEP so the design and implementation of the programme is based on the assumptions of the educator rather than the needs of the learners, who are often marginalised as they are not included in decision-making processes. Employing CER in this study helped to eliminate this one-sided and authoritative way of viewing and addressing issues. The dialogical methods of collecting data used in CER (Chilisa, 2012:253) enabled participants to express views through dialogue. In addition, CER encouraged the researcher and participants to work together to address the objectives of the study, as opposed to my assuming and imposing my views on them. Moreover, as explained above, there exists a power struggle between principals, teachers,

parents and learners regarding the design and implementation of SEP. In this case, employing CER not only created a space for discussion but also empowered the marginalised learners by giving them space to contribute to their own emancipation.

### **1.3. DEFINITION OF OPERATIONAL CONCEPTS**

Below are definitions of operational concepts central to this study, defined in a way they are used and understood in this study. This eliminates confusion and misinterpretations that might result from the use of these concepts in this study. It should, however, be noted that in this chapter only a limited definition of each concept is given because more detailed definitions are addressed in Chapter Two.

#### **1.3.1. School Enrichment Programme (SEP)**

For the purpose of this study, 'SEP' refers to the tuition given to learners after school under supervision by competent adults in a safe environment.

#### **1.3.2. Enhancing**

In the context of this study, 'enhancing' refers to improving (Mathobela, 2015:51; Juengst in Savulescu, 2006:322) the effectiveness of SEP in order to ensure sustainable learning.

#### **1.3.3. Rural**

This concept of 'rural' is used and understood in this study to be referring to a large area occupied by a low population whose lives depend on agriculture and natural resources and characterised by the poor conditions of roads, limited access to Information Communications Technologies (ICTs), and limited or lack of services such as clean water, electricity, sanitation, health and educational facilities (Hlalele, 2013:563).

### **1.4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN**

This study is anchored by Participatory Action Research (PAR) as the methodology and design, which advocates transformation and



emancipation of marginalised people. Moreover, it guards against the exploitation and disrespect (Smith *et al.* 2006:855) of the researched in the research process. As an approach it relies on the collaborative and mutual relationships as well as the inclusion of all the participants in the research process (Blake, 2006:412; Smith *et al.*, 2006:854; Tsotetsi, 2013:143; Moleko, 2014; Ungar *et al.*, 2015:5). This is triggered by PAR's commitment to ensuring social justice, collective action and social change (Loughram & McCann, 2015:709). In addition to advocating both meaningful participation and emancipation of marginalised communities, PAR recognises the strengths of both individuals and community members in effecting social change and growth (Tsotetsi, 2013:143).

PAR recognises the experiences that participants bring to the research process and how these shape the outcomes of this process. It is the duty of the researchers, according to Glassman and Erdem (2014:212), to participate in these experiences or include in their study participants who have lived and undergone these experiences. In this study, the workshops (meetings) were held at the same school, situated in the same area in which most participants resided. In addition, during these workshops the participants spoke about the issues which they had experienced within their own contexts. By creating for them a platform to speak openly about their experiences, both the participants and researcher were able to share perspectives on the issue at hand. Not only did this solidify our relationship but it also allowed us to create new knowledge based on multiple perspectives (Mahlomaholo, 2009:225).

In most cases, in my view, marginalised rural people are not always listened to or taken seriously, however, the use of workshops and meetings guided by FAIs allowed such people to be heard and their contributions valued. In addition, the use of prompts guided by FAIs allowed for flexibility and maximum participation, therefore, creating a group in which their opinions were valued concurs with the idea of empowering the participants as collaborators and co-researchers. The participants were both male and female Africans from one rural high

school, a total of ten from this school who volunteered. This group comprised one learning facilitator (LF), two heads of department (HoDs), two educators, three school learners and two members of the School Governing Body (SGB), all from a rural high school.

For the purpose of preserving the participants' anonymity, they were referred to as 'LF ZM' for Learning Facilitator, 'LEARNER A (QN)', 'LEARNER B(PT)' and 'LEARNER C (JP)' for learners, respectively. For teachers, the following pseudonyms were used: 'TEACHER A (TKM)'; and 'TEACHER B (VB)' respectively. The pseudonyms 'HoD (VM)' and 'HoD (JP)' were used to refer to the respective HoDs while the parents who participated in the study were referred to as 'PARENT A (GM)' and 'PARENT B (MF)'. In addition, these workshops were conducted in the area in which participants were able to express their views and thoughts freely and confidentially.

## **1.5. DATA ANALYSIS**

All the participants' responses were recorded on an audio-tape device to ensure that they could be transcribed verbatim. It was necessary for me to categorise the responses, look at the patterns of the responses and identify and describe the themes prevailing. According to Mathobela (2015:24), following this process assists in enhancing the researcher's understanding of the meanings from the participants' perspectives. This study adopted Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a tool for understanding, analysing and interpreting the participants' perspectives, defined as "...the study of speech beyond sentences..." (Avdi & Georgaca, 2007:158). Alternatively, CDA has been defined as both theory and methodology, tasked with analysing the politically, political-economic and socially inclined discourse (Fairclough, 2013:178). In addition, Rogers *et al.* (2005:370) define it as a scientific paradigm centred on the intention to address social problems.

Fairclough has developed a three-tiered framework in which analysis is performed on three different levels: interpretive, descriptive and

explanatory. The first level involves the analysis of both written and spoken text; the second analysis of text as discursive practice, with focus on language structures and the production, consumption and interpretation of texts by the participants; the third level with the focus on discourses as a social practice (Myende, 2014:92), emphasising how knowledge is perceived by those who receive it. Such explanations are aimed at critiquing, reflecting and understanding how social structures are designed and transformed the way they are (Rogers *et al.*, 2005:369-371).

It is important to note the appropriateness of both CER and CDA in this study, both being emancipatory and exploratory in nature (Avdi & Georgaca, 2007:171; Liasidou, 2008:496; Paulus & Lester, 2015:4). Participants challenged the discourses which portray rural people as powerless and voiceless to change their social situations. In addition, both CER and CDA challenge such discourses and seek to destabilise these polarised discourses (Liasidou, 2008:483). Creating the spaces for discussions between researcher and the rural participants empowered them to solve their problems and led to a realisation of how dominance is maintained by those in the positions of power.

## **1.6. AN OVERVIEW PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS ON ENHANCING SEP FOR SUSTAINABLE LEARNING AT A RURAL HIGH SCHOOL**

In the presentation and discussion of data, the five objectives anchoring this study are used as organising principles in order to systematise the discussion.

### **1.6.1. Challenges justifying the need for the enhancement of SEP**

In this section discussion centres on the challenges identified by the co-researchers rather than those found in literature presented in Chapter Five. The challenges were identified as follows: lack of diversity in the activities offered in the programme; ambivalent roles of parents and

lack of their involvement in the programme; negative attitudes of learners towards the programme; the rural location of the school; and poor quality of leadership and management in the programme.

### **1.6.2. Components and aspects necessary for the enhancement of SEP**

The discussions between researcher and co-researchers revealed the following components as necessary when enhancing SEP: improvement of the teaching and learning environment; provision of well-organised and diverse content in the programme; formation of an effective supervisory team; establishment of staff-preparedness and intentional programming; and formation of strong partnerships with all stakeholders.

### **1.6.3. Conditions necessary for the enhancement of SEP**

The conditions that contributed to making the enhancement of SEP were as follows: the allocation of two empty classrooms proved useful as it was far away from the noise and other disturbances in the school; partnership between the school and the community contributed to making the environment suitable for teaching and learning possible; the allocation of supervisory roles to the two HoDs played a significant part in creating a suitable environment for teaching and learning; the drawing up of the attendance register meant both teachers and learners contributed to the provision of well-organised and diverse activities; the co-researchers indicated the use of technology in the programme would contribute to the provision of diverse activities; the use of various teaching methods by teachers contributed to the provision of diverse activities; the parents' willingness to volunteer in the programme to ensure safety of the learners played a significant role; the development of the programme's vision and mission, motivation of all staff members, and forming strong partnerships between the school and the business people in the community was of help.

#### **1.6.4. Plausible barriers to the enhancement of SEP**

The following were identified by the co-researchers as possible threats to the successful enhancement of SEP: Learners' lack of motivation to attend the programme; lack of funding; the unavailability of a coordinated plan; lack of consultation with learners; strategic exclusion of other HoDs; and conflict between teachers and HoDs.

##### ***1.6.4.1. Strategies used in circumventing the above barriers***

Strategies for circumventing these barriers were identified by the participants as follows: Inclusive participation in the formation of a coordinated plan; holding motivation sessions for both staff members and learners; offering varied activities in the programme; fostering strong partnerships between local businesses and the school; engaging learners when designing a suitably tailored time-table; and enhancing positive relationships between the SMT members, principal and teachers.

#### **1.7. PROPOSED STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING SEP FOR SUSTAINABLE LEARNING AT A RURAL HIGH SCHOOL**

This section addresses the main aim of this study, that is, to propose strategies for enhancing SEP for sustainable learning at a rural high school. These strategies could be divided into both school and community levels. At school level, they include effective leadership and management, learner participation, and the provision of diverse and varied activities in the programme. At community level the strategies involve formation of partnerships between the school and the community. Also, the partnerships between the school and local business people proved to be useful strategies.

In short, this study revealed that consultation, equal participation, communication, collaboration, positive relationships, and partnerships amongst all relevant stakeholders at different levels help in enhancing SEP for sustainable learning at a rural high school.

### **1.8. VALUE OF THE STUDY**

The findings of this study are intended to contribute to the current and further research data on SEP, achieved by suggesting ways in which SEP can be enhanced to ensure sustainable learning at a rural high school. The findings, it is assumed, will benefit schools, teachers and learners in illustrating ways to enhance SEP effectively for ensuring sustainable learning.

### **1.9. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

As the study was undertaken in rural area a number of challenges arose. It was difficult to have all the co-researchers present in all sessions and in one instance the LF only managed to attend one session because of work commitments and the remoteness of the area. In other instances it was difficult to have teacher co-researchers adhering to the scheduled dates and finding times to attend the session. They cited work commitments and lack of reliable transport, so rescheduling was the only option at my disposal in this case. Lastly, the principal, the deputy and CM could not participate in the project due to ill-health and other work related issues.

Although this study was undertaken at a rural high school, the findings do not represent those of all rural high schools. The qualitative nature as well as limited number of participants makes it impossible to generalise the findings. However, these findings are only applicable to the rural high schools sharing similar challenges and conditions with the rural high school under this study.

### **1.10. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Ethical considerations in research involve considering what is proper or improper and right or wrong conduct when undertaking a research project (Sherman & Webb, 1998; MacMillan & Schumacher, 2001). To ensure proper conduct I wrote a letter to the Department of Education (DoE) seeking permission to conduct this study. I also designed an informed consent form (translated into Sesotho and IsiZulu) explaining

the aims, methodology and the dissemination of data and handed it the prospective participants or their guardians for completion. It was in that document that their rights to participate in the study voluntarily or to withdraw at any time were highlighted. In addition, in order to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants and the school, pseudonyms were used.

### **1.11. SYNOPSIS OF THE STUDY OUTLINE**

Chapter One has served as an introductory chapter to this study with focus on brief conceptualisation of SEP, preliminary literature review, problem statement, aims, research methodology and design, value and limitations, and ethical considerations.

Chapter Two begins with discussion on the three theoretical frameworks that would have possibly anchored this study. In this regard, it provides justification for using only one of these theoretical frameworks. This discussion is followed by clarification of operational concepts used. Finally, it focuses on reviewing literature, both international and national, related to SEP and in alignment with the objectives of this study.

The focus of Chapter Three is on research methodology and design, data generation methods and units of data analysis.

Chapter Four consists of a presentation, analysis and interpretation of data related to SEP.

Chapter Five presents the findings, aspects of further research and the conclusions on the enhancement of SEP for sustainable learning at a rural high school.

Chapter Six discusses the proposed strategies for enhancing SEP for sustainable learning at a rural high school.

### **1.12. CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter has served as an introduction to the topic of the study, notably ways to enhance SEP for sustainable learning at a rural high

school.

The next chapter discusses the literature review on enhancing SEP for sustainable learning at a rural high school.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE ON ENHANCING A SCHOOL ENRICHMENT PROGRAMME FOR SUSTAINABLE LEARNING AT A RURAL HIGH SCHOOL**

#### **2.1. INTRODUCTION**

The central aim of this study is to make recommendations on how a school enrichment programme can be enhanced for sustainable learning at a rural high school. To realise this aim, this chapter focuses on critical emancipatory research (CER) as a theoretical framework informing the current study. In this regard, attention is paid to the historical origins of CER, after which the focus shifts to the literature on SEP. The arguments for employing CER are made in conjunction with the discussions on how it fits with the objectives of the study.

#### **2.2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS**

This sub-section discusses the three theoretical frameworks appearing in this study, namely positivism, phenomenology and CER. The discussion begins with the origins, objectives, nature of reality, relationship between the researcher(s) and the participants/ co-researchers, and the role of the researcher(s) according to each of these theoretical frameworks. This sub-section concludes with discussion on the suitability of CER as the theoretical framework couching this study over positivism and phenomenology.

##### **2.2.1. Positivism as a theoretical framework**

Positivism has a number of characteristics, detailed in this section.

##### **➤ The origins of positivism**

The development of positivism could be traced back to the works of philosophers such as Auguste Comte, Locke, Hume and Bacon

(Tsotetsi, 2013:26). The genesis came as a result of the inquisitive minds of these philosophers about the nature of scientific truth (Moleko, 2014:14; Mathobela, 2015:38). As a result of advocating the tradition of empiricism, they viewed scientific knowledge as only attainable and able to be interpreted through empirical methods (Campbell, 2002:20), which would be useful in obtaining, explaining and verifying the two bases of scientific knowledge: logic and experience.

#### ➤ **Objectives of positivism**

Positivism works on the premise that central to the nature of scientific knowledge lies logic and experience. With its firm belief in scientific knowledge being based on the existence of verifiable physical phenomena it rejects non-empirical philosophical views and beliefs (Tsotetsi, 2013:26). Using methods of explaining scientific truth and knowledge, the proponents of positivism disregard abstract attempts to explain the world. To a positivist proponent, any statement that cannot be verified or refuted through observation or other empirical methods is not acceptable and is untrue (Tsotetsi, 2013; Moleko, 2014; Mathobela, 2015). For example, the biblical statement, “*God created the heavens and the earth*” is rejected by positivists as it cannot be verified or refuted through empirical methods. However, the statement making references to the “*Big Bang*” in explaining the creation of the universe is more acceptable to proponents of this theoretical framework.

#### ➤ **Nature of reality**

According to positivism there is a single view of reality and knowledge that refutes the idea of the existence and use of multiple perspectives of viewing and explaining the nature of reality. This positivist ‘one-reality within probability’ view was used by Comte and his proponents to study and interpret society, social structures and human affairs. This view encouraged reality to be obtained by the researcher through empirical data and objective means (Tsotetsi, 2013:28). Once such a reality has been obtained the positivist researcher would have the sole responsibility to interpret it through scientific means. To this researcher,

what Chilisa (2012:253) refers to as 'dialogical' methods of data collection or generation would not be considered genuine in the construction of reality or scientific knowledge. Instead, this positivist researcher would rely solely on the use of questionnaires to collect objective evidence as data (Higgs, 1995:5; Weber, 2004: vii, as cited in Tsotetsi, 2013:27). Mathobela (2015:38) warns that the use of these strictly empirical methods may lead to a situation in which other social issues are neglected.

➤ **The relationship between the researcher and the participants**

Within the positivist approach the participants' roles are limited to providing the researcher with the necessary evidence and data. While using the participants as mere subjects this approach privileges the researcher to collect data, analyse it and make recommendations (Mertens, 2010:15). In this case, the participants were subjects to whom or about whom the research was conducted by the positivist researcher, rather than the people with whom the research was undertaken. These participants were tasked with giving information to the researcher to negate or refute the phenomena under study (Mathobela, 2015:40). This author points to the limited nature of reality and scientific knowledge produced from this perspective as it alienates the meaningful and multiple realities to which participants are exposed or have experienced.

➤ **The role of the researcher**

According to Tsotetsi (2013:26), using positivism places the researcher in a powerful position over the participants and the research process itself. Alternatively, by assuming central authority in the research process a positivist has the power to direct the research process. This relies heavily on neutrality, objectivity and ability to collect and use statistical and empirical data, which must be quantifiable and measurable through scientific means. While assuming the position of neutrality, the positivist researcher is further tasked with producing and interpreting a replica of the known reality. Ensuring this neutrality, he or

she must be detached from the objects or subjects used in the process. In this case, the positivist researcher depends largely on deductive reasoning that is informed by logical or theoretical underpinnings and observations (Mathobela, 2015:39).

### **2.2.2. Phenomenology as a theoretical framework**

The characteristics of phenomenology are outline in this section.

#### **➤ Origins of Phenomenology**

Owing its origins to the works of Edmund Hasserl, phenomenology is based on a premise that the real world exists and people's experiences are real. In this case it accepts the roles that such experiences derived from the world can play in developing scientific knowledge. Without discarding the use of empirical methods and empirical accounts wholesale, phenomenology advocates the inclusion of information derived from human experiences in the scientific studies and the use of phenomenological methods and accounts in creating knowledge (Mathobela, 2015:41).

#### **➤ Objectives of phenomenology**

Contrary to positivism's rejection of philosophical beliefs and accounts in favour of the use of empirical methods in developing scientific knowledge (Baum, McDougall & Smith, 2006:854; Houh & Kalsem, 2015:263), phenomenology rests on a premise that appreciates the description and analysis of people's lived experiences (Mathobela, 2015:41). Moreover, without discarding the importance of commitment to 'truth' and 'facts' when describing phenomena, this theoretical framework takes into account the assumptions derived from people's lived experiences. The consideration of such assumptions further contributes to the understanding of indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) and the role such systems play in developing scientific knowledge.

### ➤ **Nature of reality**

While positivism argues for the 'one-reality within probability', phenomenology's view of reality is informed by the experiences immediate to the researcher. While positivism 'absolutises' truth derived from data collected by the neutral researcher, phenomenology regards such data as insufficient if not coupled with immediate experiences and realities. From a phenomenological perspective the collected data from the participants is not the end-product of reality but rather the first step in finding, building and understanding knowledge (Mathobela, 2015:42).

Responsibility for analysing and interpreting the lived experiences of the participants, however, lies solely with the researcher (Starks & Trinidad, in Mathobela, 2015:42). As is the case with positivism, this theoretical framework limits the roles of participants to that of providing information to the researcher without interacting with it. It further ignores the "*nothing about us without us*" principle, which is highly regarded by PAR proponents.

### ➤ **The relationship between the researcher and the participants**

Both positivism and phenomenology fail to place the researcher on an equal level with the participants. For phenomenology, the researcher's interaction with the participants is limited to question and answer sessions as the researcher poses questions to the participants about their experiences of the phenomenon under investigation. The intention is to elicit responses that explain what phenomenon they have experienced and how (Mathobela, 2015:42). Armed with the responses from the individual participants the researcher is tasked with the description of these lived experiences *for* the participants rather than *with* them.

### ➤ **The role of the researcher**

Given the limited roles of the participants in the phenomenological study, this theoretical framework also places the researcher at the centre of knowledge creation. The participants' lived experiences of the

phenomenon are transformed by the researcher into textual data (Mathobela, 2015:42) with which they are not allowed to interact. The sole responsibility of the description of these experiences lies with the researcher as the only person who possesses power to create knowledge for the participants.

The discussions above highlight both positivism and phenomenology as unsuitable for this study, considering the emancipatory and participatory nature and intentions. As a result, I decided to use the critical emancipatory research (CER) as the theoretical framework to couch this study.

### **2.2.3. CER as a theoretical framework**

In addition to discussing the origins, objectives, nature of reality, the relationship between the researcher and the participants, as well as the roles of the researcher, this sub-section focuses on justifications for using CER as the lens couching this study as opposed to positivism or phenomenology.

#### **➤ Origins of CER**

The roots of CER can be traced to the works of Marx, Habermas, Freire, and the Frankfurt school (Nkoane, 2012:100; Mahlomaholo, 2009:225). According to Boog (2003:427), this theoretical framework owes its development to the emergence of social, political and religious groups during the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries, influenced by Marx's ideas and analysis of socio-economic conditions and class structure, as well as by Habermas' conceptualisation of emancipatory knowledge and Freire's transformative and emancipatory pedagogy (Nkoane, 2012:100; Boog, 2012:430). In addition, Tsotetsi (2013:25) states that CER aimed at dealing with the inhumane conditions and aspects of social realities not considered by Marx or his orthodox followers.

The changes in the interpretation and formation of scientific knowledge played a significant role in the development of CER. Initially, it was both

epistemologically and ontologically interpreted through positivism, which in turn was heavily influenced by the empiricism tradition. Following the development of positivism detail above, the emergence of critical theory in 1968 came as a counter to the positivist view of the scientific knowledge, associated with the works of Habermas, Horkheimer and Adorno (Tsotetsi, 2013:26; Boog, 2003:430). Contrary to the positivist single-sided view of reality it called for a multiple interpretation of reality (Mahlomaholo, 2009:34) and the emancipation of all societies. Whilst in the positivist perspective the researcher assumes an authoritative position over the researched, critical theory places both the researcher and the researched in an equal position.

The critical theory researcher and the researched interactively play an emancipatory role during the research process. One of critical theory's objectives includes emancipation, freedom, transformation of societies and individuals through human action (Tsotetsi, 2013: 25; McGregor, 2003). Intertwined in this theory, CER is based on the emancipatory perspective of critical theory and empowers the marginalised groups in the society to participate in the discussions concerning their development and empowerment.

### ➤ **Objectives of CER**

CER is based on a premise that encourages emancipation of the marginalised and the oppressed (Mathobela, 2015:45) in the creation of scientific knowledge. Contrary to merely documenting and describing people's lived experiences of marginalisation and oppression, it further seeks to unpack the root causes leading to such marginalisation. Not only does it seek to find problems of the marginalised but it also suggests necessary solutions to change their situation (Hlalele, 2014:104; Dold & Chapman, 2011:512). By taking such a bold step, CER uses information shared by the participants to assist in addressing these social problems. In addition to unpacking the causes of marginalisation and oppression, CER-anchored research inquires about the extent and the roles of power and inequality in the perpetuation of

the oppressive conditions (Myende, 2014:13). The central aim is to remedy the situation through the creation of harmonious relations and cooperation. While maintaining its critical view of the situation at hand, CER also calls for the use of dialogical methods in an attempt to achieve the agenda of emancipation.

The engaging nature of the philosophy and approach by CER towards the participants resonated with the aim of this study to recommend strategies for enhancing SEP for sustainability at a rural high school. In this regard, these strategies were the end-product of the equal participation and mutual respect, as well as meaningful dialogues between researcher and the co-researchers.

### ➤ **Nature of reality**

The socially accommodative and engaging nature of CER opens it to the existence of multiple realities and perspectives, meanings and solutions about the issue at hand. This is enhanced by the collaborative work (Mathobela, 2015:46) and dialogical methods (Chilisa, 2012:253) used in the studies anchored by this theoretical framework. Rather than the researcher being the sole creator of knowledge, different people from different influences and realities contribute equally to the creation of this knowledge and use it to address their challenges. Based on this multiplicity of perspectives and realities informed by the individual and collective experiences of participants, CER succeeds in refuting the idea of the existence of one reality within probability. It further succeeds in challenging the idea of the possibility of absolute truth advocated by positivists.

Given the use of dialogical methods and collaborative teamwork in this study, CER resonates well with these methods of creating knowledge. The aim of these collaborative and dialogical interactions among the co-researchers in this study is to address the question: *“How can SEP be enhanced for sustainable learning at a rural high school?”* While the nature of this question points to the existing problem it further calls for multiple perspectives on and insights into finding ways to address the



problem of an ineffective SEP.

➤ **The relationship between the researcher and the participants**

CER refutes the '*helper* and *helpee*' relationship between the researcher and the participants in which the former is seen to be bringing solutions (help) to the problem-ridden (helpee) communities. Instead, the equal status of both the researcher and the participants (called co-researchers) when addressing the commonly shared problems inevitably leads to an egalitarian relationship between them.

Hlalele (2013:562) argues that CER encourages a move from placing power on the researcher towards collective ownership of the research process and the findings. Not only do the participants feel included in the research process but they also feel they have contributed to their own emancipation in particular and that of their communities in general. Consequently, the agenda of peace, social justice, freedom, hope and equity are all realised. For example, the harmonious relationship between the researcher and the participants is made possible by the existence of peace between them and it ensures equity. In addition, the researcher's contribution to finding solutions to the challenges experienced by the communities is an example of social justice and giving hope to marginalised people about the existence of possible solutions.

➤ **The role of the researcher**

The role of the researcher in CER-anchored research is to advance the principle of "*nothing about us, without us*" that is disavowed by the positivist and phenomenological researchers. In this regard, the role of this researcher is to ensure active involvement and participation of the people affected by oppressive conditions seeking to eliminate these power imbalances. In addition to engaging the participants in the study the researcher has to ensure the creation of an interactive and collaborative platform built on mutual respect, trust and equity (Campanella, 2009, in Mathobela, 2015:47) in which the participants' voices would be heard and considered.

Lastly, as opposed to the description and reduction of human experiences or the use of deductive reasoning to negate or accept them as collected from the participants, the researcher who uses CER has the role of understanding and decoding the interpretations of the participants (Mahlomaholo & Nkoane, 2002:2). This allows for the use of more diverse ways of looking at the problem, analysing it, interpreting and finding suitable remedies (Moleko, 2014:20; Mathobela, 2015:48).

#### **2.2.4. Reflection on the use of CER instead of Positivism or Phenomenology**

The focus of this sub-section is to justify the choice of CER for this study over other theoretical frameworks such as positivism and phenomenology. Using either to anchor this study would be problematic as they place the researcher at the centre of the research process. In this case, using either would leave me as the only one who justifies the need for the enhancement of SEP. I would be the 'expert' who identifies the challenges that the participants are facing, considered legitimate by me but not by the participants. This not only undermines the roles of the participants in identifying the problems within SEP but also limits their interaction with the research process.

By its nature, design and data generation methods, this study was participatory in addition to being qualitative. Asking the participants questions about their experiences of SEP then making descriptions of them reliant on my own expertise and perspective would not only be non-participatory, but it would also be against emancipation of the marginalised learners. The use of these theoretical frameworks would undermine the agenda of emancipation and empowerment that is central to the study.

The use of CER resonates with my idea of equality and equal participation in the research process because I believe that engaging the people who are affected by a problematic situation is the best way of understanding the problem itself, in addition to obtaining different perspectives. Consequently, in demonstrating and justifying the need

for the enhancement of SEP, CER enabled me to work with the participants as co-researchers to find solutions *with* them rather than *for* them, as would have been the case in positivism and phenomenology. According to Mahlomaholo (2009:34), CER requires a space to be created in which multiple perspectives are considered. Instead of handing out questionnaires or treating the participants as subjects in a science laboratory I engaged in deeper and meaningful discussions with them. The need for the enhancement of SEP was therefore a collective establishment and, as Tsotetsi (2013:27) notes, it is important to consider people's feelings and attitudes in CER. Not only did I use CER to work with the participants I also succeeded in creating and allowing different views from all partners in this regard. Finally, CER advocates the empowerment and emancipation of the marginalised through discursive means. Chilisa (2012:253) states that the dialogical methods used in CER afford the participants the freedom to express their thoughts and feelings through dialogue.

In addition to placing me at the centre of the research process, the use of either positivism or phenomenology to couch this study would make me assume the conditions in which SEP could be enhanced on behalf of the participants. I would use sampling techniques and other results obtained through statistical, logical and empirical methods to determine the conditions necessary for the optimal functionality of SEP. This discourages the interactive relationships between me and the co-researchers. Unlike positivism and phenomenology's insistence on the neutrality of the researcher in the research process, which results in absent interaction and cooperation, using CER encouraged me to regard the participants as co-researchers, treat them with respect and afford them the opportunity to express their feelings and thoughts (Dold & Chapman, 2011:512), rather than merely using them as research objects. They were afforded the dignity and power to reflect on their situations. Such a principle of CER concurs with the dialogical methods used in this study. To ensure this mutual interaction, the co-researchers and I worked together in determining the conditions which would be

suitable for the enhancement SEP. I did not impose my opinions of what I might have deemed necessary conditions for this programme to be enhanced as would have otherwise been the case in the use of positivism or phenomenology.

According to both positivism and phenomenology, one single view of reality and knowledge exists, implying that this reality should be obtained by the researcher through empirical data and objective means (Tsotetsi, 2013:28). Once such a reality has been obtained I would have the sole responsibility of interpreting it by scientific means. While assuming the position of neutrality I would be tasked with producing and interpreting the replica of the known reality, so undermining the attempt by this study of finding many ways of enhancing SEP.

Conversely, CER acknowledges the existence of multiple realities, the construction of which would be realised by both researcher and the co-researchers from different viewpoints. Using CER enabled me to work with them to identify barriers to the success of SEP and strategies to circumvent them rather than imposing my own considered views. Instead of this reality and knowledge benefiting only me, in CER this knowledge would be beneficial to us all. In this case, we were tasked with interpreting the mutually discovered knowledge with the aim of emancipating the latter. In addition to interpreting this knowledge, CER enabled me to have the responsibility of interpreting other people's (the co-researchers) interpretations and explorations of a school enrichment programme (Mahlomaholo, 2009:225). This would not have been possible if either positivism or phenomenology had been used because understanding the deeper meaning of people's experiences and interpretations is not appreciated by either positivists or phenomenologists.

Lastly, the choice of one of these two traditional theoretical frameworks would thwart the ownership of the research project by the participants. Within the positivist approach the participants' roles would be limited to providing the researcher with necessary data and so privilege only me

in collecting and analysing it, and making recommendations. This would deny the participants an opportunity to make suggestions (Tsotetsi, 2013:29).

With CER anchoring this study the participants could have a sense of ownership over the research process. Hlalele (2013:562) argues that CER encourages a move from placing power on a researcher to a move whereby a collective ownership of the research process and the findings thereof is important. Not only do the participants feel included in the research process but they also feel they have contributed to their own emancipation in particular and that of their communities in general. Furthermore, CER encourages a multi-faceted view of reality (Mahlomaholo, 2009:34), in this regard, working with participants on strategies eliminated this single view of issues. This also stopped me from assuming what may work for the participants and improve their conditions. It is important for the co-researchers to contribute meaningfully to their own emancipation and also to own the means through which they are emancipated. CER is about changing people's lives (Tsotetsi, 2013:29). The strategies recommended by us (the researcher and the co-researchers) contribute to changing the lives of the latter. The participants also felt they had contributed to the change they brought into their lives as opposed to the change imposed on them by someone else, as would have been the case in the use of phenomenology or positivism.

On the basis of the above arguments, I argue that the use of the CER as the theoretical framework framing this study was appropriate.

### **2.3. DEFINITION OF OPERATIONAL CONCEPTS**

This sub-section defines rural, enhancement, SEP, and sustainable learning as operational concepts in this study. Clarifying the operational concepts used in this study is intended to eliminate any misconceptions and misinterpretations a reader may form when reading this work.

### **2.3.1. Enhancement**

According to Mathobela (2015:51) the word ‘enhancement’ refers to the state of improving on the value and quality of something. Similarly, it has been defined as interventions aimed at equipping humans to function beyond what is ordinary (Juengst, in Savulescu, 2006:322). To me, the word ‘enhancement’ means to add to something that already exists and make it function and/or appear better. In the context of this study it refers to improving the effectiveness of SEP in order to ensure sustainable learning.

### **2.3.2. Sustainable learning**

McCluskey, Hofer and Wood (2004:13) argue that ‘learning’ and ‘sustainability’ cannot be separated because one cannot exist without the other. They define sustainability as “...the capacity of a system to engage in the complexities of continuous improvement consistent with deep values of human purpose.” To demonstrate this, Singh and Terry (2008:402) are of the opinion that sustainable learning enables learners to contribute to one’s own learning and that of others.

### **2.3.3. Rural**

In spite of the many studies addressing the concept ‘rural’, literature still fails to provide a universally accepted definition (Barry, Markee, Fowler, and Giewat, 2000; Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005b; Hlalele, 2012; Chigbu, 2013). Attempts have, however, been made, with Miller (1993) as cited in Barter (2008:470) stating that in the United States of America (USA) rural refers to “...any place where residents live in an unincorporated area or town of less than twenty-five thousand people and over thirty miles from an urban centre.” In addition, McSwan *et al.* (1995, cited in Barter, 2008:470) define rural in terms of the four dimensions, namely, size, geographic location, culture and the services to which only urban people have access. Moreover, Ward and Brown (2009, as cited in Chigbu, 2013:813) define rural as “...places of tradition rather than modernity, of agriculture rather than industry, of nature rather than culture, and of changelessness rather than

dynamism". In some instances researchers define a rural area by comparing it to an urban area, so rural is a direct contrast to urban (Barry *et al.*, 2000:95). In this regard, whatever services the urban area has and which the rural area lacks distinguish the two. In other instances, rural is used synonymously with words such as 'poverty' or 'small' by researchers (Hlalele, 2013:563; Chigbu, 2013:813).

In an attempt to interpret this concept, Cloke and Thrift (1994, as cited in Barry *et al.*, 2000:94) provides four phases. The first conceptualises rural as a large area occupied by a low population size whose lives depend on agriculture and natural resources. Based on the heterogeneity of rural areas (Chigbu, 2013:812), the second phase argues that rural should be interpreted in terms of the economic, political and social situations faced by communities in these areas. The third phase avoids labelling other areas as rural and instead seeks to understand the role of society, morality and culture in the construction of 'rurality' as a concept. Lastly, with its emancipatory and dialogical agenda, the fourth phase recognises the role of ordinary people in interpreting rural.

For its purpose, the current study adopts what Hlalele (2013:563) calls key features of rural profile in South Africa. According to this author, adding to low economic status and limited possibilities for furthering one's education is a result of rural South Africa is being characterised by such factors as the poor conditions of roads, limited access to Information Communications Technologies (ICTs), and limited or lack of services such clean water, electricity, sanitation, health and educational facilities.

#### **2.3.4. School Enrichment Programme (SEP)**

The terms 'school enrichment programme', 'extracurricular classes' (Byun *et al.*, 2012) 'supplementary tuition' (Mogari *et al.*, 2009), and 'school intervention strategies' (DoE, 2012) are used interchangeably in literature, and therefore also in the current study. Mogari *et al.* (2009:36) define supplementary tuition as "...extra tuition given to

learners outside the normal school time which can be in the form of private tuition, vacation school and problem-solving classes.” Other authors provide similar interpretations (Bray, 2006; Brehm, *et al.*, 2012; Aruni *et al.*, 2013). One commonality in these definitions is the expanded or extended learning and teaching given to learners after school. For the purpose of this study, SEP refers to the tuition given to learners after school under supervision by competent adults in a safe environment.

## **2.4. RELATED LITERATURE**

Literature related to the topic is reviewed in this section.

### **2.4.1. Literature related to SEP**

SEP has been defined as:

Quality community-driven, expanded learning opportunities that support developmentally appropriate cognitive, social, physical, and emotional outcomes. In addition, these programmes offer a balanced program of academic support, arts and cultural enrichment, recreation, and nutrition. After-school programs can run directly after school, or during evenings, weekends, summer vacations, and holidays (Chung, Gannett and de Kanter La Perla (2000) in Bradley, 2012:7).

In addition, SEP has characterised itself with issues related to opportunity for enrichment and play as well as training and problem solving activities in which learners engage (Puvirajah, Verma & Martin-Hansen, 2014:179). Zhang *et al.* (2006:151) argue that at the centre of SEP are the following objectives:

- Scholastic development
- Social behaviour
- Caring environment and personal inspiration.

These programmes are offered in various settings, including schools,



community centres, parks and recreation facilities, religious institutions (Zhang, 2006:152). In the South African context, they can be categorised as enrichment programmes and placement programmes (Taylor, 2010:10). The former involves extra tuition given to learners at their respective schools during the after school hours, weekends or holidays. In most cases, the learners are taught by their teachers who also teach them during the normal school hours and days. Learners in the latter are taken from their impoverished and ill-equipped schools to the better resourced schools but are often taught by teachers from these schools or the tutors. Additional conceptualisation is given by Bradley (2012) who argues that there are different forms of SEP aimed at addressing issues pertaining to youth development, school-age care and extended programmes or expanded learning programmes.

Given the different definitions and functions of these programmes, Haglund and Anderson (2009:120) notice the transformation in the definition and functions of SEP. According to these authors, SEP was seen as comprising safe environments in which parents who had work commitments left their children to be cared for. This perspective on SEP was then replaced by the view of these programmes as the place in which children can learn and improve their academic performance (Haglund *et al.*, 2009:120). In their current form, SEP is seen as school-based and community-based programmes in which learners engage after school hours and the holidays (Savage, 2013:408).

Currently, there is a debate around the structure of SEP. Some authors argue for it to be structured as the extension of school day, while others hold a view that it should be structured independently and not be mandatory. According to the former school of thought, SEP should be academically, socially and psychologically enriching (Anon, 2006:51). When organised this way, there must be a direct relation between the objectives of the programme and those of the school (Anon, 2006:52). Another argument is that when administered as limited to the extension of school day, teachers in this programme would be able to employ various teaching strategies. This is particularly important for learners

coming from disadvantage backgrounds (Haglund & Anderson, 2009:118) In addition, it has been argued that if structured this way SEP enhances the basic skills in reading and arithmetic as well as broadening the definition of learning (Haglund & Anderson, 2009:118).

Despite these debates there is, however, a consensus that the successful SEP shares the following characteristics:

- It combines academic, recreational, physical and artistic elements in the curriculum to engage learners in a variety of supervised and structured activities (Zhang, 2006:152)
- It has well-prepared staff members
- It forms strong partnerships with other stakeholders (Little *et al.*, 2008:6).

Both international and national literature indicates that participating in SEP results in improved academic performance of learners (Afterschool Alliance, 2014:11; Shenorff & Vandell, 2007:892, WCED, n.d.; Prinsloo, 2008; Bradley, 2012). Moreover, SEP proved effective when used as a means to cope with curriculum overload, lack of financial resources and educational corruption which teachers often experience (Mogari *et al.*, 2009:38; Naidoo & Paideya, 2015). It also plays a role in promoting wellness among children. Little *et al.* (2007:6) note that SEP contributed to improving the self-esteem and self-concepts of learners.

With so many advantages provided by the carefully structured and organised SEP I was curious as to why learners in the school under study were not performing optimally. In some cases, the performance would improve, while in the other cases they performed poorly in their exams across all the grades. In this case, for the past five years the school has not escaped the DoE's scrutiny as a dysfunctional school when it comes to the matric final examinations. This is despite the many days and hours learners and teachers spent engaging in SEP. This study therefore arose from a desire to see how best this programme can be enhanced to ensure both improved academic performance and sustainable learning.

#### **2.4.2 Literature related to the objectives of the study**

This section of the study focuses on reviewing literature that relates to the enhancement of SEP for sustainable learning at a rural high school. In this case, the discussion is aligned with the objectives of this study. The need for SEP is derived from a desire to address the specific needs relating to youth development, school-age childcare, and expanded learning programmes (Chung, Gannett, de Kanter La Perla, 2000). The need to develop social skills gave rise to SEP (Codon, Morrison, Albanese & Macias, 2001:212; Sanger, 2011:36), a programme seen as a response to the psychological and social risks that children often face (Zhang & Byrd, 2005:5; Afterschool Alliance, 2014:4). The participants in SEP reported not only having experienced emotional benefits but also an increase in confidence and social skills (Kornitzer, Ronan & Rifkin, 2005:317). In another study participants reported high levels of intrinsic motivation and positive moods after participating in SEP (Shernoff & Vandell 2007:892). Enhancing SEP for learners in rural areas is important because studies have shown that learners in these areas are at high risk of violent crime, distress and despair. Additionally, they are more likely to develop low self-esteem, behavioural problems and depression (Baker & Witt, 1997:19).

High levels of obesity among school children in the USA initiated SEP, necessary for promoting health and wellness (Little, Wimer & Weiss, 2007:8). The participation of learners in SEP can tackle the problem of obesity among learners (Little *et al.*, 2007:7) and according to Viluan (2005:6), in SEP learners are taught healthy eating habits and participation in sporting activities, which in turn contribute to their wellbeing. With regard to promoting wellness among children, Little *et al.* (2007:6) note that SEP improves the self-esteem and self-concepts of learners. In addition, a study found a positive relationship between the number of activities in which a learner participates and life satisfaction (Gilman, 2004, as cited in Lagace-Seguin & Case, 2008:454).

In addition to promoting health and wellness, the need to provide safety

and supervised environment for children after school gives rise to the need for SEP (Cosden *et al.*, 2001:212; Halpern, 2002:178; State Legislatures, 2009). According to Little *et al.* (2007:1), the families in the USA are faced with challenges which put children at risk, and they found that many children were left unattended as a result of high divorce rate, single-parent families and families with both parents working. Baker and Witt (1996) note that this situation is exacerbated by a mismatch between the parents' work schedules and the school schedules of their children. A study found that when children are not supervised after school they are likely to engage in risky behaviours, such as smoking, drinking, drug abuse and sexual activity (Hobbs & Vinluan, 2005). Another study noted that the "...[u]nsupervised youth are more likely to get car accidents and engage in criminal behaviour between 3 and 6 pm" (State Legislatures, 2006:09).

SEP is seen as a necessary mechanism to increase access to quality education by learners from poor financial backgrounds. In their study Singh *et al.* (2004:301) reported that some homes in rural areas made it difficult for learners to complete their school work effectively at home. The poor conditions in which these learners live are not conducive to learning and many needy ones were excluded by traditional procedures aimed at helping students (Renzulli, 1998:107). In one study, it was found that financially disadvantaged students received fewer opportunities for academic enrichment than their financially advantaged counterparts (Gentry & Miller, 2010; Bray, 2006:515). In both situations it is apparent that the use of SEP is critical in helping improve the academic performance of the learners.

SEP is also used in addressing lack of representation of ethnic minority groups in the sciences and mathematics-related careers (Fraleigh-Lohrfik, Schneider, Wittington & Feinberg, 2013:18). Another study, by Miller and Gentry (2010:600), designed a project aimed at providing enrichment opportunities to the students from cultural minority groups through participation in SEP. The need for these programmes results from their impact on academic performance of learners (Shenorff

&Vandell, 2007:892, WCED, n.d.) and they have a positive impact on the academic performance of learners (Afterschool Alliance, 2014:11). Participants showed improved performance in mathematics over non-participants whilst in his experimental study Shernoff found increased performance in English. (Afterschool Alliance, 2014:11). A study in the USA reported on the increased reading and problem-solving scores of participants in the SEP, and greater likelihood of being promoted to the next grade (Afterschool Alliance, 2014:11). In the study seeking to investigate the effectiveness of educational management organisations (EMOs) in the USA, Toson (2011: 664) found a significant increase in the academic performance of learners who received supplementary tuition offered by these organisations.

Similarly, in countries such as Hong Kong, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Malaysia, India and Cambodia the effect of SEP on academic performance is well recorded (Bray, 2003). Mogari *et al.* (2009:37) note that studies by Posner and Vandell in 1999 and MacBeath, Kirwan and Meyers in 2001 respectively found that SEP in the UK benefited learners from disadvantaged backgrounds. It was found that matriculation rate increased while the chances of completing matric successfully increased among Israeli 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders. Similar findings were reported in various studies (Lagace-Seguin & Case, 2008; Huang, Leon & La Matrundola, 2014).

It should be noted that although there has been an increase in the prevalence of SEP in South Africa in recent years, little research has been conducted on these programmes in this country (Taylor, Shindler, du Toit, & Mosselson, 2010; Bradley, 2012). According to Bradley (2012:11), the prevalence results from an attempt to remedy shortfalls in the delivery of basic education. Mogari *et al.* (2009:38) are of the opinion that SEP is used as a means to cope with curriculum overload, lack of financial resources and educational corruption which teachers often experience.

An observation by Further, Lithuania, Budiene and Zabulounis

(2006:213) was made that learner-centred teaching and learning methods in the classroom require much time. In the South African context, the implementation of a new curriculum underpinned by the principles of the Outcome Based Education (OBE) required teachers to use learner-centred methods of learning and teaching, added to which is the issue of overcrowded and under-resourced classrooms in many rural schools. In this regard, the provision of SEP is necessary because it is difficult for a teacher to teach and make necessary practical demonstrations in an environment which is not conducive for teaching and learning. Providing SEP gives time for meaningful and effective interactions between teachers and their 'at-risk' students after school or at weekends.

In his study, Bradley (2012:9) reports on an observation by Spaul (2012) of higher absenteeism rates of South African teachers compared to those of other African countries such as Namibia, Botswana and Mozambique. While the need for SEP may result from the need to make up for the lost tuition time, Mogari *et al.* (2009: 37) note that the shortage of qualified teachers is another contributory factor necessitating this need. Bradley (2012:14) concurs with this view and adds that the shortage of well-trained and qualified teachers who can effectively teach science-related subjects in schools is another challenge necessitating the use of this intervention programme. This is especially important if South Africa is to be among other competitive nations in terms of science and technology. Additionally, given the low levels of students in the science fields (Bradley, 2012:14) in universities, there is a need for SEP to address this issue.

The current emphasis on academic performance of both grades 9 and 12 learners and the result-oriented approach by the DoE both nationally and provincially has catalysed the provision of SEP in many schools. This has resulted in schools offering this intervention programme after school hours, on weekends and during school holidays (Bradley, 2012:11), with the aim of improving academic performance of learners. In addition, schools attempt to ensure that learners succeed in both the

Annual National Assessments (ANAs) and the national senior certificate (NSC) examinations. The need to improve learner performance in subjects such as Mathematics, Physics and English strengthens the case for SEP in many rural schools.

Finally, Mogari *et al.* (2009: 38) note the high admission requirements set by South African universities with which learners are expected to comply. In this regard, Bradley (2012:9) points to the high dropout rates at universities as a result of students' inability to deal with the academic demands of these institutions, highlighted by Jasen (2012). Collins (1999:62) is of the view that SEP supplements teaching and learning where there is a view that academic skills are lacking. It is clear here that the provision of SEP in schools also stems from the need to prepare learners for the academic demands of tertiary institutions.

### **2.4.3 Components of the solution to the challenges**

The components and aspects necessary for the successful enhancement of SEP are discussed in this subsection. The provision of structured but diverse activities proved to be a necessary component for the successful enhancement of SEP in the USA. This is found to be effective if these activities are aligned with SEP's outcomes and intended goals (Zhang & Byrd, 2005:5). According to Cosden (2004:220), these aligned activities are more likely to lead to higher academic performance. The importance of such alignment also helps both teachers and learners to make sense of the programme and its activities (Sanger, 2007:44). In addition, these activities should be designed to meet the needs of learners. Studies have shown that SEP whose activities were aligned with learners' needs led to high academic performance. Adding to this, studies have shown that the structured activities increase levels of attendance among learners and the learners in these activities are less likely to drop out (Cosden, 2004:222) of high school. Closely linked to the alignment of activities in SEP is that these activities should be varied. Providing participants with diversified types of activities contributes positively to the participants' developmental

gains (Afterschool Alliance, 2014:17). The findings of a longitudinal study of three SEPs indicated increased academic performance and work habits (Afterschool Alliance, 2014:7).

Adding to the plethora of activities from which learners can choose is the need for these activities to be meaningful and relevant to both teachers and learners. In order to ensure this, Sanger (2007:37) states that learners' prior knowledge and their ability to relate it to the knowledge they acquire during the lesson is important. While a lesson is on a specific theme the activities must also be coupled with fun and extracurricular activities. In another study, Little *et al.* (2001:5) found that SEP coupled with fun activities is more likely to yield greater academic performance.

Creating a positive environment conducive to sustainable learning is another component necessary for the enhancement of SEP. In addition to the provision of adequate equipment necessary for learning and teaching, the environment should provide learners with the opportunity to interact and the learning situation address the needs, learning experiences, learning styles and abilities of the diverse learners (Akin, 2008:82; Garcia-Cepero, 2008:298). For optimal functioning of SEP, the learning environment should allow for experimentation with different forms of learning (Anderson, 2009:119). Owing to its emphasis on interaction among learners as well as teacher-learner interaction, cooperative learning is suitable for use in SEP. Not only would cooperative learning increase active participation of the learner (Akinsola, 1994b) but it would also eliminate the traditional teacher-centred methods that persist in schools (Akin, 2008:81). This author further argues that the learning environment should promote peer learning<sup>1</sup> through interaction and cooperation.

Many SEPs in the USA whose objectives are linked to those of their schools' show more success than those which do not. According to Afterschool Alliance (2014:18), the effectiveness of SEP is largely

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<sup>1</sup> Learners learning from each other.



dependent upon the extent to which the programme's goals are linked to the mission and objectives of the school in which the programme is being carried out. For example, participants in a Maths and English-Language-Arts (ELA) showed significant increase in their performance when the staff members were required to plan their work properly and efficiently (Afterschool Alliance, 2014:18).

Increasing the meaningful participation and involvement of parents in SEP contributes to its success (Cid, 2014:362). According to Gang and Chinyoka, (2013:85), parents can recommend strategies necessary for the optimal functioning of SEP, with the power to influence decisions pertaining to its design and implementation. Studies have presented the findings of cases in which such power has been exercised, one reporting that the participants cited a good relationship between the school and parents as a factor that kept the participants motivated (Panday & Li Xu, 2012:830). Singh *et al.* (2004:304) note the findings of a study in which Wells (1996) focused on the link between parental involvement and academic achievement. This study concluded that when parents were involved, learners adopted their parents' ideology of achievement. According to these researchers, parental involvement in schools is important because of its link to the learner achievement. They also noted that learners whose parents were involved in their education performed better and teachers who used parent knowledge which they acquired through interactions with the parents showed improvement in their teaching. Another study found that students who received external academic support<sup>2</sup> showed improvement in social and emotional development (Little *et al.*, 2001:5). Participants in another study felt more strongly that involving parents in SEP contributes positively towards the attainment of the programmes' goals (Baker, 2000:82).

Additionally, a change in the perceptions and attitudes of parents and learners towards the programme contributes to the successful enhancement of SEP. When studying the relationship between parental warmth and child's participation in SEP, Lagace-Seguin and Case

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<sup>2</sup> The support from parents and community in SEP

(2008:454) found that children whose parents had positive attitude and perception about SEP showed more willingness to be involved in the programme. In a similar study, these researchers also noted that parental pressure on children to participate in a variety of activities offered in SEP could help predict their wellbeing as well as academic performance.

In another study it was found that participants who had positive perception and attitudes about SEP also held them towards school and the value of education (Afterschool Alliance, 2014:4). This could not, however, be the case for learners who did not possess such attitudes towards SEP. Participants in the Beacon Centre in the USA were found to have high levels of confidence and motivation to continue with their education (Afterschool Alliance, 2014:7), also demonstrated in their behavioural changes. In a separate study it was reported that a change in the participants' perceptions about SEP led to a change in the way the participants viewed themselves. These participants showed decreased frequency of disruptive behaviour while there was an improvement in the frequency of socially acceptable behaviours (Afterschool Alliance, 2014:8).

Improving programme quality and management proved important for the successful enhancement from staff quality and management. Studies have shown a link between the capabilities of staff members and the performance of learners in SEP (Afterschool Alliance, 2014:18). Quality includes effective management and supervision, well-motivated staff and the multi-faceted nature of SEP (Little *et al.*, 2001:10). Zhang and Byrd (2005:6) report that the studies by Collingwood (1997), Cutford, (1997) and Scarr and Eisenberg, (1993) respectively, have found that SEP of poor quality result in poor language acquisition, lower performance in cognitively-challenging activities and decreased social and emotional adjustment, among other things. Conversely, Zhang and Byrd (2005:6) state that well-organised and good quality SEP is a safe haven for learners and that these programmes retain participants who are in need of them.

Positive relationships between staff members and the learners participating in the programme are important, considering the academic and psychological needs of learners and creating an environment in which learners feel entirely supported and cared for (Afterschool Alliance, 2014:18). In their study, Pierce *et al.* (2010) found that when learners participated in a programme with a positive staff-child relationship they performed better in the reading and maths activities. This was, however, not the case in a programme in which the child-staff relationship was not viewed positively.

In addition to the positive staff-child relationships, staff preparedness is important for the enhancement SEP. According to Afterschool Alliance (2014:19), staff preparedness involves aspects such as professional development, low staff turnover and staff satisfaction. The staff members in SEP are tasked with teaching learners and required to manage and respond to issues that may arise in the programme (Afterschool Alliance, 2014:19). For instance, in a longitudinal study in Illinois it was found that the staff members were able to teach learners under unfavourable conditions. With regard to low staff turnover and staff satisfaction, a study has found that staff members in SEP were less likely to quit as a result of support and professional development opportunities they received in the programme (Afterschool Alliance, 2014:19). The level of professional development of staff members also impacts on the academic gains of the participants in SEP. In one reading and maths programme, Afterschool Alliance (2014) reported on the results of a study in which the participants' academic gains improved as a result of the academic competence of the programme's coordinator as well as the inclusion of an education specialist in the programme.

The provision of SEP in South Africa flourishes where there are different stakeholders involved, in this case assigned different roles and responsibilities. For example, SEP leaders are tasked with the facilitation of the sessions while the supervisors are tasked with training the leaders (Naidoo & Paideya, 2015:3). While the provision of

structured and diverse activities is seen as an important component for the successful enhancement of SEP in the USA, the same is the case in the South African context. In his study, Bradley (2012:76) reports that participants expressed a need for the addition of subjects to the ones offered in the programme. This may stem from the boredom that participants experienced in the programme, or from a feeling that other aspects of their lives, such as emotional, psychological, and recreational needs, were being neglected. This is an important because in addition to catering for the learners' academic needs SEP must also address the recreational and artistic needs of participants (Zhang *et al.* 2006:152).

International literature on the necessary components for successful enhancement of SEP notes the importance of improving programme quality and management. This is coupled with the inclusion of knowledgeable and experienced people in the programme. In their study seeking to determine the possibility of introducing the Supplementary Instruction (SI) at secondary school level in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), Naidoo and Paideya (2015) reported the inclusion of seven academics from local university as participants in the programme. The inclusion of four academics was necessary considering they were trained as SI supervisors in their respective disciplines within the university (Naidoo & Paideya, 2015:4). In addition to making meaningful contributions in the programmes, these academics would assist in ensuring quality leadership and management in the programme. In the same study, the participants comprised students from the local university who had participated in the SI programmes for mathematics and science. In the Free State, the School Change Project (SCP) comprised retired principals assisting teachers with classroom management and pedagogic content knowledge (Naidoo & Paideya, 2015:8).

#### **2.4.4 Conditions necessary for the enhancement of SEP for**

## **sustainable learning at a rural high school**

This sub-section discusses the conditions found to be necessary in ensuring a successful enhancement of SEP internationally. These include access and sustainable participation in the programme, quality programming and staffing, and strong partnerships (Little, *et al.*, 2008).

### *➤ Access and sustained participation as a necessary condition*

In the USA, ensuring access and sustained participation in the programmes proved to be a necessary condition for the success of SEP. Increased and sustained participation is likely to yield more positive results. For example, the findings of a study evaluating the success of the After School Matters programme indicated that the participants who spent more time in it had higher graduation rates than their non-participating peers. Similarly, participants in the *LA's BEST* program achieved better scores in the standardised mathematics, language and reading activities (Little *et al.*, 2008:6). Moreover, Cosden *et al.* (2004:221) reported on the increased confidence levels of students as a result of their participation in SEP, and noticed the improvement in the students' perceptions about their academic performance and education in general.

The SEP that succeeded in sustaining retention and participation shared the following characteristics (Russell, Reisner, Pearson, Afolabi, Miller & Mielke, 2006):

- Higher director salaries
- More advanced educational credentials
- Parent liaison on staff
- Youth reported a greater sense of belonging
- More positive interactions between youth and staff
- Higher academic self-esteem
- Strong academic or arts focus
- Improved academic performance through enrichment.

➤ *The well-prepared staff as a condition necessary for successful enhancement of SEP*

In similar vein, well-prepared staff as a factor of high-quality programmes proved to be a necessary condition for successful enhancement of SEP (Little *et al.*, 2008:7). The findings of the study evaluating the school enrichment programme, LA's *BEST*, noted the increased value participants placed on education as a result of the support they received from staff members in the programme (Little *et al.*, 2008:7). This became more likely when there was the presence of positive relationships and meaningful interactions between the participants and the staff.

Positive relationships flourished when staff engaged in the following (Little *et al.* 2008:7; Witt & Baker, 1997:19):

- Modelled positive behaviour
- Actively promoted student mastery of the skills or concepts
- Listened attentively to participants
- Frequently provided individualised feedback and guidance during the activities
- Established clear expectations for mature, respectful peer interactions.

➤ *The provision of structured activities and effective supervision as the necessary condition for the successful enhancement of SEP*

The provision of appropriately structured activities and supervision as another element of high-quality made SEP successful (Little, *et al.*, 2008:8). On one hand, these authors cautioned against the provision of unstructured and unsupervised activities in SEP. In this case, they highlighted the higher possibility of failure and poor academic performance and delinquency in the programme. Similarly, studies by Collingwood (1997), Cutford, (1997) and Scarr and Eisenberg (1993) respectively, have found that SEP of poor quality result in poor language acquisition, lower performance in cognitively-challenging

activities and decreased social and emotional adjustment, among other things (Zhang & Byrd, 2005:6). On the other hand, Cosden *et al.* (2004:221) reported on the success that resulted from learning under the structured time and adult supervised location. Zhang and Byrd (2005:6) argued that well-organised and good quality SEP was a safe haven for learners, and the programmes were able to retain participants who were in need of them.

Similarly, the success of the Study of Promising After-School Programs in the USA could be attributed to the provision of structured school and community activities under the supervision of an adult (Little *et al.*, 2008:7).

- *Offering various activities is a necessary condition for the successful enhancement of SEP*

The success of SEP is likely to occur when a variety of activities are offered. According to Little *et al.* (2001:5), the findings of a study in which participants whose SEP focused on apprenticeship, skill-building activities and leadership development revealed that these participants showed more academic success than their counterparts. Similarly, in a study of Israeli children whose programme consisted of various activities, Segal *et al.* (2001:62) found that there was an increase in levels of the participants' self-esteem. In another study, Lagace-Seguin and Case (2008:454) found that participants in various activities within SEP had higher life satisfaction. Including a variety of extracurricular activities in SEP helps learners to develop resilience (Cosden, 2004:223) while reducing the risk of failure. Also, for learning to be effective, learners must participate fully in the learning situation and this must also provide them with an opportunity to interact with each other (Akin, 2008:81-82). In this case, the study by Baker and Witt (2000:68) revealed that participants in SEP advocated "...creative, enthusiastic approach to learning new skills..." while other participants showed willingness to participate with their friends.

- *Intentional programming as a necessary condition for*

### *the successful enhancement of SEP*

Ensuring intentional programming in SEP proved to be another necessary condition for the success of these programmes. Intentional programming involves the issues such as clear vision and goals, strong leadership, sustained training and support to staff (Little *et al.*, 2008:7). Discussing the vision, goals and mission of the programme with other stakeholders offers a sense of continuity and reinforces the importance of learning (Neiva & Pepe, 2012:68). For example, the participants in the *CORAL Initiative* in the USA regarded the activities in which the staff gave clear instructions and goals as the conditions that led to the success of the programme (Little *et al.*, 2008:7).

#### ➤ *Training and motivation of staff members as a condition for successful enhancement of SEP*

Additionally, the training and motivation of staff members proved to be another condition necessary for the success of SEP (Sanger, 2012: 37). In some cases, the love that staff members had for children was sufficient to motivate them to engage learners in the activities. In other cases, however, staff members' motivation was rewarded with money (Neiva & Pepe, 2012:68). While monetary rewards were seen as important for some staff members' motivation, religious and civic obligations were regarded as critical factors in motivating others (Halpern, 2002:184). A study by Torppa, Kirby Wilkins and Parrot (2006) noted the need for the training in communication and social skills that staff members in SEP should undergo (cited in Vogt, 2006:18). Similarly, Neiva and Pepe (2012:68) concurred with these views and added that the positive results were more likely to be attained when staff members' communication skills with children were enhanced. As a result, these staff members learnt how to interact with the learners effectively and easily (Sanger, 2012:37). According to Vogt (2006:18), the staff members were also motivated by the consistent and informed communication they had with the management of the school and the parents. Regarded as contributory factors to the programme's success,



in addition to holding regular meetings with parents, the director of LA's *BEST Program* in the USA designed a parents' handbook to enhance communication between the parents and the programme's personnel (Little *et al.*, 2012:69).

➤ *Parental involvement in SEP as the necessary condition*

Successful enhancement of SEP occurred where there was strong parental involvement. Starkey and Klein (2000) found that there was a relationship between parental involvement and learner performance, related specifically to the performance of learners whose parents or guardians took part in the design and implementation of the enrichment programmes and interventions. Lagace-Seguin and Case (2008:458) reported an improvement in the academic performance of learners taking part in SEP as a result of the parental pressure to which these learners were exposed and the benefit of parental involvement for the psychological, social, emotional and personal wellbeing of their children at school. Baker and Witt (2000:70) noted that teachers attributed the long-term success of SEP to the views and involvement of parents who felt that the programme compensated for a lack of parental involvement. It was also discovered that the parents' high motivation and confidence levels in the programme influenced their participation.

➤ *The existence of strong partners for learning proved to be the necessary condition for the successful enhancement of SEP*

In addition to the existence of parental involvement in SEP, these programmes' success was also made by the existence of strong partnerships for learning. In describing these partnerships for learning HRFP (2010:2) stated the following:

The key element of these partnerships is that the relationships are not merely transactional in nature... Instead, partnerships for learning aim to create transformative relationships, that is, relationships that are mutually beneficial, transcend self-interests

to create larger meaning, and have a focus beyond utilitarian needs. In transformational relationships, partnering entities work together to integrate and complement their services in support of children's learning. Through fostering these connections, partners are able to create a web of supports in which the linkages add up to more than the sum of their parts. These connections provide a more seamless approach to learning that addresses the complex conditions and variety of environments in which children learn and grow.

With regard to these partnerships, studies have also reported the positive impact of the supportive partnerships between communities and SEP. According to Jones and Deutsch (2013:21), the roles of the partnerships amongst the stakeholders are significant for a successful design and implementation of SEP. Consequently, DuBois and Karcher (2005) noted a rise in cases in which the supportive partnerships between youths and adults played a significant role in the success of SEP (as cited in Jones & Deutsch, 2013:21). In this case, DuBois, Holloway, Valentine and Cooper (2002) state that the supportive adults from the community helped to reduce the prevalence of antisocial behaviour and that led to improvement in the academic performance of learners (as cited in Oh *et al.*, 2014:3). These partnerships among the members of SEP team have also been found to be important in the implementation and the design of this programme.

Deutsch (2005) reported that the supportive relationship between youths and staff members of SEP team facilitate the design and successful implementation of SEP as these relationships help in the promotion of pro-social behaviour (as cited in Jones & Deutsch, 2013:21). In their study, Oh *et al.* (2014:3) reported that it was these partnerships that distinguished dysfunctional and poorly designed programmes from the well-designed and highly functional ones.

Other additional benefits such partnerships could have on the youth include the following (HRFP, 2012:5):

- Improved social and academic outcomes
- Continuity of services across the day, year, and developmental cycle
- More diverse and comprehensive learning opportunities
- Access to additional community resources.

Secondary schools cater for adolescent children, whose stage of development is often characterised by stress (Arnett, 1999, as cited in Jones 2013:36). In addition, Wood (1997) states that children become rebellious and impulsive in this stage of development (as cited in Jones & Deutsch, 2013:36), characteristics that lead to academic and social failure and a struggle to find identity. Furthermore, schools influence academic, social and emotional functioning of these children who are in the process of shaping their own identities. In this regard schools are tasked with providing physical, cognitive, emotional and social support (Jones & Deutsch, 2013:21).

In this vain, it becomes necessary for schools administering SEP to engage in the partnerships for learning. HRFP (2010:5) highlights the benefits schools can receive from these partnerships for learning:

- Improve teaching and learning in the classroom
- Support transitions from elementary to middle and middle to high school
- Reinforce concepts, values, and skills taught in school
- Improve school culture and community image
- Gain access to additional staff and resources to support in-school learning.

Additional benefits that SEP can attain from these partnerships for learning include the following (HRFP, 2010:6):

- Gain access to and recruit groups of students most in need of support services
- Improve programme quality and staff engagement
- Optimal use of resources such as facilities, staff, data, and curriculum

Brigham and Nahas (2008), under the auspices of HRFP, stated that these partnerships need to take place at different levels, including partnerships within schools and at district level (HRFP, 2010:14). Within the schools themselves, forming relationships with the school principals SEP is likely to benefit in the following manner:

- Gain support from teachers
- Arrange agreements for resource-sharing, including having access to physical space
- Access student data, including report cards and school attendance records.

The partnerships for learning can further be beneficial to SEP if there are positive relationships among teachers themselves. HRPF (2010) puts forth the following benefits that SEP can attain from such relationships and partnerships:

- Gain access to students for programme recruitment
- Learn important information about students, including their progress in class
- Garner support and involvement of other teachers
- Ensure that the programme curriculum aligns with and complements in-class instruction.

The partnership between the schools and the local districts can help SEP on the following:

- Negotiating relationships with potential partnership schools
- Accessing school and student data, including student achievement data
- Providing in-kind resources such as transportation
- Advising on programme design, implementation, and evaluation (HRFP, 2010:14).

#### **2.4.5 Local research on the necessary conditions for the**

### **successful enhancement of SEP**

As evident in the international literature, the training of SEP staff is also a necessary condition in the South African context. For ensuring success of SEP, the findings of the study by Naidoo and Paideya (2015) suggest SEP supervisors must train and assist the leaders in these programmes with regard to carrying out their duties. According to these authors, a similar approach by universities' SI supervisors to train students to be SI leaders can be used at secondary school levels where learners can be trained as such. In another study, Prinsloo (2008:22) under the auspices of the Shuttleworth Foundation reports that tutors were given information about their roles and responsibilities before the commencement of the intervention programme in the Western Cape. In addition, the tutors were also briefed about the study and teaching material they would use in the programme.

Another condition necessary for the success of SEP corroborated by both the international and local literature is the issue of parental involvement in the education of their children. According to Prinsloo (2008:7), the participants in the programme succeeded because the parents were:

- Providing higher levels of support to their children with their school work
- Having higher qualification levels
- Having higher levels of literacy.

Additional conditions that led to the success of the programme included the following:

- Motivation levels of learners to attend voluntarily in the programme
- Having access to more books at home
- Being exposed to expanded opportunities which involve the increased opportunities to write activities (Prinsloo, 2008:6).

Furthermore, the success of the programme can be attributed to the conditions under which teachers were working. These included the

following:

- Exercising good curriculum management practices
- Having to teach fewer classes
- Making use of appropriate learning support materials (Prinsloo, 2008:8).

Unlike in the USA, where the tutor characteristics are not regarded as one of the conditions for the success of SEP, in South Africa tuition delivery and tutor characteristics proved to be a necessary condition. According to Prinsloo (2008:8), the success of the programme was attained because tutors displayed the following:

- Higher levels of attendance
- Good assessment practices and [frequent provision of] feedback
- Sound levels of curriculum management.

## **2.5 Possible barriers to the successful enhancement of SEP for sustainable learning at a rural high school**

This sub-section of the study focuses on literature documented about the barriers that often threaten the successful enhancement of SEP. The study begins with the discussion on the internationally documented literature. Before providing synthesis, the discussion dwells on the local research about the threats that often preclude the successful enhancement of SEP.

### **2.6.1. International research on the barriers that threaten the successful enhancement of SEP**

#### **➤ *Lack of funding support as the threat***

While there is an increase in the financial support (Shernoff & Vandell, 2007:892) for SEP in some countries, the enhancement of SEP is troubled by lack of funding in other countries (Viluan, 2005:15; Corregge, 2007:8). Funding is the life blood of SEP as it enables not only the remuneration of staff members but also availability of resources. The

latter is especially important because the activities in the programme must vary in order to keep learners interested and, more so, to cater for different needs of learners in order to yield the desired outcomes. A study revealed that the variety of activities offered in SEP increases the chances of academic success (Little *et al.*, 2001:5). Lack of funding affect the variety of activities provided in the programme and their quality (Correge, 2012:8), as well as impacting negatively on the access and participation of learners who are most in need of it. For example, in another study it was reported that the participants were provided with scholarships and transportation to participate in SEP by the researchers as a result of lack of funding. A similar situation was noted in another study in which the researchers established a project whose aim was to provide financial assistance to students from low-income families and unrepresented cultural groups (Miller & Gentry, 2010) to increase the participation of those participants. Consequently, learners from financially advantaged backgrounds are more likely to participate in SEP than learners from low-income families.

While insufficient funding impacts negatively on the participation of learners in SEP it further alienates parents from participating meaningfully in SEP. According to Friedman (1994), parents from poor financial backgrounds cited economic stress, alienation of school activities and lack of courage to consult the school personnel as reasons for their lack of involvement in SEP (cited in Miller & Gentry, 2010). Studies have shown that parents who participated less or not at all in their children's educational programmes and activities contribute to poor performance (Singh *et al.*, 2004). According to these studies, non-involvement of parents from rural areas put learner performance at jeopardy. In cases where parental involvement was taken for granted, Wells (1996) found that a large number of teachers blamed the school's poor performance squarely on the ignorance and the absence of parents (cited in Singh *et al.*, 2004:303).

- *Lack of communication threatens the successful enhancement of SEP*

The lack of communication between parents and the school personnel administering SEP threatens the enhancement of this programme. In his study, Baker (2000:83) reported that poor communication between parents and teachers impacted negatively on the involvement of the former in the programme. A non-participant parent in the same study also blamed a lack of communication for her child's non-participation in the programme.

➤ *Lack of variety of activities threatens the successful enhancement of SEP*

Enhancing SEP is threatened by its exclusive focus on the academic work.<sup>3</sup> Anderson (2009:118) is of the view that recent studies reveal that fun activities and games are not considered to be educationally enriching by other schools. In addition, Noguera (2003) warns that the exclusive focus on school improvement is unlikely to yield the desired learning outcomes, because stakeholders such as policymakers and social researchers hold a distorted view of the contribution of SEP to the academic mission of schools (Yemeni & Racciah, 2013:359). In a study in which the programme focused solely on assisting participants with academic work, no improvement was noted in the participants' academic performance (Morrison *et al.*, 2000:221). The sole focus on curriculum-related activities by many rural schools contributes to underperformance and learning, which is not sustainable. Adding to the deprived opportunity to acquire and practice new skills (Little *et al.*, 2001:4) is that learners' psychological and emotional needs are neglected if a programme focuses only on the academic aspects.

➤ *The threats posed by the perceptions and attitudes of the parents and learners towards SEP*

The success of SEP is threatened by the attitudes and perceptions that both parents and learners hold about the programme. In this case, if they perceive the programme is failing to fulfil their needs, learners are more likely to absent themselves or withdraw from it (Baker & Witt,

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<sup>3</sup> Curriculum-related activities.



2000:71). Consequently, this may impact negatively not only on the success of the programme alone but also on learners' academic performance. The findings of the study by Cosden *et al.* (2004:222) revealed the close relationship between the participants' attendance and their academic performance. In this case, the prediction is that high levels of attendance probably yield the desired academic performance; however, this could not be said about the participants with low attendance levels in the same programme. Further, Baker and Witt (2000:71) state that the way participants perceive the objectives and content of SEP impacts negatively on its effectiveness and viability. Adding to this is the view the parents hold of SEP. In their study, Baker and Witt (2000:70) reported that parents whose views were negative towards the way the programme was run and designed were more likely to forbid their children from attending such a programme.

➤ *Rurality threatens the successful enhancement of SEP*

The successful enhancement of SEP can be thwarted by the area in which the schools are situated. Studies have shown that rural communities are often isolated (Guthrie & Shackleton, 2006:14; Correge, 2012:8) and characterised by smaller population size, which has a direct impact on how much financial support they receive (Correge, 2012:8). For instance, learners from these communities struggle with transportation (Correge, 2012:8; State Legislatures, 2006:9) to attend SEP. In their study, Ganga and Chinyoka, (2013:85) found that many learners in rural areas could not participate in SEP as a result of their poor economic backgrounds. Enhancing SEP in schools in rural areas is important because learners in these areas are at high risk of violent crime, distress and despair. Additionally, they are more likely to develop low self-esteem, behavioural problems and depression (Baker and Witt, 1997:19).

➤ *Strategies employed in addressing the above barriers, internationally.*

This sub-section of the study discusses the strategies employed in

circumventing the threats discussed above.

In the USA, the following strategies were used to address the issues lack of variety in the activities offered in the programmes as well as ensuring sustained participation (Chaskin & Baker, 2006):

- Tailoring programmes to youth interests, needs, and schedules
- Providing a wide variety of enrichment opportunities for youth to be exposed to new ideas, new challenges, and new people.
- Designing programmes that involve activities, events and recreational outlets that are culturally sensitive and socially interesting (Vinluan, 2005:12).

In addressing the challenges, such as lack of funding and transportation, brought by the geographic location in which SEP was administered, the following strategies were used:

- The participants were provided with scholarships and transportation to participate in SEP by the researchers, as a result of lack of funding.
- The researchers established a project whose aim was to provide financial assistance to students from low-income families and unrepresented cultural groups (Miller & Gentry, 2010) to increase the participation of those participants.

In response to the lack of communication between the schools and the parents whose learners participate in SEP, the following strategies were used:

- The director of *LA's BEST Program* in the USA designed a parent-hand book to enhance communication between the parents and the programme's personnel (Little *et al.*, 2012:69).

When responding to the negative perceptions of parents and learners about the programme, the following strategies may be beneficial:

- Presence of a program coordinator or committee to oversee implementation and resolution of day-to-day problems
- Involvement of individuals with highly shared morale, good communication, and a sense of ownership
- Employment of qualified personnel
- Ongoing processes of formal and informal training, including the involvement of knowledgeable experts
- High inclusiveness of all school stakeholders
- High visibility in the school and the community
- Program components that explicitly foster mutual respect and support among students
- Varied and engaging instructional approaches
- Linkage to stated goals of schools or districts
- Consistent support from school principals
- Balance of support from both new and seasoned administrators (Zhang & Byrd, 2005:8).

#### **2.6.2. Local research on the barriers that impede the successful enhancement of SEP**

Similar to other rural parts of USA, the effects of rurality continue to hamper the success of SEP in South Africa. This manifests itself in the lack of access to ICTs (Hlalele, 2013:564) by the rural schools and communities. In this regard, many rural schools remain under-resourced (Hlalele, 2013:564) as opposed to their urban counterparts. Moreover, it has been noted that teachers are often unwilling to work in rural areas (Brown, 2009:61; Hlalele, 2013:564). Due to the bad working conditions in these areas the retention of skilled teachers who are able to administer and enhance SEP in rural schools is another challenge hampering the success of these programmes.

As it is the case in the rural parts of the USA, the challenge of access to the reliable transport to deliver learners to and from SEP is also common in South Africa. In the report, Taylor (2010:8) states that learners who participate in the STAR schools initiative have a

responsibility to find and fund their own transport to and from the programme on Saturdays. This proves a challenge to learners from poor economic backgrounds as they cannot afford to pay for transport costs. In other words, this may be another factor that contributes to the exclusion of learners from poor economic backgrounds from SEP. As was the case in the study by Bradley (2012:76), the issue of having no means and no access to reliable transport was pointed to as a cause of some cases of absenteeism by other learners in the programme.

The success of SEP in South Africa is also thwarted by poverty that often characterises many rural homes. For example, in their study conducted in a rural setting, Singh, Mbokodi and Msila (2004:303) found that the homes of some learner participants did not provide them with a conducive space to study. Similarly, findings in the report by Prinsloo (2008) under the auspices of Shuttleworth Foundation revealed that more than half of the learner participants did not have sufficient space to study at home because they shared rooms with many members of the family. The implication of this situation on SEP is that it becomes impossible for learners to successfully complete all the activities given to them in the programme. Also, it becomes difficult for them to revise and go through all the day's work at home after the programme. Consequently, learners in such conditions may not show improvement in their academic performance.

As the international literature points to the issue of lack of parental involvement as a threat to the success of SEP, the local literature also points to the same effect. Studies have shown that parents living in rural areas regard themselves as being unable to influence decisions made in schools (Mcube, 2010; Singh, *et al.*, 2004). Studies in the USA indicate the parents' busy work schedules, rise in single-parent families and families with two working parents (Little *et al.*, 2007; Zhang & Byrd, 2005) as reasons for lack of parental involvement in SEP. Similarly, the South African parents also have busy schedules. The findings of the study by Bradley (2012) indicate that while less than half of parents reported having sufficient time to assist their children with school

activities the rest reported only having the opportunity to help their children on weekends. In addition, some had less than an hour at their disposal to help their children whereas others claimed not to have any. These findings indicate that the commitments do not afford parents enough time to be involved in the education of their children. With such busy schedules it becomes difficult for parents to take part in SEP. Without their critical voice, it will not be easy for SEP to attain the desired success.

➤ *The strategies used in circumventing the above barriers, locally.*

As a response to the challenges brought forth by rurality and lack of funding that trouble rural schools and SEP in these areas the tutors were rewarded with money (Prinsloo, 2008:22) and laptop computers (Bradley, 2012). In another study, Naidoo and Paideya (2015:7) suggested that in a situation in which it was impossible to remunerate the leaders in SEP due to poor economic status of schools, the leaders may be given academic credit or leadership certificates. After citing the workload of teachers as a threat to the success of SEP at secondary school levels, Naidoo and Paideya (2015:8) further suggested the training of guidance counsellors at schools to be the supervisors of SEP. This, however, proves to be a challenge in rural schools where there are no such counsellors in their yards.

In addressing the issues of learner absenteeism in the programme and lack of motivation of some learners (Prinsloo, 2008) in SEP, the use of cooperative learning activities will enable them to interact as peers and work in groups (Naidoo & Paideya, 2015:3). This will further help them take responsibility for their own learning. Another remedy involves the optimally designed tuition materials as well as the recruitment of the competent tutors in the programme (Prinsloo, 2008:8).

## **2.7. SUCCESS INDICATORS OF SEP**

The evidence from the discussions above indicate that SEP helps in addressing specific needs relating to youth development, school-age

childcare, and expanded learning programmes (Chung, Gannett, de Kanter La Perla, 2000). In addition, this programme results in high levels of intrinsic motivation and positive moods (Shernoff & Vandell 2007:892; Zhang & Byrd, 2005:5; Afterschool Alliance, 2014:4).

Also, SEP helped in tackling the problem of obesity among learners (Little *et al.*, 2007:7). With regard to promoting wellness among children, Little *et al.*, (2007: 6) note that SEP contributed to improving the psychological and emotional well-being of learners and participating resulted in improved academic performance of learners (Afterschool Alliance, 2014:11; Shenorff & Vandell, 2007:892, WCED, n.d.; Prinsloo, 2008; Bradley, 2012). Lastly, SEP proved effective when used as the means to cope with curriculum overload, lack of financial resources and educational corruption which teachers often experience (Mogari *et al.*, 2009: 38; Naidoo & Paideya, 2015).

## **2.8. CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter began by discussing the three different theoretical frameworks. In this case, the focus was on the origins, objectives, nature of reality, relationship between the researcher and the participants, and the role of the researcher according to Positivism, Phenomenology and Critical Emancipatory Research. This was followed by justification of using CER to anchor this study as opposed to either positivism or phenomenology. The third focus of this chapter was on clarification and definition of operational concepts, followed by a discussion of literature related to SEP. Finally, the chapter provided the discussion on the related literature in alignment with the objectives of this study.

The next chapter discusses the research methodology, design and data generation in this study.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY FOR DATA GENERATION ON ENHANCING A SCHOOL ENRICHMENT**

## **PROGRAMME FOR SUSTAINABLE LEARNING AT A RURAL HIGH SCHOOL**

### **3.1. INTRODUCTION**

While the previous chapter gave a detailed discussion of literature related to enhancing a school enrichment programme for sustainable learning at a rural high school, and also expanded on Critical Emancipatory Research (CER) as the theoretical framework couching this study, this chapter is another step towards achieving the aim of this study to enhance a school enrichment programme for sustainable learning at a rural high school. To realise this aim, this chapter focuses on the methodology and design employed in the study. In this case, Participatory Action Research (PAR) as the methodology for generating data is discussed. Without discarding the principles and objectives of PAR, it further discusses how these principles and objectives relate to CER as the theoretical framework within which this study is located.

Following these discussions, this chapter shifts attention to the justification for employing PAR as a data-generating methodology employed in this study and its relevance to the current study. It focuses on the research design in which case attention is given to the free attitude interviews (FAIs) and workshops as research methods used in this study and their relevance to the study of this nature. This is in conjunction with an explanation of the relevance of these methods to CER. These explanations are followed by a profiling of participants in this study, coupled with the contribution each participant made to the study and the research process itself, wherein SWOT analysis and the stages of PAR are discussed. The focus then shifts to CDA as a method of data analysis with justifications for using it. This is followed by a description of the research site. The chapter then discusses the ethical considerations as well as how they are adhered to in this study. Lastly, a summary of the entire chapter is provided.

#### **3.1.1. Understanding research design and methodology**

Before commencing discussions of the methods employed in this study

it is important to explain the two closely linked and misinterpreted concepts of design and the methodology (Tight, 2013:137, Babie & Mouton, 2001, cited in Myende, 2014:67). For example, Cohen *et al.* (2007:47) define methodology as "...a range of approaches used in educational research to gather data which are to be used as a basis for inference and interpretation, for explanation and prediction...", while in his definition Punch (1998) refers to methodology as a procedure aimed at gathering and analysing data, and Grant and Giddings (2002:12) state that it involves, among other things, theoretical assumptions and principles on which a particular research approach is based. Not only does research methodology influence the way a researcher may phrase a research question it also influences the decision on the plan of action to undertake as well as the choice of tools to use when undertaking it. For me, research methodology is a process of generating data and analysing it using tools and procedures influenced by a set of assumptions and principles that underlie a particular paradigm within which the study is framed. Furthermore, this process as well as methods employed are influenced by the nature of the goal of the research study.

Similar to research methodology, research design is a 'loaded' term, consequently, it is often used interchangeably with the former (Myende, 2014) by some researchers. For instance, Maree (2007) refers to data collection techniques and data analysis (cited in Myende, 2014:67) in the definition, and Toledo-Pereyra (2012:279) defines it as the plan and organisation of the research, beginning at the formulation of the research questions and objectives. Hopwood (2004:352) emphasises the importance of the research design in reflecting the epistemological stance and theoretical underpinnings on which the entire research is based. In addition to the objectives of the study, it is also important to note that the way research process is planned is often influenced by the context in which it is undertaken as well as the participants involved in it. Another important issue is to ensure that the research design meets the 'fitness of purpose' (Hopwood, 2004:352).



This is explained later in this chapter.

## **3.2. METHODOLOGY**

This section describes the methodology employed.

### **3.2.1. Defining participatory action research**

In literature there is a plethora of definitions of PAR. For example it has been defined as “...an approach to research and evaluation that builds partnerships with those with knowledge and invites them to reflect on what they know” (Ungar, McGrath, Black, Sketris, Whitman & Liebenberg, 2015:3). When defining PAR, Green et al., (2003:419) state that it is a systematic study guided by the collaboration of the marginalised who are at the centre of the problem and the researchers with the sole aim of working together to bring the necessary change. Intertwined in this definition is the observation by Smith, Baum and MacDougall (2006:854) that the purpose of PAR is to gain understanding of the world with the aim of improving it through change.

Furthermore, PAR may be defined in terms of its political nature (Tsotetsi, 2013:142). Due to its participatory agenda, it recognises that in social institutions, as well as education and research, there are unequal power relations. In the community, PAR advocates transformation and emancipation of the marginalised people and guards against the exploitation and disrespect (Smith *et. al.*, 2006:855) of the researched in the research process. In this case, the power of participants is reduced to that of objects with minimal actions of merely providing the required data in the process.

### **3.2.2. Origins of PAR**

The origins of PAR can be traced back to the need by researchers to challenge the traditional methods of conducting research. This may have been exacerbated by, among others, the perceived lack of relevance of research process to, as well as the aloofness of the researchers from the researched. Additionally, the origins of PAR may also be partly attributed to a rise in the anti-colonial struggles of the

1960s (Jordan, 2003, quoted in Tsotetsi, 2013:141). Influenced by the emancipatory and transformative agenda of this period, the focus among PAR scholars rested on finding ways of bringing change, empowerment and emancipation in people's lives through research.

### **3.2.3. The relationship between the researchers and co-researchers**

PAR challenges the polarised power relations between the researchers and the researched (Ozanne & Saatcioglu, 2008:425) perpetuated by the use of conventional research methodologies in the production of knowledge. These conventional methods use the researcher's aloofness as a way of ensuring neutrality and subjectivity in the research process and during this process the indigenous knowledge of the researched is often exploited and disrespected (Smith *et al.*, 2006:855). PAR as an approach argues for the use of more 'democratic' methodologies in research (Smith, 1999, as cited in Ungar *et al.*, 2015:3) to concretise the relationships between the researchers and co-researchers. It further guards against the negative effects of the conventional methods on rural people (Smith *et al.*, 2006:855). In this case, the less dynamic approaches that remove data and information (Baum *et al.*, 2006:854) from these co-researchers are unpopular in PAR. Consequently, as an approach it relies on the collaborative and mutual relationships as well as the inclusion of all the participants in the research process (Blake, 2006:412; Smith *et al.* 2006:854; Tsotetsi, 2013:143; Moleko, 2014; Ungar *et al.* 2015:5). This supports the view that knowledge is created through mutual collaboration with the affected people (Ozanne & Saatcioglu, 2008:425). At the centre of this collaboration is mutual identification of a social problem, determination of the causes of such a problem as well as the mutual and contextualised solutions (Blake, 2009:412). In other words, PAR recognises the sensitivity and experiences of the marginalised population.

### **3.2.4. Nature of reality**

Contrary to the traditional and conventional approaches' single view and claim of reality, PAR accepts the existence of multiple realities. Given its participatory action (Houh & Kalsem, 2015:265) and support for dialogical, historical, reflective and change-oriented methods (Ozanne & Saatcioglu, 2008:425), PAR accepts the multiple realities influenced by the different historical interests, experiences and social practices brought by the co-researchers in the research process.

### **3.2.5. Role of the researcher**

Contrary to conventional and traditional methodologies in whose view the researcher is the only epistemologically and ontologically powerful driver in the research process, within PAR, the opinions and the diverse ontological perspectives of the participants are at the centre of the research process (Houh & Kalsem, 2015). In this instance, the PAR-oriented researcher conducting a research in the community views him/herself as a community member rather than an all-powerful expert. In this case, this researcher views his role to be that of working in collaboration with the community affected by the problem. In this equally-partnered process, the researcher uses his or her expertise and specialised knowledge not to impose his or her views on the participants but rather to facilitate the problem-solving process.

## **3.3. THE KEY PRINCIPLES OF PAR AND THEIR APPLICATION TO THIS STUDY**

This sub-section starts by discussing the key principles of PAR and how they have been applied in this study. According to Israel, Schultz, Parker and Becker (1998:175), the key principles of PAR include the following:

### **Recognizing community as a unit of identity**

Within the PAR paradigm communities are not viewed as separate entities at the disposal of a researcher to use as objects for study. On the contrary, communities are seen as a unit characterised by shared needs, knowledge and identity. In this regard, PAR takes the

responsibility of capitalising on such widely shared needs, knowledge and identity for the common good of the whole community. This is triggered by PAR's commitment to ensuring social justice, collective action and social change (Loughram & McCann, 2015:709). In addition to advocating both meaningful participation and emancipation of marginalised communities, PAR recognises the strengths of both individuals and community members in effecting social change and growth (Tsotetsi, 2013:143). It rallies around all members of the community to participate in the processes aimed at empowering and changing their lives. Rather than assuming power to solve the problems of the community, PAR researchers work with community members as co-researchers who possess equal power to effect social change.

### **Building on strengths and resources within the community**

The emancipatory and participatory agenda of PAR compels the researchers not to bombard the researched with plethora of resources to effect social change. In order to eliminate this 'dependency syndrome', PAR requires both the researcher and the participants to rely on their strengths and mutually identify the resources that can be used to effect social change. With regard to building on the resources within the community, it challenges the traditional approaches which view rural communities as unable to acknowledge their strengths and the resources at their disposal. It also challenges the view that instead of utilising these resources, rural communities pay attention to their deficiencies (Myende, 2014:45) rather than their strengths. Drawing from the asset-based approach, Myende (2014) categorises the community resources (assets) into primary, secondary and outsider layers. While the primary layer focuses on the resources available in schools such as members of staff (teachers, learners, SMTs and school infrastructure), the secondary layer consists of organisations based outside the school yards but are located within the same neighbourhoods (Myende, 2014:49) and how they can help in enhancing the school enrichment programmes for sustainable learning at a rural high school. The last layer at the disposal of the community

includes organisations and institutions located outside the schools' neighbourhoods.

### **Facilitating collaborative partnerships in all phases of the research**

PAR is both participatory and emancipatory in nature. In other words, for it to be successfully realised, it requires equal participation and partnership of both the researcher and the participants with participants empowered to regain control over their situations (Smith *et al.* 2006:854). Not only do participants regain control but their understanding of the programme in which they participated is increased. As a result, they are able to view this programme as relevant to their needs (Ungar *et al.* 2015:3) as well as being able to identify with such a programme.

Another important aspect for facilitating collaborative partnerships in the research process involves the notion that communities should not be viewed as objects *on* whom or *for* whom problems must be solved. In other words, PAR is principled with creating the equal power-sharing situation between the researcher and the researched. In this regard, as alluded to elsewhere in this study, the researcher's power is limited to that of being facilitator of the process whilst the participants are empowered to identify the problem, create solutions, implement them and reflect on their effectiveness. In addition, these collaborative partnerships guard against what Loughran and McCann (2015) call the '*hit and-run*' syndrome of the researchers. Rather, PAR participants are partners in the research process who are tasked with providing data and partnering the researcher when interpreting data, identifying any further areas which need probing (Loughran & McCann, 2015:712).

### **Integrating knowledge and action for the mutual benefit of all partners**

PAR as an approach requires inclusive involvement of all partners in the creation of knowledge as well as in the effecting of social change. Contrary to the conventional positivist approaches which view knowledge creation as the sole responsibility of the researcher, in

addition to involving participants as partners in the creation of knowledge, PAR requires that such knowledge is being integrated not only for the benefit of the researcher but for benefit of the entire community. In the construction of such knowledge, PAR requires interaction on a regular basis in the activities commonly agreed upon by both the researcher and the participants (Blake, 2007:412). Perhaps what is more important about this is that for the marginalised to re-gain their power they need to work with other partners to gain information about themselves (Lord & Hutchison, 1993:3). In this regard, PAR provides a basis for this mutual integration of knowledge.

**Promoting a co-learning and empowering process that attends to social inequalities.**

The PAR as an approach is based on the engagement, exercise and practice of ideas aimed at empowering communities. It is the need to act on these ideas to ameliorate the conditions that these communities are faced with. In addition to encouraging participation in the realities and experiences of the communities (Glassman & Erdem, 2014:214), it promotes a non-hierarchical relationship between the researcher and the participants, an equal relationship that takes from the researcher the role of an 'expert' in the research process and gives him or her the role of a 'facilitator'. Therefore, it is through this power-neutral relationship that both the researcher and the participants learn together and from each other. Additionally, PAR oriented research recognises the ability of people and their critical knowledge. According to PAR, the aim of this co-learning and co-teaching is not the sole interest of the researcher; rather, it is beneficial to both the participants and the researcher. Participants are afforded the opportunity to critique and challenge the way in which SEP is designed and implemented, and given the power to effect change and propel the programme design to suit their needs and situations. In addition, the participants in this study, through the workshops and FAI interviews, learned from each other about how SEP should be designed and implemented for learners in a rural high school. By being afforded the opportunity to question, critique and analyse the

way the programme is designed and implemented, they felt empowered and realised the power they had to influence decision-making and effect change. Adding to this was the new image of myself and my role as a researcher that changed in the participants eyes. Contrary to viewing me as a superior knowledgeable teacher, the participants, especially the parents and learners, started to view me as a partner who was equally contributing to effecting the necessary social change, which, in this case, involves changing the manner in which SEP is designed and implemented in a rural high school.

Contrary to conventional researchers, the PAR researchers ask questions not about themselves but ones that are relevant to the participants (Sherwood & Kendall, 2013:87) and their situations. It is through these questions that the researcher's understanding of the community's problems is enhanced. Engaging with these stakeholders in this study, my understanding of the problems that they experience when participating in this programme was enhanced. In addition, PAR helped me to view the rural communities and knowledge creation differently. I was able to recognise the power and appreciate the level of knowledge that rural people possess. I was able avoid what Smith *et al.* (2006:855) call the misinterpretation of rural communities. Instead of seeing them as objects for my research, I recognised them as able and powerful individuals who, given a chance, can exercise control over their social conditions. In this case, if they were given a chance by the education bureaucrats, they would have long participated in reforming the manner in which SEP are designed and implemented in their school.

### **3.4. THE SUITABILITY OF PAR AND CER FOR THIS STUDY**

Firstly, using any of the conventional positivist methods would be detrimental to the empowerment aspect of the participants in this study as well as effecting the necessary social change. In contrast to PAR and CER at the centre of which are the dialogical methodologies that

acknowledge the experiences and multiple realities (Ungar *et al.*, 2015:5) within the local contexts of the marginalised people, the conventional positivist methods only extract data from the contexts of these people (Smith *et al.* 2006:854). Employing these conventional methods would fail to empower the participants mainly because they would have become the passive subjects from whom I would have extracted data. This would also mean that I had conducted research *on* or *for* them rather than *with* them. Furthermore, the entire research project would be irrelevant to the needs of the participants because it would be based on my own assumptions rather than the experiences of the participants. In contrast, the use of PAR enabled the participants to view themselves as valuable contributors to their own emancipation as opposed to being 'rescued' by the researcher. This idea fits well with CER's stance on the capabilities of marginalised people to effect social change.

Both PAR and CER recognise the experiences that participants bring to the research process and how these shape the outcomes. It is the duty of the researchers, according to Glassman and Erdem (2014:212), to participate in these experiences or include in their study participants who have lived and undergone these experiences. In this study, the workshops (meetings) were held at the same school, which is situated in the same area in which most participants stay. In addition, during these workshops the participants spoke about the issues which they had experienced within their own contexts. By creating for them the platform to speak openly about their experiences both myself and the participants were able to share our perspectives on the issue at hand, thus solidifying our relationship and allowing us to create new knowledge based on multiple perspectives.

Secondly, unlike the positivist methods for which objectivity of data involves the exclusion of the researcher's impact on the phenomenon under the study (Smith *et al.*, 2006:854) the use of PAR and CER in this study was necessary to challenge this view. These two approaches acknowledge the existence of an oppressive relationship between the



academic researcher and the participants (Glassman & Erdem, 2014:214). As a result, these two methods call for an intertwined non-hierarchical partnership between the researcher and the participants throughout the research process. This partnership further helped reduce the power-relations between myself and some of the participants as well as amongst the participants themselves. It is important to acknowledge that some participants find it difficult to speak in the presence of their superiors. A similar situation was encountered as in the beginning of our workshops and Free Attitude Interviews (FAIs) the learner participants were reluctant to speak in the presence of their teachers and the principal. The same was also the case with teacher participants whose passiveness could be attributed to the presence of both the HoDs. In addition, the participants from the SGB felt uneasy speaking in the presence of the 'educated and powerful' entourage.

Thirdly, the use of PAR and CER in this study sharply contradicts the conventional view of a research process, in which it is conducted as a top-down approach. In this case, the researcher solely identifies the problems that need to be investigated in the community and provides solutions for them. The role of the people in the community is reduced to merely providing data to the researcher, with the research *on* and *for* the community. If I had employed these traditional methods I would have gone into this rural high school and told them what the problem was with their SEP, decided on the data generation methodologies, conducted the study then recommend strategies to remedy this situation.

While these traditional methods advocate a top-down approach to research, both PAR and CER support the bottom-up approach to research. As this was the case in this study, the identification of the issue to be studied and how it should be studied (methodology and design) as well as the recommendations were all agreed upon by all the participants as opposed to being imposed on them by me. In fact, the participants participated in all the cyclic phases (see figure 3.1) of this

research process. The use of this bottom-up approach in this study further fits well with the notions of self-awareness and conscientisation by rural communities which are central to this study. In this regard, by participating in this study the participants realised the unjust and polarised way in which decisions were taken pertaining to the design and implementation of SEP, and the power they possessed both to solve their problems and to influence decisions that are taken by those in charge of the design and implementation of SEP.

### **3.5. THE STAGES OF PAR**

Unlike conventional methods whereby the researchers come into the community, take data and leave people dry, PAR requires communities to be involved in a cyclical process which involves identification of the problem, data collection, analysis, reflection, and deciding on the way forward in terms of what action should be taken given the mutually discovered findings (Smith *et al.*, 2006:854; Blake, 2007:412; Ungar *et al.*, 2015:712; Houh & Kalsem, 2015:263). In other instances, in addition to mutual identification of a problem, PAR requires that both the researcher and the participants discover the sources of such problems then brainstorm possible solutions (Blake, 2007:412). Instead of following a linear process, PAR follows a cyclic process.

#### **3.5.1. Stage One: Preparation**

This stage of PAR involves what Glassman and Erdem (2014:213) call conscientisation, in which the participants challenge the existing social structures which they perceive unjust as they become aware of the unfairness of the existing social structures and practice. In addition, for the first time they realise the power they possess to change these unjust practices, a sudden conscientisation brought about by the realisation that some practices only serve to maintain the interests of the powerful in society (Glassman & Erdem, 2014:213). In most cases, maintaining the status quo ensures perpetual marginalisation of the already marginalised communities. Consequently, the participants start to question and critique (Glassman & Erdem, 2014:213) the social order to

which they were previously obedient. At this stage both the researcher and the participants decide on a suitable methodology (Tsoetetsi, 2014:144) as well as my explaining the research question in more detail. It emerged that learner participants wholeheartedly believed in the current design and implementation of SEP and later some participants realised the need for the programme to be enhanced.

The first phase of the preparatory stage involved seeking permission from the Free State Department of Education to conduct this research project, which was granted. Before meeting the participants I sent out invitations to all stakeholders and requested them to participate in the study, pasting others around the school building and inside the classroom. This was an attempt to maximise accessibility to all the willing participants. In addition, I personally took copies of these invitations to the offices of all educators at this school, and collected them after two days. This was an attempt to allow the participants sufficient time to decide on their willingness to participate. Also, it afforded the willing participants a chance to seek clarity where they might have not understood anything in the invitation itself. This further proved to be important for the willing minor participants (school learners) who had to get consent from their parents or guardians before participating in the study. In addition, it proved challenging to extend the invitation to the SGB members as some were working. In this regard, I was able to locate their children and give them the invitations to hand to their parents. These were written in English, IsiZulu and Sesotho to ensure that the SGB participants would find it easy to read and understand the content.

The second part of the preparatory stage involved the choice of the venue (research site) for the meetings and workshops. A request was made to the principal to use one unoccupied and secluded classroom in the vicinity and permission was granted. The choice of this classroom over others was determined by three factors, namely, the classroom was within the school yard and this made it easy for us to access it without any difficulty; when sessions were held during school hours it

was possible to be aloft from destructions; and in addition to being safe this classroom had enough furniture to be used by participants.

The third preparatory stage involved the choice of participants and the research site. As emphasised by both CER and PAR, there must be a mutual relationship between the researcher and the participants, the majority of whom in this study were my colleagues and learners, people with whom I had built close relationships over the years. Other stakeholders, such as LFs and SGB members, played a role in the everyday functioning of the school. In addition, central to this study was both an emancipatory and transformative agenda. Consequently, it is important to ensure the direct involvement of those affected by the problem every day (Hough & Kalsem, 2015:265). In this regard, it has over the years been the intention and duty of all the stakeholders (LFs, SGB members, teachers, learners, and SMT members) to ensure sustainable learning and academic performance at the school under study. These were the people 'appropriate' for this study and it is also important for those affected by the problem to have the interests of the entire affected community at heart rather than their unique individual interests.

The fourth stage of preparation involved the profiling of the participants and their respective contributions to this study. According to Hough and Kalsem (2015:263), at the centre of PAR lies the need to have both the concerns and voices of the stakeholders included in the research process. As stated in Chapter one, rural people are seen as incompetent and reliant solely on others to solve their problems. According to Glassman and Erdem (2014:206), the marginalised people are rendered invisible and subordinated by those who have power in society. This perception is perpetuated by a need by the powerful to maintain the status quo. In order to tackle this perpetuation, McClelland (1975) argues that the empowerment of the marginalised to an extent relies on their willingness to learn about their situation, their environment and a willingness to participate in effecting social change (quoted in Lord & Hutchison, 1993:3). The inclusion of rural learners as

participants was appropriate because in general they are the ones about whom these negative views are held and expressed by the powerful elite. Having them as participants challenged these negative views and made them realise and regain their power to influence decisions that affected them. This is also closely linked to what PAR seeks to achieve, namely, empowerment (Smith *et al.*, 2006:854) of the marginalised. This became clear in the way SEP was conducted at this rural school. The decisions, it appeared, favoured teachers and the management of the school without considering their impact on learners. In a situation when decisions were taken *about* someone rather than *with* someone it showed high levels of disregard and subordination. As a response to these challenges, engaging learners in discussion sessions and meetings about the design and implementation of SEP, this study helped to challenge the existing status quo which favoured the teachers and the principal.

Secondly, learner participants were included because they were directly affected by this situation. The entire programme revolves around what should be done to any learner as well as what each learner should do. In addition to improving academic performance this programme aimed at ensuring sustainable learning. Both CER and PAR call for the researcher to focus on and include people who are directly affected by the problem with the aim of creating harmonious and democratic relationships.

Lastly, adding to being affected by the problem is the need to devise solutions to this problem. As alluded to in Chapter One, rural learners had been muted and unrepresented in the design and implementation of SEP. By participating in this study these learners broke the silence and were able to propose various solutions. Before engaging in this study the conditions as well as the need to conduct SEP had been made only by the school management. Through participation learners were able to discuss and challenge some of the ideas put forth by the school management with regard to the need and the conditions suitable for the design and implementation of SEP.

The involvement of parents in their children's education and all its aspects is well documented in the South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act No. 84 of 1996) (SASA). The school had seven members of SGB. According to this Act, parents are legally bound to take part in the education of their children. SGB members have a role to play in ensuring that the children receive education of good quality (Tsotetsi, 2013:149). In this case, the role of the parents is not limited to commenting on the child's performance in school but their role extends to making decisions which enhance the academic performance and learning of their children. The members of the SGB represent the voices of all parents in a school, therefore, including them as participants brought another perspective to understanding the implementation of SEP. This was realised in two ways: firstly, the parents were able to express the challenges that the manner in which the programme was run and suggest ways in which this programme could be enhanced. By making such statements they were also able to challenge the top-down approach that the management of the school employed. This was intertwined with the intention of both CER and PAR to create harmonious power relations. Secondly, while the SMT assumed and imposed the rigid design and implementation of SEP, including the SGB members in the study made the SMT aware of the consequences their decisions had on families. Similarly, parents were affected by poor academic performance and a lack of sustainable learning at this school.

The school had five SMT members, tasked with assisting and ensuring the effective functioning of the school. Their work extended to managing human resources and the curriculum (Tsotetsi, 2013:149). Both the principal and the SMT members were accountable to the Circuit Manager (CM) and the district with regard to the academic performance of learners as well as the smooth functioning of the school. The invitation was extended to all, however, only two showed willingness to participate, whilst the other three cited personal commitments. Despite this fall-back the contribution of these SMT members was useful in various ways, as with their inclusion the study was able to diminish the

perception that rural learners and parents could not solve their problems. In addition to providing a clearer picture of how the programme was run, it also challenged the top-down production of knowledge as they were able to interact with learners and devise strategies needed to enhance SEP as opposed to imposing their strategies on learners. It afforded both learners and teachers the opportunity to voice their concerns directly with those who managed the programme and the entire school. Similarly to the learners, SGB, CM and the educators, these members of the SMT are affected directly by the problem of underperformance at the school under study and they had experiences and expertise that extended beyond 20 years in the education field. This was necessary in this study as it helped reinforcing my understanding of how the programme had been run and the conditions under which it thrived.

As is the case in PAR, CER calls for the research to be linked with people's lived experiences (Glassman & Erdem, 2014:213) and both place the responsibility for initiating enquiries about social order equally on both the researcher and the participants. In this regard, while questioning and critiquing the social system, as is the case in PAR, CER requires both the researcher and the participants to work as co-researchers (Mahlomaholo, 2009). In addition, from this realisation and questioning of the social challenges come the multiple views of participants. As is true for PAR, CER advocates recognition of multiple views (Glassman & Erdem, 2014:213) when knowledge is created. In this study, the participants were given a chance to recommend different activities that would be necessary when enhancing SEP. Moreover, the main aim of rising against the perceived unjust practice is to emancipate and empower the rural community. These are the objectives shared by both PAR and CER.

### **3.5.2. Stage Two: Planning**

After the preparation stage was the planning phase, characterised by the generation of strategies (Tsotetsi, 2014:144; Harnington *et al.*,

2013:525) deemed necessary to address the challenges that have been identified in the previous stages. Here, the mutual plan of action is reviewed as well as the resources which are necessary to solve the problem (Tsotetsi, 2014:144).

After collecting the earlier invitation forms from the participants and putting aside those who showed willingness to participate in the study, I had to extend another invitation to this group of participants to our first meeting. In that meeting I started by explaining what my research was about and detailing the objectives. At first it appeared as though the participants could not understand the research title or the research question. I had to spend some time explaining to them and in one instance the participants were quarrelling among themselves as to whether it was necessary to undertake this research.

Agreement on the issue of roles and responsibilities of each participant followed, and with myself as a temporary facilitator I proposed that we elect people who would be taking minutes of the subsequent meetings. I also emphasised that these roles and responsibilities would rotate. In other words, at the second meeting Participant A would be the scribe, timekeeper or facilitator. That role would be assumed by Participant B in the subsequent workshops. This rotation applied to all the roles, responsibilities and members (myself included) in the group. This was done to ensure that all participants had an opportunity to contribute and voice their opinions.

After everyone assumed particular roles and responsibilities we performed a SWOT analysis, defined by Dyson (2004:632) as a method used in the formulation of a strategy. It is intended to assess the possibility of the success of an organisation (group) in achieving the intended aims by identifying the perceived strengths and weaknesses of that organization (group). It also focuses on both opportunities and threats which may be posed by the environment in which the organization (group) operates. The intention here was to devise ways to



capitalise on the strengths and opportunities while finding ways to eliminate both the weaknesses and threats.

In our first meeting we began by discussing the strengths and opportunities of the group. We evaluated first for the strengths of our team. We were all working in the same school which made it easy for us work together and to cement relationships that already existed. This creation of a mutual and trusting relationship is regarded as essential in a PAR couched study. Since we were all teachers we shared similar experiences, which made it easier to rally around the programme and work with each other for the common goal of finding ways of enhancing SEP at this school. In addition, we were all exposed to the same style of top-down leadership as well as the authoritative leadership of education officials from the local district. This in itself made us determined to find ways of effecting change. Another strength was that some members were directly involved in administering and functioning of the existing SEP.

The focus then shifted to the threats and weaknesses of our group in achieving the goal of finding ways of enhancing SEP. The first challenge was the issue of time. Most members of this group stayed in a nearby town so they could not join the discussions after school. In cases where they would they felt they were pressed for time and needed more time to participate in the study and voice their concerns. Another weakness was the amount of work they were expected to perform at school. According to them, it was almost impossible for one to finish all the work at school.

### **3.5.3. Stage 3: Reflection**

The PAR guided and CER couched research is a continuing process in which both the researcher and the participants work collaboratively. While observing the proposed strategies manifest in praxis phase, both the researcher and the participants brainstorm the possibilities of another set of strategies should the need to revise the earlier strategies arise (Harrington, Bradley, Jeffers, Linedale, Kelman & Killington,

2013:525). While identifying the resources they currently have to solve the problem, participants assess and evaluate what is working and discard the strategies which are not working. In addition, this phase is aimed at enhancing participation and collaboration (Tsotetsi, 2014:144) of the researcher and the participants. Similar to PAR, CER requires collaboration between the researcher and the participant to identify the existing resources as well as brainstorming possible strategies which can be necessary for enhancing SEP. In this study, reflection was on two levels as discussed below.

At the school under study, the responsibility for the design and implementation of SEP lied squarely with the principal and some members of the SMT. The programme started in 2011 to respond to the persistent underperformance of the entire school. The whole SMT decided on carrying out extra classes for the Grade 12 learners in the afternoons. The classes would commence at around 16h00 Monday to Friday and on Saturdays would proceed from 8h00 in the morning and continue throughout the day. It was later decided by the SMT that learners in both Grades 10 and 11 would also participate in the programme. The roles of both supervision and administration of learners during the programme were assumed by the few members of the SMT. It should be noted that in most cases learners were left unsupervised due to high numbers. In addition to lack of support from teachers, there were no policies in place regarding the functioning of the entire programme and no teachers or SMT members underwent training on how to handle such a programme.

At this stage of our research process we thought it was important to reflect on the state of SEP. After re-explaining the objectives of the study and the topic to the participants we decided to discuss the manner in which the programme was designed and implemented. The rationale for this was to bring the participant up to par with the intentions of the study and afford them an opportunity to determine whether there was a need for the programme to be enhanced. This was also in line with what PAR requires of the participants as the ones who should

initiate the effect of change. This increased the participants' awareness of their situation, their levels of ownership of the problem and the responsibilities of finding solutions to it. By reflecting on the existing programme we were able to make the participants realise that they had power among themselves to solve the problem without being ordered by someone in authority to change the situations for them.

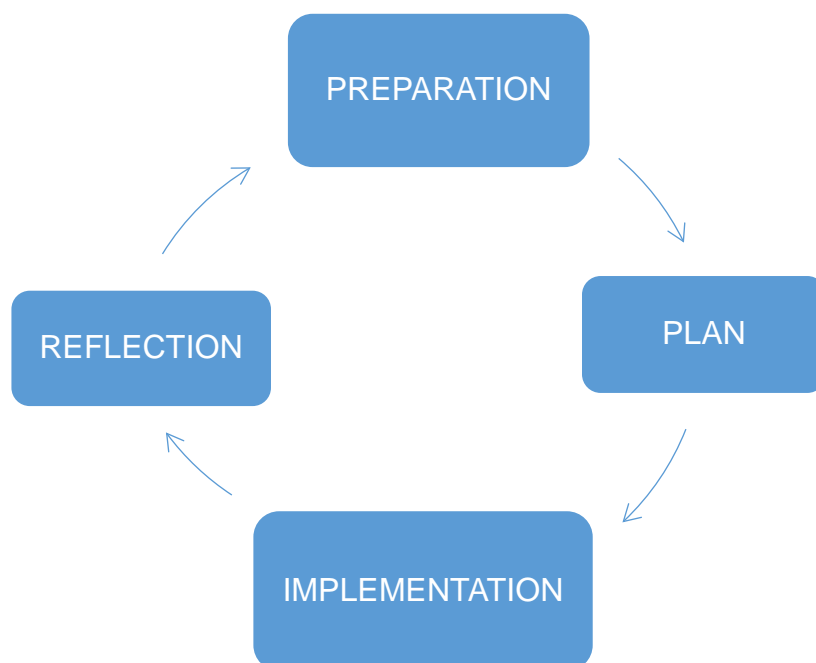
In addition, we were able to evaluate the existing strategies that the school employed when carrying out the programme. The intention here was to find out which strategies were working and which needed to be reviewed or discarded. It was only at this point that the disparities in the views of the SMT members, teachers and learners became apparent. As stated in both Chapters 1 and 2, the SMT at this school employed a top-down approach when carrying out the programme, so it was only natural for them to view their strategies as best for the programme. For teachers, however, there were many flaws in the strategies imposed on them by the SMT. Teachers felt they were at the receiving end of the programme, similarly with learner participants. They found many flaws in the manner in which the programme was carried out, and in addition to feeling left out and their voices being muted, they stated that it would be better if the entire programme were overhauled.

#### **3.5.4. Stage 4: Implementation**

Glassman and Erdem (2014:212) use the word *praxis* synonymously with the word action. According to these authors this stage of PAR involves actions and decisions taken by the marginalised communities and with the researcher as a facilitator, to change the social situations or practices they perceive as unjust. At this stage of PAR the participants realise and actualise the power to change their situations. This is the stage when all the strategies and activities mutually and unanimously agreed upon by all participants are put to the test. Participants taking charge of their situation fits well with the idea of empowerment (Ward & Bailey, 2013:307) embedded within PAR and CER. In addition, by acting on the strategies and activities about how

SEP could be enhanced, which were designed and recommended by them, the participants challenged the powerful position of the academic researchers. In other words, PAR enabled them to view themselves as valuable contributors to their own emancipation as opposed to being 'rescued' by the researcher. This idea fits well with CER stance on the capabilities of marginalised people to effect social change. Furthermore, during this stage of PAR equal participation was essential. All the participants were given equal opportunity to suggest the envisaged strategies essential for the enhancement of SEP, thus further promoting the CER's idea of equality and justice.

These different stages of PAR can be demonstrated in the diagram below:



**FIGURE: 3.1.**ThePAR process. Adapted from Tsotetsi (2014:145).

### **3.6. DATA GENERATION METHODS**

The data presented in this study was generated in two ways: the use of prompts guided by the Free Attitude Interviews (FAIs) as well as discussion-sessions (workshops). In addition to explaining these

methods I also explained how they fit into both PAR as the conceptual framework couching this study and CDA as a method of data analysis used in this study.

### **3.6.1. Free Attitude Interviews (FAIs)**

According to Buskens (2011), free attitude interviews (FAIs) as a method of data generation involve interviews of participants either in pairs or in groups (cited in Myende, 2014:90). In this study, however, these interviews were conducted with both with pairs and groups of people. Contrary to just having rigid questions in a questionnaire, FAIs require that one question be used to begin discussions. This question forms the basis for the entire conversation and from which reflections and summaries (Myende, 2014:89) of participants' contributions are made. The question asked of the participants in this study was: *how can we enhance SEP for sustainable learning at a rural high school?* In addition, as a way of ensuring optimum participation and creating a space for multiple realities this question was followed by prompts.

How was FAIs 'fit for purpose' of this study? Both PAR and CER require a space to be created for multiple realities to be allowed to emerge and acknowledged. The use of workshops and meetings guided by FAIs allowed such voices to be heard and their contributions valued. In addition, the use of prompts guided by FAIs allowed for flexibility and maximum participation. Their usage further 'fits the purpose' as it allowed participants to be treated with respect. In most cases, in my view, marginalised rural people are not always listened to or taken seriously, therefore, creating a group in which their opinions were valued concurs with the CER and PAR's principles of empowerment and respect for participants as collaborators and co-researchers. Furthermore, participating in a group in which nobody was discriminated on the basis of gender, race or creed, not only ensured the realisation of CER's principles of equality, justice and rapport between myself and the co-researchers but it also enhanced PAR's principles of participation by all participants.

### 3.7. METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

In this section of the study the focus is on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as the tool used to analyse data. The origins and the evolution of CDA are attributed to the works of Fairclough (Rogers, Malancharuvil-Berkes, Mosley, Hui & Joseph, 2005:370). CDA has largely been defined as "...the study of speech beyond sentences..." (Avdi & Georgaca, 2007:158). Alternatively, CDA has been defined as both theory and methodology tasked with analysing the politically, political-economic and socially inclined discourse (Fairclough, 2013:178). In addition, Rogers *et al.* (2005:370) define CDA as a scientific paradigm at whose centre is the intention to address social problems.

Through description and interpretation CDA seeks to challenge the way in which social practices are changed and transformed (Rogers *et al.*, 2005:370). In addition, CDA challenges the conditions of inequality with the aim of transforming these conditions (Roger *et al.* 2005:366). Adding to transforming the unequal conditions, CDA notes the manner in which language as a tool is used to maintain power in society.

It is important to note the appropriateness of both CER and CDA in this study and the central aim to develop ways to enhance SEP for sustainable learning at a rural school. As it was argued in the previous chapter, the rural schools and communities are perceived as powerless in solving their problems. Using both CER and CDA challenges such discourse and both seek to destabilise (Liasidou, 2008:483) these polarised discourses. Creating the spaces for discussions between me and the rural participants empowered them to solve their problems and led to the realisation of how dominance is maintained by those in the positions of power.

Moreover, CDA similarly to CER, advocate transformative social agendas. While CER calls for the transformation of the perpetual and unequal power relations, CDA calls for transformation of language used as a tool of dominance in support of a transformative agenda (Liasidou,

2008:496). This study, as alluded to in the previous chapters, seeks to empower the participants and challenge the polarised decision-making that undermines the design and implementation of SEP.

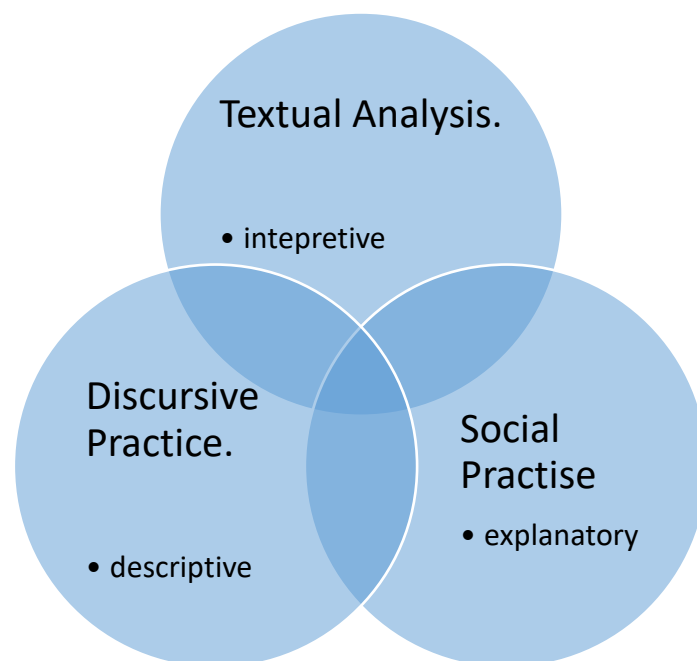
In addition, similar to this study, both CDA and CER are emancipatory and discovery in nature (Avdi & Georgaca, 2007:171; Liasidou, 2008:496; Paulus & Lester, 2015:4). Participants challenged the discourses which portray rural people as powerless and voiceless to change their social situations. In this study these participants were able to discover the power they possess to change their situations and allowed them to involve in meaningful and open discussions with their authorities. For example, not only learner participants were able to voice their thoughts and experiences in front of their parents and teachers and the platform was created for teacher participants to influence decision-making with regard to the design and implementation of SEP.

For researchers to use CDA to challenge domination through power (Rogers *et al.*, 2005:366), Fairclough has developed a three-tiered framework. In this framework, analysis is performed on three different levels: interpretive, descriptive and explanatory (Rogers *et al.*, 2005:371). The first level involves the analysis of both written and spoken text (Rogers *et al.*, 2005:369), which calls for both spoken and written text to be transcribed in order to derive the deeper meaning. Since CDA seeks to challenge power and domination often carried in discourses, in this study the spoken data was transcribed verbatim. Such transcription helped to avoid the possible misinterpretation of the participants' words and ensured it had access to the data (Myende, 2014:92) they generated. Such access increased the participants' ownership of the results generated by the study and their ownership of the entire research project.

The second level of analysis involved the discursive practice. At this level the focus was on language structures, notably production, consumption and interpretation of texts (Rogers *et al.*, 2005:370) by the participants. The main aim was to make them aware of how language

was used at local, institutional and societal levels (Myende, 2014:92; Rogers *et al.*, 2005:370).

At the third level of analysis the focus was on discourses as a social practice (Myende, 2014:92), about explaining the impact of social issues such as gender, race, and power, among others, on the construction of knowledge and how it is perceived by those who receive such knowledge. Such explanations are aimed at critiquing, reflecting and understanding how social structures are designed and transformed the way they are. These three levels are summarised in the figure below:



**Figure: 3.2.** Three tiers of CDA

### 3.8. DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH SITE



This study took place in a rural high school referred to as Pitsaneng (pseudonym), categorised as a quintile one<sup>4</sup> and falling under section 20. A school in this category depends largely on the department of education for everyday functions. This school had 21 academic staff, two administration clerks, one non-staff member<sup>5</sup> as well as two SGB members. Among the academic staff were three HoDs, one heads Natural Sciences (in the GET phase as well as Physical Sciences in the FET phase) and the other leads (Economic and Management Sciences in the GET phase and Commerce in the FET phase). The third HoD is responsible for supervising Human and Social Sciences in the GET phase while heading History and Geography in the FET phase respectively. The school begins with Grade 8 and ends at Grade 12. The total number of enrolled learners stands at 750.

### **3.9. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

I am of the view that when working with rural communities one needs to be mindful of the sensitivity and fragility of these communities towards researches conducted in their settings. Rural people tend to be more fragile because in the past they were not treated well by the researchers. In an attempt to adhere to the ethical aspects of research, following a number of presentations in the SURLEC/SULE workshops in which I presented my research proposal, I eventually wrote the summary of my study outlining its objectives, and ethical considerations to the Ethics Committee of the University of the Free State seeking permission to undertake this study. After ensuring that this study complied with the ethical requirements, the committee granted the permission.

Because this study was conducted in a school setting I found it important to write a letter to the Free State Department of Education (FSDoE) seeking permission to conduct this research process. In the Free State it is important to seek permission of the principal before

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<sup>4</sup> A no fee paying school

<sup>5</sup>A general worker or a care-taker who is responsible for maintenance, cleaning etc around the school

anyone can undertake any activity within the school yard. In this case, I wrote another letter to the principal of the school in which this study was undertaken seeking permission. This was more important because some of the participants in this study were members of the SMT and the SGB. The principal was the one who might simplify access to these stakeholders. Permission was granted.

For all the participants, letters seeking consent (translated into Sesotho and IsiZulu) were written and handed to them for acknowledgement. In these forms, the objectives and the main aim of this study were discussed. In addition, it was stressed that participants were participating on totally voluntary basis and they were at liberty to abandon the study without any consequences to themselves. Learner participants were given forms and letters to inform their parent(s) or guardian(s) of their intention to participate in this research process. In this regard, parents granted permission for their children to participate in this study.

To ensure confidentiality, all participants signed a 'confidentiality form' (attached in the appendices). It should be noted that this form was not a contract between me and the participants, but was used as a means to minimise the possibility of leaking of sensitive information about or revealed by any participant in this project. In addition, the use of pseudonyms ensured the protection of both the school and all participants. These pseudonyms would also be used when recording the participants' voices on the voice-recorder.

As required by both PAR and CER, the inclusion of participants in the research process was critical. In this regard, I met with them and discussed the problem with them, with the intention of ensuring that they became part of this study from the beginning. We also discussed and decided on how the research process would unfold. We further agreed on the times and venues for our workshops. With regard to number of sessions, we could not agree on a specific number but rather we agreed that the number of sessions would be determined by the

issues at hand, as well as the pace at which these were discussed. Sessions would be held at any point should the need arise.

### **3.10. CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter began by distinguishing between research methodology and research design to elucidate and clear the confusion that is often caused by these two concepts. Attention shifted to the definition of PAR as the conceptual framework couching this study, followed by justification for the use and relevance of both PAR and CER as theoretical framework and conceptual framework, respectively. From there, the focus was on the principles as well as the stages of PAR. Also included in these stages were issues such SWOT analysis, profiling of participants, among others. Following this, the chapter focused on data generation methods. In addition to explaining the method, justifications for using such method in this study were also provided. The method of data analysis was discussed and reasons for the use of CDA to analyse data in this study were also highlighted. The description of research site then followed. Finally, this chapter focused on the ethical considerations as well as how they were adhered to in this study.

The next chapter focuses on data presentation, analysis and interpretation.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

## **PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA ON ENHANCING A SCHOOL ENRICHMENT PROGRAMME FOR SUSTAINABLE LEARNING AT A RURAL HIGH SCHOOL**

### **4.1. INTRODUCTION**

The aim central to this study is to devise strategies necessary for enhancing a school enrichment programme for sustainable learning at a rural high school. This chapter presents data generated in an attempt to achieve this aim and the objectives of this study. Firstly, it demonstrates and justifies the need for SEP to be enhanced, secondly determining the conditions that would be necessary for SEP to be enhanced. Thirdly, the focus shifts to discussing possible threats to the successful enhancement of SEP and fourthly to exploring current understanding of the school enrichment programme. Lastly, it suggests strategies for the enhancement of SEP.

Data and discourses generated under each of these objectives are analysed on three different levels, textual, as a social practice and as discursive practice. The chapter focuses on how key elements of CER emerge throughout the study.

### **4.2. CHALLENGES HAMPERING THE SUCCESS OF THE STRATEGY TO ENHANCE SEP**

This section identifies challenges to the success of the strategy to enhance the SEP.

#### **4.2.1. Lack of funding**

The school under study is located in a rural area and as a result is not immune from the challenges faced by rural high schools, exacerbated by the different economic and social backgrounds from which learners emerge. This situation is made worse by under-resourcing of schools (Hlalele, 2013). For example, in spite the innovative programmes such as the SEP in rural schools, lack of funding hampers the effective

design and implementation (Viluan, 2005:15). The impact of inadequate funding on the SEP administered in the rural schools has been noticed by other scholars (Correge, 2012; Shernoff & Vandell, 2007). Not surprisingly, the participants in this study also confirmed what was revealed in Chapter Two.

#### **4.2.2. Exclusive focus on academic activities**

While acknowledging that SEP is aimed at improving academic performance and ensuring sustainable learning of learners, studies have shown that other activities needed to be included in the design and implementation of this programme. Failure to include such activities in SEP has had a negative impact on learner performance and its sustainability. Noguera (2003:208) warns about the dangers of focusing on the sole improvement of academic performance while neglecting other important aspects of learner schooling. In this case, having a programme focusing only on academic performance may not even guarantee the envisaged improvement in academic performance. Moreover, this exclusive focus on academic activities tends to be lacking in providing learners with social, emotional and health needs (Afterschool Alliance, 2014:3). As alluded to in Chapter Two, learners who attend SEPs which focus solely on academic performance run the risk of becoming demotivated, engaging in anti-social behaviour and having low self-confidence.

At the school under study it came to my attention that learners were expected to participate fully in a programme designed in such a way that learners were expected to be at school for three hours every day, during which time they would be expected to be studying by themselves, leaving no time for sport activities or any other extracurricular activities. It was surprising that SMT members were aware of the importance of varying activities in the programme. When I asked the HoDs why these activities were not included in the programme given their familiarity with the importance of such activities, the issue of power relations emerged. In another meeting I raised similar

question with the learners. Their responses were not different from those of their teachers. This related to the issue of top-down approach of decision-making discussed in chapter three of this study. Furthermore, it related to the notion of perceived powerlessness of rural people. In this case, the HoDs in particular felt that it was the responsibility of either the principal or the deputy principal to give such orders.

Within the group, Learner C (TP) commented about the boredom that he and others experienced during the programme. He felt that the programme was too rigid and monotonous:

*“Le matitjhere re batla ba etse study se be funny hai o be serious. We want amgamesnyana like in maths re bine amafomula and role play in English class”.*

#### ***Analysis of discourse at textual level***

The learner is stating the he recognises the need for activities in the programme to be flexible and appealing to them. His words point to the rigidity of the programme and the seriousness at which such activities are undertaken.

#### ***Analysis of discourse as a social practice***

It is evident that the learner recognises the importance of how community can influence learning and teaching in the programme. In this case, the inclusion of games which are often played in the community proves significant for the effectiveness of the programme. Games and songs which this learner proposes to be included often play a pivotal role in society in the teaching and learning situation.

#### ***Analysis of discourse from critical emancipatory research perspective***

Critical emancipatory research notices the importance of community involvement as well as the ways in which such community resolves its problems. The utterances above reflect the creative way of making the programme more appealing to learners themselves and more effective

in ensuring sustainable learning. In the phrase “*we want the study to be...*” the learner is voicing her opinions on how they would like the programme to be designed. This is what CER encourages, the ability to innovate ideas to solve problems. In the same phrase, the use of the pronoun ‘we’ shows recognition by the learner of the need to work together as equal members of a team in solving problems rather than individually. This demonstrates a principle of equal partnership in the search for solutions which is endorsed by CER as a theoretical framework couching this study. The creation of a platform in which participants were group together and given a chance to work collectively in finding solutions resonates well with this theoretical framework.

From her words above, one can successfully detect the trails of discouragement and despair. For these learners, one got the feeling that they had no power to influence decision-making in the school, despite having elected members of Representative Council of Learners (RCL) to represent their interests.

#### **4.2.3. Learners’ attitudes towards the programme**

Bearing in mind the above discussion it did not catch me by surprise that learners expressed mixed attitudes towards the programme. On the one hand, while acknowledging the importance of the programme in their own studies, learners expressed mixed emotions about the effectiveness of the programme. Below are their responses:

Learner A (QN): *“Ke nahana hore programme e hantle titjhere it’s just that ha ba attende bana ba bang.”* [“*I think that the programme is effective. It is just that other learners do not attend the programme*”]

#### ***Analysis of discourse at a textual level***

The above indicates that she has a positive attitude about the programme itself. She is also aware of the role that the attitudes of individuals can play in the success or failure of the implementation of SEP; however, the same cannot be said about other learners. Judging

from their actions of not attending, I note that it stems from their attitude towards the programme. Their attitudes were reflected in their non-attendance of the programme, hampering the effectiveness of the programme in their school but a positive attitude expressed by this participant carried a little hope for the successful implementation and the effectiveness of the programme.

### ***Analysis of discourse as a social practice***

The use of phrase “...*ha ba attende bana ba bang...* [...] *other children do not attend...*” indicates the effect negative attitudes of individual learners can have on the success and effectiveness of a collective project, the SEP in this case. These utterances are shaped by a society which recognises the importance of a collective effort in problem-solving. This is, however, made impossible by an environment at school in which learners are often in competition with each other and individual attitudes matter more than collective ones.

### ***Analysis of discourse from the critical emancipatory research perspective***

In addition to promoting partnership in problem-solving, CER advocates a complete involvement and participation of all who are affected by a problem with the intention of finding solution to such problem. Moreover, it does not support the imposition of individual's ideas on other participants but rather calls for harmony and feelings of humanity amongst the co-researchers. In this case the use of words “...*other children do not attend...*” carries genuine feelings of recognising the role ‘the other’ can play in making the programme effective and successful. In its present state it is the lack of humanity and harmony in the attitudes of learners that hampers the effective implementation of SEP.

At the same point, Learner A (QN) was interrupted by Learner B (TP) in the quest to express her opinions. Below are her views:

*Learner B (PT): “I think the programme is nothing but just a waste of time. Teachers just want to keep us here at school doing nothing. Maybe if they*



*could change the way ba etsang dintho ka teng, for now ha ke bone molemo wa this programme, sorry” [...maybe if they could change the way they do things, for now I do not see the importance of this programme...]*

### ***Analysis of discourse at a textual level***

The utterance “...*I think the programme is nothing but just a waste of time...*” demonstrates that Learner B (PT) does not see a reason for attending the programme. Her attitude towards it is negative. In the phrase “...*teachers just want to keep us here at school doing nothing...*” a demonstration is made of perceiving teachers as unable to run the programme effectively, as opposed to a realisation of her negative attitude towards it. However, the phrase “... *maybe if they could change the way they do things...*” demonstrates a possible change in attitude provided that a few things are changed in the implementation and design of the programme. This potential change is further reflected in the phrase “...*for now I do not see the importance of this programme...*” Based on these utterances a shift in the way things are done in the programme currently can lead to a potential change in the attitudes of learners.

### ***Analysis of discourse as a discursive practice***

There is a discourse about whether participating in the programme is helpful to the learners. In this case, learner B (PT) is questioning the role of teachers in the programme, describing their role as “*a waste of time*”. It is, however, surprising that this participant does not realise the impact of her attitude and of those around her towards the programme.

### ***Analysis of discourse from a critical emancipatory research perspective***

The phrases “...*teachers just want to keep us here at school...*” and “...*if they could change the way...*” demonstrate the principle of power relations central to CER. A reflection is made on the former phrase of teachers being the ones who have the power to effect change in the programme. They are also viewed as being the ones who are responsible for the

attitudes that learners develop and demonstrate towards the programme. In other words, such utterances portray learners as being unable to effect necessary changes in the programme. The latter phrase puts more power in the hands of teachers while it exonerates the learners to effect necessary changes in the programme. However, this study managed to change this status quo by creating a platform in which the two groups shared equal powers in decision-making and effecting change in the programme.

### ***Analysis of discourse as a social practice***

The use of the phrase “...if they could change the way they do things...” indicates the role that society places on teachers and the responsibility of bringing change. This belief may stem from teachers, like all authorities, being perceived as having the power to effect social change. It demonstrates that the learner is aware of the need for a shift in the manner SEP is designed and implemented at her school. It can also be noted that her utterances show a belief in the good that can be brought by a change in the status quo. At this point, however, it becomes more apparent that learners’ views reflect the perception of dependency by rural people on others in the position of authority to effect and enforce change in their situations.

What is once again interesting here is the non-realisation by society of the power that lies within itself to solve its own problems. This study hopes to help unleash this great potential that rural societies have in changing their own situations. Rather than coming up with my own solutions or creating a platform on which authorities could impose their solutions on learners it has created a platform which allowed learners to express their opinions and to reflect on and challenge their own perceptions and attitudes about the programme. The attitudes and perceptions that learners have of SEP may hamper the effectiveness and success of the programme.

In the same meeting, Learner C (JP) wanted his views to be heard. However, there was no significant difference in what he thought of the programme in relation to others:

*Learner C (JP): "Ke a utlwa meneer hore bana bareng nna ke nahana hore ha e na molemo le nna because re a feila re ntse re attenda programme everyday. Le batswadi ba a lwana hae hore re spenda nako e ngata sekolong at the end re a feila".[ I hear what others are saying teacher, I think that this programme is not helpful because we are failing and yet we attend the programme everyday. Even the parents are angry at us because we spend so much time here at school but in the end we fail.]*

### ***Analysis of discourse at a textual level***

In the phrase "...I think the programme is not helpful because we are failing and yet we attend the programme..." demonstrates the idea that the programme is not meeting its intended outcomes of helping learners perform well. In addition, carried in this phrase is a realisation that there is no need for them to attend because they do not benefit from the programme. The problem does not lie in their lack of attendance on the programme or in their attitudes towards it, but rather in the effectiveness of the programme itself.

The use of the phrase "...because we spend so much time here at school..." indicates the attitudes of learners towards school in general. The underlying meaning of the phrase "...we spend so much time here at school..." shows that the learner prefers to spend her time somewhere rather than participating in the programme. In other words, participating in this programme is viewed as a waste of time rather than an effort to help with ensuring sustainable learning and improved academic performance.

In addition, the phrase "... even the parents are angry at us because we spend so much time here at school at the end of the day we fail..." demonstrates that the attitudes of parents towards their children's attendance in the programme frustrates the learners. These learners'

attitudes, on the other hand, may stem from the conflict that they experience at home as a result of attending an ineffective programme.

### ***Analysis of discourse as social practice***

Using the phrase “... even the parents are angry at us because we spend so much time here at school at the end of the day we fail...” shows that learners and parents do communicate about the programme. The responses that such discourse produces reflect the attitudes of the learners. The anger with which parents react to the learners’ failures further impacts on the attitudes that these learners have of the programme. In short, if parents do not see the benefit of the programme their children will not be enthusiastic about it. The reverse, however, is true.

### ***Analysis of discourse as discursive practice***

When Learner C (JP) begins his response “...I hear what others are saying teacher...” it is a demonstration that he understands the discourse. When he further states that “...the programme is not helpful...” he demonstrates his ability to relate to the discourses around him. In addition, he demonstrates the issue of coherence by building on the earlier utterances of Learner A (QN) and Learner C (JP) that the programme is ineffective. These phrases that he uses are similar to those expressed by his fellow learners. As a result the negative attitudes towards the programme are being perpetuated. The phrase “...even the parents are angry at us...at the end of the day we fail...” demonstrates inter-textuality because it builds on what has been said earlier by other learners and further provides reasons parents are angry, as well as a lack of attendance in the programme alluded to by Learner A (QN) above.

### ***Analysis of discourse from a critical emancipatory research perspective***

Use of the phrase “...even the parents are angry at us because we spend so much time here at school but in the end we fail...” demonstrates arealisation

by parents of the ineffectiveness of the programme in helping with sustainable learning and improved academic performance. The fact that this realisation stems from parents themselves features well in CER, where identification of the existence of a problem must be initiated by the community rather than a researcher. Similarly, recognition by learners of the failure of the programme to achieve the intended outcomes and participating in this study to find solutions fits well with CER. This participation promotes a sense of ownership of this study by learners and helps promote responsible citizenry among learners themselves.

In the discussion with HODs one (VM) stated that learners' attitudes hampered the effectiveness of the programme, linked by him to the general ill-discipline that often troubled the school:

*"Among other things one needs to look at the so called the discipline with regard to our learners. We need to have a discipline so that our plan will function in such a way that learners will not be giving us problems"*

### ***Analysis of discourse at a textual level***

The expression "...We need to have a discipline so that our plan will function..." signifies that learners have negative attitudes towards the programme and lack discipline. Additionally, his words reflect that as part of the management of the school they have failed to instil discipline, which resulted in learners' negative attitude towards the programme. The use of the pronoun 'we' in the above expression indicates that the problem of negative attitude affects everyone in the school. This further calls for a creation of a platform in which everybody is included in an attempt to address the situation.

### ***Analysis of discourse as a social practice***

There exists a realisation in his phrases of the importance of instilling discipline in the learners in order for the programme to be success. In this case, he realises that with discipline learners' attitudes can change. The phrase "...learners will not be giving us problems..." further

demonstrates the position from which he speaks, blaming learners for the ineffectiveness of the programme. The learners' familiarity with the programme and the rules and norms that govern the school do not matter from this perspective of the HOD. According to his views the negative attitudes and ill-discipline on the part of learners hamper the success of SEP and the strategies to enhance its effectiveness.

### ***Analysis of discourse as discursive practice***

It seems that the issue of ill-discipline of learners has been evident for a while in this school. Additionally, the use of words “...among other things...” demonstrates that in addition to being aware of the situation this participant builds on what other participants have already identified as threats to the programme. This demonstrates both coherence and inter-textuality in that all participants are becoming aware of the impact a lack of discipline has on the success of SEP at this school.

### ***Analysis of discourse from the critical emancipatory research perspective***

The use of the words ‘our plan’ in the phrase “...We need to have a discipline so that our plan will function in such a way that learners will not be giving us problems” demonstrates a realisation that finding strategies to enhance the ineffective SEP is not the responsibility of the principal, SMT members and teachers or learners, rather, it needs the collective effort of everyone. This realisation calls for equal participation and the collective ownership of the problem as well as solutions. Such ownership of problems and the means to circumvent those problems produces creative learners and teachers and leads to the creation of learners who are empowered to face challenges as responsible citizens.

When I asked whether he thought learners' bad attitude towards the programme could be as a result of their exclusion in the design and implementation of the programme, in affirmation he shifted the blame to the principal that it was her responsibility to include learners. “...You see eh...ntate Mokoena here at school the principal or the deputy is the one who

*runs the school, basically. Like we told you before we are not consulted when the programme is designed but we are only informed in the morning with all other educators during the morning sessions...*

### ***Analysis of discourse at a textual level***

The use of phrases “...the *principal or the deputy is the one who runs the school...*” demonstrates that the teachers have no power to make decisions that affect the running of the programme. As a result they do not feel comfortable. Furthermore, it demonstrates a willingness of teachers to allow learners to participate in the way SEP is designed and implemented in their school. Again, the issue of a lack of consultation hinders meaningful inputs which these teachers, HODs and learners may have with regard the design and implementation of SEP. It is a result of such willingness and realisation of the importance of learnerinclusion that calls for the need to enhance SEP.

### ***Analysis of discourse as discursive practice***

This teacher uses the phrase “...like we told you before...” to signal the connection that exists and is shared between the discourses in which other participants engaged. In this case, she builds on what other participants have already said about the effects of lack of consultation. There has been a discourse about lack of learners’ inclusions that learners engaged in during ours sessions in this study (see above). In addition, the use of the word “we” further signifies the extent to which this lack of learner-inclusion calls for the need to enhance SEP in their school.

### ***Analysis of discourse as social practice***

The use of the phrase “...we are not consulted when the programme is designed and implemented...” shows that lack of consultation has become a norm at this school, further demonstrating that teachers are aware of lack of learner inclusion in the programme. The reflection “...the *principal or the deputy is the one who runs the school...*” signals the situation in which social transformation has not taken place, rather the top-down approach is administered to perpetuate exclusion of learners and

teachers, thereby hindering successful implementation of SEP. This exclusion is summarised in the phrase, “...we are only informed in the morning with all other educators during the morning sessions...” The result of such non-consultation has contributed to the need for SEP to be enhanced.

He said: “As for the learners I think that the blame should be placed on the LRC members themselves because I don’t see them doing anything.” However, he noticed the importance of including learners in the decision-making with regard to the design and implementation of SEP. This is yet another instance of perceived helplessness of rural people alluded to in the previous chapters.

#### **4.2.3. The ambiguous roles of the parents and the lack of their involvement in the programme**

Generally, the importance of parental participation in the education of their children has been discussed overwhelmingly in literature. In this study two members of SGB participated, their role, among other things, being to ensure that children are offered education of good quality (Tsotetsi, 2013:152). In addition to being representatives of parents they also represent the way a community views the school. In short, they are the voice and interest of parents in the school. There is some evidence in the literature supporting the significance of parental involvement in the programmes or interventions aimed at improving academic performance of learners. In their study, Stakey and Klein (2000) state that the improved academic performance of learners may not be attributed to the effectiveness of the intervention programme alone, but also to the active participation of parents in such a programme.

Despite the findings of these studies the lack of parental involvement in education persists, especially in rural areas and low-income families (Friedman 1994). According to Singh *et al.* (2004:301), parents in rural secondary schools are hindered by illiteracy or semi-literacy to participate meaningfully and effectively in the education of their



children. These authors further cite poverty experienced by these parents as another factor which weakens their participation. In addition to viewing school activities as irrelevant to them (Friedman, 1998), Mcube (2010:239) states that the use of English in schools by teachers when interacting with parents may also thwart the involvement of rural parents as they may not be able to articulate themselves in this language. On another level, this problem is further complicated by the great amount of time that parents spend at work (Bray, 2006:515).

With the full knowledge of representing the views and interests of other parents, two parents participated in this study to ensure that children received education of good quality. In one of the discussion sessions Asked what they thought about the design and implementation of SEP, these were their responses:

Parent B (MF) *"Like re o jwetsitse titjhere ha re tsebe letho ka programme ena ntle le hore re fumane mangolo from the principal telling us hore bana ba attende diclass ka diafternoon. [Like we told you teacher we don't know anything about the programme except that we received letters in which the principal was telling us that the children should attend afternoon classes]"*

### ***Analysis of discourse at a textual level***

The use of the phrases "...we don't know anything about the programme..." demonstrate the lack of involvement of parents in this programme. This response further points to the situation in which the parents' role in the programme is not regarded as important by the school authorities. Their roles have been reduced to being mere receivers of the decisions taken by the school management about their children.

### ***Analysis of discourse as a social practice***

The phrase "... except that we received letters in which the principal was telling us..." demonstrates the top-down approach that is often adopted by the authorities when dealing with the rural people. In this case, the decision has been taken on their behalf and they are only informed of the solutions deemed necessary to remedy the situation of poor

academic performance and learning which is not sustainable at this school.

In the phrase in which Learner A (QN) stated “...uma kukhwethwa abantu ku SGB kumela bakhethe abantu aba educated...” [*When it comes to electing members of SGB they must elect people who are educated...*] demonstrates recognition that parents are often excluded by the school management because of the former’s lack of education. It is this lack of education that leads to their voice not being heard when programmes such as SEP are designed in schools. This realisation of lack of parental involvement in SEP at this school calls for it to be enhanced.

### ***Analysis of discourse at a discursive practice level***

The phrase used by Learner A (QN) “...When it comes to electing members of SGB they must elect people who are educated... and those who know how to take of children...” demonstrates awareness this learner has of the discourse around her, and shows willingness to contribute meaningfully to enhancing SEP and ensuring sustainable learning which may result in improved academic performance of her fellow learners. In addition, she recognises the role that can be played by meaningful involvement of parents in making the programme more effective.

### ***Analysis of discourse from the critical emancipatory research perspective***

The use of the phrase “... except that we received letters in which the principal was telling us...” demonstrates a manifestation of the top-down approach that often characterises the relationship that authorities have when they are in contact with rural people. In this case, the ‘telling’ of the parents by the principal shows the polarised power relations that exist at this school in general and SEP in particular. It further demonstrates that power is not shared equally but rather it is concentrated in the hands of the principal. This approach excludes the parents from contributing meaningfully to the programme and dis-empowers them from making meaningful contributions to changing and enhancing the programme in which their children participate. In an

attempt to remedy these polarised power relations, the creation of a platform in which these parents were allowed to voice their views about the programme challenged this top-down approach.

In our meetings it became apparent that parents were prepared to participate fully in the programme and this study afforded them an opportunity not only to express their views but also to take responsibility in reclaiming their power to influence decision-making about problems that affected them and their children. The need for such empowerment is summarised in the words of Learner A (QN): “...*When it comes to electing members of SGB they must elect people who are educated... and those who know how to take of children...*”

In the same meeting, parent A (GM) said:

Parent A (GM):“...*Hore ho etsahalang moo ha re tsebe ka nnete hoba le time-table ena feela ha re e tsebe ntate. It's like ha re part ya sekolo sena...*”  
[...as to what is happening here we don't really know because we don't even know the simple timetable, Sir. It's like we are not part of this school.]

### ***Analysis of discourse at a textual level***

The use of the phrase “...*It's like we are not part of this school...*”demonstrates that parents do not feel welcome in this programme. The school management still resorts to making decisions on behalf of them without affording them the opportunity to express their views and inputs. On the other hand, this phrase demonstrates a realisation by parents that their contributions may be meaningful in the programme, signalling the negative effect that lack of parental involvement can have on SEP and magnifying the need for the improved and meaningful participation of parents in the programme.

### ***Analysis of discourse as social practice***

The use of the phrase “...*It's like we are not part of this school...*”reflects the deep-rooted social practice that is inherited from a racial and authoritarian education system in South Africa which gave authority to the management to run schools and determined the extent to which

black and rural parents could participate in school activities of their children. This practice, however, continues despite the radical policy changes that the DoE has implemented over the years.

### ***Analysis of discourse as a discursive practice***

The use of the inclusive pronoun ‘we’ in the phrase “...it’s like we are not part of this school...” demonstrates that this parent is aware of the discourse around her and indicates that is not only her who is affected by this problem of exclusion in the programme. It shows understanding of the discussions produced in the discourse as reflected in the statement “...we don’t even know the simple timetable...”, which contains the elements of the statement made earlier by Parent A (GM) (“we told you teacher we don’t know anything about the programme...”) to emphasise their exclusion from the programme. In addition, the use of the phrase “...Like we told you teacher...” demonstrates coherence as it adds to the issue mentioned previously by Parent B (MF), in which this parent reported that she also felt she was being denied the chance to contribute meaningfully to the programme.

### ***Analysis of discourse from the critical emancipatory research perspective***

From the CER perspective it is required of people to own and participate in the creation of solutions to their problems, with depolarization of power relations between the authorities and themselves imperative. However, it was established otherwise. The statement that “... it’s like we are not part of this school...” demonstrates the lack of ownership of the programme that parents experience at this school and indicates the manifestation and perpetuation of the top-down approach that it employs. This approach impacts negatively on the ability of SEP to function optimally and for learner performance and learning to become sustainable. It is critical, therefore, for this study to create a platform in which power relations are polarised and one in which participants (parents) become part of the programme with equal power, partnership and ownership.

This question was followed by a discussion about their role in the current programme and to what extent does it hindered the programme from achieving the intended purpose. Here the parents limited their roles to being responsible for serving learners during lunch hour. From their words one could sense a desperate need to participate more in the programme and other related school activities. The following were words from one of them: Parent A (GM):

*“Re pheha feela and nothing more eo ho thweng re thuse ka yona. Last year principal o kopile nna and parent e nngwe hore re tlo robala le bana ba Grade Twelve sekolong...” [We only cook here and nothing more and that’s all we are required to help with. Last year the principal asked myself and another parent to come and monitor the GradeTwelve learners in the evening here at school...”]*

Attention then shifted to the HODs and the role of the parents in the programme. HOD (JP) said:

*“...but the way things ke bonang di etsahala ka teng...it seems as if some of the parents are not taking what is happening here at school seriously” [“...but the way I see things unfolding, it seems as if some of the parents are not taking what is happening here at school seriously.”]*

### ***Analysis of discourse at textual level***

In a statement regarding the role of parents in the programme, the HOD (JP) said: *“...some of the parents are not taking what is happening here at school seriously...”* This statement demonstrates that parents do not view their participation in the school activities of their children as important. Furthermore, this HOD indicates the realisation of the critical role that parents can play in the programme. According to this participant lack of seriousness on the part of the parents leads to the unambiguous roles that they play in the programme.

### ***Analysis of discourse at a discursive level***

The statement made by Learner A (QN) that "... *uma kukhwethwa abantu ku SGB kumela bakhethe abantu aba educated...*" demonstrates awareness of the discourses around her and how her views relate to the entire discourse process. However, the statement further indicates coherence and inter-textuality as she provides an explanation as to why parents seem not to participate seriously in the school activities in general and SEP in particular. The implication from this statement is that lack of education among the SGB members make it easy for the school management to overlook them while it makes it difficult for them to establish their presence in the programme and influence decisions pertaining to the programme.

### ***Analysis of discourse from the critical emancipatory research perspective***

The words "...*some of the parents are not taking what is happening here at school seriously...*" show that the powerful (the principal and the SMT) disregard the views of the rural parents. This expression of ideas is a contradiction of what the parents thought and felt. The issue of power relations came to the fore again here as the powerful seemed to be obsessed with the views that rural local parents do not have the will to solve their own problems. In this case, Neiva *et al.* (2012:68) warn about the importance of regular communication between schools and the parents. These views are echoed by an emphasis of two-way communication that should take place between parents and schools (Mcube, 2010:234).

Central to CER is the principle of equality and empowerment of the marginalised people. The statement, "...*uma kukhwethwa abantu ku SGB kumela bakhethe abantu aba educated...*" does not necessarily call for the exclusion and further marginalisation of the powerless (uneducated) parents but rather it calls for the need to empower parents with education. From this perspective, educating parents on their roles in the programme is an empowerment process that gives parents

courage and the need to contribute meaningfully to the programme in particular and school activities in general.

Adding to the response of HOD (JP), HOD (VM) said:

*"We have to include the parents in the programme! I don't remember ourselves talking to the parents about career guidance or this programme. And the most problematic issue on this aspect with the parent we are having in this area, not to say I'm undermining them, they don't even know what is happening here at school as long as the learner is at school...they will not even bother themselves about finding someone to help their children."*

### ***Analysis of discourse at a textual level***

The statement that "...they don't even know what is happening here at school as long as the learner is at school..." demonstrates the view of parents in this community as irresponsible people who do not care about the education of their children. Not only are they not involved in the school activities but they are not making any effort in finding out about the schoolwork of their children. The phrase "...they will not even bother themselves about finding someone to help their children..." serves as acknowledgement by this participant of the gap that exists in the programme which can be filled by parents. It is also a realisation that the effectiveness of the programme to achieve the intended outcomes requires parental involvement and participation of all stakeholders, rather than it being monopolised by the school management.

### ***Analysis of discourse from critical emancipatory research perspective***

The use of the words "... they will not even bother themselves about finding someone to help their children..." further indicates the biased perception that authorities often hold of rural parents. In this case, this participant suggests that parents should look for someone to help their children. From the CER perspective the implication here is that this participant views parents as lacking the knowledge and expertise to carry out their roles in solving problems of an ineffective programme, resulting in poor academic performance and unsustainable learning.

Additionally, the use of the pronoun ‘they’ and ‘their’ in this phrase demonstrates the disharmony that exists between school management and the parents. This use of such words further demonstrates the ‘outsider view’ with which the school management approaches the problem. According to this view the problem lies with the parents and their children so it lacks common ownership of the problem and also discourages collective remedial action as well as equal partnership.

This study, couched by CER, challenged this view as it called for parents to be included from the programme rather than seeking help from ‘outsiders’. It further created a situation in which equal partnership and collective remedial action prevailed. In our third session it emerged that these parents were not happy to be excluded in the design and implementation of the programme. Rather, they revealed that although they would like to contribute to the programme in various ways they also thought that they would not be taken seriously by the principal or the entire SMT because they were uneducated. Perhaps this emanates from the principal’s and the SMT’s need to maintain the image of what Martin (1999) refers to as a good parent (Mcube, 2010:235). According to this author, such a parent has limited voice which is only heard when obeying the orders of the school management and does not interfere with the professional running of the school.

We further discussed involvement and the roles of parents in the programme with learner participants. In this regard, they overwhelmingly stated that although the role and the involvement were paramount they did not see any benefit of having such a component in the programme. Below were the views of Learner B ( TP):

“ ...iSGB enjani le emonitor ama matric kuphela? Mina irole ye SGB angibone in this programme” [*What type of SGB is this which only monitors the matric learners only? I don’t see its role in this programme.*]

### ***Analysis of discourse at a textual level***

The words “...I don’t see its role in this programme...” indicates that learners are not entirely satisfied with the role that parents play in the



programme. These words further demonstrate that this ambiguous role of the parents in the programme makes it hard for them to realise the value and need for parental involvement in the programme. They also reveal the learners' need to be given attention when participating in the programme as this attention is only given to the Grade 12 learners. In addition, the question "...*what type of SGB is this?*" asked by learner B (TP) demonstrates that she is aware of the roles that SGB members are expected to undertake. It also demonstrates a realisation of the malfunction that exists in the SGB as a component whose function is to represent the interests of parents, among other things.

### ***Analysis of discourse at a discursive level***

The question "...*what type of SGB is this?*" raised by learner B (TP) further builds on the point raised earlier by learner A (QN) about the ineffectiveness of parental involvement in the programme. This ineffectiveness results from the lack of education among the members of the SGB, calling for increased parental involvement in the programme. Currently, it is evident that the limited number of parents and their unclear roles impact negatively on the design and implementation of the programme.

### ***Analysis of discourse at social practice level***

The statement "... *SGB ... which only monitors the matric learners only? I don't see its role in this programme...*" demonstrates the unequal treatment that learners receive from the parents who are on the programme. For example, only matric learners are monitored and supervised by the SGB members, despite it having been shown that well supervised and monitored programmes tend to be effective.

### ***Analysis of discourse from the critical emancipatory research perspective***

Central to the CER is empowerment of the marginalized, often taking different forms. In some cases, it can be educational and monetary while it can be social, in other cases. The words, "...*What type of SGB is*

*this which only monitors the matric learners only?"* demonstrates that learners in this study are now empowered to question the role of the SGB in the programme and the bias with which they perform such roles in it. In addition, the ability to identify the problem regarding the involvement of SGB members in the programme as well as suggesting remedies shows a level of empowerment. There exists a realization that education can play a role in giving parents a voice and making meaningful contributions to the programme as another form of empowerment.

The above highlighted words in the foregoing statement strengthen the perception that rural parents are irresponsible and do not show any willingness to participate in the education of their children. This is in direct contradiction to the views expressed by the two parent participants above. However, this study challenged this view through the inclusion of parents whose role was equal to that of teachers, the principal and the learners. This gave them a voice on issues that relate to the education of their children and they empowered them to influence decisions about the programme that the school administered to their children. The view learners had of the roles of their parents was further challenged by this study as they witnessed the role and the inputs that their parents contributed in the programme.

#### **4.2.4. Geographical location as a threat**

According to Statistics South Africa (StatsSA) (2011), the area in which the current study took place is inhabited by less than 50,000 people. The institution also indicated that less than 12 percent of this population did not have formal schooling and less than 20 percent had completed matric. With regards to higher education, a mere six percent had some form of a qualification and over 70 percent did not have access to the Internet. This resulted in almost a quarter of the population being unemployed, 34 percent of whom comprise the youth.

With agriculture being the main economic activity of this area, almost 40 percent of this area owns livestock (StatsSA, 2011) with more than half

engaging in farming activities. Furthermore, more than 60 percent do not have access to piped water (StatsSA, 2011). Although 70 percent have electricity, only little over fifty percent are connected to sewage. On the basis of these figures and the above arguments, the area in which the school is situated may 'qualify' as a rural area.

Given the above evidence, the area itself brought its challenges to the design and implementation of SEP. According to Corrègè (2012:8), designing and implementing an effective SEP is often thwarted by the isolation that often characterises rural communities. One HOD highlighted the impact of this isolation on the effectiveness of SEP by expressing a relationship between it and lack of financial support.

HOD (VM): *"And basically among other things, looking at the area where it is situated, a rural area in which a lot of things are happening. Among other things we look at the finances that we might utilize in terms of extending the periods with the learners."*

### ***Analysis of discourse at a textual level***

A close analysis of the statement "...*looking at the area where it is situated, a rural area in which a lot of things are happening...*" indicates that there may be many challenges that face SEP as a result of the geographic location of the school under study. In addition, the phrase "...*things we look at the finances...*" indicates that the geographical location has direct impact on the finances which are necessary for the effectiveness of SEP. This indication reveals that schools that are situated in the rural and secluded areas face many challenges when undertaking SEP.

Another challenge was brought forth by Teacher A (TKM) when she stated that "...*we stay far from everything here. We are far from the resources, other schools, even the district itself....and this affects the way we run the programme...*" The teacher is indicating here that many resources are not channelled to rural schools such as this one. Rather, the resources are concentrated in schools which are closer to the urban areas. More significantly, the phrase '*we are far from...other schools*' demonstrates that the secluded geographic location of this school

hampers the necessary exchange of ideas and resources that would contribute to making the programme more effective.

### ***Analysis of discourse as a discursive practice***

The statement by this teacher “...*We are far from the resources...*” points to the reality of the inaccessibility of necessary resources by the rural schools. This inaccessibility is seemingly perpetuated by the schools being situated in rural areas. The lack of resources thwarts the effectiveness of the intervention strategies which are aimed at improving academic performance and ensuring sustainable learning.

### ***Analysis of discourse from the critical emancipatory research perspective***

Her words, “... *we are far from the resources, other schools, even the district itself...*” point to the existence of polarised power relations between the education officials (and the district) and rural schools when it comes to the distribution of resources. The implication here is that the rural schools remain marginalised as they are constantly under-resourced by the local district in which lies the power and responsibility to distribute resources.

The realisation of being far from ‘*other schools*’ by this teacher points to her awareness of the important principles of equal partnership and equitable sharing. In addition, she realises how the school’s rural nature hampers this important mutual relationship that may result in one school empowering another. This is a way to avoid over-reliance on the provincial department and local district for resources to administer the effective SEP. I regard the establishment of such self-reliant and mutual relationship among schools as an example of empowerment that is central to CER as a theoretical framework guiding the study.

In an interview with a Learning Facilitator (RZ) on the challenges they face when attempting to assist in the programme, she said:

“...*you see ntate Mokoena, as the department we face many challenges. One such problem is that of transport. Dikoloi di a shota. If for instance you have to*

*travel to the remote areas like here, you cannot travel alone in the car. You must wait for your colleague or colleagues so that le travel ka group le sebedisa koloi e le nngwe to reduce costs...” [You see Mr. Mokoena, as the department we face many challenges. One such a problem is that of [lack] of transport. The [departmental] cars are not sufficient...you must wait for your colleague or colleagues so that you can travel as a group using one car as a way to reduce costs...]*”

### ***Analysis of discourse at a textual level***

According to the statement above, the remoteness of the area in which the school is situated results in officials from the education district not visiting it regularly to monitor or even help with the running of the programme. It is clear that the costs of travelling to this remote area are high, hence these officials have been advised to travel in a group as a way to cut costs, threatening the success of SEP in two ways. One, due to the irregular and untimely visits of the district officials to this school it is impossible for the officials to offer necessary guidance, as confirmed in the statement by Teacher A “...We are far from the resources... even the district itself....and this affects the way we run the programme...” Two, these officials have to travel a long distance to the school and consequently on their arrival they are unable to attend to the challenges that may be raised by the teachers or the SMT with regard to the programme.

According to another HOD (JP), the geographical situation of the area under study proved problematic for the success of the programme in two ways: The first was on how the issue of other teachers staying far from the area in which the school is situated affected the effectiveness of the programme. These were the views:

*“O a tseba nna viewpoint ya ka when it comes to this programme neh... ho na le dintho tse two tseo nkareng ke di-stambling block sekolong mona. Ya pele ke hore when you look at our staff establishment, people come from Newcastle akere and others come from Vrede. If all educators were staying locally here e ne e tlo thusa programme ena haholo...”[...“You know, my viewpoint is that when it comes to this programme...there are two things which I could call the stumbling block here at school. The first one is that when you*

*look at our staff establishment, people come from Newcastle and others come from Vrede. And if all educators were staying locally here that would be very helpful for this programme.”]*

### **Analysis of a discourse at a textual level**

The use of the phrase “*And if all educators were staying locally here that would be very helpful for this programme...*” demonstrates how the rurality and seclusion of this area contribute to the ineffectiveness of the programme, resulting in teachers not being able to attend the programme fully. In addition, this situation is worsened by the distance many teachers live from the school.

The seclusion of this area affects the amount of time allocated to the programme, often carried out after school so many teachers are unable to attend. This has a negative impact on the implementation and the design of the programme, which in the long run affects the academic performance and sustainable learning. To add to this, HOD (VM) said:

*“When this programme started, it started at 5 while the school knocks off at 3...when e qala ka 5h30 e fela mane ka 20h00 in the evening the plan did not materialize hobane most of us re dula hole haholo le sekolo.” [When this programme started, it started at 5h30 while the school ends at 3hoo...when the programme starts at five thirty and ends around eight the evening did not materialise because most us stay very far from the school.”]*

Secondly, the issue of the impact of rural environment threatening the ineffectiveness of SEP discussed earlier in Chapter Two is further noticed by the HOD (JP):

*“Eh ha re se re sheba le environment hape, our environment is contributing a lot ho ntho tse etsahalang mona locally hore bana ba se ke ba ba le interest ya ho tlo bala... kapa ho nka programme ena serious mme seo se etsa programme ena e se be effective” [When we look at the issue of the environment again, our environment is contributing a lot to things that are happening locally here and these things make learners to lose interest in studying or taking this programme seriously. And that renders this programme ineffective.”]*

According to this HOD the rural environment also contributes to making learners lose interest in participating in the programme and their general studies.

In another session the learners and I discussed the impact that the rurality and the seclusion of this area had on the effectiveness of the programme. We discussed how this seclusion impacted on their attendance on the programme, with isolation further complicating the situation as learner participants often encounter problems that relate to transportation. Learner A (QN) stated that in most cases she and other learners wished to attend the programme, only to be impeded by unavailability of reliable transport. In addition, Learner C (IP) stated that he often wished to attend the programme on a weekend but would not have enough money for transport as he lived on a farm which was far from the school. Similar sentiments were expressed by both teacher participants and parents. Teacher B (VB) expressed the view:

*“...The issue of transport is another challenge because the taxis around this area are very unreliable. If maybe you want to continue teaching learners till late, you will not find transport to go back home. That’s a challenge...”* These views were not different from those expressed by Parent B (MF) below:

*“...taba ya transport e ba problem e serious hobane bana ba bang ba dula dipolasing and ho ba thata hore ba attende programme ka lebaka la transport, ntate...”* [...the issue of transport becomes a serious problem because other learners stay in farms where it is difficult for them to have access to the transport. As a result, it becomes a problem for them to attend the programme.

#### **4.2.5. Poor quality of leadership and management**

For SEP to be successful, Neiva and Pepe (2012:44) state that learning and teaching should be well organised for the benefit of both teachers and learners. This organisation or lack thereof impacts on the effectiveness of the programme. However, in the programme under study the participants believed poor management and leadership quality

was hindering the effectiveness of the programme. The following themes emerged.

#### **4.2.5.1. Lack of supervision**

As stated above, the learner participants in this study expressed a belief that the activities and the running of the programme were not properly supervised. According to Zhang and Byard (2005:10), learners in the unsupervised SEP tend to perform badly academically. The danger of lack of supervision was also expressed by HOD (JP):

*"I gave myself an opportunity two or three times ke tlo sheba. Even if they are studying there, these learners are just looking at books they are not even scrabbling or writing something..." [I gave myself an opportunity two or three times to check on the situation. [What I have seen is that] even if they are studying there, these learners are just staring at books. They are not even scrabbling or writing something on the paper.]*

This lack of effective monitoring was also noticed by HOD (VM) who expressed the following views:

*"Classes must also be supervised in the evening ha re re batle for evening studies ke two or three people. Ha e le hore hona le batho who want to teach learners they will come and arrange bona self." [Classes must also be supervised in the evening, [the situation is] when learners are attending the evening studies, there are only two or three people to monitor and supervise them]*

#### **Analysis of discourse at a textual level**

The use of the phrase "...I gave myself an opportunity two or three times to check on the situation..." indicates the low levels of supervision being carried out in the programme. This HOD is saying that he was not there to supervise the administration of the programme, but rather, to "...check on the situation..." In this situation learners pretend to be studying because there is no one to ensure that they are actually doing so. They only spend time "...just staring at books." As discussed in Chapter Two, a lack of supervision in SEP impacts negatively not only on the effectiveness of the programme but also on the overall academic



performance of learners. This situation is exacerbated by the lack of study skills that hamper the effectiveness of learners in the programme. As this HOD puts it: *"...even if they are studying there... They are not even scrabbling or writing something on the paper..."* This dissatisfaction with supervision was also expressed by the teacher participants. Teacher B (VB) stated:

*"...You see these learners of ours, if I may be open to you, you give them a book to study, and a learner might be staying in one page for two hours. You can see that this learner is doing nothing, by the way. So surely there is a problem with supervision and monitoring in this programme..."*

This is a demonstration of the serious consequences that lack of supervision has on both the effectiveness of the programme and the academic performance of the learners in it.

### ***Analysis of discourse as a discursive practice***

The utterance *"...when learners are attending the evening studies, there are only two or three people to monitor and supervise them..."* by HOD (VM) demonstrates coherence and intertextuality. In addition to being aware of the discourses around him about the lack of supervision in the programme, he is adding to what HOD (JP) has already said about lack of supervision in the programme. He also makes this issue more poignant as he points to the low levels of commitment in the supervision of learners in the programme.

### ***Analysis of discourse from the critical emancipatory research perspective***

The use of the statement *"... I gave myself an opportunity two or three times to check on the situation..."* by HOD (JP) demonstrates the position of authority from which he speaks. It is clear here that he only went *"... to check on the situation..."* rather than hearing the views of the participants in the programme.

It is this authoritarian attitude of the powerful in the programme that this study sought to eliminate. The creation of the platform on which the

views of the marginalised (learners, parents) were heard by the powerful (LF, SMT members and teachers) enabled the review of the programme on whose centre lie the mutually and equally made decisions about its design and implementation.

While this HOD placed the importance on the supervision of learners in the programme, one parent participant also stated the importance of supervising the teachers. According to the views of this participant it would appear that teachers spent time not focusing on the task at hand. Parent A (GM) stated:

*“Uyazi ingane ziya khuluma thisha. Bathi ku period ye forty five minutes uthesha uzo ngena eclassene for ten to fifteen minutes efundisa. From there uzo thatha i30minutes yonke engafundisi esikhulumela nje. [Teacher you know that children talk. They say that in a period of forty five minutes a teacher uses only ten to fifteen minutes for teaching and the other thirty minutes just for chatting...]”*

#### ***Analysis of discourse at textual level***

The statement that “...a teacher uses only ten to fifteen minutes for teaching and the other thirty minutes just for chatting...” indicates that a lack of supervision of teachers in the programme leads to much time being not used productively as teachers spend most of their time off task. In addition to monitoring learner activities, the role of teachers in the programme includes teaching and assigning learners the various activities.

#### ***Analysis of discourse as a social practice***

The use of the phrases “...teacher you know that children talk... [and] they say...” demonstrates the disconnection that still exists between the parents and teachers. In this case, it is clear that parents rely on their children to obtain the information about what is happening at school in general and the programme in particular. Studies have shown the dangers of unsupervised SEP as non-parental involvement in this programme. This further confirms the low levels of parental consultation and participation in the programme.

### ***Analysis of discourse from the critical emancipatory research perspective***

Parent A (GM) is quoted as saying “...teacher you know that children talk... [and] they say...”, which a demonstration of the powerless position from which they speak. This is the position which does not allow them to express their opinions or to influence the decisions taken by the school in the design and implementation of SEP.

The formation of the research team of which parents were a part was an attempt by this study to balance the power relations that existed between the teachers and parents with regard to the design and implementation of SEP. It was in this team that parents were given a chance to influence the decisions and to express their opinions to teachers, rather, with them. This platform, however, was not created for teachers and parents to blame each other, but the intention was to work together to design a programme.

I then shifted attention to the learners on the issue of supervision, at which point the group of learner participants felt neglected by the principal and the entire SMT. They were coupled with the general feeling that they were less important than their counterparts in Grade 12. In addition, the situation was worsened by the non-attendance shown by the teachers, in conjunction with a realization of risks that often characterised the unsupervised evening classes. This was in direct contrast to what SEP was supposed to provide, notably a sense of security (Zhang & Byrd, 2013:5), not only for the learners but also for the parents. Their views were the following:

*Learner B (PT): “Ba yegela bantwana ba botwa tishere moes ha ba attende” [They leave the children alone teacher and they do not attend].*

*Learner A (QN): “...rona ha ba re kgathalle that’s why nna I choose ho dula mola kerekeng. This one o kgetha ho tla mona ho tlo cheka while this one o tlela ho tlo qoqa ditaba tsa hae” [“They don’t care about us and that’s why I choose spending time at church than here. This one only chooses to come*

*here to check on her boyfriend while the other one only comes here for a gossip”]*

### ***Analysis of discourse at a textual level***

Learner B (TP) is quoted as saying “...*they do not attend...*” to demonstrate that the issue of supervision by both teachers and the SMT renders the programme ineffective. This happens because learners are often left alone without anyone to supervise or monitor them in the programme. In this case, this situation points to a badly designed and implemented programme. Learner A (QN) adds by saying that: “...*They don’t care about us and that’s why I choose spending time at church than here. This one only chooses to come here to check on her boyfriend while the other one only comes here for gossip...*” to demonstrate the point that she finds going to church more rewarding than attending the programme as a result of a lack of supervision. In addition, others find it beneficial to spend time with boyfriends and gossiping rather than being in the programme.

### ***Analysis of discourse as a discursive practice***

The statement “...*There is no use to participate in the programme be se siya phuma singa gainanga lutho*” [*There is no use participating in the programme and we leave without having gained anything*]” by learner B (PT) demonstrates coherence and intertextuality as it shows awareness that this learner has of the discourses around her and further demonstrates the extent this lack of supervision has reached in behaviour and the morale of other learners in the same programme.

### ***Analysis of discourse from the critical emancipatory research perspective***

Based on their utterances I got the impression that these learner participants only appealed for attention and meaningful participation in the programme. The utterances “...*this means we are useless... and it is demotivating and frustrating.*” by learner A (QN) and learner B (PT) respectively showed that the learners felt powerless and victimised. In

addition, the use of the inclusive pronoun 'we' demonstrates that many shared the sentiments and the experiences about the poorly supervised programme activities. In this case, they are not listened to and their voices seem not to be useful. As a result, these learners look for the meaningful places where their voice and opinions matter.

A synthesis of the opinions expressed on this issue provides a clear indication of the dangers of an unsupervised programme on the morale and general feelings of the learners. In this case, the views expressed by these learner participants reflect the need to devise a strategy to enhance this programme. It is evident in these utterances that owing to its ineffectiveness the programme fails to monitor and supervise the activities assigned to learners.

#### **4.3. COMPONENTS AND ASPECTS NECESSARY FOR THE SUCCESSFUL ENHANCEMENT OF SEP AT A RURAL HIGH SCHOOL**

There are several components and aspects necessary for the successful enhancement of the SEP at a rural high school.

##### **4.3.1. The creation of a conducive learning environment**

The creation of a positive learning environment is necessary for the effectiveness of the learning process and the optimal functionality of the school enrichment programme. It is in this dedicated space that SEP can flourish and ultimately result in the increased academic performance and sustainability of learning (see Naiva and Pepe, 2012:67, in section 2.3). It is therefore important for the creation of a suitable place for enhancing SEP at a rural school. In order for this to happen it is important for me and the co-researchers to propose the conditions we deem necessary for the enhancement of SEP.

Learner C (JP) is quoted as saying: *"...another reason why nna I don't prefer coming to class is because other learners are making a lot of noise. You would be trying to study but only to find out hore a learner would playing*

*music loud on his or her cell phone. Basically you can't study in such an environment. I think it is important to start by solving the problem of noise in the classroom...we are struggling really, something must be done about this..."*

Learner B (TP) said:*"...another thing is the issue of lack of furniture. We waste a lot of time looking for furniture in other classes or when you get to class you find out that someone has taken your chair or table... only if the principal would buy enough furniture we would save a lot of time..."*

### ***Analysis of discourse at a textual level***

The use of the phrase *"...basically you can't study in such an environment..."* indicates that this learner realises the impact that the learning environment is having on ability of all learners to study in the programme. In addition, the phrase *"...I think it is important to start by solving the problem of noise in and around the classroom..."* signals another realisation that to some extent the creation of a suitable and positive learning environment is needed to make the programme more effective. In this regard, learners prefer a learning space in which there are minimal distractions.

In the words of Learner B (TP) that *"... [w]e waste a lot of time looking for furniture in other classes..."* the issue of a lack of resources has to be addressed as another way in which a conducive and positive learning environment is created for the enhancement of SEP and effective learning. The suggestion that *"...if the principal would buy enough furniture we would save a lot of time..."* also implies that financial assistance from the principal can help in improving SEP.

### ***Analysis of discourse as discursive practice***

Being quoted as saying *"...another thing is the issue of lack of furniture..."* Learner B (TP) demonstrates understanding of the discourses around the issue of creating a positive learning environment and indicates her awareness of other factors that need to be considered in improving the conditions for the enhancement of SEP as a whole. In this regard, by stating that *"...only if the principal would buy enough*

*furniture we would save a lot of time...*”she displays an element of coherence as she is building on the suggestion that Learner A (QN) made earlier.

### ***Analysis of discourse as a social practice***

In relation to the above utterances and the context in which these utterances were made, the analysis of the discourses at a social practice level can be used synonymously with analysis of discourse as social information. In this case, the two statements, “...*when you get to class you find out that someone has taken your chair or table...*”and “...*You would be trying to study but only to find out that a learner would playing music loud on his or her cellphone...*”by Learner A (QN) and Learner B (TP) respectively indicate that they are familiar with the social reality of their situation. This study resonates well with their situation and the ineffective programme which it is investigating, and these learners serve as competent participants who experience the problems first hand.

### ***Analysis of discourse from the critical emancipatory research perspective***

Notably, the statement by Teacher (VB) “...*all the decisions lie with the principal and the deputy and the SMT members...*” demonstrates the existence of power polarisation that troubles the programme. In this case, the only person who has the power to improve the learning environment in which the programme can flourish is the principal and a few individuals.

Another significant statement is that of Learner B (TP), when she states that “...*if the principal would buy enough furniture we would save a lot of time...*”because this statement shows how power to influence decisions and effect change rests only in one person. In this situation there is an element of powerlessness that this statement conveys.

The absence of the subject (doer) in the statement “...*we are struggling really, something must be done about this...*” by learner A (QN) indicates

the shift in the responsibility and power to deal with the problem of unsuitable learning environment.

In addition to the views expressed by teachers and learners, Parent A (GM) made the following contribution:

*Indaba inye wena tishera ukuthi abantwana bethu abekho safe lana eskoleni ebusuku uma bastadisha. Kungaba ncqono if mhlabe uPrincipal anga vuma ukuthi silegelele ngoku kada abantwana uma befunda... [Another issue teacher is that our children are not safe here at school when they are studying. It would be better if maybe the principal would allow us to support the school by monitoring the situation when these children are studying]...*

### ***Analysis of discourse at a textual level***

The above discourse brings another dimension to the concept of a positive learning environment. The effective learning process and successful enhancement of SEP can only occur in a safe environment (see Vogt, 2006:18, in section 2.3. This participant shows his willingness to monitor learners when they are studying in the evening.

### ***Analysis of discourse as social practice***

Through interpreting the analysis at social practice level as the analysis of discourse as social information, this study makes an observation that these parents reflect the social reality of the school under study. This observation is informed by the following factors: the parents who participated in this study are members of the SGB; and in addition to having their own children at this school they are also staying in the community in which this school is situated. In light of this, it is therefore necessary to acknowledge the wealth of knowledge and experience these parents have about the situation this study is investigating. As a result they are competent participants in the study.

### ***Analysis of discourse from the critical emancipatory research perspective***

One noticeable utterance is from Parent A (GM): "...It would be better if maybe the principal would allow us to support the school by monitoring



*the situation when these children are studying]...*" On the one hand, this statement reflects the situation in which the power to effect change lies in those with power. However, the same statement shows a certain level of desire to reclaim the power to improve the conditions under which the programme is administered. This sudden realisation to reclaim the power stems from the active participation by this parent in this study. This is made possible by the use and application of PAR principles and CER coaching this study. Also, the creation of an environment in which equal participation is encouraged contributed to this important reclaiming of power.

Clear in this analysis is that teachers and learners became aware of the power they each possess to improve the conditions necessary for SEP to be enhanced at this school. By working together in discussing the issue of a creative learning environment it became clear that its creation is a critical condition for the enhancement of SEP at this rural school.

#### **4.3.2. Well organised and diverse activities**

Another component necessary for the enhancement of SEP is the availability of well-organised and diverse activities in which learners can engage. In addition to dealing with boredom, which many learners claim to experience, they help the learners deal with other social and developmental issues (see Little *et al.*, 2007:5). The highly multifaceted SEP can lead to a good academic performance (see Zhang & Byrd, 2005:5, in section 2.3). Studies have also shown that in a programme in which diverse activities are offered, learners are more likely to demonstrate improved social skills, self-concept and leadership skills (see After School Alliance, 2007:6, in section 2.3).

In this context, Learner C (JP) provided an enabling condition for the enhancement of SEP as follows:

*"...le matitjhere re batla ba etse study se be funny hai o be serious. We want amgamesnyana like in maths re bine amafomula and role -play in English class..." [and we want teachers to make the studying fun not too rigid or formal. We want activities that involve games. In Maths for example we want*

*activities in which we can sing formulae and those that involve role-play in the English class...”]*

Learner A (QN) said:

*“They must include the activities in which we compete with other learners from other classes. This will make us to study very hard because we will want our class to win ...Another activity may be the one in which one learner in a class assumes the role of the teacher of a particular subject and then he/she helps others with the work that was done during the day...”*

### **Analysis of discourse at a textual level**

The use of the words “...we want teachers to make the studying fun not too rigid or formal...” by Learner C (TP) demonstrates the need for change in the current structure of the programme. In this case, she is implying that the programme is less interesting to them as learners because it is too formal. The suggestion in this case is that teachers, in addition to making the programme flexible, need to employ different fun activities for learners.

In the same light, Learner A (QN) noticeably stated that: “...*They must include the activities in which...*” In this instance, it is clear that she also acknowledges the inclusion of other diverse activities as necessary for the enhancement of the programme at this school. The implication in this instance is that the current programme lacks such activities.

### **Analysis of discourse as a social practice**

The use of the words “...*We want activities that involve games...*” and “...*the activities in which we compete with other learners from other classes...*” indicates the social reality and the experiences which these co-researchers share. In this instance, they come from a society in which learning through interaction with others is encouraged. In addition, their views express those of the society which encourages and accommodates different learning styles. For example, both these learner co-researchers call for the programme in which learning activities are diverse and flexible.

From this particular analysis it is evident that the current programme fails to appeal to the interest and the learning styles of the learners. This is indicative of the need to create a multifaceted SEP and tailor the diverse activities that address different needs of the learners.

### ***Analysis of discourse as discursive practice***

Learner A (QN) said: “...*This will make us to study very hard because we will want our class to win ...*” In this case, her statement shows her understanding of the discourses around her and contains an element of intertextuality because in her statement she relates to the point of why the inclusion of various activities in the programme is a necessary condition for the programme to be enhanced.

The element of coherence is contained in the expression “...*Another activity may be the one in which one learner in a class assumes the role of the teacher...*” This statement shows a shared willingness for the creation of suitable conditions under which this enhancement can take place, and provides another enabling condition necessary for the enhancement of SEP in this school. Learner A’s (QN’s) statement adds to what has been suggested before.

### ***Analysis of discourse from the critical emancipatory research perspective***

Learner A (QN) is quoted as suggesting that “...*the one [activity] in which one learner in a class assumes the role of the teacher of a particular subject...*”<sup>1</sup> In this statement there is a realisation of power and ability to improve the current conditions which render the programme ineffective. Moreover, the assumption of such a role challenges the teacher’s authority and means self-empowerment on the part of learners as they will be constructing their own knowledge.

On the one hand, the construction of knowledge informed by the social realities and experiences of the learners is viewed as empowerment according to CER principles, whilst on the other hand, instead of viewing the learners’ challenge of the authority as disempowering on

the part of the teachers concerned, this study views this situation as an attempt to create a scenario in which all have equal influence and participation in decision-making in the enhancement of the SEP at this school.

Finally, the statement “...then he/she helps others with the work that was done during the day...” demonstrates an example of how empowerment of learners and their participation in the programme can yield the envisaged outcomes of high academic performance, while there can be an increased level of responsibility and independence which adds to the sharpening of social and study skills.

When discussing with the HoDs how the well-organised and diverse activities serve as an enabling condition for the enhancement of SEP, HoD (VM) said:

*“...We need to have a discipline so that our plan will function in such a way that learners will not be giving us problems.”*

### ***Analysis of discourse at a textual level***

Evident in the above statement is that HoD (VM) brings discipline as an important factor in creating well-organised activities. In this case there is a need to improve on the discipline of learners. While acknowledging that factor, however, this HoD is evasive on the causes of the ill-discipline in learners. The answer lies not in the unsuitable learning environment alone (see section 4.3.1.), but also in the rigid and monotonous activities in which learners engage. It is this lack of flexibility that results in learners being unruly though the call for improving learner discipline as a condition necessary for the enhancement of SEP cannot be undermined, as Learner A (QN) attested:

*“... [y]ou would be trying to study but only to find out that a learner would be playing music loud on his or her cellphone. Basically you can't study in such an environment...”*

#### **4.3.3. The establishment of an ineffective supervisory team**

In addition to helping learners with time and the learning environment to study and engage in different activities, SEP is also intended to keep learners safe and away from other social problems such as drug abuse and criminal activities (see State legislatures, 2006:09 in section 2.3). The establishment of a supervisory team is a particularly important condition for the enhancement of SEP as such a team guards against the anti-social behaviour of learners after school. During this period learners are more susceptible to criminal activities, risky sexual activities and binge drinking (see Hobbs & Vinluan, 2005, in section 2.3). With the establishment of an effective supervisory team, however, these risks can be minimised, which in turn leads to an effective SEP and increased academic performance.

In light of the above, Teacher A (TKM) said:

*“... You see these learners of ours, if I may be open to you, you give them a book to study, and a learner might be staying in one page for two hours. You can see that this learner is doing nothing, by the way. So surely there is a problem with supervision...”*

In addition, HoD (JP) said:

*“The problem of ill-discipline in the programme needs all of us to be involved in the programme. You see the problem of poor supervision of learners can have very serious consequences. For example if something happens to a learner, we as the school can be in trouble. That is why I think the issue of building a supervisory team is important.”*

HoD (VM) stated:

*“You see ntate Mokoena at the moment there is no such a team here at school. You only find one or two teachers supervising the learners in the afternoon during the programme. I think the problem as you know lies with the principal and her deputy.”*

Teacher B (VB) commented:

*"I think parents must also come on board because really some of us are not staying around here. We have to travel daily from school to our respective homes. I think the principal should talk to the members of SGB to help in this regard."*

### ***Analysis of discourse at a textual level***

The use of the words "...the problem of ill-discipline in the programme needs all of us to be involved in the programme..." by HoD (JP) reflects the flaws in the current programme which is trouble by ill-discipline attributable to lack of an effective supervisory team. In this case, however, he realises that such a team must comprise all staff members.

In addition, in her words "...you give them a book to study, and a learner might be staying in one page for two hours..." Teacher (TKM) points to the lack of study skills that learners have. In addition to partly calling for the inclusion of more diverse activities in the programme, such as activities on study skills, her statement calls for an improvement in supervision of learners, because "...surely there is a problem with supervision..."

Another noticeable statement is made by HoD (JP) that "...the problem of poor supervision of learners can have very serious consequences...we as the school can be in trouble..." In this statement he cautions against the absence of an effective supervisory team, implying a need to establish such a team at this school.

### ***Analysis of discourse as social practice***

At this point of the study, analysis of discourse as social practice is used interchangeably with analysis of discourse as social information. It is in this point that the words "...must also come on board because really some of us are not staying around here...and...the principal should talk to the members of SGB to help in this regard..." dwell on the issue of social reality to which parents of these learners are exposed and must take part in constructing and changing. In this instance, parents from the community, as well as those in the SGB, serve as competent participants in changing the social reality because they and their children have firsthand experience of the situation. In this case,

ensuring the safety of their children at school during the programme is also of paramount importance to them.

### ***Analysis of discourse as discursive practice***

The phrases “...*I think parents must also come on board because really some of us are not staying around here...and...I think the principal should talk to the members of SGB to help in this regard...*” demonstrate coherence with what other participants have already suggested. In this case, these phrases build on what needs to constitute a supervisory team as an enabling condition for the enhancement of SEP.

Furthermore, the phrases “...*You only find one or two teachers supervising the learners in the afternoon during the programme...*” and “...*a learner might be staying in one page for two hours. You can see that this learner is doing nothing, by the way...*” contain the element of intertextuality. In this instance, these phrases demonstrate an understanding by these co-researchers of the discourses around them and give reasons it is important to establish an effective supervisory team.

### ***Analysis of discourse from a critical emancipatory research perspective***

In the phrase “...*the problem... in the programme needs all of us to be involved...*” HoD (JP) demonstrates a willingness to relinquish power and include everyone in building the supervisory team whose members have equal participation and voice in decision-making. This includes learners whose voices remained on the periphery.

This phrase further challenges the view that “...*the problem... lies with the principal and her deputy...*” expressed by HoD (VM). The challenge signals a shift in the way power is perceived. In this case, HoD (JP) seems to have realised how the equal distribution of power and the common ownership of the problems that arise in the programme can yield the desired outcomes. Also, there is a realisation that everyone can contribute to building an effective SEP as opposed to the

programme being built by a few members of the SMT at the expense of other stakeholders.

The suggestion “...*parents must also come on board...*” made by Teacher A (TKM) demonstrates a will to relinquish power that teachers have and demonstrates the willingness to empower parents whose voices have been neglected on this issue.

In addition to the views expressed by teachers and HoDs, of significance is the statement of Parent (GM):

*“...Indaba inye wena tishera ukuthi abantwana bethu abekho safe lana eskoleni ebusuku uma bastadisha. Kungaba ncqono if mhlabe uPrincipal anga vuma ukuthi silegelele ngoku kada abantwana uma befunda... [Another issue teacher is that our children are not safe here at school when they are studying. It would be better if maybe the principal would allow us to support the school by monitoring the situation when these children are studying]...”*

### ***Analysis of discourse at a textual level***

The phrase “...*our children are not safe here at school when they are studying...*” expresses the parents’ concern for the safety of their children. In this case, the parent recognises the need for a supervisory team under which the learners can study freely and effectively. She also realises the role she and other parents can play in making the programme more effective and sustainable.

### ***Analysis of discourse as discursive practice***

The phrase “...*our children are not safe here at school when they are studying...*” contains an element of coherence because he is also building on what HoD (JP) said about the safety of learners which has been compromised in the programme as a result of a lack of supervision.

Additionally, the phrase “...*It would be better if maybe the principal would allow us to support the school...*” also contains the element of coherence. In addition to demonstrating awareness of relevant discourses, this phrase adds to the call made earlier by other co-researchers (HoD VM



and Teacher TKM) for the inclusion of the parents in the supervisory team.

Still on the issue of establishing an effective supervisory team, Learner C (JP) said:

*“...uma kukhwethwa abantu ku SGB kumela bakhethe abantu aba educated and aba kwazi okuphatha ingane. And for additional support ho kgethwe abazali ba educated in the community [when it comes to electing members of SGB they must elect people who are educated and those who know how to look supervise children. And for additional support only the educated parents must be chosen in the community]”*

### ***Analysis of discourse at a textual level***

In addition to being aware of the need to strengthen the supervision in the programme, this co-researcher recognises the role that parents can play in the programme. According to her, other literate parents from the community must also form part of the supervisory team, an implication being that the current programme fails to include parents from both the SGB and the surrounding community in the supervisory team, whose role is to ensure safety of learners and the effective running of the entire programme.

### ***Analysis of discourse from critical emancipatory research perspective***

The use of the phrases “...when ... electing members of SGB they must elect people who are educated...and...the educated parents must be chosen in the community...” demonstrates a realisation that the only way parents could contribute effectively in the programme is when they are empowered with education. In other words, education can be used by parents as a tool to reclaim their power and influence the decisions taken in the programme.

The use of these two phrases demonstrates a paradigm shift in Learner C's view of the world. Contrary to the earlier positivist view, in which the enhancement of the SEP rested on the members of the SMT and

teachers, there is a more multi-faceted view of the world. As evident in her words, this co-researcher demonstrates the need for parents to become involved in building a supervisory team as opposed to one comprised only of the education authorities.

#### **4.3.4. The high-quality programming and staffing**

The effectiveness of the SEP rests on the quality of the programme itself. The high-quality programmes are not only important in helping achieve academic performance but are also important in ensuring sustainable attendance and retaining learners who are in need of the services offered in the programme (see Zhang & Byrd, 2005:6, in section 2.3). To ensure the attainment of these goals the high quality programme must focus on well-prepared staff and intentional programming (see Little *et al.*, 2001:10, in section 2.3). The well-prepared staff are characterized by a positive relationship and interaction among the participants in the programme. The intentional programming is characterised by a clear vision and mission, training and motivation of the staff (HFRP, 2008:8).

On the issue of well-prepared staff, Learner B (TP) said:

*“Like QN had said, teachers often leave us alone, unattended. They only monitor the Grade Twelve learners. So you can’t tell whether it is because they don’t come to us because they are unprepared or because they don’t take us seriously...”*

Learner A (QN) also stated:

*“I think forming positive relationships with the staff members in the programme is important because we will be able to ask questions where we do not understand”*

Learner C (JP): *“I think they will kind of break the walls that exist between us and teachers because now if the teacher is not in class, it is difficult to go to the teacher’s office and ask him or her if he or she is coming to class or not”*

### ***Analysis of discourse at a textual level***

The use of the phrase “...teachers often leave us alone, unattended...” signals broken communication between teacher and learners in the programme. Learner B is saying here that teachers often absent themselves from the programme without giving a reason or explanation to the learners. She further states that as a result of this they are left confused. This lack of communication is an indication of the absence of a positive relationship between the teachers and the participants.

In expressing her view on the importance of building positive relations between staff members in the programme and the participants, Learner QN said that “...we will be able to ask questions where we do not understand...” This demonstrates that building positive relationships with all staff members in the programme will make learning and participation in the activities easy. An implication here is that positive relationships and interactions are a necessary condition for a programme to be enhanced, and clear from this is that there are no such relationships or interactions in place in the current programme.

Learner C (JP) said “...they will ... break the walls that exist between us and teachers...”, demonstrating that the quality of the current programme is low as it fails to ensure effective positive relations and interactions between the participants and the staff members. In her view, staff-preparedness is necessary as it will create a mutual and equal participation in the programme. In this case, rather than being left in confusion about teacher attendance, staff members will be held accountable for their absence or unpreparedness for class.

### ***Analysis of discourse as discursive practice***

In the phrases “...it is difficult to go to the teacher’s office and ask him or her if he or she is coming to class or not...” and “...they don’t come to us because they are unprepared or because they don’t take us seriously...” is an element of intertextuality. In this case, the two co-researchers are responding by giving examples of how the absence of the well-preparedness of staff hampers the effectiveness of the programme.

The element of coherence is contained in the expression “...*I think they will kind of break the walls that exist between us and teachers because now...*”In this instance, Learner C (JP) taking part in the discourses around her and demonstrating understanding and similar sentiment with other co-researchers on the importance of ensuring well-staff preparedness in the programme. This she achieves by building on what has been said by other co-researchers on the benefit of this as an enabling condition for the enhancement of SEP.

### ***Analysis of discourse from critical emancipatory research perspective***

The phrases “...*it is difficult to go to the teacher’s office and ask him or her if he or she is coming to class or not*”and “...*you can’t tell whether it is because they don’t come to us because they are unprepared or because they don’t take us seriously...*”demonstrate how the current programme unfairly empowers teachers at the expense of the participants in the programme. In this situation, the absence of well-prepared staff leaves learners without a platform on which to express their views.

On the contrary, the phrases “...*we will be able to ask questions where we do not understand*”and “...*I think they will ... break the walls that exist between us and teachers...*”demonstrate how important the well-preparedness of staff is for an effective SEP. In this instance, the positive relationships between staff members and participants in the programme help the learners to challenge the authorities. Asking questions does not mean attacking the staff members but rather it means asking questions that relate to the activities and concepts taught, thereby deepening understanding and increasing academic performance. This is done with the intention of ensuring mutual and equal participation in the programme rather than disempowering the staff members.

Lastly, on the issue of intentional programming the learner co-researchers said:

Learner B (TP): *“...I think having a clear vision and the goal for the programme is important because it makes things easy for us. Like we understand why we attend and what is expected of us...”*

Learner C (JP): *“I agree with TP Sir because if everything is clear to us, we can all attend knowing how we will benefit in the programme.... Maybe it will also motivate teachers and other learners to attend and take the programme seriously...”*

Learner A (QN): *“...Mina I think it is important to know what is happening in the programme so that we can tell our parents too because right now we fail to give a straight answer to our friends from lower grades...”*

### ***Analysis of discourse at a textual level***

Learner C (JP) is quoted as saying *“...if everything is clear to us...”* to indicate that in the current programme the vision and what the programme seeks to achieve are not clear. In short, to this co-researcher it is not clear why she and others have to participate in the programme. She also states that the unwillingness of other learners to attend the programme may be attributed to lack of clarity. In this situation, intentional programming will help in equipping them with knowledge and serve as a motivation for both staff members and learners.

In the same light, Learner A (QN) states how difficult it is for her to explain the goals and mission of the programme to friends and family. In addition to contributing to the increased absence of learners in the programme, the unavailability of clear goals and mission makes parents reluctant to allow their children to attend it. However, according to this co-researcher, clear goals and mission of the programme are necessary as they provide them with knowledge about the programme as a whole.

Lastly, the phrase *“...it makes things easy for us. Like we understand why we attend and what is expected of us...”* by Learner B (TP) implies that the current programme fails to make them understand their roles and the expectations that staff members have of them. To remedy this,

however, the co-researcher views the intentional programming as an enabling condition for the enhancement of SEP as it will enhance their understanding of the purpose and the expectations of the programme.

In conclusion, this analysis shows that creating positive relationships between learners and staff members is a necessary condition for the enhancement of SEP. In addition, the discourses analysed above show the undesirable effect the absence of such relationship can have on the participants and the way they interact with the staff members in the programme. Lastly, this analysis demonstrates the importance of intentional programming. This helps in clarifying the goals and purpose of the programme to the participants, as well as increasing motivation for both staff members and learners to participate actively in the programme.

In the next meeting with the HoDs and teachers the following responses were articulated:

HoD (VM): *“...among other things positive relationships are important at workplace because we all have the same purpose here, which is to teach learners...”*

Teacher A (TKM): *“...creating such relationships will help us stay focused and work together in achieving the same goal of improving the performance of our school”*

HoD (JP): *“They enhance understanding and harmony between us as the members of the SMT and teachers. Similarly they impact positively on how teachers and learners relate to each other in the programme...”*

Teacher B (VB): *“...having support from everyone motivates us to do our best in the programme and if learners see that we all do the same thing and we have similar aim they are more likely to cooperate in the programme...”*

### ***Analysis of discourse at textual level***

Teacher (TKM) said: *“...relationships will help us stay focused and work together in achieving the same goal of improving the performance of our school”* to demonstrate that in the absence of well-prepared staff they

cannot focus and work together in achieving the desired outcomes of the programme. However, where such relationship exists between staff members and the participants in the programme there is no problem with focussing on achieving the desired outcome.

Adding to this, HoD (JP) said: “...*they enhance understanding and harmony between us...and ...teachers...*” In this case, he is stating that the establishment of positive relationships in the programme will also enhance interaction between the SMT members and the teachers. This is particularly important in a situation in which some HoDs feel disadvantaged over others when decisions are taken in the programme. The establishment of positive relationships is similarly necessary in this situation as teachers felt disregarded by the entire SMT and learners felt undermined by the authorities at this school.

The words “...*having support from everyone motivates us...they are more likely to cooperate in the programme...*” demonstrate how positive relationships among all the stakeholders in the programme can serve as motivation to staff members and learners to participate cooperatively in the programme. The implication in this case is that in the current programme the absence of such relationships has left staff members with low morale and contributed to ill-discipline among the participants in the programme.

### ***Analysis of discourse as discursive practice***

These phrases “...*creating such relationships will help us stay focused...They enhance understanding and harmony between us as the members of the SMT and teachers...*” contain the element of intertextuality, whilst HoD (VM) espoused positive relationships at workplace. This element of intertextuality is also found in the phrases “...*Similarly they impact positively on how... learners relate to each other in the programme...and...they are more likely to cooperate in the programme...*” These state how the participants (learners) in the programme are more likely to benefit from the programme if centred on positive relationships.

This is also direct emphasis on the well-preparedness of staff as a necessary condition for the enhancement of SEP.

With regard to coherence, the statements “...*they enhance understanding and harmony between us as the members of the SMT and teachers. Similarly they impact positively on how teachers and learners relate to each other in the programme...* and...*having support from everyone motivates us to do our best in the programme...*”are good examples of this. They demonstrate respective awareness and understanding of both Teacher (TKM) and HoD (JP) and serve to build on the statements of other participants.

### ***Analysis of discourse from critical emancipatory research perspective***

The use of the pronoun ‘we’ by HoD (VM) in the phrase “...*we all have the same purpose here, which is to teach learners...*”is inclusive in that it demonstrates the role everyone can play in enhancing the SEP if positive relationships are established in the programme. Use of the phrase “...*having support from everyone...*” demonstrates recognition of the power of collaboration and involvement of all stakeholders in creating positive relationships with the intention of enhancing the programme. It demonstrates a willingness to relinquish power by the teachers in favour of equal and inclusive participation in decision-making in the programme.

#### **4.3.5. The establishment of strong partnerships**

The implementation of SEP is a huge task that requires the involvement of all stakeholders. One way of ensuring this inclusive participation is the formation of strong partnerships. In addition to forming active partnerships among schools in which SEP is administered, it is important for them to be formed between schools and communities, and between schools and community-based organisations, businesses and individual sponsors.



HOD (VM) said:

*“You see, given the financial situation of our school and other challenges we are facing, having companies to sponsor our school will be beneficial”*

HOD (JP) added by stating:

*“if you look at our staff establishment you can see that we do not have enough man power here at school. I think that if we can have parents coming and assisting in the programme it can be helpful.”*

Teacher B (VB) said:

*“I think like if the principal and the SMT can go out in the location to garner sponsorships from the business people around here.”*

Learner A (QN) said:

*“In most cases we participate in the programme without having enough food, so I think if they convince business people to participate in the programme we can all attend without any problem. Our parents are angry at us because they always get letters telling them to pay some money to buy the photocopying paper because the school does not have money.”*

### ***Analysis of discourse at a textual level***

The statement “...we do not have enough man power here at school. I think that if we can have parents coming and assisting in the programme it can be helpful...” by HoD (JP) demonstrates that shortage of teachers at this school contributes negatively to the effectiveness of the programme. In this situation, the partnership between the school and parents in the community is necessary to help in ensuring monitoring and safety of learners during and after the programme. As established elsewhere in this study the learners felt unsafe in the programme.

Another challenge that these positive partnerships will address is related to financial support in the programme. As HoD (VM) puts it “...given the financial situation of our school...having companies to sponsor our school will be beneficial...” the programme is troubled by lack of funding. In other words, forming partnerships with local business people in the community will help with funding and address the situation

narrated by Learner A (QN) that they “...*participate in the programme without having enough food...*” This situation impacts negatively on learners’ attendance on the programme as well as teachers’ morale.

### ***Analysis of discourse as social practice***

In her statement “...*Our parents are angry at us because they always get letters telling them to pay some money to buy food or the photocopying paper because the school does not have money...*” Learner A (QN) reflects the views of a society in which a call for parental involvement in education is met with resistance from some parents. Contrary to the view that parents in rural areas are naturally hostile to active participation in education, this reflects the views of a society troubled by poverty from which their anger is derived.

HoD (JP) is quoted as saying “...*I think that if we can have parents coming and assisting in the programme it can be helpful...*” In this case, a reflection is made of a society in which a school can rely after the establishment of positive partnerships. This reflection deepens the need for the establishment of such partnerships.

### ***Analysis of discourse as discursive practice***

These statements by Teacher B (VB) and HoD (JP) respectively “... *I think if they convince business people to participate in the programme we can all attend without any problem...* and ...*if we can have parents coming and assisting in the programme it can be helpful...*” build on the points made earlier by other co-researchers about how the programme can benefit from the establishment of such partnerships.

### ***Analysis of discourse from critical emancipatory research perspective***

Teacher B (VB) said “...*I think like if the principal and the SMT can go out in the location to garner sponsorships from the business people around here...*” to demonstrate that the power to establish such partnerships lies with the principal and the SMT members. In other words, the absence of such partnerships between this school and the community may be

attributed to unwillingness of these stakeholders. In this situation I believe that creating a positive and harmonious relationship between the principal and the entire school is necessary for the establishment of positive partnerships with other stakeholders in the community.

#### **4.4. CONDITIONS NECESSARY FOR THE SUCCESS OF ENHANCING SEP FOR SUSTAINABLE LEARNING AT A RURAL HIGH SCHOOL**

A number of conditions are necessary for the success of enhancing SEP for sustainable learning at a rural high school.

##### **4.4.1. Conditions which contributed to the creation of a conducive learning environment**

It emerged during the workshops and the interviews that the participants in this study saw the creation of a conducive school environment as an important component and aspect in the enhancement of SEP. As a result, the co-researchers and I began by dividing ourselves into groups, with each having specific roles and responsibilities and tasked with addressing the concerns which related to the learning environment.

The first group focused on addressing the issue of lack of furniture and the unavailability of a dedicated learning space. A letter was written to the principal requesting a meeting, during which permission to use the two vacant classrooms was granted. With help from other learners in the school the two classrooms were cleaned.

This was followed by a discussion between the HoD and teacher participants to address the issue of lack of furniture in the venue assigned for the programme purposes. The decision was made that the two HoDs should raise the issue of furniture in the SMT meeting and consequently, make a suggestion that the many broken chairs and tables abandoned near the school ground be repaired and used in the two designated classrooms. With the permission granted, the parent

participants in this study, together with other parents from the community, engaged in repairing the furniture. It is through the newly formed positive partnership that exists between the school and the community that parents volunteered to repair the furniture and furnish the two classrooms.

According to the co-researchers it was important to deal with the issue of safety in the learning environment. In this regard, parents (GM) and parent (MF) with other members of the SGB volunteered to take turns in providing security of learners participating in the programme. This action further pointed not only to the newly formed healthy partnership between the parents and the school, but it was an indication of reinforcement of the increased role that parents can play in the programme.

#### **4.4.2. Conditions which contributed to the provision of well-organised and diverse activities**

It became clear during the interviews and workshops that the co-researchers, especially learner participants, were more concerned with unorganised and monotonous activities that the programme offered. They also stated that their increased levels of absence in the programme resulted partly from boredom they experienced in the programme. In this regard, the following things were initiated:

##### **I. An attendance register for both teachers and learners**

As stated elsewhere in this study, learner participants describe a lack of attendance of teachers in the programme as another reason for being absent from the programme. In addition, there was no mechanism to monitor the attendance of both teachers and learners in the programme. However, it is shown in literature that effective record keeping is essential (Huang, Leon & La Matrundola, 2014:35) and it increases attendance in the programme. The co-researchers in this study had previously stated that they preferred a register for teachers and learners as it would help maintain order in the programme and ensure active participation and increased accountability of everyone

involved. In addition, this register serves as motivation for teachers and is a useful and standardised tool when it comes to remuneration of teachers at the end of term. It further enables the principal to calculate what is due to each teacher who participated in the programme.

## **II. A fully installed television, an overhead projector**

The use of teacher-centred methods of teaching was seen by learner participants as another factor impeding the effectiveness of SEP at this school. As a remedy, these co-researchers stated that they needed the incorporation of technological devices in the programme, which resulted in the installation of a digital satellite connected television set in one of the two designated classrooms which had previously been locked in the principal's office. This television set was useful in contributing to the provision of diverse activities. For example, learners spent a minimum of four hours a week watching the educational programmes on television especially those dealing with challenging subjects such as mathematics, life sciences, physical science and accounting.

Similarly, the use of an overhead projector proved useful in helping to provide well-organised and diverse activities, particularly subjects such as life sciences where the magnification of phenomena studied is important. This overhead projector proved useful in a school where there was only one microscope shared by more than 500 learners. Through its use teachers were able to project on a screen the phenomena under study to a large number of learners in a classroom and so minimise disruptions during the lessons in the programme.

### **4.4.3. Conditions that contributed to the establishment of an effective supervisory team**

From the onset the issue of lack of supervision in the programme became evident. It did not only affect the learner participants but the parent participants expressed their concern about the safety of their children. In the same light, with acknowledgement of the absence of an effective supervisory team in the programme by the two respective HoDs, the teacher participants also attributed the ill-discipline of

learners to the unavailability of such a team. As a response, we established a team comprising parents and the HoDs. With a clear role they were expected to play, the two parents who participated in this study volunteered to offer their services to the school. In this regard, they alternately came to school in the evening to provide security and ensure the safety of both teachers and learners.

Following the learner participants' concerns of lack of monitoring and high levels of absenteeism in the programme, the role of the two HoDs was to ensure that everyone complied with the times and dates reflected in the timetable, with all involved in its drafting. Adding to this was another role of ensuring the availability of all necessary resources that a particular teacher would need for a particular lesson. For example, they would ensure that the technological devices were readily connected and photocopies made on time when necessary. As a result, this active and robust engagement of both the HoDs and parents in an effective supervisory team was successfully established and was helpful in the enhancement of SEP.

#### **4.4.4.Factors that made the high-quality programming and staffing successful**

The co-researchers believed that high-quality programming and staffing would be attained if the issues of attitudes and motivation were adequately addressed. They proposed that both teachers and learners change their respective attitudes towards the programme and each other, implying that the development of positive relationships was necessary to ensure the high-quality programming.

The discussions during the workshops were the first step towards establishing positive relationships and interaction among the co-researchers and during these discussions the issue of unequal power relations among the co-researchers was addressed. This was successful in eliminating dominance of one group over another and ensuring common ownership of the problems facing the school and the remedies thereof. The roles and responsibilities given to the co-

researchers promoted interaction which in turn resulted in the enhanced positive relationships. For example, contrary to having the HoDs alone drafting the timetable we had everyone (parents, teachers and learners) involved in suggesting the dates and subjects to be offered in the programme. And parents volunteered to offer their services to the school enhanced the interaction and the positive relationships among the co-researchers.

With regard to ensuring a clear vision and mission for the programme as part of intentional programming, in one of the workshops the focus was on the development of a vision and mission for the programme. In this instance, the detailed information was given to the learner participants since they were the ones directly involved and affected by the programme and the ones whose views had been marginalised in it. The focus was on the purpose, goals and the vision of the programme. Similar information was given to the parents because their roles and opinions were undermined by the school authorities. In addition, as a way of ensuring their ownership of the vision and mission of the programme they were both asked to make contributions relating to the achievement of the outlined goals of the programme.

Lastly, intentional programming requires the staff members to be motivated. With the permission of both the principal and the SGB a local pastor was called to motivate everyone at this school. Present in that prayer and motivation session were the parents (co-researchers), parents from the community, all SMT members, all teachers and all learners. The motivation, was however, mainly channelled to both learners and the staff members who appeared not to have received spiritual awakening in a long time. Furthermore, the emphasis was on the need for all staff members to model positive behaviour at all time. In addition to receiving the spiritual upliftment, the teachers (co-researchers) and HoDs (co-researchers) were later paid by the school for working in the programme after hours.

#### **4.4.5. Factors which made the establishment of strong partnerships successful**

It later emerged during the discussions about forming the strong partnerships between the school and the business people in the community that one of the parent-co-researchers was a business person herself. She ran a small tuck-shop in the community, which made it possible for her to reach out to other business people around the community to make some donations to the programme. Their gift of photocopying paper, among others, was valuable in the programme and the school at large. As a result, partnership was established between the co-researchers and the business people and between the school and the business people and the community in general.

Another factor that contributed to the successful formation of positive partnerships was the close working relationships which the HoDs (co-researchers) and teachers (co-researchers) had with other teachers and HoDs from the nearby school. This resulted in these schools sharing resources such as discs and books as well as in learners exchanging information with other learners from the other school. The formation of such partnership was critical for the continuation of the programme as teachers also shared ideas on ways to tackle the challenging topics in their respective subjects. This was particularly useful as it had a positive impact on the academic performance of learners across the board.

Lastly, the positive working relationship between the principals of the two schools facilitated the success of the partnership. It was further boosted by the recent appointment of a new deputy principal who used to work as an HoD at the school under study. The understanding and the familiarity of the challenges that the programme faced made it easy for him to endorse the formation of this partnership.



#### **4.5. PROBABLE THREATS TO THE SUCCESSFUL ENHANCEMENT OF SEP**

The focus of the previous section was on the conditions and aspects considered necessary for the enhancement of SEP for sustainable learning at a rural high school. In this section, however, the focus shifts to identifying the plausible threats that may impede the successful enhancement of SEP.

##### **4.5.1. Learners' lack of motivation to attend the programme**

With learners being the main beneficiaries in the programme we felt that it was critical that the focus should be on factors that might negatively impact on them directly. One such factor was an increased absence of learners in the programme which might directly result from lack of motivation. Consequently, this had a negative impact of the programme's successful enhancement. In this regard, HoD (VM) said:

*"...you see ntate Mokoena with the calibre of learners we have I think it is going to be difficult to keep them attending in the programme... I really don't think they are motivated enough because in most cases these learners most of them don't come back after break especially on Fridays..."*

HoD (JP) said:

*"...what my colleague is saying is quite true. We need to find a way of keeping them interested in the programme...maybe if we plan together and agree on times that would suit them can help..."*

In the same vein, teacher A (TKM) suggested:

*"without discarding the issue ya ntate lack of motivation, I do think that boredom may lead to them not attending the programme...it's hard to keep them interested in the programme if they find the lesson boring..."*

##### **Analysis of discourse at a textual level**

In the above utterances HoD (VM) is quoted as saying *"...I really think don't think they are motivated enough..."* to demonstrate that the enhancement of SEP can be difficult if learners lack motivation to attend the programme. In addition, the phrase *"...with the calibre of learners we*

*have...*” demonstrates that the learners who participate in the programme seem not to be intrinsically motivated to do so. The implication here is that lack of intrinsic motivation within the participants may also jeopardise the success of the enhancement of SEP.

Similar observation is expressed in the words of Teacher A (TKM), when she stated that “...*boredom may lead to them not attending the programme...*” In this case, if the activities offered in the programme are not appealing to the interests of the participants this can lead to high levels of absenteeism in the programme. Therefore, it can be possible to enhance SEP successfully.

### ***Analysis of discourse as social practice***

#### ***Interpretation of discourse as social information***

In the phrase “...*We need to find a way of keeping them interested in the programme...maybe if we plan together and agree on times that would suit them can help...*” the awareness by the participant of social reality and the problem that exists comes to the fore. In addition, it demonstrate that this co-researcher is affected by the social reality, hence her attempt to find possible ways to improve the situation.

### ***Analysis of discourse as discursive practice***

The element of intertextuality is evident in the phrase: “...*We need to find a way of keeping them interested in the programme...maybe if we plan together and agree on times that would suit them can help...*” by HoD (JP) as it offers ways to remedy the to the problem raised in the statement “...*it’s hard to keep them interested in the programme if they find the lesson boring...*” raised by Teacher A (TKM)

The phrases “...*what my colleague is saying is quite true...*” and “...*without discarding the issue... lack of motivation...*” contain an element of coherence. These phrases demonstrate awareness amongst these co-researchers of the discourses around them and are used to build on the issue raised earlier by HoD (VM).

## ***Analysis of discourse from critical emancipatory research perspective***

In the statement “...We need to find a way of keeping them interested in the programme...” by HoD (VM) the use of inclusive pronoun ‘we’ signals that learners’ lack of motivation to attend the programme affects everyone. Although the use of the phrase “...a way of keeping them interested...” may seem authoritative, it further concretises the need to tackle learners’ lack of motivation to attend the programme.

### **4.5.2. Lack of funding**

The area in which the school is situated adds to the problems that affect the running of the programme. The main problem facing schools situated in rural areas is the shortage of resources. Financial support is one scarce resource facing rural schools (Delisio, 2001, quoted in Schlatter, Schahrers & Pogue, 2003:25), and impacts negatively on the overall effectiveness of SEP. The co-researchers in this study saw lack of funding as a threat to the successful enhancement of SEP:

HoD (JP):

*“...since we are not involved in the school budget it is hard for us to influence the principal to allocate some funds to the programme...”*

Teacher A(TKM)

*“I think the teacher who represents us (teachers) within the SGB does not really speak about issues that really affect us financially. Maybe if he was part of this he would understand the importance of allocating funds to the programme...”*

HoD (VM):

*Ntate Mokoena I don’t really think they will be interested in discussing financial matters of the school with you...it’s better if find ways to fund the programme...”*

Parent A (GM):

*When it comes to the allocation yezimali thishera we are not really asked for our opinions. U thola ukuthi ba yasibiza ukuthi kune nto ethize ekumela ienziwe eskoleni bese thena siya sayina kuphela. (When it comes to the allocation of funds, teacher, we are not really asked for our opinions. You*

*would find that we only attach our signatures if there is something that needs to be done here at school...”)*

Teacher B (VB):

*I think the issue of funding will impact negatively on the running of the programme. As teachers we expect to be paid as we are using our own transport to come to school. Really if there is no funding I don't see the programme succeeding...*

Learner A (QN):

*“...it is hard to participate in the programme if there is no food. We can't afford really to bring food to school. Where will we store them? The parents won't agree to that...”*

Learner B (TP):

*“...and when there is food available they are serving us food of low quality. They always feed us samp and fish Monday to Friday...we need healthy food so that we can get the energy to study and concentrate. So with the food they give us we are always tired...”*

### ***Analysis of discourse at textual level***

Teacher B (VM) said: “...[r]eally if there is no funding I don't see the programme succeeding...” to demonstrate how lack of funding remains a challenge that can hamper the successful enhancement of SEP. He further demonstrated how this would affect teacher attendance if the school does not subsidise them for transport as they are using their own vehicles to attend. In addition to the principal's lack of enthusiasm in allocating funds to the programme, Teacher A (TKM) felt that the teacher component within the SGB also lacked interest in raising their problems with the principal.

In the same light, the statement by Parent A (GM) also pointed to the powerless position from which they operate as members of SGB when it comes to school finances, an implication being that they do not have the power to influence decisions on matters related to the running of the programme.

Learner A (QN) is quoted as saying “...itis hard to participate in the programme if there is no food...” to demonstrate the extent to which lack of funding affects their everyday participation in the programme. In this case, there is no money specifically allocated to buy food for learners who participate in the programme. Moreover, learner B points out “...and when there is food available they are serving us food of low quality...” In this case, they are being served the non-nutritious food as a result of lack of funds allocated to the programme.

### ***Analysis of discourse as social practice***

The statement “...We can’t afford really to bring food to school...” by Learner A (QN) demonstrates poverty as a social reality learners in rural schools are faced with and points to the negative impact it has on the effectiveness of the programme and on learning in general. The phrase “...it’s better if we find ways to fund the programme...” is an example of interpreting discourse as social information. In this case, the demonstration is that the co-researcher is familiar with and affected by the social reality, hence, her attempt to devise a suitable solution to this social reality.

### ***Analysis of discourse as discursive practice***

In the statements “...it is hard to participate in the programme if there is no food...” and “...we are using our own transport to come to school...” as well as “...they are serving us food of low quality...” made by Learner A (QN), Learner B (PT) and Teacher B (VB) respectively, there is an element of coherence. In this case, these statements build on the argument made earlier about the negative impact the lack of funding has on the successful enhancement of SEP.

The statement “... weare not involved in the school budget it is hard for us to influence the principal to allocate some funds to the programme...” by HoD (JP) is worth noting as it contains an element of intertextuality. In this case, this statement is related to the previous statement made by Parent GM in which she talked about the little influence members of the

SGB have on the financial matters of the school and how this has a negative impact on the successful enhancement of SEP at this school.

### ***Analysis of discourse from critical emancipatory research perspective***

The statement, “...*I don’t really think they will be interested in discussing financial matters of the school with you...*” by HoD (VM) demonstrates that teachers and other stakeholders are excluded from all important financial matters. In other words, the principal has the ultimate voice in financial matters of the school and if she feels no need to allocate funds for the programme it will remain under financial strain. This is exacerbated by the observation that Teacher A (TKM) made that “...*the teacher who represents us (teachers) within the SGB does not really speak about issues that really affect us financially...*”

Additionally, in the statement “...*we only attach our signatures if there is something that needs to be done here at school...*” Parent A (GM) provides a classic example of the marginalisation of the poor rural communities by the school authority (principal). This is in contrary to the powers given to the SGB by the DoE.

While the view that “...*I don’t really think they will be interested in discussing financial matters of the school with you...*” by HoD (VM) demonstrates the position of marginalisation and disempowerment from which he speaks, whilst the statement by Teacher A (TKM) that “...*Maybe if he was part of this he would understand the importance of allocating funds to the programme...*” is poignant in demonstrating how empowering her participation in this study has been. This owes to the creation of the platform in which all co-researchers took part in solving the problem of ineffective programme with the ultimate aim of improving academic performance and ensuring sustainable learning.

#### **4.5.3. Unavailability of a coordinated plan**

The availability of a coordinated plan is a vital part of any programme for its success and the achievement of envisaged outcomes and this

plan is often carried out by all stakeholders in the programme. It is essential that before the plan can be carried out all stakeholders deliberate and participate in the decision-making of such plan. Among other things, it outlines the responsibilities of each staff member, the coordinator, parents, as well as the learners and helps with assigning tasks that also ensure the smooth running of the programme. This is often meant for teachers to plan and tailor their activities efficiently. In this case, there is a need for a well-formulated timetable which outlines the activities of each day. Despite the obvious need for this kind of planning, the threats posed by a lack of this coordinated plan became evident through the comments of the participants:

Learner A (QN): *Bana ba dula babodwa emaclassene aba stadieshe ngoba there are no teachers to monitor them and it is demotivating and frustrating. [We are left attended in the classroom and we do not study because there are no teachers allocated to monitor us]*

Learner C (JP): *Abantu aba fundayo elaba ba kwagrade 12 ngoba uPrincipal and abo thishera ba hlala ba ba monitor and ba ba attenda lento isho ukuthi thina siuseless [ The people who study are those in Grade Twelve because the principal and teachers always monitor and attend to them and this means we are useless ].*

### ***Analysis of discourse at a textual level***

Learner A (QN) said: “...we do not study because there are no teachers allocated to monitor us...” to demonstrate that they are unable to study and learn because there is no coordinated plan that guides the entire programme. This makes teacher allocations to certain learning centre impossible and hampers the effectiveness of the programme as it is difficult for teachers to ensure effective teaching and learning. It is these long unoccupied hours of learning that leave these learners frustrated and unenthusiastic about the programme. Learner C (JP) is quoted as saying “...and this means we are useless...” to indicate the way they feel when they are left unattended by teachers as a result of the unavailability of the plan of action in executing the programme.

### ***Analysis of discourse from critical emancipatory research perspective***

Being quoted as saying “...because the principal and teachers always monitor and attend to them and this means we are useless...” Learner C (JP) demonstrates the polarisation of power and decision-making that results from the absence of a coordinated plan. Evident here is that as a result of the power they possess the principal and teachers choose to assign activities to the Grade 12 learners at the expense of learners in other grades. It is as though these participants feel powerless and neglected. It is also apparent that the lack of a coordinated plan is interpreted as a lack of preparedness and seriousness on the part of the principal and the staff members involved in the programme.

Additionally, the learner participants’ demotivation may also be attributed to a lack coordinated plan from the teachers against the background that every learner is encouraged to have a study timetable and expected to follow it thoroughly. From the above responses one may argue that these learner participants were not being included in the decision-making parts of the entire programme. This perpetuation of disempowerment and unfairness towards learner participants results in their losing trust in the meaningfulness of the programme itself.

The opinions expressed above also reveal that the participants are aware of the inability of the programme to achieve its intended outcomes if the plan remains unavailable. The use of words such as *they* and *us* further reveal a deeper feeling of not owning or being a meaningful participant in the programme.

Through the use of CER and the application of its principles, the study seeks to bring interconnectedness among all the stakeholders in the programme as well as ownership of it. The learner participants had earlier complained about a lack of organisation within the programme which resulted in them not knowing which subjects would be offered on a particular day or which teachers would be in attendance.



By bringing together all the stakeholders in an effort to develop the coordinated plan this study helps to promote not only ownership of the programme but also the empowerment of the learner participants whose role seem to be down-played by the management and staff members in the programme. In the long run this study further helps to refute the perception that rural people are not able to solve their problems. In this case, the formation of a team composed of all rural participants in this study made it possible for all stakeholders to solve the problem of ineffective problem by devising the strategies to enhance the programme.

#### **4.5.4. Lack of consultation with the learners**

A successful programme in any organisation calls for the involvement and consultation with all stakeholders. The decision taken should be agreed upon by all stakeholders in the programme. In the case under study, learners form an important part of the programme, however, during our discussions in the subsequent meetings it became quite clear that this programme at this school was for and about learners as they were not involved in the decision-making of the entire programme. When asked if they were consulted about the programme learner participants responded in the negative.

Learner A (QN): *“No! ha ba re jwetse hore ho tlo etsahala tjena le tjena. Ba re re tle. Akere le batla ho phasa, le tle!”* [No! they don't tell us about what is going to happen in the programme. They just tell us to attend].

Learner C (JP): *“A guy o tla kena classe le classe hore le tle programming”* [Because you want to pass, you must come!] [A guy would enter in every class telling us to attend the programme]

#### **Analysis of discourse at a textual level**

The phrase *“they just tell us to attend the programme”* by Learner QN above demonstrates that learners are not taking part in the decisions about the programme or its contents. Nor is there is a formal setting created in which learners would be notified in time about the contents of the programme. This impulsive implementation is further reflected in the

absence of the coordinated plan as in most cases, as Learner C (JP) reflects above: *“...a guy would enter in every class telling us to attend the programme”*.

The phrase *“...because you want to pass, you must come!”* as used by Learner C (JP) shows that learners feel coerced into the programme in whose framework they did not participate in designing. In this case, it is clear that learners are not happy with the school management’s diagnosis of their problems or the possible remedies as consumers themselves.

### ***Analysis of discourse from the critical emancipatory research perspective***

The feelings of dominance over the helpless are summed up in the following expression: *“...because you want to pass, you must come!”* In this expression it is evident that the management of the school do not see themselves as contributing to the challenges it is facing. Here, seemingly, the people who need help are the learners while the school management team’s role is to devise strategies to help these learners. In this case, Learner (A) QN said:

*“Abotishere nabo bane izinkinga zabo nje about teaching a particular topic or content. But what is surprising ukuthi they are quick to point their fingers at us ba re rona re na le mathata.” [Teachers themselves have their own problems when teaching a particular topic or concept. But what is surprising is that they are quick to point their fingers at us and say that we are the ones with problems.]”*

This expression further depicts unequal participation in problem-solving. In this regard, learners are not seen as equal partners in solving the problems that face the school in general or the programme in particular. Rather, learners’ participation is reduced to mere obedience to instructions.

In a subsequent session with HODs I asked to be shown evidence of learners’ consultation about the programme. Not surprisingly, all HODs confirmed that there was no evidence of that nature, though one

didstate that the principal only gave letters to parents informing them of the involvement of their children in the programme. This view was later also expressed by all learner participants. It is evident that the management of the school took decisions on behalf of the learners and there was no record to show that learners were called or their views heard. In this case, it became apparent that assumptions were made about the problems that learners had and the management decided to devise remedies for them. This is typical of an institutionalised top-down problem-solving approach that is often adopted in rural settings.

#### **4.5.5. Lack of consultation with HODs**

Within a school setting, and given the presence of a top-down approach of decision-making, one would expect to find consultation and corporation amongst the bureaucrats themselves. However, the discussions we held with HODs and teachers further added to the concerns that were raised by parents earlier in the study. In our meetings the HODs were quite vocal about lack of consultation by the principal and deputy principal and how this would threaten the successful enhancement of the programme. According to them, both the principal and the deputy viewed themselves as the only managers of the whole school and the programme itself. While acknowledging a need for interactive effort in the implementation of SEP, these HODs viewed themselves as being strategically excluded from participating in the programme and making decisions which affect the successful implementation of SEP and the general academic performance of learners.

HOD (JP):

*Another issue that kills the school ke ntho ya consultation. Consultation is not taking place. I want to make an example neh, the four of us HODs neh, during winter classes, we were not consulted until the last day of closing. Even when teachers came hore ba tlo ruta mona, teachers were telephonically consulted. [Another thing that kills the schools is the issue of consultation...even when teachers came to teach here they were consulted telephonically]"*

### ***Analysis of discourse at a textual level***

HOD (JP) points to the lack of consultation as a serious challenge facing the implementation of SEP at this school. The use of the words “...Another thing that kills the schools is the issue of consultation...” points to the existence of non-consultation at the school management level itself, and warns about the serious ramifications for both the programme and the school as a whole.

Similar sentiments are shared by HOD (VM):

*“...the way things were happening right now, at no case you would see the deputy communicating with us who are really close to him, let alone the issue of the staff... at that stage education of the learners was at stake...”*

In this case, this HOD views lack of consultation as hampering communication about the decisions and ways of making SEP effective, whilst he also views the extent to which this conflict at the management level impedes the delivery of quality education through the programme.

### ***Analysis of discourse as a discursive practice***

The use of the phrase “...at no case you would see the deputy communicating with us...” indicates existence of a discourse around the issue of non-consultation and its impact on the effectiveness of SEP. In this case, the issue of intertextuality is evident as this phrase relates to the points raised earlier by parents, learners and HOD (JP).

The statement “...at that stage education of the learners was at stake...” demonstrates an element of coherence, and HOD (VM) adds to other far-reaching possible consequence the lack of consultation may have on the implementation of the programme and academic performance of learners.

#### **4.5.6. Conflict between teachers and HoDs**

In addition to lack of consultation when decisions were taken about SEP there was a perceived intentional conflict that the principal and deputy sought to create amongst the HODs and educators. In this case, the

role that would ordinarily be undertaken by an HOD in the programme would be assigned to an educator and vice-versa. The presence of such a conflict impeded successful implementation of the programme and impacted negatively on the morale of the people involved. It was argued in chapter two of this study that lack of unity among staff members in the programme led to demoralisation and demotivation of the participants. These are the views expressed by HOD (VM):

*“We as HODs some are viewed as better than others and the information is given to them and they are assigned some of the extra duties which capacitated themselves, letting others down who cannot get information and this leads to a conflict.”*

### ***Analysis of discourse at a textual level***

The use of the phrase “...We as HODs some are viewed as better than others...” demonstrates the unequal treatment that HoDs experience at this school when it comes to consultation. In this case, information is not distributed evenly amongst all the members of the SMT. According to HoD VM the principal and the deputy principal seem to have their favourite HoDs with whom they share information regarding the design and the implementation of SEP. In this case, this HoD is aware of the dangers of such strategic exclusion as it “...leads to a conflict.”

### ***Analysis of discourse as a discursive practice***

In the statement by HoD (VM) “...letting others down who cannot get information and this leads to a conflict...the information is given to them...they are assigned extra duties...” a demonstration is made of how some HoDs are treated more favourably than others.

On one hand, the statement by HoD (JP) that “...you leave those people alone who have been given that task to perform...in case they encounter a problem and need assistance, one would say let them see and that brings about the problem in the school situation...” signals the element of intertextuality as it relates to the statement by HoD (VM) with regard to how disempowered some HoDs appear. On the other hand, the same statement by HoD (JP) indicates the element of coherence as it builds

on what has been said. In this regard, this statement is a practical reaction that develops from the perceived unequal treatment. Rather than working as team, HODs seem to be in competition with each other, concerned with sabotaging each other at the expense of the learners' education in general and the objectives of the programme in particular.

### ***Analysis of discourse from critical emancipatory research perspective***

The use of the phrase “...some are viewed as better than others...and letting others down...” signals underlying feelings of hopelessness and defeat. In this case, the HOD concerned means that he and others are viewed by the principal and the deputy principal as incapable of undertaking their responsibilities in the programme. In other words, he views himself and others as being disempowered by the most senior managers in the school.

A feeling was expressed by the HODs that the gap created by the most senior managers in the school was capitalised on by the educators to hamper the success of SEP at school. In this case, these educators were viewed as being disobedient to the HODs, whose views seemed not to be supported by the principal and the deputy. Consequently, the HODs found it impossible to assign tasks and roles to such educators to undertake in the programme. HOD VM's views were captured in these phrases: “We are working closely to educators and if they know that there is no support behind you then it becomes difficult for you to exercise your duties”.

In addition, this lack of consultation of the HODs by the senior school managers prevents the HODs from exerting power on the educators. Among other things, in the everyday situation at school HODs are tasked with monitoring and managing the educators. This involves assigning extracurricular tasks and roles to the educators in addition to their curriculum related activities. At this school, however, such tasks were met with resistance from teachers as HoDs (JP) and (VM) stated respectively:

*I must be honest with you the educators were doing as they wish. We were not having powers, we needed a backup from someone in the senior position to take decisions, and as a result it was difficult to put educators on board. As a result, we ended up being the same”*

*“I want to make an example, the four of us HODs..., during winter classes we were not consulted until the last day of closing. Even when teachers came hore batlo ruta mona, teachers were telephonically consulted by us.”*

Deducing from their words, these HODs are concerned about maintaining their authority with the educators and saving face. In the extract the HODs were given the task of informing the educators of their roles in the programme at the very last minute. While this calls attention to the lack of a coordinated plan (see 4.2.5.2) it also creates an impression in the educators that the HODs are irresponsible and cannot discharge their duties efficiently in the programme.

#### **4.6. POSSIBLE REMEDIES USED IN CIRCUMVENTING THE THREATS**

The focus of this sub-section is on the remedies we used in an attempt to curb the plausible threats discussed above.

##### **4.6.1. Inclusive participation in the formation of a coordinated plan**

As a remedy, the teacher co-researchers and the HoDs who participated in this study designed a timetable and shared it with all other educators who participated in the programme. This helped in eliminating the confusion that characterised the programme and assisted in teachers organising and preparing their activities on time. In addition to ensuring the provision of organised activities it gave learners time to prepare for the activities and plan ahead. The time allocated to each teacher in the timetable was made flexible in order to allow for provision of diverse activities. In addition, it ended the earlier complaints by HoDs of teachers not attending regularly as there was no guideline (timetable) in place.

#### **4.6.2. Holding motivation sessions for both staff members and learners**

As supported by the empirical data and literature, the participants suggested that someone be requested to come and motivate the staff members and learners. In this light, the use of external stimulation (Neiva & Pepe, 2012:4) may be a source of motivation. Unlike in Finland, where a school psychologist would be involved in planning, development and assisting schools at every level (Ahtola & Kiiski- Maki, 2014:95), the school acquired the services of a local pastor to offer motivation.

#### **4.6.3. Offering varied activities in the programme**

The learner participants complained about the exclusive focus on academic work, stating that they preferred participating in diverse activities. According to the co-researchers, these involve different learning styles and various teaching methods, for example, some learner participants stated their desire to be given an opportunity to role play in the English class while those in the Mathematics class called for the inclusion of chess game in the programme. Similar calls were expressed by the learner participants about the incorporation of traditional Zulu games and story-telling techniques to enhance their vocabulary and understanding of IsiZulu literature (plays and poems).

#### **4.6.4. Fostering strong partnerships between local businesses and the school**

As a remedy, it is stated elsewhere in this study that we formed strong partnerships with business people in the community and so were able to receive food that lasted a week. In addition, a meeting was requested with the deputy principal about raising funds for the programme. In this case, agreement was reached that members of LRC together with the learner co-researchers would be given things (cakes, snacks, sweets) to sell around the school. This would run concurrently with the fund-



raising aimed at helping learners mitigate the costs of a farewell function for the Grade 12 learners around October.

#### **4.6.5. Engaging learners when designing a suitably tailored timetable**

A more inclusive solution to this problem is expressed in the phrase “...*maybe if we plan together and agree on times that would suit everyone can help...*” The implication here is that another contributory factor to the low rates of learners’ motivation was that in the past HoDs used to design the programme alone. As a remedy, this HoD calls for the inclusion of everyone’s views in designing the programme. In this instance, each participant was asked to suggest suitable dates and times during which it would be convenient for them to attend. This is similar to practice in the USA, where the programme was tailored according to the participants’ interests, needs and schedule (Little *et al.*, 2007:13).

#### **4.6.6. Enhancing positive relationships between the SMT members, principal and teachers**

As a remedy, we agreed that the HoDs would liaise between the principal and all co-researchers. They would be responsible for requesting meetings, submitting the timetables and facilitating the formation of strong partnerships between the school and other stakeholders (see section 4.4.5). They were given these two responsibilities for two reasons, firstly, because as part of the SMT it was easy for them to raise issues related to the programme in the SMT meetings, and secondly, the interaction about the programme with all other members of the SMT would enhance the relationship between these members and understanding and appreciation of the contribution each can make in the programme if they all work together.

### **4.7 SYNTHESIS**

This top-down approach was challenged by the study through the adoption and implementation of principles of CER. In challenging the polarised power relations that existed in the programme it created a

platform in which all parties (school management, parents and learners) identified the problem together and strived for remedies together in an equal setting. It challenged a top-down approach which is often characterized by the imposition of remedies on the less powerful, and managed to enforce the idea of *'nothing about us without us'* which is imbedded in CER to a large extent. Through participation of learners it managed to create a sense of ownership of the programme which was only enjoyed by the powerful school management team. While borrowing from the CER's view of common ownership, affording learners a platform to work together with their authorities (SMT members, teachers and parents) in identifying the problems within the programme then devising strategies to circumvent them, learners became increasingly involved in the programme and as a result can claim equal ownership of it.

#### **4.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

The main focus on this chapter was on analyses, presentation and presentation of data generated about enhancing SEP for sustainable learning at a rural highschool. In this regard, attention was first given to challenges to the enhancement of SEP to demonstrate and justify the need for such an enhancement. The focus then shifted to the components and aspects deemed necessary to circumvent these challenges. Following this was focus on the conditions deemed necessary for enhancement of SEP to flourish, threats to this enhancement and possible remedies to circumvent them. The chapter examined the monitoring strategies and indicators of successful enhancement of SEP for sustainable learning at a rural school.

The subsequent chapter reports on the findings of this study.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS ON ENHANCING A SCHOOL ENRICHMENT PROGRAMME FOR SUSTAINABLE LEARNING AT A RURAL HIGH SCHOOL**

#### **5.1. INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter discussed the generation, analysis and presentation of data on enhancing a school enrichment programme for sustainable learning at a rural high school. In this chapter the focus is on reporting the findings of this study, drawing conclusions, making recommendations and proposing strategies for effective enhancement of SEP. In addition, it highlights limitations of the study.

This study was undertaken to respond to the question:

**How can we enhance a school enrichment programme for sustainable learning at a rural high school?**

The following objectives guided the attempt to answer this question.

- To identify the challenges justifying the need to enhance of SEP for sustainable learning at a rural high school
- To identify and discuss components and aspects necessary for the successful enhancement of SEP
- To determine the conditions conducive for the successful enhancement of SEP to be realised
- To foresee the barriers that could hamper the enhancement of SEP and the possible remedies to circumvent these barriers
- To propose strategies for enhancing SEP for sustainable learning at a rural high school.

#### **5.2. FINDINGS ALIGNED TO THE ABOVE OBJECTIVES**

The focus of this sub-section is on reporting the findings aligned to the five objectives of this study.

### **5.2.1 The need for the enhancement of SEP for sustainable learning at a rural high school may be justified on the following grounds**

#### **Lack of variety in activities offered in the programme**

During the workshops and interviews the co-researchers revealed the sole focus of the programme on the academic activities as a challenge that renders SEP non-functional. In this case, it emerged that learners in the programme were expected to participate in the programme for more than eight hours, during which they were taught the entire week without any form of recreation. In addition, they revealed that the teaching methods used in the programme were more teacher-centred as opposed to being learner-centred. Similar findings were indicated by Further *et al.* (2006:213) in which they argued that the use of these teacher-centred methods created a problem in South African classrooms. This rendered them passive and also discouraged their participation in lessons. Their plight was exacerbated by the school management team and teachers side-lining their views. Consequently, many co-researchers cited boredom and rigidity in the programme as a reason for increased rates of absenteeism.

It was also found that while others opted to move aimlessly around the school premises others came to school for non-school related activities, in which case they cited lack of motivation to study as directly linked to the boredom they experienced in the programme as a result of lack of other extracurricular activities. This situation was a sharp contrast to the supposed aim of SEP to provide a developmental context in which participants experience increased levels of engagement and motivation (Korntzer *et al.*, 2005), self-esteem and self-concept (AA, 2007:6).

Given the above challenges pointed out by the co-researchers and the information from the literature, it became clear that SEP needed to be enhanced.

### **Ambivalent roles of parents and their lack of involvement**

It emerged in the discussions that the role and involvement of parents in the programme rendered it non-functional. The learner participants felt that their parents were taken for granted by the school management, in which case they reported that they were not sufficiently consulted about the design, implementation or the running of the programme. As a result, it emerged that other parents would not allow their children to attend the programme.

Another issue was reported by the parent participants themselves, namely feeling undermined by the principal. It emerged that their role in the programme was limited to serving learners food in the programme, resulting in learners being left unsupervised in the programme in an unsafe environment. It came to the fore that there was lack of communication between parents and the school as they only received letters from the school instructing them to allow their children to attend the programme. This happened, it emerged, without a proper meeting or serious participation of parents. However, for SEP to be effective and successful regular communication between parents and the school is critical (Neiva *et al.*, 2012:71).

This was in contrast to the many meaningful roles that parents can play in SEP, for instance assisting in the provision of child-monitoring strategies (Ganga & Chikoya, 2013:17). With increased levels of involvement and clearly articulated roles parents can further assist in enhancing the learners' social, emotional and psychological wellbeing (Lagace`-Se`guin & Case, 2008:454). In addition, this involvement can further assist in improving academic performance of learners (Epstein, 1992, cited in Mcube, 2010:233), because parents' involvement can serve as motivation for learners to study hard.

As evident from the deliberations we had with the co-researchers, coupled with the information provided by literature, it became apparent that the conspicuously limited roles of the parents in the programme

rendered it ineffective. Consequently, there was a need to enhance the programme.

### **Negative attitudes of learners towards the programme**

In the sessions we had around identifying the challenges hampering the effectiveness of SEP, negative attitudes of learners towards the programme were identified as a challenge contributing to the ineffectiveness of this programme. It emerged that some learners had a negative attitude towards and about the programme, and they could not see anything good in or about it. They also expressed the views that they could not associate with the programme because they did not understand its mission or objectives. As a result, they did not participate and those who did merely chatted with their friends. It further emerged that some learners preferred to spend time at home as opposed to being in the programme, whilst others cited feelings of alienation and exclusion when the programme was designed as reasons for the negative attitudes towards it.

Literature provides many benefits of having positive attitudes in the programme, such as increasing one's positive views of school and education in general. In addition, it helps in keeping learners motivated to study and changing behaviour (AA, 2014:7). With teachers complaining about increased delinquent activities of learners in the programme, poor motivation levels, increased rates of absenteeism, and poor academic performance of learners, it was clear that learners' negative attitudes thwarted the programme. As a result, these called for the programme to be enhanced.

### **The rural location of the school**

In the discussion aimed at identifying challenges hampering the effectiveness of SEP, the rural location of the school under study was identified. All the co-researchers indicated that there were challenges specific to the area in which the school is situated, unanimously pointing out a lack of resources in the school. In this regard it emerged that access to educational information was difficult as district officials did not

visit the school as often as they should, resulting in the school receiving information late, if at all.

Another issue that impacted negatively on the programme was lack of transportation. The area in which this school is situated is surrounded by farms, on which many of the learners were residing and from which transportation to school was a challenge. As a result, it became difficult for them to participate fully in the programme. Such difficulties were reported by Derek (2012:76) in South Africa, similar to those encountered by participants in the study undertaken in the rural parts of the USA (Zhang & Byrd, 2005; State Legislature, 2006:09).

It further emerged that teachers also cited lack transport as the main reason for their failure to engage fully in the programme. The non-availability of reliable transport was a serious issue because most lived far away from the area in which the school is situated. They also used common transport taking them to and from school every day so it was impossible for one to remain and engage learners in the programme when all other teachers had left.

Backed by the evidence from literature and the empirical data on challenges brought by the rural location of the school, we felt that SEP needed to be enhanced for the realisation of sustainable learning and improved academic performance of learners at this rural school.

### **Poor quality of leadership and management in the programme**

From the discourses in the workshops it emerged that poor quality of leadership and management in the programme was a challenge that contributed to the ineffectiveness of SEP. In this case, the teacher participants noted lack of proper supervision as the first sign of poor management in the programme. It emerged that only two senior members of the SMT tasked themselves with both supervision and management in the programme while other teachers residing locally and parents were effectively excluded. Due to the immense workload, it further emerged that learners were left unsupervised at night while studying.

Another finding was that the two senior members of the SMT only monitored and supervised the Grade 12 learners while learners in low grades were left unsupervised. In addition, due to lack of effective management teachers only attended and taught the Grade 12 learners as there was no timetable for lower grades. In such conditions it was not surprising that participants complained about the noise and chaos that often characterised these learning sessions. Needless to say, it was impossible for the participants to study under such chaotic circumstances.

The dangers of leaving learners unsupervised are well documented in literature, as they are more likely to engage in criminal behaviour (State Legislature, 2006:10). Their chances of being victims or perpetrators of crime escalate, whilst increase in delinquent behaviours such as smoking, drinking, drug use, and premature sexual activity has also been documented (Hobbs & Vinluan, 2005). Learners engaging in a highly supervised and managed SEP show the improved academic achievement (Cosden *et al.*, 2001: 212), whereas learners in the poorly supervised SEP are more likely to avoid this.

With the evidence of the dangers of poorly supervised and managed SEP that literature provided coupled with the empirical data generated in this study, it was therefore important for this programme to be enhanced.

This sub-section of the study was addressing the first objective (see 5.1) and confirmed that there were challenges hampering the effectiveness of SEP, thereby highlighting the need for the programme to be enhanced.



### **5.3. SOME COMPONENTS AND ASPECTS ARE NECESSARY FOR THE SUCCESSFUL ENHANCEMENT OF SEP FOR SUSTAINABLE LEARNING AT A RURAL HIGH SCHOOL**

This sub-section discusses the findings on the important components and the solutions to the challenges discussed in the previous sub-section.

#### **5.3.1. Improvement of the teaching and learning environment**

In our discourses on what would constitute a solution to the lack of supervision and chaos that characterised the learning sessions, we agreed that improving the teaching and learning environment was important for the successful enhancement of SEP. This would enable effective teaching and learning and help with the elimination of chaos and noise about which everyone was complaining. Moreover, we felt that the conducive learning environment would also assist in decreasing high levels of absenteeism in the programme.

In order to achieve these, it emerged that the issue of lack of furniture needed to be addressed. It later became clear that increased levels of absenteeism and the low levels of motivation to participate in the programme were partially a result of unavailability of furniture in the classroom. The issue of the classroom that would be used solely for the programme purposes was important. In addition to saving time, the co-researchers reported that it would be necessary in eliminating the unnecessary movement of other learners looking for the furniture in other classes.

Findings from literature indicates the benefits of creating an environment conducive for teaching and learning in SEP. Learners engaging in SEP within a safe environment are more likely to avoid high-risk behaviours (Zhang & Byrd, 2005:6), and a positive learning environment helps increase their concentration on learning (Cid, 2014:349) rather than on delinquent behaviours such as drug abuse and unwanted pregnancy (Ganga & Chikoya, 2013:85). According to Berry and La Velle (2013:80), positive learning environment within

which SEP occurs helps increasing the motivation and retention of the participants in the programme.

The evidence obtained through data generation in this study and provided by literature reinforced the need for improving the teaching and learning environment as an important component necessary for the successful enhancement of SEP for sustainable learning at a rural high school.

### **5.3.2. Provision of well-organised and diverse content in the programme**

Discussions aimed at identifying components and aspects necessary for the successful enhancement of SEP pointed to the provision of well-organised and diverse curriculum content in the programme as an important solution to addressing the challenges discussed above (see 5.2). The findings indicate that the co-researchers preferred learner-centred as opposed to teacher-centred activities. According to the participants, this helped eliminate dependency on the teacher and as a result they reported feelings of being in control of such activities and their own learning.

Another finding was that some co-researchers preferred activities that offered them opportunities to compete with learners from other classrooms. This, they indicated, would motivate them to study even harder. Others preferred the provision of activities which encouraged cooperative learning to enable them to help other learners.

As a remedy to boredom and increased absenteeism levels in the programme, the incorporation of games in the lessons emerged from the co-researchers. In this case, they preferred the use of music in the Maths class, arguing that it would help them in remembering formulae better, while role-play would be useful in the English class for enhanced comprehension and enjoyment of the literary piece.

In addition to the empirical data generated in this study, literature provides a plethora of benefits for provision of diverse activities in SEP.

According to Vandell *et al.* (2009:118), the curriculum content offered in SEP should be socially and culturally relevant and beneficial to learners. Learners who engage in SEP which offers diverse curriculum content are more likely to achieve more academically (Little *et al.*, 2007:05). Learners benefit from such activities because they keep them interested in learning, thereby keeping them away from delinquent activities (State Legislature, 2006:09). Moreover, findings indicate that learners who participate in a programme that offers diverse activities are shown to have higher life satisfaction and general wellbeing (Lagacé-Seguin & Case, 2008:453).

The empirical data generated in this study and the data from literature pointed to the benefits that learners were likely to attain if they engage in a multifaceted SEP consisting of well-organised and diverse activities. It was on the basis of such findings that we felt provision of well-organised and diverse curriculum content was a component necessary for the successful enhancement of SEP for sustainable learning at a rural high school.

### **5.3.3. Formation of an efficient monitoring team**

Our discourses in the workshops about identifying components and solutions to the challenges discussed in the previous sub-section pointed to the formation of an effective supervisory team as necessary for successful enhancement of SEP for sustainable learning at a rural high school. The findings indicated that the co-researchers called for an effective supervisory team to address the issue of ill-discipline that often characterised the learning sessions.

Another finding was that the co-researchers indicated a need for parents to form part of the team. Parents play a role in enabling SEP to retain learner participation and the general effectiveness of the programme (Deutsch, Wiggins, Hennerberger, & Lawrance, 2013:45). The co-researchers in this study argued that it would be helpful in addressing the issue of safety of learners, necessary because many teachers stayed far from the school and therefore parents would take

over the supervision role in the evenings. It further emerged that the inclusion of parents in this team was another way of giving them a voice in the programme. They would thus know who the teachers of their children were and participate in conversations about learner performance and ways to improve it.

In addition to parents' role in the team, the HoDs were also given roles of supervising and monitoring educators and learners. The co-researchers felt that it would be necessary for the HoDs to design and record the attendance of both teachers and learners, seen as necessary for increasing attendance and motivation on both sides. It further emerged that it was necessary for teachers to submit weekly lesson plans to the two HoDs, thus assisting in ensuring that teachers came to class prepared and motivated to teach. The benefits of an effective supervisory team in SEP are well-documented in literature. In the USA there was an increase in the test score of students whose teachers were required to submit lesson plans (AA, 2014: 18).

The foregoing information from literature and that generated in this study further confirmed that formation of an effective supervisory team was necessary for the enhancement of SEP for sustainable learning at a rural high school.

#### **5.3.4. The establishment of staff-preparedness and intentional programming**

In the workshops it emerged that the creation of positive relationships and interactions among all the co-researchers and the issue of developing a clear vision and mission of the programme, motivation of all staff members and the co-researchers were all necessary components and aspects for the successful enhancement of SEP. Also, they are necessary in addressing the challenge of learners' negative attitudes towards the programme.

The first finding indicated that the co-researchers preferred the formation of positive relationships because they would benefit from them. In addition to making work easy it emerged that such

relationships would enhance communication among all the stakeholders in the programme, thereby increasing learner participation and comprehension of their schoolwork. This in turn would result in improved academic performance of learners.

The last finding was that the existence of these increased interactions served as motivation for learners to attend and participate in the programme. It further emerged that teachers themselves would benefit from such interactions because they would contribute to changing learners' perceptions of the teachers. In this regard, learners, it was argued, would start to see teachers as people who came to class prepared and motivated to teach.

The benefits of forming positive relationships and interactions in SEP are well-documented in literature. According to Oh, Osgood and Smith (2014:3), the existence of these relationships serves as a determinant of the functionality of SEP. Similarly, the success of SEP also relies on positive relationships in the programme (DuBois & Karcher, 2005 cited in Jones & Deutsch, 2013:21). Formation of positive relationships among staff members in SEP is important because learners look up to the staff members for support and motivation. While this is true for staff members, the establishment of positive relationships between staff-members and learners is also crucial as it facilitates the creation of a safe and supportive environment for learners (AA, 2014:18).

There were also findings that related to the development of a clear vision and mission of the programme as well as motivation of all members. It emerged that setting clear vision and mission of the programme clarified what the purpose of the programme was. This further contributed to motivating the co-researchers, thereby enhancing participation of everyone, especially the learners. Similarly, in her study, Moleko (2014) found that the clearly stated vision and mission of the programme helped in motivating the participants in the programme.

With regard to motivation, it emerged that the co-researchers wanted to be motivated at least once every term, as opposed to once in a

semester. In addition, they felt that the motivation should be extended to all stakeholders and all learners instead of only the Grade 12 learners and their teachers. According to Berry and La Velle (2013:80), the regular motivation of learners in SEP helps in increasing their participation in the programme. The services offered by the local pastor were appreciated by everyone, even though this was a contrast to the USA where motivation was provided by a school psychologist.

With the information generated in this study, coupled with information provided by literature, it became evident that the existence of staff-preparedness and intentional programme was a component necessary for the successful enhancement of SEP for sustainable learning at a rural high school.

#### **5.3.5. Formation of strong partnerships with all stakeholders**

From the discourse aimed at identifying the components and solutions to the challenges elaborated in the previous sub-section, it emerged that the formation of strong partnerships with all stakeholders would be necessary for the successful enhancement of SEP for sustainable learning at a rural high school. Also, the use of these components in addressing some of the challenges brought by the rural location of the school under study will be discussed.

The findings indicated that the co-researchers felt the need to form partnerships at local level first. In this regard, the partnerships would be between the school and the parents in the community. The general feeling amongst the co-researchers was that such partnership would enhance the relationship between the school and the community at large. Furthermore, they are necessary for improving parent involvement and communication between them and the school. This would result in parents influencing decisions and contributing meaningfully in the programme. Finally, the co-researchers felt that these partnerships would help address shortage staff which resulted in learners studying in an unsafe environment.

The second finding pointed to the formation of partnerships with other local schools, useful for both teachers and learners to share the resources and information because the rural location of the school made access to them difficult.

Finally, it emerged that formation of partnerships with local businesses was necessary. In this case, the co-researchers felt that it would be important for the local business people to partner with the school to address the issue of lack of funding that often troubles the programme. Furthermore, it would be away of '*ploughing back to the community*' by the local businesses.

Literature is not silent on the roles of strong partnerships with all stakeholders in making the successful enhancement of SEP. Findings indicate that these partnerships help in enhancing the understanding of the challenges that learners are facing that may be contributing factors to high levels of absenteeism, (Baker & Witt, 2000:71), lack of motivation to study, and poor academic performance. They further facilitate the building of trust between the school and the community. Lagacè-Séguin and Case (2008:458) note the psychological, social, emotional and personal benefits that the learners in the programme may reap as a result of these partnerships.

With all the information generated in the workshops combined with information provided by literature, we felt that formation of strong partnerships with all stakeholders was a necessary component for the successful enhancement of SEP for sustainable learning at a rural high school.

This sub-section was addressing the second objective (see 5.1) of this study. In this case, the aspects necessary for addressing the challenges hampering the effectiveness of the SEP were discussed. They included the improvement of teaching and learning environment, provision of well-organised and diverse content activities, establishment of staff-preparedness and intentional programming, establishment of an

effective supervisory team, and formation of strong partnerships with all stakeholders.

#### **5.4. FINDINGS ON THE CONDITIONS NECESSARY FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF SEP FOR SUSTAINABLE LEARNING AT A RURAL HIGH SCHOOL**

This sub-section of the study reports on the findings on the conditions necessary for the enhancement of SEP for sustainable learning at a rural high school.

##### **5.4.1. Conditions that contributed to the creation of sustainable learning**

Through our workshops and interactions it emerged that co-researchers preferred an environment that would be conducive to teaching and learning. In this regard, the allocation of two empty classrooms proved useful as it was far away from the noise and other disturbances in the school.

Another finding was that the co-researchers felt that the partnership between the school and the community contributed to making the environment suitable for teaching and learning possible. Firstly, the parents ensured the availability of sufficient furniture in the two classrooms. In this regard, parents who were serving in the SGB (co-researchers in this study) and other parents from the community had come together to repair the broken chairs and tables. Secondly, the parents played a role in ensuring the safety of their children in the programme. Here, the parents serving in the SGB (co-researchers in this study) and the ones from the community volunteered and took turns in monitoring the safety of the learners in the programme.

Finally, the allocation of supervisory roles to the two HoDs played a significant part in creating a suitable environment for teaching and learning. They helped in liaison between other co-researchers and the other SMT members.



#### **5.4.2. Provision of well-organised and diverse activities**

It emerged that the drawing of an attendance register for both teachers and learners contributed to the provision of well-organised and diverse activities. The co-researchers in this study had previously stated that they preferred a register for teachers and learners as it would help with maintaining order in the programme and would ensure active participation and increased accountability of everyone involved in the programme. The co-researchers felt that this register served as motivation for teachers to attend their sessions in the programme. In this case, it was used as a standardised tool when teachers were paid for teaching in the programme. It further enabled the principal to calculate what was due to each teacher who participated in the programme.

While the attendance register was a critical condition in ensuring organisation in the programme, the co-researchers indicated the use of technology would contribute to the provision of diverse activities. In this regard, the installation of an overhead projector and television set made the provision of diverse activities possible. Learners spent a minimum of four hours a week watching the educational programmes on television, especially those dealing with challenging subjects such as Mathematics, Life Sciences, Physical Science and Accounting. In addition, the co-researchers felt that use of an overhead projector in programme contributed to the provision of diverse activities. Through its use teachers were able to project on a screen the phenomena under study to a rather large number of learners in a classroom, thus minimising disruptions during the lessons in the programme.

In addition to the use of technology in the programme, the findings indicated that the use of various teaching methods by teachers contributed to the provision of diverse activities. This enabled learners to engage in fun activities, such as games (chess), music (singing mathematics formulae), and role play (performing plays) in class. Complementing these findings, studies have shown that SEP whose

activities were aligned with learners' needs leads to high academic performance. Studies have also shown that the structured activities increase levels of attendance among learners, so the learners in these activities are less likely to drop out (Cosden, 2004:222) of high school. Providing participants with diversified types of activities contributes positively to the participants' developmental gains (Afterschool Alliance, 2014:17). The findings of a longitudinal study of three SEPs indicated increased academic performance and work habits (Afterschool Alliance, 2014:7).

#### **5.4.3. Establishment of an effective monitoring team**

A mutual working partnership between school and community also contributed to the establishment of an effective monitoring team. In this regard, the parents' willingness to volunteer in the programme to ensure safety of the learners played a significant role. Adding to this was the professionalism with which the HoDs undertook a role of supervision of learning and teaching in the programme. Here, the two HoDs made sure that every teacher had necessary teaching material and resources handy. In addition, they were also tasked with recording the attendance of both teachers and learners. Similar findings were achieved in the study by Prinsloo (2008:22) under the auspices of the Shuttleworth Foundation which reported that the tutors were given information about their roles and responsibilities before the commencement of the intervention programme in the Western Cape. In addition, the tutors were also briefed about the study and teaching material they would use in the programme.

#### **5.4.4. Factors that made the high-quality programming and staffing successful**

The creation of positive relationships among the co-researchers made it possible for high-quality programming and staffing successful. This was useful as it ensured equal participation of all co-researchers in the programme in addition to creating a sense of ownership of the programme and the strategies aimed at enhancing it.

The development of the programme's vision and mission was another factor that contributed to the successful intentional programming. In this regard, the inclusion of all stakeholders in the programme made this possible as it contributed to the realisation that the programme belonged to all stakeholders involved.

Lastly, motivation of all staff members was another factor that contributed to the successful intentional programme. This was mainly channelled to both learners and the staff members. The emphasis was on the need for all staff members to model positive behaviour at all time and for all learners to take their school work seriously.

#### **5.4.5. Factors which made the establishment of strong partnerships successful**

It emerged during the discussions that forming a strong partnerships between the school and the business people in the community was an important condition. The conversations that made rounds in the community resulted in one of the co-researchers convincing one local business person to sponsor the programme. This had a snowball effect because other local business made donations to the school.

Another factor that contributed to the successful formation of positive partnership was the close working relationships which the HoDs (co-researchers) and teachers (co-researchers) had with other teachers and HoDs from the nearby school. This resulted in these schools sharing resources such as discs and books, and in learners exchanging information with learners from the other school. In addition, the positive working relationship between the principals of the two schools facilitated the success of the partnership.

This sub-section of the study focused on the conditions considered necessary for the successful enhancement of SEP for sustainable learning at a rural high school. This was a response to the third objective (see 5.1) of this study. The focus was on the conditions which contributed to creation of an environment suitable for teaching and learning, conditions that contributed to the provision of well-organised

and diverse activities, conditions that contributed to the establishment of an effective monitoring team, factors that contributed to high-quality programming and intentional programme and factors which made the establishment of strong partnerships successful.

## **5.5. BARRIERS TO THE SUCCESSFUL ENHANCEMENT OF SEP**

The focus of this sub-section is on the threats which we anticipated would hamper the successful enhancement of SEP and the remedies we used to circumvent them.

### **5.5.1. Learners' lack of motivation to attend the programme**

Data generated in this study indicated that learners were not attending the programme as required. This was evident in the increased absenteeism on the Fridays and the high levels of incompleteness of activities. In this case, lack of motivation emerged as a reason. Another finding was that there could be a link between increased absenteeism and boredom that the learners experienced in the programme. All this culminated in making SEP ineffective at this school.

It further emerged that a solution to this lack of motivation and boredom was the use of different teaching methods by teachers. In this case, more learner-centred activities contributed to making learning interesting to learners. In addition, learning through fun activities proved useful in keeping learners motivated to learn and participate in the programme.

The motivational presentation that the local pastor gave was seen as an effective solution by the co-researchers and all stakeholders at this school.

### **5.5.2. Lack of funding as a threat**

The findings indicated that lack of funding was a threat to the successful enhancement of SEP. It emerged that there were no discussions about the allocation of funds to the administration of the programme and SEP

did not form part of the school budget. As a result, it emerged, it was impossible to pay the teachers who taught in the programme. In some instances the photocopying paper ran out and there would be no money to buy more. In other instances, learners would not receive food while studying as there was no money allocated for it. Another finding was that transport was a challenge for learners staying in the nearby farms because parents could not afford to pay for the transport to participate in the programme, especially in the evenings or weekends. Similarly, in his report, Taylor (2010:8) found that learners who participated in the STAR schools initiative had a responsibility to find and fund their own transport to and from the programme on Saturdays. Similar findings were made in the study by Bradley (2012:76) that no access to the reliable transport was pointed to as the cause of some cases of absenteeism by other learners in the programme. It also emerged that teachers were often not paid for teaching in the programme and when they were paid they would be given money for transport rather than tuition. This was frustrating to teachers and demoralising.

The formation of the strong partnership between the school and the local business people was a solution to this challenge. In this case, the donation of non-perishable food items by the local business people assisted in addressing the issue of shortage of food in the programme. Additionally, the fundraising activities by the LRC members proved fruitful in addressing the issue lack of funds in the programme. Lastly, there was an agreement that teachers would be paid as soon as the funds became available.

### **5.5.3. Unavailability of a coordinated plan**

In the workshops the unavailability of a coordinated plan was indicated as a threat to the successful enhancement of SEP. It emerged that there was no document detailing the roles and responsibility of the stakeholders in the programme. It emerged that the two senior members of the SMT allocated themselves all the responsibilities. The findings revealed that these members could not cope with all the

responsibilities and that resulted in making the programme ineffective. Similar findings were reported by Moleko (2014) in which she stated that the tutors would come to class unprepared. In this regard, there was no timetable indicating the teachers and the sessions allocated to each. As a result, there was increased absenteeism of teachers and learners in the programme.

Additionally, the co-researchers revealed that they were not included in the making of the plan, rather, they would just receive instructions from the two senior members of the SMT. It also emerged that this lack of a coordinated plan tarnished the image of teachers, making them appear unprepared and unprofessional to learners. Similarly, it was this absence of a coordinated plan that resulted in the confusion and embarrassment of tutors that Moleko (2014) also noted in her study. Another finding indicated that the unavailability of a coordinated plan sabotaged other subjects because learners would study some at the expense of others. In his study, Bradley (2012:76) found that the participants in that study expressed a need for the addition of subjects other than those offered in the programme.

Empirical data indicated that the inclusive participation in the formation of the coordinated plan was a solution to address these barriers. These findings corroborate the findings by Naidoo and Paideya (2015) that the inclusion of seven academics from the local university as participants in the programme proved a useful solution in the programme. Another solution was the mutual planning and design of the timetable by teachers and the HoDs. The availability of this enabled teachers to prepare sufficiently and gave them enough time to plan for diverse activities on time as a response to learners' complaints about boredom in the learning sessions. Moreover, it was effective in reducing absenteeism of teachers in the programme and to some extent assisted in changing learners' perceptions of the programme and preparedness of teachers. For example, in another study it was found that the participants who had positive perceptions and attitudes about the SEP also held them towards school and the value of education

(Afterschool Alliance, 2014:4). Moreover, the participants in the Beacon Centre in the USA were found to have high levels of confidence and motivation (Afterschool Alliance, 2014:7) to continue with their education.

#### **5.5.4. Lack of consultation with the learners**

Both literature and empirical data indicated that lack of consultation with learners was a barrier to the successful enhancement of SEP. The findings indicated that learners were not consulted but rather they were told about the programme. However, they were not informed of the vision or mission of the programme. That lack of consultation resulted in learners being unaware of the goals that the programme sought to achieve. A similar finding was reported by Moleko (2014), another being that some learners participated in the programme because they were instructed to do so while others failed to see the importance of doing so as a result of not being consulted. Other findings indicated that when learners are not consulted they lack motivation to participate.

Engaging learners when designing a suitably tailored timetable was found to be a solution to address these challenges. The findings indicated that the timetable must accommodate learners' needs and interests. Other findings indicate that learners preferred to be part of the solution aimed at solving the problems of underperformance.

#### **5.5.5. Strategic exclusion of HoDs**

One of the findings from this study indicated that some of the HoDs felt strategically excluded from SEP. In this regard, the feeling was that certain HoDs were given information while others were overlooked by the senior members of the SMT. The other findings indicated that lack of communication was another way of excluding these members of SEP.

#### **5.5.6. Conflict between teachers and the HoDs**

The findings indicated that there was a conflict between teachers and the HoDs, resulting from the realisation of the conflict that existed

among the SMT members themselves. It emerged that teachers started capitalising on the weak relationships among the SMT members. In this case, they did not comply with the instructions given to them by the HoDs, which had a negative impact on teaching and learning in the programme.

Enhancing positive relationships among the SMT members, teachers and the principal was recommended as a strategy to address these challenges. In their study, Pierce *et al.* (2010) found that when learners participated in a programme in which there was a positive staff-child relationship such learners performed better in the reading and maths activities. The findings indicated that sharing of responsibilities among the SMT members could assist in enhancing the relationships. It further emerged that scheduling and attending meetings in which robust discussions were held was another way of enhancing positive relationships.

This sub-section was responding to the fourth objective (See 5.1) of this study. On the one hand, learners' lack of motivation, lack of funding, unavailability of the coordinated plan, lack of consultation with learners, lack of consultation with the HoDs and the conflict between teachers were identified as the possible barriers to the successful enhancement of SEP. On the other hand, offering varied activities in the programme, holding motivation sessions for all stakeholders, formation of strong partnerships between the school and the local business people, inclusive participation in the formation of the coordinated plan, engaging learners in designing a suitably tailored time-table, enhancing the positive relationships among the SMT members, teachers and the principal were identified as possible remedies to these challenges.

## **5.6. FINDINGS ON THE INDICATORS THAT THERE IS A SUCCESSFUL ENHANCEMENT OF SEP**

The focus of this sub-section is on presenting the findings on monitoring strategies and indicators that there is a successful enhancement of SEP for sustainable learning at a rural high school.



### **5.6.1. Improved teaching and learning environment**

The findings indicated that creation of an environment conducive to learning and teaching assisted in reducing noise and other disruptions in the programme. In addition, the allocation of two classrooms for the purposes of the programme assisted in increased participation and motivation of all stakeholders. Moreover, finding enough furniture to be used in the programme helped in eliminating unnecessary movements by learners. This resulted in more time being spent on teaching and learning.

### **5.6.2. Provision of well-organised and diverse content in programme**

The findings indicated that the provision of a well-organised and diverse content programme resulted in the shift from teacher-centred activities to activities and lessons which are learner-centred. This resulted in making learners active in constructing their own learning while the teachers' role was limited to scaffolding where necessary. In addition to increasing learners' motivation and confidence levels and eliminating boredom in the lessons, this provision further assisted in encouraging learners to engage in the cooperative learning activities. Furthermore, including a variety of extracurricular activities in SEP helps learners develop resilience (Cosden, 2004:223), while also reduces the learners' risk of failure. Similarly, in a study of Israeli children whose programme consisted of various activities, Segal *et al.* (2001:62) found that there was an increase in levels of the participants' self-esteem. In another study, Lagace-Seguin and Case (2008:454) found that participants in various activities within SEP had higher life satisfaction.

### **5.6.3. Formation of an effective monitoring team**

The findings indicated that the monitoring team helped in instilling discipline among all stakeholders in the programme and forming such a team assisted in increasing parent participation in the programme. This

further helped in ensuring that everyone was safe in the programme. With parents being the part of the team assisted in giving parents a voice in the ongoing conversations about learner performance and ways to improve it.

Lastly, this supervisory team assisted in HoDs getting their authority back. In this case, they were able to monitor and supervise the attendance of both teachers and learners regularly, helpful in ensuring that teachers submitted weekly lesson plans.

#### **5.6.4. The establishment of staff-preparedness and intentional programming**

The findings indicated that positive relationships helped in enhancing communication among all the stakeholders. Neiva and Pepe (2012:68) concurred with these views and added that the positive results were more likely to be attained where staff members' communication skills with children are enhanced. In this case, it was easy for all stakeholders to initiate and engage in the conversations about ways to enhance SEP. Other findings indicated that the interactions helped to motivate learners to participate effectively in the programme. In addition to effective participation, these interactions resulted in mutual planning and proposing of strategies to enhance SEP and were successful in changing learners' attitudes towards it. Similarly, learners' perceptions of their teachers were also changed as a result of these interactions.

The findings on the development of a clear vision and mission of the programme helped in clarifying the purpose and goals of the programme to all stakeholders. In addition to enhancing the co-researchers' comprehension of the aims of the programme, it helped in motivating all stakeholders to become part of the programme. In their respective studies, Moleko (2014) and Mathobela (2015) reported similar findings in which clear vision and mission of the programme proved useful to the participants. Furthermore, the participants in the CORAL Initiative in the USA regarded the activities in which the staff gave clear instructions and goals as the conditions that led to the

success of the programme (Little *et al.*, 2008:7). Similarly, regular motivation of learners assisted in increasing learner participation and academic performance.

#### **5.6.5. Formation of strong partnerships with all stakeholders**

The findings indicated that these partnerships helped in enhancing the relationships between the school and the community (parents). They also assisted in improving parent involvement in the programme and participation in decisions about the programme and ways to enhance it with the aim of improving learners' academic performance. Similarly, DuBois, Holloway, Valentine and Cooper (2002), found that the supportive adults from the community helped to reduce the prevalence of antisocial behaviour and that led to the improvement in the academic performance of learners (as cited in Oh *et al.*, 2014:3). This finding concurs with that on increasing the meaningful participation and involvement of parents in SEP as it contributes to the success of these programmes (Cid, 2014:362). It further resonates with the indication by Gang and Chinyoka, (2013:85) that parents can recommend strategies necessary for the optimal functioning of SEP. Additionally, these partnerships assisted in addressing shortage of staff members responsible for ensuring safety of learners in the programme.

Other findings indicated that strong partnerships assisted in sustaining the relationships between the school under study and the other local school. This was important in increasing the schools' access to information and resources. Similarly, this further helped in the establishment of strong partnership between the school and local businesses. The partnership was found to be necessary in addressing lack of funding and lack of resources in the programme.

### **5.7. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

The findings in this study revealed that the exclusion of learners' voice when designing and implementing SEP contributed to making this

programme ineffective. Similarly, the limited parents' involvement and roles in decision-making around the programme was another drawback. The findings further indicated that lack of diverse content activities in the programme impacted negatively on the programme's effectiveness. Moreover, the failure to establish and maintain positive relationships and necessary partnerships with other stakeholders in the programme thwarted its effectiveness.

With the foregoing findings in mind, this study proposes strategies necessary for the successful enhancement of SEP for sustainable learning at a rural high school. In this case, the emphasis is on ways to improve the including learners' voices in the programme, ways to increase parental involvement, ways to increase diverse content activities as well as ways to establish positive relationships and partnerships among all stakeholders in the programme.

## **5.8. LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY**

That this study was undertaken in the rural area brought a number of challenges. It was difficult to have all the co-researchers present in all sessions. In one instance, the LF only managed to attend one session because of work commitments and the remoteness of the area. In other instances, it was difficult to have teacher co-researchers adhering to the scheduled dates and times to attend the session citing work commitments and lack of reliable transport. Rescheduling was the only option at my disposal, in this case. Lastly, the principal and the deputy and CM could not participate in this project due to ill-health and other work-related matters.

Although this study was undertaken at a rural high school, in no way do the findings of this study represent those of all rural high schools. The qualitative nature of this study as well as limited number of participants makes it impossible to generalise the findings. However, these findings are only applicable to the rural high schools sharing similar challenges and conditions with the rural high school under this study.

## **5.9. ASPECTS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

With the above limitations in mind, I recommend that further studies be undertaken on finding strategies to maintain highly effective SEP in the rural high schools. In addition, further studies should be undertaken to find strategies to enhance the SEP in high schools in the townships.

## **5.10. CONCLUSION**

The aim central to this study was to find strategies for enhancing SEP for sustainable learning at a rural high school. In this case, empirical data coupled with the other from literature relating to the enhancement of SEP was generated.

The findings indicated that the inclusion of learners' voice in the programme essential in making the programme effective. It further emerged that increasing parental involvement and participation in the programme is critical in making the programme effective. In addition, this study revealed that provision of diverse content activities in the programme is another way of enhancing the programme. Lastly, it emerged that creating and maintaining positive relationships and partnerships among all stakeholders is necessary for making SEP effective.

The subsequent chapter proposes the strategies to enhance SEP for sustainable learning at a rural high school.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **PROPOSED STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING A SCHOOL ENRICHMENT PROGRAMMES FOR SUSTAINBLE LEARNING AT A RURAL HIGH SCHOOL**

#### **6.1. INTRODUCTION**

This section of the study focuses on the strategies proposed for enhancing SEP for sustainable learning at a rural high school. In this regard, the discussion is on two different levels, namely, school and community.

#### **6.2. STRATEGIES AT SCHOOL LEVEL**

The strategies at school level have various components, as detailed in this section.

##### **6.2.1. Efficient leadership and management**

For SEP to be effective in achieving all the desired outcomes there must be efficient leadership and management roles played by the school principal and all the SMT members. The important issue here is the establishment of harmonious relationships amongst all these stakeholders. This assists in diminishing the levels of hostility while increasing the levels of communication and sharing of ideas.

The effective leadership and management in SEP will assist in the development of coordinated plan and in the sharing of responsibilities among the SMT members in contrast to favouring certain individuals over others. It will be clear as to who is responsible for designing the timetable for the afternoon sessions, who will be responsible for supervision of teachers and learners as well as the person responsible for attendance of learners and teachers. In addition, this will ensure the development and submission of lesson plans by teachers. With shared responsibilities, the SMT will be able to identify the problems and work collaboratively in finding solutions to them, as opposed to other

members feeling strategically excluded from the programme, as indicated in this study. This will be helpful in instances when SEP seem to experience problems of implementation and design.

#### **6.2.2. Effective participation of learners**

For SEP to thrive learner participation in the decision-making must be considered. While the participation of all learners in the decision-making remains a challenge, it is however important that the LRC are at the meetings in which the decisions are made. It is in such meetings where the co-shared vision of the programme will be created, discussed and agreed upon. In addition, having learners represented in these meetings will further enhance their understanding of the programme's objectives and interests. In this case, the LRC members will share the information to the masses of the affected learners with regard to the times, dates, teachers and subjects to be taught in SEP. In addition to reducing high levels of absenteeism in the programme, this will increase the levels of commitment and positive attitudes learners have towards SEP and the school in general.

#### **6.2.3. The creation of positive learning environment for sustainable learning**

The successful enhancement of SEP is attributable to the existence of the environment that is conducive to teaching and learning. In this case, the whole team comprising SMT members and teachers must:

- Identify the suitable venues in which SEP sessions will be held
- Furnish the allocated venue
- Ensure the availability and readiness of learning and teaching materials
- Ensure the presence of all teachers responsible for the sessions
- Ensure the availability of attendance registers for both teachers and learners.

With regard to ensuring safety of all learners and teachers in the allocated venues, the SMT must ensure the following:

- The presence of the parent (s) or teacher (s) responsible for supervision
- The presence of more than one SMT member.

All these will help with maintaining order in the programmes and ensuring active participation and increased accountability of everyone involved in SEP. Furthermore, the levels of absenteeism will decrease significantly as learners and teachers will feel safe during the sessions.

#### **6.2.4. Diverse and varied activities in the programme**

For SEP to be effective there must be diverse activities offered in the programme. In this case, teachers must ensure the following:

- The installation of technological devices in the allocated venue
- The use of television, overhead projector
- The use of learner-centred teaching methods
- The experimentation with learner-centred learning styles such as cooperative learning, group work, peer learning.
- The inclusion of games and music in lessons.

The incorporation of the above issues in SEP will assist in making SEP more interesting to learners and so result in increased participation of learners coupled with the high attendance rates. It will also help in learners developing the ability to learn from each other and to learn independently.

### **6.3. STRATEGIES AT COMMUNITY LEVEL**

Strategies at community level comprise the following.

#### **6.3.1. Formation of partnerships between the school and the community**

The local community has a critical role to play in enhancing the effectiveness of SEP. A positive working relationship between the community and the school will assist SEP in the following ways:



- Ensuring that there are parents to supervise the children in the evenings
- Making it easy for parents to bring forth meaningful advice on how the programme works
- Increasing parental involvement in the education of their children, which in turn will assist in addressing lack of discipline in SEP
- Assisting, as parents, in fundraising activities of the school
- Providing motivation to both staff and learners in SEP.

### **6.3.2. Formation of partnerships between the school and local businesses**

Other positive relationships between the school and the community can manifest themselves in partnerships between the school and local businesses. In this regard, the SMT, teachers and learners must ensure that the school establishes and maintains relationships that will contribute to the enhancement of SEP in the following manner:

- Local businesses may sponsor SEP activities
- Donate educational material (e.g., books, pens, pictures) in SEP
- Donate funds that can be used in paying teachers for their extra efforts.

## **6.4. PROPOSED STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING A SCHOOL ENRICHMENT PROGRAMMES FOR SUSTAINABLE LEARNING AT A RURAL HIGH SCHOOL**

The above strategies can be summarised in the two tables below:

**Table 6.1:** Strategies at school level

<b>Strategies at school level</b>	<b>The person(s) responsible</b>	<b>Theme(s)</b>	<b>Benefit(s) to the SEP</b>
Effective Leaderships and	Principal, SMT members, teachers.	Establishment of harmonious relationships	Increased levels of communication and co-sharing of ideas among parents, teachers, and

Management		Development of a coordinated plan	<p>learners in SEP</p> <p>Sharing of responsibilities among the SMT members</p> <p>Development and submission of lesson plans by teachers</p> <p>Identification of the problems and collaborative work in finding solutions</p>
Effective Participation of learners.	Learners, SMT members, teachers.	Learner participation in the decision-making	<p>Co-shared vision of the programme will be created, discussed and agreed upon.</p> <p>Enhance their understanding of the programme's objectives and interests.</p> <p>Reduce high levels of absenteeism in the programme.</p> <p>increased levels of commitment and positive attitudes learners have towards SEP</p>
Creation of positive learning environment	SMT members, teachers and parents	The existence of the environment that is conducive for teaching and learning	<p>Maintain order in the programmes</p> <p>Ensure active participation and increased accountability of everyone involved</p> <p>Learners and teachers will feel safe during these sessions</p> <p>Decreased levels of absenteeism</p>
Diverse and varied activities in the programme	Teachers	Diverse activities offered in the programme	<p>Making SEP more interesting to learners</p> <p>Increased participation of learners</p> <p>Learners develop the ability to learn from each other and to learn independently</p> <p>Improved academic</p>

			performance.
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**Table 6.2:**Strategies at community level

<b>Strategies at community level</b>	<b>The person(s) responsible</b>	<b>Theme (s)</b>	<b>Benefit(s) to the SEP</b>
Formation of partnerships between the school and the community	SMT members, Teachers, Learners	Positive working relationship between the community and the school.	<p>Ensuring that there are parents who supervise the children</p> <p>Ensuring that there are parents who supervise the children in the evenings</p> <p>Making it easy for parents to bring forth the meaningful advice in how the programme works</p> <p>Increasing parental involvement</p> <p>Addressing lack of discipline in SEP</p> <p>The parents can assist in fundraising activities of the school</p> <p>Providing motivation to both staff and learners</p>
Formation of partnerships between the school and the local businesses	SMT, Teachers, Parents	Partnerships between the school and the local businesses	<p>Local businesses may sponsor SEP activities</p> <p>Donate educational material (e.g., books, pens, pictures) in SEP</p> <p>Donate funds that can be used in paying teachers for their extra effort</p>

## **6.5. CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter addressed the main aim of this study which was to propose strategies for enhancing SEP for sustainable learning at a rural high school. These strategies could be divided into both school and community levels. At school level, they include the effective leadership and management, learner participation, and the provision of diverse and varied activities in the programme. At community level the strategies involved formation of partnerships between the school and the community as well as partnerships between the school and local business people.

The study revealed that consultation, equal participation, communication, collaboration, positive relationships, and partnerships amongst all relevant stakeholders at different levels help in enhancing SEP for sustainable learning at a rural high school.

---END---

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## APPENDIX A



Faculty of Education  
Ethics Office

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21 November 2014

### ETHICAL CLEARANCE APPLICATION:

#### *ENHANCING A SCHOOL ENRICHMENT PROGRAMME AT A RURAL HIGH SCHOOL FOR SUSTAINABLE LEARNING*

Dear M Mokoena

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-2014-054**

This ethical clearance number is valid for research conducted for three years from issuance. 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



## APPENDIX B

**INFORMED CONSENT FORM TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY  
(PRINCIPAL)**

**PERSONAL INFORMATION**

Surname and Initials:.....

Post level/ Position:.....

Gender:.....

**SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH**

The intended research is titled: **enhancing a school enrichment programme for sustainable learning at a rural high school**. The aim central to this study is to make recommendations on how a school enrichment programme may be enhanced for sustainable learning at a rural high school. In other words, this study is aimed at investigating ways in which this programme may be enhanced to ensure sustainable learning.

To achieve this aim, you and a total of three rural high school learners and two rural high school teachers, two members of the School Governing Body (SGB) in your school are requested to participate voluntarily in discussion-sessions (workshops) and observations guided by the Free Attitude Interviews (FAI) meant for data collection. These discussion-sessions and observations will take place during the Easter, winter and spring. During this process, the researcher shall make use of an audio-tape device to record the responses of the participants. It should be emphasised though, that all data collected and the participants shall be treated with utmost confidentiality. Also, this information shall be used solemnly for the purpose of this research. In this case, I understand that this information shall be used for thesis, conferences and journal articles.

I, the undersigned give an informed consent to participate voluntarily in this research project. I understand the aims of this research study. I also understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from this research process at any time I so wish. In addition, I understand that the personal information I provide in this form and that which I shall provide later during the research process will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Signature:.....

Date:.....

Contact details:.....

For further enquiries contact me (Mr.Mokoena MS):Cellphone numbers: 0788132893  
E-mail address:

[m.rmokoename@gmail.com](mailto:m.rmokoename@gmail.com)

Tel. (work): 058 924 1031

Thank You for your willingness to participate in this project.

**APPENDIX C**

**INFORMED CONSENT FORM TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY  
(CM)**

**PERSONAL INFORMATION**

Surname ..... and  
Initials:.....

Post ..... level/  
Position:.....

Gender:.....

**SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH**

The intended research is titled: **enhancing a school enrichment programme for sustainable learning at rural high school**. The aim central to this study is to make recommendations on how a school enrichment programme can be enhanced for sustainable learning at a rural high school. In other words, this study is aimed at investigating ways in which this programme may be enhanced to ensure sustainable learning.

To achieve this aim, you are requested to participate voluntarily in discussion-sessions (workshops) and observations (held at one high school) guided by the Free Attitude Interviews (FAI) to generate data. These discussion-sessions and observations will take place during Easter, winter and spring. During this process, the researcher shall make use of an audio-tape device to record the responses of the participants. It should be emphasised though, that all data collected and the participants shall be treated with utmost confidentiality. Also, this information shall be used solemnly for the purpose of this research. In this case, I understand that this information shall be used for thesis, conferences and journal article

I, the undersigned give an informed consent to participate voluntarily in this research project. I understand the aims of this research study. I also understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from this research process at any time I so wish. In addition, I understand that the personal information I provide in this form and that which I shall provide later during the research process will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Signature:.....

Date:.....

Contact details:.....

For further enquiries contact me (Mr.Mokoena MS):Cellphone numbers: 0788132893

E-mail ..... address:

[m.rmokoename@gmail.com](mailto:m.rmokoename@gmail.com)

Tel. (work): 058 924 1031

Thank You for your willingness to participate in this project.

**APPENDIX D**

**INFORMED CONSENT FORM TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY  
(LEARNING FACILITATOR)**

**PERSONAL INFORMATION**

Surname and Initials:.....  
Post level/ Position:.....  
Gender:.....

**SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH**

The intended research is titled: **enhancing a school enrichment programme for sustainable learning at a rural high school**. The aim central to this study is to make recommendations on how a school enrichment programme may be enhanced for sustainable learning at a rural high school. In other words, this study is aimed at investigating ways in which this programme can be enhanced to ensure sustainable learning.

To achieve this aim, you are requested to participate voluntarily in the discussion-sessions (workshops) and observations (held at one high school) guided by the Free Attitude Interviews (FAI) to generate data. These discussion-sessions and observations will take during Easter, winter and spring. During this process, the researcher shall make use of an audio-tape device to record the responses of the participants. It should be emphasised though, that all data collected and the participants shall be treated with utmost confidentiality. Also, this information shall be used solemnly for the purpose of this research. In this case, I understand that this information shall be used for thesis, conferences and journal article.

I, the undersigned give an informed consent to participate voluntarily in this research project. I understand the aims of this research study. I also understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from this research process at any time I so wish. In addition, I understand that the personal information I provide in this form and that which I shall provide later during the research process will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Signature:.....  
Date:.....  
Contact details:.....

For further enquiries contact me (Mr.Mokoena MS):Cellphone numbers: 0788132893  
E-mail address:  
[m.rmokoenums@gmail.com](mailto:m.rmokoenums@gmail.com)  
Tel. (work): 058 924 1031

Thank You for your willingness to participate in this project.

**APPENDIX E**

**INFORMED CONSENT FORM TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY  
(EDUCATORS)**

**PERSONAL INFORMATION**

Surname and Initials:.....

Post level/ Position:.....

Gender:.....

**SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH**

The intended research is titled: **enhancing a school enrichment programme for sustainable learning at a rural high school**. The aim central to this study is to make recommendations on how a school enrichment programme may be enhanced for sustainable learning at a rural high school. In other words, this study is aimed at investigating ways in which this programme can be enhanced to ensure sustainable learning.

To achieve this aim, you are requested to participate voluntarily in the discussion-sessions (workshops) and observations (held at one high school) guided by the Free Attitude Interviews (FAI) to generate data. These discussion-sessions and observations will take place during Easter, winter and spring. During this process, the researcher shall make use of an audio-tape device to record the responses of the participants. It should be emphasised though, that all data collected and the participants shall be treated with utmost confidentiality. Also, this information shall be used solemnly for the purpose of this research. In this case, I understand that this information shall be used for thesis, conferences and journal article.

I, the undersigned give an informed consent to participate voluntarily in this research project. I understand the aims of this research study. I also understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from this research process at any time I so wish. In addition, I understand that the personal information I provide in this form and that which I shall provide later during the research process will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Signature:.....

Date:.....

Contact details:.....

For further enquiries contact me (Mr.Mokoena MS):Cellphone numbers: 0788132893

E-mail address:

[m.rmokoename@gmail.com](mailto:m.rmokoename@gmail.com)

Tel. (work): 058 924 1031

Thank You for your willingness to participate in this project.

**APPENDIX F**

**THE 'ASSENT' FORM FOR CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH  
STUDY.**

**(MINORS/ LEARNERS)**

**TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PARENT(S)/ GUARDIAN(S) OF THE PARTICIPANT**

**PERSONAL INFORMATION**

Surname and Name of the parent/ guardian:.....

Surname and Initials of the learner:.....

Age of the learner:.....

Gender of the learner:.....

Grade:.....

**SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH**

The intended research is titled: **enhancing a school enrichment programme for sustainable learning at a rural high school**. The aim central to this study is to make recommendations on how a school enrichment programme may be enhanced for sustainable learning at a rural high school. In other words, this study is aimed at investigating ways in which this programme may be enhanced to ensure sustainable learning.

To achieve this aim, your child is requested to participate voluntarily in the workshops (meetings) and observations guided by the Free Attitude Interviews (FAIs) to generate data for this research project. These discussion-sessions and observations will take place during the Easter, winter and spring. During this process, the researcher shall make use of an audio-tape device to record the responses of the participants. It should be emphasised though, that all data collected and the participants shall be treated with utmost confidentiality. Also, this information shall be used solemnly for the purpose of this research. In this case, I understand that this information shall be used for thesis, conferences and journal article.

I, the undersigned give an informed consent for my child to participate voluntarily in this research project.

I understand the aims of this research study. I also understand that my child is at liberty to withdraw from the research process at any time he/she so wishes. In addition, I understand that the personal information we provide in this form and that which my child shall provide later during the research process will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Signature of parent/ guardian:.....

Date:.....

Signature of the learner:.....

Date:.....

Contact details:.....

For further enquiries contact me (Mr.Mokoena M.S):Cellphone numbers: 0788132893

E-mailaddress:

[m.rmokoename@gmail.com](mailto:m.rmokoename@gmail.com)

Tel. (work): 058 924 1031

Thank You for your willingness to participate in this project.

**APPENDIX G**

**'THE CONFIDENTIALITY DECLARATION FORM'**  
**TO BE COMPLETED BY ALL PARTICIPANTS**

**PERSONAL INFORMATION**

Surname and Initials of the participant.....

Gender of the participant:.....

**DECLARATION**

I, the undersigned declare that I understood the aims of the study. I also understood my rights as a participant in this study. In addition, I declare that I understood the importance of treating the information given by me or any other participant(s) with utmost confidentiality. I further understood, however, that the group situation used in this study could not guarantee absolute confidentiality of such information. In the case where I voluntarily discontinue my participation in this research project, I shall keep the information I gave or given by any other participant(s) strictly confidential.

Signature of the participant:.....

Date:.....

Contact details:.....

For further enquiries contact me (Mr.Mokoena M.S):Cellphone numbers: 0788132893

E-mail address:

[m.rmokoename@gmail.com](mailto:m.rmokoename@gmail.com)

Tel. (work): 058 924 1031

Thank You for your willingness to participate in this project.



Harrismith

9880

26 March 2014

The Principal

Madam

### **A REQUEST TO UNDERTAKE A RESEARCH PROJECT AT YOUR SCHOOL**

I am currently registered for a M.Ed. (Magister Educationis) degree at the University of the Free State. For a successful completion of this dissertation, it is required of me to conduct a research project at a rural high school about the enhancement of a school enrichment programme.

The intended research is titled: **enhancing a school enrichment programme for sustainable learning at a rural high school**. The aim central to this study is to make recommendations on how a school enrichment programme may be enhanced for sustainable learning at a rural high school. In other words, this study is aimed at investigating ways in which this programme may be enhanced to ensure sustainable learning.

To achieve this aim, a total of three rural high school learners and two rural high school teachers, two members of School Governing Body (SGB), one Learning Facilitator (LF) and two HoDs in your school will be asked to volunteer to participate in discussion-sessions (workshops) and observations guided by the Free Attitude Interviews (FAI) to generate data. During this process, the researcher shall make use of an audio-tape device to record the responses of the participants. It should be emphasised though, that all data collected and the participants shall be treated with utmost confidentiality. Also, this information shall be used solemnly for the purpose of this research.

Hopefully, this request will reach your utmost understanding.

Yours faithfully

Mr. M.S Mokoena

Contact information: Cellphone numbers: 0788132893

e-mail address: [m.rmokoenams@gmail.com](mailto:m.rmokoenams@gmail.com)

Tel. (work): 058 924 1031

APPENDIX I

488 Tshiame A

Harrismith

9880

27 April 2014

The District Director  
Thabo Mofutsanyana Education District  
Private Bag X817  
Witsieshoek  
9870

Dear Sir/Madam

### **A REQUEST TO UNDERTAKE A RESEARCH PROJECT**

I am currently registered for a M.Ed. (Magister Educationis) degree at the University of the Free State. For a successful completion of this dissertation, it is required of me to conduct a research project at a rural high school about the enhancement of a school enrichment programme.

The intended research is titled: **enhancing a school enrichment programme for sustainable learning at a rural high school**. The aim central to this study is to make recommendations on how a school enrichment programme may be enhanced for sustainable learning at a rural high school. In other words, this study is aimed at investigating ways in which this programme may be enhanced to ensure sustainable learning.

To achieve this aim, a total of three rural high school learners and two rural high school teachers, two members of School Governing Body (SGB), two HoDs and one Learning Facilitator (LF) will be asked to volunteer to participate in discussion-sessions (workshops) and observations guided by the Free Attitude Interviews (FAI) to generate data. These discussion-sessions and observations will take place during the Easter, winter and spring. During this process, the researcher shall make use of an audio-tape device to record the responses of the participants. It should be emphasised though, that all data collected and the participants shall be treated with utmost confidentiality. Also, this information shall be used solemnly for the purpose of this research.

Hopefully, this request will reach your utmost understanding.

Yours faithfully

Mr. M.S Mokoena

Contact information: Cellphone numbers: 0788132893

e-mail address: [m.rmokoenums@gmail.com](mailto:m.rmokoenums@gmail.com)

Tel. (work): 058 924 1031

## APPENDIX J

*P.O. Box 7  
Memel  
2970  
536 Mgwaqomkhulu street.*

---

Dear Mr. Mokoena M.S.

RE: Permission to conduct a research project

This letter serves to inform you that your request to conduct the research process at this school has been granted. Please, you are at liberty to use school facilities for your meetings and workshops as stated in your application letter.

We wish you all the best

Yours faithfully

## APPENDIX K TRANSCRIPTS

### TRANSCRIPTS

#### ANNEXTURE 1 TRANSCRIPT 1

This was the first meeting with the co-researchers (learners, teachers and HoDs). I started by introducing myself to everyone present.

**Facilitator:** I would like to start by explaining the topic of my research to you again colleagues despite the fact that it was explained in the invitations you received and signed. My dissertation is titled “Enhancing a school enrichment programme for sustainable learning at a rural high school.” In other words, the aim central to this study is to make recommendations on how a school enrichment programme may be enhanced for sustainable learning at a rural high school. In other words, this study is aimed at investigating ways in which this programme may be enhanced to ensure sustainable learning.

**Teacher VB:** So are we going to work together and come up with strategies to make this programme achieve its intended outcomes?

**Facilitator:** Just like that! Instead of us waiting for some from the department to come and help us with this problem of poor performance across all the grades, we are going to look for and find solutions ourselves. As I was saying, the next point that I want us to understand before is that of research methodology used in this research. Our research falls under what is known as Participatory Action Research or PAR in short. The central idea to this type of research is that people engage in finding solutions themselves. In other words, people become part of the solution –finding team. This type of research encourages people to identify the problems themselves and also to work together in addressing the same problems.

With this in mind, we will all work together as a group learning from each other and hear one another views and opinions on the matter. This is done to ensure that everyone is able to participate freely and at equal footing. You know how learners tend to behave in the presence of their teachers; they are afraid to speak their minds and so forth. In this project, however, we are going

to work together to achieve the desired outcomes. We will use the very same venue for all our meetings.

**HoD VM:** Thanks ntate Mokoena this type of research is what we need right now because truly speaking we are not happy about the performance of the school across the grades. Being given such an opportunity to contribute in making the situation better will really help us a lot. And I also think that having the SGB members among ourselves will help a lot as we will be assisting one another. We will also learn from the teachers here as to what should be done to solve this problem.

**Teacher TKM:** This type of gathering will enable us to hear the learners' side because this is about them after all. I think the SEP as you call it Mr. Mokoena should take into consideration the views of learners instead of the SMT shoving their ideas down learners' throats. On the other hand, as Mr. VM has already stated the voice of the parents is critical too. And I'm happy to see members of SGB in this meeting today.

**Facilitator:** Before we knock off in this very important session I think it is important to discuss issues of time, dates and days for our next meeting. This is an important project aimed at helping our children so we therefore need to put in extra effort to make it work out.

**HoD JP:** Okay before you close the meeting chairperson, we need to be aware that we won't find time to hold our meetings during school hours. What I'm trying to say here is that after school everyone is tired and hungry, especially these learners, we need to make sure that we get some refreshments just to keep ourselves active.

**Facilitator:** I fully concur with what you are saying Sir. That shall come to pass. We will make a plan everyone. And this brings me to the issue of the times, days and dates we will be convening here ladies and gentlemen. Can we talk about that? Any suggestions please! Yes Mme what's your contribution?

**Parent A TM:** With regard to food, learners can always have the leftovers from whatever they were fed during break time. As for us, we are old or kanjani? We can always endure.

**Facilitator:** It is important now to do what is known as SWOT analysis. This will help us identify our strengths that will assist in making our project successful. After that we also need to assess our weaknesses as a group as well as opportunities and the threats we may face in the long run.

**Facilitator:** Thank you very much for the offer. How about we meet twice a week at 15h30 until 17h00?

**PARENT A:** It is ok.

**TEACHER B:** I also think it is alright and I think that's what everyone thinks.

**Facilitator:** Thank you for all your contributions; let's meet again at 15h30 next week in the same venue.

#### ANNEXTURE1: TRANSCRIPT 2 FREE ATTITUDE INTERVIEWS WITH LEARNERS

**Facilitator:** Let's talk about the challenges that make the SEP ineffective at this school. What are your feelings about the SEP?

**Learner C TP:** Le matitjhere re batla ba etse study se be funny hai o be serious. We want amgamesnyana like in maths re bine amafomula and role play in English class

**Learner A (QN):** Ke nahana hore programme e hantle titjhere it's just that ha ba attende bana ba bang. [I think that the programme is effective. It is just that other learners do not attend the programme]

**Learner B (PT):** I think the programme is nothing but just a waste of time. Teachers just want to keep us here at school doing nothing. Maybe if they could change the way ba etsang dintho ka teng, for now ha ke bone molemo wa this programme, sorry.

**Learner C (JP):** Ke a utlwa meneer hore bana bareng nna ke nahana hore ha e na molemo le nna because re a feila re ntse re attenda programme everyday. Le batswadi ba a lwana hae hore re spenda nako e ngata sekolong at the end re a feila. iSGB enjani le emonitor ama matric kuphela? Mina irole ye SGB angi ibone in this programme

**Learner B (PT):** Ba yegela bantwana ba botwa tishere moes ha ba attende

**Learner A (QN):** They don't care about us and that's why I choose spending time at church than here. This one only chooses to come here to check on her boyfriend while the other one only comes here for gossip.

**Learner C (JP):** another reason why nna I don't prefer coming to class is because other learners are making a lot of noise. You would be trying to study but only to find out hore a learner would playing music loud on his or her cellphone. Basically you can't study in such an environment. I think it is important to start by solving the problem of noise in the classroom...we are struggling really, something must be done about this.

**Facilitator:** Parents can surely play a role in making SEP effective.

**Learner A (QN):** When it comes to electing members of SGB they must elect people who are educated... and those who know how to take of children.

Let's talk about the challenges hampering SEP. What are your feelings about the SEP?

**HOD (VM):** Among other things one needs to look at the so called the discipline with regard to our learners. We need to have a discipline so that our plan will function in such a way that learners will not be giving us problems.

**Facilitator:** With regard to what HOD VM has just said, can we really put blame only on learners' attitudes as the only thing hampering the successful design and implementation of the SEP?

You see eh...ntate Mokoena here at school the principal or the deputy is the one who runs the school, basically. Like we told you before we are not

consulted when the programme is designed but we are only informed in the morning with all other educators during the morning sessions. As for the learners I think that the blame should be placed on the LRC members themselves because I don't see them doing anything.

**Parent B (MF):** Like re o jwetsitse titjhere ha re tsebe letho ka programme ena ntle le hore re fumane mangolo from the principal telling us hore bana ba attende diclass ka diafternoon. [Like we told you teacher we don't know anything about the programme except that we received letters in which the principal was telling us that the children should attend afternoon classes

**Parent A (GM):** Hore ho etsahalang moo ha re tsebe ka nnete hoba le time-table ena feela ha re e tsebe ntate. It's like ha re part ya sekolo sena . As to what is happening here we don't really know because we don't even know the simple -time table, Sir. It's like we are not part of this school.]

**Parent A (GM):** "Re pheha feela and nothing more eo ho thweng re thuse ka yona. Last year principal o kopile nna and parent e nngwe hore re tlo robala le bana ba grade 12 sekoalong..." [We only cook here and nothing more and that's all we are required to help with. Last year the principal asked myself and another parent to come and monitor the grade 12 learners in the evening here at school..."]

**HOD (JP):** But the way things ke bonang di etsahala ka teng...it seems as if some of the parents are not taking what is happening here at school seriously" [ "...but the way I see things unfolding, it seems as if some of the parents are not taking what is happening here at school seriously."]

**HOD (VM):**We have to include the parents in the programme! I don't remember ourselves talking to the parents about career guidance or this programme. And the most problematic issue on this aspect with the parent we are having in this area, not to say I'm undermining them, they don't even know what is happening here at school as long as the learner is at school...they will not even bother themselves about finding someone to help their children



**Facilitator:** Apart from the parents, let's talk about the extent to which the local environment impacts negatively on the design and implementation of SEP.

**HOD (VM):** And basically among other things, looking at the area where it is situated, a rural area in which a lot of things are happening. Among other things we look at the finances that we might utilize in terms of extending the periods with the learners.

**Teacher A (TKM):** We stay far from everything here. We are far from the resources, other schools, even the district itself and this affects the way we run the programme.

**Learning Facilitator (RZ):** You see ntate Mokoena, as the department we face many challenges. One such problem is that of transport. Dikoloi di a shota. If for instance you have to travel to the remote areas like here, you cannot travel alone in the car. You must wait for your colleague or colleagues so that le travel ka group le sebedisa koloi e le nngwe to reduce costs. [You see Mr. Mokoena, as the department we face many challenges. One such a problem is that of transport. The cars are not sufficient you can see, you must wait for your colleague or colleagues so that you can travel as a group using one car as a way to reduce costs]

**HOD (JP):** O a tseba nna viewpoint ya ka when it comes to this programme neh... ho na le dintho tse two tseo nkareng ke di-stumbling block sekolong mona. Ya pele ke hore when you look at our staff establishment, people come from Newcastle akere and others come from Vrede. If all educators were staying locally here e ne e tlo thusa programme ena haholo [You know, my viewpoint is that when it comes to this programme...there are two things which I could call the stumbling block here at school. The first one is that when you look at our staff establishment, people come from Newcastle and others come from Vrede. And if all educators were staying locally here that would be very helpful for this programme.

**HOD (VM):** When this programme started, it started at 5 while the school knocks off at 3...when e qala ka 5h30 e fela mane ka 20h00 in the evening the

plan did not materialize hobane most of us re dula hole haholo le sekolo. [When this programme started, it started at 5h30 while the school ends at 3hoo...when the programme starts at 5h30 and ends around 20h00 in the evening did not materialize because most us stay very far from the school.]

**HOD (JP):** Eh ha re se re sheba le environment hape, our environment is contributing a lot ho ntho tse etsahalang mona locally hore bana ba se ke ba ba le interest ya ho tlo bala... kapa ho nka programme ena serious mme seo se etsa programme ena e se be effective. [When we look at the issue of the environment again, our environment is contributing a lot to things that are happening locally here and these things make learners to lose interest in studying or taking this programme seriously. And that renders this programme ineffective.]

**Teacher B (VB):** The issue of transport is another challenge because the taxis around this area are very unreliable. If maybe you want to continue teaching learners till late, you will not find transport to go back home. That's a challenge.

**Parent B (MF):** Ha o sheba taba ya transport e ba problem e serious hobane bana ba bang ba dula dipolasing and ho ba thata hore ba attende programme ka lebaka la transport, ntate. [when you look at the issue of transport becomes a serious problem because other learners stay in farms where it is difficult for them to have access to the transport. As a result, it becomes a problem for them to attend the programme.]

**Facilitator:** Being faced with so many challenges, I think it is obvious that there must be strong leadership and management. What have been our observations in this regard?

**HOD (JP):** I gave myself an opportunity two or three times ke tlo sheba. Even if they are studying there, these learners are just looking at books they are not even scrabbling or writing something. [I gave myself an opportunity two or three times to check on the situation. [What I have seen is that] even if they

are studying there, these learners are just staring at books. They are not even scrabbling or writing something on the paper.]

**HOD (VM):**Classes must also be supervised in the evening ha re re batle for evening studies ke two or three people. Ha e le hore hona le batho who want to teach learners they will come and arrange bona self. [Classes must also be supervised in the evening, when learners are attending the evening studies, there are only two or three people to monitor and supervise them]

**Teacher B (VB):**You see these learners of ours, if I may be open to you, you give them a book to study, and a learner might be staying in one page for two hours. You can see that this learner is doing nothing, by the way. So surely there is a problem with supervision and monitoring in this programme.

**Parent A (GM):**Uyazi ingane ziya khuluma thisha. Bathi ku period ye 45 minutes uthesha uzo ngena eclassene for 10 to 15 minutes efundisa. From there uzo thatha i30minutes yonke engafundisi esikhulumela nje. [Teacher you know that children talk. They say that in a period of 45 minutes a teacher uses only 10 to 15 minutes for teaching and the other 30 minutes just for chatting.]

**Learner B (PT):**Ba yegela bantwana ba botwa tishere moes ha ba attende [They leave the children alone teacher and they do not attend]

**Learner A (QN):**Rona ha ba re kgathalle that's why nna I choose ho dula mola kerekeng. This one o kgetha ho tla mona ho tlo cheka while this one o tlela ho tlo qoqa ditaba tsa hae. [They don't care about us and that's why I choose spending time at church than here. This one only chooses to come here to check on her boyfriend while the other one only comes here for a gossip].

**Facilitator:** How conducive is the environment for sustainable learning?

**Learner B (TP):** Like QN had said, teachers often leave us alone, unattended. They only monitor the grade 12 learners. So you can't tell whether it is because they don't come to us because they are unprepared or because they don't take us seriously.

**Learner C (JP):** another reason why nna I don't prefer coming to class is because other learners are making a lot of noise. You would be trying to study but only to find out hore a learner would playing music loud on his or her cellphone. Basically you can't study in such an environment. I think it is important to start by solving the problem of noise in the classroom...we are struggling really, something must be done about this.

**Learner B (TP):** Another thing is the issue of lack of furniture. We waste a lot of time looking for furniture in other classes or when you get to class you find out that someone has taken your chair or table only if the principal would buy enough furniture we would save a lot of time.

**Parent A (GM):**Indaba inye wena tishera ukuthi abantwana bethu abekho safe lana eskoleni ebusuku uma bastadisha. Kungaba ncqono if mhlabe uPrincipal anga vuma ukuthi silegelele ngoku kada abantwana uma befunda. [Another issue teacher is that our children are not safe here at school when they are studying. It would be better if may be the principal would allow us to support the school by monitoring the situation when these children are studying].

**Teacher A (TKM):**You see these learners of ours, if I may be open to you, you give them a book to study, and a learner might be staying in one page for two hours. You can see that this learner is doing nothing, by the way. So surely there is a problem with supervision.

**HoD (JP):**The problem of ill-discipline in the programme needs all of us to be involved in the programme. You see the problem of poor supervision of learners can have very serious consequences. For example if something happens to a learner, we as the school can be in trouble. That is why I think the issue of building a supervisory team is important.

**HoD (VM):** You see ntate Mokoena at the moment there is no such a team here at school. You only find one or two teachers supervising the learners in the afternoon during the programme. I think the problem as you know lies with the principal and her deputy.

**Teacher B (VB):** I think parents must also come on board because really some of us are not staying around here. We have to travel daily from school to our respective homes. I think the principal should talk to the members of SGB to help in this regard.

**Learner C (TP):** Uma kukhwethwa abantu ku SGB kumela bakhethe abantu aba educated and aba kwazi okuphatha ingane. And for additional support ho kgethwe abazali ba educated in the community [when it comes to electing members of SGB they must elect people who are educated and those who know how to look supervise children. And for additional support only the educated parents must be chosen in the community]

**Facilitator:** Let's focus on the activities offered in the SEP. What's your observation?

**Learner C (JP):** Le matitjhere re batla ba etse study se be funny hai o be serious. We want amgamesnyana like in maths re bine amafomula and role - play in English class. [and we want teachers to make the studying fun not too rigid or formal. We want activities that involve games. In Math for example we want activities in which we can sing formulae and those that involve role-play in the English class.

**Learner A (QN):** They must include the activities in which we compete with other learners from other classes. This will make us to study very hard because we will want our class to win if you look, another activity may be the one in which one learner in a class assumes the role of the teacher of a particular subject and then he/she helps others with the work that was done during the day.

**Facilitator:** Apart from a variety of activities being offered in SEP as these learners have suggested, what else maybe the necessary aspect and condition for the successful enhancement of SEP?

**HoD (VM):** We need to have a discipline so that our plan will function in such a way that learners will not be giving us problems.

**Learner A (QN):** I think forming positive relationships with the staff members in the programme is important because we will be able to ask questions where we do not understand.

**Learner C (JP):** I think they will kind of break the walls that exist between us and teachers because now if the teacher is not in class, it is difficult to go to the teacher's office and ask him or her if he or she is coming to class or not.

**Learner B (TP):** I think having a clear vision and the goal for the programme is important because it makes things easy for us. Like we understand why we attend and what is expected of us.

**Learner C (JP):** I agree with TP Sir because if everything is clear to us, we can all attend knowing how we will benefit in the programme.... Maybe it will also motivate teachers and other learners to attend and take the programme seriously.

**Learner A (QN):** Mina I think it is important to know what is happening in the programme so that we can tell our parents too because right now we fail to give a straight answer to our friends from lower grades.

**HoD (VM):** Among other things positive relationships are important at workplace because we all have the same purpose here, which is to teach learners.

**Teacher A (TKM):** We need to look at creating such relationships will help us stay focused and work together in achieving the same goal of improving the performance of our school.

**HoD (JP):** They enhance understanding and harmony between us as the members of the SMT and teachers. Similarly they impact positively on how teachers and learners relate to each other in the programme.

**Teacher B (VB):** Like having support from everyone motivates us to do our best in the programme and if learners see that we all do the same thing and we have similar aim they are more likely to cooperate in the programme.

**HOD (VM):** You see, given the financial situation of our school and other challenges we are facing, having companies to sponsor our school will be beneficial.

**HOD (JP):** If you look at our staff establishment you can see that we do not have enough man power here at school. I think that if we can have parents coming and assisting in the programme it can be helpful.

**Teacher B (VB):** I think like if the principal and the SMT can go out in the location to garner sponsorships from the business people around here.

**Learner A (QN):** In most cases we participate in the programme without having enough food, so I think if they convince business people to participate in the programme we can all attend without any problem. Our parents are angry at us because they always get letters telling them to pay some money to buy the photocopying paper because the school does not have money.

#### ANNEXTURE TRANSCRIPT 3: FREE ATTITUDE INTERVIEWS ABOUT THE POSSIBLE THREATS TO THE ENHANCEMENT OF SEP.

**Facilitator:** In the previous meeting we discussed the conditions necessary for the enhancement of SEP, today we will work on the threats that hamper the success of SEP here. Let's discuss please.

**HoD (VM):** You see ntate Mokoena with the caliber of learners we have I think it is going to be difficult to keep them attending in the programme... I really don't think they are motivated enough because in most cases these learners most of them don't come back after break especially on Fridays.

**HoD (JP):**What my colleague is saying is quite true. We need to find a way of keeping them interested in the programme...maybe if we plan together and agree on times that would suit them can help.

**Teacher A (TKM):**Without discarding the issue ya ntate lack of motivation, I do think that boredom may lead to them not attending the programme...it's hard to keep them interested in the programme if they find the lesson boring.

**HoD (JP):** Let's say that since we are not involved in the school budget it is hard for us to influence the principal to allocate some funds to the programme.

**Teacher A (TKM):** I think the teacher who represents us (teachers) within the SGB does not really speak about issues that really affect us financially. Maybe if he was part of this he would understand the importance of allocating funds to the programme.

**HoD (VM):**Ntate Mokoena I don't really think they will be interested in discussing financial matters of the school with you...it's better if find ways to fund the programme.

**Parent A (GM):**

When it comes to the allocation yezimali thishera we are not really asked for our opinions. U thola ukuthi ba yasibiza ukuthi kune nto ethize ekumela ienziwe eskoleni bese thena siya sayina kuphela. (When it comes to the allocation of funds, teacher, we are not really asked for our opinions. You would find that we only attach our signatures if there is something that needs to be done here at school.)

**Teacher B (VB):** I think the issue of funding will impact negatively on the running of the programme. As teachers we expect to be paid as we are using our own transport to come to school. Really if there is no funding I don't see the programme succeeding.

**Learner A (QN):**It is hard to participate in the programme if there is no food. We can't afford really to bring food to school. Where will we store them? The parents won't agree to that.



**Learner B (TP):**When you are hungry and when there is food available they are serving us food of low quality. They always feed us samp and fish Monday to Friday...we need healthy food so that we can get the energy to study and concentrate. So with the food they give us we are always tired.

**Learner A (QN):** Bana ba dula babodwa emaclassene aba stadies ngoba there are no teachers to monitor them and it is demotivating and frustrating. [We are left attended in the classroom and we do not study because there are no teachers allocated to monitor us]

**Learner C (JP):** Abantu aba fundayo elaba ba kwagrade 12 ngoba uPrincipal and abo thishera ba hlala ba ba monitor and ba ba attenda lento isho ukuthi thina siuseless [ The people who study are those in grade 12 because the principal and teachers always monitor and attend to them and this means we are useless ].

**Learner A (QN):** No! ha ba re jwetse hore ho tlo etsahala tjena le tjena. Ba re re tle. Akere le batla ho phasa, le tle!"

**Learner C (JP):** A guy o tla kena classe le classe hore le tle programming[No! they don't tell us about what is going to happen in the programme. They just tell us to attend. Because you want to pass, you must come!] [A guy would enter in every class telling us to attend the programme]

**Learner A(QN):** Abotishere nabo bane izinkinga zabo nje about teaching a particular topic or content. But what is surprising ukuthi they are quick to point their fingers at us ba re rona re na le mathata. [Teachers themselves have their own problems when teaching a particular topic or concept. But what is surprising is that they are quick to point their fingers at us and say that we are the ones with problems.]

**HOD (JP):**Another issue that kills the school ke ntho ya consultation. Consultation is not taking place. I want to make an example neh, the four of us HODs neh, during winter classes, we were not consulted until the last day of closing. Even when teachers came hore ba tlo ruta mona, teachers were telephonically consulted. [Another thing that kills the schools is the issue of

consultation...even when teachers came to teach here they were consulted telephonically]

**HOD (VM):** The way things were happening right now, at no case you would see the deputy communicating with us who are really close to him, let alone the issue of the staff at that stage education of the learners was at stake.

We as HODs some are viewed as better than others and the information is given to them and they are assigned some of the extra duties which capacitated themselves, letting others down who cannot get information and this leads to a conflict.

I must be honest with you the educators were doing as they wish. We were not having powers, we needed a back up from someone in the senior position to take decisions, and as a result it was difficult to put educators on board. As a result, we ended up being the same.

**HoD (JP):** I want to make an example, the four of us HODs..., during winter classes we were not consulted until the last day of closing. Even when teachers came here batlo ruta mona, teachers were telephonically consulted by us.

TRANSCRIPTS 4: FREE ATTITUDE INTERVIEWS ABOUT THE STRATEGIES AND SUCCESS INDICATORS THAT THERE HAS BEEN A SUCCESSFUL ENHANCEMENT OF SEP FOR SUSTAINABLE LEARNING AT A RURAL HIGH SCHOOL

**Facilitator:** How will we know if our strategies are indeed working?

**Learner A (QN):** I think if we want to see if the strategies are working we need to be given activities to complete and so that we can see how we perform

**Teacher B (VB):** The activities or weekly informal tests every Friday will give us a clear picture as to whether there is an improvement or as opposed to giving them a test once a term. In addition, to monitor progress, we need record the marks and post them on the school notice board. Maybe this will serve as a motivation for them to work harder.

**Teacher A (TKM):** If we assess learner performance regularly we will be able to see if they have understood a concept taught or if you will need to repeat it.

**HoD (JP):** Like I initially indicated that the problem of absence needed to be addressed urgently, I think we can use teacher and learner attendance registers to indicate to us if there has been any improvement in that regard

**Teacher B (VB):** I think these registers that Mr. J P is referring to will also help learners take the issue of attendance seriously...because if learner attendance improves it simply means that they see value in attending the programme.

**Learner C (JP):** Any positive improvement in the attitude of my fellow learners will be a sign that the programme has somehow been successful...because as you know that many of us displayed negative attitudes towards the programme, Sir.

**Teacher A (TKM):**Yooh I think it is better to see a change in the learners' attitude towards the programme and the general attitudes towards their school work. I think if they start completing their activities and being enthusiastic are the signs of a changed attitude.

**HoD (JP):** Ntate Mokoena we need to observe the general behaviour of our learners in the programme. Whether their behaviours have changed or not...I think a change in general behaviour is a sign for a change in attitude.

**Teacher B (VB):** I think the ultimate indicator of the successful enhancement of the programme is the good performance of learners in the test and tasks. I think we need to do a continuous assessment of performance maybe on the monthly basis our learners must write a one monthly test covering all the work that has been done up to that point.

**Learner A (QN):** The whole point of attending is for me to be able to pass at the end of the year. To see improvement in my marks and possibly moving to the next grade, yah.

**HoD (VM):**Remember that learners raised the issue of teachers coming to class unprepared, so I am of the view that if teachers will get used to providing us with weekly lesson plans it will really show that the programme has had some impact on them. I fully concur with what my colleague is saying here because prepared teachers will be able to deliver in class and that will reflect in the performance of learners.

**Teacher B (VB):**You know we work so hard as teachers here, we work for long hours and on weekends. I think we deserve some form of monetary reward or something. We work beyond the call of duty. I really think that motivation in the form of reward is essential.

**Learner A (QN):**Of course I believe teachers must be paid for giving up their time to spend time here with us...as for us I think a little praise here and there is not too much. Again, I am against the idea of teachers only calling our parents when we have done something wrong, I feel it's good if parents can be called also to see the improvement in our performance.

**Learner B (TP):**I think that if we are given awards such as certificates for good performance can motivate us to work even harder. It will also help motivate other learners to work harder in their subjects. Another source of motivation for us is if the school can organise a motivational speaker to motivate us once a term rather than once a year.

**Parent A (GM):** I think if singanigwa ichance ya kuthi si contribute kakhulu is another way of making this programme successful... futhi nje ngabazali it will be good if uPrincipal uzo khuluma nathi nge performance ya bantwana on the regular basis [I think if we are given a chance to contribute is another strategy of making the programme successful...again as parents it will be good if the principal would talk to us on about learners performance on the regular basis

**Parent B (MF):** The issue of us taking part in decisions regarding the programme is very critical. I also think that our involvement in every aspect of the school is very beneficial...we don't like it ukuthi sithathelwe ama-decisions nje...there is so much we can give and do as parents in the programme.

**HoD (VM):**Yes I believe that parents must be involved in the programme and be allowed to give advice here and there. They can always come and volunteer to provide us with security and monitor us when we are studying.