SCHOOLS AS SUSTAINABLE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS: A FRAMEWORK FOR ENHANCING PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

by

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DECLARATION

This is to declare that the study hereby submitted, namely, schools as sustainable learning environments: a framework for enhancing parental engagement, is a product of my own efforts and has not previously in full or in part been submitted at any university for a degree purpose. All the sources used in this thesis have been duly acknowledged. I also hereby cede copyright of this work to the University of the Free State.

_____   _____

T.J. MEKO   **DATE**

DEDICATION

I dedicate this study ,

To my grandparents Morumi Jacob and Tahleho Adelinah Meko who raised me and inspired me to attend school and work hard.

To my late mother Kedisaletse Aria and my late brother Kgalane Jacob Meko who supported me under difficult conditions.

To my wife Mamorongoe for always being there for me and helping the children with homework whilst I was busy with my studies. Your love and motivation have kept me going.

To my dearest children Morongoe, Morumi, Kedisaletse and Rethabile for keeping me going and also joining me in the study with your homework whilst I was busy. I hope that this will be a motivation enough for you to strive for greater heights.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CER   : Critical Emancipatory Research

CDA   : Critical Discourse Analysis

FAI   : Free Attitude Interview technique

PAR   : Participatory Action Research

SGB   : School Governing Body

SMT   : School Management Team

RSA   : Republic of South Africa

USA   : United States of America

SDC   : School Development Council

PTA   : Parent Teachers Association

PTO   : Parent Teachers Organisation

PIRC   : Parent Information and Resources Centre

PRC   : Parent Resource Centre

PIQUE   : Parent Institute for Quality Education

SASA   : South African Schools Act

SACE   : South African Council for Educators

NCLB   : No Child Left Behind Act

SUMMARY

The democratic dispensation in RSA since 1994 brought hope for parents to take their position alongside the teachers in the education of their children. The expectation was that more parents would engage themselves and also be welcomed into the school to shape the direction of their children's education and thus help change the traditional school landscape. However, the realization of full parental engagement, especially in township schools, was just a utopian dream in that many schools found this very elusive because of intransigent, deep-rooted power inequities between the teachers and parents.

The study is couched in critical emancipatory research (CER) paradigm which recognized parents as equal partners in the education of their children. Through CER parental engagement which is about equitable power sharing and responsibilities in teaching the learners is actualized. This is opposed to 'involvement' which allows parents to speak through the mouths of the teachers by simply doing the things that teachers tell them to do.

Through the principles of Free Attitude Interview technique (FAI) by Meulenberg-Buskens, one big open-ended question: *"How can we enhance parental engagement such that it is sustainable?"* was posed to initiate the discussions. This question opened a communicative space between the parents and other community members regarding their engagement. This question was followed by clarity-seeking questions in order to fathom the nature and extent of parental engagement at the participating schools. This open-ended question allowed the previously marginalized parents to speak for themselves regarding their engagement and what they would like to see happening in their children's education. Through CER and FAI parents and other community stakeholders with interest in education, were regarded as assets instead of adversaries who can co-construct knowledge regarding the direction that the schools should take.

The study used the critical discourse analysis (CDA) by van Dijk to analyse data from the participants. This allowed the study to have access to rich data in the form of spoken words from the participants which were transcribed verbatim into text. The CDA allowed the study to analyse data at three levels; namely, the textual, discursive and structural levels. This broad analysis allowed the study to uncover subtle power relations between the teachers and the parents and which accounted for low parental engagement at the participating schools. Through CDA the study found that parents have invaluable knowledge which if recognized can benefit the participants such as school, teachers, learners, other parents, and the community in general.

KEY CONCEPTS

Engagement

Involvement

Asset approach

Deficit approach

Empowerment

Emancipation

Sustainable

Environment

Domination

Power sharing

Voice

OPSOMMING

Die demokratiese bestel in die RSA na 1994 het hoop aan ouers gebring om hul plek langs die onderwysers, deur wie hulle kinders onderrig word, in te neem. Die verwagting was dat meer ouers self betrokke sou raak en verwelkom sou word in die skool om die rigting van hul kinders se onderrig te help vorm, en ook die tradisionele skool-landskap te verander. Die realiteit is egter dat die verwagting van volle ouerbetrokkenheid, veral in "township" skole net 'n utopiese droom was in die sin dat baie skole dit onaanvaarbaar gevind het a.g.v. diepgewortelde, onversoenbare magsverskille tussen onderwysers en ouers.

Die studie is gesetel in die krities-emansipatoriese navorsingsparadigma waar ouers erken word as gelyke vennote in die onderrig van hul kinders. Deur hierdie navorsingstipe word ouerdeelname, wat te make het met regverdige magsdeling en verantwoordelikhede in die onderrig van die leerders, gerealiseer. Dit is in teenstelling met "betrokkenheid" waar ouers by monde van onderwysers praat deur slegs te doen wat deur die onderwysers aan hulle voorgesê word.

Deur gebruik te maak van die beginsels van Meulenberg-Buskens se " Free Attitude Interview"-tegniek (FAI) is 'n ope vraag gestel om die besprekings te inisieer: *Hoe kan volhoubare ouerbetrokkenheid bevorder word?* Hierdie vraag het 'n kommunikatiewe ruimte, rakende hul deelname, tussen ouers en ander lede van die gemeenskap geopen. Die vraag is gevolg deur ander vrae wat daarop gemik was om duidelikheid te bring t.o.v. ouerdeelname by deelnemende skole. Hierdie ope vraag het voorafbenadeelde ouers toegelaat om self hul mening te lig t.o.v. hul betrokkenheid en wat hul graag sou wou sien gebeur t.o.v. hul kinders se onderrig. Deur gebruik te maak van krities-emansipatoriese navorsing sowel as die FAI-tegniek is ouers en ander deelnemers in die gemeenskap wat belange het by die onderwys, beskou eerder as bates wie kan help bou aan kennis rakende die rigting wat die skole moet inslaan.

Hierdie studie het Van Dijk se kritiese diskoers-analise gebruik om data wat ingesamel is van die deelnemers, te verwerk. Deur van hierdie metode gebruik te maak kon waardevolle inligting, in die vorm van deelnemers se eie woorde wat verbatim getranskribeer is in teksformaat, versamel word. Die kritiese diskoers-analise het gelei daartoe dat die data op drie vlakke geanaliseer kon word,nl. op tekstuele, diskursiewe en strukturele vlak. Hierdie wye analise het die studie in staat gestel om subtiele magsverhoudingkwessies tussen ouers en onderwysers bloot te lê en dat dit die rede was vir die lae ouedeelname by deelnemende skole. Kritiese diskoers-analise het tot die bevinding gelei dat ouers oor kennis van onskatbare waarde beskik wat, indien dit erken word, kan lei daartoe dat die skool, onderwysers, leerders, ander ouers en die gemeenskap oor die algemeen baat by sal vind.

HOOFKONSEPTE

Deelname

Betrokkenheid

Aanspreek van waardes

Aanspreek van tekorte

Bemagtiging

Emansipasie

Volhoubaar

Omgewing

Dominansie

Magsdeling

Stem

CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION

THE FRAMEWORK FOR PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

1.1   INTRODUCTION

The study intends to design and implement a framework for enhancing parental engagement such that it helps make schools sustainable learning environments. This chapter introduces the study by highlighting the extent and nature of lack of parental engagement in school activities.The problem of lack of parental engagement emanates from subtle power struggles between parents and teachers. Furthermore, the chapter discusses the problem statement under the aim and objectives that seek to respond to the main research question, followed by the rationale for choosing Critical Emancipatory Research (CER) and Participatory Action Research (PAR) principles as the theoretical framework. Furthermore, the chapter discusses the highlights of the review of related literature from regional, continental and international level with the aim of looking at the best practices that can be adapted to enhance parental engagement in South African township schools. The research design and the research methodology are presented, and the preference for employing Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as the approach to data gathering, making sense of discourses and for knowledge creation is explained. Reference is made to ethical issues, as well as the value of the study. The data from the participants' own words are then analysed to either corroborate or refute the literature review done. Furthermore, the study designs a framework for enhancing parental engagement as envisioned by the participants and concludes by making recommendations underwhich such recommendations can best be implemented.

1.2   BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

South African schools, especially township ones, experience low parental engagement (Mmotlane, Winnaar & wa Kivulu, 2009:2; Mncube, 2007:135-136; Mncube, 2009:8; Nyaba, 2009:22), an assessment based on the record of parents' non-attendance at parents' meetings and teacher-parent conferences. Generally, they are generally not fully involved in fundraising projects and show lack of interest in their children's schoolwork and homework (Mestry & Grobler, 2007:177).

There have been a plethora of reasons attributed to this, including but not limited to lack of information and formal education, socio-economic challenges, and culturally and politically motivated exclusion and domination. The persistence of similar situations in the area of this study related to parents who could not form a quorum during the School Governing Body (SGB) elective meetings, considered serious because it was indicative of a deep-rooted problem relating to parental engagement in schools. Since the precise reasons were not clear, it was necessary to establish the extent and nature of the problem.

The socio-economic conditions of the area of study were generally not favourable for effective schooling. The affected schools were as a result categorised by the Free State Department of Education, as no-fee-paying schools (Van der Berg, 2008:146-148). They were in quintile number two. There were families which were headed by other children because the parents or guardians had either passed on or could not stay with their children in search of jobs elsewhere. There were also learners who stayed with their grandparents and relied on their pension funds. The perceptions that parents and teachers had of one another, seemed to have affected the engagement of parents in school activities (see paragraph 4.2.5). This situation was conceived as unfavourable for a democratic and participatory social action towards inculcating parental engagement

Parental engagement discourses are necessitated *inter alia* by the apparent lack of interest and the extent at which parents are involved in school activities. The teachers tend to wield more power when they are at school. This tends to turn schools into teachers' area of jurisdiction while parents exercise such power at

their respective homes (Evans, 2011:141).This places learners in the space which is imbued with tensions, conflict and contestation for power between parents and teachers which may impact negatively on the learning processes. The non-engagement of parents in education defeats the purpose of social justice oriented education. Social justice, however, is a constitutional principle and a public mandate in the RSA (Mahlomaholo & Netshandama, 2012:43)

There was a need for this study to draw some lessons from the solutions to the challenges experienced in other countries by searching relevant and related literature, in particular from the United States of America (USA), Nigeria and Zimbabwe.For instance, Zimbabwe performs better than RSA in the SACMEQ II tests despite the fact that it experiences serious political turmoil and depressing socio-economic situations (Mahlomaholo,2010:2 ; van der Berg,2007:856).The researcher was interested in finding out how parental engagement coped under such conditions. Both Nigeria and South Africa are both young democracies which endeavor to democratize schooling through inter alia, parental engagement. On other hand, the USA as an established democracy and an economic powerhouse could provide some good practices regarding parental engagement. Focus was placed on how these countries addressed their respective challenges, together with data from participating schools in South Africa, to develop and implement a framework for enhancing parental engagement.

1.3   PROBLEM STATEMENT

The problem in this study is the low level of parental engagement at the two schools. The parents were not showing interest in the education of their children and this impacted negatively on the general performance of the schools, further evidenced by non-attendance at meetings, non-supervision of the children's work and non-participation in school activities (Ammermüller & Wöbman, 2005:579; Msila,2012:303; van der Berg,2008:148). This problem warranted an investigation because the education of the learners could not be left in the hands of the teachers alone as education is a societal aspect. This means that all role-players should be accorded an equal voice in the decisions that affect the education of the learners.

1.3.1 The research question

Against the above background, the research question was posed as follows:

> How can parental engagement be improved so as to create schools as sustainable learning environments?

This question was understood and discussed as having anticipated the ultimate goal of the creation of schools as sustainable learning environments through parental engagement. Understanding of the research question pre-empted and envisioned the kind of setting that promoted effective learning (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006:17). It also required the coordinating team and parents in particular to focus on their obligation to turn schools into socialising agents (Akiri & Ugborugbo, 2009:107; Asikhia, 2010:231). The role of parents in co-facilitating school-community collaboration was considered indispensable to the attainment of the ultimate goal of turning schools into sustainable learning environments.

1.3.2 The aim of the study

The aim of ensuring that the low levels of parental engagement in the area of the study were tackled (Mncube, 2009:8; Nyaba, 2009:22) necessitated a research design that enabled a parental engagement framework that would facilitate parents' seizure of the opportunity (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2010: 148-149) to exercise their freedom, legal rights and social responsibilities towards quality education (DBE, 2011:4). In order to address this, the following objectives were laid out.

1.3.3 The objectives

The *first* objective of identifying and justifying the need for a framework to enhance parental engagement was pursued mainly to ensure economical, efficient and effective plans (Brown, Knoche, Edwards & Sheridan,2009:485; Du Toit, Erasmus & Strydom, 2012:177; Maritz, 2010:49). The processes of parental engagement

involve resources such as time, funds and other material items, including public education infrastructures. The use of public resources and facilities may be legislated for in accordance with the wishes and aspirations of the society (Michigan Department of Education, 2011:8). The processes for the identification of the need for a framework to enhance parental engagement in schools can thus be through the "assessment of functional needs and a comparison with the detailed requirements of the educational vision, mission and program" (Lackney, 2005:530). The assessment process in this regard tends to require the use of a reflective analytic process that helps unearth different facets of the needs and problems (see chapter 4).

In the *second* instance, the study focused on the determination of the potentially conclusive components that could serve as solutions to the identified and justified needs. The main purpose of pursuing this objective was to ensure that the real education-related needs were addressed appropriately. As can be seen in chapter 5, the components that were decided upon were applicable to the needs identified. The close proximity between the components and the priority areas suggested their relevance to different contexts and situations, thus they also depended on the conditions under which the components thrive.

The *third* objective was the identification and actualisation of conditions under which the framework would be successful. The conditions that were found to be imperative included those that were created by the legislative and public mandates, when people respected and observed them, working together to maximise the output, sharing a vision and mission, continual contextual and situational analysis, and reflective moments (Lackney, 2005:530). The conditions for the successful implementation of the framework for the enhancement of parental engagement are discussed in greater detail in chapters 2 and 5.

The risks and threats inherent in the processes of development and implementation of the framework for parental engagement were to be identified and mitigated accordingly (Garlick, 2007:21; Hampton, 2009:9). The assessments and planning for them were considered as the *fourth* objective. It was imperative to prioritise the risks and threats together with the main activities and priorities of the comprehensive plan in order to ensure the successful implementation of the

framework. The processes were carried out throughout the study and concurrently with the other study objectives.

The *fifth* objective was to ensure applicability of the framework to the operationalisation of the respective priorities of the framework as it evolved. This implementation of the framework for parental engagement was part of the process of its development and the concurrence enabled the enhancement of the product at various levels and stages. This aspect is discussed at length in chapter 3 and the evidence thereof is analysed in chapter 4.

1.4   LITERATURE REVIEW

This section is discussed in greater details in chapter 2 and applied in the chapters 3, 4 and 5. The issues that are considered in this section are the theoretical framework, the operational concepts and the related literature.

1.4.1   Theoretical framework

The study followed a Critical Emancipatory Research approach, which enabled interaction among the study coordinator and the participants. The framework facilitated engagement amongst the participants to be on an equal basis to that of the partners (Mahlomaholo, 2009:13) as they determined and designed the framework for parental engagement. At the interpretative phase of CER the participants and the coordinating team discussed and ensured that best practices with regard to the framework were in place and properly implemented. That ensured their empowerment as they then 'owned' the framework. During the analytic phase, factors that impeded on parental engagement were unearthed critically with a view to improving them in a reflective practice position of CER (McLean & Stahl, 2007:6).This reflective practice seeks to make people conscious of a distorted ideology that can be used by the powerful to justify their oppression (Alvesson & Willmott, 1992:432-464). Through this study, parents were encouraged to be fully engaged in the learning of their children and recognise the

importance of this. The study hence developed a theme of power and ideology, to help inform the marginalised to question their status in life and work to change it (Mahlomaholo & Netshandama, 2012:42; McLean & Stahl, 2007:6). The three steps in CER, namely, interpretive, analytic and educative, were applied to analyse and understand parental engagement.

Harris and Goodall (2007:1-3) differentiated between parental involvement in school-based activities that were not directly connected to learning and parental engagement in curriculum issues that had a direct bearing on learning. For Rothmann (2008:110) parental engagement is based on vested interest, but in South Africa the terms 'involvement' and 'engagement' are used interchangeably, which implies that parental engagement in schools focuses on both governance and curriculum-related issues. An emphasis on the two helped the school to achieve full parental engagement.

1.4.2 The operational concepts

The description and discussion of operational concepts was found to be critical because of the significance of language and communication in synergising the thinking and subsequent actions of the people. Synergy, in turn, was pivotal to understanding the social structural arrangements of people, thus, the power of communication and language was based on the recognition that people are thinking and speaking beings (Mahlomaholo & Netshandama, 2012:41-42).

The importance of discussing operational concepts was consistent with the making of a framework for parental engagement in engendering a shared vision and collaborative work. This was especially relevant to the operational concepts that were discussed, namely, sustainability, learning, environment and parental engagement. As well as PAR, CDA and CER, other key concepts that had to be understood well by the participants included social justice, vision, and Free Attitude Interview (FAI).

1.4.3 Related literature

Low parental engagement in Nigeria manifested itself in non-engagement of parents in governance structures, non-attendance at school activities, and lack of interest in assisting learners with their homework (Ademola & Olajumoke, 2009:458; Ajayi, Haastrup & Arogundade, 2009:42). In Zimbabwe, the low level of parents' education and the lack of resources to reach distant schools accounted for low parental engagement (Chikoko, 2007:54; Chimedza, 2008:125; Mudekunye & Ndamba, 2011:10).

This problem did not affect the majority of countries, but did include affluent ones, such as the USA, where not all parents were involved at the same rate or in the same kind of activities, such as the parent teacher association (PTA). Sometimes they only helped their children to learn at home (Jasso, 2007:8-10; Kerr, 2005:2; Simon, 2004:189). South Africa has emphasised the involvement of parents in governance issues as key components for parental engagement (SASA No.84 of 1996:14), including policymaking and adoption, involvement in governance committees, fundraising, control of learning support material given to learners, assisting with homework, and attending parents' meetings (Mestry & Grobler, 2007:177; Nyaba, 2009:3). The rationale is to democratise education, which for a long time had not been responsive to the ideas or needs of parents. However, 15 years after the advent of universal suffrage and a new political dispensation, emphasis still has to be put on curriculum issues that increase the voice of parents in the education of their children.

Like South Africa, Nigeria and Zimbabwe emphasise the involvement of parents in governance committees (Ajayi et al., 2009:42) and assisting with learners' homework (Ademola & Olajumoke, 2009:458; Chikoko, 2007:53). The USA emphasises parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making and collaborating with the community as key components of parental engagement (Sheldon & van Voorhis, 2004:128). Since they have a direct impact on learning in school these components were considered when designing a framework for parental engagement.

For the parental engagement framework to be implemented successfully, the conditions under which it takes place should be reviewed. South Africa stresses clear separation of roles, conflict reduction, the use of non-exclusionary language and dialogue (Du Plessis, Conley & Du Plessis, 2007:121; Mestry & Grobler, 2007:176; Mmotlane et al., 2009:2; Mncube, 2007:142; Myeko, 2004:24). Both Zimbabwe and Nigeria emphasise close relationships between parents and teachers and common goals as conditions that promote parental engagement (Ajayi et al., 2009:44; Mudekunye & Ndamba, 2011:10; Yara & Tunde-Yara, 2010:484). Emphasis in the majority of countries is on relieving strained relations between parents and teachers, while in the USA it is on creating dialogue between them (Brain & Reid 2003:292; Harris & Goodall, 2007:1-3; Jasso, 2007:12; McDermott & Rothenberg, 2000:2; Sharratt & Fullan, 2005:6). Some of the conditions that help parents become more involved in the education of their children were considered when drawing up the envisaged framework.

The study looked at the following threats to the implementation of the framework, which were also applicable to Nigeria, Zimbabwe and the USA. They included lack of knowledge and skills, negative communication, lack of time, lack of clarity of the roles of participants, and lack of resources (Ajayi et al., 2009:42; Chikoko, 2007:53; La Bahn, 1995:2; Mestry & Grobler, 2007:183; Mohajeran & Ghaleei, 2008:54). These threats should be borne in mind and possible strategies developed to address them.

In South Africa, Zimbabwe and Nigeria there was evidence that parental engagement could improve if parents were trained and allowed to play their roles (Ajayi et al, 2009:42; Chikoko, 2007:54; Mncube, 2007:135-136). However, in the USA, good communication between parents and teachers and continuous training of parents in classroom literacy improved parental engagement (Harris & Goodall, 2007:1-2; McDermott & Rothenberg, 200:7). Differences between African countries and the USA necessitated further research in order to find factors relevant to improving parental engagement in South Africa.

1.5   RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The research design section of this study consists of both the intervention and data collection phases. The former focuses on designing and testing out a framework aimed at enhancing parent engagement in the learning of their children at two schools in Botshabelo. These both used to obtain high Grade 12 examination results but have recently experienced a decline. They were also chosen because their geographical location was accessible to the researcher and the coordinating team.

1.5.1   Coordinating team

A structure consisting of four parents from each of the two schools spearheaded the design and implementation of the framework. The parents had been elected democratically at parents' meetings of the two schools.Two members of the School Management Teams (SMTs), were included in the coordinating team. In order to add more credibility to the structure two members of the local municipality council and two from religious organisations were also invited. Once this was in place a strategic planning session was held, to conduct strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis. On the basis of these priorities, the abovementioned structure was then used to formulate an action plan spanning a period of at least six months. On a monthly basis there were meetings, which were audio-taped with the consent of the participants in order to review progress as well as to suggest ways in which the plan and its activities could be improved. This was approached in an action research manner in which cycles of planning were interspersed with cycles of action (Merriam, 1998:8).

This plan highlighted for each priority the activities and actions in which the two schools, their respective stakeholders and co-opted expertise engaged, so as to facilitate and enhance parent engagement. Each of the activities was assigned a competent person(s)/structure to organise and to implement. Timeframes were also set and formative monitoring mechanisms for improvement and adjustment established. My role as researcher was to convene, facilitate, monitor and document all these activities, with the help of the coordinating team referred to above (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:202).

1.5.2 Research Methodology

A qualitative approach in the critical emancipatory mode was used to gather data, which allowed the researcher to interact closely with the researched in a humane manner and to observe and interpret their world (Merriam, 1998:8; Mahlomaholo & Netshandama,2012:42). The FAI technique by Meulenberg- Buskens' (1997) was used to initiate all the discussions at the meetings of all the participants in the study. This technique allows data gathering process to be humane and does not alienate and undermine the research participants (Mahlomaholo & Netshandama, 2012:45). Data in the form of documents, and participants' own words in meetings, workshops, etc. were gathered and analyzed. All were transcribed verbatim for analysis at a later stage using Van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis techniques (2004; 2008). This approach allows for the use of text (that is spoken and written word as well as observation of actions) by the participants to serve as evidence for reflection and analysis at both the discursive and social structural levels.

1.6   ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

The data were gathered through the use of the principles of free attitude interview (FAI) technique. The FAI technique was predominately used during the study coordinating meetings (see chapter 3). The use of critical reflection to engage with issues was central to the communication and use of FAI. The data were subsequently analysed using CDA. The reasons for the use of FAI and PAR in data gathering, and CDA in analysis are explained in greater detail in chapter 3, whilst in chapter 2 the theoretical basis that informed the choice and relevance of each is presented. The analysis and interpretation of data in chapter 4 gave rise to the development of a framework discussed in chapter 5.

1.7   THE FRAMEWORK FOR PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

The framework recommended for the enhancement of parental engagement in schools included preparation consistent with advocacy in SGBs, ethical

considerations and the establishment of a coordinating team. The next aspects are comprehensive planning under strategic and operational planning, implementation of the framework followed the planning, reflection, and adjustment of the comprehensive plan. The framework is discussed in chapter 5.

1.8   FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The findings, conclusions and recommendations are covered in chapter 6, organised in accordance with the five study objectives as far as practicable. The issues that were considered to have been impactful to the extent of being inclusive of other issues were given attention. For instance, a recommendation based on a higher level priority might have been considered over the ones on lower level activities of the same priority.

1.9   VALUE OF THE RESEARCH

It is hoped that the study will provide solutions to problems associated with low parental engagement in the affected areas. The lessons learned may be adapted and applied in other settings to address similar problems. The body of knowledge on education management will benefit greatly from this study, as will the DoE, the schools and the teachers, in terms of the enhanced support from the parent community. Parents will also benefit by knowing better what their roles are in the education of their children.

1.10   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The researcher sought permission from the Free State Department of Education to conduct a research study at the two schools. The participants were assured that their identity was not going be disclosed and that no one would be coerced to take part in the study. Their informed consent was also obtained and data gathered was and shall be confidential, prior to its destruction at the end of the study.

1.11   CONCLUSION

This chapter has introduced the study and the background, presenting the problem statement and posing the research question. The aim and the objectives were discussed and a brief literature review outlined the theoretical framework in which clarification was given to the operational concepts and conceptual theories. The PAR principles were discussed in relation to their facilitation and use in gathering data. The technique of FAI and theoretical base for data analysis, namely CDA, were also outlined. The discussion made reference to chapters of the thesis in which the issues will be discussed in greater detail.

The framework for parental engagement was summarised by giving constituent aspects, in order to ease reference and enhance decision-making regarding the choice and use of the framework. The findings, conclusion and recommendations in respect of each of the five study objectives were referred to, with the value of the study and framework for parental engagement briefly illustrated.

The next chapter reviews the literature and constructs a solid theoretical base for the framework for parental engagement.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEWING LITERATURE ON THE EFFECTIVE FRAMEWORK FOR MANAGING PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT IN SCHOOLS

2.1   INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study is to formulate a framework for managing parental engagement in school activities. To achieve this, the chapter thus reviews literature on the effective strategies adopted to enhance parental engagement in school activities.

Firstly, it uses critical emancipatory research (CER) as a theoretical framework, on the basis of which it assists the study to operationalise its objectives. Secondly, the operational concepts that pillar the study are defined in the context of the evolving argument. Thirdly, a review of related literature on the engagement of parents in schools is conducted in line with the objectives of the study. The purpose of this review is to develop constructs which are used later to analyse and make sense of the empirical data. This is approached from local, regional, continental and international perspective. The argument being pursued is that parents have a wealth of capital which, if properly used, may benefit the schools and learners. Fourthly, the lessons learned from the best frameworks explored will be used to design a framework for enhancing parental engagement for the township schools involved in the study.

2.2   CRITICAL EMANCIPATORY RESEARCH AS THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

There are different theoretical frameworks that can be chosen when conducting research, including positivism, phenomenology and CER. Each theoretical framework is guided by the sets of beliefs that the researcher holds dear and the purpose that he/she intends to achieve. According to Merriam (1998:4), positivism

is descriptive in nature and emphasises knowledge creation through objective, scientific quantifiable methods .Therefore, any knowledge that cannot be observed and measured may not qualify as true knowledge. According to this approach the researcher can describe the situation from a distance without involving the people being studied. Phenomenology is said to be interpretive in nature in that knowledge creation is understood in terms of experience that the researcher constructs socially by interacting with the respondents. Here the researcher sought to understand the reality from the perspectives of the respondents.

CER is preferred over the first two theoretical frameworks in that it is critical and emphasises that knowledge creation is socially constructed by both the researcher and the participants. The study employed the CER lens as its point of departure, a theory that originated with the Frankfurt School of the 1920s under Carl Grunberg, Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno and later Jurgen Habermas (Mahlomaholo, 2009:225). Its main purpose was to extend Auguste Comte's theory of knowledge production (Agger, 1991:109), which according to Mahlomaholo and Netshandama (2012:39) and Lenzer (1998:xiv-xviii), identifies three stages, namely, the theological, metaphysical and positivistic. According to the theological stage, true knowledge is produced through faith, and only those who could relate to their creator through faith were in a position to access true and valuable knowledge. The metaphysical stage emphasises the adoption of a particular philosophy of reasoning and logic as ways of accessing true and valuable knowledge. According to Lenzer (1998:xviii), Comte's stance against metaphysics was motivated by his fear that human liberty, independent thinking, and the ability to act independently were a threat to social stability and often lead to global anarchy. This view opposes the CER's principles of freedom, social justice and respect for a person's ability to think for himself or herself, and undermines the person's potential to act or use his/her mind to bring about social stability and peace in the world. Thirdly, the in the positivistic stage true and meaningful knowledge can be gained through reason and observable experience. This Comte describes as constituting the highest and most positive stage in the development of human thought and enquiry. Therefore, only those who engage in scientific observations, such as in a laboratory, can achieve true knowledge. The CER of the Frankfurt School philosophers challenged Comte's views of positive

knowledge on the basis that human reality is too complex and that any attempt to study human beings has to be critical of human conditions (Boog, 2003:428; Mahlomaholo & Netshandama, 2012:40).

CER theory is participatory and collaborative in that it ensures that both the researcher and the participants take part in the process of change (Ledwith, 2007:599). It dictated that when I conducted research it had to be collaborative between the participants and myself as a researcher. The parents and I had to be engaged in the process of finding better ways of engaging them in the education of their children. Engagement strategies should not come about as impositions on the parents, but they should engage out of collaborative, joint actions and agreements. According to Boog (2003:427), participation and collaboration ensure that there is communicative interaction between the researcher and the participants. Unlike other research, this was conducted not on or about the participants, but rather with them.

CER emphasises that as a researcher I have to work with the parents to identify and tackle the obstacles that prevent our empowerment and emancipation so that we are able to support the learning of our children effectively. According to Boog (2003:427-428), the term 'empowerment' is educative in that it brings about change in terms of the skills acquired. The CER is empowering in that the participating parents are likely to improve their competencies regarding their engagement in school activities. When this happens (Esposito & Evans-Winters, 2007:226) the new ways of thinking and doing shall have been achieved.

Empowerment implies that the parents should reflect critically on their role in the education of their children. Being empowered means being able to ask questions about why things are done the way they are and not the other way around, which could have been more effective. Furthermore, being empowered means being aware of any attempts to exclude one from decision-making and thus taking a stance to resist any such attempt (Mncube, 2007:131).

Linked to the above, emancipation (Boog, 2003:427; Mncube, 2007:131) implies liberating oneself from the chains of ignorance, deliberate exclusion and control or power of someone else. When parents are skilled they will know when, how and

why they should engage in the education of their children. Alvesson and Willmott (1992:432) define emancipation as a process of freeing oneself from all social and ideological repressive conditions. CER encourages collaboration and respect between the researcher and the participants. By working collaboratively and treating the participants as speaking subjects (Ledwith, 2007:599) I gained more insight into their own world view. Likewise, by working respectively with them they could acquire new skills in parental engagement. CER seeks to bring about democracy, peace, social justice, hope and equity through research (Mahlomaholo & Netshandama, 2012:37; Mills, 2003:8). In the context of the study this implies that parents should strive for representation in the governance structures of the schools. They should demand that their voice be heard in decisions that affect the education of their children and that they should be treated with respect. Parents should reflect on why other parents do not engage in school activities and devise strategies to correct this situation, because CER does not accept the maintenance of the status quo, especially if it is depressing and devoid of development. It challenges the positivistic way of accepting the world "as it is" (Agger, 1991:109), thus perpetuating the status quo. Instead the CER is explanatory, practical and normative (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2005:n.p), diagnostic and therapeutic, in that it not only explains what is wrong with the current situation but also identifies the role-players who should be engaged to change it and provide clear solutions to achieve the envisaged social transformation (Grundy, 2007:154).

In this way, the solutions found are not foreign to the context, therefore any attempt to blame parents for non-engagement in the education of their children without interacting with them and listening to their problems would be a mistake. Their non-engagement has to be interpreted and understood in terms of the factors that influence that context. Once their problems have been understood remediation has to be carried out to address and change the situation for the better, and to be in line with Leonard's (1990:14) thinking that "without the recognition of a class of persons who suffer oppression, conditions from which they must be freed, critical theory is nothing more than an empty intellectual enterprise."

The research should strive to identify those parents whose voice has been marginalised and bring them to the centre stage in order for them to take their rightful positions as co-owners of schools, co-constructors of knowledge and curriculum, and created thereon. It also means flattening the hierarchical structure of the schools (Pushor, 2007:3) so that parents can share power with the teachers in advancing the education of the learners. The teachers should also be encouraged to treat parents as worthy partners who should be consulted regarding the education of the learners at school. To achieve the above objectives I chose the steps of CER that were relevant to the study.

2.2.1 The steps of Critical Emancipatory Research

According to Mahlomaholo and Netshandama (2012:43-44), CER consists of three main steps, namely, the interpretive, the analytical and the educative. All these were applied in this study as their nature and purpose fitted its overall purpose. During the interpretive phase I interacted, observed and listened to teachers and parents at the participating schools as they related their stories regarding parental engagement in school activities. I discussed with them the best possible practices for designing the framework for parental engagement, which envisaged a framework based on the understanding of the participants' own experiences (Merriam, 1998:4). This ensured that the envisaged framework would address the problems that perturbed the participants.

In the analytical phase we examined the factors or conditions that impeded full parental engagement, and investigated how power relations were structured at school level such that the role and interests of parents are sometimes undermined and ignored (McLean & Stahl, 2007:3). Together with the parents we analysed the conditions that impeded full parental engagement and devised strategies to overcome them.

Finally, in the educative phase we empowered ourselves through the knowledge and skills which we could employ to enhance parental engagement and to resist any form of deliberate exclusion to decision-making that impacts on the education of our children. Through CER it is possible to create conditions in which all of us,

irrespective of our level of formal schooling, academic or economic background could still play a useful role in the education of our children because of the aspirational, cultural and other forms of wealth that we have as individuals (Yosso, 2005:77). The educative phase of CER enables us all, especially the parents, to question the extent of our engagement in the education of our children and then to strive for improvement (Mahlomaholo & Netshandama, 2012:44; Shirley, 1997:73). The parents realise that it is crucial to engage in the education of their children so that they can focus on their studies. All these abovementioned three steps of CER will be used in this study. The above interaction and collaboration would not have been possible had the study been positivistic or phenomenological. Through CER there was mutual empowerment among the participants in finding solutions to enhance parental engagement at the participating schools.

2.2.2 The objectives of critical emancipatory research

CER has the following objectives that enhance the objectives of the study:

2.2.2.1 Commitment to social justice

CER challenges all forms of class and structural power that the elite use to dominate the marginalised parents in order to achieve their selfish interests (Esposito & Evans-Winters, 2007:226). The legacy of apartheid in RSA has left scores of township schools dysfunctional (van der Berg, 2007:852). This seems to suggest that the parents did not have the voice to indicate how they would like their children to be educated. CER objectives of democracy, hope and social justice give these parents the opportunity to reconstruct social confidence that was destroyed by apartheid.

As a lens it enables the study to be sensitive to issues that affect the majority of parents in the townships who have little or no formal schooling. However, the abject poverty has not discouraged them from sending their children to school or wishing them success in life in general. For this study social justice could be

achieved by helping them to engage better in the education of their children. That they value education, even though some of them have no post-secondary schooling, shows that they have aspirational and navigational capital (Yosso, 2005:77-81). Through CER the study hopes to inspire parents to appreciate themselves and their contribution to education and nation building in general.

2.2.2.2 Recognition of participants' knowledge

CER is relevant to the study because it recognises that parents' cultural knowledge is legitimate, relevant and crucial in enhancing the learners' performance and general school effectiveness. It gives the marginalised parents the opportunity to share their experience as a way of correcting imbalances of the past (Ladson-Billings & Tate 1v, 1995:58; Lee Jr, 2008:4). Parental engagement can be realised when parents' voices are heard and heeded. Any attempt to design a framework for parental engagement without positioning their voices at the centre will not yield success. Mncube (2007:141) states that some school principals deliberately use exclusionary language to exercise power over gullible parents and SGBs.

The marginalised parents need to talk about their exclusion from decisions that are made to manage and govern schools. By allowing themselves to be silenced parents can compromise the quality of their children's education, which means that they should work not independently but rather harmoniously with other stakeholders. CER asserts that the marginalised parents should share the knowledge and experience as these are appropriate and legitimate weapons to understand inequality and power relations better (Bronner & Kellner, 1989:18). The idea of power relations can be better understood through the explanation of the operational concepts that guide and pillar the study.

2.3. DEFINITION OF OPERATIONAL CONCEPTS

The operational concepts anchor the study and give it a unique identity, as follows.

2.3.1 Sustainability and the theory that informs it

Salama and Adams Jr. (2003:3) define the term 'sustainable learning environment' as the integration of environmental, economic and socio-cultural needs in order to produce a healthy and productive environment that supports effective learning. This view is shared by Lopez (2010:1), who adds an element of balance of economic, environmental and social objectives in a way that creates lasting value without necessarily depleting or taxing the available resources. It is about designing a learning environment in such a way that it contributes to the socio-economic situation that has a lasting impact on the lives of the people involved. On the other hand, Whitworth and Luckin (2009:8) define 'sustainable learning environment' as the process of learning from the present through maximisation of the resources, but without damaging them for future learners. Hargreaves and Fink (2006:145) state that 'sustainability' "…is not about maintainability of initiatives within individual schools, but about being responsible to and for the schools and students in the wider environment that your leadership actions affect. Sustainability is ultimately and inextricably about social justice."

The Brundtland commission tasked by the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development defined 'sustainability' as the ability to maintain equity between generations so that the present needs can be met without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their needs (Dresner, 2002:1-2). According to Sterling (2001:2), the concept of sustainability in education rests on four pillars, which make it sustaining, tenable, healthy and durable. This implies that the creation of a sustainable learning environment should keep those involved because it is above board and advances social justice. It should also assist those affected to work harmoniously because they can find it practically easy to do so.

From the above definitions of 'sustainable learning environment', the following observations can be made. First, a sustainable learning environment contributes to socio-economic changes (Ciegis, Ramanauskiene & Martinkus, 2009:28; Hall, Daneke & Lenox, 2010:440; Salama & Adams, 2003:4) to cater for present and future generations. These changes affect those involved in a positive manner as they are enabled to do things better because of the newly acquired skills. Second, it makes a lasting impact on the lives of those involved to think not only for themselves but also for others whose plight has to be changed (Dresner, 2002:2). The impact addresses the equity gap that used to exist as a result of low or lack of skills to act independently. One can say that a sustainable learning environment does not offer quick or temporary solutions to problems at hand, but rather provides permanent eradication of the problem. Third, because the solutions provided are permanent the present and future generations are likely to benefit (Ciegis et al., 2009:29).

Applying these observations to parental engagement means that parents should be conscientised, mobilised and engaged in such a way that their engagement brings about changes in the way they support their children with their studies. It means empowering the parents to believe in their potential and use it to ensure that their children and future generations are guaranteed quality education. It also means engaging the parents in such a way that their presence is seen in school, appreciated and relied upon to guide decisions taken in their education.

A sustainable learning environment creates conditions that enable a person to perform in a particular manner. If parents were not empowered to take part in the education of their children and not made to believe that their engagement is necessary they would withdraw themselves from any school activity and might not value the education of their children. On the other hand, if parents were told about the important role that they could play and the conditions were conducive, positive spin-offs could be seen in learner performance (La Bahn, 1995:3; Oludipe, 2009:95).

Sustainability is informed by the theory of Malthus, who towards the end of the 18th century produced a theory of population growth (Dresner, 2002:3), according to which, if population growth among the poor was not curbed this could lead to

depletion of wealth and reduce everyone to the state of subsistence (Butler, 2009:578; Hodgson, 2009:742). This view was challenged by Karl Marx as a ploy to concentrate wealth in the hands of the few elites in order to maintain inequality (Hodgson, 2009:744). Marx's view was that the poor would maintain a balance between consumption and surplus for future use in the same way as the elites were able to do. This shows that human beings have the potential to learn and to direct the process of learning in such a way that they maximise their potential to survive even in the face of extreme difficulties. According to Butler (2009:578), Malthusian theory was conservative in that it failed to recognise the human potential in creating surplus food to sustain mankind. Human beings can use their knowledge and skills to grow the economy so that sustainability can be realised. According to Huston (2009:362), it failed to address the following three factors, firstly, that as people get better wages the quality of their lives will also improve. Secondly, people will use their knowledge to combat starvation, thus ensuring that there is no mass starvation. Sustainability can be achieved if people are empowered with knowledge and skills to participate in the economy of the country. Thirdly, people will use their knowledge (family planning) to control and limit procreation. These ideas are also shared by Butler (2009:578) and Huston (2009:362), who indicate that knowledge creation and sharing can assist people to escape the Malthusian trap.

2.3.2 The concept learning and theories that informs it

According to Merriam Webster's Dictionary (1993) the concept 'learning' is the knowledge and skill acquired thorough instruction or study. It is a process of acquiring modifications in existing knowledge, skills, habits or tendencies through experience, practice or exercise. For Hiemstra (1991:9), learning is more than the accumulation of knowledge as observations about critical social and psychological issues. He states that learning involves a change of paradigm, that is, the way one sees, perceives or understands the world. This is also shared by Hargreaves and Fink (2006:32), who write that learning is embedded in life in that it prepares people so that they can better understand their world. The implication is that

learning cannot be divorced from the person's socio-economic context and that a person who has the knowledge of his/her world is said to have learned.

According to Dunns (2002:1), learning is a process of relatively permanent change in behaviour which can be observed externally and internally in the way people think, their attitudes and emotions. This is corroborated by Du Plessis et al. (2007:3), for whom learning changes a person's insight, behaviour, perception and motivation. Learning can thus be said to have happened when the newly acquired knowledge and skills enable the one who possesses them to help others to be more or less like him/her.

Nieman (2004:10) states that learning involves the ability to use cognitive power in order to make sense of the world as well as the things that we do. Therefore, to say that a person's learning is seen in terms of how he/she relates to other people whose situation is perhaps different. Critical learning involves challenging the status quo and also helps others to view the world around them differently. There are different theories of learning which are informed by the theoretical lens that one wears at a particular time.

Parental engagement in school activities is inherently a learning process where parents learn from teachers and teachers also learn from parents. It is critical to note that some parents may also be leaders in the community and may be professionals from different sectors like nursing, policing and teaching. Thus parental engagement affords the schools the opportunity of educational communicative space (Skollerhorn, 1998:557) which may also be imbued with realities of power struggles amongst the participants. It is imperative therefore, for purposes of this study, to acquaint ourselves with the learning theories and identify key aspects that can be considered in the contradictory parental engagement spaces (Mahlomaholo & Netshandama, 2012:37).

2.3.2.1 The behavioural theory of learning

The behavioural theory includes stimulus or reinforcement approach to learning developed by Skinner, emphasising behaviour as the ultimate result of learning.

However, this behaviour is dependent on the stimuli or reinforcement applied. If the stimulus is positive it may encourage repetition, whilst if negative the resultant behaviour may also be negative. To a greater extent, the power of the person to use his/her mind is not recognised, but rather people are equated with 'robots' who cannot think for themselves. This type of learning is not sustainable because it is rigid and mechanical.

Notwithstanding, its limitations for use in this study, behavioural theory of learning alerts us that there is a relationship between stimulus and response. However, the nature of the relationship between the two cannot be conclusively said to be direct or indirect. The reason for this is that there are myriad contextual and situational factors other than the stimulus and the response that can contribute to the response (see paragraph 6.3.3). For instance, where there was continuous decline in learners' performance, one would expect parents to respond to the problem as it affects their children's future. It would be imperative to find out the reasons for the passive response of the parents in this regard. Hackman (2005:106-107) contends that passive response as in this case may be as a result of lack of personal-reflection. Personal reflection on the other hand does not seem to be an aspect for behavioural theory of learning.

2.3.2.2 Cognitive theory of learning

According to Dunns (2002:1), cognitive theory of learning recognises the power of the mind in constructing meaning, problem-solving and developing understanding. It makes assumptions that human beings are logical, with the capacity to think for themselves and make meaning out of what they see .It seeks to explain the interrelation between how one's way of thinking influences behaviour. Cognitive theory rejects the behaviourism which seeks to reduce human behaviour to cause and effect. According to Ertmer and Newby (1993:58), cognitive theory posits that the learner be viewed as an active participant in the learning process, which is also closer to CER principles of democracy and social justice in that it accords the learner respect in the learning process. Ertmer and Newby (1993:59) focus on allowing the learner to use his/her appropriate learning strategies.

For this study, parents should be allowed to use their minds in helping determine how their children's education develops. They have knowledge of educating their children which should be considered, therefore in seeking answers to problems facing their children they should be accorded the necessary platform to use the knowledge they have acquired over many years to assist teachers to teach better. Knowledge creation to mould and advance the educational interests of learners should be a shared responsibility of teachers and parents, thus making schooling more relevant to the needs of the community.

2.3.2.3 Constructivist theory of learning

Constructivist theory is non-positivist and opposes the behavioural theory of learning, preferring active engagement of the learner in bringing about change. Fosnot and Perry (1996:27-28) argue that reality is not objective and that the truth is not absolute because it is being constructed from a particular point of view and is being transformed and transforming those who have access to it. They further indicate that a person's mind cannot be divorced from the context and culture that shape it, since knowledge within a culture is shared. According to Sjorberg (2007:2), learning is something that is constructed by the learner and not imposed on him/her. Constructivism recognises the prior knowledge that learners bring to the learning situation. Knowledge construction is linked to the physical, social, cultural and linguistic world of the learner. All these aspects influence the way the learner constructs knowledge and views the world.

Constructivism is relevant because like CER it recognises the importance of participants in co-constructing knowledge and finding solutions to their problems (Rahimi & Ebrahimi, 2011:91). It also recognises the importance of prior knowledge. Therefore, in dealing with the parents one should bear in mind that they can contribute knowledge in terms of how their children should be taught. Both parents and teachers should be accorded respect in terms of the knowledge that each possesses. Unlike a deficit approach to parental engagement, constructivism places the parents at the centre of their children's education by valuing their contributions. Constructivism supports CER objectives of denouncing

positivism as the only way of achieving reality. It opposes any attempt to achieve a uniform approach to finding the truth.

The application of the constructivist theory of learning to parental engagement would be for purposes of enhancing inclusivity, collaboration and cooperation amongst the participants. It should also enhance the integrated approach to knowledge creation, where cultural backgrounds, knowledge and experience are considered in deciding on issues of policies of the school and strategies to support schooling as a whole.

The use of the principles of these theories, namely constructivist, behavioural and cognitive, in the parental engagement processes seems to require continual reflection and personal reflection. This will in turn enhance the development of critical thinking skills (Hackman, 2005:105-106). The significance of critical thinking is that it enables teachers and parents to consider school activities and parental engagements from postcolonial perspectives (Hickling-Hudson, 2006:2). The main purpose is to ensure that parental engagement is a democratic participatory social action that aims at transforming schools to become sustainable learning environments.

2.3.3 Environment

Warger and Dobbin (2009:6) define the concept 'environment' as the surroundings and conditions in which something or someone lives or functions. They state that it includes a mix of intentional and unintentional conjunction of planned and unanticipated activities. Hiemstra and Sisco (1990:245) state that "we recognise that an environment includes social, cultural, and psychological elements as well as physical features."

According to Hiemstra (1991:8) and Rahimi and Ebrahimi (2011:89), the concept "learning environment" encompasses the physical space, psychological or emotional conditions and the social or cultural influences affecting growth and development of an adult person engaged in an educational activity. Therefore, the

concept is shaped by the person's cultural, social, physical and psychological makeup, which give meaning to a learning environment that in turn shapes the person's thinking and actions. According to Warger and Dobbin (2009:6), the concept 'environment' is much broader because it includes people who participate and the culture in which their participation prevails. They argue that environment is dynamic in that it includes elements that shape it from inside and outside. A learning environment within CER paradigm is thus relevant to this study because it recognises the parents as active participants in the education of their children. It also recognises the cultural capital that parents have and which benefit both the teachers and learners. The experiences of parents are crucial in determining engagement in their children's education.

2.3.4   Parental engagement

The term 'parental involvement' has been replaced by the term 'parental engagement', which recognises that not only biological parents but also grandparents and other family members play a role in the education of the learners (Moles Jr & Fege, 2011:4). 'Parental engagement' is broader and suggests a deeper mutual commitment, participation and reciprocal interaction, as well as warmer friendly relations between the parents and the teachers (Pushor & Ruitenberg,2005:14) than the term 'involvement'. Harris and Goodall (2007:1-3) made a distinction between 'involvement' and 'engagement', defining 'parental involvement' as the involvement of parents in school activities that are not directly connected to learning.

Paredes (in Sheldon, 2011:1-2) extends this definition of parental engagement by distinguishing between three different types. The first is *random*, that is piecemeal, unsystematic and unintentional. It includes efforts that are geared toward activities that attract parents to school, such as sporting and open-house activities, freshman orientation and meeting the school staff. Although these provide opportunities for parents to know the school they do not specifically focus on improving the learners' performance both over a short and long term. The second is *compliance-driven*, a broad form that focuses on activities that attract parents to

school but which serve to meet the compliance demands of the department of education (DoE) and the sponsors. This type of parental engagement often lacks systematic consideration in design and implementation. The third type is *learner-driven*, that is strategic, research-based and data-driven, and shows that the school knows the needs of its community in terms of how it should educate the learners. It includes focusing the efforts of parents in helping to address the needs of each learner at school and forming a relationship with the parents in order to address the post-secondary education needs of the learner. It is used to assist the learner with schoolwork at home and opening purposeful communication channels with the teachers.

This last type of parental engagement is closer to the definitions by Harris and Goodall (2007:1-3) and Pushor and Ruitenberg (2005:14), in that it is associated with making improvements to the learner's achievement. It also connects the parents to community resources that can advance their educational needs. The first two types of parental engagement focus on what teachers tell parents to do, such as attending school meetings and sporting activities. Although these activities are necessary they contribute little to helping the learner to master what has been taught in class in that they are not content-focused. In the Republic of South Africa (RSA) the term 'involvement' is used interchangeably with 'participation' and refers to the need for parents to be involved in governance issues of the school (Lewis & Naidoo, 2004:104; Mmotlane, et al., 2009:2). According to Pushor and Ruitenberg (2005:12), the term 'parental involvement' is authoritative and prescriptive because it channels the parents to do things that teachers want them to do, such as attending parents' meetings and assisting with homework, while decision-making remains the responsibility of the teachers. Here teachers determine the scope of parental involvement with parents complying. It is an initiative that comes from the teachers, hence decisions regarding how and in which areas remain with them.

On the other hand 'parental engagement' is defined as the engagement of parents in curriculum issues that have a direct bearing on learning (Harris & Goodall, 2007:1-3). Therefore, engagement implies enabling the parents to work collaboratively with the teachers in the schooling of their children (Pushor &

Ruitenberg (2005:3). The term recognises that parents have some knowledge that they impart to their children before they come to school, such as narrating stories of their culture, their history, and the way of living in general, as well as survival skills and knowledge of, for example, fauna and flora.

The term 'engagement' evokes a theme power, flattens the school hierarchy and ensures that both teachers and parents share authority in a respectful way in the teaching of the child. According to De Pree (1989:43), when parents are engaged they sometimes find themselves walking alongside the teachers, following teachers or leading them, hence the concept of a 'roving' leadership. According to this concept, leadership is given to the person who has the capacity to lead at that time, that is, one whose knowledge and skills can benefit the school to succeed at a given time and place. For instance, a parent who is a lawyer, accountant or risk manager can assist the school to deal with litigation, if sued; audit the school accounts in cases of financial mismanagement; or help assess and draw a risk management plan for the school. When coming to the new developments in curriculum, teachers can lead discussions and empower the parents. There are times when parents listen to the teachers, but there are also times when teachers have to listen to parents and learn from them.

Parental engagement is useful in equalising the power relations between the parents and teachers. In this study I opted for 'engagement' over 'involvement' in that the former shows more respect for the other party's social capital in helping to sustain schools as learning environments. It requires humility and involves much listening in order to learn from the other party. It relies on the knowledge base that each can bring to the education of the learners and helps redress past imbalances in that it strives for equity and social justice in the teaching of learners. For the learners to reach their educational goals they need the capital of the school and the parents. The term 'engagement' further recognises that communication between the school and the parents should be two-way rather than one-way. It differs from 'involvement', which emphasises giving instruction and communicating from one side and which tends to show the power of one party over the other, thus talking without balancing this with listening.

The term 'engagement' therefore suggests mutual partnership between the school and the parents. Partners value the contribution of each other and work towards the achievement of the same goal. According to Rothmann (2008:110), 'engagement' means that when parents are engaged they are physically present, aware of decision-making and tasks being carried out, and identify themselves with the schools of their children because what is being practised is what they been consulted about. As Rothmann (2008:110) argues, engagement motivates those who are engaged, brings about personal initiative as a result of knowledge and skills acquired, and enhances commitment of those engaged.

2.4   RELATED LITERATURE

This section reviews the literature to address the five objectives of the study, including justifying the study, its components, the conditions required for the successful implementation of the envisaged parental framework, the threats that are likely to impede its successful implementation, and the success of such frameworks from other countries.

2.4.1. The need and justification for parental engagement

This section discusses the need and provides the justification for the engagement of parents in the education of their children.

2.4.1.1 Lack of coordination: coordinating team

 The USA established a coordinating team namely, Parent Resource Center (PRC) to enhance parental engagement among the Latino parents. This coordinating team comprised university officials, principal of the participating school concerned and the district parent coordinator. This coordinating team empowered parents on how to help their children with homework and also exposing them to basic parenting skills (Bermudez & Marquez, 1996:4-5). In the

same vein parents and teachers in Zimbabwe worked together as a team to advance the education of children with special needs (Mudekunye & Ndamba, 2011:10).This team ensured the availability of equipment needed. Furthermore, this team ensured that parents were trained to deal with children of special needs and other parent groups dealing with such children.

Schools which sustain improvement continuously engage parents in their children's learning (Goodall & Vorhaus, 2011:16), however, parental engagement is a problem in township schools in RSA (Mbokodi, 2008:32; Msila, 2012:303). There is a lack of coordinating structure to ensure effective two-way communication between the parents and the schools (Singh, Mbokodi & Msila, 2004:304), which according to Ehlers and Lazenby (2010:6) contributes to lack of coordination in terms of addressing possible conflicts. Parents may feel that they are only called when there are problems with their children, so a coordinating team could have addressed the poor conditions of some of these schools and the poor results that they continue to produce, but which some parents still view as an extension of apartheid (Mbokodi, 2008:32).

According to Nyaba (2009:20), the tensions and conflicts between the teachers and parents in township schools often threaten the chance of them working as a team to bring about school effectiveness. In Nigeria and in Zimbabwe, the parents were prohibited from forming a team with teachers and therefore discouraged from engaging in the parents-teachers' association (PTA) or school development committee (SDC) respectively. This showed a power imbalance, with teachers dictating terms to parents on how to engage in their children's education.

2.4.1.2 Lack of shared vision

The lack of shared vision leads to accusations between parents and teachers. On the one hand, the schools blame the parents for non-engagement in school activities, whilst on the other parents complain that they are being prevented from taking part in their children's education by the attitudes of some principals and teachers (Mncube, 2009:2; Msila, 2012:304). Teachers' failure to recognise the role that parents play in the education of their children shows lack of shared vision.

A similar situation exists in the USA where some schools are reportedly unwilling to increase African American parents' engagement in schools. Chatmon, Scott-George, Okahara, Feuntes, Wing and Noguera (2006:201) found that some schools put the blame for the learners' failure on the parents, instead of also shouldering some responsibility. Holoway (1997:1) states that "too often parents are blamed for not being involved even though the teachers are not reaching out to them to foster involvement." According to Fahey (n.d..:3), this is because some schools do not see African American parents as potential volunteers and therefore do not engage them in voluntary projects. This mistrust creates resentment, poor communication and discourages parents from engaging fully in their children's education (Dumas, Moreland, Gitter, Pearl & Nordstrom, 2008:620). DuFour and Eaker(1998:64) in Huffman (2003:22) explain the impact that the lack of co-created shared vision has on schools:

…the lack of a compelling vision for public schools continues to be a major obstacle in any effort to improve schools. Until educators can describe the schools they are trying to create, it is impossible to develop policies, procedures, or programs that will help make ideal a reality… Building a shared vision is the ongoing, never-ending, daily challenge confronting all who hope to create learning communities.

Therefore, the environment of the parents will determine whether they finally become engaged. According to Bouakazi and Pearsson (2007:98), parental engagement depends on external factors which may either nourish or diminish it. Therefore, when factors are consistently favourable, parental engagement will flourish and this will benefit not only the parents but also the whole school. Each party has concerns about its role but no ideal environment is created for them both to connect and interact for the development of the learners.

In Nigeria, parents were also found to complain that some principals who did not allow them to participate in their children's education for fear of being criticised (Haastrup & Alonge, 2012:17). The failure to share a common vision also manifested itself in the non-engagement of parents in homework activities to assist their children to learn better (Ajayi et al., 2009:42; Chikoko, 2007:54; Kerr,2000:2;

Simon, 2004:184). When parents and teachers do not share the same vision it becomes difficult to uphold the legislative mandates.

2.4.1.3 Disregard for legislative mandates

The disregard for legislative imperatives makes parents and teachers pull in different directions. According to Singh, Mbokodi and Msila (2004:304), parents are said to accuse teachers when results are not forthcoming and yet they do not engage in the SGBs to share governance responsibilities. This is a disregard for section 20(1) (a) of the South African Schools Act (SASA, 1996), which stipulates that parents should ensure the provision of quality education for all learners at school. The disregard for legislative imperatives also plays out in the non-attendance of parents at school meetings, teacher-parent conferences and fundraising activities, and their failure to assist the learners' homework (Mestry & Grobler,2007: 177; Mncube, 2007:135 & 2009:8). Failure to attend school meetings and engage in fundraising activities therefore undermines sections 6 (6.2) and 20(1) (a) of SASA No.84 of 1996.

The disregard for legislative imperatives by parents manifests itself in their non-engagement to deal with their learners' ill-discipline (van Wyk, 2001:107). This disregard for legislative imperatives creates problems for teachers who often have to deal with ill-disciplined learners alone. For instance, section 2(2.2) of SASA No.84 of 1996 stipulates that maintaining learners' discipline in South African public schools is the dual responsibility of both parents and teachers. The disregard for legislative imperatives create problems for parental engagement not only in RSA but also in other African and overseas countries. For instance, Zimbabwe, Nigeria and the USA also reported cases of poor parental engagement as a result of a disregard for legislative imperatives, with regard to governance committees and parents' meetings (Ademola & Olajumoke, 2009:458; Chikoko, 2007:54 Jasso, 2007:4).

The disregard for legislative imperatives implies that there is no vision, teamwork or direction to engage parents and teachers in situational analysis of what causes this disregard and what can be done to address it. This means that there was no

sharing of information needed to ensure that both parents and teachers intervene to enhance the learners' performance.

2.4.1.4 Lack of situational analysis: SWOT

Situational analysis guides policy intervention, decision-making and resources needed to achieve the task at hand. It helps those who are researching a particular problem to have a full understanding of its nature, the context in which it best operates, and the impact that it makes on the lives of those affected (Ibrahim & Jamil, 2012:38). Situational analysis guides the investigations and efforts geared towards better understanding reality. The failure to conduct situational analysis can prevent the participants from understanding the causes behind non-attendance of parents, who as a result of lack of money to pay transport fares fail to honour the school meetings (Myeko, 2000:51-52).

2.4.1.5 Lack of collaborative planning

The lack of collaborative planning means that parents and teachers are detached from that part of the community and perhaps against one another. Because schools often call meetings at short notice to project an image of parents who are incapable and uncooperative shows a lack of collaborative planning (Koonce & Harper Jr., 2005:56; Mncube, 2007), which also manifests itself in a one-way communication approach which most of the schools still follow and which caters not for the needs of parents but for those of the teachers. Teachers are thus planning *for* parents instead of planning *with* them, which shows skewed power relations in favour of the teachers.

According to Simango (2006:2), there are still problems in terms of practical implementation of parent engagement programmes, such as volunteerism in RSA. It could be that such programmes are often imposed on parents instead of being planned with them. As Mathonsi (2005) argues, poor schools in Black townships still struggle with the technical planning as a result of inadequate training that

compromises the spirit of collaboration and democratisation of the school system. The lack of knowledge and skills often accounts for the exploitation of parents by teachers who impose their plans on them (Nyaba, 2009:21).

The lack of collaborative planning impacts negatively on the sustenance of plans because parents do not associate themselves with them (Healy, 2003:111). Planning for parents instead of with them leads to social injustice, lack of respect for parents' cultural capital and implies that plans may not address the real problems experienced by the parents and community in general. This will erode any hope for a better future and a just society based on equal power sharing, democracy and respect for others' opinions (Beylefeld, Bitzer & Hay, 2007:153; Lochbaum, 1998:538). When there is a lack of collaborative planning between teachers and parents the school tends to close its doors to the parents, regarding them more as adversaries than partners (Chatmon, Scott-George, Okahara, Feuntes, Wing & Noguera, 2006:208). This situation results in the two parties moving in different directions, which makes transformation very difficult. This may have negative consequences on the learners' education.

2.4.1.6 Lack of reflection

Reflection is crucial in that it gives the participants the opportunity to learn from the inputs and practices of others (Beylefeld et al., 2007:151). This is necessary in order to check whether they are still on track in terms of achieving their goal. Although the legislation stipulates that schools should develop resource centres and have liaison staff to deal with parental engagement, there was no systematic monitoring by the state departments to ensure compliance (Moles Jr & Fege, 2011:6). The lack of reflection means that schools are not evaluating the impact that they are making to enhance parental engagement. The lack of monitoring and reflection also implies that the intended vision of working as partners in developing plans to enhance their children's education could not be achieved. The lack of reflection in programmes aimed at engaging parents further implies that there was no opportunity for them and perhaps teachers to critique the dominant ideas that prevent them from engaging fully in the education of their children (Mhlomaholo &

Netshandama, 2012:42). This also leads to rigidity on the part of schools, which was strategically used to manipulate the parents (Skollerhorn, 1998:557). Manipulating parents to achieve their mission cannot serve as part of policy for parental engagement, which requires that power held by the dominant be freely critiqued in order to achieve transparency. This will balance the power relations and ensure an end to rule by fear of coercion.

From the above review, it is evident that there is commonality in terms of the need for engaging parents in the education of their children from the countries under study. All the countries emphasise the need for parents to attend school meetings, engage them in communication and governance structures of the school, assist their children with homework and learner discipline, engage in teacher-parent conferences and assist with fund-raising projects. RSA, the USA and Nigeria also stress the need for parents to be engaged in governance structures because of the deliberate attempt by some school teachers to exclude the parents from the decisions that affect the education of their children. Both RSA and the USA call for engagement of parents in voluntary projects in order to lessen the workload of teachers and as a way of sharing their time, knowledge and skills with the teachers and the learners. These countries concur on the importance of the engagement of parents in governance structures of the school, attendance of parents' meetings and the need for parents to assist their children with homework. These areas will receive further attention in the subsequent section.

2.5   THE COMPONENTS OF A FRAMEWORK TO EFFECT USEFUL PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

This section discusses the components that are relevant and effective in enhancing useful parental engagement, by offering possible solutions to the needs identified and discussed under paragraph 2.4.

2.5.1 Establishment of a coordinating team

Parents should take their rightful place alongside teachers in the education of their children (Pushor & Ruitenberg, 2005:5). This can best be achieved when parents work with teachers as a team. The parents can team up with teachers to assist with learners homework (Ajayi et al., 2009:44; Ademola & Olajumoke, 2009:458; Chikoko, 2007:45; Mestry & Grobler, 2007:177; Sheldon & van Voorhuis, 2004:133). According to Mestry and Grobler (2007:178), parents qualify to team up with teachers in assisting with learner homework because they can also provide expert knowledge as initial teachers of their children. Providing expert knowledge implies that they have not only curriculum knowledge but also cultural and other social experiences that can help the child to survive in life in general. That is what Jordan et al. (2002:14) term an 'asset' approach to parental engagement, because parents are regarded as equal contributors to the knowledge needed to raise and develop the learners. Unlike the traditional approach, in which regards parents as adversaries (Jordan et at., 2002:14), this asset approach is consistent with the principles of CER for respect of cultural and social capital for co-constructing knowledge.

Moles Jr. and Fege (2011:7) write of the importance of having a liaison team in order to ensure partnership between parents and teachers and school and community in general. Rhim (2011:33) also writes of a taskforce that should find solutions to problems that parents and teachers encounter so that the learners' performance is enhanced. According to Moles Jr and Fege (2011:8), the Elementary and Secondary Education Act Amendments of 1994 (ESEA) in the USA established Parental Information Resources Centers (PIRCs) as structures that were earmarked to enhance and implement parental engagement policies and programmes to strengthen partnerships between parents and teachers. These PIRCs were in addition to the School Community Councils that had been legally constituted and which were similar to SGBs in RSA, SDCs in Zimbabwe and PTAs in Nigeria (Mestry & Grobler, 2007:177; Moles Jr. & Fege, 2011:5; Chikoko, 2007:53; Ajayi et al., 2009:42). Therefore, all countries under study emphasise the engagement of parents in the governance structures of the school .

Hara and Burke (1998:10-11) also established an action team consisting of parents, teachers, students and community leaders in an attempt to enhance parental engagement in the education of their children. The establishment of SGBs (RSA), SDCs (Zimbabwe) and PTAs (Nigeria) can be equated with the SCCs and PIRCs in USA (Moles Jr & Fege, 2011:17), which also ensured the enhancement of the voice of parents in decisions that affected the education of their children. The existence of these structures ensures that parents share a vision similar to that of the teachers and other community members (Rhim, 2011:33).

2.5.2 Sharing of vision

There should be support from parents for what the teachers intend to achieve in the education of their children, that is there vision sharing. According to Moles Jr. and Fege (2011:9), this synergises the actions of parents and teachers into collective action that ensures all learners receive quality education. In RSA, parents and teachers should share vision, conduct situational analysis and plan together to ensure that there is policymaking, adoption and engagement of parents in governance committees, such as the SGB, as stipulated in section 20 of SASA No.84 (RSA, 1996:2A-17). These are regulated by the Act in order to legalise and democratise the engagement of parents into areas in which they were not previously allowed to play a role. The proclamation of SASA (1996) has legally given the parents the mandate to govern their schools through the SGB, therefore parents are expected to share vision and planning with teachers, to draw and adopt the school policy through the leadership of the SGB.

Another important dimension of SASA was to open doors for parents to chair and belong to various school committees, thus working as a team. According to Mwinjuma and Baki (2012:78), the engagement of parents in financial matters of the school will ensure that learners, the school and the community in general benefit.

Enhancing the parents' voices in the USA can be realised if parents and teachers share the vision and planning regarding the mission statements of their schools, review their polices, and design the development plans (Chrispeels & Rivero,

2001:121; Epstein, 2007:20; Moles Jr. & Fege,2011:7-8). The engagement of parents in the USA in governance is also linked to parents attending meetings and educational workshops, writing school policies, deciding about the choice of school that their children should attend and demanding better school performance (Moles Jr. & Fege, 2011:5).

The Zimbabwe Education Act of 1987, as amended in 2006, recognised the importance of parental engagement in the education of their children (Mudekunye & Ndamba, 2011:10). The parents are expected to form the governing councils or the school development committees (SDC) that manage the schools (Chikoko, 2007). Parents in Zimbabwe decide on the infrastructure of the school, the amount of money to be paid to subsidise the needy learners, the purchase of textbooks and what the community can do to support the school (Ngwenya, Baird, Boonstopel & Padera, 2008:1).

In Nigeria, parents are expected to take part in the PTA that administer and govern the schools (Ajayi et al., 2009:42). They are also expected to attend parent-teacher conferences in which their children's progress is discussed and parents are given the tips to assist their children with schoolwork (Ademola & Olajumuke, 2009:458). The PTA in Nigeria enables the schools to support the schools financially in order to obtain good results, maintain discipline, and ensure professional service and integrity in schools (Haastrup & Alonge, 2012:16). Maintaining discipline strengthens mutual understanding between the teachers and parents in advancing the educational interests of the learners.

The sharing of a common vision enhances the establishment of effective two-way communication channels between the parents and the teachers about the school's programme and the learners' progress (Sheldon & Van Voorhis, 2004:128). This communication is necessary for parents and teachers when dealing with such learners' disciplinary problems as poor attendance and poor performance (Epstein, 2005:130). The sharing of common vision enables the parents and teachers to address the learners' needs (Pushor, 2007:3) and build a trusting relationship which increases parental engagement in learning activities both at home and at school (Patrikakou, 2008:2). When parents and teachers have a similar vision they can share knowledge of school policies, teaching practices and

other extra and co-curricular activities of the school (Hill & Taylor, 2004:162). This extends a platform for parents to share ideas with one another and therefore increase their social capital in advancing the educational needs of the learners.

2.5.3 Respect for legislative mandates

The legislative frameworks in the four countries enable schools to work closely with the parents, and impact on the interaction between the school and the parents. Without them it would not be mandatory for schools to engage parents in the education of their children. In RSA, in particular, the legislative framework regulates the school-parents interaction. For instance, section 19 of SASA Act No. 84 (1996) stipulates that introductory and continuing training should be provided to newly elected and long-time SGB members so that they can perform their tasks well. When parents are not represented in the various governance structures of the school, nor is the community represented in decisions that affect its learners and parents, there will be no social peace and justice (Jordan, et al., 2002:21). The community's requirements will not be known to the schools that serve it. As Dewey (1995:7) writes: "…what the best and wisest parent wants for his own child that must be what the community wants for all its children. Any other ideal for our schools is narrow and unlovely, acted upon, it destroys our democracy."

If parents are engaged in governance structures for a longer time, parental engagement will grow, and if good parental practices are applied and the right atmosphere created for parents to participate in governance decisions, both the parents and the school are likely to benefit.

Moles Jr. & Fege (2011:1) believe that the inclusion of parents in the PTA or PTO in the USA makes the school accountable and responsive to the needs of the communities they serve. By allowing parents to take part in governance decisions the community can benefit in terms of its ills being addressed and solved. When the community is behind its schools and parents support their children's education, the crime rate will decrease because of skilled people who are employed and also create employment for others. Assisting with the children's homework is not confined within the walls of the classroom but goes beyond the school. In the USA

the schools are legally mandated to train parents and provide them with homework policy so that they can better assist their children (Sheldon & van Voorhis, 2004:133). The homework policy must state clearly how parents should monitor and assist instead of doing homework themselves (Modisaotsile, 2012:3, Grace, Jethro & Aina, 2012:198). The respect for this legal mandates establishes close interaction between the parents and the learners on school issues (Butler, 2011:5).

There are observations that can be made from the above discussions regarding the engagement of parents in the governance structures of the school. Firstly, the four countries emphasise the engagement of parents in governance where decisions regarding policy are made. There is agreement on the need for them to engage in governance issues, including attending school meetings, deciding on the curriculum and extra–curricular activities, mobilising extra resources, and deciding on school leadership. In Zimbabwe engaging in governance means taking responsibility for paying school fees in order to subsidise the needy learners whose parents cannot afford to pay. This is different from RSA, in which the DoE rather than the parents take responsibility for subsidising the needy learners in terms of declaring schools as no-fee paying schools. Both RSA and the USA emphasise the importance of maintaining a two-way purposeful communication between the school and parents. This communication should not be school-centred so as to project teachers as powerful against powerless parents. Striking and prominent is that the engagement of the USA parents in governance enables them to organise to demand better performing schools for their children. Both RSA and the USA further emphasise the engagement of parents in educational workshops, which is crucial in enhancing the knowledge and skills of parents in school matters.

2.5.4 Situational and contextual analysis

The identification of different priority areas for parental engagement in the different countries attests to each country conducting its situational analysis (Ademola & Olajumoke, 2009:463; Chikoko, 2007:54; Mestry & Grobler, 2007:177; Moles Jr. &

Fege, 2011:5; Oludipe, 2009:102). The analysis has been geared toward interpreting the voices of marginalised parents from the main education discourses (Pushor & Ruitenberg, 2005:12), and sought to make sense of them in order to facilitate the process of parental engagement. This interpretive-analytic process is evident in Zimbabwe's subsidising of needy learners, which acknowledges, firstly, that there were needy learners. Secondly, this act acknowledges that the needy learners would not afford to pay for their tuition or related learning activities. Thus, the act of subsidising them becomes the responsibility of the parents who could mobilise funding (Ngwenya et al., 2008:1).

In the same vein, the study identified that the USA's curriculum and training committee came as a result of the finding that parents were not engaged in curriculum and training matters (Epstein, 2007:20; Henderson & Redding, 2011:105; Moles Jr. & Fege, 2011:5). When parents know the curriculum of the school they can help their children better. As parents engage in the education of their children they also engage in the process of learning and thus stand a chance of knowing challenges that their children are confronted with at their schools and in education in general.

Empowering parents (Bernard, 1993:1) to create supportive home environments fosters a sense of resilience in children which is necessary for them to succeed in life. This is supported by Murphy (2008:13-14), who argues that resilience enables the child to make informed decisions and create relationships that are beneficial to him/her. An analysis by Perkins, Barton, Hoy, Webster and Mock (2004:1) indicates that all parents, regardless of their educational status, income and background wish to see their children succeed in life. This can ensure that all parents play a role in the education of their children and enable the parents to attend to learning distractors such as television, so that he or she has an environment conducive to study (Grace et al., 2012:197; Langdon, Meyer & Sherley,2004:1; Walberg, 2011:72). The community can know the quality of education that their children receive from school.

This analytic-interpretive process will enhance collaborative planning between parents and the teachers, and continues to affect the development of activities and allocation of responsibilities and resources. For the needed resources to be

decided upon there should be concerted effort to establish their availability or prevalence. For instance, the parents in Zimbabwe who wanted to mobilise funding for the needy children may have raised funds with parents, community and business. The reason for considering the needy learners was in line with the principles of equity, social justice and redress, thus ensuring that the needy learners were not excluded from educational opportunities. The fundraising initiatives mentioned above may include the establishment of partnerships, as in the USA (Patrikakou, 2008:14).

Analysis of RSA has established that learners' ill-discipline has impacted negatively on teaching (van Wyk, 2001:107), similar to findings as in the USA and Zimbabwe (Chikoko, 2007:54; Jasso, 2007:4). An analysis of parental engagement by Mestry and Grobler (2007:177) indicated that parental engagement was not useful, for instance in priority areas such as:

the poor attendance of parents at parents' meetings, their limited involvement in fundraising projects, low attendance at parent-teacher meetings, recalcitrance in paying school fees, inability to maintain proper control of learning support material issued to their children, poor matric results and lack of interest in learners' school work and homework

This has been aggravated by lack of effective communication between schools and parents (Singh, Mbokodi & Msila, 2004:304). A further analysis provided that the non-involvement and non-recognition of parents in the education of their children serve as barriers to quality education (Mestry & Grobler, 2007:177).

According to Sheldon (2011:99), collaborating with the community helps to integrate community resources and services to strengthen the educational programme of the school. It also validates the cultural capital and other forms of community knowledge that parents possess (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008:10). The parents are evidently in a better position to enable the schools to access the cultural capital, and their engagement is thus pivotal in order to help level off inherent cultural imbalances that may emanate from inequitable considerations of diverse cultures.

Furthermore, pressure from politicians and community organizations with interest in education was found to be making schools accountable to the community for its educational programme (Moles Jr & Fege, 2011:11; Patrikakou, 2008:8; Rogers, 2002:9). A situational analysis indicates that schools located in affluent areas tend to do well because parents and community members put pressure on schools to deliver quality learning (Rhim, 2011:30; Rogers, 2002:10), because they want good returns for their money and the resources that they have invested in their schools. Parents and community members should analyse and compare the performance of their school with others, as this will enhance professionalism. The situational analysis shows that the community should not only put pressure on the school to perform but also provide support for the teachers in order to achieve quality education (Kendall, 2007:704).

When the school collaborates with the community it stands a chance of accessing additional resources such as churches, art centres, sporting facilities and after-school support that enhance the educational development of the learners. When the community regards the school as its nucleus for development and the school sees the community in the same way, the community can take care of their schools and protect it from being vandalised (Rogers,2002;8).

The Tirisano Implementation Plan by the DoE (RSA, 1999:6) provides that schools should be centres of community life. When they open their doors to community organisations they will look after them. The school and the community should work together because they depend on each another and both play a significant role in the lives of the learners (Ajayi et al., 2009:42).

The situational analysis provides the participants with an opportunity to understand their situation, and the nature and extent of the problem relating to parental engagement. It furthermore affords the participants space to interact on a regular basis during the period of the analytic process (Kemmis, 2008:127; Mahlomaholo & Netshandama, 2012:37; Skollerhorrn,1998:557). The process of situational analysis permeates the collaborative planning.

2.5.5 Collaborative planning

Section 20 of SASA (1996) provides for collaborative planning between teachers and parents on policymaking and policy adoption. The process of collaborative planning, which is preceded by and incorporates the **situational analysis** process, is geared towards operationalising the identified priority areas. These **priority areas** included fundraising, learner discipline, curriculum and training, safety, post-secondary planning, communication, school-community collaboration, school governance, extra-curricular and co-curricular related issues that shape the learners' development (Ajayi,et al,2009:42; Epstein, 2007:20; Mestry & Grobler, 2007:177; Mudekunye & Ndamba, 2011:11; Mmotlane et al., 2009:2; Wang & Fahey, 2010:2).

In order to operationalise the identified priorities, the coordinating team of parents, teachers and other relevant stakeholders, develop activities for each priority area. For instance, parenting can be considered as an activity that operationalises post-secondary planning and/or curriculum and training. For purposes of this study both parenting and post-secondary planning are considered as activities to operationalise the priority area of parental engagement in curriculum and training matters. This view is informed by considerations of parenting which include post-secondary planning and learners' current subject choice. The basic elements of the post-secondary planning, according to the literature searched, include current subject choice; future career, financial planning for the envisaged career, researching about the intended course of study, providing advice regarding affordability of the course, employability, attending educational programmes or career exhibitions, visiting the tertiary institutions in which the course is offered and learning parental skills (Muschamp,Wikeley, Ridge & Balarin, 2007:6; Sheldon & Van Voorhis, 2004:128; Simon, 2004:124).

In the same vein, Epstein (2007:19) indicates the elements for the current curriculum and training on parenting to which parents should pay attention. These include understanding adolescent development, creating conducive conditions that promote learning, provide educational awareness to learners regarding the effects of drug abuse, peer pressure and premature sexual behaviour.

This enables parents better to **share the responsibility** of teaching their children with teachers (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001:121). The sharing of responsibilities through parental engagement in schools spreads the workloads, and offers more experiences, spreads the good news and encouragement to the community (Mestry & Grobler, 2007:177). Thus, after having developed the activities for each priority area it becomes critical to spread the workload on the basis of the experiences and expertise that the parents have to offer. It is for these reasons that during the collaborative planning process the competencies and expertise of the participants are matched in line with agreement with the respective activities.

Subsequent to the mutual delegation and sharing of responsibilities among the teachers and parents, **resources** that are found to be necessary to enhance achievement of the activities are allocated (Mudekunye & Ndamba, 2011:11). These resources can also be provided by the parents and/or organised by them from the community. In this regard Patrikakou (2008:18-19) indicates that:

…collaboration between the community and the school enable the parents and other community members to provide the learners with additional resources which the school might not have had access to previously like computers, church halls, sporting fields, teacher assistants and coaches in extra and co-curricular activities.

This means that when identifying resources, the coordinating team should source such from the school (i.e., internally) and from the community and broader society (externally).

For progress to be tracked efficiently there needs to be **timeframes** allocated for all the activities of the plan. Planning involves setting of objectives that are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound (Mestry & Grobler, 2007:178). Also, post-secondary activities require that the parents should execute their responsibilities with the learners before the learners graduate from secondary school education. Furthermore, the parents and teachers need to be aware of the learners' pressures that are inherent in their development stages. This is indicated especially in their adolescent stages. These realities require that the participants' individual programmes be aligned such that conflicts are reduced for purposes of

optimising their performance and engagement in school activities (Bermudez & Marquez, 1996:6).

According to Henderson and Redding (2011:105), parents in the USA have to decide about curricular instruction, extra-curricular activities, **mobilising resources** and deciding on school leadership. Furthermore, this collaborative planning should address homework supervision, learners' safety and wellbeing, and the school's commitment to learning (Hallinger & Heck, 2011:14). The schools also engage in collaborative planning with parents around the development of a parent engagement plan (Moles Jr & Fege, 2011:7). They argue that this plan should be made *with* parents instead of *for* parents and should include the inputs of parents regarding how they intend to share responsibility of teaching their children with teachers. This collaborative planning elevates the often marginalised parents to the same position as equal partners with teachers (Pushor, 2007:3).

In Zimbabwe, collaborative planning between parents and teachers is shared around infrastructure development, the amount of money to be paid by parents to subsidise the needy learners, the purchase of textbooks for learners and other projects that the parents and community can arrange in order to support the schools (Ngwenya, et al, 2008:1). In Nigeria, this collaborative planning between parents and teachers manifests itself in parent-teacher conferences in which the children's progress is being discussed (Ademola & Olajumoke, 2009:458). This collaborative planning further takes place in PTAs in which parents plan to support the school financially, assist with learner discipline and ensure professional integrity in schools (Haastrup & Alonge, 2012:16).

It is evident from the above discussion of the collaborative planning in RSA, the USA and Zimbabwe that the participants' identification of priority areas is critical as one of the steps in collaborative planning (Chikoko, 2007:43; Mudekunye & Ndamba, 2011:11). These priority areas include curriculum and training, safety and fundraising. Also pivotal in the collaborative planning process is the development of activities through which priority areas could be realised. For instance, the literature searched points to activities such as mobilising of resources, teaching with teachers, helping learners with homework and subsidising learners from poor family backgrounds. It is also apparent from the

literature that each activity or priority area was delegated a responsible person to oversee its implementation. There were timeframes and resources for the implementation of each activity (Mudekunye & Ndamba, 2011:11).

2.5.6 Reflection: evaluation and monitoring

Reflection can take place when parents have thought about what they can do in order to plough back resources into the school. This can be done by volunteering their services as classroom assistants and share their knowledge and experience in helping with the school development programme (Epstein, 1988:107). Parents should reflect on areas in which they are capable, such as sport, culture, carpentry and technology, to assist the teachers to do their work better (Wang & Fahey, 2010:2). Reflecting on areas of competence can increase parental engagement and create a platform for friendship and socialising, which broadens one's own horizon as a result of opportunities that exist (Fahey, n.d.:4). Reflecting on areas of competence before volunteering ensures respect for the parents' capital which is a mediation between space and capital in relation to other factors (Barton et al., 2004). As parents, teachers and other stakeholders reflect on areas of volunteerism, which will increase their social capital and in turn benefit the entire school.

Both parents and teachers should reflect on, evaluate and monitor the programmes of volunteerism to ensure that the recruitment, training and design of schedules for volunteers support the education of the learners at school (Epstein, 2007:20; Redding, 2011:18). This means that volunteers should first be identified before they could be trained and placed, thus increasing the number of parents who render voluntary service in the education of their children. Reflecting together on what parents can offer helps to make a theme of power relations between the parents and the teachers, and so allows parents to serve in areas of speciality and expertise so that their inclusion in such programmes does not amount to mere window-dressing. This will increase the commitment of parents, who once they have listed their skills can be matched to the school's needs and the programme can then be initiated.

The power relations between the parents and teachers should be balanced by giving parents the opportunity to initiate how they can volunteer to assist the school instead of just being co-opted onto committees (Epstein, 1988:107; Pushor & Ruitenberg, 2005:13). This will enable them to volunteer out of loyalty and share skills in which they feel more competent to add value. This will promote a sense of commitment which is essential for enhancement of parental engagement.

2.6 CONDITIONS CONDUCIVE TO ENHANCING PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

This section deals with the conditions appropriate for enhancing the successful implementation of the envisaged framework for parental engagement. These conditions serve to explain how the components discussed in 2.5 could be applied to enhance parental engagement, including establishment of a coordinating team, the sharing of a vision, conducting situational analysis, engaging in collaborative planning and reflecting on the plans made to evaluate its effectiveness.

2.6.1 Establishment of a coordinating team

The establishment of a coordinating team is critical in embracing the concept of democracy in education because parental engagement is a component of social justice, equity and quality education (Moles Jr. & Fege, 2011:5). This implies that as many people as possible, particularly those with an interest in education, should be involved in planning and advancing the educational interests of the child. In RSA the only structure that attempts to bring together these parties is the SGB, however, when it cannot focus on parental engagement it can rely on section 30 (1) (a) of SASA act no.86 of 1996 which empowers it to form sub-committees, to focus on enhancing parental engagement. Mestry and Grobler (2007:178) call for close collaboration between parents and teachers which can be realistically attained through team effort. In the USA this is different in that, besides establishing the School Community Councils as mandated by law (Moles Jr. & Fege, 2011:17), there are other school-based parent-teacher committees whose sole purpose is to enhance partnerships between parents and teachers.

For instance, the Individuals working with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) stipulates that parents of learners with disabilities should work with teachers as equal partners in a team to advance their educational needs (Patrikakou, 2011:131). That parents and teachers should work as equal partners in a team levels the power imbalances that divide the two and also undermines the efforts of parents.

The establishment of a coordinating team and its role permeates all levels of planning, implementing and evaluating of efforts geared towards the engagement of parents in school activities (Sanders, 2011:143). Without the existence of a coordinating team there will be policies and programmes at school to coordinate and guide any efforts to engage parents (Moles Jr. & Fege, 2011:8). This team also ensures that the annual parental engagement plan is in line with the other school-wide plans to achieve overall school effectiveness (Sheldon, 2011:100). This team has been shown to play a significant role in engaging minority parents in the USA (Paik, 2011:123), even when legal structures such as the parent advisory councils did not achieve any success (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001:123).

In Zimbabwe, the parents and teachers teamed up in committees to advance the educational needs of children with special education in schools. A similar committee that was also established to lead the Better Schools Programme in Zimbabwe (BSPZ) coordinated the efforts of various stakeholders with interest in education to bring about school improvement (Chikoko, 2007:43). The BSPZ continued to exist beyond the donor period as a result of the efforts of team members who formed the coordinating team to drive the process. The Nigerian situation indicates that engagement of parents in school committees is crucial in creating a strong and warm home-school relationship (Ajayi et al., 2009:44). Therefore, the existence of a coordinating team enables parents and teachers to share the responsibilities of teaching their children with teachers. It also creates a communicative space for expressing the views of all stakeholders as equal partners (Bolton, 2005:1; Mahlomaholo & Netshandama, 2012). This platform is important to strengthen the relationship between parents and teachers (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001:124).

2.6.2 Sharing vision to develop close relationships between parents and teachers

All countries in the study urge the development of close relationships between parents and school as a condition for enhancing parental engagement (Ajayi et al., 2009:42 Mestry & Grobler, 2007:177; Moles Jr. & Fege, 2011; Mudekunye & Ndamba, 2011:10). In RSA, for instance, the idea of establishing warm relationships is regulated by section 4 of the South African Council for Educators' Code of Conduct (RSA, 2000:4-10), which recognises parents as partners in the education of their children and the provisions section 4(m) of the National Education Policy Act (RSA, 1996:1-4) which calls for broad public participation in education. The provisions of these two Acts and the practises of the departmental officials at the district and provincial level serve to stimulate good relationships between school and parents. One can therefore say that working together with parents is not only voluntary but also a mandatory requirement on the side of the schools. The reason for this could be to democratise an education system wherein for many years parents were not recognised as worthy partners (Pushor & Ruitenberg, 2011). According to Heystek (2004:111), the school and parents should work closely, share similar norms, values and vision for their school so that all learners can benefit. Through partnerships, parents, teachers and other stakeholders share a common vision which ensures that parental engagement is increased to benefit all learners (Moles Jr. & Fege, 2011:9).

In the USA the federal government (Moles Jr. & Fege, 2011:6) ensures that the local school districts provide opportunities for parents to work with schools that serve them and their children (Patrikakou, 2011:132). Through vision sharing the parents and teachers share ownership and accountability for the learners' performance (Blank, 2011:47). The intervention of the districts also serves to enhance good relationships between the school and parents, thus the teachers (Mudekunye & Ndamba, 2011:10) can learn to handle the children in a better way. Establishing good relationships breeds the spirit of collaboration, cooperation and trust, and can help compensate for limited family resources (Ademola & Olajumoke, 2009:458). In the same vein, Chikoko (2007:45) states that parents should be treated as full partners in education in order to contribute positively. As

teachers and parents interact either formally or informally they can learn about other resources that are available either at school or in the community that they can use to enhance the quality of their children's education.

Henderson and Redding (2011:108) believe that establishing cordial relationships between the school and the parents depends on training provided to staff. They stress that staff members should be trained to treat all parents with courtesy and respect (Moles Jr & Fege, 2011:7). This is reciprocal and breeds team-spirit among teachers and parents, but conversely, an absence of a harmonious relationship between school and parents will close avenues for parents to play a role in the education of their children (Mncube, 2010:235). Exclusion also threatens and erodes parental engagement in school activities and pulls apart the two parties, with negative consequences for the learners.

2.6.3 Clear separation of roles

There should be an analysis of the **strengths** and **weaknesses** in terms of those things that parents can do to assist the teachers in teaching (Paik, 2011:123). Parents expect to play a certain role in school as indication of advancing the educational interest of the children. The school as a learning environment has certain roles to play in enhancing the learners' development. If the two parties cannot clarify their roles there will be confusion and ultimately conflict (Brown & Duku, 2008:435). Section 16 (1),(3) of SASA (RSA, 1996:2A-15) makes a distinction between **governance** and **professional development**, stating that governance (policymaking, adoption and implementation) is the responsibility of the parents through the SGB. On the other hand, professional management rests with the SMT. When roles between the parents and the teachers are clearly defined and outlined role-confusion can be minimised (Mestry & Grobler, 2007:178). Clear separation of roles makes it possible for the two parties to interact as partners in that the possible obstacles that prevent this interaction are identified (Paik, 2011:123).

In Nigeria, Ajayi et al. (2009:42) found that effective school management could be hampered if the PTA does not perform its function of leading ordinary parents to play their respective roles as expected. This means that there should be clear

lines of function so that unnecessary conflict does not arise. Prescripts and the training provided by the principal and department of education make it possible to enhance parental engagement, in which each party plays its role without encroaching on the other's territory, and also supports one another in the performance of its roles. Zimbabwe (Chikoko, 2007:53) regards the SDCs as full partners in school management rather than just being providers of physical infrastructure of the school. This will ensure that unnecessary conflicts are prevented.

2.6.4 Planning effective communication to enhance parental engagement

Parental engagement should be thoroughly planned, purposeful and focused so that the learners can derive maximum benefits. There was commonality in all countries of study regarding effective communication bringing parents and teachers closer to address the learners' needs (Ademola & Olajumoke, 2009:458; Mestry & Grobler, 2007:178; Moles Jr. & Fege, 2011:10; Redding, 2011:17). Therefore, there should be **action plans** regarding the issues to be communicated to parents, how they should be communicated and how often (Sheldon, 2011:100). This communication planning should be with parents in order to ensure equitable power sharing between them and teachers (Lemmer, 2012:86). According to Patrikakou (2011:131), the engagement of parents needs proper **planning, resources** and should be **time-bound** regarding the learners' performance. This action planning is important in that it helps to coordinate the school-community interaction and ensure that barriers to effective parental engagement are addressed (Bermudez & Marquez, 1996:7; Paik, 2011:123). According to Redding (2011:19), effective two-way communication between the teachers and parents can be planned in the following ways.

2.6.4.1 Home gatherings

The focus of home gatherings should be twofold, namely, to improve the learners' performance and to enhance parent-teacher partnership (Sheldon, 2011:100). Here the teacher visits the child's home to talk to the parents and other parents who are residing nearby. The teacher shares his/her knowledge of how learners

are taught at school, how they learn and how to inculcate study skills in them so that they can learn better and make progress in their studies. This is done so that parents and teachers can share accountability and ownership for learners' performance (Blank, 2011:47). This is done with the hope that it will benefit not only the parents but also their children. An informed parent can contribute positively to the success of the school.

2.6.4.2 Home visits

Home visits should be carried out by trained teachers or community volunteers. The purpose is to convey a message from the principal to the parents, especially those who when called to school do not show up. It begins with a letter from the principal, introducing those who are sent and explaining the purpose of their visit. The aim of home visits is to reach out to parents, especially those who are unable to come to school or have issues against the school that make them not to attend school meetings as a result. If done by trained community volunteers it can save the teachers' time in which they can concentrate on other issues.

2.6.4.3 Teacher-parent conference

Parent-teacher conferences (Paik, 2011:123; Redding, 2011:19) are a standard in well performing school, held once or twice a year to look at the various programmes aimed at enriching the learners' education. They provide teachers and parents with a platform to discuss the performance of the learners (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001:122; Wells,2009:10). Such conferences can sometimes be led by learners who share their views about the role that both parents and teachers play in their lives. Based on what learners have said the parents and teachers can then initiate their discussions.

2.6.4.4 School meetings

According to Moles Jr. and Fege (2011:7; Paik, 2011:123), meetings provide a platform for parents to interact with teachers on a range of issues affecting their children (Wells, 2009:10). Meetings should not be tense or intimidating as parents would shy away from asking questions or making comments. In RSA, Mncube (2010:23) and the USA, Moles, Jr. and Fege (2011:6) state that communication between parents and the school should be conducted in the language that parents know well as this will increase their understanding of the issues being discussed, which is a necessary step for implementation of decisions taken.

Zimbabwe and Nigeria emphasise close relationships between parents and teachers as a condition for enhancing parental engagement (Ajayi et al., 2009:42; Mudekunye & Ndamba, 2011:10). The close relationship between parents and teachers can only happen in an atmosphere that promotes free and regular communication and mutual respect, and in which teachers and parents work as partners to promote the learners' interests.

2.6.5 Providing training to parents

For parents and teachers to work together there should be capacity building (Henderson & Redding, 2011:105; Moles, Jr. & Fege, 2011:10; van Voorhis, 2011:110) so that they can work together as a team. The authors argue that there are teachers who harbour negative attitudes against parents and who do not know how to reach out to parents (Reynolds, 2010:5), which is necessary because parental engagement is a component of social justice, equity and quality education (Moles, Jr. & Fege, 2011:5). An informed parent is a better and more productive member with whom each school would like to identify. The better educated parent is one who becomes involved in school matters.

According to Boyd and Crowson (1993:36), the teachers should "reach out into the community in an attempt to strengthen the social capital available to children." This is corroborated by Mncube (2007:137), who writes that providing training to parents in RSA is mandatory according to section19 of SASA No. 84 (RSA,

1996:2A-16). The schools need to work together with the departmental officials to provide training to the parents so that they can engage in their children's education. In the USA, providing training to parents (Jasso, 2007:14; McDermott & Rothenberg, 2000:2; Sheley, 2011:158) brings about parental empowerment that makes a difference in the children's education. They found that parents who attended literacy classes every Friday became empowered and contributed meaningfully to their children's education. The empowered parents are able to mobilise the necessary resources to facilitate learning at school and home. According to Jasso (2007:14), resources are very important because they augment the parents' good intentions in a practical way.

Both Zimbabwe (Chikoko, 2007:53) and Nigeria (Ademola & Olajumoke, 2009:463) also stress the importance of training the parents. One principal in a study by Chikoko (2007:53) stated categorically that parents are important role players in education, but they need to be thoroughly trained to play a useful role. When parents are well trained to assist their children with schoolwork, proper relationships with the teachers can be developed. In Nigeria (Adeyemo, n.d.:175), recommends that parents be consistently trained in parenting skills until they are able to add value to their children's education. Empowered parents develop a sense of self-efficacy which is necessary for enhancing parental engagement in assisting children with school work.

2.6.6 Evaluation and monitoring of plans to enhance parental engagement

The coordinating team should evaluate and monitor plans geared towards enhancement of parental engagement for their effectiveness. According to Sheldon (2011:100), such **evaluation** and **monitoring** should be on an annual basis, and will help to identify the **strengths** and **weaknesses** as well as demonstrate outcomes of the activities. If plans and programmes are not evaluated and monitored it would be difficult to track progress and provide feedback (Sanders, 2011:142; Sheldon, 2011:100). Through evaluation and monitoring the data on community assets that support teaching and learning can be accessed (Blank, 2011:47; Weiss & Lopez, 2011:23).

Evaluation and monitoring ensures that there is accountability of both the teachers and parents regarding the learners' progress (Paik, 2011:123). It also ensures that quality and effectiveness are achieved in terms of the activities that are employed to engage parents (Sanders, 2011:142). Without rigorous evaluation and monitoring it would be difficult to determine whether the said plans meet the expectations of enhancing parental engagement (Hoover-Dempsey, Walker, Jones & Reed, 2002:846). A regular evaluation of the plans for engaging parents will ensure that the required results are achieved and identify possible barriers to successful implementation of the envisaged framework.

2.7 THREATS THAT MAY HINDER PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

Although parents would like to engage in their children's education by working closely with their schools, there are factors, either external or internal, which impede such engagement. The former are deliberately imposed on the parents to gag and frustrate their full engagement by those who hold institutional power. These include, for instance, factors such as centring power around an individual leader, insufficient training, negative communication, lack of resources, lack of time, unresolved conflicts, language barrier, mass learner failure and lack of evaluation and monitoring programmes. On the other hand, the latter are those over which one has control, but because of circumstances, such as socio-economic and political conditions, is unable to, and thus prevent him/her from making a useful contribution. I begin, below, with the external factors that apply to the countries in the study and which impact negatively on the enhancement of parental engagement.

2.7.1 Centring power around an individual leader

Centring power around an individual leader means excluding others from making a useful contribution (Ajayi et al., 2009:42; Msila, 2012:304), which shows an imbalance of power between the parents and teachers in that parents are hindered from accessing information and contributing to challenges that affect

their children (Coleman & Earley, 2005:91; Warren, 2000:113). This is against the democratic principles of participation that enable the parents and community to take active part in mapping their own future (Schurink, 2010:491). There may be reasons for this type of leadership or doing things. According to Simon (2004:188), when parents are denied the right to participate in shaping the future of their children the school and the parents, as two spheres, move apart.

Mncube (2007:177) has found that some principals in KwaZulu-Natal have deliberately rendered the SGBs powerless by solely performing their functions. Some parents in RSA believe that they are not welcome in schools because of the treatment meted out against them (Mestry & Grobler, 2007:177). They indicate that there is animosity that some schools direct at them. People respond differently to unfriendly situations, with some who are unshaken, but others who when faced with such unfriendly situations step aside.

A consistently unfriendly atmosphere may frighten the parents and make them withdraw if no interventions are made. When principals usurp the powers of the SGB (RSA) or SDC (Zimbabwe) it could be the result of embezzlement (Chikoko, 2007:53) of school funds and not wanting this to be discovered. Ajayi et.al, (2009:42) and Haastrup and Alonge (2012:17) state that often principals are afraid to be criticised by parents for their wrongdoing. As a result of hiding information they no longer want to involve the PTA in school matters, which results in negative ways in that parents are no longer engaged in school programmes and are denied the opportunity to visit the school to check how their children are progressing with their studies (Ajayi et al., 2009:42). The principal alone is the centre of power and issues revolve around him/her. If the departmental officials at the district or provincial offices cannot intervene, this unfortunate situation will continue to dampen the spirit of the parents who want to contribute to their children's education.

In Zimbabwe, Mudekunye and Ndamba (2011:10) found that teachers ignore the role that parents play in the education of their children. This is corroborated by McDermott and Rothenberg (2000:2) and Moles Jr and Fege (2011:9), who found that some teachers in the USA still do not regard parents as worthy collaborators who can contribute to shaping the lives of their children. The teachers who have a

negative attitude towards the parents (Bouakazi & Persson, 2007:98; Hill & Taylor, 2004:163) make the parents, especially parents who are 'less- educated', doubt the role that they can play in their children's education. According to McDermott and Rothenberg (2000:2) these teachers still have a negative "we-them" attitude. They still view parents as a separate entity that should not be allowed to connect and interact with the school for the benefit of the learners.

In the USA, the N.C.L.B Act makes it compulsory for schools to work closely with the parents (Moles Jr. & Fege, 2011:8), however, if the departmental officials do not implement the provisions of this Act and schools continue to run it alone, parental engagement will over time remain an ideal while schools continue to provide insufficient training to parents to make sure that they are not fully empowered and thus easily manipulated.

2.7.2 Insufficient training

Providing insufficient training to parents is another factor that is deliberately allowed in order to continue to exploit them. To render the parents ineffective, uncomfortable and inadequate, insufficient training is often provided (Crozier, 2000:84). In RSA, Mestry and Grobler (2007:177) and Mncube (2010:242) found that parents lacked knowledge of how to engage usefully in their children's education because of their low level of education. Some parents lacked the parenting skills necessary for creating a supportive domestic environment, instead relying solely on the schools to provide them with such skills.

However, schools are either unable to provide parents with such skills or are deliberately seeing this as a waste of time. Some teachers might be aware of this gap but do not care. According to Mestry and Grobler (2007:177), some teachers lack proper knowledge of how to reach out to the parents. This lack of parental engagement makes teachers think that parents are not important. Hill and Taylor (2004:163) found that even though the legislation has been passed in the USA, some teachers ignore the importance of engaging the parents in the schools that serve their children. They suggest that the reason for this is that most of the teacher training institutions do not offer programmes on working with the parents,

implying that before parents can be blamed for non-engagement, one has to check the role that schools play in engaging them.

Schools, as organs of state, are empowered to work with the parents, so there should be programmes and action plans at the school to engage parents. In Nigeria, Ajayi et al. (2009:42) found that insufficient training or lack of it prevents the PTA from performing its expected functions. It is this insufficient training that suits those who deliberately exploit the parents, allowing them to be at the mercy of their exploiters. Insufficient training also prevents parents from holding teachers fully accountable for performing their duties. It causes parents to lack confidence in doing their work, resulting in their withdrawal from the SGB or other responsibilities assigned to them.

In Zimbabwe, Chikoko (2007:53) also found that the education department did not provide regular training to capacitate the school development committees (SDCs). As a result, some principals were forced to do the work that the SDCs should have been doing. This results in unnecessary pressure for those honest principals who found themselves doing the work of the SDC as well at their own.

2.7.3 Irregular and negative communication

Parents and teachers are supposed to communicate regularly in order to help learners achieve their educational goals. However, what is happening in reality contradicts this as the two parties do not communicate as expected because of a negative communication from the school (Mestry & Grobler, 2007:177; Chatmon et al., 2006:207). The enhancement of parental engagement, such as in the child's development, needs some nurturing in order to bear positive results because they are treated as adversaries rather than as assets (Mudekunye & Ndamba, 2011:10; Chatmon et al., 2006:207). Negative communication often frightens parents, even if they were willing to take part (Dumas et al., 2008:620). This applies especially to 'less-educated' parents who often view the school as right or who remain quiet.

In RSA, Mestry and Grobler (2007:178) found that the schools do not communicate effectively or frequently with the parents about the learners'

progress. This situation not only hampers the learners' progress but also affects the enhancement of parental engagement in a negative way. This is corroborated by Jasso (2007:11), who found that some schools in the USA create an unwelcoming environment that often discourages parental engagement. Poor communication in USA schools (McDermott & Rothenberg, 2000:2) results in 'low-intensity' letters and flyers, as well as little face-to-face interaction with the parents. If the education department does not stimulate positive communication between the school and the parents through the policies and practices of its officials, the parental support which is so much needed to advance the children's educational programme will not be realised.

2.7.4 Lack of resources

Parents are expected to help the school mobilise resources at home, school and in the community in order to enrich the quality of their children's education. When the school works together with the parents, more resources can be gathered to enhance the learners' development. The availability of resources can serve as a stimulus which motivates parents to work closely with the school, in order to realise the educational goals of the learners. However, the lack of resources from the parents in terms of transport to school meetings can undermine their engagement. According to Jasso (2007:10) and Chimedza (2009:125), parents often have to travel long distances to school meetings. Parents who do not have money for transport (Hill & Taylor, 2004:162) because they stay far from their schools only attend some school meetings. Mncube (2009:13) has found that parents are unable to attend school meetings in KwaZulu-Natal because meetings are often held in the evening and they do not have transport to travel at night. To those parents who do not have transport it becomes difficult to attend, especially in the light of a high crime rate. Parents are afraid of being mugged or even killed. The lack of resources makes it difficult for parents to attend meetings, even when they are important.

2.7.5 Lack of time

Teachers and parents play a significant role in enhancing learners' educational development, the two parties being expected to find time to discuss all educational issues that affect the learners' development both at school and home. It is expected that each party will avail itself in order to craft a developmental plan for the learners, however, the sharing of quality time between the two does not happen as expected because parents do not always find time to honour school meetings (Modisaotsile, 2012:3). They indicate that parents often complain about inconvenient meeting times (Koonce & Harper Jr, 2005:56), which hampers not only the child's progress but also that of both the parents and the school. When parents do not show up to school when invited they deny themselves the opportunity of lending their hand in the education of their children. The non-attendance of parents hampers the general growth and progress of the school which could have been shaped by their inputs had they attended.

Mmotlane et al. (2009:2) indicate that parents have to find time to take part in a series of activities, such as attending meetings, sporting activities and social events organised by the school. Du Plessis et al. (2007:129) state that as school activities require time and commitment it becomes difficult, especially for working parents. Some parents work far from home, leave early in the morning and finish work late, thus arriving home at night. Their hectic schedules sometimes do not give them time to attend school activities. Jasso (2007:13) found that American parents at times double up their work schedules in order to provide for their families. Some have labour-intensive jobs that make it difficult to attend school activities (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008:22).

According to Chimedza (2008:125), working parents in Zimbabwe are unable to fetch their children from school early as most are still at work. According to Mncube (2007:16), some schools organise meetings in the evening, which makes it difficult for parents to avail themselves because of lack of transport. However, the 'educated' parents are said to attend school meetings and are more likely to find time than 'less-educated' ones (Jasso, 2007:16; Mmotlane et al., 2009:2). The reason for this is that most of these parents are supervisors at their workplaces and can arrange to leave without being questioned.

Despite provisions in the section 16A (2) (b) of Basic Education Laws Amendment (BELAA) no.15 of 2011 regulating the sharing of time for meetings between the school and the parents, if the two continue not to interact regularly it will affect the learners' education negatively. Parental engagement can be hampered due to lack of time from the parents or the school regarding meetings with the parents as a waste of time for the teachers. It may be at an inconvenient time for the parents. The lack of time due to divorce, death of a family member or change in financial status of the family can result in the withdrawal of the parents from school activities (La Bahn, 1995:1). The unavailability of time to interaction may in the long run affect not only the educational programme of the child but also the parents and general performance of the school as a whole.

2.7.6 Language barrier

Language serves as a medium that connects two or more people. In an ideal situation it is expected that the message be delivered or conveyed in the language familiar to the sender and receiver, or the speaker and the listener. The importance of interaction between the two parties for the development of the learners cannot be overemphasised. In RSA, Mncube (2009:8) found that parents and teachers were unable to find one another because of the foreign language that teachers often use during SGB and parent meetings. A study conducted by Singh et al. (2004:304) also indicated that the use of foreign language serves as a barrier to effective communication and interaction between the parents and the school. According to Sanders (2008:288), school, parent and community partnerships are difficult when they do not share a language in which to discuss issues, such as the role that each has to play in the education of the children. Arias and Morillo-Campbell (2004:9) found that some immigrant parents in the USA find it difficult to interact with the schools because they do not understand English. The schools can overcome this by using the language that parents can understand.

The SASA (RSA, 1996:2A-8) gives the SGB the right to choose the language policy of the school, and the DoE through its circulars and workshops at district

and provincial level of involvement encourages the implementation of the language policy. However, if there is no follow-up or consistency in schools' communication with parents in the appropriate language, parental engagement will over time decline.

2.7.7 Unresolved conflicts

Owens (1991:245) defines 'conflict' as something that is inevitable, endemic and often legitimate, such that when two or more people gather there are likely to be divergent views, in this case between the schools and parents regarding the educational development of the child. These divergent views can lead to conflict if they take place regularly, and unresolved conflict may lead to parents and teachers not working together to advance the educational programme of the learners. Bouakazi and Persson (2007:98) found that teachers often feel threatened by an increase of parental influence in terms of how their children should be taught. In RSA, Brown and Duku (2008:432), Mestry and Grobler (2007:177) and Mncube (2007:135) found that unresolved conflicts among the SGB members, between teachers and parents, caused by role confusion, hamper the enhancement of parental engagement and also affect the learners' education negatively.

When parents and schools do not collaborate their authority and effectiveness will diminish (Hill & Taylor, 2004:163). According to Nyaba (2009:20), sometimes conflict between the school and parents arises as a result of parents who do not interpret the policies correctly. If no training is provided by the district or provincial education offices of education to schools and parents about resolving their difference harmoniously, in the long run parental engagement that is important for the learners' development will diminish. The unresolved conflicts, if not well managed, could affect the learners' performance, with serious consequences in that the community's investment will be lost. In such cases the learners' chances of succeeding in their studies may be compromised and this may also lead to poor learner performance.

2.7.8 Mass failure by learners

Parental engagement happens within a specific environment, shaping and being shaped by other factors (Chatmon et.al., 2006:206). If the environment is positive and the power relations are balanced between the parents and other role-players, parental engagement can be enhanced. Parental engagement, such as the learner's development, depends on the conditions that prevail at school and the regulations at the district, provincial and national level. This means that the parents and teachers should interact and support each other so that the learners' educational needs are addressed. It also implies that schools should do their work in order to encourage parents to voice their opinions, thus seeing the benefits of supporting their children (Hoover-Dempsey & Walker, 2002:5; Moles, Jr. & Fege, 2011:9).

For parents to support the schools they should be satisfied with the quality of education offered to their children. According to Ajayi et al. (2009:42) and Haastrup and Alonge (2012:18), the mass failure of learners in public schools in Nigeria has made some parents lose confidence in the public schools, a finding corroborated by Ademola and Olajumoke (2009:459) who state that some parents in Nigeria pay high fees at the private schools because they believe that such schools give better returns for their money. Catsambis (1998:3) shares this view that parents in the USA are also concerned about the learning opportunities that schools provide for their children. According to Gold, Simon and Brown (2005:241), urban public schools continue to fail to provide quality education to the children in that the pass rate continues to decline.

In RSA, Msila (2012:304) indicates that there is public dissatisfaction with the failure of schools to deliver quality education, which in turn leads to only a few ensuring that schools turn around their situations. This is supported by van den Berg (2011:30), who found that parents should complain about teacher quality, teacher effort and how little their children learn at school because learner performance has not improved significantly in most township schools. According to Modisaotsile (2012:4), teachers in township schools teach an average of 3.5 hours a day, compared with about 6.5 hours a day in former white schools. The failure by schools to deliver quality education to the learners diminishes the engagement

of parents which is critical for schools to bring about change to the community. The role that the teachers play inside the classroom is crucial in determining whether parents continue to support the school or withdraw such support. Wells (2009:10) writes that "if we can't teach students to read, we've lost both the child and the parent." There are concerns about the teachers' low qualifications in RSA contribute to low learner performance (Mahlomaholo, Francis & Nkoane, 2010:282; Mji & Makgato, 2006:254). In a study conducted by Barton et al. (2004:6) in the USA, a parent who nearly lost hope of seeing her hyperactive son progress in education because of the efforts of a dedicated teacher, reported that:

My son was… real hyperactive, always on the go, wouldn't stay still…Everybody was trying to get him drugged up so he could stay still, and Ms B. was the only teacher, ''He's a boy , he's a natural boy''. We're gonna do this and we're gonna do that and we're gonna get that boy where he needs to be. And she was dedicated. If he missed school, she called to find out why… Every Thursday night she had a family night, just for that classroom. That woman was dedicated.

If schools cannot do enough to assist the learners during school hours in such a way that parents see the difference in them, attracting a parental voice in education might prove difficult (Chatmon et al., 2006:207). The impact that teachers make in the learners' lives may determine whether or not the parents are engaged (Dewey, 1995:7). If the impact is positive parents will support the efforts of the school, but if negative parents may feel reluctant to support such schools and withdraw their children (Moles Jr. & Fege, 2011:8). According to Harris and Goodall (2007:2) and Desforges and Abouchaar (2003:5), parental engagement is positively linked to the performance of the learner. They indicate that the higher the learner achieves the more the parents become engaged. The reason for this is that most parents like to see their children doing well in life. However, this does not apply to all parents in all situations. There are instances of hardships that can motivate parents to work even harder in order to avoid its repetition.

According to Delgado (1989:238), telling stories about how one came to be oppressed can serve as a remedy to lessen one's oppression. The parents can tell stories of how their children experience teaching in the hands of the teachers, their failures and frustrations so that together they can find solution. As

collaboration among the parents increases they are likely to learn from one another and realise that the problem is not as insurmountable as they had thought (Goodall & Vorhaus, 2010:36; Jordan et al., 2002:18). The teachers need to be made aware that in as much as they would like to see parents engaging in their children's education they also need to maximise their efforts in providing quality education that every parent, irrespective of education level, can see.

In the USA, if schools fail the learners in great numbers parents withdraw their children and register them at another school (Moles Jr. & Fege, 2011:8). Unfortunately, this opportunity does not exist in African countries and the lack of quality education in proximity to the home leaves the parents with no choice. If the opportunity to switch schools existed it would make the schools accountable for their performance to the parents. The schools should inform the parents about the progress of their children and together with the parents find solutions to correct the situation in the event that the learners do not make progress. It would also make the schools realise that they cannot spend the investment of the parents at ransom, as parents are aware of what is happening in schools (Singh et al., 2004:304). This may also give the parents the opportunity to exercise their choice and make their voice heard. If parents withdraw their children from perennial underperforming schools, the consequences may be dire in terms of the revenue that schools receive according to the learner enrolled. This means that parental engagement can be enhanced if the conditions are positive. The engagement of the district intervention in ensuring that quality education is delivered is essential for sustaining parental engagement. If there is no progress made to drive the learners' performance higher, parents will stay away from schools. Conversely, when the schools produce good results parents will identify with them.

2.7.9 Lack of evaluation and monitoring

Parental engagement programmes require regular evaluation and monitoring in order to succeed, however the lack of these can pose a serious threat. A study by Moles Jr. and Fege (2011:6) found that programmes relating to parental engagement often fail because of lack of regular monitoring and evaluation,

therefore those who are tasked to carry them out should do so in order to enhance parental engagement, otherwise parents will be excluded (Rhim, 2011:100). The lack of regular evaluation and monitoring may fail to minimise the barriers that often hinder parents from engaging in their children's education.

2.7.10   Low level of formal schooling

The low level of formal education may act as a temporary or permanent impediment, depending on the barriers and the individual's willingness to overcome them. The level of formal schooling often determines the extent to which a person can contribute to the social and economic development of the learner (Singh et al., 2004:301). The lack of formal schooling is an internal factor because it is within one's own control to live with it or change it. Although it can be argued that repressive social and political conditions can be used to determine one's level of education it is something that one can reverse if opportunities are created.

The four countries in the study identified a low level of formal schooling among the parents as an obstacle to true and useful engagement (Mestry & Grobler, 2007:17; Yinusa & Basil, 2008:320; Chikoko, 2007:54; Jasso, 2007:16). Although many parents would like to assist, their low level of formal schooling stands between them and their wishes. They cannot reach out to their children and provide that needed assistance as expected. The lack of or low level of formal schooling sometimes provides a fertile ground for the elites who hold institutional power to manipulate the parents and advance their own selfish interests (Mncube, 2009:2). When parents do not have proper education it becomes difficult for them to perform their duties and responsibilities in school. In Nigeria and Zimbabwe it was found that the low formal schooling makes it difficult for the members of the PTA and SDCs to execute their tasks well (Ajayi et al., 2009:42; Chikoko, 2007:5).

In RSA, the adult basic education and training is provided free of charge as a strategy to eradicate illiteracy and address the skills shortage. According to MacDermott and Rottenberg (2000:2), parents were engaged in the education of their children through the provision of the literacy classes that were offered to parents every Friday. At the personal level it is the responsibility of every parent to

take a conscious decision to better his/her education, however, the intervention of the school in working collaboratively with the parents can assist them overcome their shortcomings through training opportunities and exposure. The intervention of the DoE both at district and provincial level is crucial in providing opportunities to the parents to improve their education.

2.7.11   Lack of parenting skills

There is a lack of family structure to support the learners' education in that parents are said to be neglecting their children (Bojuwoye, 2009:462). According to Simon (2004:192), good parenting entails three main areas of parental engagement. Firstly, parents have to know the career that the child intends to follow after high school education. This include familiarising themselves with the subjects that a child takes at school to see if that combination can help him/her to achieve his /her goal in life. This can be done by attending career exhibitions at school or in tertiary institutions with the child. The parent can know in advance the financial implications involved and therefore design a financial plan to assist the child to realise his/her educational career. Secondly, parenting requires that the parent should assist the child to make applications for admission to tertiary institutions to further his/her education after completing high school education. Showing keen interest in the child's future career and assisting the child every step of the way will enhance parenting skills. In the USA, schools are expected to expose parents to good parenting practices so that they can engage in the education of their children (Moles Jr. & Fege, 2011:7). Parenting skills can be learned through training provided and interaction opportunities among the parents. Thirdly, parenting includes assisting the child to make an application for employment after completing high school. This means that the parent should be knowledgeable about how to compile the curriculum vitae and prepare the child for job interviews. The availability of the policies at district and provincial level of intervention are crucial to ensure that schools help improve parenting skills.

2.8   EVIDENCE OF PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

There is enough evidence that parental engagement can be enhanced and sustained when the role of parents is recognised and appreciated. The schools should recognise the wealth of knowledge that parents can bring into the education of their children. Most parents, irrespective of their level of education, possess the aspirational and cultural capital which if well used could benefit the school in many ways (Yosso, 2005:77-81). A study by Burton et al. (2004:6) found that parents have an awareness of the hospitality that the school provides and will embrace it if this is extended to their children. In this study a parent was moved, inspired and overwhelmed by the training and interest which the teacher showed to the parents of hyperactive children. These children are often labelled as 'impossible' and deregistered from the mainstream. A teacher who devised an intervention and sacrificed her time to educate the parents won the support of parents who had nearly lost hope of seeing their children succeed in their studies.

Showing a keen interest, providing support and training can awaken the capital parents have for their children's education. By spending time in class learning, the parents were empowered to deal with their children in a better way. The skills that these parents acquired can be shared with other parents who have similar children, helping the skills base of the community grow and so aid survival. By showing interest in assisting the parents the teacher created an inviting space or environment for parents to enter the school landscape and position their voice. Positioning the voice of parents is crucial in order to balance the power relations between the parents and the school. When the power relations are balanced parents will feel free to enter the school and contribute to finding solutions to problems that perturb them.

A study conducted by Pushor and Ruitenberg (2005:20) also shows that parents can engage themselves in the school affairs if they are continuously invited to be part of the setup of the school. In this study the parents were invited to staff meetings and professional development sessions. Their study further emphasised an environment that promotes positive beliefs, hospitality and trust as key conditions for promoting and sustaining parental engagement (Pushor & Ruitenberg, 2005:23-45). This study further reveals that accommodating parents,

inviting them to school and welcoming them with a smile can foster a trusting relationship that is needed for enhancing parental engagement. If schools are serious about sustaining parental engagement there should be evidence that shows intention in how they deal with parents. In some schools one can hardly see the photographs of parents, even though schools claim to be friendly towards them. The school space should cater for parents' activities so that they can see themselves as part of the school landscape. The parents who contribute to the success of the school should have their photographs displayed in order to position their voice in school. This can work as a strategy to attract other parents. In the end it can be said that it does not matter what educational level parents have. As long as they are invited and capacitated properly the school and the learners can benefit.

2.9 CONCLUSION

Based on the lessons learnt from this chapter, one can conclude that parental engagement is a global problem that confronts both developed and developing countries. These countries experience more or less similar problems, however, what differs is how they respond to challenges of parental engagement. The developing countries put more emphasis on governance issues, in keeping with the principles of democracy to improve representation on the governing councils. The developed countries tend to focus on the engagement of parents in the curriculum issues in order to improve parental skills and so assist the learners.

CER, with its objectives of social justice, democracy, peace, respect and hope is the most relevant theoretical paradigm for reawakening the parental capital in South African township schools so that the voice of the parents can be heard in the decisions that affect the education of their children. Through its objectives CER can help the parents to appreciate their role in the education of their children and thus avoid self-condemnation for not being educated. It can also be stated that all parents, irrespective of their level of education, have the aspirational, social and familial capitals which if blended with the teachers' knowledge base can benefit the learners and the school in general.

Sustaining parental engagement cannot be achieved if the whole community is not mobilised to support the efforts of the teachers and the parents. The community should not only provide support but also hold the school accountable for sustaining parental engagement. This can contribute to better learner performance and improved school effectiveness, and provides teachers and parents with the opportunity to learn how to deal with each other. Parental engagement is influenced by other factors, such as the parental capital, the environment in which it takes place, and the attitude of those who possess institutional power. Proper training and the high level of parental education can help enhance and sustain parental engagement. The higher the level of parental education the better the chance that engagement will improve and also demand answers for quality education from school. Poor parental engagement can be overcome if opportunities are provided to enhance the knowledge base of the parents. The schools need to work with the parents as partners and provide hospitality for them in order for them to feel free to visit the school at any time.

This study affords a unique opportunity to address challenges associated with parental engagement. This is achieved by developing a framework that is based on the principles of sustainable learning environments (SULE). The principles of SULE focus on the real life needs and problems of the leaners and the community and take cognisant of their social backgrounds. Critical emancipatory research couches the development of the parental engagement framework, and guides the use of conceptual theories like constructivist and cognitive learning theories. These are subsequently operationalized through the use of the principles of participatory action research.

The next chapter will deal with methodology and shed light on how these partnerships were achieved between the research participants and the researcher.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

FOR PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

3.1   INTRODUCTION

This study is about the design of a framework to enhance parental engagement in their children's education in order to enhance school effectiveness. In this chapter the research design and methodology that are suitable for engaging parents in the education of their children are presented. To achieve this, participatory action research (PAR) was used to gather data from the diverse experiences and knowledge of the participants. This was relevant to the study as it embodied the principles of CER that promote a social construction of knowledge through inclusion, engagement instead of involvement, empowerment, and emancipation of the participants. The data was collected using the principles of Meulenberg-Buskens' free attitude interview (FAI) as a technique and analysed using critical discourse analysis (CDA) as espoused by Van Dijk. These were employed in a manner that gave the participants a voice on how parental engagement could be sustained. The coordinating team that spearheaded the study, their profiles, roles and responsibilities as research participants, and the reasons for their inclusion in the study are also explained. A comprehensive plan for data gathering, the types of data gathered and the instruments used to gather it are discussed. Finally, the chapter presents the method for data analysis and draws conclusions.

3.2   THE RELEVANCE OF PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

The study adopted PAR as methodology in order to fathom parental engagement in a better way. Participatory action research is an approach used in the social sciences to address complex social issues (Eruera, 2010:1). This is relevant to the study in that parental engagement is a human and social issue that happens within a specific context and it influences or is influenced by other factors (Barton,

et al., 2004:6). We chose PAR because it recognises that knowledge is socially based (Hawkins, 2008:2) and that it should be co-constructed with the participants to ensure that parental engagement remains a participatory process of involving multiple role-players. In this study the coordinating team looked at parental engagement at the school with a view to understanding its impact on learner performance and general school effectiveness. PAR was relevant because it studies power relations with the purpose of teaching the participants to understand power abuse (Dworski-Riggs & Langhout, 2010:215). The coordinating team used PAR to educate the parents about how those who hold institutional power could sometimes abuse it to further their selfish interests and thereby deny parents any voice in the education of their children. The hierarchical structure of the school often ensures that only select individuals take part and have authority to make decisions. The PAR was used because it allows for participation, action and reflection (Eruera, 2010:1). Swantz (2008:33) believed that PAR should be considered the best research method in that:

While the traditional research methods take the people as objects of research, ours took them as actors, in fact as the stars of the whole process. This was a revolution in itself. Despite the problems, the method whereby researchers stay and work with the local people is the best one, as besides bringing youth of different educational levels together, it also gives the local people opportunities for learning from the researchers… At the same time we learned a lot from the local people. People talk freely with people with whom they are acquainted.

PAR is relevant for this type of the study in that it helps to advance the objectives of CER in recognising the parents as speaking beings who should be given a platform to relate their stories and experiences (Kemmis, 2008:127). This is necessary in order to remedy the power inequities between the parents and teachers (Gaventa & Cornwall, 2008:173). Unlike the positivistic approaches, which do not give voice to the participants and which treat them as subjects, PAR recognises the importance of participants in co-constructing knowledge. It also allows for interactive learning between the participants and the researcher (Swantz, 2008:33), and recognises that they as parents can contribute to knowledge construction despite their position of 'power,' which is often regarded

as inadequate. Because the local people are given the opportunity to indicate their problems, they can be relevant to suggest the solutions to the identified problems in the sense that they will inform the researchers about what will best address their problems (Martin, 2008:397; von Maltzahn & van der Riet, 2006:111). This will ensure that the solutions found are tailored to address the local problems of the parents.

The coordinating team members were allowed to play a full part in the study and reflect on their engagement at the identified schools with a view to correct their situation. This was in line with PAR, as it allows the participants to be co-researchers and play a central role in the research process..

Together with the coordinating team we employed the PAR aspects of brainstorming, group activities and individual exercises as part of taking action and ensuring full participation of all the participants to identify and review the need, components, conditions, threats and evidence for parental engagement at the identified schools (Eruera, 2010:3). PAR was relevant because it allows for open communication so that participants can talk about their situation (Kemmis, 2008:127). By creating a platform for the participants to talk about their problems, the coordinating team opened a communicative space for them to express their views respectfully and suggest possible solutions to overcome the social injustices that restrict them from achieving full parental engagement (Bolton, 2005:1; Hickling-Hudson, 2006:3; Skollernhorn, 1998:557).

We maintained a free flowing communication among the coordinating team members in order to promote inclusiveness and the spirit of teamwork. After identifying the abovementioned aspects of parental engagement, the coordinating team members were to think critically about the objectives of the study regarding parental engagement at their schools. During the following meeting the coordinating team members prioritised the identified constructs in a grid according to SWOT analysis (see annexure P1) in terms of how they affected their schools.

3.3   DESIGN

The design consisted of the conceptualisation, profiling of schools, the establishment of the coordinating team and the roles and tasks that were performed by the participants to implement the study plan.

3.3.1   Study conceptualisation

The idea of the study came into being as a result of a continuous decline in learners' performance at matric level at the participating schools over three years. According to Eruera (2010:3), PAR begins with the identification of a problem and thereafter a community that has raised it is motivated to address it. I then developed an interest in what lay behind, which led me to interact with the principals of the affected schools. During my interaction we observed that the non-engagement of parents in the education at their schools might have been one of the factors which contributed to the decline of the learners' performance (Schurink, 2010:491).

 After internalising the issue I realised that a solution could be found to transform the situation (Mahlomaholo & Netshandama, 2012:42). We then formalised my discussions with the principals of the affected schools and their SGBs. Once permission had been sought and granted to conduct the research study by the DoE, I interacted with the principals of the identified schools and their SGBs to promote the idea of a research study at their schools (see annexure P1). It was important to introduce myself and give the SGBs a background to my study as a way of establishing rapport and trusting relationship with the participating schools (MacMillan & Schumacher, 1997:402). This paved the way for the study to be undertaken in the knowledge that I had the support of the key stakeholders of the schools.

3.3.2   Profiling of schools involved

The two schools had been producing good results at matric/grade 12 but had been experiencing a decline over the previous three years. Matsieng school began with grades 10 to 12, with a total enrolment of 1,200 learners and a teaching staff of 54. It had experienced a downward spiral in its matric results from

2009 (73.7 %), 2010 (68.4%) to 2011(51.8%). At the end of 2012 the results at grade 12 improved to 69.8%. At the time of this study, Matsieng did not have a full complement of parents in the SGB but rather five instead of nine. As a result, parents were not represented on the Finance, Disciplinary or Curriculum Committees of the SGB. Nor were they engaged in the processes of the School Planning Committee, or school activities such as supervision of learners during sports days, afternoon study sessions or voluntary services with the school physical infrastructure maintenance and care.

Sediba school also began with grades 10 to 12. The learner population was 824 at the time of this study, and a staff complement of 37. This school had also experienced a sharp decline in matric results from 2009 (50%), 2010 (38%), to 2011 (47%) over a similar period of three years. At the end of 2012 the results improved to 59.5%. The parents of Sediba learners were not sufficiently engaged in the educational affairs of the school. For instance, the SGB did not operate with the full parent component, nor were they engaged in the Fundraising Committee, post-secondary school planning, Curriculum Committee, or Disciplinary and School Development Planning Committee. These schools were chosen because they wanted to find out the role that parents could play in this regard and also they were near my work station as an official of the DoE in the Free State Province (FS) and my place of residence.

3.3.3 Establishment of a coordinating team

PAR facilitates the establishment of a structure to allow people to deal with the issues that prevent them from making proper contributions and living a fulfilling life (Dworski-Riggs & Langhout, 2010:216; Ehlers & Lazenby, 2010:5; Hara & Burke, 1998:11). The coordinating team was established through the process of consultation, and negotiations, starting with the initial one-to-one discussions with the principals of the affected schools, the religious leaders, the municipal leaders and eventually with the parents who were democratically chosen at a parents' meeting and supported by other parents to represent them. Their willingness to participate ensured that research was conducted *with* them rather than *on* them,

and that solutions found addressed their real challenges. This was crucial in order to accord the participants the respect they deserved (Beylefeld, Bitzer & Hay, 2007:153).

According to Wheeler (2001:101), PAR allows people to generate solutions to their problems. The coordinating team offered parents, teachers and other community stakeholders a communicative platform on which to explore the best ways to make parents engage usefully in their children's education (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001:124; Lavedenz & Armas, 2012:102; Mahlomaholo & Netshandama, 2012:37; Skollerhorn, 1998:557). This was a way of closing the gap between the parents and teachers and of remedying the power inequities through the process of knowledge production by all stakeholders (Gaventa & Cornwall, 2008:173). This contradictory communicative space also created the opportunities for the researcher and the participants to learn from one another (Martin, 2008:396). This mutual learning process was essential in order to give us confidence to confront our challenges of poor parental engagement at the participating schools. The coordinating team members were selected on the basis of the knowledge and skills that they were likely to bring to the team as co-researchers (Schurink, 2010:490). This enhanced the diversity of opinion which was needed to enrich the debate and ensure that no uniform solution was prescribed for parents (Hickling-Hudson, 2006:3; von Maltzahn & van der Riet, 2006:113). It also ensured that the voice and engagement of parents become part of the solutions to their problems (Gaventa & Cornwall, 2008:173; Kemmis, 2006:460; Pushor & Ruitenberg, 2005:). The purpose of establishing a coordinating team was to align the activities of the different stakeholders and ensure that all members shared the same vision for the study (Ehlers & Lazenby, 2010:69; Huffman, 2003:22; Moles Jr.& Fege, 2011:9). This was necessary to ensure that the power relations were well balanced and that members respected one another so the product of the study would be sustainable. The formation of the team was also crucial for enhancing the spirit of collegiality necessary to reduce aloofness and possible conflicts that could tear the team apart (Ehlers & Lazenby, 2010:6).

The coordinating team was responsible for initiating analysis of the situation at the participating schools, draw up planning and guiding it to include inputs from all

stakeholders so that implementation thereof could be successful and sustainable (Ehlers & Lazenby, 2010:6; Hara & Burke, 1998:10; Nordqvist & Melin, 2008:326; Sanders, 2011:143; Sheldon, 2011:100). Furthermore, the coordinating team had to identify the resources, set timeframes and conduct reviews to evaluate progress made (Michigan Department of Education, 2011:63; Paik, 2011:123; Sanders, 2011:143). According to Mapp (2011:8), parents are full partners in their children's education and therefore should be allowed to form part of the committees that make decisions at school. This means that the existence of a representative coordinating team would thematise power imbalances between the parents and teachers and thus bring about hope, inclusion, mutual respect, peace and social justice (Eruera, 2010:1; Mahlomaholo & Netshandama, 2012:37; Moles Jr. & Fege, 2011:7). Furthermore, the representativeness of the team also ensured that the study obtained the support of the key community stakeholders required to be sustainable. It also ensured that the community was mobilised to support its schools and view them as investment centres for the future of their children. Once chosen, the purpose of the study, the ethical considerations and other rules deemed necessary for the success of the study were explained and each member signed the consent forms (see annexures C2, C3, C4, C5). This was necessary in order to ensure free participation of participants into the study so that sustainability could be achieved. It would not have made any sense to include people who were not committed to participate for the duration of the study, otherwise it would not have been successful (Prew, 2009:828).

According to Lodico, Spaulding and Voegtle (2010:18), researchers have to uphold the ethical considerations of conducting research. They argue that the participants' rights should not be ignored and they should be given all the necessary information relating to the research study. This means that participants should have a clear understanding of what their roles will be as well as their right to withdraw from the study. The participants were therefore informed of the purpose of the study, their right to withdraw, issues of confidentiality and anonymity, as well as the information that they should provide to the coordinating team. This was to show them that they were and will be valued and respected. The ethical considerations were explained so that harmonious relationships and trust between the researcher and the participants could be engendered. The

participants voluntarily filled the consent forms to show commitment to the study. Together with the participants we formed the coordinating team to take the study forward with everybody playing his/her roles and taking responsibility.

3.3.4 Profiling of coordinating team members

This section explains the manner in which data was gathered and analysed to make sense of the problem of parental engagement at the participating schools. The study consisted of participants who were drawn from different sectors of society and professions. The common factor that united these participants was their willingness to participate freely in the study (Seidman, 1991), as there was nothing to be gained from trying to persuade a reluctant participant to become involved in the study. That they came from different sectors of society was a positive factor in terms of sharing their experiences and complementing one another. The participants were drawn from four categories, namely, the teachers, who were in charge of school management (SMTs); the political/municipal leaders, who were in charge of the wards or locality in which the participating schools were situated; the religious/faith leaders, who operated in the vicinity of the participating schools; and the parents, who were not necessarily members of the SGBs. These participants were included in the study on the basis of their willingness to learn and contribute their ideas on parental engagement.

3.3.4.1   School Management Team members

The SMT members had knowledge of and experience in dealing with parents. All had been in the SMT for more than five years and could provide critical information (Miller & Crabtree, 1992) about parental engagement. Their inclusion made a difference in terms of ensuring that what was learnt would be implemented. They were valued and trusted as school leaders and therefore contributed positively to the study. They also served as liaison between the school and the community. They had been working at the same schools for more than five years and therefore seemed to know and understand the community, its

culture and its leaders well. They provided contacts in terms of the religious and municipal leaders in their locality. The inclusion of SMTs helped the coordinating team to know the nature and extent of non-engagement of parents in a school situation. They also ensured that there was accommodation for the coordinating team to hold meetings and workshops as well as helping to action all the plans of the coordinating structure. Through their engagement, the policy changes relating to parental engagement were shared with the SGBs and other parents during parents meetings. Their inclusion in the study helped to popularise it to the staff members and learners as well as the parents.

3.3.4.2   *Municipal leaders*

The municipal leaders were elected community representatives who were revered by community members because of their leadership skills and ability to persuade people. Their inclusion in the study helped to mobilise the community to look after its schools and to invest in education as a way of making sure that no child of school-going age was left behind. They also played a significant role in helping to establish parental 'cells' in each street or zone (a zone could be made up of two or three streets) and whose primary aim would be to advance the educational interests of the people residing in that zone. Their inclusion in the study mobilised the community members into a school situation (Shirley, 1997:76). In this way the community could look after itself. As elected public representatives they needed to work closely with the schools through their education desks. They also provided political intervention to assist the school with resources that parents sometimes found difficult to provide, such as mobilising the parents to form a *letsema* or campaign to clean the school. They also talked to community members to make sure that no vandalism or theft of school property occurred.

3.3.4.3   Religious Leaders

The religious leaders played a key role in mobilising the community around issues of faith and morality. Their inclusion in the study helped to enhance its credibility by ensuring that parents were empowered to make proper decisions regarding the education of their children. They motivated the parents to ensure their obligations of providing support for their children's welfare, including their educational needs. Besides dealing with parents in churches, the religious leaders also dealt directly with the learners and thus helped to instil discipline and proper values which are a recipe for the learners to succeed at school. Their presence added value in terms of their motivational programmes that strengthened both the parents and the teachers in encouraging discipline and hard work amongst the learners. They were also asked to deal directly with the learners by providing counselling and pastoral care to the child-headed families as well as linking the parents with welfare and other professional bodies that could offer the required services.

3.3.4.4   Parents

The parents are the 'financial muscle' of the school. Their contributions to fund-raising and other activities provide schools with financial capital that is highly needed (Caldwell, 2008:1) to achieve their mission of educating the children. There is sufficient evidence that parents play a more useful role in inspiring the children to learn and achieve (Mudekunye & Ndamba, 2011:10; Oludipe, 2009:95; Pushor, 2007:3). Their inclusion in the study provided them with a platform to speak for themselves (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001:124), which was necessary in order to deal with the misconceptions that they were not lacking of any capital in contributing towards the development of the learners. Their inclusion also helped to balance the power relations between them and the teachers. The parents who were participants were not members of the SGBs but just ordinary parents who happened to have children at the participating schools.

None of these parents, except one, had a post-matric qualification, but they all had one thing in common, namely a desire to see their children doing well at these schools and in life, despite not themselves being formally educated. They came from low socio-economic backgrounds and some were not employed, thus having

no other means to generate income. Their inclusion in the study was crucial as they would strengthen the hands of the SGBs in mobilising other parents to engage effectively in the education of their children. It also strengthened the relationships between the parents and teachers as well as between the school and community in general. Their inclusion was critical in making the community aware about what was going at school. They also served as the resource team that the SGBs could rely on to educate other parents about the role of parents during parents meetings, thus debunking the myth that only teachers can provide knowledge about learning (Pushor, 2007:3).

3.3.4.5   The researcher

The researcher was an official of the Free State Department of Education responsible for school management and governance development, a post held for more than 11 years. His other duties included providing guidance and training to the teachers, SMTs, SGBs and RCLs about issues of curriculum management and implementation, financial management, human resources, safety issues, evaluation of school principals and liaison with teacher unions and community-based organisations. The extent of the engagement in this regard was not limited to the sub-district in which he operates, but included an entire education district that covers other towns in which he is deployed. The researcher had experience of diverse parental engagement, which added value to the study.

He also participated in other community structures as a leader and as a member of various organisations that dealt with parents, such as churches, politics, farming and parental associations. The researcher had been inspired by what he usually saw when interacting with various schools in which parents were often not regarded as worthy partners.

3.3.5 Roles and responsibilities

It is crucial that members of the team know their roles and responsibilities (Prew, 2009:828). They should execute their tasks and responsibilities with commitment and precision (Sharratt & Fullan, 2005:12), as this helps address inherent power-

related struggles and enhances achievement of set objectives. The participants' roles and responsibilities are discussed as follows.

3.3.5.1   School Management Team

The main responsibility of the SMT members included the following: to sensitise the staff members and learners about the study; to enable the coordinating team members to access pertinent information; and to provide management and leadership where necessary (Miller & Crabtree, 1992). The inclusion of the SMT members in the coordinating team ensured that the study made a difference in terms of ensuring that what was learnt was implemented. They also served as liaison between the school and the community. The SMTs also ensured that there was accommodation for the coordinating team to hold meetings and workshops as well as helping to put into action the plans of the study. Furthermore, the SMT members availed their skills and knowledge during the processes of planning and development of policy for parental engagement. They also served as the resource-base for the SGBs in dealing with parental engagement activities. Therefore, their inclusion helped the study to achieve its objectives.

3.3.5.2   Municipal Leaders

These were elected community representatives who were revered by community members because of their leadership skills and ability to persuade them. They helped to mobilise the community to look after its schools and to invest in education as a way of making sure that no child of school-going age was left behind (Chikoko, 2007:53). The inclusion of municipal leaders also helped to hold schools accountable for their performance (Gordon, 2010:31; Moles Jr & Fege, 2011). This they did through their ward meetings during which they also sensitised the parents to their rights to access to information regarding the school's performance. They also played a significant role in helping to establish parental "cells" in each street or zone (a zone could be made up of two or three streets),

the primary aim of which was to advance the educational interests of the people residing in it. In this way the community could look after itself.

As elected public representatives they worked closely with the schools through their education desks and provided political intervention to assist the schools with resources that parents sometimes found it difficult to provide. These they achieved through activities such as mobilising the parents to form the *letsema* or campaign to clean the school, especially at the beginning of the school year or when the need arose. They also talked to community members to make sure that no vandalism or theft of school property was allowed. They liaised between the schools and the taverns that sold alcoholic beverages to learners. Their inclusion in the study was crucial in that they shared power with other school stakeholders to raise the consciousness of parents and community in general about their basic obligations of supporting their children (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001:122).

3.3.5.3   Religious leaders

The religious leaders played a key role in mobilising the community around issues of morality. Their inclusion in the study helped to enhance its credibility by ensuring that parents were empowered to make proper decisions regarding the education of their children. Besides dealing with parents in churches, the religious leaders also dealt directly with the children and thus helped to instil discipline and values as a recipe for children to succeed at school (Steyn, 2003:24). Their presence added value in terms of their motivational programmes that strengthened both the parents and the teachers in encouraging discipline and hard work amongst the learners. They were also encouraged to deal directly with the learners by providing counselling and pastoral care to the child-headed families, as well as linking parents with welfare and other professional bodies that could offer the required services.

3.3.5.4 Parents

The parents supported the school with finances as they contributed towards the implementation of the education programmes. Their contributions in fund-raising and other ways provided the schools with financial capital that was highly needed to achieve its mission of educating the children (Caldwell, 2008). There is sufficient evidence in the literature that parents play a useful role in inspiring children to learn and achieve (Brain & Reid, 2003; Jordan et al., 2002:14; Mudekunye & Ndamba, 2011:10; Oludipe, 2009:95; Patrikakou, 2011:131). When parents are actively involved, children are likely to do well in their studies. The parents who were participants were not members of the SGBs but ordinary parents who happened to have children at the two participating schools. Their inclusion in the study was crucial as they strengthened the hands of the SGBs in mobilising other parents to engage meaningfully in the education of their children and thus effect the necessary school changes (Carreon, Drake & Barton, 2005:468). These parents also played an important role in establishing parental cells that looked after the educational interests of the community. They also served as the resource team that the SGBs could rely on to educate other parents about the role of parents during parents' meetings, thus debunking the myth that only the teachers can provide knowledge about learning (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001:140).

3.3.5.5. Researcher

As the researcher in this study I coordinated the activities of the coordinating team. I availed my expertise, competence and experience of school management and governance to the coordinating team. As the coordinator I also executed management and leadership duties of the study. I was responsible for securing permission from the Free State DoE to conduct this study and also identified and engaged potential team members (see annexure C1). Other responsibilities included organising resources such as venues for meetings, keeping study records, issuing agendas, and participating in the implementation of the coordinating team resolutions. My other duties included providing guidance and

training for the teachers, SMTs SGBs and RCLs around issues of curriculum management and implementation, financial management, human resources, safety issues, evaluation of school principals and liaison with teacher unions and other community-based organisations. My role was to convene, facilitate, monitor and document all these activities with the help of the research structure referred to above (Lincoln & Guba 1985:202). I also led the process of analysing and interpreting data, though the structure assisted with the verification of the interpreted data (MacMillan & Schumacher, 1997).

3.4   RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESEARCHER AND PARTICIPANTS

PAR is based on the relationships between the researcher and the participants. Good relationships are based on the principles of trust and respect (Grant et.al., 2008:591; Moles Jr & Fege, 2011). To work well with the people one does not know, one must win their trust and respect, and convince them that one is not only interested in writing about their stories but actually wishes to help them bring real change to their lives. For this study I managed to win the trust of the participants by acting honestly and respectfully towards them. I also attended the parents' meetings at the two schools, where I was given the opportunity to address the parents about the purpose of my study. During those meetings I urged the parents not to lose hope in their children's education as this situation could be improved.

By sympathising with the parents we managed to establish a harmonious relationship of respect that was non-judgemental, non-threatening and non-directive (Dworski-Riggs & Langhout, 2010:227; Merriam, 1998:85). These relationships were strengthened by being honest with one another, and by treating one another professionally, which helped us to advance the objectives of CER of respect, humility, peace and social justice (Hill & Tyson, 2009:741). It also allowed the participants to feel free to contribute as much as they could to the research study.

On the other hand, as the researcher I humbled myself in order to gain more information that helped to understand the world of the participants better. By upholding the objective of respect we ensured that the study did not become a

talk-show but rather worked towards finding solutions to real life problems that affected the participants. I was fully immersed within them in an attempt to find solutions to their problems. I was listening to the lived experiences of parents on how to sustain parental engagement and also share my experiences with them (de Laine, 2000:16; Grant & Humphries, 2006:403). In some instances I adopted the 'observer-participant' role (Mertens, 2010:367), in order to give the participants the opportunity to talk and craft solutions to their problems.

PAR's principle of reflexivity was employed because I did not want to impose my views on the participants or influence the outcome of the data they provided. Parahoo (1997:292) argues that researchers should engage in the process of reflexivity whereby they reflect on their preconceived social practices and those of the participants to ensure that a balanced research outcome is achieved. In this research study we adopted a self-critical stance to ensure that our actions did not compromise the quality of the outcome of what was researched. We achieved this reflexivity by ensuring that we went back to our earlier data collected in previous meetings and together confirmed it before making the final interpretation during the subsequent meetings (Grant & Humphries, 2006:407; Hickling-Hudson, 2006:7; Martin, 2008:404). This process gave us an opportunity to correct any misinterpretations and ensure that the views of the participants had been correctly captured. The process of reflexivity allowed the coordinating team members to relate their stories without being guided by the researcher. The reflexivity also gave the coordinating team the opportunity to authenticate the data collected because everybody participated in reflecting on it.

This approach gave me the opportunity to understand their situation much better (Hickling-Hudson, 2006:3). Both the participants and I engaged in the process of finding solutions as co-researchers (Hawkins, 2008:2). The process of communicative action was transparent and gave all the chance to shape and influence the direction of the research study (Grant & Humphries, 2006:409; Skollerhorn, 1998:557). My role was to initiate the study but taking it forward depended on the co-operation of every team member based on the activity that was done at a particular time (Mahlomaholo & Netshandama, 2012:45). This approach recognised the prior knowledge of the participants, which was in line

with the CER objective of privileging the local knowledge when conducting a research study (Grant & Humphries, 2006:403; Hargreaves, 2007:4; Schurink, 2010:494; von Maltzahn & van der Riet, 2006:111).

According to Ledwith (2007:599) there should be collaboration and participation wherein everyone is involved in the process of change. To bring about the desired change in the lives of the participants we discussed together what could be the solutions to their problems of non-engagement. Through collaboration the parents formed parental cells in which to advance the educational interests of the learners. Through collaboration parents learned the importance of tolerance and respect for one another's views. The participatory approach that was adopted ensured that the voices of the parents were included in the planning and design of the research study (Sanginga, Kamugisha & Martin, 2010:696). It allowed the parents, who had a stake in partnership with the school, to have a voice in decision-making that affected the education of their children (Dworski-Riggs & Langhout, 2010:216). The participants would be free to share information, knowing that the person who sought it will help them solve challenges in their lives.

My relationship with the participants embodied the principles of democracy, equity and liberation (Esposito & Evans-Winters, 2007:223). The coordinating team ensured that power relations between the researcher and the participants were balanced .As a researcher I did not display the 'I know all attitude' to the challenges that confronted the participants. The solutions arrived at were approved by both parties (i.e., researcher and participants) as a remedy to the participants' problems. There was mutual agreement on the solutions found, which increased the chances of implementing the solutions (Hertz-Lazarowitz, Zelniker & Azaiza, 2010:271). Mills (2003:8) also emphasises participation and democracy as central to sustaining a harmonious relationship between the researcher and the participants.

These principles were upheld at all times in order to give me a clear insight into the participants' own world, whilst they had a chance to be liberated from the social ills that were making their lives unbearable (Biesta, 2010:39). The participants were given the opportunity to talk about their problems and also found courage to confront them. According to Boog (2003:427), there should be an open

communicative interaction between the researcher and the participants, which implies that each party should feel free to raise any concerns that it might have with the understanding that such a move will bring the parties together rather tear them apart. The participants were treated with respect and shared their views about parental engagement as equals (Ferguson & Rodriguez 2005:1; Heystek, 2004:116).

By allowing free but purposeful communication, the participants, especially parents were allowed a voice in the education of their children. The open communication approach that we adopted increased trust amongst the participants. Establishing a rapport, trust and reciprocal relations with the participants is essential if the researcher wants to gather data that will help him/her understand the participants' own world (MacMillan & Schumacher, 1997:402). Together with the coordinating team members we ensured that our relationship embodied the principles of democracy, peace, equity, respect and hope in order for the participants to solve their problems rather than the researcher doing so (Mahlomaholo & Netshandama, 2012:37). I worked collaboratively with the participants to produce knowledge that was beneficial to both of us, that is parents and I worked together to find solutions to our common problem of low parental engagement at the participating schools.

3.5   COMPREHENSIVE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

This section deals with the comprehensive plan that was drawn up to guide the operations of the coordinating team in achieving the objectives of the study (see annexure P 1). This consisted of two levels, namely, the preparation level and the joint planning level. The preparation level covers all the efforts that were made by the researcher to prepare for the study, while joint planning covers the activities of the coordinating team after being established. Both these levels complemented each other and were crucial to ensure the success of the study.

3.5.1 Preparation

This level of planning involved the activities that were carried out by the researcher alone, before the establishment of the coordinating team (see 3.3.1). These included activities such as liaising with the university supervisor to phrase the topic of the research, seeking clearance from the University Ethical Committee to conduct the study, seeking permission from the DoE to conduct the study, securing one-on-one interactions with principals of the participating schools, identification of prospective participants, deciding on the data collection instruments; and interacting with the SGBs of the participating schools. This preparation was crucial to prepare for smooth operationalisation of joint planning with other participants. It also ensured that the resources needed were mobilised before the commencement of the study, and eased the way for joint planning with other members of the coordinating team.

3.5.2 Joint planning

Parental engagement requires thorough planning by all who have an interest in the education of the learners, otherwise the attempt will be a futile exercise (Michigan Department of Education 2011:8; Rodrigues-Brown, 2009:5). Once the coordinating team has been established a comprehensive plan detailing every step to be taken was designed (see annexure P1). This plan consisted of such outcomes as the establishment of the coordinating team and the setting of priorities to achieve the objectives of the study. Each priority had activities which were developed in order to achieve it.

This plan was made through a strategic planning session, to analyse the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) and so develop the priorities in order to address the objectives of the study (Paik, 2011:123; Rhim, 2011:32; van Deventer & Kruger, 2003:80). On the basis of these priorities, the abovementioned team then formulated an action plan spanning a period of six months (Hara & Burke, 1998:6; Patrikakou, 2011:132; Sheldon, 2011:100). On a monthly basis, the coordinating team had meetings to review progress and suggest ways in which the plan and its activities could be adjusted for

improvement (Eruera, 2010:3). This plan highlighted for each priority the activities and actions which the two schools and their respective stakeholders, and co-opted expertise to enhance parental engagement. Each task was assigned a competent person to organise and implement. The timeframes were set and formative monitoring mechanisms for improvement and adjustment were adjusted (Sheldon, 2011:100).

Through this planning the coordinating team identified the need for the study, the components for parental engagement, the conditions for successful implementation of a framework to enhance parental engagement, and the possible threats that might impede the envisaged framework. This exercise afforded the team members the opportunity to grow their skills to plan and create improvement in their schools (Jordan et al., 2002:21). The inclusion of all the participants from the beginning motivated them to implement the action plan that was drawn up.

3.5.2.1   Identification of the need for parental engagement

The first daunting and most critical task for the coordinating team was to have a comprehensive understanding of the nature and the extent of the need for parental engagement in schools. The coordinating team members can achieve this by becoming embedded in the development and implementation of processes and systems that are geared towards attaining this objective. This study drew some lessons in this regard from the literature in RSA, USA, Nigeria and Zimbabwe. In Zimbabwe, for instance, the parents identified the learning needs as having been associated with learners' socio-economic conditions of indigence.

The parents subsequently identified a potential solution to that need in the form of an action and activity that they as parents had to engage. The solution was for the parents to subsidise the needy children (Ngwenya et al., 2012). This study understood the parents' action and activity of subsidizing the needy learners, as a high level activity that parents should have attained through engaging in various sub-activities and tasks. In other words the high level activities could have been considered as being at strategic level. The sub-activities or lower level activities

that were meant to address the high level activities, therefore, were at an operational and a more practical level.

The study further considered possibilities that the parents that might have been involved and engaged with the initial idea of subsidising learners should have solicited support from other stakeholders. Furthermore, there should have been timeframes allocated for the sub-activities, especially considering that learning through formal schooling was time-bound. Also, the neediness of learners could not have been delayed perpetually, or there would not have been any need for subsidisation of learning for the needy learners. The processes in which the parents were engaged in this regard were thus considered as collaborative planning for the identification of the needy (Dworski-Riggs & Langhout, 2010; Eruera, 2010:3; Mudekunye & Ndamba, 2011:11).

The problem statement depicted the need for the enhancement of parental engagement (see chapter 1 paragraph 1.3). The study coordinator was perturbed by the postponements of the SGB elective meetings that sought to elect the parent component because the parents did not make up the quorum. This gave the impression that parents were either not interested in the education of their children or deliberately excluded themselves from the processes (Kristiansen & Bloch-Poulsen, 2008:464; Mncube, 2007:131; Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2010:141). These views were contradictory and needed to be ascertained, justified and addressed accordingly. Pursuant to the justification of the need for parental engagement the affected and relevant stakeholders were engaged with a view to open the communicative space amongst them (Dworski-Riggs & Langhout, 2010; Eruera, 2010:3; Mahlomaholo & Netshandama, 2012:37; Skollerhorn, 1998:557, also see chapter 2 paragraph 2.5.5).

This subsequently raised the question: *how can we enhance the engagement of parents in education of our children such that it is sustainable?* To answer this, critical reflective sessions with relevant stakeholders and parents were organised (Eruera, 2010:1). This open-ended question was followed by clarity-seeking questions using the principles of the FAI technique by Meuleunberg-Buskens. This thought-provoking question sought to challenge the participants to think critically about their situation and reflect on issues that impeded the engagement of parents

in school matters such as finance, communication and academic performance, and improvement planning. The reflective sessions were conducted in a way that enabled the participants to be free to voice their views without intimidation (Johnson et al., 2012:71; Kemmis, 2008:125-127; Lavadenz & Armas, 2012:102; Mertens, 2010:238). Thus, the principles and values of mutual respect, trust and humility were encouraged and the focus of the discussion was on an attempt to give hope to the parents who appeared to have been marginalised so that their freedom to engage equitably in the education of their children would prevail (Rearick & Feldman, 1999:336; van Loggerenberg, 2002:45).

The issues that were raised during the reflective sessions were categorised into strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that affected parental engagement at the two schools (see annexure P1). For instance, the coordinating team noted the strength of parents in giving learners money for refreshments when going to school. However, the learners used this money to buy alcoholic beverages at nearby taverns. This was categorised as weakness because it reflected lack of monitoring on the part of parents, who thought that giving learners money was an end in itself. These weaknesses were prioritised as challenges that impeded effective parental engagement at the two schools.

The coordinating team reflected on these challenges during the subsequent meeting to ensure and enhance common understanding for future intervention. This was crucial in order to clear any misinterpretation that might not have been picked up during the first meeting (Shirley, 1997:37-38). The reflections helped the coordinating team to conceptualise the idea of parental engagement as one of the answers to poor learner performance, especially at grade 12, and as a way of contributing to the overall school effectiveness.

After identifying the possible factors that necessitated the need for parental engagement, a comprehensive plan was developed. This included identifying the priorities for each need identified, the activities to address it, the people responsible for implementing those activities, the resources needed to accomplish each priority and timeframes by when progress should have been made. The plan developed was shared with other parents at a parents' meeting, in order to include the voice of parents in what we were doing. According to Johnson, Carter, and

Finn (2012:71), programmes designed for parental engagement should include parents in their planning otherwise they may fail to challenge the existing power inequalities at school.

The coordinating team used PAR's tenet of action plan to draw up the homework policy (annexure HP), establish the parental cells and draw up the timetable for the supervision of the afternoon studies (annexure TT). At the observation phase the coordinating team discussed and analysed the documents and records of the SGBs relating to parental engagement. These documents included minutes of the SGB, attendance registers for such meetings and the implementation of resolutions. The objective of this was to analyse the power relations between the teachers and the parents. To balance the power relations the coordinating team shared the responsibilities among its members, thus also easing the data collection process.

It was during one of these meetings that municipal leaders and parents indicated their enthusiasm to be part of the study (4.2.1). They believed that the study would give them the opportunity to voice their concerns regarding the role of parents at schools, because parents' meetings did not offer them such opportunities (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001:123; Lavadenz & Armas, 2012:102).

The meetings of the coordinating team provided members with the opportunity to know each other better, and to focus on the same goal. All members expressed enthusiasm to be part of the study as this would give them the opportunity to address the problem of parental non-engagement at their schools. One of the members, Mr Sishi from Matsieng school, remarked that:

Parents do not come to school when called by the principal. Some learners are staying with the grandparents who can no longer walk long distances to school. Other parents do not 'care' as in some instances the learners are not their biological offspring.

The fact that parents were said not to be attending meetings indicated that there was a need for the study to be conducted. This meant that teachers and parents were not communicating effectively about the learners' progress. The study offered them a platform to create conditions conducive to attendance (Chrispeels

& Rivero, 2001:124; Skollerhorn, 1998:557). The study enabled them to talk about stories, the things that made them engage and disengage from the education of their children. This was not a once-off exercise as it was also reflected during the second meeting of the coordinating team. The reason for this was to ensure that the participants' views were well captured before a planning session took place, in line with PAR's objective of creating knowledge about a particular problem through observation before action is taken. The participants confirmed that indeed situational analysis regarding the need identification for parental engagement was well captured as it existed at their schools.

3.5.2.2   Components for enhancing parental engagement

This section discusses the components of the possible solution to the needs identified in paragraph 3.5.2.1, including identification of areas of engagement of parents in the education of their children, such as school structures, teacher-parent communication, collaboration with the community and volunteering.

The coordinating team facilitated the processes of identification and planning for the possible areas in which parents should be engaged. The coordinating team stated the importance of parental engagement in governance structures of the school where decisions are taken. This was in line with PAR tenet of advocating inclusion of the voices of participants in the decisions that affect their lives (Dworski-Riggs & Langhout, 2010:216). PAR strives to address the power imbalances and social structures (Grant, Nelson & Mitchell, 2008:589) that perpetuate inequality. For this study we looked at the balance of power between the parents and the teachers. This was done by applying the principle of inclusivity by which every participant contributed freely to finding the solutions for sustaining parental engagement at the participating schools.

According to Kemmis (2008:128), decision-making implies giving all the participants equal rights to contribute to decisions. The coordinating team observed that there was unequal power between the teachers and the parents (Coleman & Earley, 2005:91), which prevented the voice of parents form being heard. We encouraged parental engagement in all the school based committees

in order to balance the power relations. The participants were allowed to share their power in the study by deciding to participate freely. We applied PAR to reduce the power of the researcher and to elevate the participants to the level of co-researchers who made decisions in all stages of the research project, from situational analysis to planning, implementation and data analysis (von Maltzahn & van der Riet, 2006:115). This was in line with the views expressed by Baum et al. (2006:854), that participants should be involved in every level of planning to find solutions to their problems. We agreed that power inequalities between the teachers and the parents could lead to domination of the marginalised (*i.e.*, parents) by the powerful elites (*i.e.*, teachers) and therefore exclude parents from decisions that affected the education of their children. Grant et al. (2008:592) note that:

It is vital to note that research participants are not powerless in the research relationship - indeed, without their consent, the relationship would not exist …Power is not limited, but rather can be shared and this sharing can generate more power.

The coordinating team observed that in some instances the hierarchical structure of the school deprives the parents of their right to make decisions regarding the education of their children on the basis of being regarded as illiterate (Ajayi et al., 2009:42; Mncube, 2007:135). PAR states that all should help make decisions and not only those who have institutional power (Dworski-Riggs & Langhout, 2010:221).The participants were given the opportunity to identify the components that were relevant to their situations instead of these being imposed on them by the researcher. This is supported by Wheeler (2001:101), who argues that the community and not the researcher should find solutions to their problems. Any imposition of a solution by the researcher could miss the target, be a misdiagnosis of the problem and be contextually irrelevant.

PAR states that once the problem has been identified a planning session should take place to address it (Eruera, 2010:1). The engagement of all participants was encouraged during the drawing up of the action plan as it allowed for sharing of experiences (Hickling-Hudson, 2006:4-5; Sanginga et al., 2010:699-700). The coordinating team agreed that the inclusion of the parents in the SGB, the

curriculum, and other committees of the school where decisions regarding the education of the children are taken, was crucial.

The coordinating team encouraged the parents during parents' meetings to challenge all the social norms about their roles in the schools and the decisions that excluded them. They were motivated to strive for inclusion in all the process that defined the problem, solution and act of implementation. Therefore, during the site visit the coordinating team looked at the representation of the parents in all governance committees of the school and checked whether parents took part in decisions that were made, the quality of those decisions, how they were communicated to the parents, the contributions of the parents, as well as the implementation of those decisions. The coordinating team also looked at the policy for encouraging parental engagement, the hospitality given to the parents when visiting the school as well as any signs of welcoming parents to the school.

The principle of engaging participants in decision-making was also implemented during the course of data gathering. All coordinating team members were allowed to participate in the process by sharing the tasks to actualise the action plan. We interchangeably chaired the sessions of the coordinating team meetings to show that everyone could lead and be led (De Pree, 1989:43; Hickling-Hudson, 2006:4-5). No individual took the centre stage or dominated others, the role of the researcher being determined by the coordinating team as they saw it fit (Mertens, 2010:253; De Pree, 1989:43). The decisions were taken by all participants. In one instance I was running late for the scheduled meeting because of serious emergency so I telephoned the coordinating team members to ask for postponement of the meeting, but my request for postponement was declined. The members felt that it was crucial for us to meet as promised and I had to be there, which I was, albeit late. This incident shows that decisions were made openly without any fear or favour, demonstrating PAR's principle of commitment to team decisions in order to bring about real change in the lives of the participants.

The coordinating team was always striving for a more consensual model of engagement, which allowed the participants to criticise and shape the process of the investigation without any fear of reprisals (Dworski-Riggs & Langhout, 2010:218). PAR is participatory in nature (Hawkins, 2007:4), and is not research

conducted *on* people but rather *with* them. In this study PAR was used to encourage the coordinating team members to reflect critically on how their knowledge and structures limit the desired parental engagement. It was also used to encourage the research participants to devise strategies to overcome those limits.

PAR encourages two-way communication between the researcher and the participants (Mertens, 2010:239; Dworski-Riggs & Langhout, 2010:219). Every member of the coordinating team was free to talk about any issue that could assist the study to achieve its objectives. Participants were engaged in communication freely (Kemmis, 2008:128), to contribute ideas to the study. No restrictions were placed on them, which means that when using PAR as a research method people should be allowed to talk respectfully about any issue without fear of victimisation. The coordinating team deliberated on the need for more purposeful two-way communication between the school and the parents as a way of sustaining parental engagement.

The maintenance of open two-way communication motivated the coordinating team to strive for mutual understanding of the issues that were considered during the meetings and site visits. Therefore, during the site visits the coordinating team unanimously agreed to look at all aspects of communication that sustained parental engagement. These included the policy for communicating with the parents, the records thereof, the types of communication, programme for communication, the frequency thereof, the quality of communication and the barriers that hinder sustained effective two-way communication. These records were analysed with the intention of understanding and making sense of them. They were checked to corroborate the literary evidence with a practical situation.

PAR posits relationship building (Chiu,2006:189).The coordinating team succeeded in building the relationship through the team building exercise to assess what each member was likely to bring to the study. This helped us to know ourselves better and so deal with one another in a professional way. Understanding one another assisted us in working as a team in order to achieve the objectives of the study. To build relationships among the participants the coordinating team members ensured that each member was treated with respect.

The regular meetings that were held also enabled us to build strong relationships. The informal relationships that already existed amongst the team members strengthened the team spirit that was needed for the team to realise its objectives of the study. Our ability to relate well enabled the coordinating team members to share power equally. As the study reached its critical point of data analysis and implementation, the coordinating team also increased the frequency of its meetings.

PAR is practical because it connects research to the development and practical reality of the participants, and demands that there be mutual communication between the researcher and the participants (Swantz, 2008:32). In this research we held mutual discussions about the strategies that could be employed to encourage and sustain parental engagement at the two participating schools. These purposeful discussions centred on transforming communication channels with the parents at the two schools with the intention of improving them. This was needed to encourage parents to share their knowledge of assisting learners with their school work.

PAR is anchored on the belief that all knowledge, including community and parental knowledge, is necessary and that power asymmetries should be non-existent (Dworski-Riggs & Langhout, 2010:222). In probing the engagement of the parents in assisting the learners with homework the coordinating team agreed that recognising the wealth of knowledge that parents possess was crucial. We agreed that some parents were better educated than even some of the teachers and therefore could play a meaningful role in assisting the learners with homework. The team also felt that it could learn from certain parents who were said to be not 'educated,' and that such parents could, if empowered, play an important role in the education their children. This was in line with Kemmis (2008:124), who found in a research study that participants' interpretive categories were not their own but rather products of histories and traditions.

This implies that parents have had the knowledge to teach and raise the child long before he or she could start formal schooling, and such parental capital should always be recognised, encouraged and strengthened (Pushor,2007:8). In order to measure the contribution and knowledge of the parents, the coordinating team

resolved to look at the homework policy of the two schools to check whether it encouraged parental engagement and was known by them.

PAR emphasises the empowerment of the participants (Dworski-Riggs, 2010:1; Eruera, 2010:5; Hawkins, 2008:4; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005:567). This study aimed at empowering the parents so that they could take their rightful position in the education of their children. We also looked at whether the parents were trained to assist with homework in terms of the strategies that they should use when assisting the learners, the challenges that they faced and the possibility of establishing parental cells to address the educational needs of the children in the community.

The coordinating team identified the training needs of the parents from the governance up to the curriculum issues in order to give parents a better understanding of their educational role. The coordinating team believed that the empowerment of parents could bring enlightenment and eventually emancipation. This was because training could bring about more understanding, which eventually leads to a sense of independence.

When there is empowerment, the power relations between the parents and the teachers could be balanced. According to Boog (2003:428), empowerment leads to self-awareness because it increases one's competencies to act independently, as well as self-assertiveness, in that it helps the marginalised to determine their destiny. This is based on the premise that if people are capacitated to be aware of the conditions that oppress and marginalise them they can assert themselves to reverse and resist such oppressive conditions. The parents were able to show the level of empowerment when they started to speak with authority on the issues that affected the education of their children. They realised that they should hold the teachers accountable for promises given on the education of their children.

Being empowered implies that parents made the teachers listen and speak through the mouths of the parents. The coordinating team was unanimous that if training was provided parents could engage meaningfully in the education of their children. Therefore, training sessions were conducted in curriculum management, parenting, financial management and the SGB's roles and responsibilities.

The schools-community coordination through collaborative effort amongst the various stakeholders is paramount to the parental engagements in schools. PAR stresses that members of the community should analyse their problems (Hertz-Lazarowitz et al., 2010:271), and challenges the one way to knowledge construction and recognises that other community members have a role to play in bringing about change (Kemmis, 2008:124). The coordinating team comprised the community leaders from the municipal and religious institutions to ensure that the community took charge of its schools in order to bring about development. The local people were thus given a platform on which to work together to illuminate their local problems so that solutions could be found (Habermas, 2003:106-107, Skollernhorn, 1998:5570). PAR negates the imposition of solutions on the community by the external forces as this may not result in sustainable solutions to their problems (Hertz-Lazarowitz, 2010:271).

In this study we worked together and shared our expertise without undermining one another's own expertise. I realised that I was just a partner in the research study and that the participants were also having a role to play (Mahlomaholo & Netshandama, 2012:42). According to Grant and Humphries (2006:403), PAR as a collaborative research mode requires that the researcher and the participants work together to identify the problems, draw a plan to address those problems, evaluate the changes that happen and reflect on the impact made. In this study the problem was defined and researched only after reaching a mutual understanding with the participants. The involvement of the participants enhanced the chances of the project reaching its goal of bringing about the desired change due to the capital that the participants shared with the researcher (von Maltzahn & van der Riet, 2006:111). Because of the sharing of cultural and social capital we were able to empower one another.

By including parents and other community leaders as participants we managed to ensure that the credibility of the study was enhanced through positioning the cultural capital and other experiences of the community (Yosso, 2005:77). This also assisted us to minimise the alienation between the teachers and the parents in that it made the teachers appreciate the wealth of knowledge that parents

possessed. In this way the schools would be talking through the voice of the parents (Pushor & Ruitenberg, 2005:12).

The process of researching about parental engagement at the two schools included all community role-players in order to enhance the credibility of the research study. The community leaders deliberated on what they could do to sustain parental engagement in schools. The inclusion of both the municipal and religious leaders ensured that the community was well represented in the decisions that affected the future of its learners and the development of the schools in general (Goodall & Vorhaus, 2010:36; Jordan et al., 2002:14; Patrikakou, 2008:2).

PAR encourages community support (Dworski-Riggs & Langhout, 2010:227) and acknowledges that the research study should be responsive to the needs of the community (Grant & Humphries,2006:403). It stresses that members of the community should make some inputs in co-constructing knowledge, which means that community interests and experiences are well reflected in research. In this study we applied PAR to listen to the parents as they related stories of their engagement, instead of telling them how they should engage themselves. This approach gave us the opportunity to understand the suitable conditions that could enhance parental engagement better from the participants' points of view. In this study the team members collaborated to determine the components and conditions for parental engagement. This was necessary in order to reflect the experiences, expectations and the interests of the parents so that the envisaged parental framework could be relevant to address the needs of the participating schools. This process of community inclusion ensured that the community takes full ownership of the research study and this increased the chance for implementation of the solutions arrived at.

PAR recognises the community members as the experts of the community problem under investigation and the usefulness of the research should be informed by the everyday experience of the participants from that community (Eruera, 2010:1; Grant, Nelson & Mitchell, 2008:589). Without the engagement of the participants from the two schools it would have been extremely difficult to understand the magnitude of parental engagement at the two schools. Allowing

the participants to share their stories illuminated the depth of the problem facing the two schools which could not have been understood had they not related their stories. PAR allowed the community leaders in municipal and religious leaders to share their stories and knowledge with their schools. It allowed for the community to share their experiences and also what it intended to achieve. The participants spoke about how sometimes they were deliberately excluded by those who have institutional power, hence their non-engagement. The coordinating team ensured that the power relations were balanced as a way of encouraging and sustaining parental engagement. A non-dominating, non-threatening environment was maintained and this enabled the participants to focus (Mertens, 2010:238) on their schools with the aim of finding solutions and ways to change it.

PAR encourages volunteering one's services with the aim of empowering others to live better than before (Mertens, 2010:249). In this study I volunteered my services to the participating schools by holding motivational sessions for the grade 12 learners and also assisted with the answering of some questions during parents' meetings. By volunteering my services for free to the two schools I earned favour and support of the SGBs and others, including the teachers. That I was not a total stranger to the two schools helped me to build a relationship of trust with them, and to immerse myself within the participants who regarded me as one of their own. According to De Pree (1989:25), volunteering one's services enables one to have covenantal relationships that promote inclusiveness with those who benefit from such relationships.

PAR is based on the relationships between the researcher and the participants (Grant et al., 2008:591), which sometimes are built through volunteerism. In this study the participants volunteered their time for study meetings, and attended parents' meetings and workshops that were organised to empower them around parental engagement. We all agreed that being part of the study was likely to benefit us, our children and our schools. We also agreed that as participants-volunteers we should not expect any remuneration. By being transparent about volunteerism, the coordinating team members engaged in the study with clear expectations. The participants indicated that parents should volunteer their services in committees such as the Maintenance, Curriculum, the supervision of

the afternoon classes, Finance, Disciplinary, Sports and Cultural committees of the schools. This step was necessary to engage participants in conditions that could enhance parental engagement.

3.5.2.3 Conditions for sustaining parental engagement

This section deals with the conditions conducive to parental engagement at the two schools. These were identified by the participants to enable parents to be engaged in the education of their children, and included provision of appropriate and relevant training of parents on parenting and collaborative planning. PAR is emancipatory in that it aims at providing the participants with the skills to be aware of their shortcomings and create an enabling environment to overcome those limitations (Hawkins, 2008:4: Grant *et al.,* 2008:589). It allows for new knowledge to be gained through collaboration. When the person is emancipated he/she possesses knowledge that helps him/her to deal with the structural limitations that previously hindered progress. In this study the parents were empowered to identify the repressive conditions that limited them in attaining self-development (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005:567). The parents were empowered to identify any attempts to usurp their powers, roles and responsibilities by those who held institutional power. PAR was used to train parents in decision-making so that they could link their engagement to their situation. The training of parents was based on a belief that knowledgeable parents are likely to contribute positively to the education of their children. According to Gaventa and Cornwall (2008:175), the only way to reverse power inequalities is to enlighten the powerless:

countering power inequities involves using and producing knowledge in a way that affects popular awareness and consciousness of the issues and power relations which affect the lives of the powerless…

According to Grundy (1987:154), training parents as participants promotes a critical awareness that negate their current situation as unacceptable. Providing training to parents enhanced their understanding of their engagement in their children's education. It was also a way of inspiring, strengthening and encouraging their voice and demonstrating their various forms of capital. The emphasis was on

enlightening them so that they could become aware of the structural factors that were making them powerless. If parents have sufficient knowledge they can use it to shape the school landscape so the teachers' knowledge will no longer take centre stage in teaching the learners. If parents are not trained, the teachers will continue to monopolise the teaching of the learners and perhaps regard themselves as the only 'experts' for teaching the learners.

The knowledge and skills acquired could be used in similar situations to enhance and sustain parental engagement. The research team employed PAR to educate the parents about their situation and show that they could draw lessons from it in order to correct it for the better (Chiu, 2006:186). Reflecting on their situation provided the parents with an opportunity to learn and increase their knowledge. The acquisition of knowledge was necessary to enable them to relate to their situation (Chiu, 2006:189).

The application and use of PAR principles enabled the coordinating team to maintain close relationships among the participants. It is practical and collaborative (Hawkins, 2008:4) because it aims to help the marginalised to identify the unjust conditions that prevent them from living a satisfying life. In this study PAR was used to assist the parents to identify all the conditions that could promote and sustain good relationships or partnerships between them and the school. This was based on the premise that the teachers possessed power which was unequal to that of the parents. Therefore, one of the ways to close this power gap was to use PAR in order to ensure a close working relationship between the parents and the teachers. PAR was thought as a relevant vehicle for privileging the voice of the parents in knowledge production (Gaventa & Cornwall, 2008:173).

During data gathering the research team worked collaboratively with the parents to enhance a sense of partnership. Their contributions were valued and encouraged as showing the important role that they played as worthy partners, thus making them contributors to the study (Jordan et al., 2002:14). The parents were made to understand their engagement in relation to the contribution of others. The research team applied PAR to create opportunities for them to learn together with others as this could bring superior results. According to Grant.et al. (2008:591), PAR is based on relationships. To build trust, especially with the people with

whom one is not familiar, requires trust and genuine interest in others' life stories. For this study we managed to maintain close relationships with one another by being honest and respectful.

PAR advocates a clear separation of roles by which the researcher acts a social person and a professional with a clear purpose in mind (Mertens, 2010:252). I had to distinguish my role as the social person, a community member who was concerned about the non-engagement of the parents, and a professional who had particular aim to realise. I applied PAR to join hands with the community members to deal with the social problem. As a social person I collaborated with the team and the parents on an equal basis. As a professional I did not impose myself on the schools but rather negotiated my entry by following the formal channels to investigate the non-engagement of the parents.

During our interaction with the participants and the parents we ensured that issues were handled in a professional manner so that the study could achieve its aim. According to Dworski-Riggs & Langhout (2010:215), being empowered or achieving freedom means that people should recognise the social boundaries that regulate their interaction. The research team used PAR to make parents aware of those boundaries, and that in some instances a person might play a leading role whilst in other instances such a person could be a follower, hence the concept of a 'roving leadership' (De Pree, 1989). The research team deliberated on the issues that should be performed by the parents, the teachers and the (Mertens, 2010:253) rest of its members, in order to sustain parental engagement. These discussions were conducted in the language that all participants understood in order to enhance engagement.

The use of language in order to foster unity amongst the participants is imperative. The ability to speak the language of the participants was crucial in putting the participants at ease and also creating a rapport between them and the researcher. Fluency in the language of the participants helped me to gain access to sensitive but otherwise necessary information (Kawulich, 2005:40). However, this also helped me to tread carefully and avoid any jokes that could offend the participants. It also enabled the participants and me to engage fully in the research process, because they were part of all the deliberations. This also gave the participants the

opportunity to ask for any clarity when they did not understand what was to be done. By speaking the language of the participants I convinced them that the researcher cared about them and their situation.

Communicating in the language of the participants shows some respect for the participants' cultural wealth and the value attached to it. It also thematises power relations between the researcher and the participants. Speaking the language of the participants enabled me to be on their level and also assisted in opening the communicative space in which everybody could participate. According to Hooley (2002:8), using a language that is accessible to the participants advances the objectives of CER in that it focuses on how power is often built through the use of language. The use of a common language in this research study assisted us to detect any hidden form of power between the teachers and the parents. This helped us to gain a deeper understanding of parental engagement at the schools.

It is critical for the coordinating team members to recognize and encourage the recognition of the knowledge, skills and contributions. PAR recognised that the participants possess invaluable knowledge that could be relied upon to solve their problems. According to Yosso (2005), African people possess cultural capital which often is not recognised, whilst for Balcazar, Keys, Kaplan and Suarez-Balcazar (2006:4), PAR recognises the capital that the participants have and encourages them to use this in order to improve their world. In this study the parents were allowed to share their knowledge of teaching the learners with the teachers.

This idea was in keeping with PAR's principle of knowledge construction, in which local people's knowledge plays a crucial role in finding solutions to local problems (Baum et al., 2006:855). This idea helps to tailor solutions to address the local problems, as applying solutions that do not help local people to solve their challenges may waste time. Wimpenny (2010:90) argues that PAR challenges the traditionally held notion that knowledge lies only with the privileged experts. He argues that knowledge construction should be a shared responsibility of the researchers and the local people. This gives the participants the opportunity to voice their concerns and suggest ways that can best solve their problems. For this study the participants were given the opportunity to state what accounted for poor

parental engagement at their schools and suggest ways it could be improved and then sustained.

3.5.2.4 Risk identification for parental engagement

Prior to conducting a study it was advisable to conduct a situational analysis of the observation in order to analyse the threats that may impede the successful completion of such a study. This was in line with the provisions of the University Ethics Committee and the DoE to ensure that participants were accorded respect, protected from any harm and that the research would not encroach on the tuition time. Once the impediments had been identified, a risk assessment plan was developed to rate the probability of the each risk and to mitigate against it. The coordinating team used PAR's participatory (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2008:281-282) approach to create an opportunity for the research members to identify all the risks associated with parental engagement. The research team identified the following risks that were associated with PAR.

According to Kawulich (2005:20), the use of foreign language in a research process creates a barrier and gap between the researcher and the participants. The coordinating team identified the use of foreign language as an impediment towards effective communication and full parental engagement. The participants indicated that the use of foreign language excluded the majority of parents who cannot express themselves in these languages. This was therefore regarded as abuse of power by the teachers to exclude parents from decision-making, because the parents who could not access the discourse in these languages were marginalised (Grant & Humphries, 2006:403). The coordinating team adopted a non-exclusionary language so that other members could not be excluded from the discussions or interaction with the parents of the two schools. All the research study meetings were conducted in the language in which most participants were fluent or spoke well. When foreign concepts or terms were used they were explained in the participants' own language so as to enhance the principle of inclusion (Mncube, 2007). The research members empowered themselves about how the text and spoken words could sometimes be discursively used to

reproduce the power imbalances and domination by the elites (van Dijk, 2004). The coordinating team members felt that the use of exclusionary language excluded the majority of the parents from playing an active role in the education of their children and that this hindered free flowing communication between the teachers and the parents.

Negative communication could impact negatively on the role of the parents (Dworsi-Riggs, 2010:218). Through the use of PAR the coordinating team drew up a programme for all its meetings so that members could know in advance when to meet. This programme was also strengthened by telephone calls to remind the participants of the meetings as well as to ensure that they stayed focused on the study. All the invitations to the meetings were written in a language that all members understood and this principle was applied when deliberating on the issues during the meetings. This increased the engagement of the participants in discussing the issues in the language in which they felt confident to express their views.

The use of the language with which the participants were familiar increased their understanding of the issues that were discussed. When people feel that they are being considered in matters that affect their lives they will stay committed to the implementation of the solutions found. Through regular communication and interaction the team members managed to build strong relationships. Whenever a member missed a meeting he/she would be briefed to ensure that he/she remained involved. This was to ensure that the limited time for conducting research was used appropriately.

Through the use of PAR the coordinating team identified time as a risk factor that should be carefully planned for (Dworski-Riggs & Langhout, 2010:222). Therefore, all meetings were restricted to two hours so that the team members could have enough time to return. The study meetings were held on Sundays of every new month in the afternoon. However, at times it was not possible for all members of the research team to attend. The time factor was thus regarded as a threat that sometimes affected the commitments of other participants, who failed to attend some meetings. To compensate for this the coordinating team had to schedule

extra meetings late in the afternoon, when most of the participants were back from work.

The research team looked at the frequency of the meetings that the schools had with the parents and whether they were given enough time to participate in the discussions. The time factor was also analysed to check the amount of time that the parents engaged their children in homework and whether they were trained by the schools regarding the time that children should spend doing their homework. Parental engagement level was evaluated to check the amount of time that participants took to attend to school matters, such as parents' meetings, SGB meetings and any other activity that had a direct bearing on the child's education. The coordinating team observed the duration of some parents' meetings at the participating schools and the impact that they had on contributing to some parents having to leave before the end of the meetings.

The coordinating team applied PAR to monitor the power relations based on the amount of time that each participant spent on the subject matter under discussion. The participants were made aware that the powerful could sometimes use time allocated to dominate and exploit the marginalised in the discourse being discussed. The participants were made aware that they should not allow the injustices, inequalities and dominance of the elites to prevail for a long time as it would be difficult to reverse them and correct the situation. The coordinating team used PAR to motivate parents to engage immediately in the education of their children as a way of increasing community development and parental capital. The coordinating team applied PAR to make the participants aware that by failing to engage in the education of their children the parents were imposing self-oppression as well as marginalising themselves. Manipulation of time could thus be regarded as the limiting factor that those who possess institutional power use to further their selfish interests over the marginalised.

Conducting research study requires that one have resources to buy equipment for the research, such as the audio-materials, to make telephonic contacts, to photocopy and to cover for travelling expenses. According to Mncube (2009:9), the lack of resources can impede parents from attending meetings at school. Some parent –participants could not attend some of the study meetings because

they did not have transport fares. They had to board a mini-bus taxi to the central venue where the coordinating team usually held its meetings.

The participants deliberated on this issue and unanimously agreed that the participants be compensated for their travel expenses. This did not in any way amount to payment but only to cover strictly the travelling expenses of the participants. This was also in line with the provision of section 27 (1) of SASA Act No.84 (RSA, 1996:2A-22), that members of the SGB be reimbursed for the costs incurred in performing their duties. There was no payment of any kind as the engagement of the participants in the study was free and voluntary. It merely helped to address the problem as some of the participants were not working and had to part with their last cent was difficult.

PAR helps to expose all practises that are negative towards development (Hawkins, 2008:4). By talking about their stories the participants indicated that some principals and teachers did not appreciate their support or presence in the school. They indicated that principals of schools sidelined them and did not value their contributions. This was in line with the findings by Ajayi *et al.* (2009:42), that some principals no longer allowed the parents to take part in the governing councils of the schools. This attitude deprived the parents of the right to contribute to the education of their children. The coordinating team examined the extent to which parents in various school committees dealt with the learners' education. This was necessary in order to ensure that parents were not excluded from making the decisions that affected the future of their children.

3.5.2.5   Evidence of applicability of the framework to parental engagement

A study conducted by Dworski- Riggs & Langhout (2010:217-218) at Ruby Bridges Elementary school indicated that PAR can provide reliable results. In this study PAR was used to find out how the conflicting relationships among the students could be resolved. Through the use of PAR the study found that the school structure tended to exclude other stakeholders and that parents felt that they did not have a say in what happened at school. By engaging all the role players in the decision-making processes in which everyone was allowed to speak on the

issues, a platform was created for solving the problem at hand. The use of PAR allowed the students to talk about different cultures and to appreciate the different cultures. It allowed the participants to better their relationships and work towards the achievement of the same goal.

In another study, by Hawkins (2008:1), PAR was applied to analyse the sharing of story time to enhance the pre-schoolers' awareness of and sensitivities to social justice issues. Through the application of PAR the study empowered those who were teaching them about the social justice issues.

After the drawing up the comprehensive plan the research coordinating structure identified and prioritised the constructs for each objective. The comprehensive plan, attached as annexure P1 shows the constructs that were developed by the research structure. These constructs will be matched against the literature constructs derived from the literature study to determine their relevance in designing a framework for parental engagement at the identified schools where there are similarities.

During the parents' meetings, the principals of the two schools provided me with the names of the local councillors and religious leaders in their wards. These were contacted telephonically to brief them about the study and to solicit their support, which was positive.

The first meeting was set up to form a research structure. During this meeting the background and purpose of the study were discussed, after which members of the research structure gave their inputs regarding parental engagement at their schools in line with the objectives of the study. The members of the research structure enthusiastically supported the idea of parental engagement as something that could help improve the performance of learners at their schools. The members willingly showed interest to participate in the study. I then explained to the participants the ethical consideration and requirements of conducting any research study. The members were assured that their names and those of their institutions would not be divulged to any person who was not part of the study and that they could withdraw at any time if they so wished, without repercussions. I

then issued each participant with the consent form as proof that nobody had been coerced into participating in the study.

3.6   DATA COLLECTION

This section deals with tools and techniques that were used by the coordinating team to gather data.

The coordinating team used a voice-recorder to record the spoken words of the participants and later on transcribed and transformed those words into a written text to study (Seidman, 1991:87). The use of voice-recorder offered a highly reliable record to which one could return at a later stage in order to make meaning of the data recorded. The use of the voice-recorder during the meetings provided an opportunity to capture a greater volume of data which could not be captured as minutes. The recorded voices of the participants were re-visited and follow-ups were made long after the meeting was adjourned. These were predominantly done in order to clarify issues that were unclear during the meetings. The information gained from the voice-recorder assisted the coordinating team members to understand how the parents organised their responses. The information obtained was transcribed and coded and organised according to the five study objectives.

3.6.1 Document analysis

Organisations can be understood either through making direct contact with them or through the reading of its history. Document analysis represents the latter, in which the recorded history of the organisation is perused with the aim of making sense of it. According to Jupp and Norris (1993:37), document analysis was used in the early work of Thomas and Znaniecki on Polish peasants in Europe and America in 1918 to 1920 and their experiences of migrating to Chicago. They focused on the social structure and the individual to check how they were welcomed and the letters they wrote back home. It was used by positivists until the

1960s, mainly to gather quantitative data on the document, the sender and the recipient. They believed that document analysis could produce an objective view on the causes and effects.

The work of Carl Marx in the 1970s changed this view because it placed emphasis on the relationship between the documents and the social structure, class relations, ideology and power. According to Plummer (1983:132), Foucault's approach to document analysis is different in that:

It is a text where the human authorship is of no interest, where the subject is denied and where the informational value of the document is of little concern. It is merely an independent discourse through which power relations are constituted and the text hence comes simply to exemplify this wider theory.

According to Bowen (2009:1), document analysis implies a systematic way of reviewing or evaluating the documents. The document is therefore regarded as a means of inquiry in its own right. The coordinating team used the documents that relate to parental engagement, such as the minutes of the SGB, the plan to engage parents in school activities, the policies that engage parents, and voluntary services offered by parents to school. For instance, the coordinating team noted that the two schools' records were not well kept or up to date about the number of parents who attended school meetings.

3.6.1.1 Advantages of document analysis

The advantage of document analysis as a data gathering tool is that it provides the researcher with access to key information and also cut the costs and time of having to be at all the places (Mertens, 2010:373). It also gave the researcher an opportunity to enter the research site with an informed picture of what to look for. This background information was necessary to make prior preparations for the coordinating team, and the documents often contained resolutions that have been taken in various interactions with the parents. Through the use of document analysis one could see the exercise of power of one group over the other, even if in the past (Hakim, 1993:131). Therefore, document analysis helped our

coordinating team to describe the historical events of the two schools as they unfolded in terms of the resolutions taken. In this study the coordinating team was able to have an understanding of what was discussed during the parents' meetings, how the discussions were conducted, who dominated them and the implementation of the resolution as a result of using document analysis in the form of school minute books for parents as well as SGB meetings.

The document analysis provided a true picture of what transpired in the past, especially if unrelated to the present research. This is possible in the event of the authors of the documents not being aware that their records could be used in future research studies. The study used documentary evidence to analyse the records, minutes, resolutions, books of parental engagement, the quality of decisions and its implementation as well as policy issues. The coordinating team used document analysis at the two schools not to quantify the number of parents who attended or did not attend meetings but rather to detect how power was used. This analysis was conducted with a view to detecting the power relations between the teachers and the parents. Therefore, all records of the SGBs' interaction with the parents received attention. Such records included minutes of parents' meetings, attendance registers agenda for parents' meetings, invitations to parents' gatherings, photographs of parental engagement activities, the environment in which parental engagement takes place, the power relations, the agenda for parents meetings, patterns of communication during the meetings(e.g., from staff to parents), and any document relating to parental engagement. These documents were analysed in order to make meaning out of them. Document analysis provided the research team with a true picture of the status of parental engagement as honestly captured by the participants themselves without being twisted in interviews in order to impress anyone.

The use of document analysis also provided the research team with the opportunity to balance the story of the participants, unlike having to rely on one source of information. This was necessary in order to enhance the credibility of the study. This collection of school documents as an instrument was also used in a study in California Assessment Program (CAP) to assess and identify the effectiveness of the schools in grades 3 and 6 of Mathematics and Literacy

between 1978-1979 and 1980-1981 by Hallinger and Murphy (1986:335). If properly used, this tool can provide rich information for making meaning. The scanning of documents to gather data provided the research team with an opportunity to see and read what was being discussed by schools regarding parental engagement (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997:403) rather than being told. It was a way of verifying what was said during interviews. In this way the research team was able to make an informed opinion regarding parental engagement at the participating schools. This way of data gathering also provided the research team with an opportunity to assess the quality and effective implementation of resolutions taken around parental engagement. Because the research team was able to see the documents, it was easy for it to suggest any improvements, unlike standing outside the situation and relying on the information provided in the questionnaire. Most importantly, the changes provided could be discussed with the participants to shape them before they were implemented.

The records provided were analysed and interpreted to make meaning, by visiting the schools to peruse the records in a 'non-intrusive' way (Richards, 2006). As one enters the school yard there are things that one can observe that also provide data about parental engagement. The signs, messages on the bulletin boards, photographs on the walls and the hospitality that is given to parents and the general school atmosphere can send a message about whether the school is parent-friendly or not (Pushor & Ruitenberg, 2005). According to Mertens (2010:374), data collection should be participatory in nature in order to fit well into PAR principles. The coordinating team implemented this principle to ensure that all participants engaged in the process of data collection, analysis and suggestion of actions to address the identified problems. This allowed for the authentication of the solutions suggested before implementation could take place and as the solutions suggested became relevant to the problems identified.

3.6.1.2 Limitations of document analysis

The study coordinating team was also considerate of the limitations inherent in the process of document analysis. It could sometimes be confusing if not well captured, and might provide an incomplete and deceitful picture of what actually transpired. At times it was too cumbersome to deal with because one had to sift

the information that was not related to one's topic. If not verified by those who were present when they were compiled, they may miss certain resolutions or actual context in which the deliberations were made.

3.6.2 Observations

Another method of data collection, observations, included what the coordinating team saw when visiting the participating schools, such as the descriptions of the environment within which parental engagement took place. The two schools were situated in impoverished sections of Kgohlong township, where the majority of people were not employed and those that were employed, worked in Sengangata, about 60 kilometres distant. These two schools still lacked basic facilities, such as sports fields, laboratories, properly stocked libraries and school halls. The school grounds were littered and overgrown with grass, signs that they were poverty-stricken places and perhaps places of no hope. However, there were flowers in front of the old administration at Sediba school, a sign that even in poverty there was hope that a new beginning could still be found. At Matsieng school parents held their meetings under a car shelter, where teachers parked their cars during the week and where the noise of the passing cars and loud music at a tavern across the street often attracted the attention of parents who gathered for meetings on Sundays. The poverty that prevails at the two schools in terms of lack or shortage of facilities is a replica of what happens around the schools. This is the legacy of apartheid, when schools were resourced differently based on race and yet expected to perform the same way. It was hard to comprehend that schools whose elders (i.e., parents) have been dominated and disenfranchised for almost a century could be expected to perform the same way as their oppressors, who during that period had amassed great resources at the expense of the majority.

The coordinating team also observed the social environment during the meetings. The lack of space for seating often made those parents sit at the back, so as not to hear what was being discussed. Only those seated in front could engage fully with the discussions. However, these difficult conditions could not deter these parents from deliberating about the future of their children. The coordinating team also looked at the attendance of parents during parents' meetings, the quality of

their contributions to discussions and the decision-making process in terms of who decided on issues being discussed.

These observations helped the coordinating team to form some meaning which made sense of the situation (Richards, 2006) when visiting the research sites to determine the power relations between the teachers and the parents. The observations of how the school environment looked gave an impression of the type of parental engagement at that school. The coordinating team used this together with the principles of FAI and document analysis to gain a better picture of parental engagement at the participating schools (Hallinger & Murphy, 1986:335). Observations captured the expressions of the participants and how they felt about their experiences (Kawulich, 2005:2).

The coordinating team used the principles of F.A.I by Meulenberg-Buskens to gather data by capturing issues that affected parental engagement. According to Meulenberg-Buskens (2011:18), it was developed during industrial psychological research, known as Hawthorne Research, in 1929 in USA. This type of research allows the participants who are interviewed to speak freely about their experiences, thus giving the coordinating team a chance to gain more understanding of their world. We used this interview technique because we were interested in the experiences and stories of parents regarding their engagement. This technique also allowed the coordinating team to interact closely with the parents and build a relationship of trust with them.

3.6.3 Free Attitude Interview technique (F.A.I)

The FAI technique afforded us opportunities to visit the sites and listen to parents, to collect the records, documents, and any visual material that was relevant to the study. This technique enabled the coordinating team to have access to the rich data which could not have been accessed with ease through other means (Hallinger & Murphy, 1986:336). It also allowed us to observe the body language of the participants, something that showed us how they felt about their situation. It is a person-to-person interaction which is non-directive in nature but can also be used in group discussion to gather data from parents. To obtain information from parents the team exercised humility and respect, thus building and encouraging

parents to open up. The FAI can be used to explore opinions because it encourages freedom of expression. The coordinating team members were able to guide the discussions through use of its principles. For instance, the participants were asked a question: *how can we enhance parental engagement at our schools so that it is sustainable?* This was followed by clarity-seeking or probing questions to deepen the understanding of the responses of the participants. The information obtained was subsequently confirmed through reflective summary by the participants, coined by the facilitator of the session and supported by the participants.

The coordinating team was mindful of the limitations of the Free Attitude Interview technique. Although this technique enhances rapport between the researcher and the participants, but it can be time-consuming to conduct. This is because the data recorded from the participants have to be transcribed verbatim and this implies listening to the recorded tape over and over again. This technique also requires funds for purchasing the equipment and the accessories that enable transcription to proceed smoothly.

3.7   DATA ANALYSIS

The coordinating team used the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) by Van Dijk (2004:22) to analyse data gathered. According to this approach data is analysed at three levels in order to fathom the hidden power relations that are imbued in the use of words. These levels are the textual, the discursive/ cognitive and the structural level of analysis (van Dijk, 1995:30). When used appropriately they can assist the marginalised to detect any efforts by the powerful to reproduce, enact and legitimatise dominance and inequality in order to maintain their cycle of oppression and dominance by the oppressor over the marginalised (Sheyholislami, 2009:1; van Dijk, 2004:13). Phillips (2007:n.p.) describes CDA as an approach of relating text analysis to the social and political context of what is being studied. It regards the use of language as a form of social practice that is linked to a particular context. Parental engagement as a discourse is a social practice. There is a relationship between what people say about parental

engagement at their schools (textual), how they think about what parents should and should not do (discursive/cognition), and what they do to make sure that parents do or do not what they want (social structure). The CDA is relevant for this study in that parental engagement can be better understood if it is linked to the environment in which it takes place as well as the socio-conditions that regulate and shape it. Parental engagement does not take place in vacuum.

The CDA was used to challenge the structures that dominate the voice of the parents at school and thus deny them the right to engage fully in the education of their children. CDA was used to raise awareness of the parents about how the text /discourse, discourse practices/socio-cognition, and socio-cultural practice/social analysis (Fairclough, 1995:57; Chuliaraki & Fairclough, 1999:113;van Dijk, 1995:30) on parental engagement could be manipulated, twisted to project parents as incapable and lacking of the necessary capital to engage in the education of the children. The parents are often labelled as 'problematic' and 'uncooperative' by some schools, whereas on closer examination such schools were found to be causing problems to parents by not providing the necessary hospitality (Pushor & Ruitenberg, 2005). These three levels are hereunder briefly discussed to show how the coordinating team applied them in the study to analyse the inherent power relations between the teachers and the parents who often account for non-engagement of parents.

3.7.1 Textual analysis

This level of analysis deals mainly with the text (spoken or written words). It involves the use of different figures of speech, such as syntax, semantics, lexicon and the topics that dominate the discourse at a given environment (van Dijk, 1995:18). The reason for this is to give the text a particular appearance that can either attract or distract the person who reads it (Rogers, 2008:56). Because of this appeal to the reader the text can be regarded as either objective or subjective. For instance, the coordinating team noted the use of words, concepts and phrases that gave the impression that parents were 'not interested' in the education of their children because they were 'reluctant' to be elected as SGB members. Such

words were loaded with power and had social injustice connotations, and thus assisted the coordinating team to identify the key priorities for achievement of the study and to balance the power relations (Rogers, 2008:55-56). Without the use of textual analysis it would have been difficult to uncover the underlying meaning of power domination that these concepts conveyed regarding the view that teachers had about parents (Poole, 2010:140).

Ruiz (2009:n.p.) cautions against the surface objectivity of the text as a tendency that is often applied by the positivists. Through analysing the text the hidden meaning of what it actually implied was also revealed. This enabled the coordinating team to be aware of the unequal power relations and therefore respond accordingly to thematise any power relation struggles. The textual analysis assisted the coordinating team to understand that language may be used as a form of social interaction to demonstrate the power relations (Fairclough, 1995:1). The way the text is used may control the minds of those who read or listen to it and may determine how they eventually conduct themselves (van Dijk, 1995:21).

The coordinating team compared the presentation of data and theories about parental engagement with the views of the parents at the participating schools in order to suggest truths. The coordinating team exposed the parents to different views about parental engagement as a way of increasing their access to the text. The texts that gave hope to the parents by recognising and positioning their voice were shared with them as a way of helping them address issues of inequality and dominance. The participants were given the opportunity to share stories of their contribution to their children's education as a way of demonstrating their capacity.

The parents were motivated not to look down upon themselves but rather work hard to assist their children with their studies. They were empowered to demand that meetings be conducted in the language that they best understood, so that they may not be excluded from discussions and let their minds be easily controlled and manipulated through the use of a foreign language. The coordinating team emphasised the importance of providing parents with alternative ways of looking at how texts could be used discursively by the powerful to limit their engagement in the education of their children. The parents were made aware of the importance of

counter-reading in order to maintain a balance with the text. This means looking at the finer details of the text like the rhetoric, style and lexicon in order to detect any abuse of power or dominance through the use of the text (Rogers, 2008:55).

The first step in textual analysis was to ensure that the discourse was translated into a textual form in order to make sense of it. To achieve this we transcribed the records of our discussions and categorised them into themes or topics to guide us realise the objectives of the study. The transcriptions were done meticulously to capture all aspects of our discussions, the verbal and non-verbal aspects. According to Ruiz (2009:n.p.), the textual analysis helps the researcher to enlarge the data gathered through the application of the content and semiotic analysis. He argues that these two aspects of textual analysis can help the analyst to determine the structure and the composition of the discourse. In this study both approaches of textual analysis were employed to gain a deeper understanding of parental engagement at the participating schools. The reason for this was to enhance the analysis of the contextual/ discursive practice and the social analysis or interpretation of the text because the text is intertwined with the context in which it is produced as well as the social tendencies that approve or disapprove it.

The coordinating team used CDA to examine the context in which parental engagement was taking place and the key role-players/figures during the discussions, parents' meetings, and interactions with the participants. The positive and negative opinions about parent were noted, and examination made of the choice of words (formal structure), their lexical and syntactic structure, in order to make themes of the power relations (Sheyholislami, 2009:5). For instance, in one parents' meeting attended the team noted that only three parents engaged fully by asking pertinent questions around issues of finances. A closer identification of these parents revealed that they were formally educated and had experience in dealing with finances. The majority of the parents seemed to have identified themselves with the financial statement by not questioning it. This approach analyses the access and power to public discourse and how this is distributed. Those who control the access to the media can, for instance, use that power discursively to reproduce, enact and legitimise certain practices in society (van Dijk, 1995:20).

The coordinating team employed CDA to make parents and other participants aware of how those who possess institutional power could use it to deny them access to decision-making and thus have control over their minds and actions. Those who possess institutional knowledge appear to be more powerful than those who lack this power and if this is not counterbalanced it could be abused. Fairclough (1995:1) defines CDA as an analytical framework consisting of theory and practical approach for studying language in its relation to power and ideology. Sometimes people use language in a way that excludse the marginalised from participating in matters that affect their own lives (Mncube, 2007:131).

Sometimes power and ideology can be embedded and hidden (van Dijk, 2004:13) in figures of speech such as the metaphors, hyperbole and vocabulary. The semantic 'moves' such as the disclaimers of 'apparent denial' ('I have nothing against the parents, but...') and 'apparent concession' ('Not all parents are bad, but...'), as well as other ways of pretending to show politeness (Fairclough, 1995:2). The coordinating team also made the parents aware of the positive self-presentations and the negative other-presentation that could be levelled against them, especially when things did not go well. Sometimes people that parents are illiterate, instead of saying they lack skills. Being illiterate sounds harsh and dismissive and the word does not give the listener any hope that the person will overcome the shortcoming. 'Lacking skills' is more polite and gives hope to the listener that if opportunities are provided those who lack skills can overcome it.

The coordinating team therefore used CDA to analyse this power imbalance in engaging parents and empowered them to unblock the power bases that oppress, exclude and render them ineffective (Fairclough, 1995:1). When analysing data the coordinating team looked at the way the teachers used their ideologies and power to prescribe to and control the parents, and thus deny them of their 'voice' regarding decisions that affected their children.

CDA seeks to examine the relationship between ideology and social cognition, between ideology and society and between ideology and discourse (van Dijk, 2004:24). The construction of ideology takes place in social context and this shapes the way people in that context think and conduct themselves. Therefore, what is valued and regarded as truth in one situation may not be accorded the

same status in the other situation, because of what those people see as truth to them. According to Van Dijk (1995:19), ideology controls the social representations of groups, and thus the social practices and discourses of their members.

The coordinating team exposed the parents to a variety of parental discourses that position the voice of the parents, despite what other discourses say about their non-engagement and lack of capital (Barton et al., 2004:4). The parents were motivated not look down upon themselves but rather use whatever skill they had to engage in the education of their children, and also seize every opportunity presented to empower themselves. Ideologies, as Van Dijk (1995:19) states, can be 'learned' through the generalisation of mental models, that is, the personal experiences of social members. The coordinating team used CDA to mobilise the parents to assist one another and to form parental cells as social structures in which they shared good practices and also planned the educational future of their children (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001:140).

3.7.2   *Cognitive analysis*

The discourse does not affect the actions of people only but also their minds. According to van Dijk (1995:21) the elites or those who hold institutional power often use the discourse to control the minds of the marginalised in a manner that suits their domination over the less powerful. Therefore, cognitive analysis involves having the ability to comprehend and question the way the discourse can be used to justify the oppression of the marginalised by the powerful (Sheyholislami, 2009:4). It mediates between the text and social structure in order to demonstrate that the discourse is context-based and socially constructed. The formation of the coordinating team, the supervision of afternoon studies by parents, and the drawing of the homework policy were some of the attempts to bridge the gap between the parents and teachers as well as between the school and community in general. They provided teachers and parents with an opportunity to communicate and plan together (Lavadenz & Armas, 2012:102; Phillips, 2007:n.p.; Skollerhorn, 1998:557). This bridging of the gap was necessary

to dispel the negative attitudes that teachers and parents used to have about one another. It also enabled the coordinating team to balance the power relations between the teachers and parents. This cognitive analysis enabled the coordinating team to understand parental engagement from a social justice perspective as equal partners to teachers in the education of their children (Johnson, Carter & Finn, 2012:70; Shirley, 1997:27).

The coordinating team interpreted parental engagement discourse in order to make meaning of the context. The way the society behaves and thinks about parental engagement may often be confirmed or changed at the micro-level of individual beliefs, which in turn shapes the individual actions and understanding (van Dijk, 1991:50). The understanding that parents have may organise the sets of attitudes about how they understand their engagement and also act, sometimes against their own best interests. To control the attitudes of parents one has to analyse how parental engagement is often being portrayed at the macro-level, because that often influences how people think and react at the micro-level. People may either accept or reject the socially accepted norms of living, depending on the influence that they receive and the meaning that they attach to those norms. This implies that the way people articulate their point of views in talking, acting and writing may be influenced by their environment and the type of discourse that prevails there. This means that if the context is rich in terms of the resources this may have a bearing on how people in it relate and interact in terms of the way they understand the discourse being used. Therefore, the engagement of parents derives its meaning from the context in which it takes place in relation to other factors (Barton et al., 2004).

To understand parental engagement better, the coordinating team visited the parents at the two schools, talked to them and analysed the context in which they were engaged, as well as the factors that impacted on their engagement. The coordinating team wished to avoid a situation of talking about the things that parents are said not to be doing without listening to the parents themselves. Parental engagement can be sustained, depending on the relations with other discourses that circulate in social space, hence the notion of intertextuality (Ruiz, 2009:n.p.). This form of text analysis influences the way people in a particular

environment comprehend and make meaning of the discourse. This way of analysis enabled the team to unearth the hidden power relations that actually impeded maximum parental engagement at these schools. In an environment that was not resourceful in terms of how text could be discursively used, the participants can be easily misled and manipulated.

The coordinating team informed the parents that control of access to discourse only involves not only control of action but also that of the mind. The parents were informed that if they relinquished their responsibility of self-engagement in their children's education they were in a way also allowing the schools to control not only their actions but also their minds, and thus continue to exclude them from educational discourse as worthy partners. The parents were empowered to work with their SGBs to produce counter-practices that sought to position and legitimate their voice in the education of their children.

The coordinating team applied this level of analysis to increase the understanding of the members regarding the way the parents are often portrayed. This was done by exposing the participants to the discursive way of presenting the role of parents in the education of their children in order to maintain dominance over them. The parents were made aware that sometimes the words could be used to undermine their efforts and contribution in their children's education. The use of words such as 'illiterate' to describe the educational level of the parents could, for instance, make parents doubt their potential and withdraw themselves from supporting their children as expected.

3.7.3   The Social analysis

This level of analysis critically analyses the way language is used at the social level of interaction in order to resist or legitimatize power, dominance and inequality in society (van Dijk, 1995:18). This level also justifies and gives meaning to the way language is used in a particular context. It stresses the importance of linking the discourse to the environment (Ruiz, 2009:n.p.; van Dijk, 1991:60) and emphasises that discourse cannot take place in a vacuum. The structural

organisation of the society often accounts for who controls power, access to public discourse and determines the agenda thereof.

Through the social structural analysis the coordinating team accessed the additional resources from other community structures which were invited to shed some light on other issues in order to assist us to achieve the objectives of the study. For instance, in an attempt to stop the selling of alcoholic beverages to the learners, the social workers and local ward committees were invited to discuss the matter with the tavern owners. Through social analysis the team managed to balance the power relations between the tavern owners and the schools for the benefit of the learners and the community in general. This intervention shaped and gave parental engagement a new meaning at the participating schools. The structural organisation of the text is used to enhance the effectiveness of the text by giving it specific expressions or meanings.

The non-engagement of parents in the education of their children should be understood against the backdrop of the social setup that used not to value their role in the teaching and learning of their children. The previously held notion of teachers as custodians of knowledge made parents withdraw from schools and undermined their own inputs (Heystek, 2004:114). Therefore, the engagement or non-engagement of parents should be understood as a product of the social conditions in which it was produced.

A critical analysis of parental engagement can illuminate more understanding of the other social conditions that shape it. Our role in this research was to find out those fundamental social conditions that shape the role and understanding of the parents regarding the education of their children. The manner in which language is used by the elites at social level may reproduce social inequality, dominance, class and social status. According to Pushor (2007:2-3), the use of the term 'parental involvement' positions the authority of the teachers against that of the parents. She further states that this term limits the voice of parents to do things that teachers tell them to do instead of what they believe the school should do for their children. Often parents are targets of what the schools tell them to do, without providing an opportunity to internalise or question that which should be done. Through the application of CDA parents were empowered to analyse in whose

interest it is and whose voice is positioned when dealing with the schools (Barton et al., 2004:4; Pushor & Ruitenberg, 2005).

The coordinating team used this level of analysis to look at how the school setup was constructed in terms hierarchical levels that could be used to stifle the voice of the parents. The research participants were made aware that these structures could be used against them by those who possess institutional power to exclude them from decisions that affected the education of their children. This level seeks to understand the engagement of the parents from the economic, cultural and political angles of society that shape it (Fairclough, 1995:62). Through social analysis the coordinating team managed to find out the knowledge that parents could bring into the education of their children and the socio-political factors that might impede their contribution. The parents were encouraged not to doubt their wealth of capital and contribution and thus urged to continue to support their children.

3.8   CONCLUSION

In the introduction, the chapter highlighted the main aspects of the research design and methodology. The design section discussed issues of conceptualisation of the study to profiling of schools and of the coordinating team members. These profiles enhanced data gathering and collaborative planning processes. In the same vein, the roles and responsibilities of the participants were discussed in order to proactively address and avert possible conflicts. Furthermore, this was helpful in addressing the inherent power struggles. It was also imperative to describe and discuss the relationship between the researcher and the participants. This was critical to the issues of levelling of power struggles between them as they prepared to engage intensely in the collaborative planning and implementation processes. The planning process considered preparation and joint planning of the five study objectives.

The selection of PAR as the appropriate methodology for data collection assisted the parents to look at their engagement critically. By applying PAR principles of establishing a close relationship with the participants the researcher helped the participants to identify their problems and work on them. To gather the desired

data requires the researcher to humble himself/herself as part of CER principles of advancing social justice. The inclusion of other community members in the study enhanced the principle of inclusion and social justice. Through the application of the FAI of Meulenberg-Buskens, the parents were allowed to relate their stories of being marginalised by those who control access to the discourse. By allowing the parents to talk about their stories a better view of their engagement was accessed. Through the use CDA one was able to see how the text can be used to justify oppression of one group by the other.

The next chapter deals with data analysis, presentation and interpretation of the findings on effective framework for managing parental engagement in schools.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS ON EFFECTIVE FRAMEWORK FOR MANAGING PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT IN SCHOOLS

4.1   INTRODUCTION

The study aims at designing a framework for managing parental engagement in schools. It describes and discusses how data was analysed towards the formulation of an effective framework for managing parental engagement at school. At the analysis and interpretation level the coordinating team applied van Dijk's (2004:22) critical discourse analysis (CDA) to analyse how the language at the textual, contextual and social structural levels were used discursively to display, reproduce, enact dominance, power relations and inequality in order to maintain the status quo between the powerful and the subalterns. The chapter concludes by highlighting the key findings that will be used to design the envisaged framework so as to enhance and sustain parental engagement.

Data was collected in two ways and categorised in terms of the objectives of the study, namely by following a participatory action research (PAR) cycle of initiating conversations with the participants during the study meetings, and visiting the research sites to strengthen the statements of the participants. This was crucial in order to use multiple sources instead of seeing one side only. I present the data gathered at the study meetings in the form of the voices of the participants as co-researchers of their situation. After constituting a research team and engaging in SWOT analysis (see 3.5.2) coordinating team explored the depth of parental engagement at their schools by applying the principles of FAI (Meulenberg-Buskens, 1997:2-3), in which the participants dealt with an open, non-directive question, *'how can we best enhance the engagement of parents at our schools such that it becomes sustainable?* The views of the participants to this one

question were captured and categorised according to the objectives of the study, as will be explained in this chapter.

4.2. THE NEED IDENTIFICATION:CHALLENGES AT SCHOOL RELATING TO PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

This section discusses data in respect of the key aspects that constitute the challenges, and therefore the need for the framework for parental engagement. These are the coordinating team that should facilitate and mediate the activities of the affected participants; the lack of shared vision that should unite the efforts of the participants towards effective learning and teaching; the disregard for supporting legislative imperatives; lack of situational analysis; joint planning the lack of implementation plan; and, finally the lack of reflection to monitor and evaluate the framework for its effective implementation.

4.2.1 Lack of coordinating team

There should be a dedicated team that drives the process of parental engagement at school level (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001:121; McKechnie, 2003:117; Michigan Department of Education, 2011:57; Moles, Jr. & Fege, 2011:8). The existence of such a team will ensure that advocacy is done in order to conscientise parents about the importance of working together with teachers to promote the learners' education (Michigan Department of Education, 2011:61). Such a team can also ensure that partnership between the school and parents is strengthened and that schools account to the parents and community regarding the learners' education (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001:124). According to Ehlers and Lazenby (2010:6), the existence of the coordinating team aligns the different views from different participants. They further argue that the existence of a coordinating team is crucial in order to ease any tension and provide common direction. Without such a team no one would play a key role in ensuring that parental engagement at the two schools was planned, promoted or implemented in a manner that allowed them to show and share their talents (Nordqvist & Melin, 2008:326).

However, the two schools did not have a dedicated coordinating team to address issues of common interest. As a result the following below par performances were noted: learner attainment dropped from 75% to 50% and 50% to 47% over a period of 3 years; the learner discipline was characterised by poor attendance of classes and the use of intoxicating substances; parental attendance at school meetings was poor to the extent that some important meetings were postponed; the school-community interaction was virtually non-existent because stakeholders with interest in education lacked information on how to get involved in school activities. The lack of a coordinating team impacted negatively on the functionality of these schools because the efforts of the parents and other potential participants were excluded from their transformation discourses. This is clear from their non-engagement in the financial affairs of the schools, maintenance of the physical environment, learner discipline and learner attainment activities (2.4.1.1 - 2.4.1.6). This means that parents' efforts were not coordinated or maximised to address the challenges relating to dysfunctionality. Learners and the school in general could therefore not derive optimum benefits.

The non-existence of a coordinating team was clear in Mmathabo's statement that she always wanted to contribute to the welfare of the school but did not know how, as there was no team to engage ordinary parents fully in their children's education. Therefore, the existence of such a team provided her with a platform to raise her concerns and shape her community's children (Chirspeels & Rivero, 2001:124; Mahlomaholo & Netshandama, 2012:37; Skollernorn, 1998:557). At one of the coordinating team's meeting she said:

Ke ikutlwa ke thabile ho ba karolo ya moifo ona.Jwaloka ka lekhanselara ke ne ke ntse ke labalabela ho nka karolo dikolong empa ke sa tsebe jwang… Boteng ba moifo ona bo re bulela mamati ho aha thuto ya bana ba rona e thekeselang. [I feel excited to be part of this team. As a ward councillor I have always wanted to contribute in school welfare but did not know how … The presence of this team opens the doors for us to rebuild the education of our children that is shaking.]

The phrase '*bo re bulela mamati*' [it opens opportunities for us] implies that before the formation of the coordinating team Mmathabo and other parents were not given the opportunity to belong to committees or contribute. She and other parents

were excluded and gagged by those who were holding institutional power, as in her phrase *'empa ke ne ke sa tsebe jwang'* [but I did not know how.] Her statement indicates that she did not know how to participate in the welfare of the school, notwithstanding that there were SGBs at the two schools (Valdes, 1996:162). This means that the establishment of the coordinating team was in her view imperative, because the existing structures at the two schools did not prove useful. It provided her with an opportunity that the SGBs and SMTs could not provide. Furthermore, she was excited by and welcomed the establishment of the coordinating team, as is clear from the statement '*ke ikutlwa ke thabile hoba karolo ya moifo ona.*' [I feel excited to be part of this team.] Her view was that as part of the team she would contribute on matters she and others experienced and which affected the learners' behaviour and performance at school.

The willingness to belong and participate as a team member is also clear from the statements of Ms Neo that:

Re lokela ho iteanya le dithavene, mapolesa, disoshial workers, dikereke le di ward khanselara ka ho rekisetswa bana jwala le dithefatsi. [we need to meet with the nearby taverns, the police, social welfare, the churches and ward councillors regarding the selling of liquor and drugs to the learners.]

The phrase *'re lokela'* [we need to] means that before the start of this study there was no structure that could offer the participants this opportunity to deal with the challenges of their lives. The coordinating team therefore served as a platform of concerted efforts from various community members to share expertise and provide hope to the community (Swantz, 2008:38). Selling liquor to school learners leads to social injustice, takes away hope for the future and disturbs social peace. This parent seemed to have a clear understanding of life in general, hence suggesting a multi-pronged team consisting of the tavern owners, police, social workers, churches and ward councillors to deal with community issues. The fact that she indicated ' *…ho iteanya le…'* [to consult with] shows that she wanteed issues to be addressed in a peaceful manner. This is consistent with the principles of peace, consultation, freedom and social justice (Moles Jr. & Fege, 2011:5). The absence of the coordinating team at these schools meant that ordinary parents who were not necessarily members of the SGBs could not find a platform to express their

views or contribute to the effective development of their schools. It also meant that parental engagement was not given the priority it deserved. This multi-pronged team encouraged the enhancement of school-community interactions which was necessary to provide additional resources to the school (Gordon, 2010:32).

The fact that Mmathabo and other parents were 'denied' opportunities to belong to a team that improves parental engagement and also contribute to the general school improvement, was against the spirit of Ubuntu, social justice, peace, freedom and respect for other people's knowledge (Reason & Bradbury, 2008:699). In a democratic world people should be allowed to contribute as much as they can to enhance the quality of their lives and service delivery in general. Section 30 (1) (b) of SASA stipulates that parents should serve on various sub-committees of the school created by the SGB. The existence of a coordinating team in the USA in the form of Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE), Parent Management Training (PMT) and the Parent Information Resource Centres (PIRC) ensured that parents were mobilised to support their children's education through the training sessions offered (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001:121; Dumas, Moreland, Gitter, Pearl,& Nordstrom, 2008:619; Moles, Jr. & Fege, 2011:8). Similarly, in Zimbabwe, the School Development Committees (SDC) mobilised parents to look after their schools by encouraging them to pay school fees as a way of sustaining them (Chikoko, 2009:53). The intervention efforts by the coordinating team assisted parents in gaining a better understanding of the school's programmes relating to the learners' performance.

A closer look at the team establishment and team work reveal the critical role that it provides in respect of creation of a 'contradictory space' (Mahlomaholo & Netshandama, 2012:37). This is a space that tends to afford an opportunity to engage and accommodate diverse situational experiences, knowledge and skills of the participants (Skollerhorn, 1998:557). The SDC in Zimbabwe stayed on because the participants based their team work on some mutually agreed upon principles and values. These included values such as mutual trust and respect (Moles Jr. & Fege, 2011:9; Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2010:141). Furthermore, these values and principles sustained the teams by enabling them to balance the inherent power relations struggles, because the diversity referred to here included

bringing together leaders who have wielded administrative, political and knowledge power (Van Dijk, 2008). This is evident in the SDC, where participants also included the local councillors (political power), school administrators (administrative power), teachers and parents (knowledge power). Likewise, in the USA, the coordinating team, the Action team for Partnership (ATP), comprised the teachers, school administrators, parents, community members and high school learners. Sheldon (2011:100) argues that this diverse composition was essential in guiding and coordinating school-community engagement efforts. The coordinating team by virtue of adopting the set of principles and values according to which the team would be led, managed to address inherent ideological, cultural and political power differential issues.

4.2.2 Lack of shared vision

The existence of a common vision unifies divergent views (Ehlers & Lazenby, 2010:69). Section 20(1) (e) of SASA stipulates that parents through their SGBs should support the principal, educators and other staff of the school in the performance of their professional functions. This implies that there should be a sharing of a vision between the parents and the teachers so that the school can improve its performance target. The sharing of a vision provides direction for both parents and teachers to work together to achieve their goal of ensuring that learners receive quality education (Ehlers & Lazenby, 2010:69; Moles Jr. & Fege, 2011:8). The sharing of a vision ensures that there is partnership of mutual respect, trust and support between the parents and the teachers (Moles Jr & Fege, 2011:9). This means that vision serves as a golden thread that links the parents, teachers and other community structures together to achieve the learners' education. When people share a vision they do not compete against each other (Senge, 1990:9) but rather use their strengths to complement one another, because they believe that this is the right way to go (Ehlers & Lazenby, 2010:366). This means that vision aligns the expectations of different stakeholders.

The lack of shared vision among the participants at the two schools implies that the stakeholders were working divisively, in 'silos,' and sometimes even against one another. This means that people were not focusing on the common issues

that make their schools succeed. This was possible because they could not focus their attention on the same issues, such as improving learners' performance, attending parents' meetings to plan together and work as a team. The lack of common vision among the stakeholders is evident in the data provided by reverend Nkosi, who operated in the locality of Matsieng school during one of the coordinating team's meetings. He indicated that *'… mokgokgo le matitjhere a hae ba sebedisa batswadi ho atjhiva mishini wa bona'* […the principal and his teachers use parents to achieve their own mission.] The phrase '…*ba sebedisa batswadi…*' […they use parents…] indicates that they did not share a common vision. To manipulate or use somebody has a negative connotation, and shows selfishness on the part of those who do it. It means profiting at the expense of others whilst pretending to be on their side. It is a surreptitious way of holding power over others. It is unethical to use a person to achieve one's own interests and still claim that they are a team. The fact that one group is using the other to achieve its own interests shows an unequal power over those who are being manipulated and used (Skollerhorn, 1998:556). In this case it shows that teachers were more powerful than parents. Using others to achieve one's mission is contrary to the principles of CER for mutual respect, social justice and peace, in that it will not allow for full and equal participation between the teachers and the marginalised parents (Francis & Le Roux, 2012:16). This amounts to abuse of power by the teachers.

The lack of shared vision was also elucidated by Ms Neo, a parent from Sediba school, who stated in a meeting of the coordinating team to brainstorm on the need for the study at the two schools that:

Ho na le dikarohano tse ngata sekolong pakeng tsa matitjhere, batswadi le bana sekolong sa rona mme ke nahana hore taba ena ke yona e re busetsang morao re le sekolo. Ke ka hoo sephetho sa sekolo se dulang se theoha selemo le selemo. [There are many differences between teachers, parents and learners at our school which I think account for holding the progress of the school. That it is why the results of the school continue to drop.]

The word 'd*ikarohano*' [differences] shows divergent views and ways of doing things. It also shows division, rift and non-tolerance of others' opinions. People

who have divergent views strive to win at all costs and triumph over their competitors. It shows an inability to balance the power relations between the parents and the teachers, further undermining CER principles for social justice and peace. When parents and teachers work against each other instead of teaming up together the school is likely to lose focus of its core business of ensuring quality teaching and learning. This may have negative repercussions for the learners, parents, the school and the community in general.

4.2.3 Disregard for legislative mandates

Sections 16A (1) c (i) and 58B (1) of the Education laws Amendment Act of 2007 stipulate that the teachers should develop an academic performance improvement plan and present it to the parents through their SGBs for adoption. It further emphasises that progress on the implementation of this plan be done before the end of June every year to the SGB. This view is supported by Moles Jr and Fege (2011:7), who argue that USA schools should develop with parents a parents' improvement plan that includes the inputs of parents regarding how to improve the learners' performance. Such a plan should further include working together with parents as equal partners (Flynn, 2007:230). Section 23(9) of SASA No. 84 of 1996 further stipulates that parent number in the SGB should be one more than the total number of other stakeholders combined.

There was a shift from the legislative mandates at the two schools in that parents and teachers were not working as a team. Firstly, they did not comply with the sections16A and 58B of Education Laws Amendment Act of 2007. Secondly, at both Matsieng and Sedibeng schools there was no joint planning between the teachers and parents to improve the learners' performance. Whatever plans were in place, they were imposed on the parents by teachers (Pushor, 2007:3). This means that there was disregard for the legislative mandates. Thirdly, the SGBs of the two schools were operating with half a quota of the parent component. This was in spite of section 23 (9) SASA of 1996, which stipulates that the total number of parents should be more than the total number of other stakeholders combined. The parents were not represented on the finance committees of the two schools

and this contradicted section 30 of SASA as amended, that the SGB should establish sub-committees and ensure that persons who are not necessarily its members are appointed to serve on them. This implies that there was a disregard for the legislative imperatives which excluded parents from serving in such a committee. Furthermore, section 4.1 of SACE No.31 of 2000 stipulates that teachers should recognise parents as partners in education and should therefore promote a warm, harmonious relationship with them. The disregard for legislative mandates was evident in Ms Gift's statement, during one of the meetings of the coordinating team, that:

Sekolong sa rona ha re na di grade meetings ho plena thuto ya bana' [*At our school we do not have the grade meetings to plan the education of our children*.]

This situation contradicts sections 16A and 58B of the Education Laws Amendment Act of 2007, which implies that teachers are disregarding the legislative mandates to jointly develop a plan with parents about how to improve the learners' education.

The disregard for legislative mandates was clear from the data provided by reverend Nkosi, that

Tjhelete e khontrolwa ke matitjhere ba le bang…' [Money is controlled by teachers alone…]

According to section 30 (1) of SASA of 1996 as amended, parents should form part of the Finance Committee of the school. This was necessary in order to ensure transparency in terms of how money should be utilised. Failure to include parents in the financial affairs of their school shows that teachers were not upholding the legislation. It also casts doubt and shows lack of respect for parents who are financial contributors of the school and yet are excluded from its usage.

The failure to follow the legislative mandates was also clear from the statement of Mr Sishi, the deputy principal at Matsieng school, who indicated during one of the meetings of the coordinating team to identify the need for the study that:

Batswadi ha ba tle sekolong ha ba bitswa ke mosuwehlooho mabapi le boitshwaro ba bana ba bona. [Parents do not come to school when called by the principal to address the behaviour of their own children.]

Failure by parents to attend meetings at school contravenes section 6.2 of the guidelines for the consideration of SGBs in adopting a code of conduct for learners as promulgated in general notice 776 May 1998. This section stipulates that parents should attend meetings called by the SGB.

Learner discipline is the responsibility of both the teachers and parents, therefore when parents do not come to school when called by the principal they are also disregarding legislative mandates. The implication for this could lead to lack of cohesion and teamwork, which should enable teachers and parents to work harmoniously to promote the learners' education. This can further impress on the learners a culture of disrespect for legislative imperatives both at school and in society in general.

According to Moles Jr. and Fege (2011:7), the disregard for legislative mandates in the USA made other schools bypass the expectations of the states. Because of a lack of systematic monitoring and enforcement some schools continued to marginalise the parents from playing an active role in their children's education (Ajayi et al., 2009:42; Mncube, 2007:131). The disregard for legislative mandates could spell a lack of vision, cohesion, mutual respect and teamwork. It is a recipe for social injustice, and lack of respect for partnership or accountability on the part of both the teachers and parents.

4.2.4 Lack of situational analysis

In order to gain a better understanding of the nature and extent of the problem at hand, a situational analysis of the area of the study by the participants has to be undertaken (van Deventer, 2003:81). In this study, the coordinating team facilitated the processes at the two schools and consolidated the results thereof during its meetings. These processes considered the strengths relating to parental engagements at the two schools on matters pertaining to the learners' attainment;

learners' discipline; management of school finances; maintenance of school infrastructure; communication between the school and the community; and the engagement of parents in the SGB. These processes also unearthed issues relating to the weaknesses that the two schools had in respect of these legislated priority areas according to SASA, section 20 and SACE Act 31 of 2000 section 4.1. The coordinating team explored the possible opportunities that could be beneficial to addressing the identified priorities. In order for the team to enhance successful implementation of the envisaged solutions the inherent threats and risks were identified and mitigated against. When one is aware of the situation, a better strategy can be designed to deal with the possible threats (Flouris & Yilmaz, 2010:32).

Neither school engaged in a SWOT analysis to determine its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats with regard to the enhancement of parental engagement. As a result, the finances at Matsieng school, for instance, were incomplete and resulted in disciplinary action against both the principal and the financial clerk. Parents were not included on the Finance Committee, as evident from the data by the reverend Nkosi, who was also a member of the coordinating team. During one of the coordinating team meetings that identified the need for this study as part of the situational analysis, he said:

Tjhelete e khontrolwa ke matitjhere ba le bang. Hona ho kgothaletsa bobodu le ho utswa. [Money is controlled by teachers alone. This encourages mismanagement of funds and fraud.]

The Reverend Nkosi was concerned about was the lack of engagement of parents in the control and management of the school finances, highlighting that this function was performed by teachers alone. He further considers this act as promoting corruption and was concerned about the power wielded by teachers who controlled the school finances. He appeared to raise this view of power wielded by teachers in the phrase '*e khontrolwa ke*' (it is controlled by). His view is also that this abuse of power manifests itself in the promotion of corruption which is a financial misconduct. The exclusion of parents from the Financial Management Committee was also inconsistent with the provision of section 16A (2) (J) of SASA as amended. The seriousness of the impact of the exclusion of

parents from finance management activities of the school hampered their participation in other priority areas that required funds. For instance, the maintenance of school premises by parents needs funds, also considering the relatively high unemployment rates in the area of this study. In the same vein, the issue of learner attainment may require some financial injection possibly for extra learning support materials. On the issue of communication, for instance, the proposal was that the school should consider the use of short messages (SMS texts) to invite parents to meetings. This has similar financial implications to those of the print media.

Parental engagement was evidently not treated as a priority that could lead to improved learner performance and general school effectiveness. As a result of this failure the teachers could not recognise that parents could be the resource that they and learners could utilise to turn around the situation at their schools. The lack of SWOT analysis at the two schools prevented them from investing fully in the communities that they served or accounting to them in terms of learner performance. The lack of SWOT analysis at the two schools further implied that there was no plan to engage parents in terms of improving the learners' performance (Moles, Jr. & Fege, 2011:7). The lack of SWOT analysis also indicated that the parents at the two schools could not incorporate the views of their community into what was going on at school (Simon, 2004:13). This means that the school missed out on the resources, expertise and other services which they could have accessed from the community.

It is evident from the discussion immediately above that the lack of continual situational analysis could lead to serious abuse of power that could result in a vicious cycle of social injustices (Nkoane, 2012:4). These in turn could lead to disregard for equity, peace and hope while showing disrespect for the legislated public mandates.

4.2.5 Lack of collaborative planning

Parental engagement needs thorough collaborative planning by affected participants for it to succeed (Rodrigues-Brown, 2009:5). This planning should be

geared towards achieving effective parental engagement in schools (Michigan Department of Education, 2011:8). According to Mitchell County School System (MCSS, 2012:1), when there is collaborative planning, parents and other community members are afforded the opportunity to make inputs regarding what is being planned and how it should be implemented. This is supported by Haastrup and Alonge (2012:17), who argue that parents through their SGBs have to be engaged in planning for learners' achievement.

Collaborative planning is also supported by legislation in RSA in that Sections 16A and 58B of the Education Laws Amendment Act 31 of 2007 provide that parents should be consulted with regard to the development of the schools' academic performance improvement plans. This act provides that progress reports should be provided every six months to the SGBs, thus parents and other community members should be consulted before the decisions are implemented. According to van Deventer (2003:84-85), planning enables parties to set themselves standards for performance, draw a budget to achieve their standards and also identify the possible threats that may hamper them to achieve their plans. This shows respect towards parents as worthy role-players in their children's education.

However, there was no comprehensive plan at the two schools to enhance parental engagement or to engage parents in collaborative planning in order to improve the learners' academic achievement (Harvard Family Research Project, 2009:10-11). Important meetings in which collaborative planning was supposed to be carried out had sometimes been postponed as a result of the low turnout of parents. The lack of joint planning between the parents and the teachers implies that there was no focus on systematic plans to sustain meaningful collaboration and partnership. This means that teachers were planning alone and for parents without giving them the opportunity to make inputs. In such a situation the voice of the parents in shaping the direction of their children's education was either insufficient or non-existent. Pushor and Ruitenberg (2005:12) describe such a situation as a platform on which parents speak through the voice of the teachers because they only do the things that teachers tell them to do (Michigan Department of Education, 2011:13).

The lack of collaborative planning was evident from the data provided by Ms Neo, a parent at Sediba school. When asked about joint planning in one of the meetings of the coordinating team that considered the need for this study, she stated that:

Matitjhere a etsa diqeto a le mang. Ha ba re khonsalte. [Teachers take decisions alone. They do not consult us.]

The phrase '…*ha ba re khonsalte…* '[they do not consult us] shows that teachers do not consult parents when they plan or implement their plans. The plan seems to be understood by Ms. Neo as reflective of the decisions taken by teachers. However, her view in this context also reflects a person yearning for consultation and engagement in the planning processes. It would thus appear that parents are not respected as people who can think or contribute positively to the planning processes (Mahlomaholo, 2009:225). By planning alone teachers impose their views on the parents. This is also indicative of abuse of power by teachers. This abuse of power excludes parents from contributing towards shaping the education of their children (Nkoane, 2012:6). The practice does not promote equity, peace or social justice, but deprives parents of an opportunity to exercise their freedom to participate in the education of their children (Ajayi et al., 2007:42). This may lead to withdrawal of parents which can be interpreted as lack of interest in their children's education (Flynn, 2007:23). This way of planning prevents parents from owning such plans, and thus creates problems for implementation.

The above discussion illustrates that parents in these two schools were not engaged in the processes of identifying the activities through which the identified priorities could be achieved. They were deprived of an opportunity to avail their skills, knowledge and competencies through the planning process of delegation of responsibilities. Nor were they part of an exercise of resource allocation for the implementation of the activities or their respective timeframes. They could not contribute to the development of monitoring and evaluation processes (Moles Jr. & Fege, 2011:6).

To illustrate this we consider the priority on learner attainment as an aftermath of the coordinating team. This the team identified activities such as developing and

implementing homework policy, offering extended learning opportunities and after-school programmes at communal and school levels. These activities were allocated to parents who showed a keen interest in and capacity to execute them. Parents also indicated and confirmed their availability. Subsequently, the activities were allocated resources such as classrooms, in which extended learning was conducted. These extended learning opportunities took place in the afternoon from 15:00 to 16:30. They were developed at the request of Neo, who was concerned that learners lost considerable time for learning as a result of closing of gates when they were late in the morning. During the planning session that was preceded by the SWOT analysis she said:

Ho teha mohlala, matitjhere a kwala di geiti hoseng bakeng sa bana ba fihlang lata. Ba di bula ka boreiki. Taba ena e etsa hore bana ba lata ba lahlehelwe ke nako. [For instance, teachers lock gates in the morning for learners who come late. They open the gates during break. This causes learners to lose a lot of time.]

That school gates are only reopened during break was a course for concern for Neo and the coordinating team. The time taken for them to be reopened, 'during break,' accounts for two hours, which is equivalent to for periods of about 30 minutes each. This defeats the purpose of improved learner attainment which the schools aim to achieve. It was as a result that the extended learning opportunities were introduced as activities to make up for possible lost time, noting the possibilities of similar time wasting occurrences during normal tuition time at school. Notwithstanding this activity, the collaborative planning process by the coordinating team, SMT, SGB, teachers and parents worked out alternative mechanisms for addressing late coming. These included issues such as grounding of latecomers for the substantial time to cover up for the time lost in morning. This grounding was supervised by parents and teachers who availed their services accordingly.

The implementation of these activities by the delegated persons was tracked through the progress given during the coordinating team's monthly meetings. In order to ease the subsequent processes of monitoring and evaluation, the progress given was thoroughly analysed and assessed. It considered various possibilities to improve performance and achievement of a said priority. This was

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done with the understanding that achievement of the priorities leads to achievement of parental engagement. As a result the plan was also as an implementation tool that enhanced the reviews and adjustments of the plan. Thus planning was not static, it evolved with the progress made.

The lack of collaborative planning to enhance parental engagement and learner achievement at the two schools implies that there was no collaborative effort to implement the unilateral decision taken by teachers in these areas. For parents to engage usefully they need to be part of that process and speak for themselves (Pushor & Ruitenberg, 2005:12). This is evident from the data provided by Ms Neo, a parent at Sedibeng at one of the meetings of the coordinating team:

…ba di bula ka boreiki…' Se na se ka hlahisetsa bana kotsi ha ba ntse ba eme kantle le ho ba kgothaletsa ho tlalatlala le motse. [They open them during break time. This can compromise the learners' safety and encourage them to loiter in the community.]

That this parent raises an objection to the decision already taken and implemented by teachers shows that she was not party to it and might not support its successful implementation. This would create unnecessary divisions that may hamper the progress towards achievement of the goals. If such a parent finds an opportunity she could raise a dissenting voice which teachers may regard as unpalatable and negative, when it was not so. The issue here, according to this parent, was how parents could be expected to implement decisions to which they were not party.

This led to another problem, that of lack of implementation at the two schools. This was because teachers and parents did not work collaboratively to identify priorities, suggest strategies for each priority or share responsibilities (Michigan Department of Education, 2011:14). They could not attach timeframes or report on the impact or progress that they were making. The non-availability of an implementation plan was a problem in that there was no focus, implying that the teachers and parents were working divisively. This was evident from the data provided by Ms Gift during the meeting of the Coordinating Committee, that:

Matitjhere ba nka hore ha re etla sekolong re tlo ba nkela mosebetsi wa bona kapa re tlisitse mathata. [Teachers think that when we come to school we are going to take their work or bring them problems.]

The phrase *'… re tlisetse mathata '* [we have brought problems] shows *a* failure by teachers to understand and identify the priorities for parental visits to school. If this was identified as a priority during joint planning, teachers would have known that parents' visits to school serve to strengthen them to achieve the objectives of their schools. This statement further confirms the literature that teachers often think that parents' visits to schools are about raising complaints about their work (Flynn, 2007:24). Therefore, preventing parents from coming to school can create learning gaps which parents could have closed had they been allowed to visit (Harvard Family Research Project, 2009:2).

4.2.6 Lack of reflection

For parental engagement to succeed there should be reflection on what is being done as a way of assessing the effectiveness thereof (Bermudez & Marquez, 1996:5). Reflection is essential because it enables all those involved to fathom parental engagement by evaluating its impact (Rogers, 1999:19). Through the process of reflection the participants are able to take a stance of being both the actors and their own critics (van Loggerenberg, 2002:45), in that every task that is allocated and accomplished is critically analysed to evaluate its impact. This is necessary in order to ensure that only tailored solutions to problems of parental engagement are found for the participating schools. Through the process of reflection the coordinating team can view parental engagement at the two schools within the whole social, political and economic context within which they are mired. The process of reflection helps to unearth issues of power inequalities, democracy, freedom and social justice as they relate to parental engagement (Rearick & Feldman, 1999:336).

However, there was no reflection at the two schools regarding the enhancement of parental engagement or the impact it could make in enhancing the learners' performance. The non-existence of a coordinating team at these schools to

spearhead parental engagement implies that the stakeholders were not working as partners or reflecting on their practices relating to parental engagement. This was traced from the data provided by Ms Semonye, a parent at Matsieng school. During one of the meetings to reflect on the actions of participants to enhance parental engagement, she indicated that:

Stadi sena se re file monyetla oo re neng re se na ona wa ho itekola hore ebe re ntse re hata ka tshwanelo kapa tjhee. [This study has given us the opportunity that we did not have to evaluate whether we are still going as expected or not.]

The phrase *'monyetla oo re neng re se na ona wa ho itekola'* [opportunity that we did not have to evaluate ourselves] implies that parents and other stakeholders did not have the opportunity to reflect on their practices together before the initiation of the study. This further implies that they were not aware of the factors that hindered effective parental engagement and therefore could not be in a position to suggest possible solutions to their problems. According to Ms Semonye, the study provided her and other stakeholders with the opportunity to pause and reflect on the impact of their actions in order to bring about school effectiveness (Patrikakou, 2011:132). Ms Semonye's sentiments were also expressed by councillor Sellwane, at the same meeting:

Pele re ne re itshebeletsa feela, e mong le e mong a iketsetsa taba tsa hae empa stadi sena se re fa monyetla wa ho sheba morao hore leeto la rona le nolofale. [Before we were just working individually but this study gives us the opportunity to look back so that our journey can be easy.]

The statement by councillor Sellwane points out that previously the stakeholders at the two schools were working in silos and were not reflecting on their practices. This study is crucial in that it gives them a platform to reflect as a strategy of making their journey into the future much simpler. Therefore, reflection enables them to analyse and critique their own practices (Rogers, 1999:19; van Loggerenberg, 2002:45). If the participants were not reflecting on their actions they would not be in a position to transcend the obstacles that undermined their engagement through proper understanding (Rearick & Feldman, 1999:336). In the USA the lack of regular monitoring and reflection by the coordinating structures for

activities relating to enhancing parental engagement, although regulated by the law, did not lead to the desired results. (Harvard Family Research Project, 2009:10; Moles Jr. & Fege, 2011:6). According to Speth, Saifer and Forehead, 2008:17), many other state education agencies failed to "systematically monitor implementation of the plans of schools in improvement," which led to decreased parental engagement. The lack of reflection and regular monitoring at the two schools implies that parental engagement was neither focused nor effective.

4.3   COMPONENTS OF THE FRAMEWORK TO ENHANCE PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT IN EDUCATION

This section discusses the components of the framework that will facilitate and enhance the processes geared towards addressing the challenges outlined in paragraph 4.2 above.

4.3.1 Establishment of a coordinating team

The establishment of a coordinating team plays a crucial role in steering the study project forward (Ehlers & Lazenby, 2010:5). For this team to work collaboratively it should be representative of all stakeholders with an interest in the school and the education of the children in general (Mertens, 2009:200). This is crucial in order to ensure that diversity is embraced and that the team enjoys public credibility and support. This will also ensure a proper distribution of power from all people with interest in education. The team plays a critical role in ensuring that strategic planning process is implemented and that activities relating to the achievement of key priorities are realised (Nordqvist & Melin, 2008:326). It should ensure that the entire study project relating to successful enhancement of parental engagement at the two schools becomes a success. In this study the coordinating team was representative of the SMTs, parents, religious leaders, municipal leaders and the SMGD (3.3.3).

This was necessary to draw experience from different stakeholders who all work with parents almost on a daily basis. This team was responsible for ensuring that parental engagement was enhanced at the two participating schools with a view to improve learner performance and ultimately school effectiveness. The establishment of a coordinating team to develop a framework that would enhance parental engagement at the two schools was welcomed enthusiastically by participants. This is evident from the view expressed by Councillor Sellwane during the first meeting to establish a coordinating:

Sesotho se re ntja pedi ha e hlolwe ke sebata. Ke ntho e nthabisang ho ba karolo ya thimi ya ho sebetsa le matitjhere le batswadi ho ntlafatsa thuto ya ngwana Mo – Afrika. Ha re kopane, re le ntho e le nngwe re ka hlola mathata a mangata. [Sesotho idiom says two or more people can do the job better than one person. I am happy to be part of a team of teachers and parents who work to improve the education of an African child. When we are together as one, we can address many problems.]

Councillor Sellwane uses the Sesotho idiom *'ntja pedi'* to show the importance of team spirit in addressing the challenges that affect the learners' education. She indicated that it was easy to work as a team, unlike trying to address the educational challenges of learners alone. This, according to Councillor Sellwane, would create a space for the parents and teachers to have a common understanding of their challenges. According to her it is through working together that people gain educational knowledge and skills necessary to enable them to successfully address and overcome their social injustice and other life challenges (Mahlomaholo, 2012:34-35).

In this study the challenge that the coordinating team faced was to enhance the voice of parents in the education of their children by ensuring that they are accorded a platform as members of the coordinating team so that they can speak for themselves (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001:124; Pushor & Ruitenberg, 2005:12). Councillor Sellwane's statement that she was pleased to be part of a team of teachers and parents further signifies her willingness to belong and submit herself as a team player. She did not see herself as above others, in spite of her position

in the community as a political leader. This shows that she espoused values of Ubuntu, teamwork, social justice and freedom.

4.3.2 Sharing of a vision

The sharing of a vision is crucial in ensuring that stakeholders from different backgrounds focus their energies on a common issue (Moles, Jr. & Fege, 2011:9; Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2008:141). They furthermore argue that vision can be used to energise the participants to resist further subjugation and map the democratic vision of what they can become. Vision ensures that participants work as a team and not as competitors (Moles,Jr. & Fege, 2011:9), and vision sharing among the participants was critical to ensure that parental engagement was enhanced at both schools and learners' performance could also improve (Senge, 1990:9; Wilson, 2012:2). The sharing of a vision can only be possible if the participants uphold certain norms and values (West-Burnham, 2003:9; Senge, 1990:9).

The coordinating team that steered this research study adopted norms and values such as mutual respect to ensure that all participants were treated with respect and equality, with no domination of one participant by others; teamwork, to assist the team to share their experiences, knowledge and skills; honesty, in order to provide a balanced view of the situation; punctuality, to implement the plan and ensure respect for deadlines; diversity, to accommodate different views; and freedom of expression, to speak in the language that is best understood by all participants (Shields & Sayani, 2005:396). According to Sergiovanni (2001:66), adherence to these values is crucial in order to bind the participants together and ensure that the coordinating team achieved its mandate in terms of the priorities mentioned in paragraph 4.3 above.

The sharing of a vision was emphasised by Ms Gift, a parent at Matsieng school during a session to identify the components for parental engagement at the two schools:

Re lokela ho fedisa dikarohano pakeng tsa rona le matitjhere. Matitjhere a lokela ho bona batswadi e le karolo ya bona letsholong la ho ntlafatsa thuto ya bana. [We need to bridge the gap between us and the teachers. The teachers should see us as part of them in an effort to improve the education of the children.]

The statement by Ms Gift that *'re lokela ho fedisa dikarohano pakeng tsa rona le matitjhere'* [we should end divisions between us (parents) and teachers] indicates the willingness by parents to share a vision with the teachers, because vision promotes inclusivity and social cohesion, shared values and development of a learning community (West-Burnham, 2003:9). The parent, Ms Gift, points out the importance of sharing a vision with teachers so that all can focus on one core responsibility, namely, improving the learners' education. A plea by Ms Gift to end any divisions or rifts between teachers and parents suggests the existence of unequal power relations that prevailed before the inception of this study at the two schools. These divisions accounted for the poor parental engagement and poor academic performance by learners, as well as school ineffectiveness.

The importance of a shared vision was corroborated by Ms Sellwane, a municipal leader from Sediba school. She indicated during one of the meetings of the coordinating team to brainstorm about the components for parental engagement that:

Re lokela ho sebedisana mmoho le dikolo hore thuto ya bana e tswele pele hantle. [We need to work together with schools so that the education of our children can improve.]

In the same vein, the principal of Sediba school, Mr King, also supported the sentiments echoed by both Ms Gift and councillor Sellwane that:

Thuto e lokelwa ho kopanelwa. [Education needs shared responsibility.]

All representatives from the parents, community and teachers were in unison in believing that for parental engagement to be enhanced all should work together. It thus become apparent from this discussion that a parental engagement framework for the two schools can only succeed when there is a common vision among all

the stakeholders. The sharing of a vision is imperative for supporting the legislative mandates of ensuring harmony between the teachers and the parents.

4.3.3 Supporting legislative imperative

The legislation forms a critical aspect in the regulation of parental engagement in the schools. Its regulatory function is pivotal in levelling and balancing inherent power relations and irregular practices that may not be in harmony with the principles of democratic governance of schools. This is evident in the plethora of legislative imperatives that represent public mandates in the RSA. For instance, section 16 (1) of SASA provides that "the governance of every public school is vested in its governing body," and section 16 A (1) (bb) of Education Laws Amendment Act, 31 of 2007 requires that the principal should table the academic performance improvement plan before the SGB. Subsequently, the progress in respect of the implementation of this plan is to be periodically reported to the SGB. Evidently, this requirement places a significant responsibility for the teachers, learners and parents to work collaboratively. It is furthermore evident that the roles that each stakeholder should play are also broadly spelt out. This is to afford the parents, learners and teachers as well as other stakeholders an opportunity to put them into operation accordingly.

The role of legislation as a critical component of parental engagement is also evident in policies and related laws in USA. Michigan Department of Education (2011:8) for instance, requires schools to develop parent involvement plans designed to support student achievement. Similarly, the Zimbabwean Education Act of 2007 stipulates that schools should work with parents as equal partners in improving learners' performance (Mudekunye & Ndamba, 2011:10). A similar situation is prevalent in Nigeria, where schools are also expected to enter into partnerships with parents in order to enhance learner attainment (Ademola & Olajumoke, 2009:458).

The importance of the development of agreed upon policies at micro level became apparent in the area of this study. The coordinating team meeting that solicited the participants' views about the need for this study, pointed, *inter alia*, to the need for

the homework policy. The coordinating team found that though the principals of the two schools confirmed that they do encourage parents to assist with homework but the two schools did not have a homework policy and that parents had not been taught how to assist with it. The principal of Matsieng school, Mr Tajeka, responded to the question about whether his school had homework as follows:

Ha re na homework polisi. Matitjhere a fa bana mosebetsi mme bana ba lokela ho etsa mosebetsi oo hae". [There is no homework policy. The teachers just give the learners work and the learners will do the work at home.]

This statement contradicts literature that schools should design a homework policy and share it with parents (Shumow, 2011:79; van Voorhis, 2011:111). According to Pushor (2010:3), the act of drawing a homework policy should be a dual responsibility between the schools and the parents. She further argues that parents should be co-constructors of homework policy and should have input on the time, amount of homework, and the roles that everyone has to play, depending on their context. The engagement of parents in co-constructing homework policy of the school is consistent with the principle of participation, power-sharing, human diversity, consultation and social justice (Grant, Nelson & Mitchell, 2008:590). Therefore, in the absence of a policy, it becomes difficult for parents to engage appropriately with their children's homework, as there is no structure to guide them. It is perhaps not fair for the schools to blame the parents for non-engagement in learners' homework when schools have not taken any initiative to expose or train parents in how to assist with homework. This is a deficit model which does not recognise (Barton et.al., 2004:4) the parents as worthy partners who can bring any difference in their children's learning. It also fails to recognise that parents have provided teaching long before the learners come to school.

The development and implementation of the homework policy in this study thus became an aspect that received attention. The homework policy was developed in collaboration with the other participants. It included aspects of time, amount of work and the roles played by the different participants. Supporting legislation became a critical aspect of parental engagement framework because the

legislation serves as a parameter within which one has to define one's own actions (Stelmach, 2008:18).

4.3.4 Situational analysis

The participants in the parental engagement processes are required to have sufficient knowledge and understanding of the nature and extent of the status of parental engagement in the affected schools (Bermudez & Marquez, 1996:6). This knowledge can be derived from an analysis of the environment for possible opportunities, strengths, weaknesses and threats (Common Wealth Secretariat, 1993:16; Ehlers & Lazenby, 2010:8, Van Deventer, 2003:81). The situational analysis helps the coordinating team to understand where and how power is gained and lost and who is included and excluded in making decisions in educational discourse affecting the learners' future (Kochan & Reed, 2005:77). This interpretive-analytic process should be conducted collaboratively by the team of participants who share a common goal regarding parental engagements. It also affords participants an opportunity to further interact with one another and have an occasion to share views, experiences, circumstances and situations regarding matters of parental engagement (Kemmis, 2008:127). This practice tends to enhance collaborative work, as was evident in the in the USA, where situational analysis was conducted to determine the needs of the participants in the Parent Resources Center (PRC) study (Bermudez & Marquez, 1996:4). In the same vein a situational analysis conducted in Zimbabwe in the study by Mudekunye and Ndamba (2011:10) revealed that the views of parents were not often considered when making decisions about the inclusion of learners with special educational needs.

In this study, situational analysis was considered as a part and parcel of the process of development and implementation of the framework for parental engagement at the two schools. It was conducted at the beginning, during the process of development and implementation of the framework for parental engagement. It was in line with the principles of the FAI technique to afford participants an opportunity to participate freely and openly (see chapter 3). In this

way pertinent and critical information and experiences were unearthed and shared. For instance, Ms. Gift, had this to say about the engagement of parents in learner's homework during one of the coordinating team's meetings to identify and follow-up on the role of parents in assisting their children with school work:

Ke kgona ho thusa ngwanaka ka accounting hobane ke na le lesedi la yona empa disubjects tse ding ke hloka lesedi le letle. [I can assist my child with accounting but as for the other subjects I do not have the knowledge.]

Ms Gift's view indicates that although parents may have knowledge of some subjects they may be struggling with others (van Voorhis, 2011:2). This view also supports the idea held by Hoover-Dempsey and Walker (2002:5) and Walker et al., (2004:3-7) (see 2.5.3.1) that parents need guidelines, if possible written, so that they can assist and monitor the learners' homework. These scholars have listed a number of activities that parents should carry out in order to engage meaningfully in their children's homework, such as creating a conducive environment, working with the teachers to spell out the instructions for doing homework, providing oversight, responding or providing help, engaging in direct teaching, as well as breaking tasks into manageable units, to mention a few. The situational analysis assisted the coordinating team to discover the capital that parents already have and which if identified and properly harnessed could benefit the school as a whole. For instance, a parent from Sediba school, Ms Neo, indicated how her mother had assisted her with mathematics homework and also instilled a love for maths in her. She stated this during one of the meetings of the coordinating team to follow-up on the role of parents in assisting their children with homework:

Ke ne ke hloile maths ha sa le sekolong. Ke ne ke dula ke dotjha klelase ya maths. E ne e re ha titjhere a kena ka klelasing e be key a toilet. Mme wa ka e ne e le motho ya inwellang mme a sa shebe mosebetsi wa ka wa sekolo.Ka tsatsi le leng ha ke ntse ke etsa homeweke ya maths yaba o mpotsa hore na ke etsang. O ile a nka buka ya ka ya maths yaba o qala ho ntlhalosetsa hore bodmas ke eng. O ile a re bodmas e bolela hore re qala ka dipalo tse ka masakaneng pele. Eitse ha ke utlwa a bua ka bodmas yaba ke hoopla seo titjhere a re rutileng sona klelasing. Tsatsing leo ke ile ka hlokomela hore mme w aka o ntse a tseba ho bala. O ile a

nketsetsa palo e le nngwe yaba o re ke etse tse ding. Ke ile ka sebedisa mohlala wa hae yaba ke nepa tse ding. Ha ke fihla sekolong titjhere o ne a maketse hore nah o tlile jwang ke nepe dipalo. Ke ile ka bolela hore ke thusitswe ke mme. Yaba ho tloha mohlang oo ke rata maths." [I used to hate maths as a learner. I would always dodge the maths class and go to the toilet whenever the maths teacher enters the classroom. My mom used to drink a lot and never checked my school work. One day as I was busy with maths homework she asked what I was doing. She grabbed my book and began to explain bodmas to me. She said that bodmas means starting to solve the figures within the brackets first. I immediately recalled what the teacher told us in classroom. She did one problem for me and thereafter let me do the rest which I got them right. When I arrived at school the teacher was surprised to find out that I got my maths right. When he asked who assisted me, I said it was my mom. From that day onwards I started to like maths.]

This statement by Ms Neo shows that parents can play a useful role in their children's education if conducive conditions prevail for them to share their capital (Cousins & Mickelson, 2011:2-3). This means that parents should be regarded as assets and worthy contributors of valuable knowledge. It also seeks to justify that education actually starts at home and is perfected at school (Heystek, 2004:111). Such knowledgeable parents could be utilised to assist other learners and parents in her vicinity. This step can encourage similar parents to offer their services and expertise so that communities can sustain themselves. Ms Neo's mother was able to fulfil the role of engaging with the homework as a parent provided tutoring to enhance the learner's understanding of mathematics. She also demonstrated that parents can contribute maximally to their children's learning (Jordan et al., 2002:14). The knowledge also justifies parents' place in collaborative planning.

4.3.5 Collaborative Planning

There should be collaborative planning by all the stakeholders for parental engagement to succeed. Collaborative planning is crucial in that it enables the stakeholders to achieve things together that they cannot achieve alone (Booher & Innes, 2002:227). They further indicate that collaborative planning is necessary in

order to motivate the stakeholders to change the status quo. It connects the stakeholders (i.e., parents, community members-religious and political leaders, SMTs, and the departmental official as school management and governance developer-SMGD) to work as a team geared towards the enhancement of parental engagement as the aim of the study. An effective planning allows the participants to forecast on the possible threats and work out solutions to circumvent them before they happen (Bermudez & Marquez, 2002:7; Nikols, 2011:4). Therefore, collaborative planning becomes a conclusive component for parental engagement in that it helps the coordinating team to address the real rather than perceived issues affecting parents at the two participating schools.

The importance of collaborative planning is demonstrated by Neo, a parent at Sediba school, who said this during one of the meetings of the coordinating to identify possible components for parental engagement at the two schools that:

Re lokelwa ho khonsaltuwa pele diqeto di etswa mabapi le thuto le boitshwaro ba bana ka kakaretso. [We should be consulted before decisions that affect our children's education and discipline in general are taken.]

The statement by Ms Neo calls for parental representation in the planning of their children's education. This means that parental engagement will only grow when the parents' voice is part of the plan to manage the school. This view supports that of Bermudez and Marquez (2002:7), that school efforts to address learner performance cannot succeed if they do not capture the views and inputs of parents. This shows that parents should be part of the school-wide planning to enhance learner achievement and general school effectiveness.

Ms Neo's sentiments were shared by Mr Sishi, a deputy principal at Matsieng school that:

Batswadi ba lokela ho ba karolo ya QLTC komiti hore ba be karolo ya meralo yohle ya ho ntlafatsa thuto ya bana jwaloka lefapha le labelabela. [parents should be part of the Quality learning and Teaching Campaign (QLTC) Committee so that they can become part of all plans to improve the education of the learners like the department of education requires.]

The phrase *'ba be karolo ya meralo yohle'* [be part of all the plans] shows the need for parents to be part of plans to improve learners' performance. It also shows that parents have the right to plan with the teachers and other community members how their children should be taught and what they should be taught. It further recognises the wealth of capital that parents are likely to bring to the education of their children.

The view that parents should be part of the QLTC plan is shared by Epstein (2007:20), that parents be engaged in the curriculum activities of the school so that they know what is going on the classroom. Therefore, parents were engaged in the curriculum matters of the two schools by supervising the afternoon studies and helping with the learners' homework because the participants identified these as priorities during the meetings of the coordinating team. The engagement of parents in these areas empowered them to track the performance of the children in their studies. Ms Gift, parent at Matsieng school, captured the views of parents that:

…*dikhomentse tse posetif tseo bana ba di fumanang di entse hore ke sapote ngwanaka ho fihlela a pasa matric.* […positive comments that children get about their potential have helped me to support my child until she finishes her matric.]

Therefore, collaborative planning enabled parents to walk side by side with teachers in enhancing parental engagement in their children's education. This ensured that learners received parental support, as echoed by Ms Gift.

The success of the Parent Resource Center (PRC) in Texas, USA, became successful because the parents were part of the planning process to enhance their engagement (Bermudez & Marquez, 2002:6). A similar situation arose in Zimbabwe where the parents in the SDCs worked together with other stakeholders to increase their engagement in school related issues (Chikoko, 2007:53). Therefore, collaborative planning ensures that power relations between teachers and parents are balanced, that parents are consulted and also engaged in the process of planning for the education of their children. The principle of consultation augers well for the values for democracy and social justice in that the plans are co-constructed by parents, teachers and other community members.

This is crucial for the successful implementation of such plans. When parents are consulted and their inputs solicited and integrated into the school improvement plans they will be motivated to support its implementation.

4.3.6 Reflection as conclusive component for parental engagement

There should be evaluation, monitoring and reflection in order for parental engagement to be enhanced. According to Rearick and Feldman (1999:336), the process of evaluation and monitoring enables the participants to be self-reflective of the social issues that parents and other stakeholders are faced with in their daily interactions. This means that the coordinating team members should reflect on whether their actions add value to the implementation of intended plans so that these should enhance social and cultural capital (Dantley, 2005:42; Rogers, 1999:19) of those involved. Reflection is critical in that it enables the participants to stand outside the whole process and begin to critique their own actions and suggest possible improvements (Nikols, 2011:6; van Loggerenberg, 2002:45). This ensures that the intended framework or outcome is of the highest quality that can improve the lives of those affected (Bermudez & Marquez, 1996:5). They further indicate that by engaging in the process of evaluation, monitoring and reflection, the coordinating team stands a better chance of counteracting any unforeseeable threats that may hinder successful implementation of the envisaged framework for parental engagement.

The process of monitoring, evaluation and reflection were also followed by the members of the coordinating team, through the data that was collected from the participants during the study meetings. These meetings created opportunities for the participants to evaluate the effectiveness of their actions activities, as Ms Gift attested during one of the meetings of the coordinating to identify the components for parental engagement

Ha e sa le ke ba karolo ya moifo o na ke kgonne ho hlokomela hore moradi wa ka ha a sebetse hantle thutong e nngwe ya hae ya ba ke nka mohato wa ho mo thusa le ho iteanya le titjhere wa hae. [Since I became part of this team I realised

that my daughter was not doing well in one of the subjects and I took steps to help her and also meet with her teacher.]

The phrase 'ke kgonne ho thusa' [I was able to help] indicates that the participation of Ms Gift in this study enhanced her awareness of the factors that affected her daughter 's education and would enable her to find solutions to them. It further means that her potential and self-worth developed through her participation in the study could now act as a resource for the school and the community (Balcazar et.al., 2006:10). Ms Gift's sentiments were also echoed by reverend Nkosi during one of the coordinating team's meetings:

Ho nka karolo ka hara QLTC khomithi ho re butse mahlo ho re re ka ntlafatsa thuto ya bana jwang re le batswadi. Setadi sena se re file monyetla wa ho sheipa thuto ya bana ba rona. [Taking part in the QLTC committee has opened our eyes to improve the education of the learners. This study has given us the opportunity to shape the education of our children.]

Participation in the curriculum was identified by the participants as one of the priorities that enhance parental engagement in school activities (Bermudez & Marquez, 1996:5). The phrase *'ho re butse mahlo'* [it has opened our eyes] indicates the skills and knowledge that the Reverend Nkosi and other parents acquired as a result of their participation in this study. From the figurative expression, to open one's eyes means exposing such person to things that he or she was not initially aware of.

When parents are able to assist their children academically the gap that exists between them and the teachers as professionals is narrowed. This is necessary in order to ensure equitable power sharing and mutual respect between parents and teachers (Moles Jr. & Fege, 2011:7). Furthermore, this makes the work of teaching the learners much easier in that both teachers and parents will be sharing their responsibilities. A study conducted by Bermudez and Marquez (1996:5) in the USA also found that parents increase their knowledge and participation after been part of the PRC project. The parents who participated in that study indicated that they could now help their children better with their school work, thus their participation gave them an opportunity to broaden their horizon in

terms of assisting their children with the schoolwork. Therefore, the process of evaluation, monitoring and reflection provided Ms Neo and other parents with the opportunity to monitor, evaluate and reflect on the impact of their actions and plans for enhancing parental engagement.

4.4   CONDITIONS CONDUCIVE TO ENHANCING PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

This section deals with the conditions conducive to enhancing parental engagement at the participating schools. These conditions were crucial in that ignoring them might hamper the successful implementation of the envisaged parental engagement framework. These include the establishment of the coordinating team, the sharing of a common vision, upholding the legislative mandates, situational analysis, collaborative planning and reflection on the impact of the envisaged framework.

4.4.1 Establishment of coordinating team

The coordinating team represented diversity prevalent in the affected area of the study (Hara & Burke, 1998:11). The diversity, for instance, in this study comprised SMTs, parents, religious leaders, political leaders and education officials. This ensured that conditions conducive to engaging parents are created with all participants instead of prescribing them for them (Pushor & Ruitenberg, 2005:i). This coordinating team was responsible for coordinating and implementing all activities relating to parental engagement at the participating schools. Through the establishment of the team the study managed to create a space for the expression of diverse views, experiences and knowledge (Mahlomaholo & Netshandama, 2012:37; Skollerhorn, 1998:557) in order to craft possible solutions to the problems of parental engagement at the participating schools. This facilitated processes of cohesion and synergy towards the attainment of a common goal and a social community of engaged parents in the education of their children (Ingram, 1987:186). This was possible in this study because the participants' views were argued to their logical conclusions, to the extent that the most logical idea was

pursued. For instance, there was a suggestion that police be brought in to deal with the tavern owners who were selling liquor to school learners. This was strengthened by the view that the situation was volatile and may strain relations between the school and the business community (tavern owners). The ultimate argument was to involve the tavern owners to gain the first-hand knowledge and information about the nature and extent of the problem that related to learners' use of alcohol. Subsequently, they together with the entire coordinating team, created further space for the determination of the solution. Ultimately an amicable solution was found. Evidently, and based on the above discussion it was not possible for one person to arrive at an amicable solution with the tavern owners. This needed a multi-skilled, open-minded team willing to debate issues to their logical and useful conclusions.

The existence of the Parent Information for Quality Education (PIQE) in the USA provided Latino parents with a communicative space to discuss their beliefs, define their roles and devise alternative ideas about how to engage better in their children's education (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001:124). The existence of the PIQE created opportunities for such parents to increase their knowledge and skills, therefore the existence of the coordinating team in this study also created space for parents to re-examine their engagement and exchange views with other stakeholders regarding this.

4.4.2 Sharing of vision

The sharing of vision synergises and converges diverse ideas and actions of the various stakeholders towards the achievement of a common goal (Kaplan & Norton, 1996:76). Through the sharing of a common vision the schools can set the best picture of themselves for the future (Bryson, 1988:77). In this study parental engagement as a vision was a driving force that mobilised the various stakeholders (i.e., parents, teachers, religious, political and educational representatives) to work towards the enhancement of learner performance and general school effectiveness. This was echoed by Councillor Sellwane from the

vicinity of Sediba school at one of the meetings of the coordinating to identify the conducive conditions for parental engagement. She indicated that:

Re lokela ho sebedisana mmoho le dikolo ho bona hore thuto ya bana e tswela pele hantle. [We should work together with schools to improve the learners' education.]

The statement by Councillor Sellwane was corroborated by Ms Neo, a parent from Sediba school at the same meeting:

Re lokela ho eletsana ka maemo a bana ba rona.' [We need to advise one another about the conditions of our children.]

The statement by Councillor Sellwane indicates that they (parents, politicians, religious and community members) should work together with the teachers. The phrase '*re lokela ho sebedisana mmoho'* [we should to work together] literally means the intention to work together. People who work together share common vision and values, without which they would work against one another.

In this study, working together included planning, identifying priorities and conditions together as well as reflecting on the achievement of the said priorities. When parents and teachers share a vision they can advise one another regarding the education of the learners. The sharing of a vision enabled the parents to work with teachers as equal partners. This is evident from the statement of Neo that '*re lokela ho eletsana'* [we need to advise one another], and shows that there was closeness which enabled the coordinating team members to have a common vision. Without a vision it would be difficult for members of the coordinating team to come together, advise one another or work together. According to Moles Jr. and Fege (2011:9), the sharing of a vision increases accountability and collective action. This is evident from the data provided by Ms Neo that *'re lokela ho eletsana'* [we need to advise one another], which increases collective action and accountability by all the stakeholders which was lacking before the study was conducted. An increase in collective action and accountability means more learners stand a chance to benefit from increased parental engagement (Johnson, Carter & Finn, 2011:70). This was necessary in order to bring social justice, level the imbalances of the past in which parents and other stakeholders were under-

represented, bring hope for a better future and finally respect for others' knowledge base (Rearick & Feldman, 1999:336). Therefore, the sharing of a vision became a conclusive condition that kept together the members of the coordinating team and focused on improving the school effectiveness through enhancing the voice of parents in their children's education.

4.4.3 Respect for legislative imperatives

The legislative mandates create conditions that ensure that participants achieve their public mandates in a respectful and cordial manner. Furthermore, they spell out the roles and responsibilities of the participants. For instance, section 16 of SASA 84 of 1996 makes a distinction between professional management, which should be performed by principals and governance which should be performed by parents through their SGBs (Beckmann & Prinsloo, 2009:172; Brown & Duku, 2008:435). This is necessary in order to encourage the levelling of power relation struggles and disparities.

When teachers and parents share responsibilities of teaching the learners are likely to benefit (Brown, Knoche, Edwards & Sheridan, 2009:485; Ibrahim & Jamil, 2012:38). The importance of working together with teachers was also identified by Ms Gift, a parent at Matsieng school during a meeting to identify the conditions for enhancing parental engagement:

Re lokela ho kena ka setotswana' [we need to engage fully.]

This is a Sesotho expression that refers to a person's total commitment and engagement in a task. In this instance it appeared as though the parent was involved wholeheartedly. To engage fully can also serve as a value that enhances the respect for legislative imperatives and which also brings about cohesion in the team and respect for accomplishment of given tasks. Ms Gift's statement further shows that in order for them to engage fully in school tasks, a clarity of roles will has to be made. Thus, she states that

Re lokela ho seha moedi pakeng tsa rona le matitjhere. [We should draw a line between our work and that of the teachers.]

This actually means that the roles should be clearly understood by all participants in order to avoid unnecessary conflicts. This was necessary in order to bring about harmony, social justice and respect (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2010:143).

The demarcation of responsibilities helped to maintain sound power relations between the teachers and the parents and allowed for equal sharing of capital (Cousins & Mickelson, 2011:3; Singinga, Kamugisha & Martin, 2010:696). The sharing of capital between teachers and parents was crucial in recognising parents as worthy contributors in their children's education. It also bonded teachers and parents and thus strengthened the concept of the roving leadership further (De Pree, 1989:43), as indicated in paragraph 2.6.4, that parents and teachers should work together for the benefit of the learners. The respect for legislative mandates enhances transparency, collaboration and decreases inherent conflicts about the different roles to be played. The separation of roles should be carried out in a humane, respectful manner so that each stakeholder can feel his/her inputs and presence are valued. The efforts of parents and teachers in teaching the child should complement one another in a collegial manner. This will bring about peace and hope for the future.

4.4.4 Situational analysis as a condition conducive to parental engagement

Situational analysis is critical in order to understand the background of the problem being addressed or the matter being pursued (van Deventer, 2003:86). This was also applicable in order to address the problem of parental engagement at the two schools (Ibrahim & Jamil, 2012:38). Without conducting the analysis of the situation the coordinating team would not have been in a position to know the nature and extent of the problem and what to do in order to address it. By conducting a situational analysis the coordinating team managed to carry out the planning and implementation of the envisaged framework properly (Commonwealth Secretariat, 1993:16). Situational analysis helped the

coordinating team determine certain challenges, such as those relating to human relations. Reverend Nkosi alluded to this situation:

Mokgokgo le matitjhere a hae ba sebedisa batswadi ho atjhiva mission wa bona.
[The principal and his teachers use parents to achieve their mission.]

The phrase ' mokgokgo le matitjhere a hae' [principal and his teachers] indicates that the Reverend Nkosi had analysed the situation at school and come to a conclusion that there was no cooperation between the teachers and the parents, hence parents were on the one side and teachers on the other side. The situation was serious because he made reference to the principal and his teachers having used parents to achieve their own mission. This was corroborated by Mr Sishi, a deputy principal at Matsieng school :

Batswadi ha ba tle dikopanong ha ba bitswa ke principal. [Parents do not come to meetings when called by the principal.]

That parents did not come to school confirms that the relations between the teachers and parents were not sound for effective parental engagement.

Through further analysis of the situation the coordinating team was able to determine other problems that can be categorized into: problems related to curriculum delivery as a result of poor parental engagement; learner ill-discipline; and power relations struggles between parents and teachers. Furthermore, this analysis enabled the participants to determine the seriousness of the non-engagement of parents in school activities. The categorised problems were prioritised according to the impact they would make when implemented. We then subsequently found that issues of power relation struggles between parents and teachers followed by non-engagement of parents in curriculum matters had an impact. The analysis pointed to parental engagement in all these activities becoming a critical strategy for envisaged parental engagement framework. The situational analysis paved the way for the coordinating team to engage in planning, because what was planned for had already been identified in advance.

4.4.5 Collaborative planning as a condition conducive to enhancing parental engagement

Collaborative planning enables different stakeholders to sit together and jointly plan for what they cherish and hold dear without losing sight of what they are doing (Mintzberg, 1994:113). It gives those involved an opportunity to share information and experiences, jointly pay attention to critical issues and mutually determine the priorities and decide how to implement those identified priorities (Brown et al., 2009:485). In this study, collaborative planning enabled the coordinating team to engage parents and other stakeholders as equal partners to co-construct meaningful ways of enhancing parental engagement in the education of their children. This was necessary in order to ensure that the product of planning would be owned by all for successful implementation and sustainability. This plan was informed by issues identified from the situational analysis by concerned stakeholders. These issues included, among others, the engagement of parents in curricular matters, learner discipline, engagement in SGB matters, communication, school-community relationships and parenting workshops.

These priorities were broken into tasks, each with the sub-tasks to ensure easy implementation. The coordinating team then allocated these tasks to its different members, depending on their potential and experience so that desired results could be attained. This was supported by the Reverend Nkosi, who indicated that care should be exercised to ensure that tasks be allocated to people with passion so that desired results could be achieved. He said this during one of the meetings of the coordinating team to brainstorm the possible conditions for successful implementation of the envisaged parental engagement framework that:

…ebang ho kgethwa motho ya ratang ntho ditholoana di tla ba teng… [if people who are passionate are chosen there will be results.]

The statement by Reverend Nkosi indicates that participants who are assigned responsibilities for ensuring successful planning for parental engagement should be passionate about their tasks (Ludema & Fry, 2008:292). This was clear from the phrase *'motho ya ratang ntho'* [a person who is passionate about something] that results will be achieved. This served as a caution to members of the

coordinating team to be cautious of the calibre of members needed to drive the successful implementation of the desired plans. Maybe he was talking from experience that failure to assign people according to their interest and what they are likely to contribute could have serious consequences on the intended action plan. Therefore, passion to carry out one's allocated tasks served as one of the values that kept the coordinating team members together and guided their operations so that the envisaged plan could be successfully drawn up. This was crucial in that it would serve no purpose to assign tasks to people who do not value the importance of engaging parents in their children's education. The team had to ensure that all its members shared the same vision and interest of ensuring that steps were taken together to enhance parental engagement at the participating schools. This phrase also served as a yardstick for the allocation of tasks to members of the coordinating team.

The sentiments expressed by Reverend Nkosi were echoed by Mr Moya, a parent at Matsieng school at the same meeting:

Ditaba tsa rona di hloka moralo o tsepameng le maikemisetso ho beha ditholoana bakeng sa thuto ya bana ba rona. Ebang re sa tshware ka thata morero wa rona o tla nyopa. [Our discussions need proper planning and commitment in order to bring the desired results. If we do not work hard our plan will collapse.]

The statement *'ditaba tsa rona di hloka moralo o tsepameng le maikemisetso…'* [our discussions need proper planning and commitment…] shows three things that Mr Moya indicated. Firstly, he considered himself as part of the team that was engaging in a specific activity, hence the use of the 'ditaba tsa rona' [our discussion.] This shows that he was participating freely as a team member for something that they all believed in and cherished. Secondly, it also indicates that whatever they were talking about needed some form of proper planning, hence the word *'moralo o tsepameng'* [proper planning] to succeed. This shows how critical planning was a condition conducive to enhancing parental engagement (Dantley, 2005:485; Hara & Burke, 1998:11). He was perhaps concerned that haphazard planning could not achieve the desired results for effective parental engagement. Thirdly, Mr Moya talked about 'maikemisetso' [commitment] as an element that was needed in order to ensure successful completion of the planning

and perhaps of the envisaged parental engagement framework (Chiu, 2008:541). Commitment was necessary to ensure that coordinating team members remained focused on the achievement of the research objectives.

This goes in tandem with Reverend Nkosi's plea for passionate people to drive the engagement of parents forward and higher at the participating schools. The cyclical reviews of PAR afforded the team opportunities to evaluate our commitment to achieving the allocated tasks during subsequent team's meetings. Through the commitment and passion shown by members of the coordinating team a comprehensive plan was drawn up detailing all that was supposed to be done, how it was to be done, the resources needed, when each activity was to be carried out and who were to be involved (Bryson, 1988:76), as indicated in paragraph 3 of chapter three.

4.4.6 Reflection as a condition conducive to enhancing parental engagement

The legislative imperatives require that parents and teachers reflect on their planning of enhancing parental engagement in the education of their children. In RSA, for instance, section 16A (bb) (iii) stipulates that both teachers and parents should reflect on the progress made with regard to the implementation of the academic performance improvement plan every six months. These mandates set the scene for the teachers and parents to reflect on their efforts to improve the learners' performance. According to Delgado-Gaitan (1991:23), reflection enables people to be aware of their social conditions and their strengths in dealing with them.

Reflection is critical in that it allows those involved to look into whether their efforts are yielding any progress (Kaplan & Norton, 1996:77; Schurink, 2010:489). Reflection and monitoring provide learning opportunities for those involved to learn and also modify their plans and strategies. Therefore, reflection and evaluation are critical steps in that they provide the stakeholders with the opportunity to engage in debates with a view to evaluate the impact of their actions. This view is expressed by (Bawden, 2004:41):

The essential systemic evaluative process is a dialogic, participative, reflective, and democratic form of collective or social experiential learning in which the wholeness, connectedness, embeddedness, and three- dimensionality of systemic is explicitly exploited in a number of different and vital ways.

In this study reflection was made at every second meeting that was held to follow up on the allocated tasks in order to track progress. The tasks that were achieved were further evaluated to check whether they satisfied the required standard. The reflection was also evident from the views of the members with regard to the effective implementation of our programme. This observation was made by reverend Nkosi regarding the starting time for our meetings on Sundays:

Ke nahana hore re lokela ho tjhentjha dinako tsa dikopano tsa rona. Ebang re qala ka hora ya boraro re tla ba le hora tse pedi ho fihla horeng ya bahlano. Se na se tla re fa monyetla wa ho ya kerekeng pele re etla mona. [I think we need to change the starting time for our meetings. If we start at 15h00 till 17h00 we will have two hours and this will give us the opportunity to go to church first.]

Reverend Nkosi identified the time factor as a condition that would allow all coordinating team members to avail themselves at the team's meetings. This refection was done after the observation that was made that some members were at times arriving late at the meetings. This was also done to accommodate members who were travelling by taxi to the venue, as it was found that transport was slower on Sundays than during weekdays. Use of the word *'tjhentjha'* [change] means that reverend Nkosi had thought about the attendance of members carefully before suggesting improvements to the situation. By suggesting a time that suited all members Reverend Nkosi wanted full participation of all the stakeholders. This was necessary to ensure respect for participants to attend to their religious and other commitments. This was necessary in order to ensure commitment to the study and also bring about peace, broad consultation, and social justice (Gaventa & Cornwall, 2008:183).

The reflection of the implementation plan was also raised by Sishi, the deputy principal of Matsieng at one of the meetings of the coordinating team to reflect about the conditions of the study:

Ditaba tsa rona di namme haholo mme eka re ka kopana habedi kgweding ho fana ka monyetla wa lekola progress. Ke fumana nako ena e le nyenyan haholo. [Our issues are many and if we could meet twice a month this will give us enough time to evaluate the progress. I find this time too little.]

The phrase *'ditaba tsa rona di namme'* [our issues are many] shows that a reflection of some kind was made, otherwise Sishi would not have been in a position to make this observation. These reflections helped the coordinating team to adjust its meeting times so that progress could be made. Although at the beginning of the study we agreed on the starting time and dates for our meetings, the reflections made by members as the study unfolded and reached its critical stages made us adjust our meeting times. This was necessary in order to ensure significant progress. According to Brown et al. (2009:502), ample time is needed when implementing a parent engagement programme, not only to ensure acquisition of skills but also internalisation of a philosophy of practice. Without enough time for reflections we would not have responded positively to the suggestions by reverend Nkosi or Sishi. This was crucial in order to minimise the possible threats that could have been brought about by ineffective time management.

4.5   THREATS ASSOCIATED WITH PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

This section deals with the possible threats which if not well militated against can negatively affect the enhancement of parental engagement. These threats were identified by the coordinating team with other participants during the study meetings and included the following: the use of exclusionary language, negative communication, centring power around the teachers, failure to engage learners fully in curriculum matters, inadequate training, the prevalence of conflict, and lack of resources.

4.5.1 The use of exclusionary language

The use of language can have an impact on whether the parents engage in their children's education or not. If parents and teachers communicate in different languages it becomes difficult to connect and understand one another (Mncube, 2009:8). According to Sanders (2008:9), establishing a partnership between the teachers and the parents is likely to fail if they do not share a common language. The use of exclusionary language in this context implies the use of foreign language, either English or Afrikaans, and any language which is not vernacular. The use of exclusionary language was also identified as a threat by Reverend Nkosi during one of the meetings of the coordinating team:

Tsela eo matitjhere a tritang batswadi ka yona e etsa hore batswadi ba tjhetjhele morao. Matitjhere a buela bonkgono sekgowa mme ntho ena e a ba tshabisa. Ntho ena e aha lerako pakeng tsa matitjhere le batswadi hobane ba iphumana ba sa amoheleha. [The way teachers treat parents is causing parents to back off. The teachers speak English to the grandmothers and this frightens them. This thing creates a wall between the teachers and the parents because parents feel unwelcome.]

The sentence '*matitjhere a buela bonkgono sekgowa mme ntho ena e a ba tshabisa*' [teachers speak English to grandmothers and this frightens them] shows that teachers and parents (i.e., grandparents) do not understand one another (Kristiansen & Bloch-Poulsen, 2008:464). This is evident from the grandmothers becoming frightened. The word *'bonkgono'* implies grandmothers. Reverend Nkosi suggested that parents who attend meetings in which a foreign language is used were grandmothers, that is people who attend such gatherings and who are bombarded with a foreign language are elderly mothers. This meant that teachers who were younger were abusing the elderly by talking to them in a language that these 'grandmothers' did not understand. This also meant a breakaway from their tradition and culture in that they do not want to identify themselves with the language that the 'grandmothers' speak.

Failing to speak in one's language when addressing one's own parents creates disunity, shows lack of respect and perpetuates social injustice (Shoho, Merchant

& Lugg, 2005:54). This is a narrow view of what an 'educated' person should be because it brings no peace with others (Akinpelu, 1981:183). The use of the word '*bonkgono*' [grandmothers] takes for granted that all parents who attend meetings are grandmothers, despite the young parents, both men and women, who also attend such meetings. Perhaps his thinking was informed by most parents' meetings in which mothers were in majority. Hiding behind the use of '*sekgowa*' [foreign language] widened the gap between the teachers and the parents.

The observations of Reverend Nkosi were shared by Ms Semonye, a parent at Matsieng who indicated at one of the meetings of the coordinating team to deal with the possible threats that may hinder parental engagement that:

Vishini le mishini di ngotswe ka senyesemane mme hona ho etsa bothata ho batswadi ba sa tsebeng puo ena ho di utlwisisa. [Vision and mission are written in English and this makes it difficult for parents who do not know this language to understand them.]

If parents cannot make head or tail about the vision and mission statements of their schools they will not help in actualising them. According to Hooley (2002:2) these should be written in the language that parents know so that they can internalise and identify with them. Language is a form of culture because it contains cultural expressions and values that are prominent in one's own environment (Grant & Humphries, 2006:403). If the vision and mission statements are written in a foreign language this implies that schools are not advancing or respecting the culture of the community that they claim to serve (Goodall & Vorhaus, 2010:49). This will create a gap between the parents and the teachers as well as between the schools and community in general. This is a way of preserving power by those who hold institutional power against the marginalised parents.

The coordinating team used the common language that was understood by all its members in order to enhance better understanding, respect, peace, social justice and effective parental engagement. This gave the participants the opportunity to express their views fully and also enhanced their commitment.

4.5.2 Negative communication

Negative communication takes the form of failing to acknowledge and respect the contributions of other people. It implies talking negatively about what others can do whilst presenting oneself in a positive light (Sheyholislami, 2009:4). Such communication impacts negatively on the sharing of a common vision and the possibility of planning collaboratively with as a team. According to Grant and Humphries (2006:403), parents and teachers should be encouraged to talk about the good things that they can do for their children as a way of moving forward. This will create and enhance partnership between them (Barge & Oliver, 2003:130). The negative communication includes calling learners by names as a way of inflicting pain on their parents. The negative communication was also identified by Ms Semonye, a parent at Matsieng, in one of the meetings to brainstorm the threats for enhancing parental engagement:

Matitjhere ha a kgethe mantswe ha ba bua le bana ba rona. Ho na le ho thwe bana ba rona ba hlooho di thata,ke majwe a moralla. Ntho ena e etsa hore ngwana a ikgelle fatshe a ipone a sa tsebe letho. [Teachers do not choose words when talking to our children. It is being said that our children are stupid, they are stones. This way of talking to the child makes him/her to undermine oneself.]

The phrase *'ba hlooho di thata, ke majwe a moralla'* [they are stupid, they are stones] is derogatory. It deprives those to whom such remarks are directed of human dignity. This is an insult to the parents of such learners who brought them to school to be educated so that they too can one day be better citizens of their country. The statement further casts a shadow of doubt that they will ever be better, hence the use of the phrase *'majwe a moralla'* [very hard stones] to indicate that they cannot develop and think. If teachers call learners names, this might be an indictment on their part as teachers. It might mean that they too have failed in their duty to transform such learners into successful human beings, showing that negative communication as used by teachers include words that send a message of despair and lack of respect for learners and their parents (Akiri & Ugborugbo, 2009:2; McGregor, 2003:2). This way of communicating with learners, and indirectly so with their parents, undermines the legislative imperatives of treating learners and their parents with dignity (Moles Jr. & Fege,

2011:7). Negative communication makes parents lose hope or confidence in the school. It creates a gap between the school and the parents and exposes the school to vandalism and other forms of destruction. Teachers and parents should show hope to learners that, despite the difficult circumstances, they can still make progress.

4.5.3 Centring power around the teachers

There is a tendency by some principals to exclude parents from the decisions that affect their children's education (Mncube, 2007:177; Haastrup & Alonge, 2012:17). This is a threat to parental engagement because it views parents as inadequate and lacking in basic knowledge and skills for assisting their children academically or otherwise. It views teachers as the only holders of knowledge who can make the learners succeed. The centring of power denies parents and other stakeholders the right to plan together with the teachers for the benefit of the school and the whole community. According to Cousins and Mickelson (2011:1), parents tend to be supportive when they feel that teachers welcome them and also respect their traditions and contributions. Reverend Nkosi, a religious leader operating in the locality of Matsieng school, reported lack of transparency as one of the threats that alienate parents during one of the meetings of the coordinating team to identify the possible threats at the participating schools:

Ha ho na transparency. Ha e sa le ho kgethwa batho ba le bang ka hara SGB. Ka nako e nngwe ha se hore matitjhere a rata mosebetsi wa batswadi bana, empa ele feela ho fihlella ditabatabelo tsa bona. Batswadi ba nkelwa diqeto ke prinsipala le komiti ya hae. Ha o kena ka ofising hangata o bona vision le mission empa dintho tsena ha di phethahatswe. Matitjhere a sa ntse ba qhelela batswadi ka thoko. Ha ba ba tle hore re tsebe hore ho etsahalang ka dintho tse ding haholoholo ditjheleteng tsa sekolo. [There is no transparency. The same people have elected several times in the SGB. At times it is not that the teachers like the work of these parents but they just want to achieve their mission. The principal and his/her committee decides for the parents. Often when you enter the office you see the vision and mission but these things are not actualised. The teachers

still side-line the parents. They do not want us as parents to know what is happening especially with the school funds.]

The phrase 'there is no transparency,' depicts a situation with which Nkosi is familiar, hence he speaks with confidence and authority. By operating clandestinely the teachers continue to show the abuse of power that is used to maintain the status quo. This way of dealing with parents still fails to recognise the wealth of capital that parents can bring to the education of their children. The centring of power within the hands of the teachers is a form of denying parents access to the discourse that affects the future of their children (McGregor, 2003:6). It further shows that there is no common vision or respect for legislative imperatives. The phrase *'batswadi ba nkelwa diqeto'* [parents are being decided] shows lack of democracy and that parents are made to speak through the voice of the teachers (Pushor & Ruitenberg, 2005:12). It also elevates the status of teachers higher to that of parents. This may reduce parents to just spectators in their children's education.

The Centre for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP, 2010:3) reported that "parents come out when they feel welcome… that sense of I'm being respected, appreciated and acknowledged as an important part of the a group or activity." If those who hold institutional power decide for parents there may be challenges in terms of implementations of decisions taken. This may be prompted by lack of ownership of the plans drawn up *for* parents but *not* with them. The centring of power around the teachers will make parents undermine themselves and thus reduce the time they share with their children to improve their education. The coordinating team employed distributive power sharing among its members to indicate their importance and contributions in making the study to succeed (Nkoane, 2012:5). This was necessary to ensure a sustainable partnership based on mutual respect and social justice.

The statement further shows that centring power around the teachers creates problems with the implementation of the *vision and mission*. These aspects, according to Nkosi, are the sole responsibilities of the teachers and are being imposed on the parents and other stakeholders. The failure by parents to challenge this centralisation of power may be the result of lack of training.

4.5.4 Inadequate training

When parents are not adequately trained they may possess inadequate knowledge and skills, making them feel insecure (Crozier, 2000:84). Inadequate training serves as a handicap for parents to perform their duties of enhancing parental engagement and learner performance (Ajayi et al., 2009:42; Chikoko, 2007:53; Mestry & Grobler, 2007:177). The failure to provide adequate training opportunities to parents is one other way that the elites use to enact, reproduce, and justify their dominance over the less powerful (Wicks, Reason & Bradbury, 2008:19). Inadequate training or lack thereof leaves parents at the mercy of teachers in terms of information provided. This may be a recipe for the manipulation of parents by teachers. Ms Semonye, a parent at Matsieng, remarked about the inadequate training provided to parents during one of the meetings of the coordinating team:

Batswadi ba kgethwa ebe ba behwa khoneng ka ho fuwa mosebetsi oo ba sa o kwetlisetswang. Motswadi o iphumana ka nako e nngwe a tsheuwa ke matitjhere hobane a sa etse dintho ka tsela e nepahetseng.Ha ditho tsa SGB di sa kwetliswa ka nepo ho ka ke ha e ba le ditholoana tse ntle. [The parents are elected and then put in a corner by given the work that they have never been orientated in. Therefore the parent finds himself/herself at times been laughed by teachers because they do not do certain things right. When members of the SGB are not trained correctly no results can be seen.]

The statement *'batswadi ba kgethwa ebe ba behwa khoneng'* [parents are elected and then put in a corner] shows an intention by teachers to expose them (i.e., parents). This is deliberate in order to render their efforts worthless. Indirectly this serves to discourage parents from engaging any further by inculcating inferiority complex in them. It also serves to perpetuate disunity so that even in future these parents should be afraid to be part of any team to bring about school improvements. It also encourages a fertile ground for inequality and social injustice (Steinberg & kincheloe,2010:144). This runs against the legislative imperative of providing training to parents so that they can engage effectively in their children's education as stipulated in section 19 (1) (b) of SASA of 1996. It is also an intention of teachers as stated by Semonye to weaken the power of

parents as valuable partners in their children's education. The lack of adequate training of parents was also raised by the principal of Matsieng school, Mr Tajeka, at the same meeting:

We lack capacity. Ha le re emphaware, empa le batla hore re etse dintho kaofela. [We lack capacity. You do not empower us and yet you expect us to do everything.]

The statement by Tajeka *'we lack capacity'* shows that the lack of adequate training is a threat to vision sharing, collaborative planning and teamwork between the teachers and parents. This lack of training affects not only parents but also teachers, since they lack knowledge of the strategies of how best to deal with parents. The lack of capacity as viewed by Tajeka is not a result of their making but rather as a result of the others, in this case education departmental officials. This is perhaps due to his status as a principal, such that he does not err but is made to do so by others. According to van Dijk (2004:13), this is a way of presenting oneself in a positive light. Tajeka's statement *'ha la re emphaware'* [you do not empower us] apportions blame to others for inadequate performance instead of accepting personal responsibility.

When people are given insufficient training they depend on others to decide for them (Chikoko, 2007:54). This dependence may lead to manipulation by those who have power (Crozier, 2000:87). When parents are misled and manipulated they will not be able to hold teachers accountable for providing quality education to their children. Manipulating parents shows that teachers have more power and that they abuse it to achieve their selfish interests. According to Grundy (1987:155-156), this way of working with parents undermines the principles of social justice, peace, equity and freedom (Carr & Kemmis, 1986:205; Moles Jr. & Fege, 2011:5), which are necessary for enhancing quality education and parental engagement. The coordinating team ensured that sufficient training opportunities were created for the parents and other stakeholders so that when parents feel inadequate they are supported to engage meaningfully. For instance, training in finance management, curriculum and assessment policy statement (CAPS), roles and responsibilities of SGBs, to name a few, were offered. This training was informed by a belief that once parents were empowered they would be able to

engage better in the education of their children as well as minimising conflicts between teachers and parents.

4.5.5 The prevalence of conflict

The divergent views by different stakeholders which are not harmonised are responsible for the prevalence of conflicts in schools (Gelsthorpe, 2003:25). These conflicts often scare parents away from engaging in school activities. Often teachers and parents compete against one another (Mastro & Jalloh, 2005:2), which means that parental engagement cannot flourish in an atmosphere of conflicts unless the teachers and parents find creative ways of dealing with it (Ngcongo, 1995:39). The conflict between teachers and parents is caused by power struggles, diversity of opinion, different beliefs and cultural values (Keith, 2011:236). The prevalence of conflicts was also identified by Ms Gift, a parent at Matsieng school, during one of the meetings of the coordinating team to identify the possible threats that might derail the envisaged parental engagement framework:

Ka nako e nngwe re balehiswa ke diqabang le diphapang tse teng pakeng tsa rona le matitjhere. [At times we are scared by conflicts between us and the teachers.]

The word '*diqabang'* [conflicts] in this context carries negative connotations (i.e., feelings, attitudes and emotions). This is evidenced by the parents abrogating their responsibilities, as captured in the phrase 're *balehiswa ke diqabang'* [we are scared by conflicts]. This means that the prevalence of unmanaged conflict in this instance was a threat to collaborative planning and vision sharing between the parents and the teachers. This therefore necessitated the participants identifying and taking precautionary steps to deal with it. The word 'diphapang' [difference of opinions] carries the same meaning as 'diqabang' [conflicts], which means difference of opinions. The conflicts arise as a result of power struggles between the teachers and parents, as evidenced by Ms Semonye, a parent at Matsieng school. She corroborated the views expressed by Gift at the same meeting:

Ka nako e nngwe matitjhere ha a re buise hantle mme sena se jala lehloyo pakeng tsa rona le matitjthere ao. Matitjhere a nka hore ha re eya sekolong re ba isetsa mathata. Le pele o bua le yena o se a ntse a kgenne. Ke elelletswe hore matitjhere a mang ha a batle ho eletswa… [Sometimes teachers do not speak well to us and this sow hatred between us and such teachers. Teachers think that when we go to school we are bringing them problems. Even before you speak they are already angry. I have realised that some teachers do not want to be advised…]

The statement by Semonye shows that conflict between the teachers and parents not only scares parents away but also creates 'lehloyo' [hatred] between them. This is the greatest repercussion of conflict between the people. When teachers and parents hate one another it can lead to physical scuffles and injuries. Hatred between teachers and parents is likely to discourage successful implementation of the envisaged plans for engaging parents.

The statement further indicates that conflicts between teachers and parents are also fuelled by the fact that '…*matitjhere a mang ha a batle ho eletswa'* […some teachers do not want to be advised]. This sentence shows that teachers do not want to listen to parents' advice. It could be that they think they are the only custodians of knowledge and of teaching the learners. Such thinking negates the cultural capital that parents possess and is also against the legislative imperatives of regarding parents as partners in their children's education. This contradicts section 4 SACE Act 31of 2000 relating to the code of conduct for teachers which stipulates that teachers should work with parents as partners. According to Hill and Taylor (2004:163), some teachers in the USA still deliberately ignore the legislation that they should work harmoniously with parents as partners. The prevalence of conflicts further negates power sharing between the teachers and the parents. It also causes the teachers not to account to the parents and the community in terms of the learners' performance. According to the Centre for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP, 2010:3) "Parents come out when they feel welcome…that sense of I'm being respected, appreciated and acknowledged as an important part of the a group or activity." Therefore, the prevalence of conflicts

erodes respect for collaborative planning and implementation of plans designed by parents and teachers, with dire consequences for the learners' education.

4.5.6 Failure to teach the learners

Failure by teachers to focus on teaching learners so that they can succeed in their studies discourages effective parental engagement. In Nigeria, parents lost confidence in public education as a result of mass learner failure (Ademola & Olajumoke, 2009:459; Ajayi et al., 2007:42; Barton et al., 2004:6). It is the wish of most parents to see their child succeed in school and in life in general (Redding, 2011:160). Therefore, mass learner failure knocks not only the pockets of parents but also their aspirations. It is for this reason that Mmotlane et al. (2009:2) cautioned that unless both parents and teachers set aside time in which to focus on the learners' progress, schools will continue to decline. The effects of this will affect the community's investment negatively.

The failure to teach learners well was also experienced by Ms Semonye, a parent at Matsieng school. She revealed this during one of the meetings to discuss the threats that may impede the successful implementation of the envisaged parental engagement framework:

Bana ba kreiti 10 ba feitse ka bongata sekolong mona lemong se fetileng… Ha e sa le ke qala ho phehela bana mona sekolong ke bone matitjhere a sa ruteng bana… [Grade 10 learners failed in big numbers here at school the previous year… Since I started cooking for learners I have seen teachers who do not teach the learners…]

This sentence '*ke bone matitjhere a sa ruteng bana'* … [I have seen teachers who do not teach learners] disillusioned Semonye as a parent to see that when the children were at school they were not being taught or taken care of. This exposure may either give parents to have a negative view of the school regarding its commitment to achieve quality education for learners or serve as sufficient

evidence for parents like Semonye and others to start looking around for better schools for their children, provided they have means to transport them to such destinations. This may also motivate parents to mobilise other parents to challenge this situation, provided there is support to do this and cooperation from those who are in charge. In most instances the first scenario is likely to happen because of the power relations that exist between the teachers and the parents.

According to Wing et al. (2006), teachers tend to blame parents for poor learners' performance instead of also owning up to their failure as professionals. This is the case when teachers project an image of knowing everything and of people who do not err. Furthermore, that this parent had seen that some teachers did not teach the learners might link with the mass failure of learners in grade10 the previous year. According to McGregor (2003), that some teachers were seen not to be teaching the learners suggests that all teachers were not teaching the learners, hence the statement '*bana ba grade10 ba feitse ka bongata sekolong mona selemong se fetileng'* [grade 10 learners failed in big numbers the previous year.] The concerns of Semonye were shared by Ms Gift, who was present at the same meeting:

Ka nako e nngwe batswadi ba nyahama ebang bana ba sa sebetse hantle dithutong tsa bona. [Sometimes parents despair when children do not work well in their studies.]

The statement '…*ba nyahama ebang bana ba sa sebetse hantle dithutong tsa bona'* [they despair when children do not do well in their studies] suggests that they had not been happy to see a large number of grade10 learners fail the previous year. This process, if it continues, may impact negatively on any attempts to enhance parental engagement in school activities. When teachers do not teach leaners they not only destroy the future of the learners concerned but are also driving the parents away from school. Such unprofessional conduct undermines the legal imperatives of shared planning and accounting to the parents as stipulated by section 16A (I) (c) (ii) (bb) of the Education laws Amendment Act NO.31 OF 2007. This piece of legislation mandates teachers share their plans of improving the learner performance with parents and give feedback about progress every six months.

According to Reynolds (2010:5), parental engagement encompasses the activities that parents set for themselves as well as those that they do in their interaction with the teachers. This therefore means that teachers are not the only ones to be blamed for not focusing on the learners' performance, but rather parents also have to take some responsibility. To ensure that this threat does not demotivate the parents the coordinating team interacted with parents to encourage them to monitor their children's books and work done in class. This was necessary in order to ensure that teachers accounted to parents in terms of their work in class. Furthermore, the coordinating shared with participants and parents the various techniques of assisting learners with their homework after this was identified as a need by participants. The engagement of parents in supervising the afternoon learners' studies was another effort to ensure that parents planned and worked collaboratively with the teachers, so that more focus could be given to enhancing school effectiveness.

4.5.7 The impact of lack of resources

Parents sometimes lack resources that enable them to engage effectively in their children's education (Deslandes, 2005:83; Labahn, 1995:1-2). The lack of transport makes it impossible for some parents to attend school meetings because they stay away from their children's schools (Hill & Taylor, 2004:162; Mncube, 2009:13). The lack of resources was also experienced by participants from the two participating schools. Ms Gift, a parent at Matsieng, remarked about the lack of resources at a meeting of the coordinating to discuss the threats that may impede effective parental engagement:

Batswadi ba bangata ha ba sebetse. Ha ho batluwa tjhelete re re ha re sebetse. Ke nnete ho boima bakeng sa batswadi ba lokelang ho palama tekesi ho tla sekolong. Ha motswadi ya dulang hole a se na tjhelete ya transporoto ho na e ka ba tshita. [Many parents do not work. When money is needed we say we do not work. It is true that it is difficult for a parent who has to board a taxi to school. When a parent stays far from school and does not have money for transport this could be a problem.]

The statement by Ms Gift that *'batswadi ba bangata ha ba sebetse'* [many parents do not work] suggested that parents did not have the means to support the school financially. She also included herself in this number of parents, hence the use of the phrase *'re re ha re sebetse'* [we say that we do not work]. However, being unemployed and without financial resources to support their schools did not in any way suggest that they did not wish to see their children succeed in their studies.

This poor financial status of such parents can sometimes be interpreted by those who have institutional authority as a sign that they are not supportive. This perception may dampen the spirit of some parents and drive them to withdraw from the education of their children. When parents fail to turn up for meetings as a result of lack of transport fares their absence can be utilised by teachers to decide *for* them and not *with* them.

The lack of resources also became evident during a meeting at Sediba school when the principal, Mr King, addressed the parents at a meeting about contributing financially towards the grade 12 learners' camp during June vacation. His address was interrupted by murmuring from the parents:

Ke tsebile hore ha ke bua ka tjhelete ho tla ba le modumo o tjena. Tjhelete e ntshuwang e nyenyane hampe ho feta eo o e fang ngwana ho reka mateki a expensive. [I knew that when I talk about money there will be this noise. The money that is paid is even less than the one that you give to you to buy expensive takkies.]

The word 'modumo' [noise] conveys a negative connotation, interruption to stop a person who is speaking. This could be because what was being said did not go down well with the audience. In this context, the amount of money which the principal talked about made parents murmur as sign of rejection. This murmuring could have been caused by the questions that unemployed parents were asking themselves where they would get it, and not as pure rejection of what the principal was saying. The two schools had opted for no-fee status because parents were unable to pay an annual school fee of one hundred rand, and the learners at these schools received a free daily meal. As a result of this the DoE was paying the fee

for each child enrolled. The no-fee status was allocated according to the relative poverty of the area in which the school was situated. Although this was a relief for poor unemployed parents it could create a culture of dependency, which ultimately may deplete the state's resources.

The coordinating team realised that lack of resources could be threat to its members in terms of attending its meetings, therefore, members were reimbursed for the costs incurred for travelling to and from research meetings. This strategy worked well for participants because they were able to honour the coordinating team's activities. To ensure maximum attendance of meetings by parents it was decided that meetings would be scheduled during month-ends, when the majority of parents perhaps had been paid and so had money to travel to school. Alternatively, the schools could target those parents who often do not turn up for meetings through the home visits programme. This would enhance maximum parental engagement in school activities and so counteract the lack of resources as a possible threat.

4.5.8 Low level of education

The low level of formal schooling also accounts for poor parental engagement (Mncube, 2009:8). Parents with a low level of formal schooling are not seeking out or gaining access to the information that they need as a result of their educational background (Crozier, 2000:54). They tend to rely too much on the teachers. Relying on the elites for information may pose challenges as the information given may be twisted (Huckin, 2002:5). This could expose parents to political manipulation, corruption, bad governance and civil strife (Deininger, 2001:291). The participants indicated that the low level of formal schooling sometimes impeded parents from engaging in their children's education. Ms Neo, a parent from Sediba school, pointed this out during one of the meetings of the coordinating team:

Matitjhere a hona jwale a lakatsa hore re thuse bana ka homework empa re ka thusa jwang ha titjhere a sa fe ngwana example ya ntho eo a batlang hore re thuse bana ka yona? Pele ha ngwana a ne a fuwa homework, titjhere o ne a fana

ka mohlala mme motswadi o ne a fumana ho le bobe ho thusa ngwana. [Nowadays teachers want parents to assist the learners with homework but how can we assist if the teacher does not give the learner an example of what should be done? In the past when a learner was given homework the teacher would provide an example to make things easy for the parent.]

This question, '…*re ka thusa jwang ha titjhere a sa fe ngwana examp*le?' [how can we assist if the teacher does not give an example?] shows that parents have in some instances limited knowledge of the subject content and may not be competent to assist in all subjects. This further means that though parents show a willingness to assist the lack of the technical know-how (Shumow, 2011:77) limits and hampers their efforts. Therefore, the low level of formal schooling threatens the good intentions of parents to assist their children. Such parents can only play a useful role if empowered and shown how to assist their children. This corroborates the view of Hoover-Dempsey (2011:62), that often parents assist if they believe that they have knowledge of their children's learning. It also confirms the views of Redding (2011:160), that parents, irrespective of their educational status, want the best for their children and may through their aspirational capital (Yosso, 2005:77-78) propel and motivate them to succeed in life.

Another parent, Ms Gift from Matsieng school, also indicated the low level of formal schooling of parents as a threat. During one of the meetings of the coordinating team to follow-up on the threats that hindered parental engagement, she indicated that:

Ke qetetse kgale ho etsa accounting. Syllabus le yona e fetohile. Dintho tse ding ke sa di hopola empa e seng kaofela. Ke ye ke jwetse ngwanaka hore a kopane le bana ba bang ho mo thusa hobane ha ke sa na lesedi le feletseng. Re ka thabela ha matitjhere ba ka re thusa ka dintho tse ding. [I have done accounting way back. The syllabus has changed. I still remember some of the things but not all of them. I often tell my child to form group discussion with other learners because I no longer have all the knowledge. We would appreciate the assistance of teachers in other things.]

The phrase '*re ka thabela ha matitjhere ba ka re thusa ka dintho' tse ding'* [we would appreciate if teachers can assist with other things] indicates that parental lack of formal schooling hinders parents when working independently of the teachers. It shows that parents are straddling between knowing and not knowing. According to Hodge and Kress (1988:3), this represents ideological complexity in that it denotes;

a functionally related set of contradictory versions of the world. An ideological complex exists to sustain relationships of both power and solidarity, and it represents the social order as simultaneously serving the interests of both dominant and subordinate.

The statement corroborates the literature under 2.4.1 and 2.8.1, that parents' lack of proper formal level of schooling is one of the reasons parental engagement is wanting in some of the township schools. From the above two statements it appears that these parents have a certain level of knowledge which, if appropriately sharpened, can benefit the learners and the school in general. That they can compare the changes that are happening now with those of the past shows hope for a better future. These statements also indicate that parents have knowledge which the teachers often do not want recognise (La Bahn, 1995:2; Moles Jr. & Fege, 2011:10).

These parents believe that engagement in their children's education can be increased if the teachers capacitate them on things that they no longer remember. The coordinating team created a platform on which parents might sharpen their knowledge of the subjects that they had passed well at school. This was crucial in order to sharpen their subject knowledge so that they could be of assistance to their children and to community clubs that deal with educational issues. This step helped the coordinating team invest more in the community members for uplifting the standard of education and for making sure that the community becomes aware of what learners were doing in school. A six-week programme for a two-hour session was implemented for parents in Accounting and English. Parents attended these sessions on a Saturday. These sessions covered the content, assessment and promotion requirements of the subjects involved, and helped bridge the gap

between the parents and teachers in terms of what the learners were exposed to in the classroom.

4.5.9 Lack of time

The lack of time threatens the much needed interaction between the teachers and parents to build, direct and shape the education of the learners. This is because parents often do not avail themselves to school meetings in which the learners' performance is being discussed (Turney & Kao, 2009:264). Although parental engagement is important for enhancing learner performance, parents were not committed to setting aside time for the education of their children (Dumas et al., 2008:620; Labahn, 1995:1). This is because some parents had tied work schedules in which they worked long hours and therefore had no time for school activities (Ibrahim & Jamil, 2012:39).

According to Mmotlane et al. (2009:2), parents have to set aside time to attend for school activities as a way of supporting their children. Reynolds (2010:5) indicates that parental engagement encompasses those activities that parents set for themselves as well as those that they do in their interaction with teachers. Therefore, setting aside time to attend to the child's education should not be something that they do as a result of their interaction with teachers, but should be self-directed. The parents should see the need for and value of spending time checking and assisting the child with his or her studies. However, the participants indicated that parents ddido not spend time on their children's education at the participating schools. Ms Gift, a parent at Matsieng school, stated this during one of the meetings of the coordinating team to identify the possible threats for parental engagement:

Batswadi ba bangata ha ba sebetse. Ha ho batluwa tjhelete re re ha re sebetse empa re hloleha ho bona hore bana ba rona ba fihla ka nako sekolong. Re hloleha ho iponahatsa dikopanong tsa sekolo ekasitana le ho thusa bana ka di homework. Re sitwa le ho bona hore bana ba rona ba a bala [Most parents do not work. When money is needed at school we say we do not work, yet we fail to ensure

that our children arrive on time at school. We fail to attend school meetings and also help the learners with homework. We fail to see that our children study.]

This statement shows openness and willingness to accept the blame in that the parent used the word "we" to show that the fault really lay with them as parents (McGregor, 2003:7). The use of 'we' conveys a strong message that suggests that indeed what is being said is correct. The word 'we' also indicates that she was part of those parents who have been mentioned above.

By admitting their fault as parents they stand a chance to correct their mistake in that those who make mistakes and do not realise that they have erred are bound to repeat their mistakes. The failure by parents to allocate time to school activities of their children deprives them of the opportunity to position their voice in the education. The failure to spend time on the child's education is corroborated by van den Berg (2011:30), "not enough parents are unhappy about the poor education system. Few parents complain about teacher quality, teacher effort or how too little their children are learning at school." This also confirms the literature in 2.4.1 and 2.7.5 that parents do not make time to attend to school matters such as parents' meetings, sport day, fund-raising and other curricular and extra-curricular activities.

When parents do not make time for their children's education they may lose out in terms of the training opportunities that are offered and this may further weaken their voice. The lack of time as a threat was also identified by Mr Sishi during one of the meetings to reflect on the possible threats for parental engagement:

Batswadi ha ba iphe nako ho tla sekolong ho buisana le matitjhere ka mosebetsi wa bana. Le ha o ba ngolla mangolo ha ba iponahatse. [Parents do not give themselves time to come to school to talk with teachers about the learners work even when you have issued written invitations.]

The phrase *'ha ba iphe nako'* [they do not give themselves time] shows that they did not share quality time with their children to look at what the learners were doing. This lack of time also disregards the legislative mandates that parents should assist teachers in the executions of their work. By not giving themselves time also indicates that they do not share common vision and working as a team.

If parents do not give themselves time for their children's education they will be perpetuating a circle of inequality and social injustice. This will erode any chance of collaborative planning with teachers to advance their educational needs.

4.5.10   Poor parenting skills

The parents should provide proper accommodation, health, nutrition and safety to support their children's education. However, Harris and Goodall (2007:2) cite poor parenting or child care issues as barriers to parental engagement. According to Bojuwoye (2009:462) and Dumas et al. (2008:620), parenting is lacking because parents are neglecting their children, and this has an adverse effect on their development. Ms Gift, a parent from Matsieng school, pointed out the lack of parenting skills during one of the meetings of the coordinating team:

'Thuto ya mantlha e qala lapeng tlasa tataiso ya motswadi. E bang ngwana a rutilwe hantle ha habo ho tla ba thata hore a kgeloswe tseleng ya nnete kantle .Ha ngwana a itshwere hantle matitjhere ba sebedisana mmoho le batswadi ba ngwana ya jwalo.Batswadi re hloka tataiso e ntle ho hodisa bana ba rona ho fihlella sepheo sa bona. [The real education starts at home under the guidance of the parent. If the child is properly taught from home, it will be difficult to be derailed outside. If the child behaves properly, the teachers work well with the parent of such a learner. Parents need direction to lead their children towards achieving their aim.]

The phrase *'… batswadi re hloka tataiso e ntle ho hodisa bana ba rona…'* [As parents we need guidance of how to raise our children] indicates that a lack of proper parenting skills among the parents. This statement confirms the literature under (2.8.2) that some parents lack parenting skills and therefore cannot engage in their children's education as expected. The lack of parenting skills deprives the learners of cultural capital that their parents were to provide so that they become well-rounded adults of tomorrow. By failing to provide parenting to their children, parents become weak links in society, because culture shapes a person's life. According to Simon (2004:) and Epstein (2007:19), parenting involves exposing parents to psychological development of the learner. If the parents have

knowledge of how the child grows, and his/her developmental challenges, they can share such information with the teacher.

The lack of parenting skills at Sediba school as a threat also came out during the discussion with Mr King, the principal of the school:

Re ye re be le career exhibition bakeng sa bana empa ha re soka re nahana ho ba le diwekshopo tsa batswadi. Ke elellwa hore taba ena e ka nna ya ba ke yona e fokodisang boteng ba batswadi sekolong hobane ho bonahala batswadi ba bangata ba sa bapale karolo ya bona maphelong a bana. [Sometimes we hold career exhibition for learners but we have never thought of workshops for parents. I realise that this might be the reason for weakening the presence of parents at school because many parents do not play a role in the lives of their children.]

The phrase *'ha re soka re nahana ka diwekshop bakeng sa batswadi'* [we have never thought of workshops for parents] means that the lack of parenting, though appearing to be a problem and a threat to effective parental engagement, saw no efforts made to deal with it. However, the study provided Mr King with the opportunity to reflect seriously on poor parenting as a contributory factor in poor parental engagement. His position as principal gave him an opportunity to deal with parents and assess the roles that they , hence 'batswadi ba bangata ' [many parents] do not play a significant role in their children's education. If, according to King, many parents indeed did not play a significant role in their children's lives this suggested that poor parenting, if not counteracted, may diminish parental engagement in school activities.

The lack of good parenting skills means that the parents did not share the family culture with the teacher so that he or she might teach the child appropriately (Basca, 2005:7). This therefore meant that the teachers would not listen to the parents about the intentions they had for their children. When teachers know the extent of the parents' investment in their children they will perhaps change their attitude in order to help this investment to achieve its fruition. According to Epstein (2007:19), parenting includes workshopping parents on issues that help the child to behave well and so reach his/her goal in life.

In this study the poor parenting skills of parents were addressed through the running of workshops on parenting with assurance, career choice, planning for tertiary education, and learners' code of conduct. These were crucial in exposing and enhancing the parents' knowledge to social issues that might affect their children's lives. The joint collaborative planning for these workshops ensured that parents share the strategies of raising the children with teachers and other stakeholders in a mutually respectful and partnership manner.

4.6   EVIDENCE

This section has captured the data from the participants which corroborates the literature that parental engagement depends on the context in which it takes place (Barton et al., 2004). This context can consist of positive conditions such as teamwork, vision sharing, planning together, and reflecting together. These conditions encourage partnership based on mutual respect between the parents and the teachers. The mutually drawn up plans enhance parental engagement in their children's education. The negative context consists mainly of contestation of power relations between the teachers and the parents. These power relations manifest themselves in the threats to teamwork, sharing of common vision, collaborative planning and reflection on their practices.

The study has shown that parental engagement can be enhanced if the communicative space from which it takes place is harmonised to allow respect for diversity, equitable inputs and power sharing (Mahlomaholo & Netshendama, 2012). The success of the study was based on ability of the participants to exploit positive conditions in a manner that they mitigate the possible threats identified. The commitment of participants in planning together and reflecting on their plans together ensured that the solutions that tailored made solutions to the problems of parental engagement were developed with local people. The data from Ms Gift and reverend Nkosi who participated enthusiastically in the study represent the views of many other parents about the achievement of the study.

Ms Gift, parent at Matsieng school, shared her views of the study as follows:

Jwaloka e le mona re fumane lesedi stading sa mofuta ona, ke nahana hore ho a hlokahala hore re le moifo ona re nne re etela dikolo tse mabapi ho hlokomedisa batswadi ka seo re ithutileng sona. Ke ne le mmeting wa sekolo se seng moo ho neng ho buuwa ka leano le letjha la thuto e leng CAPS. Kamora kopano yaba ke botsa batswadi hore na ba utlwisisetse seo mistrese a neng a bua ka sona. Eitse hoba ke bone hore ha ba utlwisisa yaba ke dula fatshe le bona ke a ba hlalosetsa. Ke leboha ntate Metsi ka lesedi leo stadi sena se le tlisetseng. Ke ukutlwa ke phethahetse kannete. [Now that we have gained knowledge from a study of this nature, I think it is necessary for us to as a team to visit the neighbouring schools to make parents aware about what we have learnt. I was attending a meeting at another school where CAPS as a new approach to teaching was discussed. After the meeting I asked parents whether they have understood the lady teacher who was presenting. After noticing that they did not understand I sat down with them and explained this to them. I thank Mr Metsi for knowledge brought by this study. I really feel complete.]

The statement by Ms Gift that *'re fumane lesedi'* [We have gained knowledge] indicates that they (i.e., participants) were better off than before they participated in this study. Ms Gift is using the pronoun 're' [we] to show that she was not the only one who benefitted from participating in the study. She seemed to notice this change in others who were also part of this study. Her statement further shows that the knowledge that she gained was so valuable that she even wished to share it with other parents from neighbouring schools. This was evident from the efforts that she took to explain what CAPS entailed. She indicates that 'ke ikutlwa ke phethahetse ka nnete' [I truly feel complete], which is why she ensured that other parents also gained the same understanding as herself. Her participation in the study increased her knowledge to be a strong link between the school and the community.

Reverend Nkosi also participated through the study period and his views were considered as evidence that parental engagement framework worked for the participating schools. He indicated this to demonstrate a change of attitude that teachers had towards parents:

Pele ho stadi sena matitjhere ba ne ba re sheba hampe re le batswadi. O ne o ka kena sekolong mona ebe ha ba o dumedise empa kajeno dintho di fetohile ha e sa le ke eba le karolo stading sena. Ke amohelwa hamonate e leng ntho e neng e sa etsahale pele'. [Before this study teachers used to look at us badly as parents. You would come to school here and they would not even greet but today things have changed. Since I became part of the study, I'm now being well received which is something that was not done before.]

The statement by Nkosi that before this study teachers used to look at them badly as parents, shows that the study changed the perception of teachers about parents as lacking of knowledge to develop the child's life. The study eroded the deficit approach to parental engagement and made teachers to view parents as assets (Barton et al., 2004; Pushor & Ruitenberg, 2005). This is evident from Nkosi' s statement that *'ke amohelwa hamonate e leng ntho e neng e sa etsahale pele* [I'm well received, something that was not happening before.] This new perception was crucial to ensure that parents work collaboratively and share the same vision with teachers to improve the learners' education. It was necessary to flatten the power relations between the teachers and the parents. This ensured social peace, harmony and hope for future collaboration and partnerships between parents and teachers.

The new perceptions teachers held about parents enabled them to welcome them into their classrooms for supervision of afternoon studies, or for reflecting together on their observations. This collegiality was necessary to turn schools into sustainable learning environments.

4.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter has demonstrated that parental engagement is a contestation of power between those who possess institutional power and the marginalised parents. It also shows that the marginalisation of parents, although they remain silent about being oppressed, does not mean that they are not aware of their situation or accept it. What these subaltern parents need is re-awakening so that they can start to talk about their situations openly. It has been shown that parental

engagement does not happen in a vacuum. It shapes and is also been shaped by other factors in that environment. If the prevailing conditions are positive it will grow but if they are negative it could be inhibited. The use of language can hide the power play of the elites to justify their dominance over the marginalised.

This chapter concludes by showing that the domination of the elites over the dominated parents cannot last forever. There is evidence that parents can position their voice in the education of their children if properly empowered. There is also evidence that if parents work together and empower one another there will be benefits not only for the learners and the schools but for the community as a whole.

CHAPTER 5

THE FRAMEWORK FOR ENHANCING PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

5.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter seeks to present a framework for enhancing parental engagement such that schools become sustainable learning organisations. This is done through the conceptualisation of the study, the identification of possible participants and the establishment of the coordinating team. Furthermore, the joint planning session is discussed with a view to operationalizing Critical Emancipatory Research (CER) principles of respect, democracy and social justice. The joint planning spells out the situational analysis to identify the need for the study, the priorities for engaging parents, the conditions under which parents can carry out those priorities, the risks that may impede successful implementation of the framework, and the learning experiences drawn from implementing the framework. Joint planning helps to uncover and address inherent power relations that often determine whether parental engagement is sustained or not. The chapter concludes by stressing that power, if correctly exercised, can bring about social justice, peace and freedom, which are the cornerstones for sustained human development.

5.2   THE PREPARATION

The preparation for the study consisted of the conceptualisation and joint planning. The conceptualisation sets the standard and maps the processes that should be followed until the framework is implemented to test its effectiveness.

5.2.1 Individual preparation

Designing a framework for engaging and enhancing parental engagement requires a thorough preparation on the side of the initiator. This initial preparation is crucial to ensuring the successful design and implementation of the framework. The preparation includes seeking permission from the DoE to conduct a study in order to develop such a framework. Furthermore, the possible participants to be members of the coordinating team should be identified and approached. Approaching them can best be done on one-to-one basis because it affords the one who is being approached an opportunity to think critically and honestly about his/her possible contribution in finding solutions to the identified problem. It also affords the initiator the opportunity to establish close relationships with the participants prior to establishing a coordinating team, and helps to mobilise the necessary tools such as voice recorders and documents. In this study preparation was done by asking for permission to conduct a research study and thereafter the possible participants were identified. The possible participants were from diverse social backgrounds and experiences. This initial preparation was crucial for later joint planning by the coordinating team.

The one-to-one discussions and reflective sessions indicated that parental engagement was a serious concern in township schools (Mbokodi, 2008:32; Msila, 2012:303). The reflections pointed to possible unequal power relations between the teachers and parents as a contributory reason for the lack of parental engagement.

5.2.2 Advocacy with the school governing bodies

The school governing bodies (SGBs) possess legislative power relating to the governance of schools (SASA, sections 8, 9, 16, 20). They are the guardians of school properties, including the documents relating to parental engagement, therefore they should be consulted in terms of the advocacy of the intended study so that they can know what is going to happen at their schools. This is crucial because the changes that the study proposes should get their approval for implementation. The SGBs are crucial components in terms of popularising the

study so that other parents know what is going on. They need to be made aware that the existence of the coordinating team is there to strengthen their hand and not to take over the control of their schools and perhaps replace them. This is important in order to ensure good relations between the SGBs and the coordinating team members.

The other reason is that the SGBs could be expected to help with the resources, such as venues for meetings of the coordinating team and documents that relate to the engagement of parents. Permission needs to be sought as part of showing respect for the SGBs as legal structures responsible for school governance. This will ensure that legislative mandates regulating the SGBs are observed and implemented. Respecting the SGBs will enhance social justice, bring about peace and give them hope for the future. It gives the SGBs hope to consider their place in the education of their children (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001:124). Therefore, advocacy with the SGBs paves the way to reaching their constituency, who are the parents of the learners enrolled at their schools. It also helps to create a better understanding of the nature and extent of the problem by responding to the questions that SGB members pose during advocacy sessions with them.

In view of the preceding discussions the coordinating team conducted the advocacy with the SGBs of the participating schools to involve them in the nature and scope of the study, the participants, the SGB documents that would be needed, the duration of the study, the time participants would be meeting, and the type of spinoffs the study was likely to bring. This prepared fertile ground for the success and sustainability of the envisaged parental engagement framework because the framework would be mindful of the ethical considerations.

5.2.3 Ethical considerations

Designing a framework for enhancing parental engagement should uphold ethical considerations, including one that participants' identity should all time be protected so that they are not revealed outside the study. They were informed about the research paradigm, how it works and what it entails, and informed of the data collection procedure and the data collection instruments. This was necessary

because the participants' voices were to be audio-taped and that required their permission. All aspects of the study relating to the participation and contribution of the participants as co-researchers were considered.

This is in line with the principles of CER for respect of the participants. According to this paradigm participants should not be treated as subjects with no input on how to address their problems in a manner that is sustainable. This also helps to value the local knowledge base of the participants (von Maltzahn & van der Riet, 2006:111). The researcher's role should be to interpret their aspirations in order to make sense of them (Mahlomaholo & Netshandama, 2012:43).The participants should be at liberty to enrol or participate in the study, which can be achieved if the study coordinator is transparent to them about what the study entails and the duration of the study period so that they can make informed decisions (Brydon-Miller, 2008:201).

The participants should also know what roles they are going to play in order to make the framework succeed. This is important in that it openes the communicative space between the researcher and the participants (Skollerhorn, 1998:557). This helps to motivate them to participate in the study as there is no use recruiting people who are not willing to stay for the duration of the study (Dumas, et al., 2008:619; Prew, 2009:828). If participants are not willing to stay and contribute to the success of the study they will jeopardise the successful completion thereof. It is therefore crucial that participants voluntarily engage in the study so that they can be motivated to see the end results of their work.

5.2.4 Establishment of coordinating team

The engagement of parents needed a team that could spearhead it (Hara & Burke, 1998:11; Michigan Department of Education, 2011:57). The establishment of a coordinating team in order to deal with parental engagement was necessary because of the evidence that formal structures such as the school councils could not succeed in breaking the entrenched power hierarchies at schools (Stelmach,2012:33). This team coordinated and synergised the efforts of these stakeholders so that there could be shared purpose and vision (Ehlers & Lazenby,

2010:69; Senge, 1990:9). This team was representative of all the community stakeholders with an interest in education (Sheldon, 2011:100).

For this framework, the coordinating team included the parents, the SMTs, religious leaders, municipal leaders and an official from the DoE. This team coordinated and synergised the efforts of these stakeholders so that there could be shared purpose and vision (Ehlers & Lazenby, 2010:69; Senge, 1990:9). Through shared vision the spirit of collegiality and partnership based on respect and trust was developed among the members of the coordinating team (Moles Jr. & Fege, 2011:9; Shirley, 1997:27). The relationship of trust and reciprocity was essential for the coordinating team to bond and work together as a unified force. Working together and sharing common vision dispelled the signs of mistrust that existed before the establishment of the coordinating team, which provided parents and other stakeholders with a platform to consider issues, debate the current practices and reconstruct new alternatives that made them support their children better (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001:124). The coordinating team played an important role in ensuring that there was social action to address the problem of low parental engagement at the participating schools (Hubbard & Hands, 2012:44). The coordinating team created opportunities for members to have a better understanding of the situations affecting parents at the participating schools.

The coordinating team was responsible for conducting a SWOT analysis to determine the need for the framework, the priorities to which it should draw the attention of parents, the conditions conducive to successful implementation of such priorities, the risks and threats that might hamper implementation of the framework, and the applicability of the framework to indicate its effectiveness. The threats and weaknesses were matched against the strengths and opportunities and allocated to people with the potential to mitigate them (Lochbaum,1998:537).The coordinating team ensured that tasks were allocated to members who had the potential to carry them out at a given time. This was important to ensure successful completion of the tasks. Once the coordinating team had been established a comprehensive joint planning was put into practice.

5.2.4.1   The school management teams

The SMTs hold positional power (Van Dijk, 2008:88) in terms of influencing the direction that the school has to take. They can either approve or disapprove. They also serve as a point of entry to the school, therefore negotiating and consulting them was crucial to secure approval and access to other stakeholders. Consulting them enabled them to share their power with marginalised parents, something that was unusual and uncommon according to their school culture. This created a communicative space in which to share their knowledge with other parents and learn from them (Skollerhorn, 1998:557). This communicative space allowed both SMTs and parents to understand one another better and enhanced the collegiality between them. This in turn brought peace and mutual respect for the capital that each possessed.

The SMTs were central in that their participation in the study would help with the implementation of the programmes and policies geared towards the engagement of parents. Their inclusion in the study helped to conscientise them to the need for community development and ensuring that schools become centres of hope and transformation to their communities.

5.2.4.2 The municipal leaders

The municipal leaders hold position of power in their communities. They are elected public representatives that people trust and revere. Including them in the study brought the community closer to their schools and enhanced the parental discourse agenda in their interaction with the community members. This way they would sensitise the community and the government to support their schools. This was necessary in order to ensure that schools were protected from vandalism and other destructive actions by community members. They also served as the mediators between the marginalised and their schools (Mahlomaholo & Netshandama, 2012:37). Where there was disagreement between the school and the community they could be called on to intervene, thus enabling the SMTs to share power with the community and to ensure that community cultural wealth was nurtured in the school.

The municipal leaders served as gateways for popularising the study in the community. Their inclusion enhanced the sustainability of parental engagement in that they created fertile ground for community members to be aware of the need to rally behind their children's education.

5.2.4.3 Religious leaders

The religious leaders are usually influential as defenders of peace and social justice. Their role in providing pastoral care gave the marginalised parents the hope that power inequalities between them and the teachers would be addressed (Mahlomaholo & Netshandama, 2012:37). Their humility was crucial to influence other 'powerful' members of the coordinating team to exercise respect, equity and social justice in ensuring that the voice of the marginalised parents was heard in the debate to shape the direction of their children's education. Their inclusion was critical in helping the marginalised parents to view the school's hierarchical setup not as inevitable constraints on their freedom to engage in their children's education (Agger, 1991:109). The religious leaders ensured that social justice agenda and reversal of the inequities of the past were achieved. Their inclusion helped the study to achieve inclusivity and fluidity of ideas and experiences.

5.2.4.4 The parents

The parents were key participants in the study. Their inclusion in planning the framework to enhance their engagement could only succeed if they were party to decisions from planning to implementation (Michigan Department of Education, 2011:63). Their inclusion in this study transformed the way they used to see themselves in the school landscape. They changed from viewing themselves as passive recipients of what happened in school regarding the education of their children. Their inclusion was crucial in ensuring that the learners were supported better to realise their dreams. They also played a key role in mobilising other parents who were not part of the study to realise the important role that they could play in their children's education. Working together with parents enabled them to

share platform with other members of the coordinating team and this bridged the gap between them and their children's schools. It also helped the other coordinating team members to understand their engagement or disengagement from their own perspective, what caused it, how they felt about that and how their engagement could be enhanced.

Their engagement in the study provided them with an opportunity to speak for themselves and write their own history, not the way other people wanted it but the way they wanted it to be. Thus, their engagement provided an opportunity to influence their children for the better. This was essential in restoring confidence and self-belief in their own potential. These parents were to liaise between the SGB and other parents as well as community members. In this way their participation in the study bridged the gap that used to exist between the teachers and the parents as well as between the school and the community in general. Their inclusion also assisted in bringing a sense of shared responsibility between the parents and the teachers regarding the education of the learners.

Their inclusion in the study was crucial not only in terms of building a relationship of trust between the teachers and the parents but also in increasing their voice in the decisions that related to the education of their children. This was also important in ensuring that parents spoke for themselves regarding the needs of the community in general (Pushor & Ruitenberg, 2005:12-13).

5.3   COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

Parental engagement is a purposeful effort to enhance the voice of parents in the education of their children. This means that comprehensive planning is needed to ensure that every parent ultimately plays a meaningful role. This plan was drawn up jointly with all the coordinating team members because of a shared belief that all members were capable of contributing to the success of the framework. This collaborative planning was essential to enhancing the principle of social justice by ensuring that all stakeholders with an interest in education made inputs regarding the direction of their children's education (Chrispeels & Gonzalez, 2011:269; Healy, 2003:104; Rodriguez-Brown, 2009:5). The planning comprised strategic

planning, situational analysis to determine the need for the framework, the identification of priorities, the implementation thereof and reflective sessions to evaluate progress made.

5.3.1 Strategic planning

Strategic planning spanning a period of six months was drawn up to address the objectives of the study. Each had a priority area and the number of activities attached to such a priority. These activities were assigned competent people to realise them. On a monthly basis the coordinating team held meetings to evaluate progress and changes were made on the plan depending on the progress made at a particular time. This strategic plan consisted of shared vision, situational analysis, risk assessment plan and the legislative and policy mandates.

5.3.1.1 Shared vision

Developing a framework for parental engagement requires the coordinating team members to have a common vision. This synergises their efforts and thinking so that a quality plan can be drawn up to achieve the objectives set out (Moles Jr. & Fege, 2011:9). The vision sharing enabled the coordinating team to achieve its objectives because the members were supporting one another. Vision enables the members of the coordinating team to subscribe to certain values and norms that guide their operations (Huffman, 2003:22; Senge, 1990:9). These included mutual respect, honesty, punctuality (see 4.3.2), equality, teamwork, diversity and freedom of expression (Hickling-Hudson, 2006:4; Moles Jr. & Fege, 2011:7). These values assisted the coordinating team to enhance the appropriateness and sustainability of the framework for engaging and enhancing parental engagement (von Maltzahn & van der Riet, 2006:112).

They guided the operations of the coordinating team throughout the process of the study. When people have the same vision they work as equal partners and recognise the wealth of knowledge that each has to bring to the team. This helps

to balance the power relations which often account for conflicts and disunity. The sharing of vision enabled us to mobilise the parents to work together with the schools in order to ensure that every learner received quality education (Moles Jr. & Fege, 2011:9). Through shared vision the coordinating team created conditions conducive to engagement in situational analysis in order to determine the extent of parental engagement at the participating schools. This also created opportunities for parents to speak for themselves regarding their engagement and disengagement (Pushor & Ruitenberg, 2005).

Shared vision enabled the coordinating team members to share results of their actions, take ownership of the study framework and account for the results of their plans of engaging parents in their children's education (Blank, 2011:47). The shared vision and the values that the coordinating team members upheld became the guiding anchors of the study. These values, for instance, mutual respect, honesty, commitment, teamwork and humility, enabled the members to listen to one another and share the tasks allocated equally. They also helped the coordinating team members to work harmoniously and learn from one another. The sharing of values, beliefs and practices contributed to the relevance and sustainability and effectiveness of the framework that includes local knowledge (von Maltzahn & van der Riet,2006:112).

The respect for the participants' local knowledge is crucial in bonding the researcher and the participants as well as the successful implementation of the envisaged parental engagement framework. This respect is important in bringing about social justice and hope to the local community. It also facilitates their analytic abilities of identifying their challenges and suggesting possible solutions (Mahlomaholo & Netshandama, 2012; von Maltzahn & van der Riet, 2006:115). Through the sharing of a common vision the coordinating team members levelled the power imbalance which existed before the study commenced. This balancing of power created opportunities for the previously marginalised to engage in parental discourse with the teachers as equal partners in their children's education.

The shared vision allowed the coordinating team to be supportive of one another. For instance, in one incident the coordinating team members felt that the meeting

would rather start a bit late than begin before all members were present. This showed a spirit of collegiality, commitment and support for one another (Ehlers & Lazenby, 2010:69). It also showed that the inputs of every member were invaluable in terms of contributing to the success of the study. This spirit enabled the coordinating team to conduct a SWOT analysis to determine the factors behind low parental engagement at the participating schools.

The shared vision was displayed throughout the study, from situational analysis to planning, implementation and reflection to track progress made. It cemented the coordinating team members to remain in the study until it was completed and also created mutual accountability (Moles Jr. & Fege, 2011:9). It focused and enabled the members of the coordinating team to speak with one voice. The existence of a common vision created opportunities for the members of the coordinating team to learn from one another. According to Chrispeels and Rivero (2001:119), when parents engage in their children's education it will help mitigate the negative impact of poverty and prevent the learners from dropping out of school.

Where there is a shared vision teachers would not be reluctant to share power with the parents (Evans, 2011:141), but rather they will recognise parents as part of their own in their quest to deliver quality education to the learners. The sharing of a common vision was essential in ensuring that members of the coordinating team engaged in situational analysis to determine the root cause of poor or low parental engagement at the participating schools. It was crucial hearing from the participants' voices as to what accounted for such poor parental engagement.

The sharing of a vision allows the teachers and the parents to work together effectively (Sanders, 2011:143). Shared vision should be implemented in order to take the school forward. The sharing of a common vision enables the coordinating team members to reduce the level of conflict among themselves in terms of what should be achieved and how to achieve it. It thus enables members of the coordinating team to engage in collective efforts to determine the needs of their schools as partners. When parents and teachers work together as partners they will be able to identify what causes their problems and also suggest possible solutions to address those identified problems.

5.3.1.2 Situational analysis

The coordinating team conducted situational analysis to determine the nature and extent of parental engagement at the participating schools and how to enhance it to be sustainable (Michigan Department of Education, 2011:61). This situational analysis was necessary to generate vision of making improvements where there was a need because it provided the background environment (Ibrahim & Jamil, 2012:38). Situational analysis guides the point of entry into the situation and this enabled the coordinating team to stay focused on its mission (Hara & Burke, 1998:11). This helps to minimise the waste of time, resources and misdiagnosing of the real problem. Therefore, situational analysis allows the coordinating team to access local knowledge which is crucial to validate the framework as it contains the information that participants considered very important to their lives (von Maltzahn & van der Riet, 2006:111).

The situational analysis was done by asking one main question: how can we enhance parental engagement at your school such that it is sustainable? The principles of FAI technique by Meulenberg-Buskens were used to probe further clarity-seeking questions. These deepened the understanding of the coordinating team members. The situational analysis was made through SWOT analysis whereby the opportunities and strengths were matched against the threats and weaknesses through the drawing of a plan of action (Paik, 2011:123). This enabled the coordinating team to unearth deep-rooted power inequities between the teachers and parents which often account for non-engagement of parents (Coleman& Earley, 2005:91; Johnson et al., 2012:70; Warren, 2000:113). It helped to create a learning space for coordinating team members to learn about the situations of parents at the participating schools (Hubbard & Hands, 2012:47; Skollernhorn, 1998:557).

The information thus obtained from the SWOT analysis was categorised into the various objectives of the study in a grid format. For instance, the situational analysis pointed out that parents were not actively engaged in the curriculum issues of the school, which laid a basis for the development of shared vision among the coordinating team members, the identification of the framework priorities and implementation thereof.

5.3.1.3 Risk assessment plan

The situational analysis highlighted the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats relating to parental engagement at the participating schools. This was done by applying the principles of the FAI technique in a meeting situation in which the participants talked about the state of parental engagement at their schools (Garlick, 2007:17). From what transpired during the discussions, the coordinating team responded to the threats and weaknesses identified through situational analysis. These threats and weaknesses were identified, analysed, evaluated and put on a scale of low to high impact and low to high probability (Hampton, 2009:9). This enabled the coordinating team to understand what caused low parental engagement, how, where and why.

The process of risk assessment opened a communicative space for the coordinating members to talk about the risks and devise strategies to prevent them (Garlick, 2007:17; Skollerhorn, 1998:557). The risks that seemed to have high impact and high probability were attended to first. These risks had the potential to hamper the successful completion of the study, and prompted the coordinating team to clear any barriers to the achievement of the study's objectives. For instance, the threat relating to time for the coordinating team meetings was identified. The members felt that the time for their meetings should be shifted from 14hours to 15h30 on Sundays to allow the members to attend to their errands. Therefore, the time for meetings was structured according to the needs of the members in order to ensure harmony between their schedules and the coordinating team's activities (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001:126).

The risk assessment plan also assisted the coordinating team to exercise care regarding the frequency and duration of the meetings, which it restricted to at least two hours per session once a month. This step was essential in order to allow all members to honour the meetings of the team and also to promote harmony among the members. However, when there was a need for emergency meetings an arrangement was made with the approval of all members. The spirit of collegiality that existed among the coordinating team members allowed us to visit those who for one or other reason could not attend such meetings, to appraise them of what transpired. This helped them to be on par with other members who

managed to attend. The reaction of the coordinating team in speedily addressing aspects of time management for the study enabled it to complete the study project within the stipulated timeframe.

The risk relating to the use of exclusionary language was counteracted and addressed through the use of a common language that all participants spoke (Moles Jr. & Fege, 2011:6). This was necessary to enhance better understanding and successful implementation of the resolutions taken. The foreign concepts were thus translated into a language that the participants understood (Singh et al., 2004:304), and accorded the participants respect and hope by explaining and translating certain concepts to them so that they felt part of the whole study process. It also assisted in broadening the feedback sessions to other parents who were not part of the study about the achievements and lessons learned. Mitigating against this threat was consistent with implementation of the legislative mandates to include parents in the decisions that affected their children's education.

5.3.1.4 Legislative and policy mandates

Parental engagement needs all stakeholders to abide by the legislative and policy mandates (Sanders, 2011:143). The legislative and policy mandates set the guidelines, norms and standards for working with parents so that parental engagement becomes purposeful to both parents and teachers. The existence of legislative and policy mandates helps to democratise the communicative space between the teachers and the parents. This space provides parents, teachers and other stakeholders with an opportunity to exchange ideas, network and build relationships (Domina, 2005:234), essential to making parents full partners in their children's education (Mapp, 2011:8). The legislative and policy mandates also balance the power relations between the teachers and the parents because they regard parents and community as assets that can contribute meaningfully (Abdul-Adil & Farmer Jr., 2006:1).

The legislative and policy mandates guide the actions and operations of the coordinating team to make parental engagement a legal requirement. This is

essential in order to ensure that it is treated with the utmost care and sensitivity it deserves as well as making it an integral part of the school setup (Ibrahim & Jamil, 2012:39). These legislative and policy mandates need to be used in such a way that they attract the social and cultural capital of parents into the school situation so that learners can benefit.

Upholding the legislative and policy mandates enabled the coordinating team to realise that the schools alone cannot deliver quality education without the support of parents and other stakeholders. They ensure effective collaboration between the parents and teachers and between the school and the community in general (Patrikakou, 2011:132). They were critical in ensuring peaceful and warm relationships among the members of the coordinating team as well as the sustenance of the team efforts.

However, one should caution against any framework that merely seeks to comply with the prescripts of the law, that is, where parents are represented but with no decision-making powers regarding what happens at school. Compliance-driven parental engagement is not sufficient if the voice of the parents is not privileged in enhancing the quality of their children's education. What is needed is to equalise the voice of the parents with that of the teachers. To achieve this, parents should not only be informed about the decisions that have already taken but also be consulted about them. According to Henderson and Redding (2011:105), parents can play a critical role in deciding on the curriculum of the school, school improvement plan, teaching, allocation of resources and even school leadership.

Moles Jr. and Fege (2011) have found that parent councils in USA engage not only in the selection of the principal but also in evaluating his or her performance. This shows the confidence and trust that the education department has in the governing councils. Engaging parents in governing structures of the school benefits the school in achieving its objectives, and the parents in expanding their leadership skills. It also makes implementation of the decisions taken much easier.

The envisaged parental engagement framework should not make parents the stooges of teachers who are consulted only when it suits the teachers (Singh et al., 2004:304). The inclusion of parents in decisions relating to the drawing up of

the school improvement plan will ensure that they stay informed about what is going on at school in terms of what their children should achieve. This is in line with what Sheldon (2011:2) regards as a learner-driven type of parental engagement. This sees parents working together with teachers to advance the educational needs of the learners, and is achieved through the process of learning from one another in that teachers not only teach parents how to help their children learn better, but they also learn from parents how the learners learn at home so that the home education knowledge can be advanced and formalised at school.

When parents feel part of the decision-making at school they will respect and ensure the successful implementation thereof. There should be collaborative planning between parents and teachers in order to ensure that both school and community needs are considered.

5.3.2 Operational planning

The operational plan is crucial to operationalising a framework for parental engagement. It will ensure that the strategic plan objectives are reduced to small, manageable and specific units or tasks that can be easily achieved. Such an operational plan begins with the activities that lead up to the establishment of the coordinating team, and those undertaken by it, such as situational analysis, shared vision, collaborative planning and reflection. Once the coordinating team has been established it should engage in the identification of the activities that would be essential to realising the objectives of the study. These activities should be allocated responsible people and resources as well as timeframes. The progress should be tracked regularly to ensure that the development and implementation of the framework for parental engagement achieves its targets.The operational plan should include situational analysis to determine and justify the needs for the study, the components to determine the priority areas to engage parents, the conducive conditions that could enhance parental engagement, the threats associated with parental engagement, and the reflection to evaluate the efficacy of the framework.

5.3.2.1   Justification of the need for the framework

The coordinating team should analyse the context and situations of the schools relating to parental engagement. The situational and contextual analysis should focus on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that impact on parental engagement. For instance, the strength that was identified by the coordinating team relates to a parent who supported learners with their homework in Accounting because she had background knowledge of the subject. This parent was utilised to assist other learners in their neighbourhood and also to mobilise other parents to form parental cells to support the education of their children. The study explored the opportunity for expanding the principle of parental engagement in curriculum matters on a larger scale (4.3.5). The parents were engaged in afterschool supervision of the learners' studies and were motivated to attend parenting sessions in which they were exposed to childrearing and developmental stages as well as detecting anti-social tendencies in their children. The parenting workshops further exposed parents to engagement in their children's education by giving the children advice on career choice and financial support.

In the same vein the weaknesses that were identified by the coordinating team related to lack of team work, lack of shared vision, lack of situational and contextual analysis, non-adherence to legislative mandates, lack of collaborative planning, poor communication, poor school-community relationships, the use of exclusionary language, mass learner failure, poor parenting, and low level of formal schooling. These weaknesses counteracted the strengths identified and as such needed to be addressed.

In order to address these issues, the analytic process had to be more involved and conducted in greater depth. This requires that techniques and principles such as FAI, free and participatory engagements should be considered. For instance, the weakness and threats relating to the poor school-community relationships were addressed through inviting parents during parents' meetings to offer their services in areas of need, identified jointly by parents and teachers. Through reflective sessions the parents were able to identify their competencies and skills which would assist the schools to address the areas of need. Through these reflective sessions the retired teachers were identified, and their profiles captured

on the schools' data bank. These teachers were approached to fill the gaps created by teachers who were ill for shorter periods which the schools could not fill through the normal vacancies of at least 30 days. This ensured that teachers were available to teach the learners all the time and improved the relationships between the school and the community, bringing together teachers and parents to enhance the learners' education.

In the same vein the threats and weaknesses relating to poor communication between the teachers and the parents were addressed through identification of channels of communication. These should be used to ensure that communication does not flow in one direction only, but rather from teachers to parents and vice versa, to balance the power relations between the teachers and the parents. The SWOT analysis can be conducted through meetings of the coordinating team with discussions centred on the nature and extent of parental engagement at the participating schools. These discussions were held through the principles of FAI technique with participants asked one main question*: How can we enhance parental engagement such that it becomes sustainable?* This was followed by clarity-seeking questions designed to improve understanding of the situation. The information and data gathered was categorised and prioritised according to impact. Those challenges that seemed urgent and having more impact were given immediate attention, whilst those that had less impact were attended to at a later stage. This was crucial in order to ensure that the coordinating team intervened in areas that the parents and teachers felt would make a significant impact in enhancing parental engagement at the participating schools.

The determination of the need for the study was achieved through reflective sessions which permeated all levels of the study. This data included non-attendance of school meetings, lack of or poor communication between the parents and teachers, disengagement of parents from school governance structures, inability of parents to render assistance to their children's learning, and poor school-community relationships. These factors pointed to a need for the study because parents were said to be disengaged from their children's education. This situation was not helping the schools or the learners to take their schools

forward. The identification of these factors enabled the coordinating team to draw up priorities as a way of responding to them.

5.3.2.2 Identification of the components and priorities

The coordinating team that implements the framework for parental engagement should identify the priority areas that are directly related to their specific problem. This is a way of responding to the gaps or shortcomings that account for poor parental engagement and the priorities should be identified at meetings of the coordinating team in which all participants have a chance to make an input. For instance, in this study the coordinating team identified priorities such as the establishment of the team, shared vision and collaborative planning, to name a few (see chapters 2 and 4).

When parents are afforded an opportunity to identify the components of the engagement they tend to become committed to the tasks, unlike when imposing those tasks on them (Skollerhorn, 1998:556). This should be a collaborative venture between the teachers and parents as this will ensure respect for social and cultural capital of parents as well as their commitment to sustainability of the framework (Yosso, 2005:76; von Maltzahn & van der Riet, 2006:111). This is because parental engagement is a regulated area and it also shows respect for parents as worthy partners. This is well expressed by Cummins (1996:34) "…real changes in school will only begin to take place when relationships of power begin to change, that is when the voices of parents and the community are heard and the direction of the school reflects the values of all."

It is imperative to be sensitive to and to observe the principles and values of mutual respect for the views of the other participants. This can be achieved if all those affected are involved in the process as equal partners, to ensure and enable free flow of ideas regarding the issues at hand. It provides a mechanism through which emancipatory knowledge can be created (Biesta, 2010:X; Martin 2008:397), and affords the participants and the study an opportunity to derive optimal benefit from the diverse experiences and knowledge of each. This knowledge can then be synergised towards the attainment of the shared vision, setting the tone and

prepares for the participants' efficient and effective planning for parental engagement in schools (Prew, 2009:826).

The identification of priorities in this way will ensure that the community's needs are represented in school planning so that every learner has a chance to benefit academically and extramurally (Prew, 2009:832). The coordinating team identified the priorities of curriculum engagement, communication, engagement in governance, and school-community collaboration. Each was divided into a number of activities and assigned a responsible person to carry it out. The timeframes were attached to each and progress was tracked on a monthly basis. For instance, to achieve the priority on curriculum, activities such as assisting with learner's homework, supervision of the learners' afternoon /after-school studies by parents, training of parents in curriculum matters, the drawing up of a homework policy and the establishment of homework centres, as well as parental cells to advance the educational interests of both learners and parents were identified.

This priority was allocated to the SMT members because of their in-depth experience in dealing with issues of curriculum on daily basis. When they encountered difficulties the other members of the coordinating team provided assistance. In the event that they could not provide the required help the coordinating team invited other curriculum specialists to shed some light. The achievements made were discussed with other parents during parents' meetings at the two schools. The inputs from general parents' meetings were discussed during the meetings of the coordinating team as part of its reflective sessions.

The priority on school-community relations was assigned to the municipal and religious leaders. The activities relating to the achievement of this priority included maintenance of learners' discipline, identification of taverns which sold alcoholic beverages to the learners, talking to tavern owners and asking social workers and police to deal with the problem. Eventually, what began as a school-based problem of non-engagement of parents had a ripple effect into the community and vice versa. The collaborative planning afforded the coordinating team an opportunity to identify all priorities for engaging parents in the education of their children.

The priority on communication included assessing the availability of communication records, the types, means and rate of communication, and the flow of communication power from one angle to the other, or whether there was a balance of power (Chrispeels & Gonzalez, 2011:268). These activities were considered with a view to determine the power relations between the parents and the teachers. Parental engagement is not only about the numbers of parents who attend or do not attend meetings but rather about quality of communication that parents are afforded to shape the direction of their children's education (Carreon, et al., 2005:468). Affording the parents an opportunity to share their inputs with teachers shows respect for family experience and knowledge (Hoover-Dempsey & Walker, 2002:16), and strengthens family-school ties, enabling the two parties to converge in enhancing the learners' education.

5.3.2.3 Identification of the conditions for engaging parents

The coordinating team should identify conditions that are suitable for the optimal implementation of the framework for parental engagement in schools. The importance of this action is fundamental in that failure to do so might lead to a failure and fruitless exercise. For instance, a prevalent condition in which parents complain about teachers who do not open up for their respective participation or who complain that parents do not want to be engaged in the education of their children (Harris & Goodall, 2007; Taylor, Rudolph & Foldy, 2008:661) may affect negatively the possibility of parents and teachers sharing a common vision. It will also adversely affect the school-community coordination.

Thus, the parental engagement framework that evolves will encounter serious problems if the possible conditions under which it can best work are not clearly identified. Once the conditions have been identified the next step should be to determine how such conditions could be applied in order to enhance parental engagement. This can be achieved by applying the principles of the FAI technique with the one main question: *Under which conditions can the framework for parental engagement be implemented sustainably*? Such a question can be followed by a number of clarity-seeking questions in order to improve

understanding. The coordinating team identified the conditions that enhance the successful implementation of the envisaged parental engagement framework, including the establishment of the coordinating team, the sharing of common vision, applying the legislative mandates, planning effective communication, providing training and reflecting on the actions made to check progress made (see 2.6). For instance, the condition relating to the legislative mandates requires that parents be well represented in the SGBs so that their voice can be heard (Campbell, 2011:7).

Section 4 of the SACE act also stipulates that teachers should work together with parents as equal partners (Campbell, 2011:6). The implementation of the legislative mandates ensures that parents are treated with respect and that their knowledge of educating their children is also recognised (Michigan Department of Education, 2011:8). The legislative mandates create focus in the sense that parental engagement will not be treated as an event rather as part of the school's daily operation to achieve quality teaching and learning (Ibrahim & Jamil, 2012:39). The legislative mandates provide guidelines for the achievement of the desired actions. The availability and implementation of the policy relating to parental engagement makes it a priority which requires everyone to participate. This way it will not be left to an individual school to decide whether to engage parents. The implementation of the policy will ensure both compliance and accountability.

In the same vein the condition relating to collaborative planning was achieved through joint planning of the framework. This included all stakeholders, namely, parents, SMTs, the religious and municipal leaders. This ensured inclusivity and that the framework becomes relevant to the needs of the local community by addressing its pertinent challenges. This collaborative planning ensured that these stakeholders rely on the strengths of each other in planning and implementing the framework. Therefore, the principle of shared vision and roving leadership were crucial in assisting the coordinating team to achieve collaborative planning of the framework (De Pree, 1989:43). This collaborative planning ensured that the community's needs would be included in the planning and implementation of the framework for parental engagement, and the sharing of power between the

teachers and the parents. The framework for parental engagement should be planned in such a way that it addresses the existence of the problem identified by the participants. This problem should be of a nature that not one individual person would address it but rather the joint efforts of all the stakeholders. The participants should therefore work to together to design a plan to address the situation.

To engage parents in their children's education, training should be provided (Bermudez & Marquez, 1996:4; Rodriguez-Brown, 2009:23). The provision of training capacitates parents to learn more about the school culture whilst also giving the teachers an opportunity to learn about the culture, norms and values of the community. Through the provision of training, the teachers and parents had the opportunity to understand one another better.

Training gives parents confidence to execute their responsibilities. In this study it was provided to parents in parenting, financial management, assisting their children with homework, and communication (Hara & Burke, 1998:14; Sanders, 2011:142). Workshops were crucial in enhancing the capacities of parents in supporting their children's education better, designed in such a way that they catered for what the coordinating team knew about parenting and the experiences and needs of parents (Bermudez & Marquez, 1996:7). They changed the way parents regarded themselves and thus increased their confidence.

Providing training is crucial in that it helps parents to break down rigidity in the institutions and the manipulation of public debate by the dominant and powerful teachers (Skollerhorn, 1998:557). This means that parents need not go through formal education for them to be assisted to engage in their children's education. The parents can better their knowledge and skills if conditions are created for them to learn. The provision of training therefore enables the marginalised parents to take into cognisance those risks associated with meaningful parental engagement and thus develop strategies to counteract them.

5.3.2.4 The risk assessment and management plan

Every framework has its own inherent risks which if not assessed and well managed could hamper its successful implementation. The coordinating team identified the risks associated with enhancement of parental engagement. The following risks were identified: centering power on an individual leader, insufficient training, negative communication, language barrier, lack of time, unresolved conflicts, mass learner failure, low level of formal schooling, lack of parenting skills, and lack of evaluation and monitoring. Each risk was assessed on the basis of its severity (impact) and frequency (probability), then categorised into a grid format from low to high severity and low to high frequency (Hampton, 2009:9).

This was necessary in order to ensure that those risks with high severity and high frequency were addressed and given attention before those with low severity and low frequency. For instance, the risk associated with the use of exclusionary language was considered to be from medium to high severity and medium to high frequency. This had the potential to exclude other members of the coordinating from the discussions and ultimately lead to the breakdown of team spirit and collapse of the whole study (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001:123). It had the effect of power abuse over the marginalised parents and was central to subjugation as well as scaring them off (Rogers, 2008:55). Therefore, this warranted immediate attention so that parents could use their own language and culture.

To counter this risk the coordinating team resolved to use the language that all its members could easily hear and understand. The correspondence was also in the language that they spoke and could read. During the meetings the concepts that were foreign to them were explained in their language, which helped to enhance the quality of the deliberations during the team's meetings as members could make inputs and pose questions. It also assisted in bonding the team members and thus helped them to identify themselves with the study framework.

The use of exclusionary language posed a serious risk because it had the potential to exclude parental capital from the educational discourse (Lavadenz & Armas, 2011:100). The results of this remain in the division of community into classes on the basis of their level of education. It also deepens the separation

between the community and the schools as well as between the teachers and parents in particular. Ultimately, this leads to schools' failure to be socialising agents and to account to the community they serve (Patrikakou, 2008 6). The other risks involved the low impact but high frequency. For instance, the risk associated with insufficient training was considered to have a relatively low impact but high frequency, that is, when compared to the risk of excluding parents from the main education related discourses through the usage of foreign language.

The reason for the relatively low impact lay in the common language used during parental engagement sessions, as those with skills and competencies would successfully transfer or impart their skills and knowledge to the less marginalised parents. This will ensure that parents use the skills acquired to help their children learn better. Ultimately the whole community will stand a chance to benefit. The different educational levels should not be something that divides but rather something that unites as a result of diversity. This should provide a contradictory space which is necessary to learn from one another (Mahlomaholo & Netshandama, 2012:37). The contradictory space provides an opportunity to appreciate the knowledge and skills that parents bring to the school setup (von Maltzahn & van der Riet, 2006:111). This local knowledge is crucial in making the envisaged parental framework relevant to addressing local problems and also enhancing its successful implementation.

5.4   IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FRAMEWORK

Implementation of the plan is crucial because it actualises the framework. The coordinating team was in a position to analyse its effectiveness it terms of the following factors.

5.4.1 Teamwork

Parental engagement needs concerted efforts from all role-players with interest in the education of the learners. Through the spirit of teamwork and collegiality the team that is representative of community stakeholders should be established. This should be representative of the community members with an interest in the

education of the learners, such as parents of the learners at the participating schools, the SMTs of the affected schools, the municipal and religious leaders residing in the vicinity of the participating schools, as well as the departmental official working with them.

These people should form a team because of their quest to address the problem of low parental engagement at the participating schools. Through the efforts of this team the marginalised parents would be in a position to enter the communicative space with the teachers and other community leaders who hold power in their areas of expertise (Skollerhorn, 1998:557). This communicative space is critical in providing opportunities to level the previously existing power inequities between the marginalised parents and other community stakeholders. In order to address these immanent power struggles, the coordinating team should, in its teamwork, earnestly operationalise values of mutual respect, trust, humility and social justice (Moles Jr. & Fege, 2011:7; Rearick & Feldman, 1999:336).

This helps the participants and other stakeholders to cooperate and subsequently give their support and engage in collaborative efforts of the school. This tends to create opportunities for members to learn from one another. Furthermore, the participants who may have been marginalised and whose self-esteem might have been threatened would gradually regain their confidence. Regaining confidence gives the parents hope that they will now consider themselves as equal to other stakeholders who wield power in contributing to their children's education. Persons who are confident in what they do tend to seize the opportunities and freedom to express themselves. In this way, their experiences and knowledge become accessible to the schools through the coordinating team and teamwork. Von Maltzahn & Van der Riet (2006:111) argue that such local knowledge is important because it increases the validity of research and allows for the emergence of information considered as important by the participants.

In this study, for instance, the value of teamwork that is guided by mutual trust, respect and humility was manifested in the unity of the coordinating team members. To demonstrate this, the participants who were perceived to have wielded more power, by virtue of their status in the community, submitted themselves even to those who were perceived to be in less powerful positions.

This seemed to have been as a result of them sharing and submitting to the same principles and values that guided the operations of the coordinating team.

5.4.2 Shared vision through priorities

The vision that is shared by the participants should be implemented. In this study the vision was to develop a framework to enhance parental engagement in such a way that it became sustainable. In order to achieve this shared vision the coordinating team and the participants engaged in collaborative planning to change and shape the direction of parental engagement in their schools. The planning was mutually inclusive of the situational analysis to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats relating to parental engagement at the participating schools. These were analysed and interpreted to make sense of the underlying factors that hindered parental engagement at the participating schools (Mahlomaholo & Netshandama, 2012:43-44).

The values adopted by the coordinating team formed an intricate part of the processes to achieve the vision. The processes included the situational analysis, collaborative planning, and reflective sessions that the coordinating team engaged in with a view to achieve the objectives of the study. The five study objectives served as the mission to realise the shared vision, because they were derived from the study aim which became the shared vision of the coordinating team. In other words, the mission statement was to justify and demonstrate the need for a framework for parental engagement, to determine potential solutions to the identified challenges facing parental engagement, to identify the conditions that could be conducive to the implementation of the suggested solutions and the framework, to identify and mitigate against the possible risks and threats that could derail the successful implementation of the parental engagement framework, and to trial the framework to determine the efficacy of the framework.

5.4.3 Operational plan-priorities

The plan to engage parents in the education of their children should be implemented (Hara & Burke, 1998:10; Michigan Department of Education, 2011:8). The starting point for the operational plan flows from the five objectives and the mission statement (5.4.2). In this study, the starting points were the identification of the priorities for which activities were developed and resources allocated (2.5.5 and 4.3.5).

The plan subsequently served as a tool to track progress in respect of each activity provided by the delegated persons and the coordinating team members during each meeting. For example, the development of the homework policy was delegated to the SMTs because of their knowledge of curriculum of management and implementation. These people presented their report to the coordinating team members who then made their input before a final guide was adopted. This means people who are delegated responsibilities should report back to the main team that delegated them to do the said work for ratification and adoption of the task assigned. The timeframes were also attached to each priority and resources provided to ensure successful achievement of the study objectives. On a regular basis, progress regarding the achievement of the tasks given was tabled at the coordinating team's meetings.

5.5   REFLECTION

There should be reflection to evaluate and assess whether parental engagement is at a required level (Michigan Department of Education, 2011:63). Parental engagement priorities have to be evaluated and regular feedback given in relation to their attainment for them to succeed, otherwise it will be difficult to assess the impact that they are making (Sheldon, 2011:100). Reflection is crucial to determine whether the desired results are being achieved (Brown et al., 2009:502; van Loggerenberg, 2002:45). It provides feedback regarding the achievement of activities designed to engage parents in their children's education. The coordinating team reflected on the progress made every second meeting of its sitting. This reflection permeated all levels of planning, from situational analysis to

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implementation of the plan and evaluation of the whole process at the end of the study. Therefore, reflection was carried out after the achievement of each allocated task, to analyse its effectiveness and appropriateness. For instance, the coordinating team members reflected on the workshop held for parents regarding the pass requirements in various grades at secondary school level. Each member reported on the lessons learnt. This was important in order to have a common understanding so that we could convey the same message to other stakeholders who at our schools and respective communities.

The members of the coordinating team also reflected after attending the workshop on parenting. They shared their experiences regarding the lessons learnt and what they had previously thought parenting entailed. These reflective sessions gave the team an opportunity to adjust its plan of action according to the lessons learnt. This was crucial in ensuring that where there were challenges with regard to achievement of certain areas, better strategies could be designed to register the required results (Brown et al., 2009:502; Dantley, 2005:42).

Through reflective sessions the coordinating team was able to deal with issues of democracy, freedom and social justice as they related to parental engagement at the participating schools (Rearick & Feldman, 1999:336). By unravelling the social issues that impact negatively on the parents the coordinating team was able to gain a better understanding of the underlying values and norms that shape the nature and extent of parental engagement at the participating schools. Reflection assisted the coordinating team in evaluating which data was essential to support the study framework to achieve its objective (Blank, 2011:47).

The diverse composition of the coordinating team provided an opportunity to validate the quality of their own actions because it provided an opportunity to include and work with local people (von Maltzhan & van der Riet, 2006:111). The different stakeholders who comprised the coordinating team demonstrated their skills in critiquing the tasks achieved to determine whether they were addressing the local problems with local solutions. They applied the principles of the FAI technique to ask a broad question about what the participants had learnt from the tasks allocated. This broad question was followed by clarity-seeking questions to understand the task at hand better. This was critical in ensuring that the final

product of our actions would meet the desired standard. The reflective sessions were not limited to team members but also held internally by individual members and externally by the University team. The possibility of bias of the participant with dual responsibilities was averted by involving the stakeholders who were not necessarily members of the coordinating team. The Sustainable Learning Environment/ Sustainable Rural Learning Ecologies (SULE/SURLEC) team played a pivotal role in this regard. This was critical in ensuring that no aspects of the framework relating to parental engagement would be taken for granted. Without the evaluation of the parental engagement framework the coordinating team would not have been in a position to know the impact that it was making regarding the engagement of parents in their children's education. At the end of the study a major reflection was conducted to evaluate the impact of the whole study.

5.6   ADJUSTMENT OF PLAN

The coordinating team had to adjust the operational plan according to the progress made. Where there were challenges other members of the team joined with responsible participants to ensure that the desired results were achieved. The periodic reviews provided the coordinating team with the opportunity to identify areas of weakness and suggested interventions to address them. The adjustment of the plan provided a space to look at the framework from another angle. It also addressed the gaps identified with regard to the achievement of the study objectives. For instance, the plan regarding the coordinating meeting schedules was changed slightly to allow for additional time required to finalise the study. Instead of meeting once a month, as usual, the coordinating team met fortnightly in order to be on par with the required schedule for completing the study project. This was done unanimously with the permission of the other team members who suggested this change after I had briefed them about the deadlines set by the University. Therefore, the meeting plan was structured to suit the needs of the coordinating team members and this increased the commitment to and ownership of the study project by all members (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001:120).

The adjustment of the comprehensive plan increased impetus with regard to the achievement of the study objectives and demonstrated the unqualified commitment by the coordinating team members to own the study, because they could see the spinoffs of their participation in bringing sustainable change to their schools.

5.7   CONCLUSION

This chapter has addressed the framework for enhancing parental engagement. It has explained why pre-research preparation is critical. This involved reference to individual preparation, aimed at preparing the research leader and also scouting for members to establish the coordinating team. The critical role of the team was explained in terms of identifying participants and facilitating their engagement in the study in a positive and sustainable way.

The chapter moved on to explain how to go about compiling a comprehensive plan. The processes that featured prominently included strategic planning, and operational planning. In the context of these concepts reference was made to shared vision, situational analysis, risk assessment plan, legislative and policy mandates, and the identification of priorities.

The implementation of the framework was discussed against the background of the elements of the PAR cycle. It was shown how the elements could be applied reiteratively. This was to dispel the thinking that the elements are distinct and that can be attended to and applied as such.

CHAPTER 6

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

6.1   INTRODUCTION

This study intended to enhance parental engagement in school activities in order to make them sustainable learning environments. The aim and objectives of the study are presented through a synopsis of the lessons learned and what was covered in the preceding chapters, with the aim of presenting the findings. Attention is also given to the recommendations of the study with a view to enhancing and sustaining parental engagement. The limitations of the study are listed with a view to highlight the gaps for future study interventions. The chapter concludes by presenting the way forward in terms of what has been learned.

6.2   THE AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study was to enhance parental engagement in such a way that it becomes sustainable. In order to achieve this, the principles of the FAI technique were applied to pose one main question: *How can we enhance parental engagement in such a way that it is sustainable?* To make sense of the responses of the participants and broaden understanding of the problem at hand, clarity-seeking questions were posed as a follow up. The answers to this main question were categorised according to the study objectives, namely, the need for the enhancement of parental engagement, the components in which parents should engage in order to enhance their engagement, conditions under which they could best perform or execute the identified components, the threats associated with impeding the enhancement of such parental engagement, and the evidence to attest to the effectiveness of the components and the conditions for enhancing it.

In order to achieve the study objectives, literature from national, regional, continental and international sources was reviewed. This was to determine the best practices from the countries of study with a view to learn from them. These literature constructs were compared with the data obtained from the participants at the two schools to check whether there was any match. The aim of this was to develop a framework for enhancing parental engagement that is relevant to the situations of the two schools so that it can be effective and sustainable.

6.3   THE NEED FOR ENHANCING PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT SO THAT IT CAN   BE SUSTAINABLE

This section presents the findings in respect of the need for enhancing parental engagement. The findings are presented according to the study objectives.

6.3.1 Existence of a coordinating team

The study found a lack of teamwork between the teachers and the parents because the decision-making was still vested in the hands of the teachers alone. For instance, the chairing of parents' meetings was dominated by the teachers and this could not give the elected parents the opportunity to address other parents. The teachers even presented the financial reports, which was against legislative mandates. It also showed that parents and teachers were not sharing power together as equals and that the final voice in terms of what should be done remained firmly in the hands of the teachers. Both parents and teachers in the study agreed that there was a need for parents and teachers to work together as a team. They both emphasised and corroborated the literature that parents and teachers should share the responsibility of teaching the learners. They also both agreed that parents and teachers possessed the capital needed to interchangeably foster teamwork and roving leadership with the ultimate goal of benefitting the learners. The study found that there was a need for parents and teachers to form partnerships and work as a team because working together would also have a ripple effect on the learners. Both parents and teachers

expressed a need for working together. The learners would see that both their parents and teachers were interested in their work.

The conclusion that can be drawn from this is that, before the study, both parents and teachers were working in silos and sometimes against one another. This situation created a wall between the two. As a result, their schools could not achieve some of their objectives relating to fundraising, learner achievement and parenting. The inability to work as a team implies that they were not appreciating the skills and knowledge that each could contribute to the education of their children, and that there was dominance of one by the other.

6.3.1.1 Recommendations

The study recommends that parents and teachers should work together as equal partners in the education of their children. This will dispel the notion that parents are devoid of the capital necessary to advance the educational needs of the learners. By working together they will also strengthen the capital that each possesses and this will enrich the learners' education and the general school effectiveness. Working together will ensure that both parents and teachers share power and make joint decisions regarding the learners' futures. Through teamwork the teachers and parents stand to benefit from their expertise.

6.3.2   Shared vision

The study found that parents and teachers were not sharing a common vision regarding the development of their schools. This manifested itself in teachers not allowing parents to be part of the decision-making regarding the use of school funds. The parents indicated that they were consulted only when money was needed and not how it should be spent. This means that the teachers were holding power over the parents who were perhaps regarded as financial contributors but not as financial managers. This undermined and eroded the spirit of collegiality between the parents and the teachers, implying that there were no

common values that the two upheld in order to advance the education of the learners.

The lack of shared vision resulted in parents being barred from taking initiatives of how and what their children should be taught. It also manifested itself in parents receiving invitations to meetings very late and as a result failing to attend, even had they wished to. The study also found that invitations to parents often did not bear the signature of the SGB chairperson. According to parents this was an act of undermining their authority as parents' meetings were the competence of the SGB and not the principal alone. This skewed power relation still shows that parents were not equals of the teachers. The study also found the lack of vision at the two schools as the parents' meetings were chaired by the principals instead of the SGB chairpersons, which shows lack of trust and power sharing between the parents and the teachers. This means that the teachers were usurping the powers of the parents in the SGBs by denying them to perform their roles.

The conclusion to be drawn here is that lack of shared vision ran counter to focus and direction. It was one of the reasons for poor parental engagement at the schools. It accounted for withdrawal of parents from the education of their children.

6.3.2.1 Recommendations

The study recommends the sharing of a common vision by parents, teachers and other community members. This will make schools relevant to the communities that they serve and the community will value its schools as centres of community development and growth. The sharing of common vision means that people will participate not because they are forced to do so but because they see the need for participating and sharing their knowledge and skills.

6.3.3 Situational and contextual analysis

The study found that there was a need for situational analysis in order to have an understanding of the underlying factors that account for poor parental engagement

at the participating schools. The study found that there were accusations and counter-accusations between the parents and the teachers because each had unfounded suspicions about the role of the other. The teachers often thought that parents were deliberately not interested in the education of their children. Parents on the other hand accused the teachers of excluding them from the main discourse decisions that affected the education of their children.

The lesson that can be drawn from this is that without proper situational analysis the actual problem that accounts for poor parental engagement will not be known or properly addressed. The lack of situational analysis resulted in parents and teachers not knowing what should be done to improve parental engagement because they were not speaking with one voice.

6.3.3.1 Recommendations

The study recommends that proper situational analysis be made to find out what causes poor parental engagement. This will ensure that subtle and discursive power relations that account for dividing the parents and teachers are identified and addressed. The situational analysis ensures that tailored solutions are found to address local problems. This will ensure that peace, hope and social justice prevail, and that parents and teachers treat each other as assets to advance the learners' education.

6.3.4 Legislative imperatives

The study found that parental engagement at the participating schools was not in line with the legislative imperatives. The SGBs of the participating schools were operating with a lower quota of the parent component members, despite legislation stipulating that the number of parents should be one more than the number of other stakeholders combined. Also found was a disregard for legislative imperatives, in that parents were not availing themselves to school meetings to help teachers deal with their children's discipline and plan the development of the

school together when needed. Furthermore, it was found that although the two schools registered a high number of learners (Matsieng had 1,200 and Sediba 824), the records of attendance at parents' meetings showed that only just over one hundred attended. The teachers pointed out that the meetings were the main mode of contact with parents as other means, such as the newsletters and bulk SMS system, proved too expensive for their schools because of budgetary constraints. The schools depended largely on an education departmental grant deposited on a quarterly basis as fundraising projects were not yielding any significant results.

The quality of the discussions during parents' meetings also indicates that few parents participated and the agenda was congested with other items, thus giving parents and teachers little time to discuss the learners' performance. A congested agenda made those chairing the meeting rush against time, which resulted in some parents withdrawing from asking questions for fear of being labelled uncooperative. At one of the meetings at Sediba school the principal whispered to his staff that one parent was uncooperative after she had asked a number of questions. This situation was also corroborated by Mncube (2009:8), about schools in KwaZulu-Natal province in RSA, where black parents were afraid to ask question at ex-model C schools for fear of being labelled uncooperative.

The study also found a disregard for legislative imperatives on the side of the teachers. For instance, at Matsieng only a few teachers, especially those in the school management team (SMT), attended the parents' meetings. The parents at this school were angered by being asked to attend meetings whilst teachers who taught their children and were supposed to brief them about their progress were not attending. This situation denied the parents an opportunity to seek feedback on their children's progress at school, meaning that teachers were dealing with learners' discipline alone, without being assisted by the parents. The study also found disregard for legislative imperatives in the manner that parents were treated by teachers. Parents were not always welcomed to school to raise concerns about the teachers' work.

The conclusion that can be drawn is that the disregard for legislative imperatives runs counter to democratising of the educational discourse and denies both

parents and teachers an opportunity to engage in communicative space to shape their children's education. The reason for this could be the quality of teacher training, as some did not value the importance of parents in the education of their children. Other teachers did not know how to reach out to parents or engage them. These teachers do not recognise parents as partners. This disregard for legislative mandates accounts for teachers persistence in viewing parents as adversaries rather than assets. The lack of proper parenting workshops also accounts for parents not fully engaging in the education of their children.

6.3.4.1   Recommendations

The study recommends that parental engagement policies be implemented in order to enhance parental engagement such that it is sustainable. This will democratise the education discourse and create a communicative space for parents to take their place along the teachers as equals. It will also ensure power sharing and equal contribution, ending the domination of one by the other and giving parents hope to share their capital with the school for the benefit of the learners.

6.3.5   Collaborative planning

The study found there was lack of collaborative planning between the parents and the teachers at the participating schools. The teachers were planning for the parents without consulting them, which means that the decisions were flowing in one direction only, from teachers to the parents. The lack of collaborative planning betrayed a disregard for legislative imperatives as parents and teachers were not planning together. The study found that the two schools were not planning jointly with parents to enhance their engagement. This situation was compounded by the two schools not having a programme for parents' meetings. The reason provided was that the new SGB would be drafting this programme after being elected in March 2012. Almost two months after been elected a parent participant in the study indicated that the new SGB at her school had not held a meeting, except the one that they had for electing the office-bearers. The new SGBs had not met to draw up the annual programme for their meetings, or acquaint themselves with the

school development plan and other plans that aim at improving the learners' performance at school.

Although the schools often blame parents for non-engagement (6.4.3) this situation shows reluctance on the part of the schools to involve parents. It shows an attitude of self-sufficiency as schools believe that they can advance the education of the learners with their parents playing only a minimal if any role in the education of their children. The lack of collaborative planning also served to benefit those teachers who were not in favour of parental partnership. The deliberate exclusion and self-withdrawal of parents in collaborative planning widened the gap between the parents and the teachers, and thus maintained the status quo propagated by the traditional approach to parental engagement.

We can thus conclude that lack of collaborative planning will leave parents marginalised and treated as subservient consumers instead of worthy contributors. The lack of collaborative planning means that there was no alignment of activities to ensure synergy, nor a plan to ensure that parents and teachers shared the execution of activities to enhance parental engagement. The lack of collaborative planning also revealed that the engagement of parents was not being coordinated or planned. The lack of collaborative planning also denied other stakeholders the opportunity to make inputs in plans geared to the enhancement of parental engagement and general school improvement.

6.3.5.1 Recommendations

The study recommends that there be collaborative planning between parents and teachers. This will build respect for parents' capital and ensure that their voices are included in making decisions that affect their children. Collaborative planning will also ensure that parents support the decisions taken and also own the process of implementing them. The collaborative planning ensures that the community needs are included in school plans and that schools become relevant to the communities that they serve. Planning together brings about respect for one another's capital. It also enables parents and teachers to achieve what they could

not achieve when working alone. Collaborative planning also brings about social justice, peace, hope and mutual respect.

6.3.6   Reflective practice

The study found that the participating schools were not reflecting on their actions and practices to determine whether they were effective in enhancing parental engagement. They did not evaluate their actions or practices regarding parental engagement, and such lack of reflection indicates that the participants at the participating schools did not have the opportunity to consider alternative views. The lack of reflective practices denied the participants an opportunity to engage in SWOT analysis to find out what causes poor parental engagement.

The conclusion that can be drawn from this is that without proper reflective practices the participants would not be in a position to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of their actions relating to parental engagement. By failing to use reflective sessions the schools were not in a position to counteract the barriers to effective parental engagement.

6.3.6.1 Recommendations

The study recommends that reflective practices be held regularly to evaluate the effectiveness of their plans regarding the enhancement of parental engagement. The regular reflections will identify the areas that require urgent attention in order to make proper intervention. It also recommends that schools make formal reflective sessions on their efforts to engage parents, and that the DoE monitor it.

6.4   COMPONENTS FOR PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

The study found that the identification of the components for parental engagement is critical in mapping the direction that it should take. The identification of such

components should be a dual responsibility between the teachers and the parents. These components include the establishment of the coordinating team.

6.4.1 Establishment of the coordinating team

The study found that there had been no collective decision-making, power sharing or team sprit before the establishment of the coordinating team. The establishment of this team brought together the participants from diverse backgrounds and experiences. The teachers, parents, municipal leaders, religious leaders and an official from the DoE shared the communicative space together in an effort to map the future of their children's education. As a result the teamwork brought a spirit of mutual respect for the knowledge that parents and teachers possess in teaching the learners. It also ensured that the views of the parents were included in the education discourses that affected their children, thus dispelling a previously held view of teachers as the only dominant figures in shaping the education of the learners. It gave parents confidence as the real founders of the learners' education which started long before they go to school. The establishment of the coordinating team assisted in balancing the powers between the previously marginalised parents and the elite teachers. This power balance was conducive to shared vision and collaborative planning.

The conclusion drawn from this is that teamwork complements the knowledge and skills base that both parents and teachers possess. The team also brings about shared responsibility, consultation, hope, peace and social justice, and is able to mobilise more resources needed to sustain effective parental engagement.

6.4.1.1 Recommendations

The study recommends the establishment of a coordinating team that is representative as this will ensure that the community's needs are included in the school plans. It will enable the school to access the resources from various community stakeholders. When parents work with teachers and other

stakeholders in a team they can learn from one another and so enhance their engagement.

6.4.2 Shared vision

The study enabled the two schools to share vision as a way of owning the results of their actions and sharing accountability. The existence of a shared vision harmonised the relationships between the teachers and the parents at the two schools which had previously not been working as a team. Therefore, those who engage in enhancing parental engagement should share a common vision as this vision enables the participants to focus their energies in such a way that all learners are able to benefit. It motivates the stakeholders to engage, knowing that their engagement will make a difference to their own lives and those of others around them. The shared vision enables the participants to have common values which they hold dear, enabling them to value the contribution of one another and develop policies that assist them in confronting their challenges.

The conclusion that can be drawn from this is that a shared vision is an integral part of any effort geared to enhancing the engagement of parents in their children's education. Without shared vision the participants are likely to work divisively and sometimes against one another. This will result in conflicts which derail them from achieving their objective of enhancing parental engagement.

6.4.2.1 Recommendations

Those who intend to enhance parental engagement such that it is sustainable need to share a common vision. They should ensure that this is made known to all stakeholders who are affected so that they can also own it. Once a vision has been developed and shared it should be implemented, to ensure that the activities at school level are organised in such a way that they help realise the shared vision. This will make it a practical reality instead of just a dream.

6.4.3 Situational analysis

The study enabled the participating schools to analyse the situational and contextual environments as a way of determining the level of parental engagement at the school. The evaluation of the situation will determine the factors and conditions that are either responsible for enhancing or diminishing parental engagement. The evaluation of the situation also assists in identifying the challenges that lie ahead and therefore design the proper intervention to mitigate against those challenges. The analysis of the situation will also help the designers to plan in such a way that the barriers to effective parental engagement are addressed.

The conclusion that can be drawn from this is that the situational analysis determines the context in which parental engagement takes place. Without proper situational analysis the schools would not be in a position to know the underlying factors that impede effective parental engagement at their schools.

6.4.3.1 Recommendations

The study recommends that the two schools should engage in situational analysis to determine the level of parental engagement and the factors that either promote or impede successful enhancement of parental engagement. This can be achieved through SWOT analysis in which the strengths and opportunities are grouped together against the weaknesses and threats.

6.4.4 Planning

The study found that planning is central to the achievement of the goals, therefore parental engagement should be thoroughly planned otherwise the whole exercise of trying to bring the parents into the school setup will not bring the desired results. Thorough planning should consist of the preparation stage of the framework and the actual engagement of the team members in identifying the needs, components, conditions and threats. Furthermore, the team should engage in

identifying the priorities and activities that can operationalise and actualise the components. The preparation stage includes making necessary logistical arrangements to enable the study to be conducted successfully. These include asking permission to conduct the study, conducting the advocacy with the SGBs of the schools concerned, the identification of the possible participants and the establishment of the coordinating team members.

The second level of planning should involve joint efforts of the members of the coordinating team to craft the vision for the study, conduct a situational analysis, identify the components, conditions and threats associated with parental engagement. The joint planning was crucial because it enabled the coordinating team to give the study focus by identifying activities, attaching responsibilities and timeframes as well the monitoring of the progress thereof. The planning is very important in that it brings coordination of activities and ensures that the available resources are fully utilised to enhance parental engagement.

The conclusion that can be drawn from this discussion is that planning gives direction, coordinates the efforts of various stakeholders and allows for tracking of progress and evaluation of effectiveness thereof. It can thus be concluded that without proper planning the participants would not be able to implement their plans such that they are able to achieve their goals.

6.4.4.1 Recommendations

The study recommends that planning be considered an integral part of any effort to engage and enhance parental engagement in the education of their children. This planning should be a joint effort of all the stakeholders who have interest in the learners' education and who are keen to make a difference by committing themselves to the study. It should not be fixed but flexible, to allow any adjustments after making reflections. This planning should also be adjusted to suit the participants' schedules so that they may find it easy to contribute their time and energy to the study whilst also carrying on with their lives.

6.4.5 Review of parental engagement plans

The review of the plans to engage parents was another crucial finding of the study. Before its commencement there was no joint reflection by participants about the level and impact of parental engagement at their schools. The study enabled these participating schools to draw and review the effectiveness of parental engagement, which gave the participants an opportunity to suggest possible changes and adjustments with a view to strengthen areas of weakness. Through regular reviews the schools can know whether parental engagement is making the desired impact.

It can thus be concluded that regular reviews of plans for engaging parents are very important. They will ensure that parental engagement becomes relevant to the needs of the schools concerned and so assist the schools to identify and address the needs of the community in general.

6.4.5.1   Recommendations

The study recommends that parental engagement plans be regularly reviewed to assess their impact, which will enable the schools to know the nature and extent of parental engagement. This review can be carried out by soliciting the views of the stakeholders in a meeting.

6.4.6 Provision of training

The study found that the neither school had a training programme to empower the parents. This was contrary to the provision of section19 (2) of SASA of 1996, which stipulates that the school principals and other education departmental officials should enhance the capacity of the SGBs in the performance of their duties. However, the study found that the two schools relied heavily on these officials to render training to their SGBs. There was no school-based initiative to ensure continuous training of parents with the aim of enhancing their engagement.

The study further found that parents were expected to perform duties for which they were not trained, putting them under pressure because of criticism from the teachers. This situation often intimidated the parents, especially those with less formal schooling who tended to withdraw from such situations. The study found that parents who had been elected were not receiving school-based training from the principals. The failure could be the result of ignorance on the part of the teachers or deliberate efforts to frustrate them as elected representatives of the parents. This often leads to the parents quitting their positions.

Depriving the marginalised of necessary training may be a ploy by the powerful to keep them marginalised, in which case it amounts to control of power by the powerful over the less powerful. Allowing the marginalised access to information may enable them to question the decisions of the powerful. Therefore denying the marginalised access to information and training opportunities serve the elites in two ways. Firstly, they may be able to get away with malpractice or negligence for a time as they cover their tracks and follow ulterior motives, such as embezzling the school funds. Secondly, this may make them too powerful and thus corrupt (Ajayi et al.,2009:42 ; Chikoko,2007:54).

The conclusion that can be drawn from this is that empowering parents through training opportunities will enable them to perform their duties effectively. This enlightenment would minimise role-confusion in which people act out of ignorance. Providing training would help reduce unnecessary conflicts.

6.4.6.1   Recommendations

The study recommends that training be provided in order to empower the parents to engage fully in their children's education. This training should address the needs of the parents in areas of weakness.

6.5   THREATS TO PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

This section deals with possible threats that may impede successful enhancement of parental engagement. These threats should be correctly identified and their impact assessed to evaluate their probability and severity. The study identified the following threats that were associated with parental engagement.

6.5.1 Language barrier

The study found that language was a barrier that impeded understanding among the parents, and instances of invitations to parents that were written in English. The agendas for parents' meetings were also in English, excluding parents who could not speak this language. The participants noted this and drew up a plan to overcome this barrier. The coordinating team used the language that the participants understood. When foreign concepts were used they were translated into the participants' language. This was important in enhancing understanding and respect among the participants, and promoting social justice, peace and hope.

The conclusion drawn from this discussion is that the use of foreign language excludes parents from the main educational discourse that affect their children. It also shows disrespect towards the parents and makes the schools irrelevant to the communities that they serve.

6.5.1.1 Recommendations

The study recommends that any programmes geared to the enhancement of parental engagement should be conducted in a language that the parents understand. This will show that they are part of the discussions and may feel motivated to make inputs. The language policy of the school should be structured so that communication between the school and the parents is enhanced.

6.5.2 Lack of parenting programmes

One of the findings related to lack of or poor parenting programmes at the participating schools. The study found that neither school had parenting programmes so the parents could not be exposed to the careers that their children intended to follow high school education. The parents could not be exposed to financial planning to support the future education careers of their children, and the schools often blamed the parents for not assisting with learner discipline. The parents could not detect anti-social tendencies among their children or devise mechanisms to deal with them.

Based on this discussion, the study concludes that the lack of parenting programmes at the participating schools was one of the contributory factors in poor parental engagement. Parents were not capacitated to engage fully in the education of their children.

6.5.2.1 Recommendations

The study recommends that there be parenting programmes at the participating schools. Parents should be exposed to these on an annual basis so that they can have an idea of the careers their children would like to follow and how to support them to realise their goals.. These programmes should be jointly drawn up with the parents so they can also list the things that they feel should be addressed in order to empower them. These parenting programmes should be evaluated regularly to determine their effectiveness.

6.5.3 Lack of time

The study found the lack of time by parents to engage in their children's education as one the impediments towards the enhancement of parental engagement at the participating schools. The lack of time to attend to school activities was evident in the low attendance of parents at parents' meetings. Some would even leave before the end of the meetings to show that 'they did not have time' to attend to school activities. Another finding was that the meetings of the parents would not

start on time as a result of the delay by both the SGB and parents who came late. This situation shows that neither party was respecting school activities.

The conclusion that could be drawn from this is that long meetings may result in other parents having to leave before the end of the meeting sessions. This can be viewed as a lack of mutual respect and interest in their children's education.

6.5.3.1 *Recommendations*

The study recommends that there be training on time management for parents and teachers so that people can learn the importance of managing time. This will ensure that there is sufficient time to attend to school activities and other personal matters. Proper time management will also ensure that parents and teachers prioritise issues that will give them sustained results for investing in their children's education.

6.6   LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The lifespan of the coordinating team depends on the term of office of the current SGB. This means that the coordinating team cannot exist beyond this period because the incoming SGB might not welcome it. The engagement of parents in their children's education such that it becomes sustainable will depend on the environment and the underlying power struggles that prevail between parents and teachers and also between parents themselves. The success of the study also depends on the willingness of participants to avail their time for a longer period. Parental engagement is a process that needs time for both teachers and parents to plan collaboratively over time. Both parents and teachers need to internalise the importance of working as a team, but this requires more time.

The study also noted the constraints of resources which prevent the parents and teachers from meeting regularly at school. The home visit programme requires funds on the part of the school to transport the teachers and other participants reaching out to parents who usually do not attend school meetings. The study also noted the willingness of participants to stay for the duration of the study. For instance, the study lost two of its members becomes of work relocations and other personal commitments. The existence and success of the coordinating team

depends on the relationship of mutual respect, trust and humility with the SGB, and being committed to reaching the same goal.

6.7 CONCLUSION

The study concludes that parental engagement is a contested area that entails power relations, which determine who holds power and why. These should be identified and balanced in order for parents and teachers to work as equal partners. The study concludes that both parents and teachers possess knowledge which if well blended can benefit the whole school community. There should be an open and warm communicative space so that the parents can feel part of the school landscape. This will ensure that they contribute their knowledge, resources, skills and time to developing the education of their children. This can be achieved by working together as a team, sharing the vision, planning together and reflecting on their actions with a view to making the necessary adjustments. The study further concludes that the components for parental engagement be a joint venture and should not be imposed on the parents. This will ensure that parents engage fully and willingly in shaping the learners' education. There should also be monitoring by the DoE to ensure that schools are held accountable for enhancing parental engagement. The schools should report on the effectiveness of their plans to engage parents. This will ensure that cordial relations are developed between the schools and the communities that they serve and that communities look after their schools as centres of community development.

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PERMISSION TO CONDUCT THE STUDY

education

2011 – 07 – 13

MR T J MEKO
2447 Section H2
BOTSHABELO
9781

Dear MR Meko

REGISTRATION OF RESEARCH PROJECT

1. This letter is in reply to your application for the registration of your research project.

2. Research topic: **Schools as sustainable learning environments: A model for parental engagement.**

3. Your research project has been registered with the Free State Education Department.

4. Approval is granted under the following conditions:

4.1 Principals participate voluntarily in the project.

4.2 The name of the school and participants involved remain confidential.

4.3 The questionnaires are completed and the interviews are conducted outside normal tuition time.

4.4 The letter is shown to all participating persons.

4.5 A bound copy of the report and a summary on a computer disc on this study is donated to the Free State Department of Education.

4.6 Findings and recommendations are presented to relevant officials in the Department.

5. The costs relating to all the conditions mentioned above are your own responsibility.

6. **You are requested to confirm acceptance of the above conditions in writing to:**

> The DIRECTOR: STRATEGIC PLANNING, POLICY AND RESEARCH, CNA Building, Private Bag X20565, BLOEMFONTEIN, 9301

We wish you every success with your research.

Yours sincerely

FR SELLO
DIRECTOR: STRATEGIC PLANNING, POLICY AND RESEARCH

Directorate: Strategic Planning, Policy & Research • Private Bag X20565, Bloemfontein, 9300 • Room 401, Old CNA Building, Maitland Street, Bloemfontein 9300 • Tel: 051 404 9263 / Fax: 051 447 7316 • Email: research@fs.edu.gov.za

ANNEXURE C 1

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT THE STUDY

education

FREE STATE PROVINCE

Tel: 051 404 9098
Fax: 051 404 9274

2011-07-13

Mr M.J. Mothebe
Director: Motheo Education District
Room413
9570

Dear Mr Mothebe

NOTIFICATION OF A RESEARCH PROJECT IN YOUR DISTRICT

Please find attached copy of the letter giving **Mr Meko** permission to conduct research in
sampled schools in the Motheo Education District. Mr Meko is the SMGD in the Motheo District
Office and is studying for Phd in Education Management with the University of Free State.

Yours sincerely

FR SELLO
DIRECTOR: STRATEGIC PLANNING, POLICY AND RESEARCH

INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARENTS

Consent Form: Parents

I am doing a PhD research on "**Parental engagement in Botshabelo Schools.**" I am inviting parents who are willing to take part in the study. I assure parents who wish to take part that their names and those of their schools will not be divulged to any party that is not part of this study. I also undertake to ensure that no physical or emotional harm will befall you as a result of your participation in the study. Parents' participation in the study is voluntary and have the right to withdraw from the study if so wish.

Your involvement in this study will help you gain more knowledge about parental engagement in school activities

May you sign below to give consent to participate in the study.

I _____ _____ hereby consent to participate voluntarily in the abovementioned study

Signature   Date

_____   _____

....
....

TOKOMANE YA TUMELLO : MOTSWADI

Ke ntirisana le lengolo la dilano tsa komako dithutong (PhD). Ke ikemisetsa ho itlahlela ka setotswana ha batswadi thutong ya bana ba bona. Ke mema batswadi ho ikhaepa ho ba le kabelo diphuputsong tsena. Ke tshepisa hore batswadi ba nkang karolo diphuputsong tsena, mabitso a bona le a dikolo tsa bona a ke ke a phatlalatswa ho mang kapa mang eo eleng karolo ya diphuputso tsena. Ke tshepisa hape hore ha ho kotsi ya leho e sa le tlhahelong bakeng sa ho nka karolo diphuputsong tsena. O na le tokelo a ho ikgula diphuputsong tsena neng kapa tfang rotshepiso e sa phethahatswe.

Ho ba le kabelo ha hao diphuputsong tsena ho ka phatalatsa tsebo ya hao ya kabelo ya batswadi, mererong ya sekolo

Ka kopo tekena mola ho fane ka tumello ya ho nka karolo.

Nna _____ _ se dumela ho ho nka karolo ka boithaopo.

....
....

Tekena   Letsatsi-Morla

Consent Form: Municipal Leaders

I am doing a PhD research on "**Parental engagement in Botshabelo Schools.**" The purpose is to enhance more parental engagement in decision making that affect the education of their children at school. Parents play a vital role not only in governance but also in curriculum related issues that also make the school to function well. I am therefore inviting Municipal Leaders who are willing to take part in the study. I assure Municipal Leaders who wish to take part that their names and those of their directorates will not be divulged to any party that is not part of this study. I also undertake to ensure that no physical or emotional harm will befall you as a result of your participation in the study. Municipal leaders' participation in the study is voluntary and have the right to withdraw from the study if so wish.

Your involvement in this study will help you gain more knowledge about parental engagement in school activities.

May you sign below to give consent to participate in the study.

I _____ hereby consent to participate voluntarily in the abovementioned study.

Signature: _____   Date: _____

Consent Form: Religious Leaders

I am doing a PhD research on **"Parental engagement in Botshabelo   Schools."** I am inviting religious leaders who are willing to take part in the study. I assure religious leaders who wish to take part that their names and those of their churches will not be divulged to any party that is not part of this study. I also undertake to ensure that no physical or emotional harm will befall you as a result of your participation in the study. Religious leaders' participation in the study is voluntary, and have the right to withdraw from the study if so wish.

Your involvement in this study will help you gain more knowledge about parental engagement in school activities

May you sign below to give consent to participate in the study

I _____   _____ hereby consent to participate voluntarily in the abovementioned study

Signature: Date:

_____   _____

Consent Form: Educators

I am doing a PhD research on "**Parental engagement in Botshabelo Schools.**" I am inviting educators who are willing to take part in the study. I assure educators who wish to take part that their names and those of their schools will not be revealed to any party that is not part of this study. I also undertake to ensure that no physical or emotional harm will befall you as a result of your participation in the study. Educators' participation in the study is voluntary and have the right to withdraw from the study if so wish.

Your involvement in this study will help you gain more knowledge about parental engagement in school activities

May you sign below to give consent to participate in the study

I _____ _____ hereby consent to participate voluntarily in the above mentioned study.

Signature   Date
___   ___   ___   ___

PLAN

FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF

A FRAMEWORK FOR ENHANCING

PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

IN SCHOOLS

AS

SUSTAINABLE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

ANNEXURE P1

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1. VISION

Ensuring higher levels of parental engagement in schools

2. MISSION

To engender a culture of engagement and collaborative work toward schools as sustainable learning environments

3. VALUES & PRINCIPLES

The values and principles adopted by the coordinating team to synergise the efforts made by the participants were: mutual respect, mutual trust, equity, peace and social justice.

4. PRIORITY AREAS

4.1   Parental engagement in learner discipline

4.2   Parental engagement in curriculum related matters

4.3   Parental engagement in governance related issues

5. SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

The analysis of the situation and contexts within which the schools in the area of this study operated considered the immanent strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that were relevant to the development and implementation of the framework for parental engagements:

SWOT ANALYSIS GRID: TOOL FOR REFLECTIONS

Reference	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Need		***Parents do not assist with learner discipline*** Parents are unavailable when they are needed Do not take part in fundraising initiatives		Parents work far ***Children are left by themselves*** Lack of interest in attending meetings Foster parents
Components	Help with homework in subjects they are conversant with Parents serve in various committees	Out of school youth limited knowledge	Out of school youth who passed grade 12 to assist Volunteering to execute some functions	
Conditions	Parents tend to give children money for food at school	***Communication is not good between the parents and the***	Make children aware about their constitutional rights and	Parents do not be-friend teachers to enable closing of the work related gap between

		school	responsibilities	them
		Liquor outlets next to schools pose threat	Follow up on information	Learners buy alcohol
Threats		***Ill-discipline from home carried over to school*** No follow ups on communication to parents Unavailability of parents & Staying with grand parents		Use of foreign language tend to exclude parents from participation ***Limited knowledge or educational background bar parents from supporting with homework***
Applicability	Willing and available team of parents and teachers	Capacity in relation to support of learning (i.e. curriculum issues) Capacity/skills– financial management matters	Training/workshops on governance issues: e.g. financial related, roles and responsibilities etc.	Socio-economic realities such unemployment vs. voluntary unpaid work at school

6.   The Action Plan

The action plan below operationalizes the priority areas identified under section 4 above. These are analysed, interpreted and discussed in chapter 4 of the thesis. The raw data is provided as annexures to the thesis.

The plan integrates the information that relates to the vision of the study and focusses on activities that were prioritized high and operationalized by the coordinating team.

The information is thus organised in accordance with the five study objectives in order to facilitate synergy with the aim of the study:

Objective 1: To demonstrate and justify the need for the development of a framework for parental engagement in school activities

Objective 2: To identify the main components of a suitable model for parental engagement

Objective 3: To determine the conditions which are conducive for successful implementation of a parental engagement framework

Objective 4: To determine the threats that may hinder successful implementation of the parental engagement framework

Objective 5: To trial and monitor the functionality of the parental engagement framework

Objective 1: To demonstrate and justify the need for the development of a framework for parental engagement in school activities

ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	TIME FRAME	RESOURCES REQUIRED
Make arrangements with schools to • obtain / access the document / records identified by the coordinating team members *viz.* resolutions, minutes of meetings • access venue for holding meetings to inspect the records	SMT (T.J.) SMT (T.J.)	27 Nov 2011	Minutes of meetings Attendance registers Classroom / Office
Check records for possible parental engagement activities in respect of the following: • type of parental engagement • attendance of parents' meetings • availability of records • training /workshops	Coordinating team (T.J.)	27 Nov 2011	Control / signing of homework books Learner Discipline Attendance registers Policies Parenting Finance / Asset management
Explore the impact of close-by businesses on learner attendance and discipline *e.g.* r.t. drug abuse	Coordinating team (Pastors & Councillors)	27 November 2011	Information / views from Parents, Learners, Principals &

			Teachers & Business owners

Objective 2: To identify the main components of a suitable model for parental engagement

ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	TIME FRAME	RESOURCES REQUIRED
Identification of areas of voluntary activities / exercises for parental engagement in respect of the following: • sports • curriculum delivery / implementation • cultural activities	Coordinating team (SMT)	30 November 2011	Annual programme Schedule of dates for events (district, provincial & national) Subject & Learning Area Policies Important dates for cultural events
Ensure proper representation of parents in governance structures: • encourage formation and use of subcommittees for finance; policy development & implementation; and learners discipline	Coordinating team (SMT)	30 November 2011	South African Schools Act NEMA School Policies on Governance

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Enhancing communication between schools and the parents: • exploration of possible types of communication • communication barriers • frequency of meetings	SMT & T.J.	30 November 2011	Communication policy Communication records
Encourage parents to create an opportunity for conducive conditions for learning to take place at home: • understanding the diverse and adverse family conditions • proposing possible solutions and learning from one another	Coordinating team (Parents)	29 March 2012	Parenting Learners' study time tables
Engender good parenting skills • supportive environment for learning	SMT & T.J.	30 November 2011	External (professional) support
Encourage school – community collaboration • schools as centres for community life	SMT Coordinating team	30 November 2012	Policy directives

Objective 3: To determine the conditions that are conducive for successful implementation of a parental engagement framework

ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	TIME FRAME	RESOURCES REQUIRED
Facilitate processes of enhancing co-operation and collaboration among teachers, learners and teachers	Coordinating team	30 March 2012	Workshops
Ensure prevalence of clear roles and responsibilities of parents and management	SMT Coordinating team	30 March 2012	Workshops
Encourage two-way communication between the school and the parents	SMT Coordinating team	30 March 2012	Expert advice to assist the schools to improve their communication strategies
Support regarding schools' access to relevant resources	T.J. Coordinating team	30 March 2012	Needs analysis Prioritised needs

Objective 4: To determine the threats that may hinder successful implementation of the parental engagement framework

ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	TIME FRAME	RESOURCES REQUIRED
Create opportunity for regular feedback and information sessions	T.J. Coordinating Team	30 March 2012	
Skills audit of out of school youth and parents	TD Coordinating team	30 November 2011	SMT Support SGB Support
Facilitate process of deployment of identified skills in the coordinating team programmes	Coordinating Team	January 2012	
Mobilise community support for schools	Councillors/Pastors Coordinating Team	January 2012	

Objective 5: To trial and monitor the functionality of the parental engagement framework

ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	TIME FRAME	RESOURCES REQUIRED
Implement the identified programmes simultaneously with the development of the framework for parental engagement in terms of • home work • afternoon and evening classes • maintenance of premises and infrastructure • learner discipline • communication and feedback • school-community coordination	Teachers Parents Parents Parents, Teachers SMT Councillors/Pastors	30 November 2012	Implementation Plans/Programmes

SCHOOLS AS SUSTAINABLE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS: A FRAMEWORK FOR ENHANCING PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

MOLAWANA WA TAOLO YA MOSEBETSI WA HAE

HOME WORK POLICY

LENANE

1. **SELELEKELA**

2 **KGOTHALETSO YA MELAO**

3 **SEPHEO**

4 **MATSATSI LE NAKO YA MOSEBETSI WA HAE**

5 **KGOTHALETSO YA DITHUTO BAKENG SA MOSEBETSI WA HAE**

6 **SEABO SA MOTSWADI**

7 **SEABO SA MOSUWE**

8 **SEABO SA NGWANA**

9 **TEKOLO BOTJHA YA MOLAWANA**

10 **KANANELO YA MOLAWANA**

1.   SELELEKELA

Molawana (policy) ona o entswe ke ditho tsa komiti e hokantseng boiteko ba ho hlopha le ho rarolla qaka ya ho teelwa le ho iteela ka thoko ho thuto ya bana dikolong ha batswadi. Qholotso ena e bonahetse e tshwenya haholo ka ha pelaelo e bile hore ha e ame feela dithuto tsa bana hamper ebile e tlola melao le ditabatabelo tsa bongata tsa hore bohle re nke karolo ntlafatsong ya ruta le ho ithuta.

Moifo o ileng wa kgobokanya boiteko bona o ile wa itshetleha le ho nkela hlohong maikutlo le mehoplo ya bana, matitjhere le batswadi. Tokomane ena e bile e nngwe ya ditokomane le mehopolo e kenyeleditsang maikutlo mme ya seka-sekwa le ho ananelwa ke moifo.

2.   KGOTHALETSO YA MELAO

Taba ya ho sebetsa mmoho le ho etsa meralo mmoho e ka kgontshang phethahatso ya melao ya naha e tshehetswa ke melao e latelang:

2.1   National Education Policy Act

2.2   South African Schools Act le

2.3   South African Council of Educators Act

3. SEPHEO

Sepheo sa molawana wa mosebetsi wa hae ke ho:

3.1 tsamaisa mosebetsi wa hae (home work) ka tsela e nepahetseng,

3.2 kgothaletsa bana ho etsa mosebetsi wa hae,

3.3 eketsa nako yah o bala le ho ithuta,

3.4 kgothaletsa batswadi ho hlahloba mosebetsi wa bana

3.5 kgothaletsa katamelo pakeng tsa batswadi, bana le matichere le

3.6 dumellana le batswadi ka matsatsi le nako ya ho etsa mosebetsi wa hae.

5. DITHUTO

4.1 Bana ba tla etsa mosebetsi wa hae dithutong kapa dikarolong tsa thuto (topics/themes) tseo ho bonahalang ba ena le mathata ho di utlwisisa,

4.2 Matitjhere a ka sebedisa ho sebetsa hampe ha bana dithutong kapa karolong tsa thuto e le maemo a kgothaletsang phano ya mosebetsi wa hae,

4.3 Dithuto tse kang ya dipalo (mathematics) le akhounting (accounting) di lokela hoba le mosebetsi wa hae ka matsatsi oohle a dithuto/sekolo

4.4 Matitjhere (le bana) ba lokela ho buisana le ho dumellana ka mokgwa wa phapanyetsano ya phano ya mosebetsi wa hae dithutong tse ding.

5   MATSATSI LE NAKO YA HOMEWORK

5.1   Bana ba lokela ho etsa mosebetsi wa hae (homework) matsatsing a latelang: Mantaha, Labobedi le Labone, ka phapanyetsano dithutong tse ding (k.h.r. tseo e seng dipalo kapa accounting)

5.2   Bana ba lokela ho nka bonyane dihora tse pedi ho etsa mosebetsi wa hae matsatsing ao,

5.3   Dihora tse boletsweng ho 5.2 ka hodimo, di ka nna tsa feta bobedi ho ya ka boemo le kutlwisiso ya ngwana ya mosebetsi,

5.4   Batswadi ba lokela ho tsebiswa le ho hlokomediswa ka dithuto le matsatsi a tsona a mosebetsi wa hae.

6.   SEABO SA MOTSWADI

Motswadi o lekela ho

6.1   hlalosetsa ngwana moo a ka kgonang teng,

6.2   se etsetse ngwana mosebetsi,

6.3   tekena buka tsa ngwana ho bontsha hore o bone mosebetsi wa ngwana,

6.4   buisana le titjhere ka mosebetsi wa ngwana le diqholotso tseo e bang o kopana le tsona.

7.   SEABO SA TITJHERE

Titjhere o lokela ho'

7.1   buisana le batswadi ka mosebetsi wa ngwana,

7.2   dumellana ka mekgwa eo ba ka thusang ngwana ho ithuta le ho etsa mosebetsi wa hae.

8.   SEABO SA NGWANA

Ngwana o lokela ho,

8.1   nka boikarabelo ba ho etsa mosebetsi wa hae,

8.2   tsebisa titjhere le motswadi e bang bothata bo le teng.

9.   TEKOLO-BOTJHA YA MOLAWANA

Molawana ona o tla lekolwa le ho fetolwa ho ya ka dinako le maemo a dithuto sekolong. O tla fetolwa ho ya ka di pehelo le melawana ya sekolo e laolang tekolo le phetolo ya melawana ya sekolo tlasa botsamaisi ba lekgotla la sekolo la tsamaiso.

10.   KANANELO YA MOLAWANA

Molawana ona ke karolo ya melawana ya sekolo mme o ananetswe ke lekgotla la tsamaiso ya sekolo ho ya ka melao le melawana e laolang kananelo tsa melawana ya mofuta ona.

Kananelo e etsahetse mohla la …... kgweding ya …………………………2013, sebakeng sa ……………………………….

_____

Modulasetulo: SGB

_____

Letsatsi

ANNEXURE T 1

THE NEED FOR THE FRAMEWORK FOR PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

Metsi: Re ka etsa jwang hore batswadi ba ikakgele ka setotswana thutong ya bana ba bona ka tsela eo tshehetso ya bona e tlang ho tswela pele ka nako e telele?

Mmathabo -Ke ikutlwa ke thabile ho ba karolo ya moifo ona. Jwaloka lekhanselara ke ne ke ntse ke labalabela ho nka karolo empa ke sa tsebe jwang. Ke tshwenngwa ke hore batswadi ba fa bana tjhelete e ngata ha ba etla sekolong ebe ba reka jwala le dithetefatsi. Taba ena e baka mathata sekolong le setjhabeng kakaretso. Ke kene sekolo mona mme ke motlotlo ka thuto eo reileng ra e fuwa mona (yaba o supa mosuwehlooho ka monwana ho bontsha teboho). Boteng ba moifo ona bo re bulela mamati ho aha thuto ya bana ba rona e thekeselang . Ka nako eo re neng re kena sekolo mona ka yona ho ne ho se na dintho tsena tse mpe tseo re di bonang kajeno. **Molefi**- o bua taba ya bohlokwa le nna ha ke fihla mona ke ka shabela ho bona moshanyana le ngwana kamoo ba neng ba mamarela ne ka teng pela geiti ya sekolo. Ke utlwile taba ena e hlile e sa ntshware hantle. **Sishi-** Stadi sa mofuta ona se hlokahala hobane bana ba rona ha ba sebetse hantle ha re ba bapisa le ba dinaha tse mabapi jwaloka Mozambique. Lebaka ke hore batswadi ba bonahala ba ikguletse morao ha ho tluwa thutong ya bana ba bona.Ke utlwa ke thabela ho ba karolo ya stadi sena hobane ke nahana hore se tlo re thusa ho kwala gap e teng pakeng tsa rona re matitjhere le batswadi. O ka ke wa ruta ngwana hantle ebang motswadi wa hae a sa fane ka sapoto. Re lokela ho sebetsa mmoho lebitsong la katleho ya bana jwaloka dkolo tsa toropong. **Sellwane**, le nna ke shera maikutlo a tshwanang le dibui tse fetileng. Ke ntho ya bohlokwa ho sebedisana le matitjhere re batswadi le setjhaba kakaretso ho etsa bonnete ba hore bana itshwarelle ka thuto. Ha re phuthile matsoho re le batswadi, matitjhere a tla thatafallwa. Sesotho se re ntja pedi ha e hlolwe ke sebata. Ke ntho e nthabisang ho ba karolo ya thimi ya ho sebetsa le matitjhere le batswadi ho ntlafatsa thuto ya ngwana Mo-Afrika. Ha re kopane re le ntho e le nngwe re ka hlola mathata a mangata. **Busa** re matitjhere re hloka borakgwebo ba hlahelletseng ka mahetla ho re thusa ka fundraising. Rakgwebo a ka arolelana tsebo ya hae ya fund-

ANNEXURE T 1

THE NEED FOR THE FRAMEWORK FOR PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

raising le sekolo. Ha re sebetsa mmoho le batswadi le community re a kgothala re le matitjhere. Ke dumellana le ntate Sishi hore bana ba rona ba sebetsa hampe ha o ba bapisa le ba dinaha tse mabapi jwaloka ha a se a boletse.. Lebaka ke hore ha re fumane tshehetso e phethahetseng ho tswa batswading. Re ka thabela ha batswadi ba ka re atamela hobane ha re eme mmoho re ka ke ra hloleha. Nna ke hore stadi sa mofuta ona se tla re tswela molemo haholo . Dikolo tsa rona di sebetsa hampe tjena hobane batswadi ba rona ba emeletse hole le rona. Ba re siya le bana mme le ha o lakatsa ho kopana le bona o ba fumana ka thata. **Nkosi** – ke lekgehlo la pele re dula tjena le matitjhere le batswadi ho shebisana ka thuto ya bana. Ke nahana hore ena ke platform e ntle eo e leng kgale re e labelabela hore re sebetse mmoho re ahe thuto ya ngwana e motho e motsho. Ha o ya dikolong tsa toropong matitjhere le batswadi ba kopane , ke ngatana nngwe ke hona performance ya dikolo tseo e leng ntle hakaana. Le rona ha re ka kopana . ra ba moya o le mong progress e tla ba teng. Ke nnete hore qalong ya leeto lena ho tla ba thata empa ke na le bonnete ba hore ha nako e ntse e ya ho tla loka. Ke lebohela monyetla oo stadi se re fang ona hobane bonnete re a hlokana. Matitjhere a sitilwe ho tswela pele hantle ntle le rona re le batswadi bopaki bo teng ka pela mahlo a rona. Ho na jwale di reng dirisultse ? Di theoha selemo le selemo hobane ha re tsotellwe, re qhelelwa ka thoko .

 Ms Neo ke rat ho responda tabeng eo Mmathabo a buileng ka yona pejana . Ka nnete re le batswadi re batla re tshwenyehile ka maemo a thuto kakaretso ka hara dikolo tsa rona. Bana ha ba sebetse hantle ho hang. Taba e ntse e le yona ya katamelano pakeng tsa batwadi le matitjhere. Mofuthu wa ho sebetsa le matitjhere ha re o utlwe ka hara dikolo tsa rona. Ho na le lenyatso le leholo le lebiswang ho rona batswadi. Ka nako e nngwe e kaka matitjhere ba re etsetsa favour ya ho ruta bana rona.

Re lokela ho iteanya le dithavene, mapolesa, dishoshial workers, dikereke le di ward khanselara ka ho rekisetswa bana jwala le dithetefatsi. Taba ena e hloka setjhaba kakaretso ho e hlola.

ANNEXURE T 1

THE NEED FOR THE FRAMEWORK FOR PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

T 1   The lack of shared vision

Nkosi- Ho nka karolo ka hare ho SGB ke ho kena phepetsong ya ntho e ntjha eo o neng o sa etse. Ke ho ba le kgahleho ya ntho e eo hobane ebang ho kgethwa motho ya ratang ntho ditholoana di tla ba teng. Ebang ba sebetsana le batho ba butseng dipelo ba ka ba le mafolofolo. Ho batlahala motho ya sa rekeng sefahleho. E be motho ya tla bulang ba bang mahlo hobane ha o se na tsebo bat la dula ba o beha khoneng hobane o hloka tsebo le lesedi hore ha le a workshopuwa. Ha o bua nnete o toba taba ha ba o thabele. Ha ho ka rutwa di SGB ha di qetwa ho kgethwa, setho ka seng se tsebe mosebetsi wa sona ho ka loka. Batswadi ha ba shejwe ka letho ha tluwa diqetong. Diqeto di nkuwa ke matitjhere ba le bang. Mokgokgo le matitjhere a hae ba sebedisa batswadi ho atjhiva mission wa bona.

A parent from Matsieng school, **Ms Gift-** Ho na jwale batswadi ba a tsejwa ha ho batluwa ditjhelete empa ha di sebediswa ha ba tsibiswe. Tjhelete e khontrolwa ke matitjhere ba le bang. Ho na ho kgothaletsa bobodu le ho utswa. E bang batswadi ba le teng ka hare ho komiti ya ditjhelete hona ho ka tlisa kgalemelo ho matitjhere. Bohlokwa ke hore batswadi ba nke karolo ho bona hore ngwana ka mong o a benefita. Ha ho na le tjhelete e hlokwang ke sekolo ha batswadi ba le teng batswadi ba thabela ho sebetsa le batswadi ba bang mme ho ba bobebo ho ntsha tjhelete e hlokwang. **Ms Neo** kgale batswadi ba ne ba sa fuwe monyetla ona oo re o fumaneng ka mora tokoloho. Batswadi kgale ba ne ba sa fuwe monyetla wa hore ba kene ka hare ho dikomiti tse kang governing body le ding jwaloka hona jwale re dutse mmoho ho rerisana ka thuto ya ngwana. Nakong e fetileng re batswadi ba ne ba le siyo empa kajeno lefapha la thuto le buletse hore re kene. Motswadi e mong le e mong o lokelwa hore a rutwe hore ha a isa ngwana sekolong sefe kapa sefe a utlwisise hore o bohlokwa hakae.

ANNEXURE T 1

THE NEED FOR THE FRAMEWORK FOR PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

T 1   The non-existence of grade meetings

Ms **Gift** - Ha re na di grade meetings sekolong sa rona ho plena thuto ya bana ba rona. Ka hoo re sitwa ho ntsha maikutlo a rona hore na re bona jwang thuto ya bana ka ha parents meeting ho buuwa dintho tse ngata ka nako e le nngwe. Re hloka ho buisana le matitjhere ka di grade mmetings hore re kgone ho utlwisisa mathata a bana ba rona dithutong tsa bona. Ha re kgone ho etsa hona ka ha nako ya di mmiting e le kgutshwane. Empa re ka fumana monyetla ona jwang ebang matitjhere ba sa ikemisetsa? Her statement was also supported by both reverend **Nkosi** and **Mr Sishi** of Matsieng school that:

Nkosi – Ha ho na di grade meeting e le hore batswadi ba buisane le matitjhere a dithuto tse fapafapaneng tseo baithuti ba di etsang ho kgothaletsa sephetho se setle. **Sishi**-Re na le parents meeting feela sekolong sa rona. Ha rena mefuta e meng ya dikopano. Sekolong seo ngwanaka a kenang ho sona toropong ho na le mefuta e mengata ya dikopano. Ho teaha mohlala, jwaloka fan woko, fishing with parents, parents' day, batswadi ba theha dihlopha tse thabisang bana. Dintho tsena di etsa hore batswadi ba sapote sekolo hobane ba a bona hore sekolo se a ba ananela. Sekolo se lokela ho etsa bonnete bah ore batswadi ba ruta batswadi ba bang ka bohlokwa ba ho ikakgela ka setotswana thutong ya bana ba bona. Sekolo se lokela ho rala program ya quality teaching and learning campaign (QLTC) bakeng sa hore batswadi ba ikakgele ka setotswana . Batswadi ba lokela ho thus aka ho supervise di afternoon studies. Batswadi ba lokela ho ho tla sekolong ho tla sheba ha matitjhere ba rut aka phaposing hore ba tsebe ho ntshetsa thuto pele hae. **Nkosi** nna ke nahana hore di grade meetings di tshwarwe mme athendense ya batswadi e lokela ho tjhekwa. Ho lokela ho be le faele ya batswadi ba athendang le ba sa athendeng hore ka nako ya ho sebetsana le boitshwaro ba bana e be e ka ntshuwa ho bona hore na ke batswadi bafe ba tlang le ba tleng dikopanong tsa sekolo. Ho nka karolo ha rona ka hara komiti e kang QLTC ke ho ithuta ntho eo re neng re sa e tsebe. Boteng ba batswadi ke hwa bohlokoa bakeng sa

THE NEED FOR THE FRAMEWORK FOR PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

bana ba hlokang lerato la botswadi ho ba tshehetsa thutong ya bona. **Semonye** bana ba grade 10 ba feitse ka bongata sekolong mona lemong se fetileng. Ha batswadi ba atametse matitjhere ba ka etsa hore bana ba sebetse ka thata. Ha e sa le ke qala ho phehela bana mona sekolong ke bone matitjhere a sa ruteng bana. Titjhere e mong o ne a kena ka klelasing e be o bala kuranta ntle le ho ruta bana. Matitjhere a emela hore prinsipala a be sa le a ba setse kamorao hore ba ye klelasing. **Ms Gift** selemo le selemo ke faela direpoto tsa bana ba ka. Ho tloha ngwanaka a etsa grade 1 ke ntse ke khipile diripoto tsa hae. Ke ile ka bona hore ngwanaka selemong se fetileng o ne a sa sebetse hantle sabjekteng e itseng. Ha ke mmotsa y aba o re titjhere ya sa sabjekte ena o lwantshana le prinsipala mme o lwantsha prinsipala ka bana ba rona. Dikhomentse tse phosetif tseo ngwana a neng a di fumana hore o na le bokgoni di ile tsa nketsa hore ke sapote ngwanaka ho fihlela a psa matriki. Ke dikhomentse tse phosetif tse re ahang re le batswadi. Ka nako e nngwe batswadi ba nyahama ebang bana ba sa sebetse hantle dithutong tsa bona. Ha matitjhere ba sa batle prinsipala ba phanisha bana ba rona. Ha o sa batle prinsipala o tlo etsa hore di risaltse di theohe. Ka nako e nngwe matitjhere a bana ba rona a tlile botitjhereng feela ho tla kgola. Bana ba qoqa ka bona ba re hoseng matitjhere ha ba kene ka klelasing ba re ho a bata. Na o ka re bana ba kene ka klelasing ebe wena ha o kene? Hona ho bontsha ho hloka boikarabelo.

Ms Neo- Ho na le dikarohano tse ngata sekolong pakeng tsa matitjhere, batswadi le bana sekolong sa rona mm eke nahana hore taba ena ke yona e re busetsang morao re le sekolo. Ke ka hoo sephetho sa sekolo se dulang se theoha selemo le selemo.

T 1   The disregard for Legislative mandates

Mr Sishi- Batswadi ha ba tle sekolong ha ba bitswa ke mosuwehlooho mabapi le boitshwaro ba bana ba bona. Lebaka la sena ke hore bana ba bang ba dula le maqheku

THE NEED FOR THE FRAMEWORK FOR PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

a fumanang ho le boima ho ya sekolong, mme bana ba bang ke dikgutsana tse dulang di le ding ha batswadi ba bang ba sebetsa hole mme sena se ba sitisa ho tla sekolong. **Gift**- ho teng batswadi bas a kgathalleng letho la sekolo mme sa itshwenye ho tla dikopanong tsa sekolo. Ka nako e nngwe ha re fumane mangolo ka nako. **Modiehi**- hangata bana ba na ba re patella mangolo a tlang ho rona haholo ebang a bua ka boitshwaro ba bona bo sa lokang sekolong. **Semonye**- eh ke utlwa taba ena e nhwahwaya. Matitjhere ba bitsa dikopano tsa batswadi empa bona ha ba iponahatse kamehla dikopanong tseo. Batswadi ba tla ntsha maikutlo a bona jwang ha ba le siyo? Taba ena e a re tshwenya re le batswadi. Re le batswadi re takatso ya rona ke ho bona ha re bitsetswa kopanong , matitjhere le ona a be teng. Hangata se etsahalang ke hore matitjhere ha a be teng dikopanong mme ho tla feela dihlooho tsa mafapha mona Matsieng. Ha re kgone ho utlwa ka bothata ba bana ba rona hobane batho ba ba rutang ha ba iponahatse. Matitjhere ha a kgathalle. Mohlomong ha ba lakatse hore batswadi ba ba botse dipotso mabapi le se feidisang bana hakaana. **Gift**- ha batswadi ba buisana kamehla le mosuwe wa ngwana, a ka tsebisa mosuwe ka bothata boo ngwana a nang le bona. Ka tsela e ena mosuwe a ka tseba ho sebedisana le ngwana hantle sekolong.Neo- matitjhere a lokela ho bitsa kopano e le nngwe mmo bana, batswadi le matitjhere ba tlang ho buisana ka mathata ao bana ba kopanang le ona dithutong tsa bona. Tiki- na e be newsletter e kakeng ya re thusa tabeng ee? **Tajeka**-sometimes ho expensive ho sebedisa newsletter because e ja dirisose tsa sekolo. You must remember that re no fee paying school. Le hore batswadi ha ba patale school fees. So ho boimanyana.

T 1   The lack of collaborative planning

 Ms Neo -Katamelo pakeng tsa matitjhere le batswadi e sa le hole haholo. Ho na jwale matitjhere ba etsa diqeto ba le bang ya notlela heke ya sekolo. Ha ba re khonsalte. Bekeng e fetileng halofo ya bana ba sekolo e ne e kwaletswe kantle ho jarete bakeng

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sa ho fihla lata. Nahana feela ha bana ba kwallwa kantle ka 8h00 ba tlo bulelwa ka 11h00 nakong ya boreiki hore ba fetwa ke dithuto tse kae? Ka nako e nngwe bana ba fetwa ke di sabjekte tsona tseo ba sa di tsebeng. Matitjhere ba se ke ba etsa qeto ba le bang ba sa ka ba kopana le batswadi. Pele ha re ntse re kena sekolo o ne o fuwa punishment ka mora sekolo ho ena le ho kwallwa kantle. Ebang ngwana a kwallwa kantle e ba tlwaelo ho yena. Taba ena e ka kenya bana tsietsing le ho ba kgothaletsa ho tlalatlala le motse le ho ba hlahisetsa kotsi ha ba ntse ba eme kantle ka hore ba hohelwe ke bana ba bang ba sa keneng sekolo mme ba ka ba ba qetela ba tswa kotsi. Bana ba phanishwa ka tsela e bohloko ya ho kwallwa kantle. **Nkosi** – batswadi ba tena ba sa ye mmeting because their views are not taken seriously. **Gift**- nna ntate ha ke fihla hae ke bua le ngwanaka ka. Ke mmolella hore ha o fihla lata Matsieng o tlo kwallwa digeiti. Ke mmolelletse hore nna ha tlo ya sekolong ha fihla lata. Nnnete rona batswadi ho na le dintho tseo re sa di nkelleng hlohong. Ha fihla Matsieng o tlo ngodisa ngwana o fuwa molaotheo hore o tsebe hore na ho sebetswa jwang. Ke fa ngwana tjhelete ya tekisi hore a fihle ka nako sekolong. O tsebile maikutlo a ka ka molaotheo wa ntate Tajeka. Ha re le batswadi re tlamehile re bolelle bana ba rona hore dimmeting tse re bitsetswang re dumellana le eng ha re dumellane le eng. Rona re le batswadi re nka monyetla kannete like ntate Tajeka ha re hlole re mmatla re ba tla ho bolaya bottle boo kgale a bo etsa ka hara sekolo ebe jwale re batla ho fetola mmuso wa ntate Tajeka empa o ne o ntse o tswela bana ba rona molemo. Nna ke mmolelletse hore ha ka fihla lata ha ke kene. Batswadi re ithafaletsa ka hore ha re batle ho tsamaya dimmeting. E re ha ngwana hao a etsa ntho e mpe ebe o re jwale bona heh sekolo sa ne! Ka nako e nngwe ke ile ka fumana bashemane ba six ba Matsieng Fairways. Ebe ke re ha ke ne ke le motho wa ntate k eke tlo ba nka ke ba kenye koloing ke re re tlo bua ebe ke ya sekolong ho ntate Tajeka ke re ke batla ho tseba bothata ba bana ke eng? Ke na le bonnete ba hore waka haeba o ne a fihla lata o ne a etsa ntho eo bao ba e etsang.**Neo**- mare ken a le potso. I'm not against le molao wa sekolo haebe ntho e sa re tswele molemo re tlamehile re etse hoba ke molao? Molao o mong le mong o na le clause e re

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tshwarang. Haeba ntho e sa re tswele kgomo na re tlamehile re peseletse? Ho na le molao o reng ba se shapuwe hape re na le o reng ha ba fihla lata ba se bulelwe digeiti. Na re tlamehile ho dula nthing e sa re sebeletseng. Potso ya ka e stupid ke eo . Na ha ho na any form of punishment e re ka e tlisang ho bona hore ho na le phapang? Ha o nka ngwana ka 8h00 o mo beha ka ntle ho fihla 11h00 di hora tseo a di dutseng kantle di kae? Number two, o se a kopna le bana bao ab nang le dikelello tse kantle, na ba tla stopa ho ntshetsa ntho ya ho fihla lata? **Semonye**- ntate moruti bona o botsitse potso e re ke mo arabe.O butsitse potso yah ore ntho ena e re tswela molemo na? Re tlamehile re dule ka hore ho yona re e tswelledise. A ke re mme a re bana ba Sediba ke half ya sekolo kaofela kantle! Batswadi ba bana ba bona ba fihlang lata ba entseng? Le thusa ban aba lona jwang? Molao wa nako o ruta ngwana motho e motsho hore nako ke yona e tlo etsa hore a sebetse ka thata. E mo ruta boikarabelo ba ho etsa mosebetsi ka nako. Ntate moruti e tena jwang pthutheho e sa tshwareng nako ebe sa le o pereletse o le mong o emetse phutheho. W aka moruti o itse ha re fihla lata o tla be a re amen.Re lokela ho ruta ban aba rona hore di geiti di a kwalwa ka 7h00 mme ba lokela ho tshwara tekesi e ba isang sekolong ka nako.Ngwana eo hosane e tlo ba mme ka baka la nako kapa ntate ka baka la nako**. Neo**- ke thabela ntho eo mme a e buang kapa a e pthuthullang. Ho lehlohonolo sekolo sa Matiseng moo batswadi ba fiwang molao. Nna sekolong sa Sediba ha ke tsebe ntho eo le hore e ngotswe jwang e shebile kae? Ntate moruti kgale re le bana ba sekolo re ne re sa kwallwe di heke ha re fihla lata ,re re ka mpa ra shapuwa hob aka nako eo e ne e le nako ya thupa akere? Dilemo di fetohile hona le ntho e ka etsuwang hore ban aba lata ba kene ba ngolwe mabitso haba qeta after school ba fuwe punishment, ke ngole di learning area tsa ka kaofela ha sekolo se tswa ke a tseba hore ke tshwanetse ho nka kgarafu mane ke lo kgotha.Pele hwane re ne re fumana punishment e jwalo Hobaneng matitjhere ba re ba hlatswe difenstere Ha ke fihla hae ke tla be ke kgathetse mme le yena a batla mosebetsi, ke tlamehile ho kga metsi. Hosane ke lo ikurusa ke ye ka nako sekolong**. Semonye**- nna ke ipotsa hore titjhere yena o reng ha a kena klelasing ha a bona ngwana a le siyo o etsang? Pela

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mmo ke sebetsang teng bana ba ba kena ka shopong ka 8h30. Ke ipotsa hore ha sekolo se kene ba batlang kantle .Ke ye ke ba kgwase hore ba tsamaye. Nna ke ipotsa hore matitjhere ba etsang ha bana ba le siyo ka klelasing? Ngwana ha yo mare dibuka tsa ha eke tsae. Wa utlwa kae kae tjhee le matitjhere nkare ha ba kgathalle. **Nkosi**-dikolo tsa mmuso di na le bothata ka katamelano ya batswadi le matitjhere. Bekeng e fetileng ke ne ke le mona sekolong. Ke kopane le matitjhere bao ke ileng ka ba dumedisa empa ha ba ka ba re letho. Motho ya nkamohetseng hantle ke prinsipala le yena mohlomong o ne a etsa jwalo hobane a tseba hore ke karolo ya stadi sena. Ebang ho ne ho se jwalo mohlomong a ka be a ntse a sa nkamohela hantle. Ha motswadi a kena sekolong o lokelwa ke ho thuswa ke titjhere e mong le e mong ya kopanang le yena. Ha o sheba atmosphere o kgona ho bona hore bothata bo teng. Matitjhere a nka hore ha batswadi ba tlile sekolong ba tlo ba laela empa e le batho ba etsang mosebetsi ke bona. Batswadi ba tena ba sa ye meeting because their views are not taken seriously.

T 1   LACK OF COLLABORATIVE PLANNING

 Semonye-Ka nako e nngwe diphapang pakeng tsa matitjhere le mosuwe-hlooho di a re tshosa hobane re iphumana re le dipakeng. Ka nako e nngwe ha ba re buise hantle mme sena se jala lehloyo pakeng tsa rona le matitjhere ao. Matitjhere ba nka hore ha re etla sekolong re tlo ba nkela mosebetsi wa bona kapa re tlisitse mathata. Le pele o hlalosa seo o tlisetseng sekolong o se a ntse a kgenne. Ke elelletswe hore matitjhere a amang ha ba batle ho eletswa. Sekolong sena seo ngwanaka a kenang ho sona , ke ile ka elelliswa principal ka mosebetsi o fokolang wa titjhere ya sicence ya grade nine. Principal ha a ka lokisa bothata boo mme o entse hore titjhere eo a se ke a ntjheba hantle. Matitjhere ha a rate re ntsha maikutlo a rona ka mosebetsi wa bona re le batswadi. Matitjhere a thabela hore re le batswadi ha re etse hona le hwane empa bona ha ba lakatse ha re ntsha maikutlo a rona ka tshebetso ya bona. Taba ena ha e re dule hamonate re le batswadi.

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T 4   REFLECTION

Sishi -nako e se e batla e tsofetse e seng re tle ka Labone? Maar le ka nna la e sheba. Ka bomadimabe ha kgone ho printa but ke tla etsa hore e mong le e mong a tle a fumane copy ya hae. Jwale ntho ya bohlokoa re tlo qala ka di afternoon studies? **Nkosi**-a ke re ntate Metsi ha e be ke hopola re sebeletsa due date ya di 25? So nna ho latela kutlwisiso ya ka hantle ke a tseba if it is possible ha e implimentuwe hosane hona mona Matsieng. Rona ha re na problem.A ke re o se o kopane le prinsipala etlare maya beke e fela ho be ho negotiatuwa taba ya sekolo sa mme ebe e le hore beke ya Monday ho be ho qalwa ho mme. Re be re nka mmeting re o etsa Laboraro ka baka la soccer re tlo sheba hore sport se a etsahala then ka Friday re be re comphaela report ka Matsieng. **Metsi**- ho tla tla ba kgonang ho ba teng hosane. Ke nahana re tla qala Matsieng mona le ha re tsebe na boemo bo tla be bo le jwang. Batswadi ba teng ba kgonang hore thusa ba ka atamela le ba hlalosetse ka botlalo seo re se etsang. Ha re qaleng ka grade 12 feela re etse sekolo kaofela ebe kamorao re sheba hore re sebeditse jwang. Ha re boneng hore re ka ke ra thusana le matitjhere ho tlisa phapang ya hore diresults di nyolohe.**Neo**- nna ke tla be ke le siyo hobane ke ya klelasing hosane afternoon. **Metsi**- ke nahana hore SMT ya sekolo e tla hlosetsa bana le matitjhere ka morero ona hore ho se be le pherekano. Re tlo sebedisana mmoho le bona hobane kaofela re tshwenyehile ke maemo a thuto. Ke nahana hore boteng ba rona bot la etsa phapang e kgolo. **Moya**-Ditaba tsa rona di hloka moralo o tsepameng le maikemisetso ho beha ditholoana bakeng sa thuto ya bana ba rona. Ebang re sa tshware ka thata morero wa rona o tla nyopa. Re hloka ho ba le mafolofolo hore re atlehise morero ona. Ka tjhebo ya ka ke bona eka dintho di ka tsamaya hantle ebang re tshwarisana taba le matitjhere le bana kaofela. Ha ba tseba hore re mona molemong wa bona ha ke bone bothata bana beso.**Nkosi** – ke nahana hore re lokela ho tjhentjha dinako tsa dikopano tsa rona haele mona re se re qadile ka afternoon studies. Ebang re

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qala ka hora ya boraro re tla ba le hora tse pedi ho fihla horeng ya bohlano. Se na se tla re fa monyetla wa ho ya kerekeng pele re etla mona stading. **Sishi**- ke dumellana le maikutlo ana hobane ditaba tsa rona di namme haholo mme e ka re kopana bonyane habedi ho fana ka monyetla wa ho lokola progress. Ke fumana nako ena e le nyenyane haholo. Ke hlokometse hore re lokela hoba le nako e enough ya ho discusa repoto ka nngwe ka botebo. Sena se tla re thusa hore kgone ho elellwa dintho tse tshesane tse ka tshohang di re sitisa.**Metsi** – na ebe re ntse re hata hantle kapa ho teng moo re lokelang ho tiisa lebanta teng stading sena sa rona? **Gift-**Stadi sa mofuta ona se re file monyetla oo re neng re se na ona wa ho itekola hore e be re ntse re hata ka tshwanelo kapa tjhee. Jwaloka e le mona re fumane lesedi stading sa mofuta ona ke nahana hore ho a hlokahala hore re le moifo ona re nne re etela dikolo tse mabapi ho hlokomedisa batswadi ka seo re ithutileng sona. Ho supervisa bana ho re file monyetla a bopa katamelano pakeng tsa bana, matitjhere le bana ho sheba dintho ka leihlo le le leng. Sena se thusisitse ho tlisa maqhama ao re neng re se na ona.

T 4   FINAL REFLECTIONS

Ke ne ke le mmeting wa sekolo se seng mmo ho neng ho buuwa ka leano le letjha la thuto e leng CAPS. Kamora kopano yaba ke botsa batswadi hore na ba utlwisisitse seo mistrese a nang a bua ka sona. Eitse hoba ke bone hore ha ba utlwisisa yaba ke dula fatshe le bona ke a ba hlalosetsa. Ke leboha ntate Metsi ka lesedi leo stadi sena se le tlidetseng. Ke ikutlwa ke phethahetse kannete. Eitse hoba ke hlalose yaba ba leboha ba re ke hona ba utlwisisang taba e neng e bolelwa ke mistrese. Batswadi dintho tsena ha ba di tsebe.Re lahlehile hampe ha re tla thutong ya bana ba rona, haholo ha ho tliswa diphetoho re sa le morao. Le hona jwale CAPS e teng dikolong empa ho re na ke eng ha re tsebe. Nnna ke ile ka itholela, ha hona le motswadi le a le mong ya ileng a phahamisa letsoho. **Sishi**- ho tshwana le ha re amohela mohau re re mohau ona o tsamaye le ba tsamayang o sale le ba salang. **Gift**-CAPS ena ke utlwile ho buuwa ka yona hohle.Ke qadile ho tseba hantle mona stading sena.Ha na re tena re sa fumane

ANNEXURE T 1

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direpoto tsa bana e qadile mane ka foundation e tlo nyolla di levels. Bana ba banyane ba ne ba hlahlojwa ka reiting ya level 1 ho ya ho level 4. Jwale ba kentse reiting ya level1 ho ya level 7 jwaloka ba baholo. Ha ho na motswadi ya ileng a tsotella yaba ke re ke tena ke ba le tsebo tjena hobane ke nkile karolo e itseng stading sena.**Sishi**- thuto ya matsatsing ana e bitswa CAPS hobane lefapha le tlohile ho OBE. Semonye- thuto e tla dula e le teng ho matitjhere hobane ke mosebetsi wa bona. Ke mosebetsi wa lona matitjhere ho re hlalosetsa batswadi. Ka dinako tse ding sekgowa se thata re ke ke ra se utlwisisa. Ntate Metsi ke a o leboha stadi sena se mphile lesedi le leholo. Se nthutile mme ke se ke bona kelello ya ka e hodile haholo. Ke ikutlwa ke phethahetse ho feta pele. **Nkosi**-pele ho stadi sena matitjhere ba ne ba re sheba hampe re le batswadi.O ne o ka kena sekolong mona ebe ha ba o dumedise empa kajeno dintho di fetohile ha e sa le ke eba le karolo stading sena. Ke amohelwa hamonate e leng ntho e neng e sa etsahale pele. Kannete re ikgoletse tsebo e ngata haholo. Re lebohela le bona di results di nyoloha e le bopaki ba hore seo re neng re etsa se nwelletse ho batswadi. Ka stadi sena re tjhentjha dikolo tse ngata ka hara motse wa rona ho hlokomedisa batswadi ka role ya bona. **Sishi**- lehlakoreng la matitjere re ikutlwa re thabile haholo re le sekolo. Stadi sena se tlisitse diphethoho tse ngata sekolong sa rona. Se re thusitse ho tjhentjha perception ya rona ka batswadi. Re ithutile hore batswadi ban a le bokgoni le tsebo e ka re tswelang molemo re le matitjhere. Mohlala stadi sena se sibollotse batswadi ba nang le lesedi le tsebo ka tse ding tsa dithuto tseo re di rutang bana sekolong mona. Batswadi bana re ka ba nka e le dirisose tseo re ka di sebedisang ho thusa bana le batswadi ba bang ka kakaretso. Re bone le tshehetso ya batswadi e nyoloha ha e sa le stadi sena se eba teng. Nka re se kgonne ho re fa tsebo le di strategy tseo re ka atamelanang le batswadi ka tsona. Re kgonne le ntlafatsa di polisi tsa rona hore karolo ya batswadi e utlwahale le ho lokisa finance polisi ya sekolo. Re kgonne le ho kwala masoba moo a neng a le teng dipolising tsa rona. Ke rata ho leboha ntate Metsi ka stadi sena hobane se re file morolo le tshepo dintho tseo re di etsang.

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Sellwane,pele re ne re ntse re itshebeletsa feela, e mong le e mong a iketsetsa taba tsa hae, empa stadi sena sa re fa monyetla wa ho sheba morao hore leeto la rona le nolofale. Ee ke dumela hore ho a hlokahala hore re shebe morao hore re tiise moo ho haellwang teng. Le rona lehlakoreng le community re utlwa re le motlotlo hore ebe re bile karolo ya moifo ona wa ho batla tharollo ya mathata a thuto ya bana ba rona. Stadi sena se kgonne ho re bontsha hore moo re sa kgoneng teng re ka batla thuso kantle hore re kgone ho tswela pele. Nna kannete ke ithabetse haele mona ke ile ka ba karolo ya moifo ona o batlang tharollo yah ore batswadi ba kena ka setotsewana thutong ya bana. **Semonye** – nna nka lerako le teng le le teng pakeng tsa rona re le batswadi le matitjhere kajeno le wele. Re se re le ntho e le nngwe mme re a rerisana molemong wa ngwana. Ntho ya nkelwa diqeto e fedile hobane matitjhere ba tseba hore re le batswadi re bohlokwa hakae hore thuto ya bana e tsamaye hantle mona sekolong. Ke ithutile dintho tse ngata jwaloka CAPS, le seabo seo ke lokelang ho ba le sona thutong ya ngwanaka. Re ikutlwa re amohelehile ebile re karolo ya sekolo sa bana ba rona jwaloka batswadi.Neo- ha ke tsebe hore nka qala kae ka taba ena. Ke rata ho lebohela monyetla ona oo o mphang ona ntate moruti. Ke kgonne ho tsosolosetsa tjheseho ya batswadi sekolong sa rona ka baka la stadi sena. Re le batswadi re ikopantse ka digroup jwalo ho eletsana ka thuto ya bana ba rona le ho ruta ka dintho tseo ebang re sa di utlwisise. Ke bona phethoho e kgolo dikopanong tsa sekolo hobane batswadi bat la ka bongata le ho nka karolo ka mafolofolo. Ke nahana hore stadi sena se tlositse tshabo eo re neng re na le yona re le batswadi ya ho ikgella fatshe ka hore ha re a ruteha. Ke nnete thuto ya hlokahala empa motswadi a nna a nka karolo ka ho bontsha tshehetso ya hae le interest dithutong tsa ngawana. Ke rata ho lebohela monyetla ona kannete re bulehile mahlo ho feta pele. Ke a leboha.

ANNEXURE T 2

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T 2   SHARED VISION

Tiki – Ho ya maikutlo a lona ke mesebetsi efe eo batswadi ba lokelang ho phethahatsa bakeng sa ho phahamisa tshehetso ya bona? **Gift-** Ee …ke nahana hore re le batswadi re lokela ho fedisa dikarohano pakeng tsa rona le matitjhere. Matitjhere a lokela ho bona batswadi e le karolo ya bona letsholong la ho ntlafatsa thuto ya bana. **Sellwane-** re lokela ho sebedisana mmoho le dikolo hore thuto ya bana e tswele pele hantle. **Mr King-** Modimo o re thusitse ka weather ena. Ha ho na ba le motho ya tlo otsela. Re tla le bitsa ho tla ho shebana le analysis kaofela empa ha jwale re kopa ho shebana le maths , geography le physics. Thuto e lokelwa ho kopanelwa. Thuto e tshwana le pitsa e ntsho e maoto a mararo e leng motswadi, ngwana le titjhere. Re kopa hore batswadi ba re thuse. Lona le le batswadi le ka re thusa hore re etse jwang hore dirisaltse tsa bana di nyolohe? Puo ya rona (matitjhere) ke hore ngwana ha a sebetse ka thata. Ho na le bana ba tlang ho rona ba lla hobane ba dula le borangwane le bomalome ba ba sitisang ho sebetsa hae.Ho na le bana ba dulang le bonkgono mme ha e re 8h00 clock nkgono o re lights off. A re dumelleng bana ho bala. Aim ya rona ke hore ba pase kaofela.Ha re re 70% ke 30% ya ngwana mang eo re batlang e feile? Ha le re thusa le le batswadi bana ba tla atleha. **Nkosi-** rona re le batswadi re rata hore ho be le order, disiplini le hore ho tsebahale hore ha re ka ke ra ananela dintho tsohle empa ha re fapana ho lokiswe dintho ka ofising. Re lakatsa hore bana ba rona rutwe. Tlhokeho ya disebediswa jwaloka dibuka ea re tshwenya. **Ms Neo-** re lokela ho sedisana re le batswadi. Ebang motswadi e mong a sa kgone ho fihla kopanong ya sekolong ba neng ba ile ba lokela hlalosetsa ba neng bas a ya ka diqeto tse fihlelletsweng. Hapehape re lokela ho eletsana ka maemo a bana ba rona. Ho teng batswadi ba tshabisang bana ba bona ba sa itekelanang kelellong. Batswadi bana ba tshaba ho isa bana ba bona dikolong tse ikgethileng. Hona jwale ho teng ngwana eo a qadileng sekolo le ngwanaka empa ngwanaka o qetile matriki ha enwa yena a ntse a le grade 8. Ho hlakile hore ngwana enwa o na le bothata mme o lokelwa ho iswa dikolong tse ikgethileng.

ANNEXURE T 2

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T 2   THE HOMEWORK POLICY

Nkosi-– na ho a hlokahala hore re be le homework policy? **Tajeka-** Ha re na homework polisi. Matitjhere a fa bana mosebetsi mme bana ba lokela ho etsa mosebetsi oo hae. Ke nahana hore ho a hlokahala hore re be polisi ya mofuta ona hobane bana ba bang ha ba etse homework kamehla. Bothata boo re nang le bona ke lack of capacity. We lack capacity. Ha le re emphaware empa le batla hore re etse dintho kaofela. **Ms Gift** nna ke na le maikutlo a reng taba ena e ka re thusa haholo bakeng sa ho re nolofaletsa mosebetsi re batswadi. Mohlala, matitjhere ba batla hore re thuse ka homework, ke nnete re a lokela ho thusa, empa bothata ba rona ke hore hobaneng homework e sa hlophiswe ho ya ka matsatsi a itseng kapa bonyane dithuto tse thata tse sokodisang bana? Ka nako e nngwe o le motswadi o hloleha ho hobane ngwana o tla homework tse tse tharo ka nako e le nngwe. Re fumana hona kannete e le tshita ho rona batswadi. Ke kgona ho thusa ngwanaka ka accounting hobane ke na le lesedi la yona empa disubjeckte tse ding ke hloka lesedi le letle.Le ha ho le jwalo tshabo ya ka ke hore ke qetse kglale ho etsa accounting.Syllabus le yona e fetohile. Dintho tse ding ke sa di hoopla empa e seng kaofela. Ke ye jwetse ngwanaka hore a kopane le bana ba bang ho mo thusa hobane lha ke sa na lesedi le feletseng. Re ka thabela ha matitjhere ba ka re thus aka dintho tse ding. Se na se ka thusa hore hpotsa ka dintho tseo re neng re di etsa ha re sa le sekolong. Moo ke kgonang teng ke ye ke bokelle ban aba accounting ba dulang haufinyana hore ke tlo ba thusa. Ntho ena e nthusitse ho bona diphetoho tse seng di le teng thutong ena. **Ms Neo**- matitjhere a hona jwale a lakatsa hore re thuse bana ka homework empa re ka thusa jwang ha titjhere a sa fe ngwana exampole ya ntho eo a batlang hore re thuse bana ka yona? Pele ha ngwana a ne a fuwa homework, titjhere o ne a fana ka mohlala mme motswadi o ne a fumana ho le bobebe ho thusa ngwana.   **Ms Gift**- re le batswadi re thabela ha ho ka sebediswa puo ya rona dikopanong tsa sekolo hobane hona ho matlafatsa kutlwisiso. Ha ho thuse letho ho bua le batswadi ka puo eo ba sa e utlwisiseng ho ja eka o letswantle. Ho na ke tshenyo ya nako feela. Makgowa a sebedisa puo ya bona eo bongata ba batswadi bo e utlwisisang.

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Hobaneng re lokela ho sebedisa puo ya batho ba leng siyo ka hara rona? Puo tsa rona di hola jwang ebang re sa di sebedise? **Nkosi** tsela eo matitjhere a tritang batswadi ka yona ke yona e etsang hore batswadi ba tjhetjhelle morao. Matitjhere a buela bonkgono sekgowa mme ntho ena e a ba tshabisa. Ntho ena e aha lerako pakeng tsa pakeng tsa matitjhere le batswadi hobane ba iphumana bas a amoheleha. Ha ho thuse letho ho thiba bonkgono ditsebe ka sekgowa se se lelele. Ho hlokahalang ke hore molaetsa o finyelle moo o lokelang ho ya teng. Ho ya ka molao-theo wa naha dipuo tsohle di a lekana ka boemo mme a re se nyenyefatseng puo ya rona Ma-Afrika. **Semonye**- vishini le mishini di ngotswe ka snyesemane mme hona ho etsa bothata ho batswadi bas a tsebeng puo ena ho di utlwisisa. **Neo** -Ke ne ke hloile maths ha ke sa le sekolong. Ke ne ke dula ke dotjha klelase ya maths. E ne e re ha titjhere a kena ka klelasing e be key a toilet. Mme wa ka e ne e le motho ya inwellang mme a sa shebe mosebetsi wa ka wa sekolo.Ka tsatsi le leng ha ke ntse ke etsa homeweke ya maths yaba o mpotsa hore na ke etsang. O ile a nka buka ya ka ya maths yaba o qala ho ntlhalosetsa hore bodmas ke eng. O ile a re bodmas e bolela hore re qala ka dipalo tse ka masakaneng pele. Eitse ha ke utlwa a bua ka bodmas, yaba ke hopola seo titjhere a re rutileng sona klelasing. Tsatsing leo ke ile ka hlokomela hore mme wa ka o ntse a tseba ho bala. O ile a nketsetsa palo e le nngwe yaba o re ke etse tse ding. Ke ile ka sebedisa mohlala wa hae yaba ke nepa tse ding. Ha ke fihla sekolong titjhere o ne a maketse hore na ho tlile jwang ke nepe dipalo. Ke ile ka bolela hore ke thusitswe ke mme. Yaba ho tloha mohlang oo ke rata maths.**Nkosi**- re batla re utlwile maikutlo a batho ka homework polisi, wena o ka tshwaela ka le reng ntate(a supa **Metsi**) . **Metsi**- hhh…ke nahana hore dintho tseo le di buileng di etsa kelello. Homework polisi e lokela ho thusa sekolo ho ntshetsa ditatabelo tsa sona pele. E lokela ho kgothaletsa tshebedisano pakeng tsa bana, matitjhere le batswadi.Homework polisi e lokela ho thusa ho ruta ngwana e le hore le wena o le motswadi o ntse o ithuta ka mosebetsi le mathata ao ngwana a kopanang le ona sekolong le hore na kutlwisiso ya hae e kae? Ka mantswe a mang thuto ya ka klelasing e tswela kantle. Hantlentle thuto e qadile lapeng

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empa e ntshetswa pele feela sekolong ka tsela eo re ka reng e formal. Homework e thusa ngwana ho tsepamisa maikutlo a hae thutong ka nako tsohle. Ha ngwana a se na homework o fihla shebella TV (bo the bold and beautiful jwalojwalo) e leng dintho tseo hangata di sa hodiseng kelello ya hae jwaleka ho bala. Ha ngwana a na le homework polisi o tla tsepamisa maikutlo a hae thutong mme ntho ena e tla eketsa nako ya hae ya ho ithuta. Jwaloka le se buile re lokela ho bona hore homework ho be overload ya mosebetsi mmo ngwana a tla iphumana a etsa homework thutong tse fetang bobedi hobane hona ho ka nka nako e ngata ya motswadi haholo jwang ya tjhaisang lata a fihla a kgathetse. Re sisinya hore bonyane ngwana wa secondary , haholo matriki o lokela ho nka dihora tse pedi ho ya ka boima ba dithuto tsa hae a etsa homework. **Neo**- askies ntate Tiki, ntho eo o buang ka yona ke na le bothata ka yona ka tlung. Ke lekile ho bua le ngwanaka a etse di homework tsa maths. Maths o batla practise. Ke kopa a sebedise 45minutes a se a hatella kelello ya hae empa oa hana. Ke etse jwang ka ngwana enwa hobane ntho ena ha e mo sebeletsa le nna e tla ntshebeletsa? **Nkosi** –leka hore ha o bua le yena o sebe bohale, e ya fatshe hobane ho bontsha e ka ngwana o na le stress.**Neo**- ka mantswe a mang ho bolela hore ha ngwana enwa a sa etse homework le nna ke tjhelelletse? **Moya**- ke nahana hore o ka mmotsha e bang o kgona hore a sebetse jwang kapa o ka kopa bana kapa batswadi ba nang le lesedi ho thusetsa.

T 2   LEARNER DISCIPLINE

Tiki- le ka reng ka boitswaro ba bana kakaretso? **Tajeka**- re sebetsana le bana ba hlaaha ba sa boneng matitjhere ka letho. Ha ngwana a itshwere ka tsela e tjena sekolong ho bontsha le hore batswadi ba hae ha se letho ho yena. Taba ena e bontsha bofokodi ba botswadi hae. **Modiehi** – batswadi ba na le matla hodima bana ba bona le ha e le hore ban a le nako e nnyane le bana ba bona. Ha batswadi ba nka karolo ha ho na ba le bana ba tla itswara hampe. E bang ngwana a tshwarwa hampe ke titjhere, motswadi ya teng ka hare ho komiti ena o tla etsa ho be le tekatekano ya ditaba. Ebang

ngwana a le phoso ha e mong wa batswadi a le teng qeto e nkuwang e tla tjhaellwa monwana. **Semonye**- boteng ba batswadi bo etsa hore bana ba tjhentjhe mekgwa ya bona ya ho tella matitjhere. Boteng ba batswadi bo tlisa tshabo baneng. Matitjhere a mang a manyenyane haholo hoo bana ba bang ba lakatsang ho ba le dikamano tsa lerato le bona. Boteng ba batswadi bo ka tlisa tshabo le ho sireletsa matitjhere. Matitjhere a mang a tsubela pela bana le ho tsubisana le bona. Boteng ba batswadi bo ka thusa ho thibela boitshwaro bona bo bohlaswa. **Letsatsi**- ka tsatsi le leng ke ile ka bitswa e le ha moshanyana wa ka a ne a entse botlokotsebe sekolong. Ke ile ka mo tshwara ka mo tlohela yaba o kena tseleng. Jwaloka motswadi nke ke ka laelwa ke ngwana. Ho tloha moo o ile a kena tseleng jwaloka bana ba bang. Ha na demokrasi haka o tla e bona seterateng. **Nkosi**- thuto ya bohlokwa ke eo ngwana a tlang le yona ho tswa habo. Kgalekgale motswadi e mong le e mong o ne a ena le lentswe hodima ngwana. Kajeno maemo a fetohile. Pele ho ne ho ena le boitshwaro. Mmuso o rethusitse ebile ha o wa re thusa hobane o ntshitse bidumedi ka hara thuto ya ngwana motho e motsho. Thuto ya bohlokwa ke eo ngwana a tlang le yona ha habo. Pele re ne re tseba hore hoseng phareiting mosuwe kapa moruti o ne a nka five to fifteen minutes a bua ka lentswe la Modimo. If ngwana a se na background ya mekgwa, a beile pamphlet ya ditokelo empa a se na boikarabelo ha ho thuse letho. Mohlala (yaba o supa dibotlolo tsa jwala ka klelasing) ke mona ba ne ba entse kwasakwasa. Batswadi ba pele ba ne ba sa bale ntho jwaloka re e bala pampering empa ba ne ba phela ntho eo. Batswadi ba hlolwa ho kgalemela le ho bontsha bana tsela ho tswa malapeng.Ho thata ho matitjhere ho otlolla thupa e seng e omme. Botahwa bona boo re bo bonang (a supa dibotlolo tsa jwala ka phapusing) ke bopaki bo felletseng ba hore re le batswadi re tshwere mathata. **Gift**- thuto ya mantlha e qala lapeng tlasa tataiso ya motswadi. Ebang ngwana a rutilwe hantle ha habo ho tla ba thata hore a kgeloswe tseleng ya nnete kantle. Ha ngwana a itshwere hantle matitjhere ba sebedisana mmoho le batswadi ba ngwana ya jwalo. Batswadi re hloka tataiso e ntle ho hodisa bana ba rona hore ba fihlelle sepheo sa bona. **King**- re ye re tshware di career exhibition bakeng sa bana

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empa ha re soka re nahana ho ba le diwekshopo tsa batswadi. Ke elellwa hore taba ena e ka ya ba ke yona e fokodisang boteng ba batswadi sekolong hobane ho bonahala batswadi ba bangata ba sa bapale karolo ya bona maphelong a bana ba bona. Ha ngwana a rohaka titjhere ka nako e nngwe o ipotsa hore na motswadi wa hae o na le lentswe hodima hae. Na o be a sa qala lapeng ka motswadi wa hae. Ka bomadimabe ke mathata ao dikolo tsa rona tsa lekeisheng di iphumamang di le ka hara ona.

T 2   SCHOOL-COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

Nkosi – ha re ke re bueng ka dikamano pakeng tsa sekolo le community hanyenyane. Ke teha mohla, jwaloka ka kereke re thusa ho rekela ban aba hlokang school uniform le ho thusa ho ingodisetsa scial grants. Re thusa le ka ho motiveita bana ho ithuta le hore ba sebetse ka thata sekolong.Bothata boo re kopanang le bona hangata ke hore bana ba bang ha ba na identity documents, ba bang ha na batswadi. Re etsa kgoeletso yah ore mmo ho nang le bana ba mofuta ona re ba thuseng ebang re hloleha le iteanya le rona. **Mmathabo**- jwaloka baemedi ba setjhaba re kgona ho bua le setjhaba ho lwantsha botlokotsebe ka hara motse ho thibela ho utswa ha thepa ya sekolo. Re thusa dikolo tse sa sebetseng hantle ka tshehetso ya mothiveishene le ho hlphisa matsholo a tlhwekiso ya dikolo. **Sellwane-** Nna ke nahana hore re lokela ho sebedisan le dikolo ho bona hore thuto ya bana e tswela pele hantle. Re lokela ho thusa dikolo ka disebediswa tse ka ntshetsang thuto pele. **Tajeka**- thuto e ka ntlafala ha feela batswadi ba re tshehetsa.Ba rilaktente (batswadi) ho kgethwa jwaloka ditho tsa SGB. Ha ba na intharest. Mme ha ba sapote bana ba bona . They do not want to dirty their hands. They just want to be a group and not a team ke ka hona election meeting ya rona e ileng ya postponwa. Ka nako e nngwe ba re nyahamisa. Re hula ka thata, re bang. Batswadi ba phuthile matsoho. Ditlhoko tsa rona di ngata haholo mme re hloka batswadi ba ithopa ho re mita hafo way ka tjhelete le ho lokisa meaho le jarete ya sekolo sa rona jwaloka dithwaelete tsa bana, mamati le ho penta diklaserumu. **King**- le nna ke shera maikutlo a ntate mona. Batswadi ha ba batle ho nka boikarabelo ka hara SGB. Ba nahana hore

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SGB e na le mosebetsi o mongata. **Nkosi**- ke lakatsa ho responda tabeng eo bontate ba qetang ho bua ka yona. Batswadi ba nkelwa diqeto ke principal le lefapha la hae. Tlo ke etse mohlala ha ke tsebe mme on o le teng lemomg se fetileng. Ntho e ileng ya etsahala le ho senya dipuisano pakeng tsa SGB e tshebetsong e ne e sa etse dintho tseo prinsipala a di batlang. Prinsipala o ile a bitswa ho introdusa diguests le fan aka dimpho. If ho ne ho ena le transparency eo ke buang ka yona o ne o lebeletse hore prinsipala a tsibise ntate le mme nnyeo ba eteletseng sekolo pele hona jwale .Ntho e ileng ya etsahala ke ena, mokgokgo ha a ka tloha a tsebisetse SGB e teng tshebetsong ka nak eo. O ile a tsebisa SGB e kileng a sebetsa le yona four to five years. Ke yona ya ileng a e tsebisa. Ke ha ke ipotsa potso ya hore ho sebetswa jwang? Hlompho ya ho mentiona mabitso e bontsha tlotlo empa ha o sa etse jwalo empa o refera komiting ya dilemo tse tharo tse fetileng , o sa bue letho ka eo o sebetsang le yona hajwale e tlisa dipelaelo. Matitjhere a neng a tlameha ho amohela di awards ba ne ba le siyo. **Gift**- Matsieng mona ho sa ntse ho ena le ntwa e kgolo pakeng tsa matitjhere, batswadi le prinsipala . Re lokela ho kopana ho lokisa dintho. Ha re batswadi ba nnete re ke ke ra sebediswa ke prinsipala kapa bana ba rona. Re le batswadi re hlodiswa ditaba ke hore SGB e fetileng did not write the minutes. **Metsi**- nna ke nahana hore kopano le tshedisano pakeng tsa sekolo le community e ka thusa hore sekolo se fumane disebediswa tseo se neng se di hloka jwaloka councilor Sellwane le moruti Nkosi ba se ba boletse. Taba e nngwe ke hore community e nka sekolo e le part ya yona morerong wa development le hlokomela hore sekolo ha se utswetswe thepa ya sona le ho thujwa. Ka mantswe a mang sekolo le community di a hlokana molemong wa ngwana . **Neo** – re le batswadi re lakatsa hore ho be order, discipline mme ebang re fapana ka maikutlo ntho eo e felle ka ofising. SGB e lokela hore e tlise peace, ha thuto e be ntho ya pele ya mantlha eo ba e sebeletsang.

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T 2   CLEAR SEPARATION OF ROLES

Gift re iphumana re le khoneng. Re lokela ho seha mola pakeng tsa mosebetsi wa rona le matitjhere hore kutlwano e be teng. Ka nako e nngwe e nngwe ha o re o kena ka setotswana o bolellwa hore oa itshunyaka, mosebetsi oo ha se wa hao. Ha re batle ho iphumana re qabana le matitjhere ho sa hlokahale . Ka nako e nngwe re le batswadi re balehiswa ke diphapang tse bang teng pakeng tsa rona le matitjhere. **Lekoele**- ke motho ya sebetsang ka botshepehi . Ke rata mosebetsi oo ke neng ke o etsa haholo jwaloka modulasetulo wa SGB Matsieng, empa ha ke a ka ka hlolwa ke tsebiswa ka dikopano. Ke ile ka rahelwa kantle ntle le mabaka ya ba ke re ke itulele. O kake wa sebetsa mmo o sa batluweng . Taba ya sena ke mosuwehlooho ya sa batleng ho eletswa. Ke sebeditse nako e telele posong ka ditjhelete. Ke tseba hore re lokela ho tshwara ditjhelete jwang empa morena e moholo ha o mo hlokomedisa o ne a sa mamele. **Nkosi**- wa tseba ntate ausi ho na le ntho eo ke ithutileng yona . Dikolo tsa private di fapane le tsena tsa public. Dikolo tsa private di batla di hlompha katamelano ya batswadi. Dikolo tsena tsa mmuso di na le mathata a fetisisang. Ho na le ntho e beilweng geiting, bitso la yona ke sekgowa jwale ba etsa bonnete ba hore ha otla ha o amohelehe. There was a time ke tla sekolong prinsipala o ne a nkamohela hantle hobane o ne a ntseba ho fapana le titjhere eo ke neng ke kopana le yona geiting. **Neo**- nna ke nahana hore re lokela ho kopana le matitjhere ka mosebetsi wa rona re le batswadi. Re lokela ho buisana as equals hobane matitjhere ba rata ho imposa diqeto tsa bona ho rona batswadi. Hangata ha ba rate ha re ka ntsha maikutlo a rona. Ho na jwale ba o tlohela o etse mosebetsi ebe kamorao ba re ke mang ya itseng o etse mosebetsi oo? Hona ke ho tjheha motho le ho mo nyahamisa mme mohlomong training e ka re thusa haholo mabapi le taba ena. Re ka thabela ho tjhoriswa hore re etse mosebetsi ya rona ka nepo. Ho lehlohonolo batswadi ba sekolo sa Matsieng ba fuwang molao-theo le dipolisi tsa sekolo hore ba kgonang ba ipalle.**Semonye**- re ka thabela ho rutwa ka boikarabelo ba rona thutong ya bana, hore na re thusa jwang le hore eng seo re batswadi re lokelang ho se labella ho matitjhere mabapi le thuto ya bana. **Sishi**- ho

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na dintho tse professional tseo re leng matitjhere re lokelang ho di etsa thutong ya ngwana ka nqe nngwe ho teng dintho tseo batswadi ba lokelang ho di etsa le tseo re lokelang ho di kopanela. Ho arolelana mosebetsi ho se ke ha bolela hore re a lwantshana kapa ha re sebetse jwaloka team. Re lokela ho sebetsa jwaloka team empa e le hore re uthwisisa hantle seo re lokelang ho se etsa. Re lokela ho arolelana mosebetsi. Mosebetsi oo re o etsang re le matitjhere o lokela ho le matlafatsa le le batswadi. Ka tsela e tshwanang mosebetsi oo le etsang le le batswadi o lokela ho re matlafatsa re le matitjhere. Ho seha moedi ho se ha nkuwa e le karohano pakeng tsa batswadi le matitjhere empa e le hore motho ka mong a bapale role ya hae ka tshwanelo. **Metsi**-ke dumellana le lona ka taba ena hobane kutlwisiso ya tabeng ena ke hore ho be le diphapahng tse sa hlokahaleng pakeng tsa matitjhere le batswadi . Bonnete ke hore bobedi bona bo a hlokana mme ho na ya ka reng o moholo kapa bohlokwa ho feta e mong. Matitjhere ha kgone ho etsa mosebetsi wa bona hantle ntle le batswadi. Bobedi ba bapala karolo e kgolo kgodisong le tataisong ya ngwana sekolong.

ANNEXURE T 3

THE THREATS FOR THE FRAMEWORK FOR PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

Metsi- na re ka re ho teng dintho tse sitisang batswadi ho ikakgela ka setotswana thutong ya bana ba bona? **Nkosi**-nna ntho eo ke e bonang e le tshita e etsang hore batswadi ba se nke karolo ka tsela e phethahetseng ke taba ya attitude. Tsela eo matitjhere ba tritang batswadi ka yona e etsa hore batswadi ba tjhetjhelle morao. Matitjhere a buela bonkgono sekgowa mme ntho ena e a ba tshabisa. Ntho ena e aha lerako pakeng tsa matitjhere le batswadi hobane ba iphumana ba sa amoheleha.Hobaneng ha matitjhere ba sa tle leveleng ya batswadi? Ba sa sebedise puo eo bonkgono ba e utlwisisang? Ha ho thuse letho ho bua ka puo eo bonkgono ba sa e utlwisiseng .Ha ho thuse letho ho bua sekgowa se se telele o thiba bonkgono ditsebe empa ba sa utlwisise. Tabataba ke hore molaetsa o finyelle moo o lokelang ho ya teng. **Semonye**-ke dumellana le ntate moruti. A ko bone ntho e etsahalang dikolong mona. Ho na jwale ho kena ka ofising o bona vishini le mishini ke tsane di ngotswe ka senyesemane, mme hona ho etsa bothata ho batswadi ba sa tsebeng puo ena ho di utlwisisa. Hobaneng ha merabe e meng e sebedisa puo ya yona empa rona batho ba batsho re shwabela puo ya rona? Ha motho a sa tsitsa puong ya habo ya letswele a ka tsitsa jwang puong eo e seng ya habo? Ho na jwale matitjhere ha a kgethe mantswe ha a bua le bana ba rona. Ho na le ho thwe bana ba rona ba hlooho di thata, ke majwe a moralla. Ntho ena e etsa hore ngwana a ikgelle fatshe, a ipone a sa tsebe letho ebile e mo etsa setshehisa sa bana ba bang. Ntho ena e qetella etsa hore ngwana e nwa a balehe sekolong kapa a lwane le bana ba bang esitana le yona titjhere eo . Ntho ena e tlisa lehloyo le sa hlokahaleng pakeng tsa batswadi le matitlhere. Ke motswadi ofe ya ka thabelang ho romela ngwana wa hae sekolong ho tla etswa setshehisa sa bana ba bang le matitjhere? Mantswe a jwalo ke thupa eo ngwana a sitwang ho e lebala bophelong ba hae kaofela mme a qetella a tjhenetjha le semelo sa ngwana. Bana ha ba Tshwane mme e mong o ka wa moya kapele . Ha o re ngwana ke lejwe la moralla, na e be ha o rohakelle le mostwadi ya tswetseng ngwana eo? Ka nako e nngwe dipuo tsena tse mpe tse lebiswang baneng ba rona ke tsona tse etsang hore batswadi ba qetelle ba ikgulela morao. **Sishi-** ha ke nahane e le tsela e lokela hore titjhere a ka buwa jwalo le ngwana. Ke tokelo ya motswadi ofe kapa ofe ya sa kgotsofalang ho itlhahisa sekolong

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ka bothata ba hae. E bang motswadi a sa tle sekolong re ke ke ra tseba ka bothata ba hae. Re le matitjhere re lokela ho hompha bana bao re ba rutang hore ba tsebe ho re hlompha. Sesotho se molao o tswa ntlo kgolo o ya ntlwaneng. Kutlwisiso ya ka ke hore ha e moholo a hlompha e monyane , ho tla bobebe ho e monyenyane ho busetsa hlompho e jwalo. Discipline le respect ho tswa lehlakoreng la titjhere le la ngwana di etsa hore ho be order le hore kaofela ba tsepamise maikutlo a bona thutong. Ntlha ena ke ya bohlokwa mm eke nahana hore re lokela ho buisana ka yona hore e kenyeletswe polising ya sekolo. Ke nahana kaekae le lefapha le nena taba yena mme le ka nna la nka dikgato kgahlano le titjhere ya sebedisang dipuo tse jwalo. **Nkosi**- ntho e nngwe eo ke elelletsweng ke taba ya ponaletso. Ha ho na transparency. Ho na jwale ha e sa le ho kgethwa batho ba le bang ka hara SGB. Ka nako e nngwe ha se hore matitjhere a rata mosebetsi wa batswadi bana, empa e le feela ho fihlella ditabatabelo tsa bona. Batswadi ba nkelwa diqeto ke prinsipala le komiti ya hae. Ho o kena ka ofising hangata o bona vision le mission empa dintho tsena ha di phethahatswe. Matitjhere a ntse a qhelelwa ka thoko. Ha ba ba tle hore re tsebe ho etsahalang ka dintho tse ding haholoholo ditjheleteng tsa sekolo. O a bona ha ho ka thijwa lesoba lena leo le sebediswang ho ntsha ditjhelete ka backdoor ke nahana hore re le batswadi re ka haba haholo. **Gift**- atjhe ntate moruti empa le rona re le batswadi re ntse re le phoso. Taba yah ore batswadi ha ba tle dikopanong tsa sekolo e etsa hore dintho di tsamaye ka tsela eo o buwang ka yona . Nna ke nahana hore re le batswadi ha re sebedise tokelo ya rona ya molao ya ho nka karolo mererong e amang thuto ya bana ba rona. Ke nnete hore ka nako e nngwe re balahiswa ke matitjhere empa ke nahana hore ha re sa eme ka maoto re le batswadi ho kgalemela dintho tse mpe tse etsahalang ho ke ke ha loka. Re lokela ho ema ka maoto ho lwantsha bothata bona ho ena le ikgulela morao hobane ha re etsa jwalo thuto ya bana ba rona e tla safara. **Gift**- Ntate moruti, ha re se keng ra compleina feela empa re etse letho ho tjhentjha maemo ao re iphumanang re le ho ona. Ke ulwa taba ena e le thata kennete hore ho teng matitjhere a sa batleng ho kopana le batswadi, a sa batleng ho bontshwa diphoso tsa ona empa ona a tatela ho re supa ka menwana hore ha re sirase ka thuto ya ~~bana~~ ba rona. Ho na jwale ha ba re fe le haele

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polisi ya sekolo mme o ipotsa hore o tle nka karolo jwang empa o sa tsebe na polisi e reng? Ha e seke ya eba ntho ya bona ba le bang eo ba ratang hore polisi e reng.**Metsi** ke lakatsa ho kgutlela tabeng ntate moruti ya pele. O bolela jwang ha o re ha hona trasparecy? **Nkosi**- financial statement ya sekolong mona e be ntse e balwa ke matitjhere ho ena le trejara wa SGB eo e leng motswadi. Ho hlakile hore o qhelelwa ka thoko kapa ha a tsebe letho ka hore ditjhelete di sebetsa jwang. Ntho ena feela e bontsha ho hloka transparency. Motho o ka bua letsheare lohle ka taba ena ebang nako e dumela. Ka nako e nngwe re lokela ho nyebekolla dintho tsena hore ho be tshepano pakeng tsa matitjhere le batswadi. **Semonye** – ntate moruti hape ntho e nngwe e bakang tshita ke hore batswadi ba kgethwa e be ba behwa khoneng ka ho fuwa mosebetsi oo bas a o kwetlisetswang. Motswadi o iphumana ka nako e nngwe a tsheuwa ke matitjhere hobane a sa etse dintho ka tsela e nepahetseng. Ha ditho tsa SGB di sa kwetliswa ka nepo ho ka ke ha eba le ditholoana tse ntle. Mohlomong le taba ya hore trejara ha balle batswadi financial statement ke le leng la baka ana.**Metsi** – o bolela hore SGB ha e fumantshwe training? **Semonye**- ke mang? Ha re a tshwanela ho emela lefapha mohlang le tlang ka programo ya lona. Ho lokela hore ho be le training pragramo eo sekolo ka bo sona se lokelang ho e kenya tshebetsong. Ke nahana hore sena se ka re fa morolo le tsebo ya ho etsa dintho tse ntjha. **Gift**- batswadi ba bangata ha ba sebetse. Ha ho batluwa tjhelete re re ha re sebetse. Ke nnete ho boima bakeng sa batswadi ba lokelang ho palama tekisi ho tla sekolong. Ha motswadi ya dulang hole a se na tjhelete ya transpoto ho na e ka ba tshita. Batswadi ha ba sebetse. Ha ho batluwa tjhelete re re ha re sebetse empa re hloleha ho bona hore bana rona ba fihla ka nako sekolong. Re hloleha ho iponahatsa dikopanong tsa sekolo ekasitana le ho thus aka di homework. King- Ma-Afrika ha tsebe hore re ya kae. Hangata batswadi ha ba sapote sekolo ka tjhelete empa ngwana ha a qala a eya dikolong tse toropng motswadi ntseng a re ha a na tjhelete tokotoko o se a kgona ho lefella ngwana. Ke ne ke re ke nke monytla ona le sa bua ka mathata hore bana ya khempeng mme ngwana k among o lokela ho lefa R250.00.Hantlentle re ya kae Ma-Afrika. Le hona mona tsebile hore hang feela ha ke buuwa ka tjhelete ho tla ba le modumo. Tjhelete eo bana ba e

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ntshuwang e nnyane hampe ho feta eo o e fang ngwana ho reka mateki a expensive.**Sishi**- bothata bo teng ke hore batswadi ha ba iphe nako ho tla sekolong ho buisana le matitjhere ka mosebetsi wa bana. Le ha o ba ngolla mangolo ha ba iponahatse. Ha ho ka tloswa lerako le etsang hore ho be karohano e kaana pakeng tsa rona le batswadi ho ka loka. **Nkosi** – batswadi ha ba kweltiswe hantle hore ba ikutlwe ba phuthulohile ho etsa mosebetsi ka thahasello. Ha batswadi ba kgethwang ba fuwe training e phethatseng.

ANNEXURE TT

TIME TABLE FOR PARENTS' SUPERVISION OF AFTERNOON STUDIES

Day	Class	Number of learners: attendance		Time	Responsible parent	Comments
		Possible	Actual			
Monday						
Tuesday						
Wednesday						
Thursday						
Friday						

General remarks:

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……

_____   _____

SIGNATURE OF PARENT   **DATE**

_____   _____

SIGNATURE OF TEACHER   **DATE**