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Use of systems tools in the creation of an intervention
programme that deals with educational disparities

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ABSTRACT

South Africa's Education System is beset with inequalities. These inequalities are what can be termed disparities in the education system of South Africa.

These disparities are mainly the result of the country's old apartheid political system. The new democratic political system had to come up with programmes of redress by introducing intervention programmes. The programmes were introduced with the aim of bringing about equality in the education system.

Evidence of the disparities can be seen by comparing ex model C schools and previously disadvantaged schools.

The study reviews the disparities that exist between an ex model c school and a previously disadvantaged school, particularly in the area of organisation and management systems.

The review of the disparities is done with the aim of creating a model of intervention for a distressing problem situation identified by a previously disadvantaged school, which has not been addressed by the Department of Education's intervention programmes.

A model of intervention will be created using a systems tool, Soft Systems Methodology.

A model of intervention is created to ensure that interventions are implemented and that the school's organisation and management systems are empowered in tools that they can use to deal with various other problem situations.

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CHAPTER 1
GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1   Introduction

South Africa had a political system that ensured that all races did not enjoy equal opportunities in various spheres of their lives and education was one of the areas that was affected. The education system in South Africa is marked by disparities which are to a large extent a result of the old apartheid political dispensation. Notable disparities can still be observed between ex–model C schools[1] and previously disadvantaged schools. Examples of some of these disparities are evidenced in matters such as the provision of physical resources, the breadth of the school curriculum, the financial resources available, the extra–curricular activities offered, the school culture/ethos, discipline, the composition of the staff, the school‟s organisation and its management systems. According to Ladd quoted in Tamer (2005:1), „During apartheid, there was very unequal treatment of the races and people were put in schools by race, operated by fifteen different departments of education. Funding across departments was egregiously unequal...which changed by the end of the apartheid era‟. The fact that it was apartheid that was the root cause of the inequalities that exist to this day in the education system is further supported by Chetty and Ngcongo (2000:66), who argue that „the fragmented education departments were structured unequally on the basis of apartheid ideologies: hence, there was no unified system of school management and governance for schools in South Africa‟.

Faced with all the challenges of the past, South Africa‟s democratic government, through the Department of Education, has come up with various interventions, policies and programmes designed to redress the disparities in the education system.   From my personal observation as an educator, I can testify to the existence and success of some of these interventions. According to Coulby,

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[1] Prior to 1994, when the old government was preparing the white public schools for transition to a new democratic government, it gave white schools the option of being Model A schools (completely private), or Model B (state schools) or Model C (state-aided by 75% of their budget with the balance obtained from school fees). Although most schools chose to be Model B, the government decided to convert all white schools to Model C. In the new education system they are called ex Model C schools. (Education Rights Projects)

Lowen and Jones (2000:178), „During the first five years of South Africa‟s first democratic government, the Department of Education has restructured the administration of schools at the highest levels and established a coherent, progressive policy framework. These are impressive achievements, given the extent to which apartheid education had become entrenched...‟ Whilst there have been noted successes, some problems remain. Obviously, these have to be speedily addressed if the Department of Education is to adhere to its vision, which is „of a South Africa in which all its people have equal access to lifelong education and training opportunities, which will contribute towards improving their quality of life and building a peaceful, prosperous and democratic society‟. (Education Around the World, 2000:1)

The importance of ensuring that the intervention programmes in South Africa‟s education system succeed can never be over-emphasised. I feel that every South African child deserves a right to equal education of a high quality. One of the many reasons for making this assertion is that they should be able to feel at ease at tertiary institutions and not feel inferior and unable to cope because of the inferior education they received in their schools in a post-apartheid era. Moreover, it is important that all of them should be equipped to compete fairly in the job market.

One of the difficulties that the Department of Education has is with the implementation of its policies, which ultimately has to happen at schools. This implies that the strength of the organisation and management systems at schools is important to ensure proper implementation and achievement of the approved transformation policies and programmes. Davidoff and Lazarus (2002:4) argue that „For many schools and teachers, the introduction of so many new policies over a relatively short space of time has proved to be confusing and overwhelming... While most of these policies are a move in the direction of a more holistic and integrated understanding of educational practice, ultimately the implementation of such policies rests with education managers and teachers‟.

This study will focus on the disparities that exist between ex-Model C schools and previously disadvantaged schools as far as their organisation and management systems are concerned. This study is performed in the belief that if the organisation and management systems are conducive to the implementation

process, then there will be an improved chance of the intervention programmes succeeding.

1.2 Motivation for the study

In addressing the issue described above, the study will focus on the disparities that exist between an ex-Model C school and a previously disadvantaged school in regard to their organisation and management systems. The intention is also to look at the interventions made by the Department of Education, specifically relating to the organisation and management systems in schools, in order to see how those interventions can benefit from systems thinking. The department of education stands to benefit from having a pool of suggestions and recommendations from which to choose intervention models that might assist in bridging the gap between ex-Model C schools and previously disadvantaged schools.

The management teams of the schools used in the research also stand to gain from the research and the recommendations that will emanate from the study. According to Davidoff & Lazarus (2002:27), „the development of numerous and uncoordinated education policies since 1994, and the varied attempts to implement these policies at all levels of education governance, have resulted in numerous committees and other structural forms being created. This raises a major challenge to schools which need to find ways of drawing these different structures together in a coordinated way to facilitate effective management of change and, ultimately, to pursue the core purpose of the school in an effective and efficient manner". The fully researched proposal of an intervention programme that addresses disparities in the organisation and management of schools from a systems-thinking perspective therefore stands to benefit school management teams. It is likely to benefit the schools because „all systems approaches are committed to holism" (Jackson, 2000:18). The proposal should therefore help to integrate all of the structures and elements of a school so that they to work together constructively. To be specific, the approach that will be used is Soft Systems Methodology. According to Jackson (2007:181-182),

> SSM is a methodology, setting out principles for the use of methods,
> that enables intervention in ill-structured problem situations where
> relationship maintaining is at least as important as goal-seeking and

answering questions about "what" we should do is as significant as determining "how" to do it.

A strategy will be offered for the use of schools that will help them to implement their management policies. For instance, they will be encouraged to take people"s views or „mental models" into account in arriving at management decisions, which is one of the core, relevant concepts of SSM.

Lastly, the learners, educators, parents and the community at large are stakeholders in a school system, and all of them stand to benefit from improved schools, whether they are improved in terms of their resources, relationships or management.

1.3 The focus of the study

The study will focus on creating a model of intervention that will address some of the disparities in the education system using systems-thinking tools. The disparities that the study will focus on are those that relate to organisation and management systems. The existing disparities will be outlined by comparing two schools, i.e. an ex-Model C school and a previously disadvantaged school. The ex-Model C school is Port Shepstone High School and the previously disadvantaged school is Sinomusa High School. In addition to that, the study will create a programme/model using systems-thinking tools that could be used in dealing with the existing disparities.

1.4 Problem statement

As an MCom student in Organisation and Management Systems I have been exposed to a lot of information on systems thinking and other related knowledge on management that made me take a closer look at schools which seem to be similar and yet are really different, and I have observed disparities that have made me ponder a lot on what the causes and effects of these disparities are.

I also started looking at the interventions made by the Department of Education and asked myself how they relate to systems thinking.

As an educator, who was the head of the Human and Social Sciences Department in a rural school for nine years and then in a prime urban school for six years, I had the advantage of being able to compare the two schools and identify the disparities that existed between them.

The rural school is a previously disadvantaged school in the village of Montebello in Indwedwe, KZN. It is a school with limited physical and human resources. The urban school, which is an ex-Model C school is in the prime urban area of Ridge Road in Durban, KZN, part of the city ward of Ethekwini Region. It is well endowed with physical and human resources.

As an educator, I felt fortunate to have worked in these very diverse environments. At the same time, I was disturbed by the disparities that I observed. My unease stemmed from thinking about the likely long-term outcomes of the observed disparities. One example of these disparities was observed in the way in which the two types of schools are managed, particularly by the school management teams as well as by their own Governing Bodies. I began to view these schools as systems and to look at the relation among their elements - the learners, educators, resources, parents/guardians, etc. I began to notice that the degree, level and ways in which these various elements of both schools (their systems) exist and interact are very different. This difference in degree and level constitutes a major disparity exist between the two schools. There are many other disparities that I noted, such as in their physical resources, school curricula, financial resources, extra–curricular activities, school culture/ethos, discipline, staff composition and other staff-related factors. The focus in this study, however, will not be on all of those disparities but on the disparities that exist as far as the organisation and management systems of two the schools are concerned.

As has been indicated in the introduction, the Department of Education (DoE) has come up with intervention programmes to deal with the disparities in the national education system. In spite of some successes that have resulted from the departmental interventions, challenges persist, especially with effective implementation of the programmes. Intervention programmes need to be effective so as to avoid undesirable consequences such as „school dropouts, as learners at poor schools realise that their future is not likely to include employment or qualification" (McKinley & de Villiers, 2005). Such consequences

must be avoided. There is therefore a need for recommendations and strategies that will ensure that the implementation of the DoE"s intervention programmes takes place.

1.5 Objectives of the study

The main objectives of the study are to do the following:

I.   Outline existing disparities in the education system, particularly with regard to organisation and management systems, by comparing an ex-Model C school with a previously disadvantaged school.

II.   Briefly show the interventions that have been made and the theory or theories that informed these intervention programmes.

III.   Create a model of intervention using systems tools that will deal with organisation and management systems.

1.6 Research questions

The questions to be answered by performing this research project are:

I.   What disparities exist between the chosen ex-model C school and the previously disadvantaged school in so far as organisation and management issues are concerned?

II.   What are some of the intervention programmes that have been introduced into the previously disadvantaged school with regards to its organisation and management systems?

III.   How can such intervention programmes be made more effective by using systems tools?

1.7 Limitations of the study

The main limitations of the study are the brief time available for its performance, and the sample size.

1.7.1 Time

The study that I am undertaking is part of my MCom qualification and this is my final year. Therefore the time to do more than is represented in this study simply does not

exist. However, whatever is presented here will be a product of thorough research and will also be informed by my past years of observation and informal research.

1.7.2 Sample Size

I stated in the introduction that I had observed disparities in the two schools that I worked at over a period of fifteen years. However, I decided to use another previously disadvantaged school, Sinomusa High School, and Port Shepstone High School, which is an ex-Model C school, as the basis of this study, rather than the two schools at which I had worked, because I have relocated and the two schools are now far from where I reside, whereas Sinomusa High School and Port Shepstone High are closer to where I reside and both are part of the Ugu District of the Department of Education.

Secondly, I believe that using schools other than the ones at which I worked will help me to see if the disparities can be identified in other schools as well. Compared with the number of schools in South Africa, this is a very small sample size. Therefore, it is important to stress that the disparities that I will highlight do not necessarily exist in all types of ex-Model C schools and previously disadvantaged schools. Even if many schools may fall under the same category, they are different in terms of their composition, their environment, and the ways in which they are managed, and therefore I cannot generalize. As Davidoff and Lazarus state, „Each school is different and what works in one situation might not work at all in another... So much depends on the sensitivity, judgement and wisdom of the people facilitating the process, and their ability to critically facilitate an interpretation of the phenomena..." (2002:59) The intention therefore is to come up with a model using SSM that could be used by any other school to interpret its problem situation and to help create an environment that is conducive to the implementation of education interventions.

1.8 Overview of the dissertation structure

Chapter One introduces the study by briefly discussing the disparities that exist in South Africa‟s education system. The focus here is on organisation and management systems.

Chapter Two presents a review of the relevant literature on educational disparities and their causes, and intervention policies and programmes designed to address

the disparities. In addition, the problems with the implementation of the intervention programmes will be briefly reviewed. The disparities that will be discussed are basically those that exist between ex-Model C schools and previously disadvantaged schools, and the focus will be on differences in their organisation and management systems.

Chapter Three will discuss the research methodology and design.

Chapter Four will focus on the analysis of the data collected and will present the intervention.

Chapter Five will present the findings, reflections, implications and recommendations derived from the data analysed in Chapter Four, and will conclude the study.

1.9 Summary

This chapter basically introduced the study by looking at what inspired the researcher to decide on this research topic. It also indicated briefly what the benefits of the study will be, what the study will focus on, and what the limitations of the study are.

In embarking on this study, it is imperative that a thorough review of the writing on the subject of the disparities in the South African education system is done before embarking on the data collection. This will assist in giving direction to the study. The following chapter (Chapter Two) will review the relevant literature, with a focus on the organisation and management systems in ex-Model C schools and previously disadvantaged schools. Several other areas of disparity will be discussed as well, because they also have an impact on the effectiveness of organisation and management systems.

CHAPTER 2
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The educational system of a country cannot be studied to any purpose without due regard to the people and the history that have helped to shape it. (Behr, 1988:9)

This statement is relevant to the structure that this chapter will take. As has been indicated in Chapter One, the study is about the interventions of the Department of Education that are aimed at dealing with disparities in the educational system in South Africa, especially disparities in the organisation and management systems. However, many other disparities and intervention programmes in the education system will be discussed because all of them have an impact on the organisation and management systems of schools. The ultimate objective of looking at these disparities is to come up with a model of intervention, using systems tools.

To understand the state of our education system, we need to look at the history of our country, as Behr suggests. The discussion in this chapter will start by looking at the history of our country"s education system. The reason for doing this is to identify some of the causes of the present situation. The discussion will not be belabour the point of our history, as we are now sixteen years into a new political dispensation. Moreover, the study"s main focus is not on the causes of the disparities but on making intervention programmes more effective and implementable, as a way of helping to eradicate the educational disparities.

As the country moved into a new political era, transformation policies and strategies were devised by the state to correct the ills of the past. Our education system also had its own policies, strategies and programmes that were devised to try to perform the same task. The second part of the discussion in this chapter will discuss some of the transformation theories that informed the intervention programmes. Thereafter the chapter will outline the redress process or intervention programmes that were aimed at dealing with the disparities in our educational system and

attempt to establish the reasons for their existence. The fourth part of the chapter will discuss the significance of these programmes as a way of establishing if they are phenomena worth researching. The last part of the chapter will discuss the challenges that beset these intervention programmes, as well as their implementation. The assumption will be that if all is well with the interventions and their implementation then there is no need for more proposals to overload the existing ones. General challenges will be discussed, but the focus will be on the disparities in the schools‟ organisation and management systems.

2.2 A brief history of South Africa‟s Education System

According to Rohrs, quoted in Kruger (1992:1-2), „A historical orientation can sharpen our awareness of the place of things in the present‟. This brief discussion of the history of South Africa‟s education system is presented with the aim of doing exactly that, which is to explain the main cause of the disparities and to explain why, as a country, we are saddled with the problem of redress.

There could be many factors that contributed to the disparities in education, but the main one is the policy of South Africa‟s previous government, which was the apartheid policy. According to Behr (1988:14), this was the policy used by the National Party to win the 1948 elections which put it into power. Generally speaking, it was a policy that was designed to create and maintain White supremacy over all the other races in South Africa. It is a system that ensured that Whites had better opportunities and were provided with more and better facilities than the other race groups. This bias in terms of opportunities and resources is highlighted in the HSRC report discussed in Behr (1988), where the following issues are raised;

- The serious shortage of teachers of natural sciences and mathematics in non-White schools(especially Black schools), ranging from 70% to 90%, whilst the shortage in White schools ranged from 20% to 50% (pp42 -43)
- The concern of the Working Committee on Education Financing, which was of the opinion that spending on Black education was disproportionately low, and on White education was disproportionately high (p43)
- The huge backlog in respect of schools for Blacks, whilst the demand for school buildings for White education had largely been met. The report revealed that there was a shortage in excess of 1½ million classrooms for primary school pupils and almost 300 000 for secondary school pupils. (p44)

The disparities were not only in facilities and opportunities, but could be observed in the curriculum that was offered to different race groups. In a sociological study by Christie, quoted in Behr (1988:111), one of the comments that were made by teachers was that:

„The reading books are all about White middle class children in England. This bears no relation to the culture of Black children in Soweto – never mind the rural areas. It has nothing to do with the world they experience outside the school. These kinds of books do nothing to instill a love of reading in black children".

Based on the above, one can clearly see the areas of redress the present education system of our country has to deal with. One of the results of the comment from teachers interviewed by Christie is that many of the black learners that went through this old system of education may have challenges in instilling the love of reading in their own children when they themselves do not have that love of reading.

In addition to curriculum problems, apartheid also had a negative impact on the general management of non-white schools. The Eiselen Commission, whose findings are discussed in Behr (1988:33), reported that:

> there were certain weaknesses in the prevailing system of Black
> Education. In the main these were as follows: the educational
> programme was not part of a socio-economic development plan;
> there was no participation of the Bantu in its control; inspection and
> supervision was inadequate; the school life of the pupil was too short;
> the general orientation of the schooling was too academic; and
> teachers were not sufficiently involved in the broader planning of
> general development schemes for the people involved.

Without any doubt, the picture painted by the Eiselen Commission is that of a dysfunctional system. It was dysfunctional in the sense that it did not allow one of its vital elements (the teachers) to play the role they were supposed to play. They should have been involved in the process of planning, in order to be able to meet the needs of their learners. In addition it was a system that was not in tune with the environment that the supposed beneficiaries were part of, because it did not look at the needs of the communities from which the learners came.

Given this context, redress had to take place. Redress would have to go beyond creating opportunities and providing facilities, to work on changing people‟s mentalities and attitudes. According to the Cille′ Report discussed in Behr(1988:37), „Many described the object of the system [apartheid] as a premeditated effort to educate the black pupil in such a way that he would be submissive to the whites or to put it more strongly, that he would be and remain the slave of the oppressor‟. To prevent this from happening, peoples‟ mentalities had to change.

One can obviously be conscious of the vital role that intervention programmes have to play in order to change from an education system that was designed with the purpose described by the Cille′ report to one that aims at developing people to be major role players in the country‟s economy.

However, even with the abolition of apartheid and new systems in place, there were challenges that persisted that did not result directly from policies of apartheid but were rather indirect consequences of it. These will be discussed at greater length in the section of this chapter that deals with the present challenges, but they are mentioned here because they, too, contributed to the disparities.

One of the problems was that some of the very same oppressed learners that were exposing the educational injustices they were suffering created an unruly atmosphere in the schools, which did not help much with implementing the strategies for improvement. This challenge and its contribution to the recalcitrance of some historically disadvantaged school are discussed at great length by Fleisch (2002:100-101) when he argues that:

> An unanticipated consequence of the radicalisation of student
> leadership was the development of a marginalised student culture or
> *com-tsosi* [a comrade who also exhibits characteristics of a hooligan]
> – which challenged the authority both of teachers and school
> managers. In the early 1990s, the rise of SADTU added to the
> growing disorder in black schools. The new teachers union grew
> rapidly as the voice of a large section of young teachers. Having
> participated in the student struggles at high school and at colleges,
> these novice teachers started their careers in authoritarian schools...
> Teacher militancy had a sinister side, as seen in deliberate

campaigns to „oust" principals who were perceived to be authoritarian
or simply anti–union.

The situation that is described by Fleisch above had negative consequences. I believe it was not wrong for young teachers to join a teachers" union but the fact of the matter is that some of the campaigns, even if they were introduced with the good intention of fighting apartheid policies, exacerbated problems of the day. Some of the results are those mentioned by Fleisch (2002:101), when he argues that „Without state authorities to back them up, and the ever-present threat of being "expelled", many principals abdicated control and supervisory responsibilities. The familiar signs were of learners arriving at nine o"clock and not returning after the midmorning break, and of teachers not honouring their teaching periods".

The above clearly shows that the list of problem areas was quite long and the government of the day had to deal not only with the direct effects of apartheid policies but the indirect consequences as well.

2.3 Transformation processes

To address the injustices perpetrated by the apartheid government, policies, structures and programmes were designed, the more specific purpose of which was to deal with disparities created by apartheid and to transform our Education System, as well as other government departments.
It is noteworthy that debate on the transformation of South Africa"s education system did not start only with the inception of the democratic government in 1994. From the time of Soweto uprising in 1976 there had been pressure on the government to transform the education system, although there was still resistance on the part of the government then and an insistence on maintaining the status quo. In the literature review to follow attention will therefore be paid to the debates and recommendations that took place prior to 1994.

Most of the transformation processes followed the path of ensuring that equal opportunities were provided for all South Africans, regardless of race, gender, religion and creed. They took their cue from the Constitution of the country. This view is supported by Davidoff and Lazarus (2002:49), who argue that:

>In South Africa, the values espoused in all education policies are
congruent with [the] country‚s Constitution. Key values that have
been highlighted include a commitment to building democratic
structures and practices, equity and redress in relation to historic
inequalities, addressing prejudice and discrimination and
accommodating diverse needs through a commitment to building an
inclusive education and training system and promoting the well-being
of all members of the school community.

There was indeed a lot of pressure to transform the education system of the
country, and while people were conscious of the fact that it would not be an easy
task, the argument was that the complexity of the transformation processes ‚should
not be used as an excuse for sluggish and feeble attempts. It is a bounden duty to
commence with practical programmes as soon as possible and to move
purposefully towards the ultimate objective". (HSRC report quoted in Behr,
1988:119 -120)   I believe that the Department of Education recognized the
complexity of the situation and put in place some measures that would assist in
identifying the problems to be overcome, rather than engaging in *ad hoc* projects.

Some of these measures are systems that will give regular relevant information to
direct and monitor the success of the intervention programmes. Examples of these
measures are EMIS (the Educational Management Information System) with each
school allocated its EMIS number, as well as NEIMS (the National Education
Infrastructure Management System), SRN Surveys (the School Register of Needs)
and LURITS (the Learner Record Information and Tracking System).

The systems listed above, which were designed to ensure the efficient
implementation of intervention programmes, are interventions in their own right. An
array of transformation theories influenced the design and choice of the
programmes. In the performance of this research project one could pick up certain
elements from various theories that could have informed the programmes, some of
which will be discussed briefly below. As these theories are discussed, examples of
the intervention programmes that may have been influenced by them will be
mentioned but will not be discussed fully. The full discussion of the intervention
programmes will form part of the next section.

2.3.1 Modern liberalism

According to Wikipedia (2010), liberalism is „the belief in the importance of individual liberty and equal rights", Star (2007:1) states that „modern liberals have called for equal rights and political rights".

This brief information on what modern liberalism is about is in line with the main objective of the Department of Education, which is to bring about equity in the system, as indicated earlier on by Davidoff and Lazarus (2002:49).

2.3.2 Social choice theory

Social Choice Theory is a theoretical framework for measuring individual interests, values or welfares as an aggregate towards collective decision-making. A non-theoretical example of a collective decision is passing a set of laws under a constitution. (Wikipedia, 2010)

For the Department of Education to come up with intervention programmes, it had to look at the interests and welfare of the previously disadvantaged learners and design programmes that cater for their welfare. Tackling the problems of overcrowded classrooms by building more classrooms, ensuring that there are qualified educators for mathematics and science, and changing the curriculum to one that will equip all learners to compete fairly in world markets are examples of endeavours that emanate from having assessed the individual interests, values or welfare of people.

2.3.3 Globalisation

Globalisation is defined as „the spread of connectedness of production, communication and technologies across the world… It involves the diffusion of ideas, practices and technologies". (Smith and Doyle: 2002)

One of the elements of the education system that was gradually transformed was the curriculum, and when the viability of the new curriculum was assessed, it was compared with the curricula in countries in the world where the curriculum had been successfully implemented. Whether that was the right approach or not is something else, but in this instance one can see how that transformation process was to a certain extent influenced by globalisation.

2.3.4 Structuration Theory

As has been argued in the section on the brief history of South Africa‟s education system, the main cause of the disparities in the education system was the apartheid policy. In transforming the education system, new policies and acts were introduced to redress the inequalities. An unjust system existed and had to be replaced by a just system.

This is in line with structuration theory, which „holds that all human action is performed within the context of a pre-existing social structure which is governed by a set of norms and or laws which are distinct from those of other social structures. Therefore all action is partly predetermined based on the varying contextual rules under which it occurs. However, the structure and rules are not permanent and external but sustained and modified by human action in a textbook example of reflexive action.‟ (Wikipedia:2010)

A good example of an intervention that falls in line with the arguments of structuration theory is the South African Schools Act of 1996, which „promotes access, quality and democratic governance in the schooling system‟. (DoE Annual Report, 2008-2009) The system of democratic governance that includes parents in the governance matters of schools had not previously existed at previously disadvantaged schools. The attitude of most parents at these schools towards the education of their children had been predominantly determined by the old system, but the new system legitimised their involvement through the establishment of School Governing Bodies. This is a relatively new concept for previously disadvantaged schools, and will yield various results on the basis of which the system will constantly be modified, until the intended results are achieved.

The norms and standards of the funding of schools is another policy that aims to transform previously disadvantaged schools through meeting their needs, which had not been met before, a fact which had prevented them from performing the tasks that were performed by their well-resourced counterparts in ex-Model C schools.

What is described above has some slight echoes in Marxist theory. Marxism is defined as „An economic and socio-political ideology of how to change and improve society by implementing socialism… where the proletariat take control of government and then implement reforms to benefit their class…‟ (Wikipedia:2010) Marxism may be extreme in the sense that it argues that the state should take over the property of

the „bourgeoisie", but the element of reform that is aimed at benefitting the previously disadvantaged resonates with most intervention programmes.

All the of theories above are about transforming society, and some of the intervention programmes referred to above bear resemblance to transformation theories. The purpose of presenting them in this way was to gain more understanding of the intervention programmes by understanding the theories that may have influenced them.

The next section below will discuss the intervention programmes aimed specifically at dealing with the disparities in the South African education system.

2.4 Intervention programmes

2.4.1 A strategy to deal with the shortage of science and mathematics teachers as well as unqualified and under qualified educators.

As has been argued earlier on, there was a greater shortage in Black schools than in White schools of science and mathematics teachers. The results of such a scenario are undesirable. Children from disadvantaged schools might miss the chance of studying towards a career in the scientific and engineering fields, just to mention one disadvantage. The engineering field is one of the fields that have constantly suffered a shortage of professionals, and it is also one of the vital professions in the reconstruction and development of our country.

To deal with the problem of the shortage of mathematics and science teachers, the department came up with the strategy of giving funding and bursaries to educators who would take mathematics and sciences as their majors. According to Burger (2008/09), the Department of Education came up with a „National Strategy for Mathematics, Science and Technology" whereby „provinces offer teachers bursaries to study the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE)". This obviously goes a long way towards ensuring that there is a certain number of mathematics, science and technology educators that the system will gain every year, because an investment has been made towards that gain.

The bursaries offered were meant not only for the science, mathematics and technology learning areas, but also to upgrade the qualifications of educators who were either not qualified or under-qualified. Successes have been noted with this strategy. According to the DoE annual report for 2008-09:18, „More than 500 bursaries were allocated to higher education institutions to support prospective teachers in national priority areas... Approximately 1085 Funza Lushaka Bursary students graduated with ACE in 2008 and 1063 with a National Professional Diploma in Education (NPDE)‟.

Other measures to improve the qualifications of educators included equipping them with computer skills. According to Global Projects, 2004/05:

> During 2003, the private educational sector formed INTRADEM as a
> joint initiative. The name INTRADEM is short for Institute of Training,
> Development and Empowerment and the core focus of this project is
> to technologically „enable‟ the approximately 30,000 unqualified and
> under qualified educational workforce (Teachers and Educators). The
> project has embarked on a mission to find creative ways to tackle the
> enormous challenge of closing the digital divide amongst the
> approximately 30,000 under qualified educational workforce in South
> Africa, through proper skills transfer‟.

Gaining more professional educators in South Africa‟s education system is definitely a step in the right direction. The detrimental and long-lasting consequences of leaving learners at the hands of unqualified educators can never be underestimated. This vital point is accurately put by Behr (1988:42) when he argues that

> A system of education aimed at the optimal development of
> individual talent, the promotion of economic growth, and the
> improvement of the quality of life of the people requires for its
> successful implementation *inter alia* a sufficient number of suitably
> qualified teachers. The lack of suitably qualified teachers in Black
> schools has led to what has been described as „an unfortunate cycle‟
> by which poorly educated persons enter teaching and in turn
> produce poorly educated students, so that the risk is being run of
> perpetuating mediocrity in the group whose educational
> improvement is essential to the development of the country.

The strategy of the Department of Education does not only provide bursaries and leave it at that. It goes on to place the qualified educators in the schools that are in need of educators. It is guided in this exercise by the „Post-Provision Norms", which have „contributed to the availability of more educator posts in historically disadvantaged schools" (Burger, 2008/9).

2.4.2 Funding

The lack of classrooms,, libraries, toilets, etc was one of the problems experienced by disadvantaged schools. Unfortunately these disadvantaged schools were not collecting enough school fees, if any, to be able to resource themselves and meet all their needs. Lack of resources does not do much for the success of a school, in terms of achieving its aims and objectives, and this can have a number of unintended consequences. One of these consequences is put forward by Davidoff and Lazarus (2002:4) when they argue that „Decades of unequal provision of resources have left most schools seriously under-resourced. The effect that this has on the morale of teachers cannot be underestimated". Adversely affected educator morale has a big potential of reducing the enthusiasm of learners for learning, just to mention one of the consequences.

Davidoff and Lazarus (2002:4) go on to describe some of the challenges that face educators in under-resourced schools, such as „teaching in a school which only has bucket toilets; teaching at a school which has insufficient textbooks, no photocopier, little equipment, no sporting facilities..." and all of these challenges clearly show the need for financial assistance for such schools.

The funding of schools is a measure by which schools can meet their needs. The discussion on funding will initially be general, but at the end it will be supported by information on specific areas that are being funded, e.g. the construction of classrooms, sports facilities, etc.

According to Burger (2008/09), „The National norms and standards for school funding became national policy... with 60% of a province"s non-personnel expenditure going to the poorest 40% of learners in public schools". The above information clearly shows that there are some programmes to assist the most disadvantaged schools with funds to meet their needs or to pay for their needs.

In addition to the „National norms and standards for school funding", there is also a programme called QIDS–UP (Quality Improvement, Development, Support and Upliftment), whose aim is to „improve schools" infrastructure, supply curriculum resources, etc". Having heard about these impressive programmes, the question is whether schools have benefitted from these programmes or not.

According to Burger (2008/09), „1000 schools were improved at a cost of R76,5 million in seven provinces and 11 000 schools received reading books, including reading books in indigenous languages for 2200 schools [in 2008/09]".

Assistance with transforming the previously disadvantaged schools came not only from government but also from the business sector and the international community. There are several countries that Burger (2006:27) argues „have been instrumental in the provision of technical and financial assistance to the national and provincial departments of Education". One example that he cites is „The government of the UK and Northern Ireland [who] are making available R226 million to the Limpopo Department of Education. The assistance, which will be spread over six years (2003- 2009), is known as the *Khanyisa* Education Support Programme". This obviously proves the assistance that the government has received in its drive to provide or fund the needs of the previously disadvantaged schools.

In addition to the international community, the business sector has made meaningful contributions towards funding the needs of the previously disadvantaged schools. Their projects include the „Business Trust", READ (which extends to 1200 schools), and the Joint Education Trust. (Education in South Africa: May 2001). Other collaborations are with „UNICEF, [who] signed contracts with service providers to expand the Sport for Development Programme from November 2008 to October 2009". (Hindle, 2009).

The above information clearly shows that a considerable amount of money from various sources has gone towards funding the needs of previously disadvantaged schools, but the important element in all of these efforts is that „Educational finances are only effective when they are consistently applied to programmes meaningful to target communities, dovetail with current efforts, and retain most of their impacts". (Fiske & Ladd, quoted in Adisu, 2005:2)

2.4.2.1 The Building of Classrooms

As was indicated in the brief history of South Africa"s Education system, there was a huge backlog for classrooms in Black schools. The Department of Education took this critical problem into cognisance when deciding on intervention programmes.

The main problem that has resulted from the shortage of classrooms has been overcrowding. There are several problems that result from having to teach in an overcrowded classroom. Firstly, it is difficult for an educator to move around the class to monitor and supervise learners" work. If one looks at the list of the top 10 public schools (November, 2009:4), one can clearly see that the pupil/teacher ratio had a role to play in the success of these learners.

Below is a table showing the top 10 public schools.

Prov	School	Candi-dates	%pass	% univ-ersity Exem-ption	Average A"s Per Student	Fees per annum	Pupil/ Teacher Ratio	* no of teachers
WC	Westerford	168	100	99	3.4	R 17 020	1:30	54 (T) 25 (S) 29 (SGB)
KZ	Westville Girl"s	203	100	100	3.3	R 12 960	1 :30	62 (T) 33 (S) 29 (SGB)
GA	Afrikaanse Hoer Mesieskool	168	100	99	3.7	R 14 800	1 :33	55 (T) 36 (S) 19 (SGB)
KZ	Westville Boys"	227	100	95	2.3	R 20 800	1:19	75 (T) 39 (S) 36 (SGB)
WC	Rustenburg Girls"	142	100	99	2.4	R 18 250	1:30	51 (T) 24 (S) 27 (SGB)
WC	South African College	140	100	99	2.0	R 21 300	1:14	51 (T) 20 (S) 31 (SGB)
GA	Raucall Secondary	94	100	95	1.3	R 1 900	1:35	22 (T) 19 (S) 3 (SGB)
LP	Mbilwi Secondary	201	100	93	1.5	R 600	1:37	57 (T) 52 (S) 5(SGB)
WC	Rondebosch	149	100	90	1.4	R 20 420	1:20	44 (T) 24 (S) 20 (SGB)
KZ	Durban Girls"	233	100	96	2.9	R 12 600	1:17	72 (T) 42 (S) 30(SGB)

SOURCE: Sunday Times, 18 October 2009:4

TABLE: 2.1   **(T) =TEACHERS   (S) = PAID BY STATE   (SGB) =PAID BY SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY**

The average pupil/ teacher ratio for the 10 schools is 1:27 and one believes that the small classes contributed to the attainment of good results.

In an overcrowded classroom, opportunities to have one-on-one consultation between a learner and an educator can be severely reduced, if they occur at all. Moreover maintaining discipline in a crowded place can prove to be a challenge. All of these challenges point to the need for more classrooms so that the number of learners in a class can be reduced. Less crowded classes will have more appeal to educators than overcrowded ones.

If an educator is given a choice, he or she is likely to opt to work at a previously advantaged school rather than a previously disadvantaged one. Behr (1988:218) explains that when students go on practice teaching they go to different areas, and Black students sometimes go to White schools where they witness „academic and scholastic excellence in action", whilst White students go to Black schools where they „experience the other side of the picture – classrooms with overcrowded classes often with insufficient desks and sometimes with few, if any books or stationery".

Basically, Behr"s argument opens one"s mind to some potential future problems where educators might not be interested in working in previously disadvantaged schools if problems like overcrowding are not resolved.

The Department of Education has in the past built more classrooms. The table below shows the progress that has been made in the area of building classrooms. Table 2.2 below shows classroom backlogs.

Province	Classrooms Required in 2000
Eastern Cape	11 557
Free State	1 759
Gauteng	2963
KZN	9867
Limpopo	9071
Mpumalanga	6218
Northern Cape	266
North West	2071
Western Cape	1344
Total	**45 116**

TABLE: 2.2. Source: SRN 2000 (Education Rights Project,

http://www.erp.org.za)

45 116 classrooms required in one year is quite a big challenge, especially if one considers the cost of building just one classroom. To see how much progress is generally made in a year, Table 2.3 shows the progress made in dealing with backlogs in education infrastructure from 1999 to 2002.

Financial Year	Classrooms Built	Toilets Built	Schools Supplied with Water
1999-2000	1 936	1 345	252
2000-2001	2 267	1 211	253
2001-2002	2660	4 173	181

Table 2.3 Source: Government Information on Education in South Africa, May 2003

The progress shown in the table above seems to have continued. In the 2008/09 report by the National Director–General of the Department of Education it was indicated that 164 schools benefitted from R2.7 billion that was allocated by the Minister of Finance for capacity maintenance and infrastructure provision.

Briefly, the disparity of classroom shortages is being addressed. The pace is rather slow considering the number of classrooms that still need to be built[2], however one needs to appreciate the fact that Cabinet in September 2007, after receiving information on the progress made with regards to infrastructure development, „resolved that innovative ways of accelerating service delivery should be explored". (Burger, 2008/09)

Table 2.2 and Table 2.3 also show the number of toilets built and the number of schools supplied with water, which is an indication that strides have been taken towards meeting the other infrastructural needs of some schools.

2.4.2.2 Sports and Other Extra-Curricular Facilities
In as much as classrooms are the main structures that are needed for teaching and learning to take place, other facilities are essential for the holistic development of learners. Sport facilities are some of these essential facilities. One good example of

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[2] Preliminary costing on backlogs was estimated at R216 billion. (Report by Duncan Hindle, Director–General of Education, May 2009).

the importance of a sufficiently resourced sports curriculum is the fact that sport can be a career option for a learner, and such a learner needs to be catered for in the same way as a learner who wants a career in medicine. Both of them require educators for the relevant subjects, as well as facilities such as laboratories.

The role that a school needs to play in the holistic development of a learner is best argued by Davidoff and Lazarus (2002:58):

> Sadly, too often we forget that schools are not only about passing grades and university exemption. They are about providing a nourishing and supportive place of learning, of socialization, of developing sound interpersonal skills, of preparing to participate fully in life. Schools are places where learners" physical, psychological, spiritual and social development is being fostered.

The argument above highlight the need for intervention programmes such as the provision of sporting facilities, to ensure that the holistic development of learners takes place.

The Department of Education has taken some measures to provide for extra-curricular activities. According to Burger (2008/09), „Some of the arts, culture and music flagship programmes the department co-ordinates in collaboration with Department of Arts and Culture include the South African Schools Choral Eisteddfod, the National Indigenous Games, the Music and Movement Festival and the National Language Festival and Concert". Efforts to provide a diverse array of programmes can be commended because they will appeal to the interests of different learners.

In addition to the above, other programmes are highlighted by the Hindle Report (2009:54), such as the Dreamfields Project, which provides „underprivileged schools with football kits", as well as the Youth Camp Programme, which „includes educators, officials, SAPS representatives", the aim of which is to address issues of „risky behaviour like abuse of drugs, early sexual practices etc".

There are probably many other intervention programmes in the area of Sports and Extra Curricular Activities but the ones referred to above show that some measures are being taken to provide for all of these activities.

2.4.3 Curriculum

The brief history of South Africa‟s education system indicated that the curriculum of the apartheid era for previously disadvantaged schools was not of a proper standard to equip the learners to be role players in the economy and development of the country. With transformation came the new curriculum for all schools. This curriculum was named the NCS (New Curriculum Statements), and relied on outcomes-based education. Mason, quoted in Beets and Van Louw (2005:177) explains the intention and purpose of OBE by saying that the curriculum was „intended to reduce the legacy of apartheid by promoting the development of skills to prepare learners for participation in the local democracy as well as in the increasingly competitive global economy‟.

If one looks at the old curriculum and understands the intention of the new curriculum, then one can say that the new one is indeed intended to correct the shortcomings of the old curriculum. This is not to say that the new curriculum does not have its own shortcomings, but the point is that an intervention programme was created to address the curriculum disparity.

2.4.4. School management and governance

The importance of school management and governance can never be over emphasised. Generally speaking, when qualified educators have been provided, funding for resources provided and classrooms provided, the people who form part of school management and governance have the responsibility of ensuring that whatever has been provided at the school, achieves the purpose for which it was provided, and are accountable to the school community in the exercise of their responsibility. To support the fact that management and governance are cornerstones of the school system, Davidoff and Lazarus (2002:39) argue that „At the heart of the school are leadership, management and governance. It is these aspects of school life that ensure that all other aspects are held together and developed‟. They further go on to explain the role that each element plays. They say that

> Leadership is the art of facilitating the school to „do the right thing at
> the right time‟, while management is the discipline required to ensure
> that the school „does things right‟ or functions well. Another way of
> looking at it is to see leadership as directing a school and
> management as holding the school, maintaining the wellbeing of the

school and ensuring that systems set in place are working well.
(Davidoff & Lazarus, 1997:32)

Apart from showing the importance of each element (leadership and management), the above quotation highlights the fact that one element cannot operate without the other. The third element incorporated in leadership is that of school governance.

Management and leadership have always formed part of the school system of previously disadvantaged schools. Providing for them is therefore not like providing an intervention programme. However, „the problem of the shortage of quality educational leaders is especially distressing in black schools" (Meerkotter, Fataar, Fuglestad & Lillejord, 2001:103) and as a result the programmes for capacitating leaders and managers can be construed as a form of intervention. These capacity building programmes have a big role to play. Ngcobo, quoted in Chetty and Ngcongo (2000:78) „observe[d] an acute lack of expertise in some schools, in areas such as financial management and budgeting; design of school constitution; and continuous assessment". This observation by Ngcobo is indeed „distressing" if one considers that previously disadvantaged schools lack resources, and if there is a situation of management challenged in „financial" and „budgeting" matters, then processes such as planning, sourcing and paying for resources will be affected.

Some of the strategies to help guide leaders and managers are the Batho Pele Strategy (People First), the Public Finance Management Act, and the Public Service Act, which serve as referrals in their different management and leadership tasks (Education in South Africa, May 2001).

The formation of partnerships with the business sector is one of the intervention strategies intended to help mentor and capacitate education leaders and managers. One of these partnerships is the well-known one called TIRISANO (Working Together), and listed among its achievements is contributing towards bringing about „increased basic school functionality, the ability of provincial education systems to better manage both human resources and financial policy and a clearer focus on delivery and implementation". (Education In South Africa, May 2001)

School governance is the responsibility of the school governing body (the SGB). School governance has always been a function of elected parents in the ex-Model C schools, but school committees or SGBs were unknown in the previously

disadvantaged schools. Chetty and Ngcongo (2000:65) argue that „Governance, on the other hand, was a concept which had little relevance or place in schools other than in state-aided (model C) schools where parents were given a platform to make significant decisions primarily because they made a major financial contribution to the school by paying high fees". This statement highlights the governance disparity between previously disadvantaged schools and ex-Model C schools.

The pivotal role of having parents and learners forming part of the school governing body can never be over emphasised, regardless of whether they can afford to pay high fees or not. According to Davidoff and Lazarus (2000:177):

> In South Africa the governing body of the school is the legal body responsible for the development of overall school policy (including language policy and the school code of conduct), the vision and mission of the school, financial management and fundraising, as well as making recommendations about appointments at the school.

I believe that the role of a School Governing Body as explained above can help strengthen a school‟s functionality because not all tasks are left in the hands of educators and the management. The parents and learners are also there to offer assistance.

The South African Schools Act (SASA)(1996)[3] and many other policies, strategies and pieces of legislation prove that a lot of groundwork was done to ensure the success of the transformation process. Here are several of the Acts and policies that guide transformation processes. This is the latest summary of policies and legislation, as provided in the DoE Annual Report 2008-09:

1. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), which requires education to be transformed and democratised in accordance with the values of human dignity, equality, human rights and freedom, non-racism and non-sexism...
2. The National Education Policy Act (NEPA) (1996), the purpose of which is... to inscribe in law the policies, as well as the legislative and monitoring responsibilities of the Minister of Education, and to formalize the relations between national and provincial authorities...

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[3] This Act promotes access, quality and democratic governance − Department of Education Annual Report, 2008–9.

3. The South African Schools Act (SASA) (1996), which promotes access, quality and democratic governance in the schooling system.

4. The Further Education and Training Act (1998), the Education White Paper 4 on Further Education and Training (1998), and the National Strategy for Further Education and Training (1999 – 2001).

5. The Higher Education Act (1997), which provides for a unified and nationally planned system of higher education.

6. A whole spectrum of items of legislation, including the South African Council of Educators and the Employment of Educators Act (1998), aimed at regulating the professional, moral and ethical responsibilities of educators, as well as the competency requirements for teachers.

7. The Adult Basic Education and Training Act (ABET) (2000), which provides for the establishment of public and private adult learning centres.

8. The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act (1995), which provides for the formation of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), which forms the scaffolding for a national learning system that integrates education and training at all levels.

9. The National Curriculum Statements (Grades R-12)

10. The Education White Paper on Early Childhood Development (2000, provides for the expansion and full participation of 5 year olds in pre-school reception grade education by 2010.

11. Education White Paper 6 on Inclusive Education (2001), which allows for the inclusion of vulnerable learners and reduces barriers to learning by means of targeted support structures and mechanisms.

12. The General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act, (Act 58 of 2001), which provides for the establishment of Umalusi, which is charged with the issuing of certificates at the various exit points...

13. The National Financial Aid Scheme Act, Act 56 of 1999, which provides for the granting of loans and bursaries to eligible students in public higher education institutions.

14. The Further Education and Training Colleges Act (2006) (Act No. 16 of 2006), which provides for the regulation of Further Education and Training...

In addition to the above, there are several other strategies that are aimed at transforming the education system of South Africa.

Listing all of the policies is important as it shows that the existence of the disparities has been addressed from almost every conceivable angle. The question then arises - why have all of the transformation objectives that have been outlined in all of the policies, pieces of legislation, acts and strategies not managed to bring about the equality that we so desire in education? It is important to ask this question in order to avoid the pitfall of many education systems as described by Dalin (1998:3) when he argues that „the history of school improvement is rife with examples of grandiose plans that never materialize, of politicians who are good at setting goals but vague when it comes to strategic planning". Ultimately, whatever has been designed for school improvement must be implemented, unless there are serious impediments and reasons that show that the schools were not going to gain from the reform process.

The following section will look at the significance of the intervention programmes. This is to build on the point that was raised above, that of ensuring that policies are indeed implemented.

2.5. The significance of the intervention programmes

Generally speaking, people are inclined to do something if they stand to gain from it or see a reward for doing it. It is from this point of view that I would like to look at the significance of the intervention programmes, to show their importance, so that even if challenges abound, persistence will be there to make them successful. This section will not look at all the possible areas of intervention but will analyse only the key areas of intervention, such as resources, the curriculum, and school management and governance.

2.5.1 Resources

The intervention programmes have targeted different kinds of resources, physical, financial and intellectual. As has been indicated in the section on the „brief history of South Africa‟s educational system", resources were not equally distributed in all South African schools.

Muller and Roberts (2000:4-5) believe that availability of resources is very critical in the process of reforming schools. They present an argument on resources „dubbed the "*three ts*" by Riddell" and these *'three ts'* refer to „*textbooks* (the availability of

textbooks and supplementary materials), *teacher quality* (as measured by the kind and amount of pre-service teacher training); and *time* (as measured by the time and work demands placed on students)".

As has been said, the „three ts" described above indicate critical areas in a process of reforming schools and in the process of redress, and it is pleasing to know that attention to these resources has been given through the intervention programmes.

In his Address to the Graduation Ceremony at Medunsa (1991:2), Nelson Mandela argued that „there has to be a recognition that when we look at the provision of education to black South Africans we start with a situation of vast disparity. Any attempt to address the provision of adequate education must immediately pour resources into the upgrading of facilities, and the upgrading of expertise". One will immediately think that we all know about the need of providing resources, but what is the significance? He further highlights the challenge that universities have to try and overcome as a result of their intake of poorly equipped students. He argues that „It is not the fault of the University or the students that Bantu Education has impaired our students" abilities. But it is the responsibility of the Universities to ensure that students" potential does emerge and that no step be left unturned to ensure that this happens". This is a fair argument but it is also a huge responsibility for universities, in the sense that they have to work extra hard and spend extra time in developing skills that could have been developed at school level. Therefore it is important that resources are provided at school level so that learners" potentials can be tapped at an early age rather than only at university level. This argument highlights the significance of the intervention programmes that address the shortage of resources.

2.5.1.1 Physical Resources

There are many items that one could list as falling under physical resources but I believe that the main one is the availability of sufficient classrooms to accommodate all of the learners in groups of reasonable size. The size of the group should be whatever will ensure that the objective of having learning take place in that classroom.

Whilst discussing intervention programmes, mention was made of the list of the top ten schools in South Africa in 2009, as reported by Nombembe (Table 2.1) and the

common factor in all of those schools was a low teacher/pupil ratio, which on average, is 1:27. If one takes Durban Girls" High as an example, it had a total of 233 matric learners and the teacher/pupil ratio was 1:17. What that translates to is that there are roughly 14 matric classrooms. That is an ideal situation for ensuring that different activities like group discussions and role playing take place. It is an ideal situation that many previously disadvantaged schools cannot afford, i.e. to have 14 classrooms used by Grade 12s only. A low teacher/pupil ratio has shown that it can enable better performance, as evidenced by the 100% pass rate in all IEC schools and the average of 97% university exemptions.[4]

Looking at the same table (Table 2.1), one can see that Mbilwi Secondary School charges fees of only R600.00 per annum, which is thirty-four times less than what Westville Boys" High is charging. With the fees that ex-Model C schools collect they are able, among other things, to obtain more resources and attain most of what they set out to attain. One needs to keep in mind that the very same schools that charge higher fees are the ones that were already better resourced than previously disadvantaged schools. The intervention made through the national norms and standards for school funding[5] is therefore unlikely to be sufficient to assist previously disadvantaged schools to catch up with the ex-Model C schools.

2.5.2 Capacity Building

Just as one would be sceptical about receiving medical treatment from someone who is not qualified, I believe the same skepticism should apply in the school situation. The system of assisting teachers to get qualifications can work in favour of learners, who need to be under the care of qualified educators.

Capacity building goes further than just helping people to obtain academic qualifications and can include workshops that assist educators with such matters as discipline and classroom management, factors which have to do with creating an environment conducive to teaching and learning.

In her discussion on „Leading the Intelligent School", MacGilchrist (1997:2) talks about nine intelligences, one of which is „Academic Intelligence", which she defines as concerning „the value put on high quality study and scholarship". She further

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[4] The average exemption rate for all schools combined.
[5] These norms are progressive, with 60% of a province's non-personnel expenditure going to the poorest 40% of learners in public schools. (South Africa Yearbook:2008/09)

argues that „Academic Intelligence values and promotes teachers" learning because it recognises that it is inextricably linked with pupils learning". Interventions for capacity building are therefore significant in the sense that they contribute to proper learning. It is, as Fullan (1996:423) puts it, that „you cannot improve student learning for all or most of students without improving teacher learning for all or most teachers".

2.5.3 Curriculum

When comparing the present curriculum with the past one, Beets and Van Louw (2005:178) argue that

> In contrast to past, mechanistic theories of knowledge acquisition, learning is now understood as an active process of mental construction and sense making. School learning should be authentic and connected to the world outside of school to develop the ability to use knowledge in real-world settings.

This kind of learning can be seen as relevant in the sense that learners should be able to use in their communities the knowledge learnt in their schools, as opposed to learning something that gets one to pass the grade but has no role to play thereafter.

In addition, the „active process" allows for learners to take part in the learning and not be solely dependent on the educator. I believe this goes a long way towards developing their self-confidence and the ability to express themselves, which are strengths that are needed in the workplace.

Moreover, this kind of curriculum allows for different types of assessments, which takes into consideration the different abilities of learners. Some learners may not be good with tests but good at doing research work and projects over an extended period of time and the new curriculum caters for that.

Therefore, one can say that this kind of intervention is a significant one. It may have had its own share of challenges but one understands the gap that it was intended to narrow.

2.5.4 Management and Governance

Davidoff and Lazarus (2002:169) argue that „An important function of management is that of "holding" the organisation; providing the framework to fulfill its purpose". They go on to say that „It is pointless being excited and enthusiastic about infinite possibilities but not achieving them simply because they are unmanageable or there is too much chaos". The introduction of School Governing Bodies as committees to be in charge of school governance helps with the distribution of responsibilities and should help alleviate the problem of „too much chaos".

The establishment of the system of School Governing Bodies reinforces the legitimacy of the involvement of parents in the school lives of their children, which had previously not been obvious to them (and in some instances is still not so), especially in some previously disadvantaged schools. This move of involving parents in school governance is indeed welcome, as „research shows that parent involvement influences the level of student achievement". (Dodd & Konzal, 2002:7)

The interventions are important in the sense that they assist managers in ensuring that policies and programmes are implemented. Capacity building (through in-service training and other strategies) and mentoring from the business sector will assist in the implementation process.

The important role played by principals (as part of management) in the implementation process is stressed by Fullan (1992:82) when he argues that „In the first study of innovation involving almost 300 school districts, Berman and McLaughlin found that projects having the *active* support of the principal were most likely to fare well". I believe this is true and at the same time I believe that if I have full knowledge of what the project is about and how to go about achieving it, then there is a better chance for me to implement the project. I believe excitement without ability does not help much in the timely implementation of projects.

In conclusion one can say that the Department of Education has indeed intervened in key and critical areas of the education system. This section of the chapter has attempted to see if there are any benefits that can be gained from these intervention programmes and the answer is yes, there are benefits, as has been argued above.

Having said that, one needs to keep in mind that schools are organisations and, as Dalin (1998:34) puts it, „organisations are like the landscape: complex and varied".

Indeed schools, by virtue of the fact that they are complex entities, will always be subject to challenges, and the next section will look at the challenges that threaten the success of intervention programmes.

2.6. Challenges to the intervention programmes

Although much has already been achieved with regard to improving schools, I believe that still more needs to be done. Bennet, Crawford and Riches explain succinctly how one can establish that there is a need. They say that „A need is considered to exist if „what is" falls short of „what should be". The challenges that will be discussed below will indicate that there is a need for „something". I believe the „something" is not more intervention programmes, because the discussion in this chapter has clearly indicated that we have more than enough of them already and that they are indeed relevant for our school system. In discussing the challenges, I believe the missing "something" will emerge.

There are many existing challenges – too many to be able to list them all - but I believe the ones that will be discussed will be sufficient to shed light on the rest.

2.6.1 Curriculum challenges

The new curriculum, which is outcomes–based, requires that educators, who were already teaching when the new curriculum was introduced, be constantly trained. Making time to attend training is a challenge on its own, because some educators operate in accordance with hectic schedules which require them to be in class during the early part of the day and to be involved with extra-curricular activities later in the day and over weekends.

Some educators may have had the time to attend training on the new curriculum, but even they have had to face difficulties. Davidoff and Lazarus (2002:4) argue that „While there has been a commitment from departments of education to provide training, for example, in the new outcomes based education, often the training has been inadequate, and teachers have been left to manage fairly radical methodological changes with little ongoing support".

New resources are needed for the successful implementation of new methods of teaching and learning, resources such as computers[6], new textbooks, more classrooms, a selection of items of stationery, etc. In a situation where there are backlogs[7] to deal with, one can obviously understand how the challenge of providing for the new curriculum comes about. The fact that there is a problem in the implementation of the new curriculum is asserted by Chetty and Ngcongo (2000:78), who argue that „while government is designing policies to transform schools, it is failing to deliver promptly on the material support to implement policy directives. This imbalance leaves the schools (especially the previously disadvantaged ones) destitute in their eagerness to match policies with practice". They go on to use the example of OBE, arguing that „OBE has been introduced in the midst of a very fragile culture and low morale in many schools, as well as very inadequate resources".

The argument is that there are insufficient means to see to the programme"s successful implementation.

2.6.2 Maintenance and infrastructure

The sad reality is that some of the infrastructure that has been provided has not been maintained well. Money has to be spent to repair that infrastructure, while there are areas that have not had the opportunity of getting infrastructural development at all, yet. According to Government Information on Education in South Africa (May 2001), „The biggest decline has been in the number of schools in excellent and good condition, indicating that investments in infrastructure have not been adequately maintained". Apart from having to inject more money for repairs, the government has the challenge of making people understand and appreciate the importance and long-term effects of infrastructural developments. This is indeed a serious challenge.

One of the possible reasons for seeing this challenge as being serious is the argument by Bennet *et al.* (1992:128) that

> The broad implications of the implementation process have several
>
> interrelated components. The first is that the crux of change involves
>
> the development of meaning in relation to a new idea, programme,

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[6] Computers cannot just be put in any classrooms but need proper computer laboratories that are well secured, which increases the cost of having them in the school.

[7] Preliminary costing on backlogs is estimated at R216 billion, according to the DoE Annual Report for 2008/09:31, presented by the Director–General, Duncan Hindle.

reform or set of activities. But it is *individuals* who have to develop new meaning, and the individuals are insignificant parts of a gigantic, loosely organised, complex, messy social system that contains myriad different subjective worlds.

I fully concur with the above statement in the sense that the government is addressing what it sees as a need and bringing about change, but the fact of the matter is that understanding, appreciating and welcoming interventions programmes can never be the same for everyone. The task of also trying to establish everyone‟s opinion and feelings towards a project can really be time consuming and costly. Moreover, the phrase „a messy social system‟ is a key phrase in understanding the seriousness of the challenge. I believe programmes cannot wait for a social system to be normal (if a situation like that ever exists) before introducing them, but one has to keep in mind that operating in some situations, where hooliganism is rampant, poverty exists, the use of drugs is common, and general moral degeneration is the order of the day, will definitely bring about its share of challenges.

2.6.3 Parental involvement

The significance of having parents actively forming part of the school system has been discussed and positive results can surely be reaped if they show interest in the concerns of the school.

In certain schools parents are not active elements of the school system. One of the reasons for their lack of involvement could be that they understand teaching to be an affair between the teacher and the learner and do not see why they need to be part of the system. This point is suggested by Meerkotter et al (2001:161) when they argue that „In communities with low levels of adult literacy and school experience, parents lack confidence to intervene in the school because of their own unfamiliarity with the institution and out of deference to the academic status of teachers‟. One could coerce them into being part of the system, but if they did not know why they were there they might not be of great help.

In some situations where parents are part of the school system, they may not feel welcome, especially in cases where some members of staff do not want parents to know that approved departmental policies and procedures are not being followed. The other reason why they be made to feel unwelcome is argued by Burgess

(1995:50): „The teachers‟ fear... is that intrusion by parents, even on legitimate grounds, will damage their authority position and make them subject to forms of control that are, for them, illegitimate – control by outsiders‟.

Even if they feel welcome, some parents may feel challenged by the tasks they are asked to perform. As has been indicated earlier on, school governance is the responsibility of the SGB, which includes parents‟ representative, and the chairperson of which must be a parent. One of the duties that in many instances has proven to be a challenge to the members of the SGB is highlighted by Chetty and Ngcongo (2000:7) - that of fundraising. They argue that „The challenge to raise money by people without expertise, and often from people living below the subsistence level, is indeed a daunting, if not an impossible task‟.

The problems described here are a serious concern, as the failure to address them effectively is actually widening the gap between the ex-Model C schools and previously disadvantaged schools, preventing the state from bringing about equity in our education system. The ex-Model C schools are in a position to raise funds to add to the relatively high fees paid by parents, as against some previously disadvantaged schools which have not yet engaged in fundraising and yet are also not collecting much in the way of fees, if they do manage to collect them at all.

2.6.4. Information feeding system

By an information feeding system, I mean a system of ensuring that information about the needs of schools is able to progress from schools to ward level, to district level, to provincial level and if need be, right up to national level. In his report in 2009 the Director- General of Education, Duncan Hindle, stated that „the provision of information by the provinces continued to pose a challenge‟. This challenge causes serious concerns because one cannot intervene when one does not know where one needs to intervene. Moreover, help might end up being received by schools which are not so needy and the poorest of the poor might be left out. The danger of having such a situation is highlighted by Unterhalter, Wolpe and Botha (1991:16), when they argue that

> In the absence of coherent development strategies, there is a strong
> tendency for *ad hoc* education and training policies to be advanced.
> A consequence of this is that education and training programmes
> may contribute only to a highly limited degree to a process of social

transformation and may serve to help reproduce powerfully entrenched structures generated by apartheid.

Television newscasts have shown us situations where learners are learning in an open area under trees, and as soon as that desperate situation is shown on TV, speedy assistance arrives. What this means is that one needs a proper information system that will inform development strategies, so that the Department does not seem to be responding to the crisis of the moment but follows up on its well-researched and thought-through strategies.

The failure of the provision of adequate information will have a negative bearing on budgeting. It will create a situation where some priority areas are not budgeted for because of the difficulty of getting information from the provinces.

2.6.5 „Blanket" approaches

By blanket approaches, I mean approaches (to deal with disparities) that are the same for almost everyone. It is important to admit that it is rather difficult, if not impossible, for the Department of Education to tailor-make intervention programmes for each school. The point being made here is that the implementation of a „blanket" approach is bound to give rise to inefficiencies because the needs of all disadvantaged schools are not the same, and the order of priority in which their needs need to be filled is not the same. As Davidoff and Lazarus (2002:59) argue, „Each school is different and what works in one situation might not work at all in another", and therefore one might end up with interventions that seem redundant in one school and might be useful in another. This is indeed a challenge.

2.6.6 Evaluation and monitoring programmes

It can be seen in the above discussion on transformation processes in South African education that the DoE has already established many intervention programmes. However, over the years the focus has been on the matric results. This is not necessarily a bad thing, except that it seems to have become so strong a focus as to detract from many other significant programmes. In addition, the strength of this focus has the potential of creating a competition among schools, and the *Tirisano* programme (which is about working together) would then be relegated to the periphery of our attention.

Further, „In this competitive climate, schools fighting for survival may retreat into a new isolationism. While this may advance the interests of a particular school; it ultimately has negative effects on the community as a whole..." (Chapman and Aspin, 1997:295)

On a smaller scale, if one looks at the discussion that took place after the labour strikes in 2007 and 2010, the focus was on how to help matric students who had lost out during the strike. I believe a discussion like that needs to take place but there are other areas of concern that need to be addressed as well, such as how the morale of all learners and educators, and many other aspects of teaching and learning, get affected during labour strikes. Surely there is a need to evaluate all areas of the school system, not just a few.

Evaluation and monitoring therefore needs to be done to ensure that „what all would endorse in principle can progressively be delivered in practice". (Meerkotter et al, 2001:17)

Muller and Roberts (2000:2), argue that „Equity is often invoked as the goal of this or that effort at reform. But justifying a policy or an intervention in terms of a noble social goal is absolutely no guarantee that the social goal will be realised. Sometimes it is just the opposite, and good intentions stand in the way of revising a policy, or dropping an intervention, that simply does not achieve its goal".

I believe the challenge is for the department of education to have the ways and means to constantly monitor and evaluate programmes so that they can discard the ones that do not work and find ones that work, regardless of whether they were formulated with „noble" intentions or not .

2.6.7. Insufficient personnel at school level.

Table 2.1(The Top 10 Public Schools) has a column showing how many educators are employed and paid by the SGB at each school, over and above those that are paid by the state. Most of the schools shown are ex-Model C schools and in most cases almost 50% of their staff complement is employed by the SGB, whereas the same cannot be said about previously disadvantaged schools, as evidenced by Mbilwi Secondary.

The challenge is that when everything necessary has been done (i.e. the educators have been trained, extra-curricular activities provided for, and the new curriculum introduced), the workload of the educators in previously disadvantaged schools it too much for them to be able also to sufficiently engage their learners in all of the relevant activities.

In addition one finds that the SGBs of ex-Model C schools pay for support staff to ease the load of educators, such as administration staff, cleaning and maintenance staff, and even others such as counsellors. This may be the case on a small scale in a few previously disadvantaged schools, but it is more likely to be not the case at all.

The results of this situation are that the staff at previously disadvantaged schools, including management, are overburdened with work and cannot operate effectively. Even delegating work becomes problematic as everyone is overloaded. Fullan (1992:93) identifies some of the tasks that principals have to deal with which he refers to as „crises of the moment", such as attending to „telephone calls, two students fighting, sales people, parents waiting to see them, calls from central office to check into something or to come to an urgent meeting and so on". Some of these tasks could be delegated to other staff members if there were more educators and support staff available.

The problem in such a situation is that there is no proper and effective management of the school, and the „opportunities... to initiate changes, or even to get out in hallways and into classes and network with kids and teachers are certainly restricted". (Hargreaves and Fink, 2006:197)

2.6.8 Complexity of the system
Various factors add to the complexity of the attempts to implement the intervention programmes.

2.6.8.1. The Changing World
Intervention programmes are introduced into a dynamic system and, even if there were no disparities to deal with, their implementation would still take place in a context of transformation and change. The following argument by Dodd and Konzal

(2002:2) brings to the fore the challenges that face the implementation of such strategies:

> Old ways of thinking, old formulas, dogmas, ideologies, no matter how cherished or useful in the past, no longer fit the facts. The world that is fast emerging from the clash of new values and new technologies, new geopolitical relationships, new lifestyles, new modes of communication, demands wholly new ideas and analogies, classifications and concepts. We cannot cram the embryonic world of tomorrow into yesterday"s conventional cubbyholes.

The understanding that one gets regarding the argument by Dodd and Konzal, is that the life-span of some of our intervention policies and strategies may be short because of the fact that we live in an ever-changing environment. This might mean that by the time some of these interventions programmes get implemented, they may no longer have the desired impact. This is indeed "chasing after a moving target and lagging further and further behind". (Bishop, 1994:69)

However, one appreciates the fact that a lot of money is spent on researching policies and strategies as well as training personnel to ensure that these policies and strategies get implemented, and it is therefore not easy to adapt them at the last moment.

2.6.8.2. The Entire Social System of South Africa

The education system of our country is not the only area of our society that was severely affected by apartheid. Programmes of redress are taking place in other departments of our government as well, creating competition for resources.

Moreover, if some other areas of our society were sorted out first, this would actually help in making the intervention programmes of the Department of Education more effective. Bishop"s argument below (1994:119-120) clearly demonstrates the point in discussion;

> In most developing countries there are two economies, two cultures and two (at least) societies, but only one education system... It is very difficult and costly to create equality of educational opportunity in a society where economic inequalities are glaring... On the other hand, if we were to create equality of economic opportunity through direct political action, equality of educational opportunity would either

automatically follow or would be created at a comparatively small cost.

Unfortunately, we are a developing country with the typical challenge of having to deal with a gap between the rich and the poor. Those parents who have financial means will take their children to good schools and those that cannot afford high fees will take their children to less resourced schools where they do not have to pay fees.

Apart from the issue of unequal economic opportunities, the other challenge of our current social system is that of getting parents or communities in general, especially of the previously disadvantaged schools, to be involved in the school lives of their children. This challenge is raised by Chetty and Ngcongo (2000:77), who state that „When the author spoke to one chairman of the governing bodies about challenges they face in school governance, he stated that, among other challenges, they observe that black, especially African, parents do not participate in sporting activities to support their children..." There may be many reasons for this, including sheer apathy, but at the same time it would be insensitive not to acknowledge the role played by the current social system in this challenge. This concern is best argued by Davidoff and Lazarus (2002:5);

> We are living in times of changing family contexts. We can no longer take for granted the norm of the nuclear family. There are many single-parent families, either through divorce or separation, or through mothers not having married their children‟s fathers. Often children do not live with their parents, but rather with grandparents or relatives, for a variety of reasons, including because of being orphaned through the HIV/AIDS pandemic. In many nuclear families, both parents are working, and young people are expected to fend for themselves and their younger siblings.

The argument above clearly indicates that the complexity of the systems that intervention programmes are addressing is a challenge on its own, which is why the implementation process becomes a challenge.

2.7. Summary

The discussions in this chapter may have seemed lengthy, but the intention was to highlight as many elements and areas of intervention programmes as possible. It would have been possible to focus on interventions regarding organisation and management systems only, but schools are systems and an intervention in one area of the school system will have repercussions for another area and organization, and management systems are no exceptions.

After looking at the transformation processes introduced by the Department of Education, it is possible to conclude that the Department has indeed been thorough in its efforts to address the disparities in the national education system created by apartheid. It is clear that these intervention programmes play a vital role in the transformation of the education system. However, it is also clear that the implementation of the intervention programmes is problematic, and the discussion of the challenges concluded with a reference to the complexity of the system that the interventions address.

I believe that that is where the main challenge to the intervention programmes lies, including those interventions that deal with organisation and management. The challenge lies in dealing with a complex system. It is this challenge that prompts one to look for an approach that will help address that challenge. The approach that will be proposed in this regard is the systems approach. The next chapter will therefore discuss the methodology of a systems approach.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed intervention programmes and concluded with the challenges that are facing the programmes. The salient factor in these challenges was the complexity of the system (the education system) that these interventions are trying to change. This chapter will look at the research methodology appropriate to tackle this challenge. This will be done by first looking at data collection strategies that were used. The section on data collection will be followed by a description of the research methodology, research design and research methods selected. Thirdly, the validity of the research method that has been used will be discussed.

The chapter will conclude with an analysis of data collected.

3.2 Data collection strategies

Even if there is abundant literature on the disparities between ex-Model C schools and previously disadvantaged schools, there was a feeling that a comparison of two schools in these categories would be productive. There were various reasons for this decision, the chief of which was the desire to add to the understanding of the situation on the ground by interacting personally with people who form part of the school system, and to delve deeply into their perspectives on the topic of discussion. When focus group discussion took place at Port Shepstone High School and Sinomusa High School more disparities were discovered, and the views held by educators of both schools towards intervention programmes were discovered.

The benefits derived from collecting data through comparing two schools are more or less the same as the benefits that would accrue from using the case study method.

When discussing the strengths of case studies and life stories, Braud and Anderson (1998:280) argue that

These approaches study „the real thing". They are especially useful in learning how complex processes dynamically interact in people"s everyday lives. Factors that are measured more superficially through standardised assessments can be examined in greater detail and depth by case studies.

For this research, the benefit of getting to meet people that form part of schools" management teams was the light that they were able to shed on the topic under study. The greater understanding gained from the teams of respondents was vital in showing that the various elements of school organisation and management systems (educators, learners, parents and administration staff, etc) have to work together to manage „complex" and dynamic processes.

Various studies can be performed using statistical information from various government information sources as their database, but the challenges inherent in implementing Departmental policies were best understood when one met with the crucial people tasked with implementing policies at school level, where success of the policies is tested.

Having decided on the data collection strategy that has just been described, the next step was to choose the design and method to be used in carrying out research.

3.3 Research methodology, design and method

3.3.1 Research methodology

The methodology chosen for this study is qualitative methodology. According to Marshal (1996:524), a qualitative method is „inductive and holistic [and] explore[s] complex human issues". A school"s organisation and management system is complex, by virtue of the fact that it incorporates various elements.

On the next page is a table that shows „the difference in emphasis in qualitative versus quantitative methods".

QUALITATIVE METHODS	QUANTITATIVE METHOD
Emphasis on understanding	Emphasis on testing and verification
Focus on understanding from respondent"s/informant"s point of view	Focus on facts and/or reasons for social events
Interpretation and rational approach	Logical and critical approach
Observations and measurements in natural settings	Controlled measurement
Subjective „insider view" and closeness to data	Objective „outsider view", distant from data
Explorative orientation	Hypothetical- deductive; focus on hypothesis testing
Process oriented	Result oriented
Holistic perspective	Particularistic and analytical
Generalisation by comparison of properties and contexts of individual organism	Generalisation by population membership

Table 3.1 – Source: Reichardt and Cook, quoted in Ghaun and Grønhaugh (2002:86)

If one analyses each characteristic of the qualitative method, one will realize that qualitative methodology is indeed the appropriate one for the study being done.

3.3.1.1 Emphasis on Understanding

The intention of the study is to understand and create more understanding about intervention programmes, particularly those that pertain to the organisation and management of schools. The lack of effectiveness of the intervention programmes was discovered by holding discussions with people tasked with their implementation.

3.3.1.2 Focus on Understanding from Respondent"s Point of View

In-depth information on the study will come from focus groups that will give their own points of view on the issues that will be discussed.

3.3.1.3 Interpretation and a Rational Approach

Conceptual framework was composed and a literature review was performed with the intention of knowing as many intervention programmes as possible, as well as their significance and challenges. This was done so that when a model of intervention is created, one has a clear understanding about the challenges that exist and the approaches to take.

3.3.1.4 Observations and Measurements in Natural Settings

The case study of two schools is done with the intention of observing the phenomenon under study in its natural settings, so that one does not only rely on information provided by the government and other sources. The disparities were obvious as one entered the gates of each school, seeing what was displayed in the foyers, and observing the process of meeting the educators that formed part of the focus group.

3.3.1.5 Explorative Orientation

This characteristic ties up with the two above, because it deals with getting as much information as possible.

3.3.1.6 Subjective, „Insider View" and Closeness to Data

The subjectivity is that of the researcher, who was an educator for twelve years, and worked at both a previously disadvantaged school and at an ex-Model C school, and therefore being close to the data.

The respondents, who are part of the schools" systems, are also subjective in some of their responses, which may be their opinions and not necessarily facts. It is these opinions that are important in the intervention process because if we are to understand the school system, we have to understand the assumptions of the people in the system because „our mental models, our theories about the way the world works influence our actions, which in turn influence the interactions of the system". (Senge et al: 2000, Kindle Location

1953). Therefore for one to understand the interactions of a system, one needs to understand mental models which influence interactions in a system.

3.3.1.7 Holistic Approach

O‟Connor and McDermott, quoted in Armson et al. (1999:45) define a system as „a set of components interconnected for a purpose‟, and schools are systems by virtue of the fact that they have a set of components that are supposed to work together for learning to take place. The right approach to use when dealing with them is a holistic approach that suits the „interconnected‟ nature of systems.

3.3.1.8. Process–Oriented

Creating a model of intervention is a process that involves analysing the present situation, deciding what the ideal situation would be, and finding a means of getting to the ideal.

Qualitative methods were selected for use here because of their appropriateness to the nature of the study undertaken.

3.3.2 Research design

The research design was chosen with the main objective of the study in mind, which is to use systems tools to contribute to the effective organisation and management systems of schools, with the purpose of ensuring effective implementation of the Departmental intervention programmes described above. The design path that this research will follow is in line with Evaluation Research.

Mouton (2004:158) describes two types of Evaluation Research:

- Qualitative (Naturalistic) and Empowerment Evaluation Research
- Implementation (Process) Evaluation Research

I believe both types are appropriate for the study, because it starts by looking at the existing intervention programmes to establish their effectiveness, and according to Mouton (2004:158) „Implementation evaluation research aims to answer the question of whether an intervention... has been properly implemented‟. The effectiveness or ineffectiveness of any programme is closely tied with how well it was implemented. Mouton (2004:161) goes on to argue that qualitative and

empowerment research „focus[es] on the process of implementation rather than on (quantifiable) outcomes". Therefore, this research design is appropriate for the study because one of the aims of the study is to contribute to effective implementation of intervention programmes.

3.3.3 Research method

The study made use of focus group discussions. According to Ghauri and Grønhaugh (2002:109), „One advantage of the focus group is that it produces a very rich and in-depth data expressed in respondents" own words and reactions..." To be able to create a model of intervention, „very rich and in-depth data" is of paramount importance. It will assist in getting as many opinions as possible to establish the respondents" perspectives or mental models. People"s perspectives or mental models are key concepts in Soft Systems Methodology, a systems approach that will be used in creating a model of intervention.

I made appointments with the Principals of the two schools in an attempt to get educators to take part in the focus groups. I met with the Principal of Port Shepstone High School, who wanted to fully understand what the study was all about. After he was satisfied with the explanation, he tasked his Deputy Principal to assist me in putting together people who would form part of the focus group. She managed to get four educators, including herself, to form part of the Port Shepstone High School focus group. My discussions with the Principal of Sinomusa High School were mostly telephonic, and he is the person who organised the educators that formed part of the focus group of Sinomusa High School. There were two educators, the deputy principal and the principal.

The recruitment of focus group participants was done on my behalf mainly by school management, after management teams had understood what I hoped to achieve by using focus groups.

3.4 Construct validity

3.4.1. Focus group questions

The questions that were put to the participants in the focus groups attempted to establish the following;

- The different roles that are played by each element of the system, and their impact on the whole organisation. The elements under discussion were the parents, educators, learners and support staff.
- If the organisation and its management were operating as a system.

The questions were designed to provoke discussion of the following, through asking about the partnerships that they have formed and their networking activities:

a. interdependency
b. The boundary of each school system
c. The environment of each school system

The above was done with the intention of „establishing correct operational measures for the concepts, ideas and relationships being studied". (Remenyi, Williams, Money & Swartz, 1998:179)

3.4.2 Internal Validity

Generally speaking, efficient organisation and management systems help bring about the success of an organisation"s goals and objectives. The same may be be true or may not be true for schools. The efficient organisation and management of a school may not lead to the successful implementation of the intervention programmes, because the school may not feel that the programme will benefit their learners. This was indeed the case at Port Shepstone High School, where the participants indicated that they had some problems with seeing the relevance of some elements of the new curriculum. If they did not implement those elements, it would not have been because they could not do so, but because they did not want to. Therefore the successful implementation of this programme related to how the programme was viewed by the organisation and its management. There are so many dynamics at play in schools, which will determine the success of programmes.

Elements of the school system may be well interrelated and be in a position to successfully implement programmes, but factors such as their perspectives on the issue may hamper progress. They may not see the significance of a programme and therefore may be less than enthusiastic about implementing it.

3.4.3. External validity

This research project will study the organisation and management systems of two schools, but one needs to keep in mind that „each school is different and what works in one situation might not work at all in another. So much depends on the sensitivity, judgement and wisdom of the people facilitating the [change] process". (Davidoff and Lazarus, 2002:59)

The above argument is cited to support the researcher"s belief that there can be no assumption that the findings from Port Shepstone High School will be representative of all ex-Model C schools and that the findings from Sinomusa High School will be representative of all previously disadvantaged schools.

The purpose of using the two schools goes back to the argument presented on data collection strategies, i.e. it would be good to have the feel of the „real thing".

The argument about the study not being interchangeable is supported by Yan, quoted in Remenyi et al (1998:180), where he contrasts the external validity of survey and case study research. He argues that

> Survey research relies on accumulating numerical evidence and interpreting it using only statistical generalisation, whereas case studies rely on in-depth evidence that is evaluated on the basis of analytical generalisations. In analytical generalisation, the researcher is striving to associate a particular set of results to some broader theory and thus the sample size is not such a relevant issue.

The above argument is true for the study being done. The broader theory of unequal educational opportunities between ex-Model C schools and previously disadvantaged schools is already „analytical generalisation", and the study of the two schools is used to generate „in-depth evidence".

3.5 Analysis of data

Data will be analysed using a systems approach. There are various reasons for the effectiveness of systems approaches such as systems thinking. One reason is that systems thinking is „simply a model employed to try and diagnose problems and to suggest how organisations might be designed", (Jackson: 2000, p11) and another reason is that it „is a powerful practice for finding the leverage needed to get the most constructive change". (Senge, Cambron-McCabe, Lucas, Smith, Dutton and

Kleiner, 2000:8) If one is going to use systems approaches in the analysis of the data it is strictly necessary first to understand what systems thinking, is about.

3.5.1. Definition of a system

According to Luckett (2004:1), a system may be defined as „a collection of things and activities which are interrelated and which can be regarded as a single, whole entity that has a purpose and that can adapt and survive in a changing environment such that the purpose can continue to be met".

Key areas of systems can be identified from the broad definition above

3.5.1.1. An Interrelated Collection of Activities

This concept is important. A relationship exists between the different parts of a system that unifies rather than divides parts of the system. If one looks at an example of the elements of a school system, such as the learners, educators, finance, infrastructure and so on, one realizes that each element cannot survive without the others.

3.5.1.2 The Purpose of a System

This nature of a system is very important because it engages the parts of the system to establish what their purpose is. A school"s main purpose is for learning to take place. If the school does not recognize and attempt to fulfill this purpose, the school as a system will disintegrate. One will witness behaviour such as educators not honouring their teaching periods, learners coming in and out of school as they please, and management not monitoring and controlling the work. After all, in this instance, no one would care about the purpose of the school.

The importance of the organisation knowing its purpose is highlighted by Luckett (2004:2) when she argues that „the transformations that take place within a system are closely connected to the understanding of the purpose of a system".

3.5.1.3 The Adaptive Nature of a System

A system exists within an environment and the environment where it is found is dynamic; hence the need for the system to adapt and change.

The extent to which a system can adapt depends on some of its qualities. Two of these are its boundaries and environment. In simple terms, a system‟s boundaries decide what will be part of or fall within your system, and what will fall outside of your system. Elements outside of the system are also important, as Luckett (2004:2) explains. The environments of systems „are those things, activities and people which are outside the boundary of the system, but which either contribute to the understanding of the system or have some impact on the system‟.

3.5.1.4. Sustainability of a System

The adaptive nature of the system is crucial in order to ensure that the system
is sustainable and that it continues to achieve its purpose.

As systems exist and evolve, they encounter challenges. Examples of these challenges are given by Armson et al (1999:27). They argue that „they range from minor upsets through to near-catastrophes, from temporary hitches to persistent, gnawing "tangles", "puzzles" or problems through to... exciting opportunities‟.

This scenario entails that a system needs to be aware of what is happening within itself, and also to understand the type of challenges it is dealing with. All challenges or situations are not the same, and diagnosing the challenge correctly will go a long way in treating it appropriately.

3.5.1.5 Classifying a System‟s Situation

As has been said above, understanding the kind of situation one‟s system is in
will suggest the measures to be taken to deal with the situation. The two
figures on the next page show some of the types of situations that a system
can be in:
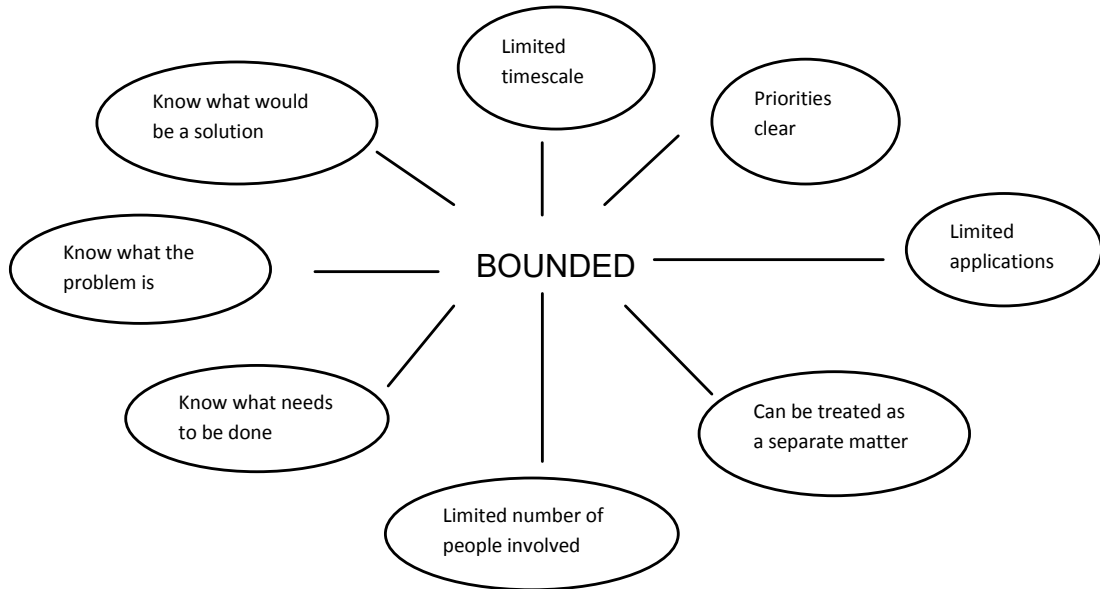
Figure 3.1a – Characteristics of a difficulty
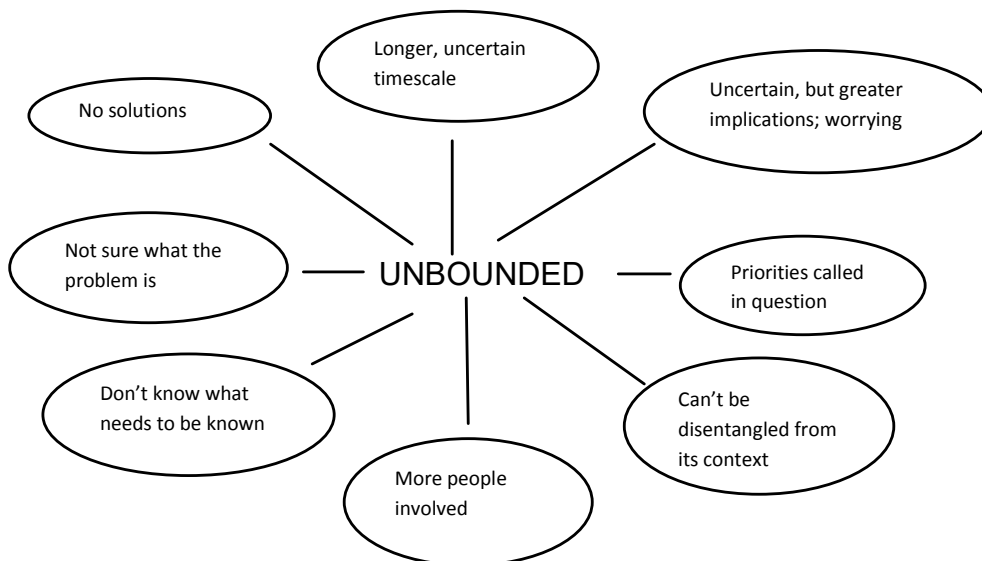
Figure 3.1b Characteristics of a mess
Source: Armson et al. 1999. Systems Thinking and Practice: A Primer. P 29

The above diagrams show characteristics of each problem situation and will therefore determine the type and intensity of intervention to use.

The complexities encountered by systems can be classified into two categories. Figure 3.2 below depicts the characteristics of soft complexities and hard complexities.

High

Some personal   some organisational
Problems, e.g.   problems e.g.
Divorce   bankruptcy of a financial
      Institution
SOFT

HARD
Simple mathematical
Puzzles   Chess problems

low

low   computational difficulty   high
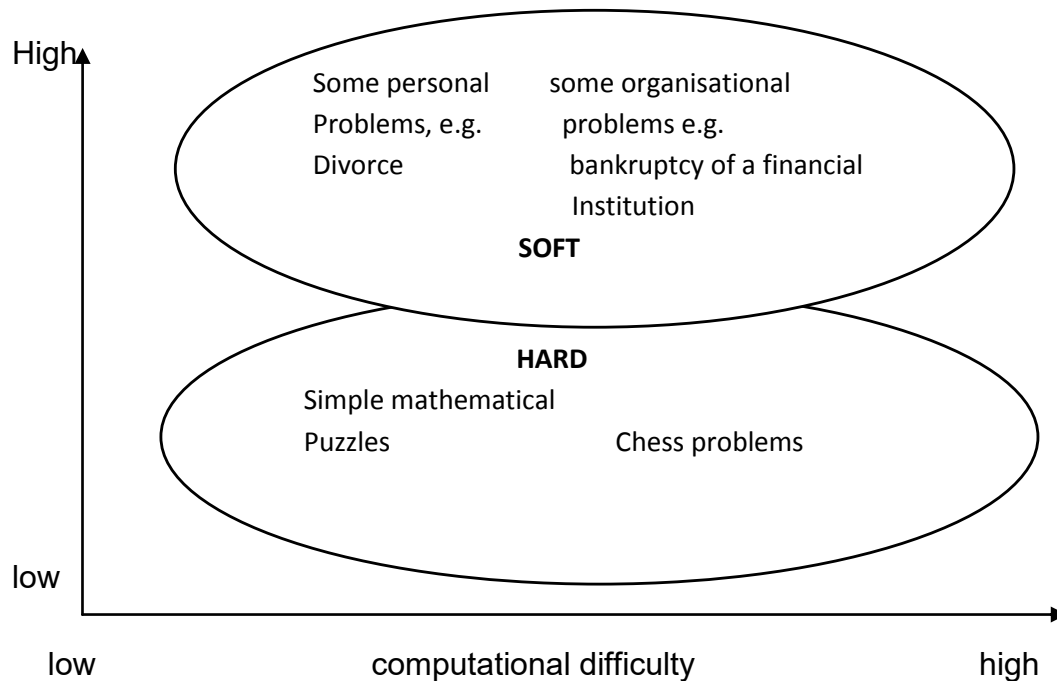
Figure 3.2 –Source: Armson et al. 1999. Systems Thinking and Practice: A Primer. p34

From Figure 3.2.one can see that the challenges of organisations have soft complexity. Hence the need to use an appropriate systems approach, a Soft Systems Approach, known as Soft Systems Methodology.

3.5.2. Soft Systems Methodology (SSM)

This section will discuss what SSM is, what its underpinnings are, and show why it is an appropriate systems approach for the analysis of the study‟s data as well as for the intervention process

3.5.2.1 What is SSM?

According to Checkland (1999) SSM is the set of principles informing the methods used in complex problem situations. He also describes it as an „approach embodying not only a logic-based stream of analysis but also a cultural and political stream...‟

3.5.2.2 SSM as an Enquiry Process

In dealing with a complex problem situation using SSM approach, one is encouraged to use „rich pictures‟ as means of understanding the problem context better. A rich picture „is a symbolic picture which depicts key actors (and other elements) and the relationship between them. The picture also attempts to capture attitudes and values‟. (Luckett, 2004:14) What SSM does is that it ensures that everyone is familiar with the problem context/situation through the process of drawing a rich picture. This allows for as many pictures to be drawn as possible, ensuring that the key elements of the problem context surface. The fact that one is studying a drawing makes it possible for one not only to detect the denotation of the message in the picture but also to see the attitudes and values behind the message.

Enquiring about the context of the problem is one of the essential processes in SSM. Through the enquiry process one should be able to understand the different worldviews of the participants. „Worldviews‟, or people‟s perspectives, are important to SSM. One needs to establish how many and whose worldviews one is going to consider. The issue is linked with the placement of the boundary of a system, which will determine who will be part of the intervention process and therefore whose worldview will be taken into account in designing the intervention. There are obvious implications regarding the placement of a boundary, because critical and system-enhancing worldviews may be excluded by an injudiciously placed boundary, or redundant and detrimental worldviews may otherwise be included in an intervention.

The point to stress is that one is not trying to establish what the actual problem is during the enquiry process. The reason why this act (of trying to establish what the problem is) is discouraged at this stage is because „various people (stakeholders) involved in the situation will view the situation differently and these differences of perception contributed to the complexity of the situation. To look for the problem implies that all people in the situation see the situation in the same way‟. (Luckett, 200417) The thought is that if it is clear what the problem is, the situation is not complex and it can be dealt with using hard systems approaches rather than soft systems approaches.

3.5.2.3 Purposeful Action

The enquiry is done with the aim of taking action with regards to the problem situation. When discussing the emergence of soft systems thinking, Jenkins, quoted in Checkland (1999), argues that „Analysis is not enough... Beyond analysis it is important to put something together, to create, to "engineer" something". This is the „action" part of SSM.

3.5.2.4 Learning Experience

The structure of SSM is such that it encourages learning to take place. One learns from the enquiry process how to present one"s views using the rich-picture technique, and one gets to know about other people"s worldviews as well. One learns that even if one"s organisation has well-articulated mission statements, a vision, goals and objectives, it may still encounter problems in reaching its goals. There could be cultural, political, or many other sorts of barriers that may stand in the way of progress. If the use of SSM helps organisations to uncover these barriers, then it will have brought about a learning experience.

Luckett (2004) ties the learning experience that takes place in SSM with Kolb"s learning cycle. She identifies common elements in both systems, namely:

- Observing
- Connecting
- Deciding
- Implementing

When practising SSM one goes through the following phases;

- Entering the problem situation and observing it.
- Connecting with the problem situation through understanding it better. Rich-picture technique helps to create better understanding of the situation.
- Developing root definitions, which are about transformation processes to be undertaken to improve the situation
- Identify activity models to use during the course of decision-making.
- Implementing the intervention to improve the situation.

What makes the learning experience brought about by SSM useful is that it is not learning induced by an external expert and imposed on an organization, but „the course being followed is continuously generated and regenerated from inside the system". (Checkland,1999).

3.5.2.5 Monitor and Control

Having come up with purposeful action, implemented the action and gone through a learning process, there is the need to monitor and control.

Monitoring and controlling in SSM do not come only at the end of the intervention cycle, but are carried out throughout the intervention process. Luckett (2004:25) gives us a formula that ensures that every aspect of a root definition (the transformation process) is covered. She talks about stating what you will do, by what means, to achieve what – doing X by means of Y in order to achieve Z. An example taken from the education system would be to say that a new curriculum will be introduced using modern technology and resources to achieve outcomes-based education. This helps to avoid a situation where a new curriculum is introduced and results typical of outcomes- based education are expected, and yet there are no resources to ensure that outcome.

The other control measure is that of using the „CATWOE" mnemonic, a „useful way to check whether the root definition(s) were complete". (Luckett, 2004:26) He unpacks CATWOE as representing;

C – Customers of the system

A – Actors in the system, i.e. the people who will make the system work

T - Transformation

W -The worldview or assumptions underlying the system

O- The owners of the system.

E- The environment of the system

This checklist is useful as it ensures stakeholder involvement, or at least ensures that no element of the system is overlooked during an intervention process.

The final action that is taken is also subjected to a control and monitor system. This is done through what Checklands (1999) refers to as the 3Es. These Es stand for Efficacy, Efficiency and Effectiveness, and they are for „checking that output is produced, whether minimum resources are used to obtain it, and checking at a higher level, that this transformation is worth doing because it makes a contribution to some higher level or longer-term aim".

This control and monitoring system is important for interventions because;

- So many decisions are taken with great zest only to die a slow death because there is no monitoring that follows implementation.
- It ensures that no element of the system, within or without of the boundary, is not considered in the decision-making process.
- It also ensures that there is accountability with regards to the resources used to attain the desired results.

3.6 Summary

This chapter has discussed the selected research methodology from different angles. The discussion included the research design and methods, systems thinking in general, and the soft systems approach, which will be used in the creation of an intervention model.

Having looked at the challenges of intervention programmes in the previous chapter and in this chapter discussed an appropriate intervention approach; we will look at the creation of an intervention model in the next chapter

CHAPTER 4
THE INTERVENTION

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the processes of collecting data. This chapter will present the data collected. The presentation will start with brief background to and context of intervention. This will be followed by a brief explanation of what areas of organisation and management were targeted by the intervention. The data derived from the two schools will be presented in a comparative manner as a way of establishing if there is a disparity in the organisation and management systems of the two schools. Lastly, an intervention model will be created, using SSM.

Whenever reference to schools is made, they will be discussed in alphabetical order, starting with Port Shepstone High School and then moving on to Sinomusa High School.

4.2. Brief background and context of the intervention

4.2.1 Port Shepstone High School

It is an ex-Model C school situated in the town of Port Shepstone on the south coast of the province of KwaZulu-Natal. In terms of the Department of Education demarcations, it falls under the Ugu District of the Department of Education, Sayidi Circuit, and Ogwini Ward. It has a learner enrolment of 1428 and a total number of 61 educators. 41 of them are state paid and 20 of them paid by the SGB.

4.2.2 Sinomusa High School

It is a previously disadvantaged school in the area of Izingolweni on the south coast of the province of KwaZulu-Natal. In terms of Department of Education demarcations it falls under the Ugu District, Sayidi Circuit and Izingolweni Ward. It has a total enrolment of 749 learners and 22 educators, all of whom are paid by the state. It has no SGB-paid educators.

Basically, the two schools are in the same district and the same ward, so that they have the same control centre.

4.3 Areas targeted by the intervention

Discussions took place around three areas of organisation and management.

4.3.1 The systemic nature of the schools" organization and management systems

Discussions were aimed at identifying elements of the system and their interconnectedness. The interconnectedness was established by discussing the role played by each element and how each element contributed to the overall well-being of the school.

4.3.2 Transformation and adaptability

The discussions attempted to disclose the evolving nature of the system, its ability to manage change, and the particulars of the change process taking place.

4.3.3. Communication, monitoring and control

The ability for the system to effectively carry out the above tasks was investigated through posing questions about boundary placement, interactions with their respective environments, and their manner of response to feedback. For one to respond to feedback, one needs to take a look at the whole process that led to the feedback that one is getting. This exercise of reflecting on actions taken is very vital in transforming an organization. It ensures that same mistakes are not repeated by the organization because it does not give itself time to analyze its feedback. This exercise of analyzing feedback is what is referred to as „metareflection", whereby, „you deliberately challenge your own norms, attitudes and assumptions. You reconsider the tasks you have set for yourself and try to understand the ways that your own choices (both conscious and unconscious choices) may contribute to the frustration you feel or the effectiveness of your organization". (Senge *et al*:2000, Kindle location 2216)

4.4. Systems Map of the two schools (School organization and Management)

Below is a systems map for Port Shepstone High School"s organisation and management.
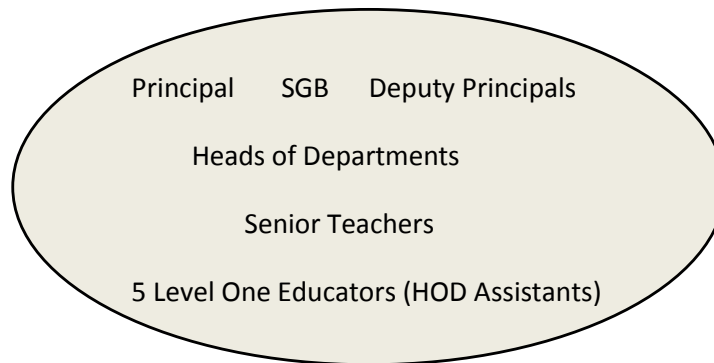
Figure 4.1

Below is the systems map for Sinomusa High School"s organisation and management.
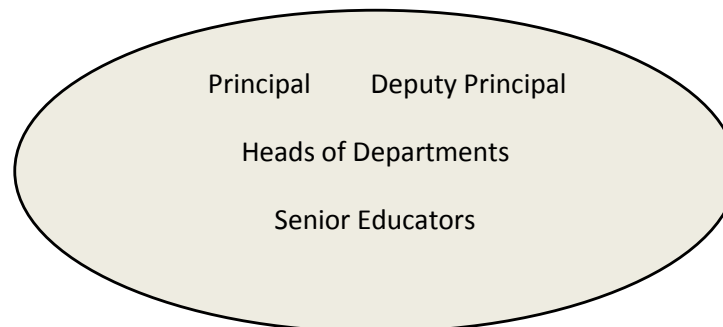
Figure 4.2

As can be seen from two systems map above, both schools have more or less the same idea about what constitutes the elements of their school organisation and management systems. There are, however, some differences that can be noted.

- Port Shepstone has two deputy principals, both of whom are state paid, mainly because it has a bigger enrolment.
- Port Shepstone also has 5 level one educators who are SGB paid. They assist Heads of Departments. That is not the case with Sinomusa.
- Sinomusa has identified its SGB as falling outside the boundary of its organisation and management system, because the school understands the task of its SGB to be school governance and not school management.

The systems maps have made us aware of the systems that we are dealing with. The study will now proceed to present the data.

4.5 Overall presentation of the data

QUESTION	PORT SHEPSTONE HIGH	SINOMUSA HIGH
Identify elements of your organization and management system.	Fig 4.1	Fig 4.2
Are these elements interrelated?	Yes, they are. All elements are very much interdependent. SGB, for example, has played a huge role in ensuring that the work-load of school management is drastically reduced. They have done this by: • Appointing 5 level one educators to assist HODs • Appointing a full-time social worker and 3 counsellors to take care of learners" well - being. • Appointing administration clerks, over and above those paid by the state. • Appointing more maintenance staff, and designating parents to	Yes, decisions are taken collectively. SGB is generally responsible for school governance. Learners" representatives are part of the SGB and they give feedback to learners on the issues discussed. The elements of the system work as a collective.

	supervise the maintenance staff. Moreover, recognition is given to people for the work they do and the school believes in rewarding hard work, especially those staff members that go an extra mile in the execution of their duties.	
Are different elements of your system accorded the importance they deserve, e.g. being given a chance to voice their views and opinions, initiate projects, etc?	Yes they are. Parents are allowed to take part in various tasks to assist the school. An example is a budgeting workshop that takes place in October, which is co-ordinated by parents and, as has been said earlier, they help with the maintenance of the school buildings and many other tasks.	Yes, they are all given the importance they deserve, but too often the parents do not do much for the school. The reason is that the parent body does not have the same professions that parent bodies in ex-Model C schools have.
Do you think you have a shared vision and purpose for the school?	Yes, because there is a lot of support that the elements of the system give each other. Even learners are supportive because overall they adhere to the rules. Some of the rules may seem petty (e.g. being forced to wear their blazers) but they co-operate. This is not to say there are no discipline problems but overall the school is doing well and is a successful school, although	Yes, they are supportive of decisions taken. As has been said, the parents may not be as active as the school would like them to be, but they are aware of what is happening in the school and are supportive of activities that take place. Since there is no sport budget, soccer players usually try and raise funds for their soccer team.

	this may sound biased coming from a school management member, but it is true. In addition learners understand the kind of image that the school wants to maintain. They also do their bit in fundraising, although it is mostly done to benefit orphanages and other charities.	
Are you confident that the management system that you have in place can adapt and survive in a changing environment such that you are still able to achieve the purpose and the vision that you have for the school? Examples of changing environments could be bigger enrolments, a shortage of educators, addiction problems, learners" changing attitudes towards the rule of law and education in general; or extra work that could be placed by Department of Education on management teams?	Yes, the school has actually been successful in the listed areas. Enrolments have always been big; therefore that is not a challenge. There are enough classrooms. As it is, there is no class that has more than 35 learners. Had it not been for the 20 SGB-paid educators, then the school would have felt the shortage of educators. There are programmes to take care of learners" needs. There are HODs who are tasked with pastoral care, and there is a social worker and 3 school counsellors. As has been indicated, the extra SGB staff (educators and admin) has significantly reduced the workload for state-paid staff.	Yes, so far the school has managed to adapt and survive but it has been a serious challenge, especially with enrolments. Learner intake has increased and yet no new classrooms have been built to accommodate more learners. The Department of Education enforces the rule that a school is compelled to accept learners if that school is the one nearest to a learner"s home. As it is now, there are only 2 grade 9 classes of 89 each, and the class average for other classes is 65. The school makes use of a counsellor who services the other schools in the area. In the past the school has made use of a private

		school counsellor but it proved costly. The deputy principal is responsible for counselling of learners because she holds a Master"s Degree in Educational Psychology. Educators and management have learnt to multi-task. There was one SGB educator who resigned because of the salary. She was paid R1000.00 a month.
Do you feel that as a school you have transformed and evolved over time or do you still do things the same way you used to?	The school is an ex-Model C school and therefore in terms of demographics, it used to be mainly white, but now 80% of the learners are black. This has necessitated subject changes and IsiZulu is now an additional language offered at the school. However, the ethos and work ethic of the school have remained the same.	Yes, the school has been introduced to new levels of technology and use laptops.
Are you feedback conscious? That is, do you analyse the effects of the decisions and actions that you take?	Yes, the school has in the past taken decisions that it later reviewed and changed. One example is a decision to offer religious education, which was taught by parents. It was later stopped because management realised it was not representative of all religions.	Yes, the school does not persist with doing something that does not work.

| Can you identify policies of the Department of Education that you applied to a problem situation and that created more problems? | The school is guided by the policies of the Department of Education in how it runs the school, but it is also guided by the school code of conduct that is created by parents, learners and staff members. Between the two, solutions are available.
Some Departmental interventions were introduced when the school had already embarked on them, making them easy to implement. One example of that is Outcomes-Based Education. The school had decided long before the New Curriculum Statement was introduced to make teaching learner-centered. The new curriculum was welcome, but the school was not happy and resisted the implementation of some learning areas. | The policy that states that classes need to be inclusive has created more problems. It is a challenge for educators to know what pace to use in a class that combines gifted learners and challenged ones. The educators find it hard to decide how and for whom they must do remedial work.
The policy of learners attending schools close to their homes, regardless of whether they can be accommodated or not, has proved to be a challenge. |
| Can you identify any interventions or guidelines by the Department of Education that have been helpful in solving the various challenges that you face? | The power given to SGBs, such as permission to raise funds, is a policy that the school appreciates. The school raises more money from its fundraising projects than its intake from fees. | The School Nutrition Programme, where all learners are supplied with one meal a day. This intervention has decreased the rate of absenteeism and truancy and has led to better concentration in class.
The permission for schools |

		to engage in fundraising projects is helpful, and the school has a vegetable garden and sells produce. A community member is employed to work on the project.
. Are you involved in any partnerships with other schools, businesses, NGOs, etc?	There are no partnerships with any other schools except when they have to meet in official meetings with schools in their clusters for the moderation of learners"work. Learners have social awareness clubs but they do not have partnerships with any institutions. They raise funds and donate to different charities and make about four visits a year to different institutions, whether hospitals, schools or orphanages, but no one of these in particular. The school offers advertising opportunities to various businesses by erecting advertising boards on sport fields along the main road, Marine Drive. The school sometimes gets sponsorship from the community but it is mostly sponsorship from parents.	The school is not involved in any partnerships but would love to be involved with the business sector. There is a programme called Dinaledi where the Department of Education partners schools with private companies to assist schools. One of the neighbouring schools is in that programme and the educators went on an international learning excursion. Some learners are involved in a project called a Buddy project. Learners keep in constant contact with the SA Police Force and inform them about illegal activities in their communities - more like watchdogs. The intention is to help create a safe community for themselves and their families.

Table 4.1 Overall Presentation of Data

Many implications, findings and conclusions can be drawn from the comparisons made in Table 4.1, and discussion of them will take place in the next chapter.

The purpose of the above exercise was not only to look at the disparities between the two (representative) schools but also to do something about them. As Jenkins, quoted in Checklands (1999), puts it, „Analysis is not enough... Beyond analysis it is important to put something together, to create, to "engineer" something".

The next section will put together an intervention programme addressing one of the organisation and management challenges facing Sinomusa High school.

4.6 The Intervention

The intervention will follow the phases proposed by SSM. The phases are represented in the diagram below.
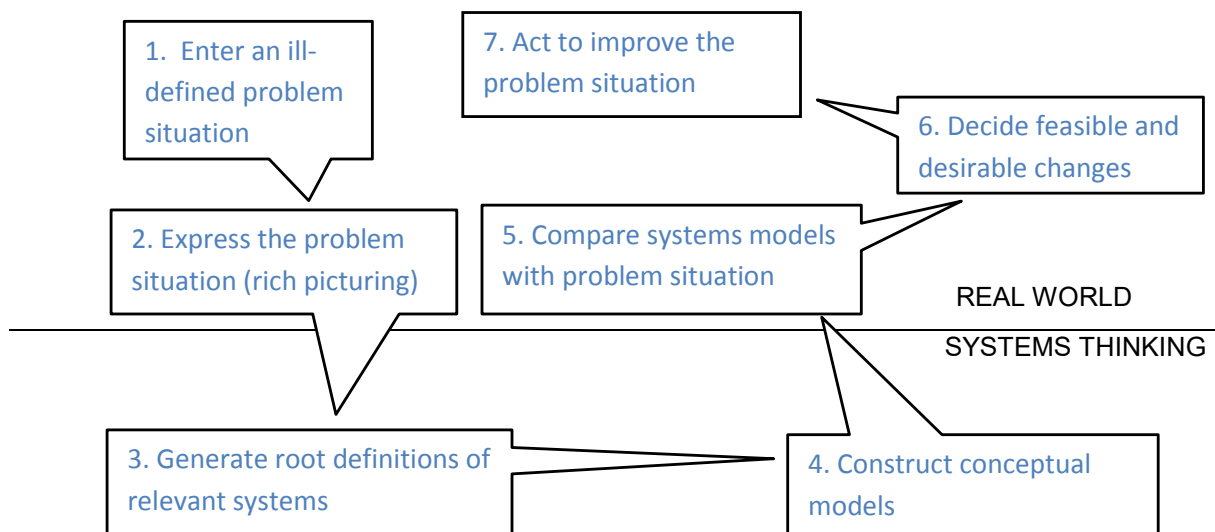
Figure 4.3- Phases of the Intervention

4.6.1 Phase 1 – **Entering an ill-defined Problem Situation**

The problem situation is overcrowding, which makes it difficult for teaching and learning to take place. The situation is exacerbated by the Department of Education"s attitude towards the issue. They do not see the school as needing extra classrooms. They feel the school has well-built structures and is appealing aesthetically, which is not the case with most other schools. That may be true, but

the aesthetics and soundness of the buildings have nothing to do with the fact that the school cannot accommodate the increasing numbers of learners.

4.6.2. Phase 2 – **Expressing the Problem Situation**

The Rich Picture below depicts the overcrowding challenges at Sinomusa High School.

Figure 4.4 – Rich Picture of Overcrowding at Sinomusa High School.

4.6.3 Phase 3– **Generate Root Definitions**

RD 1 - A system of improving deteriorating learner performance by having an environment or classrooms that allow for one-on-one consultations, so that learners" needs can be known and addressed and their performance improved.

RD 2 – A system of having less-crowded classrooms by building more classrooms, so that better learning can take place.

RD 3 – A system of learners who show pride in their school by keeping it clean so that they can prevent the spread of diseases.

RD 4 – A system where there is a spacious environment to operate in by having different rooms designated for different tasks so that fewer tensions are created by learners pushing to be able to get a seat in a venue.

RD 5 – A system of keeping the school clean by the careful handling of school property so that they can benefit from the resources provided, like the toilets.

RD 6 – A system of developing a litter-free environment by designating different ground space to each grade, so that each grade and the grade educators can be able to keep their respective areas clean and be accountable for their ground space.

RD 7- A system that has enough classrooms and other extra-curricular facilities so that learners from the community may be accepted into the school without any resistance.

4.6.4 PHASE 4 - Construct Conceptual Models

1. SGB meets and calls for a general meeting

2. Meeting takes resolution and appoints task team

8. Get designs and establish costs of building the desired structures

3. Task team to meet and draw up plan of action and co-opt outside professionals

4. Task Team researches on relevant modern structures

9. Monitor Progress

5. SGB monitors progress

7. Report to SGB

10. Report back to SGB

11. Identify skills and labour available from parents and community to reduce building costs

12. Compile final request with designs and costs

15. Report to SGB

13. Monitor

14. Get permission from relevant structures such as Department of Education, Tribal Council /Municipality

19. School receives funding

16. Identify and approach sponsors and/or relevant departments

17. Monitor

20. Task team implements programme

18. Funding provided.

22. Monitor Activities

23. Make adjustments

21. Define measures of performance (time frames, building standards to adhere to)
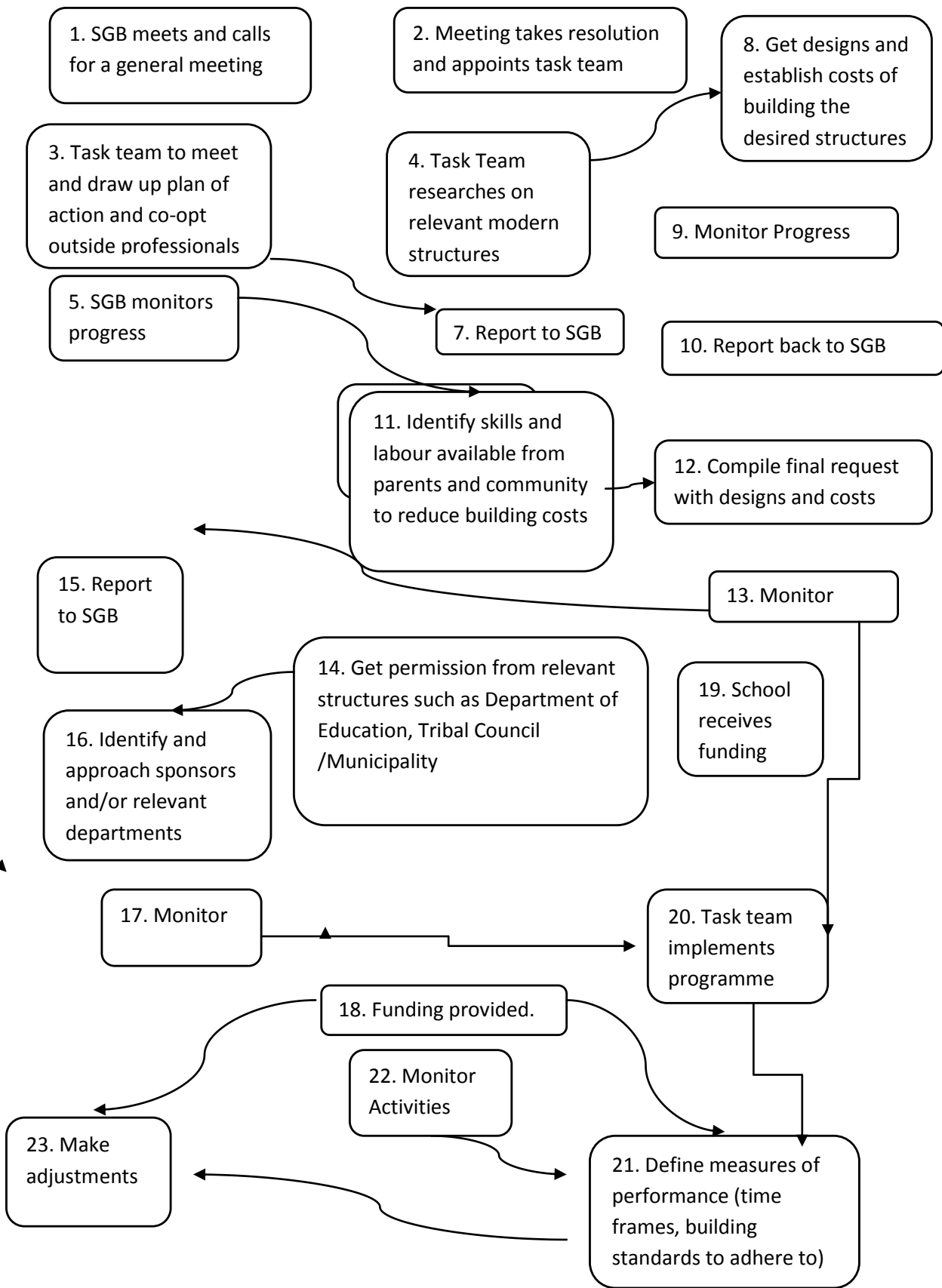
Figure 4.5 – Conceptual Models

4.6.5 PHASE 5 – Compare Systems Models with Present Situation.

ACTIVITY	EXISTS AT PRESENT?	HOW IS IT DONE?	ANY DIFFERENCES	HOW IS IT JUDGED?	WHAT CHANGES ARE REQUIRED
Stakeholders" Meeting	Yes	Rarely	Yes	Positively	Meet regularly
Co-option of professionals from outside of the school	No	_	Yes	Skeptically	Attitude and fear of being dominated and losing control
Formation of Task Teams	No	Rarely	Yes	Positively	Motivation and offering people opportunities where they can assist.
Research	No	Get to know by hearsay what is happening in other schools	Yes	Positively	Active quest for ideas, networking and visiting ex-Model C schools to see their facilities, understand how they are utilised and maintained. In addition get more profitable ways and means of fundraising.
Constant Reporting	No	Rarely	Yes	Positively, but not so positively by the principal	Have set dates for the whole duration of project so that there can be no excuses given because information on meeting dates was given on time.
Monitoring by SGB	Very rarely	SGB is mostly informed about matters, more like being updated.	Yes	Positively	Empower parents, motivate and give them recognition for contributions made. Report their efforts to the Head of the area, such as the Chief, so that he/she can praise and

					let people know about efforts made by those parents that involve themselves in school matters.
Identify skills and labour available from community	No	-	Yes	Positively	Get parents to offer their services and volunteer wherever help is needed
Identifying sponsors	No	Wait for Department of Education to assist	Yes	Positively	Being pro-active and less dependent on Department of Education.
Relationships	Exists at present?				
SGB – School	Yes, but poor				
Management – Tribal Council	Good				
School – Department of Education	Good				
School - Other Schools	Very poor				

Table 4.2 – Comparison of Systems Model with the Present Situation

4.6.6 PHASE 6 – **Decide Feasible and Desirable Change**

1. Regular meetings with SGB and other stakeholders, such as the Chief of the area.
2. Task Team to identify the minimum number of classrooms needed and draw up a
     Draft request.
3. Identify sponsors and send requests for sponsorship.
4. Task Team to thoroughly engage the team from Physical Planning, the Department
     of Public Works.

5. Task Teams to report regularly, meeting dates to be decided and circulated to all concerned.

6. Identify parents who have building skills and request their services when funds are available.

7. Implement other RDs that do not need money, such as, designate different ground areas for different grades.

8. Make time to meet with principals who can assist in getting fund raising activities up and running.

Summary

This chapter presented the data derived from two schools, Port Shepstone High School and Sinomusa High School. When discussions took place at Sinomusa problems were identified, the most distressing of which for the school"s management was that of overcrowded classrooms.

The problem situation having been identified, a draft intervention programme was prepared, utilising the six phases of the SSM model to do so.

The next chapter will present findings, recommendations and conclude the study.

CHAPTER 5
FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

The study set out to discuss the disparities that exist between ex-Model C schools and previously disadvantaged schools, particularly in the area of their organisation and management systems. Having collected data, analysed it and created an intervention model for a distressing problem situation at Sinomusa High School, this chapter will conclude by discussing the findings, implications, recommendations and conclusions from all of the activities that have been carried out.

Firstly, the research findings will be outlined, starting with the findings obtained from comparing the two schools used in the research, and followed by the findings obtained from the intervention process. Secondly, the implications of the study will be discussed. This section will also include the personal reflections of the researcher. Thirdly, recommendations will be made as to how to address the problem areas that were discovered during the course of the study.

5.2 Research Findings

5.2.1 Research findings from the comparison of the two schools
There were various findings obtained from comparing Port Shepstone High School and Sinomusa High School. The findings will be discussed under the following sub-headings;

- The Purpose of the Schools" Organisation and Management Systems
- The Sustainability of the Schools" Organisation and Management Systems
- Transformation

5.2.1.1 The Purpose of the Schools" Organisation and Management Systems
When comparing Port Shepstone High School and Sinomusa High School, it was clear that the degree to which the organisation and management system of each school had achieved its purpose was not the same at all.

Port Shepstone High seems to have succeeded in achieving its purpose. This has not been an automatic occurrence, but some thought and action has been put into ensuring that the system achieves its aim. The main innovation was involving parents, and therefore having the staff"s workload reduced to allow for effective management.

Sinomusa"s organisation and management system has encountered some challenges, particularly with having to multi-task, because of the shortage of staff to reduce the management workload. Parental involvement is minimal, if not almost non–existent, and this has had a negative impact on ensuring that the parents effectively execute their approved functions in the school. One reason that was given for this by the principal was that most parents are not professionals, as against the situation in ex-Model C schools, hence their minimal involvement.

 However, one did not get the feeling that the lack of parental involvement was a worrying issue for the school"s management. Although one understands that having formally educated parents is an advantage, it is a matter of concern that the lack of the involvement of such an important element of the system can be dismissed on those grounds.

5.2.1.2 Sustainability of the School Organisation and Management Systems

Port Shepstone High School seemed to be very self-sufficient. This conclusion was reached on the basis of the following facts:

- It has its own empowerment policies and activities, such as Budget Workshops, which take place every year.
- It hires extra staff to complement state-paid staff.
- It supplements school fees through fund-raising to cater for its increasing needs and to make up for its bad debts.

This self-sufficiency indicates that the system is likely to be sustainable. The system has learnt to find ways to deal with challenges, rather than depending solely on the assistance of the Department of Education.

In the case of Sinomusa, there is a huge dependency on the Department of Education. One needs to appreciate the fact that the socio-economic status of the parents from the two schools is not the same. Even if the parents of Sinomusa High

School were more involved in the system, it is unlikely that they would be able to hire as many SGB-paid educators as Port Shepstone High School. The dependency was established with regards to the following

- The school is awaiting assistance from Physical Planning to provide extra classrooms.
- It is hoping to be part of the Dinaledi programme, where the Department of Education partners schools with different private companies.

Whether there is any justification for the school‟s inability to deal with its challenges or not, the fact of the matter is that the sustainability of the management system is at stake. This is because there are many other schools awaiting assistance from the Department of Education, some in worse condition than Sinomusa. If the Department does not come to their rescue the problems will persist and that will have a negative impact on the system.

The finding that really established that Port Shepstone High School‟s management and organization systems were sustainable was that the SGB had appointed 5 level one educators to assist HODs with their duties. What this means is that an understanding of what management entails is spread through all levels of the school system, from level one educators right up to levels 4 and 5, the deputy principals and the principal. This has added benefits, one of which is that when there is a vacancy for an HOD post, the school has a pool of experienced internal people to choose from, and these are people who know the culture of the school and would not need induction. Port Shepstone High School has indeed overcome the challenge described by Davidoff and Lazarus (2002:176) when they argue that „It is obvious that a major challenge is to build leadership and management capacity throughout the whole school‟.

5.2.1.3 Transformation

A disparity in the level and understanding of transformation emerged from the comparison of the two schools. There was a sophisticated understanding on one hand, and a basic understanding on the other.

Port Shepstone High School‟s focus was chiefly on their image and brand. They showed this focus by stating that with all the changes that had taken place, they

had maintained the work ethic and ethos that had earned them their reputation. They constantly spoke about their achievements, whether they were asked to do so or not.

Sinomusa High School has undergone some transformation, and now has access to modern technology and resources that were not previously enjoyed by previously disadvantaged schools. They described their use of laptops as a measure of their transformation, thinking that their acquisition of the laptops will somehow transform their learners and their learning.

Transformation for one school has become sophisticated and gone beyond acquisitions, whereas the other one is still more or less equating transformation with acquiring things. This finding confirmed the lament of Bishop (1994:69) that school systems in poor, developing countries were „chasing after a moving target and lagging further and further behind".

5.2.2. Research findings from the intervention process

The findings derived from the intervention process demonstrated the strengths and weaknesses of the tool that was used in designing the intervention.

5.2.2.1 Strengths of the Intervention Tool

The strengths demonstrated by the intervention tool will be discussed under the following headings:

- The Creation of Broad Thinking
- Empowerment for Facilitating the Intervention.

5.2.2.1.1 The Creation of Broad Thinking

During the intervention process, it became clear that some mental models were a stumbling block towards making improvements. There was a dominant perception that the problem of classroom shortages could be solved only by the Department of Education in collaboration with Department of Public Works. Added to this perception was another in which parents were cast as an element that would not be helpful in finding a solution to the problem.

The intervention helped to broaden the minds of the participants. Eventually the thought was that it might be desirable and feasible to find out what skills the parents might have, that could help bring about a solution to the problem of the lack of

classrooms. The parents might not be professionals, but they might have building skills and other skills that might come in handy. This is in line with the argument made by Chetty and Ngcongo (2000:79):

> While governing bodies have fixed legal roles and tasks, their varying conceptions of governance may not be arbitrarily dismissed. That which is useful and in line with the principles of the Constitution in their experience of governance, needs to be upheld... It is a process of distilling what works from what does not in governance and management, within the environment and culture of people.

One can only concur. In this case the school would profit from finding out what is useful in the parent body, harnessing it and using it to the benefit of the school.

One other desirable and feasible change would be to source sponsorships. Even if this were not to become a full-time effort, an attempt of sorts should be made. This activity would help to reduce the school‟s dependency on the Department of Education. Given the desperate overcrowding in its classrooms, the school just cannot afford to wait for the Department to provide the necessary extra classrooms. The DoE indicated that it had classroom backlogs of R216 billion in 2009. (DoE Annual Report 2008/9).

5.2.2.1.2 Empowerment for Facilitating the Intervention

The three analyses that need to be performed when intervening in a problematic situation proved powerful in creating more understanding about the problem situation. These are the intervention analysis, the social/cultural analysis and the political analysis. (Luckett,Ngubane & Memela, 2001:523)

The intervention analysis, which entails knowing about who the stakeholders are, assisted in unveiling the shortcomings of the intervention. The intervention included only members of the school management, yet the successful implementation of any intervention will need the involvement of all stakeholders. This realisation assisted in ensuring that when activities were envisaged, all stakeholders‟ needs were included somehow.

The socio/cultural analysis led to an awareness of the dominant culture, which is a culture of dependency.

The political analysis led to an awareness that the organisation and management of the school is not working efficiently as a system. For instance, it was rather difficult to get information about some issues. I would ask questions, the senior person present would give a very brief answer, and any further probing would not yield much. This happened a lot with questions around the role played by the SGB. These questions could be answered fully only by the principal, and the other members of the management team seemed to be uneasy when such matters were raised.

Performing the three analyses referred to above contributed to the strength of the intervention, because they alerted me to issues that may be contributing to the problem situation in the school management system, which the members of the management team were unable to articulate.

5.2.2.2 The Weakness of the Tool Used in the Intervention

The critique of SSM by Luckett, Ngubane and Memela (2001:523) proved to be true in the intervention of this study. They argue that „Because of it aims at reaching accommodation and consensus through open debate, some voices may be marginalised in those situations where there is an uneven distribution of power".

As has been indicated earlier on, there seemed to be some tension around the issue of the SGB and its role in school governance. One cannot help but wonder if more information would have been obtained if the debate/discussion had not been so open.

5.3 Implications arising from the study.

Several implications that emanated from the study/discussion are arranged, below, in terms of the problem area to which they relate.

5.3.1. Involvement of the SGB

There are various implications for schools that do not have parents, in the form of SGB, playing the roles that they should be playing.

The first implication is that the management of the school cannot operate effectively because it has to govern the school in addition to managing it.

Secondly, the management or mismanagement of finances becomes a concern when decisions are not taken with the full understanding and approval of the parents.

Thirdly, research has proved that the role played by parents in some ex-Model C schools has brought about developments that would otherwise not have happened if the parents were not part of the school organisation and management system. One needs to understand that most of these ex-Model C schools were already well resourced. Having a parent body that constantly maintains and supplements resources is an added advantage for them. The same cannot be said about some of the previously disadvantaged schools in terms of parental involvement.

One must appreciate the fact that the concept of SGBs is an old concept in the ex-Model C schools, where the system has been perfected. However, much as one understands that the SGB concept is relatively new in previously disadvantaged schools, a situation where the concept has not been properly implemented 14 years down the line[8] raises serious concerns.

One continues to see a situation where the ex-Model C school is reaping the benefits of having an active SGB and the previously disadvantaged school is losing out on the benefits of having an active SGB. This scenario widens the development gap between the two types of schools and reminds us again of the sad statement by Dekker and Lemmer (1993:31) that

> Achieving equality in education has become rather an elusive goal
> and remains one of our greatest challenges in education.

5.3.2 Classroom shortages

One can imagine the difference between the quality of the learning and teaching that takes place in a class of 35 learners as against the quality of the learning and teaching that takes place in a class of 89 learners.

A school may have qualified educators, material resources and commitment, but the challenge of having to keep 89 teenagers attentive and well-behaved for 45 minutes to an hour cannot be underestimated. This kind of environment does not promote learner- centred teaching, because it is difficult for an educator to move around and monitor learners" work. It

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[8] School Governance is one of the policies that form part of SASA (South Africa School Act) of 1996.

inevitably creates a situation where an educator uses the teaching and assessing methods that the environment allows, which may not benefit all learners. This situation is lamented by Senge *et al*:2000, Kindle Location 944, when they argue that, „The tragic outcome is frustration on all sides: teachers who either give up or get burned out and a great many kids who either get cast aside or forced to learn in ways that significantly compromise their learning potential".

While describing the teaching conditions in a Grade 9 class of 89 learners, the Deputy Principal said that because of the overcrowding the classroom is always dark, even with the lights on, and the educator has to stand and remain right in front, because there is no space for movement. A situation like this is not likely to improve educators" and learners" morale. It is an environment that has the potential of making the learners cranky, especially on hot days, and the stifling conditions must be partly responsible for provoking the fights among the learners that the focus group identified as one of the problems created by the overcrowding.

If one conjures up the picture of a bright and airy classroom at Port Shepstone High School and a dark crowded classroom at Sinomusa High School, one can fully concur with McKinley and de Villiers (2005) when they state that

> There is every indication that the crisis is deepening as disparities between former „Model C" schools and township and rural schools grow. This feeling of abandonment leads to widespread hopelessness in schools and their surrounding communities and concomitant behaviour such as school drop-outs...

This argument raises another outcome of the school environment depicted above, that of school dropouts. It is not all learners that find schooling exciting and if conditions are not conducive to learning, this category of learners will find it easy to drop out of school.

5.4 Recommendations

Having outlined the findings and implications of the study, this section will make recommendations. The intention of the study was not to discuss the disparities for the sake of discussing them but to add to the body of knowledge so that improvements may take place.

5.4.1 The research method

The focus group research method was very useful in assisting the researcher to get as much information as possible. However, I believe it is important to find out in advance from each individual member of the group if they will be comfortable answering all questions in the presence of a senior management member. This is important in ensuring that the study is authentic and that the answers given are honest answers.

I also believe the outcomes of the study would have been richer if the parents and learners had formed part of the focus group. Technically they are not part of management, but their existence has a huge impact on the management of schools. Not having parents as part of the focus group discussions was one of the limitations of the study, which future studies in this area can take into cognisance. However this research method proved that a great role can be played by systemic methodologies in dealing with a problem situation in a school. Discussions that took place in focus groups unveiled mental models of educators and school managers, thus informing one of their attitudes towards the problem experienced at school.

One assumption that can be highlighted was that of the head of the school who felt that unlike parents in ex-model C schools, their SGB parents are challenged about school governance issues because they do not possess the same professions like those of parents in ex-model C schools. That they do not possess same professions may be a fact but to give that as a reason for their minimal involvement is an assumption. This kind of assumption is dangerous in the sense that it somehow makes it understandable and acceptable that there would be minimal involvement of parents in the school system. This critical problem is discussed by Senge et al:2000, Kindle Location 1586 when they argue that „Mental Models limit people‟s ability to change" when they are „untested and unexamined".

5.4.2 The success of school management

Certain factors that are crucial for successful and effective organisation and management systems emerged from the study.

5.4.2.1 Partnerships

Working with the management systems of other organisations could go a long way in improving the problematic management systems at previously disadvantaged schools. It will help to mentor the management of previously disadvantaged schools on various matters, and this would reduce dependency on the Department of Education. This recommendation reflects what is said by Chapman and Aspin (1997:206) when they argue that

> There is a need for a much stronger set of linkages, connections and partnerships between business and commerce and schools. In fostering such relationships, leaders of industry and their education liaison officers might work out ways in which they can become more involved with the work of schools... perhaps there might as well be further significant inputs of funding, time and personnel on the part of business, industry and trade unions towards assisting a process of lifelong learning in schools.

The Department of Education has policies such as *Tirisano*[9] that address the need for partnerships, but I believe schools need to take the initiative as well.

5.4.2.2 Developing a Learning School

The schools need to evaluate what has been productive and what has not been productive. If some activity has not been productive for some time, then the management, including all of the stakeholders, needs to work on a new strategy. The need for a school to be a learning organisation is best argued by Davidoff and Lazarus (2002:41):

> ...the school needs to be a learning organisation, an organisation which is constantly and systematically reflecting on its own practice, and making appropriate adjustments and changes as a result of new insights gained through that reflection.

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[9] Tirisano means working together.

This exercise may look time consuming but it has added benefits. A situation where there is a persistent problem in a school and the same, failed solution is resorted to repeatedly has the potential to erode the confidence that subordinates have in the management system.

5.4.2.3 The Importance of Holistic Approaches to Management

The importance of understanding that all elements of a school system are important and treating them as such cannot be over emphasised. The following argument is as true for previously disadvantaged schools as it is for any other organization:

> In every organisation, there are particular aspects or elements which make up the organisation, and each of these needs to be functioning healthily for the whole to be healthy. Any unhealthy or malfunctioning element will have a negative ripple effect throughout the system (Davidoff & Lazarus, 1997:17)

The intervention that was made using SSM proved that many ideas can be generated by involving different elements of the system. One no longer has individualistic or fragmented kind of thinking, where each person thinks they know what is best for the school but do not have a forum where they can share their thoughts and have them debated. This is a learning process for everyone involved, in the sense that one is able to see if, as elements of a system, they are working together or against each other. It gives people an opportunity to start afresh and pull together towards the same vision. This vision is a shared vision which stands to benefit the school. According to Senge *et al*: 2000, Kindle Location 238, „People with a common purpose (e.g. the teachers, administrators and staff in school) can learn to nourish a sense of commitment in a group or organization by developing shared images of the future they seek to create and the principles and guiding practices by which they hope to get there".

5.4.2.4. The Importance of Monitoring and Controlling the System

It is important that the policies that have been put in place should be constantly monitored and controlled. One such policy is that of the establishment of SGBs in previously disadvantaged schools. Are they playing the role that they should be playing? The role played by the SGB in Port Shepstone High School proves the fruitfulness of this policy. However, its effectiveness cannot be realised if the

Department of Education does not monitor whether or not the SGBs are indeed playing the role that they are supposed to play in all other schools.

The Department of Labour has a system of randomly visiting construction sites, talking directly to workers and assessing their working conditions. This is done to ensure that the approved labour practices are adhered to. If they are unhappy about some practices, the contractor in charge of the site is given a list of actions to take and the date by which he or she must comply. Failure to do this may lead to the imposition of fines or the termination of the project. The same could be done by the Department of Education. The recommendation is not that the Department should close down schools but that it should intervene in order to create a proper SGB structure for the school.

Moreover, it is important for the Department of Education to constantly monitor the impact of some of its rules and regulations. The rule I have particularly in mind is that of instructing schools to accept a learner if that school is nearest to the learner"s home. One fully understands the rationale and noble intentions behind this rule. The question is what happens if the school has reached its maximum enrolment capacity and there is still a significant number of learners from the community who need places in the school? This rule may work better in urban areas, where there are more schools within a small geographic area than is the case with schools in rural areas.

This policy needs to be monitored to ensure that there are measures to compensate for the unintended outcomes of the rule. In this case, mobile classrooms may be provided until they are replaced by more permanent measures.

5.5 Conclusion

The intention of this study was to use systems thinking tools in the creation of an intervention programme that deals with disparities in the education system. The study was able to do that by first discussing the disparities in the education system in general. The discussion ranged from the history of our education system to the interventions that have been put in place, their significance, and the challenges to their implementation.

Secondly, the study discussed the research methodology that was used in the collection and analysis of data. Data was collected to give evidence to the disparities that exist between ex-Model C schools and previously disadvantaged schools. The focus was on the organisation and management systems of the schools.

Having collected and analysed the data, certain problems in the organisation and management of a previously disadvantaged school emerged. These challenges were in accord with literature reviewed on disparities in the South African education system. A model of intervention was thereafter created to deal with one of the challenges that had been highlighted.

The intervention process proved that beyond policies and strategies from the National Department of Education, a lot of work needs to be done within the boundaries of each school. As was stated in the study, the problem of educational disparities is a complex one to be dealt with by implementing policies, strategies, Acts, etc. Indeed, customized systemic methodologies can be used to bring about school transformation because „all schools and their situations are unique and require their own unique combination of theories, tools and methods for learning‟ (Senge *et al*: 2000, Kindle location 218).

The Department of Education, even in its best intentions, cannot offer solutions to all problems experienced in South African schools. The responsibility therefore lies with each school system to deal with its problems situations.

The question is why is the study concluding that it should be the responsibility of the school system to transform itself? It is because if we look at a school or any organization from a systems point of view, we realize that indeed „every organization is a product of how its members think and interact‟ (Senge *et al*: 2000, Kindle location 462). When Port Shepstone High School realized that their school‟s HODs needed assistance with their workloads, they decided to appoint some level one educators to assist HODs. This was not the directive of the Department of Education but a solution realized from within the school.

Likewise, the discussion (during the intervention process) at Sinomusa High about how the problem of overcrowding can be addressed yielded many options that had

not been discussed before. More than that, it helped to shift focus from blaming anyone about the situation, to getting solutions for the problem.

This proved that each school has the power to transform itself and it has to adopt a certain stance and attitude to ensure that its power works for it. The attitude that the study indicated that schools need is that of being a learning organization.

Through the intervention process the study showed what it entails to be a learning organization.

As has been indicated earlier, the school system needs to have a shared vision to be able to carry out its purpose. Phase 3 of SSM deals with creating root definitions and during this process, the school was able to come up with a shared vision by looking at the present system and articulating the system that they want.

When they were articulating the system that they want, they were able to discuss the importance of having an active SGB. This could have been a wish for many educators but they did not know how or did not have the courage to voice it. This process allowed educators to „develop the capability to talk safely and productively about dangerous and discomfiting subjects" (Senge et al: 2000, Kindle Location 238).

The intervention empowered the elements of the school to tackle head on the challenge that they have and should another challenge arise, they have learnt ways and means of improving the situation. The old attitude of waiting for the principal to request assistance from the Department of Education and thereafter wait patiently for assistance to come, whilst learners are suffering, can never be the way to run schools. People need to continuously engage with their problem situation in an attempt to bring about improvement. This is where the need for customized systemic methodologies comes in.

Customised systemic methodologies are relevant because the study indicated that schools are systems and as Senge *et al* (2000: Kindle location 1322) argue; „When we inhabit a school as a living system, we discover that it is always evolving. We participate in that evolution by asking questions like "Why is this system this way? Why do these rules exist…We are not willing to settle for explanations meant to pacify us, such as, "The people who have the power make it that way". This kind of

approach will help school managers and other elements to be not complacent, but take a proactive stance in bringing about transformation in their schools.

The evolving nature of systems means that today"s solutions may not be tomorrow"s solutions, and one cannot keep on going somewhere to get solutions, but must develop a self-organizing system. Systems thinking talks about emergent properties which, simply put, are unexpected results of an intervention. It is the antithesis to reductionist thinking that can make one believe that more classrooms will equal to smaller classes, less fighting, better results, etc.
.
The Department of Education can build more classrooms for the school to alleviate the problem of overcrowding. But this solution is no guarantee that the problem will be solved. The school may end up with even more learners as the department feels justified in sending more learners to the school; after all it has spent some money extending the school. The question is what does the school do in that situation? It cannot expect a speedy response, if any, from Head Office. This scenario indeed highlights the need for school systems that are empowered to solve their problems from within.

I believe the study has proven that there should be more dialogue taking place within schools as opposed to innumerable principal meetings that must come up with a policy that must fix problems of schools with diverse environments and elements. One fully concurs with Senge *et al* (2000: Kindle Location 181) when they argue that „It is becoming clear that schools can be re-created, made vital and sustainably renewed not by fiat or command and not by regulation, but by taking a *learning orientation'*.

Based on the above, one can say that the study has shown the importance of systems tools in dealing with educational disparities. The conclusion has summarized concepts of systems thinking that are vital for transforming schools.

In conclusion, after having considered the many findings, implications and recommendations of the study, there is just one thought that binds all of them together: that we need to work inclusively, as a team, in order to be able to hope that we will one day realize our ambitions as a nation. I believe that Collinson and Cook (2007:157) point to this solution in the following statement:

Individual performance has been emphasized for so many decades both in schools and in the workplace, that collective learning and systemic thinking may sound impossibly idealistic. We could take lessons from the military, where survival means working together as a team and where learning from and with others can quite literally mean the difference between life and death.

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QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION POINTS FOR FOCUS GROUP AT PORT SHEPSTONE HIGH SCHOOL

Questions/Discussion Items

1. Let us identify elements that form part of your school management system
2. Are these elements interrelated? Please elaborate.
3. Are the different elements of your management system accorded the importance they deserve, e.g. by being given a chance to voice their views and opinions, initiate projects, etc.
4. Do you think as a management team you have a shared vision and purpose for the school? Please elaborate.
5. Are you confident that the management system that you have in place can adapt and survive in a changing environment, such that you are still able to achieve the purpose and the vision that you have for the school? Examples of changing environments could be bigger enrolments, shortage of educators, learners' changing attitudes towards the rule of law and education in general, addiction problems, extra work that could be placed by Department of Education on management teams etc. Please elaborate.
6. Do you feel that as a school you have transformed and evolved over time or you still do things the same way you used to. Please give examples.
7. Are you feedback conscious, that is, do you analyse the effects of decisions and actions taken by your management team?
8. Are you boundary conscious, that is, do you spend time in deciding who forms or who does not form part of your management system and benefits or lack of benefits that relate to deciding who forms and does not form part of your management systems? Examples could be religious groups, learners themselves, business community, NGOs, wider community, policing forums, etc.
9. Can you identify any interventions/guidelines/policies of the Department of education that you applied to a problem situation and that created more problems
10. Can you identify any interventions/guidelines/policies of the Department of education that have been helpful in solving a problem situation

A. PARTNERSHIPS

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. If you have formed partnerships in the past or are presently in some, what have been some of the benefits that you are at liberty to mention?
2. Given benefits and challenges of partnerships, do you consider forming partnerships as one of vital means in achieving one's goals and objectives?

3. Any networking programmes with other schools?

GENERAL

1. How often do you have SGB meetings? Are they well attended?
2. How do you keep/contact parents?
3. Admin – How many learners do you have, state paid educators, secretaries
4. What your average class size?
5. What programmes do you have that take care of the following areas
   - Physical
   - Psychological
   - Spiritual
   - Social Development

End

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION POINTS FOR FOCUS GROUP AT SINOMUSA HIGH SCHOOL

A. SYSTEMS THINKING

Reading of what is within brackets is optional. I included it in case anyone wanted to understand what the concept of systems thinking is. Questions follow below.

[Systems' thinking is holistic thinking, where one approaches situations or issues as a system. A system is a set of components that are interconnected for a purpose. The main focus is on the interconnectedness of elements in a system. Schools can be seen as systems because they have elements or components that are interconnected and have a purpose to serve. Some examples of an entire school system are learners, parents, teaching staff, admin staff, maintenance staff, finances, curriculum, infrastructure, SGB, culture/ethos, etc]

Questions/Discussion Items

1. Let us identify elements that form part of your school management system
2. Are these elements interrelated? Please elaborate.
3. Are the different elements of your management system accorded the importance they deserve, e.g. by being given a chance to voice their views and opinions, initiate projects, etc. A good example would be that of encouraging parents to raise funds for the school.
4. Do you think as a school system you have a shared vision and purpose for the school? Please elaborate.
5. Are you confident that the management system that you have in place can adapt and survive in a changing environment, such that you are still able to achieve the purpose and the vision that you have for the school? Examples of changing environments could be bigger enrolments, shortage of educators, learners' changing attitudes towards the rule of law and education in general, addiction problems, extra work that could be placed by Department of Education on management teams etc. Please elaborate.
6. Do you feel that as a school you have transformed and evolved over time or you still do things the same way you used to. Please give examples.
7. Are you feedback conscious, that is, do you analyse the effects of decisions and actions taken by your management team?
8. Are you boundary conscious, that is, do you spend time in deciding who forms or who does not form part of your management system and benefits or lack of benefits that relate to deciding who forms and does not form part of your management systems? Examples could be religious groups, learners themselves, business community, NGOs, wider community, policing forums, etc.

9. Can you identify any interventions/guidelines/policies of the Department of education that you applied to a problem situation and that created more problems
10. Can you identify any interventions/guidelines/policies of the Department of education that have been helpful in solving a problem situation

B. PARTNERSHIPS

Reading of what is within brackets is optional. I included it in case anyone wanted to understand the kind of partnerships I am referring to. Questions follow below.

[Partnerships are voluntary collaborations that build on the respective strengths of each partner, optimize the allocation of resources and achieve mutually beneficial results over a sustained period – World Economic Forum (2003)

A partnership is a thoughtfully created, value-added and mutually beneficial relationship between consenting entities/organisations that is nurtured over time and leads to measurable results - World Bank Development Forum (Nov/Dec 1999)]

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. If you have formed partnerships in the past or are presently in some, what have been some of the benefits that you are at liberty to mention?
2. Given benefits and challenges of partnerships, do you consider forming partnerships as one of vital means in achieving one's goals and objectives?

GENERAL
1. How often do you have SGB meetings?
2. How do you keep in contact with parents?
3. Admin – How many learners do you have, state paid educators, secretaries and SGB staff?
4. What is your average class size?
5. What programmes do you have that take care of the following areas:

- Physical
- Psychological
- Spiritual
- Social Development

C. CREATION OF AN INTERVENTION PROGRAMME USING SYTEMS THINKING.

Using question 9 of section A, kindly participate in creating an effective intervention for the persistent problem situation you are experiencing. The following activity will be explained and directed by the researcher.

- ➢ Identify problem
- ➢ Give more characteristics of a problem (rich picturing)
- ➢ Identify transformation processes that will improve the situation (root definitions)
- ➢ Identify minimum set of activities necessary to make the system work
- ➢ Compare the above with what is happening at present
- ➢ Decide on what are your feasible and desirable changes
- ➢ Act to improve the situation

********END********