

THE UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

**STAKEHOLDERS' EXPERIENCES OF SCHOOL
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT IN THE CONTEXT
OF FREE PRIMARY EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY
OF TWO PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE RURAL
AREAS OF BEREA DISTRICT IN LESOTHO.**

MARGARET MARETSELISITSOE MALATALIANA

2009

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**Stakeholders' experiences of school financial management in the context of Free
Primary Education: A case study of two primary schools in the rural areas of
Berea district in Lesotho.**

By

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**A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the
Masters Degree, (Faculty of Education, Management, Leadership, Policy and
Development)**

Date: April 2009

Supervisor: Mr. S. D. Bayeni

DECLARATION

I, **Margaret Maretseliso Malataliana**, here declare that this dissertation entitled “Stakeholders’ experiences of school financial management in context of Free Primary Education: A case study of two primary schools in the rural areas of Bera district in Lesotho” is the result of my own investigation and research and that it has not been submitted in part or in full for any other degree or to any other university.

M. M. Malataliana-----

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-----*20/04/09*-----

DATE:

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DATE:

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ABSTRACT

This is a case study that focused on the stakeholders' experiences of school financial management and how the challenging experiences were addressed in the face of Free Primary Education (FPE) programme. In order to answer the research questions, individual interviews at face-to-face basis and document analysis were utilised. The data was collected from the two principals, six educators and four parental representatives of the two primary schools participated in this study.

The findings of this study revealed that the two primary schools experienced a severe lack of funds that emanated after the implementation of the FPE programme. The other important issue disclosed was that the government has to communicate with parents of learners and community members stating which basic educational needs are covered by the state funding and which are not catered for. This is hoped to bring understanding to parents and community members that the educational expenses of their children should be a shared responsibility with the government.

The findings of this study warrant the following recommendations that the government has to develop a new policy for parental funding as a way of subsidising the government funding. There should be a fund raising policy for all primary schools. The FPE programme, as it does not cater for all educational basic needs. It would be better to call it 'Educational Support Programme' (ESP). The government subvention should be increased from R5.00 at least to three quarters of the former school fees before the implementation of the FPE programme.

The findings of this study have implication to the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) to review and evaluate the FPE programme so that the revealed gaps and suggestions made in this study should be used as a way forward to improve this programme to suit quality education to be provided to all Basotho children. In addition, this should be followed by provision of sufficient funds to cater for and cover all the financial needs of an individual school.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

UPE	Universal Primary Education
FPE	Free Primary Education
ASC	Advisory School Committee
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	School Management Team
SDP	School Development Plan
TSC	Teaching Service Commission
MoET	Ministry of Education and Training
NMDS	National Manpower Development Secretariat
DEO	District Education Officer

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction and background

This study was located in Berea district, which is highly rural in Lesotho. In this district, two schools namely Rakotsoana and Motlejoa primary schools were involved in this study. These schools are part of Malimong dissemination centre which is made up of a cluster of schools established to ensure effective inspection by the Ministry of Education. In this community, the majority of families earn their living through stock and crop farming. While some of the parents in this community worked in the nearby factories, others are former employees retrenched from the gold mines of the Republic of South Africa. This socio-economic background has made the living very difficult.

In many years before 2000, many Basotho children attended primary education and some did not complete primary schooling while others did not attend at all. This conclusion is drawn on my experience as a primary school principal in Lesotho for fifteen years. Children's inability to attend schools was caused by the fact that many parents could not afford to pay school fees for their children's education. This situation demanded the Lesotho government to provide a free education to all children from different social classes. As a point of departure, the government of Lesotho declared the right to free education for all children (Lehohla, 1999). This declaration was a follow-up to the National Education Dialogue (NED) of 1978 whose aim was to introduce Universal Primary Education (UPE) as suggested by members of the United Nations (UN).

For effective implementation of the UPE, the NED of 1978 was followed by the international conference at Jomtien in 1990. In this conference there were 150 countries which agreed to declare primary education free with an aim of reducing illiteracy and. With regard to this commitment,

children and youth were expected to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs. Through this declaration, the Right Honourable Prime Minister, Mr. Pakalitha Bethuel Mosisili (22nd November 1999) announced that the implementation of Free Primary Education (FPE) programme in all primary schools would be effective in 2000. The FPE was a programme (as will be discussed in full in the next section) to relief parents from paying school fees and aimed at providing free education to all the Basotho children.

With the inception of the FPE programme in 2000, parents were no longer expected to pay school fees nor to make any financial related-contribution towards their children's education (Lehohla, 1999). Part of the FPE programme was to provide free lunch to the children. The government employed community members to prepare and provide lunch to school children. Although the FPE programme enhanced community development and contributed to the education of Basotho children, in primary schools there seemed to be insufficient funds to run the schools. Primary schools on government funding programme had to submit estimated enrolments to the government for allocation of resources every year but such allocation of resources was insufficient to meet the schools' needs. The financial challenges which emerged along with the implementation of FPE programme were revealed by the participants' responses and documents analysed in chapter four.

When FPE programme was implemented it was generally believed that the government would provide all basic resources to primary education level but the government provided only learners' text books, stationery, teachers' guides and lunch for learners during the day. Consequently, primary schools lacked financial resources, which in turn affected the school financial management because the school budget failed to cater for the entire financial needs of the school. In some cases, financial constraints made it almost impossible for majority of the Basotho children to pursue educational goals as there was no more clear school financial management that informed planning,

organisation, leading and controlling over organisational finances (Swart, 2002). Therefore, primary schools seemed to function ineffectively due to inadequate financial resources. Part of the problem was that the FPE programme compelled schools to make requisitions that tend to cover stationery, learners' and educators' books only. The abolishment of school fees by the government affected the schools negatively. Bisschoff and Thurlow (2005, pp.9-14) argue that "school fees are, in many instances, the lifeline of the school" This acknowledges the vital role played by school fees in primary schools before the implementation of the FPE programme. Therefore, my standpoint is that in order for the schools to function effectively, there must be sufficient financial resources so that schools can achieve their shared vision, purpose and a sense of direction in order to create conducive culture of teaching and learning.

1.2 Free Primary Education

Following the Universal Primary Education (UPE) and the subsequent Jomtien international conference held in Thailand in 1990, the member states of the United Nations (UN) established diverse programmes to ensure the implementation of 'free and compulsory' education in all schools across the world. Taking these goals of the UPE in the context of Lesotho, the Free Primary Education (FPE) programme is what the government of Lesotho tailored for the Basotho children like other Sub-Saharan countries. The FPE programme rolled out from standard one to the proceeding levels of schooling each year right up to standard seven which is the last level in the primary education level (Ministry of Education, 2001). The FPE programme had to phase out the payment of school fees each time it was introduced in each standard every year.

In order to maintain a fair involvement of stakeholders in education, there is Advisory School Committee (ASC) in every primary school and this is discussed in full in chapter four. The ASC is a team of people representing various segments of the community that surrounds an individual

school. Its role is to advise the principal and educators on how to improve and develop education quality and advise the principal with the annual school budget. Similarly, the South African Schools Act (No 84 of 1996) governs the community schools with a School Governing Bodies (SGB). Its role is to support idea of a partnership between all people who have an interest in education in schools and it gives people a far greater role in the governance and development of their schools. The ASC and SGB have similar roles of promoting interconnectedness and partnership of the stakeholders in the education of their children; therefore, these concepts will be used interchangeably in this study.

1.3 Rationale of the study

Drawing on my work experience as a principal for the past eleven years, I became aware that in 2001 primary schools in Lesotho experienced financial difficulties as a result of inadequate educational resources. This was caused by none payment of school fees after the implementation of Free Primary Education (FPE) programme which started in 2000. Schools became financially disadvantaged. The FPE programme only covered specific areas such as feeding scheme for learners, teachers' and learners' books, stationery and building maintenance (Ministry of Education, 2001), and left out important areas such as sports, salaries of security personnel, travelling expenses for educators to attend professional workshops and purchasing of instructional materials which were formerly covered through school fees. Due to a lack of finances, the ASC in primary schools could neither coerce parents into paying school fees nor encourage them to participate and engage them in fund raising activities. This was caused by the perception created by the government that education was be free hence no school fees could be collected.

Given the fact that schools were no longer able to cater for the basic school necessities, consequently creating a gap in the primary education system, it is important to investigate the

challenges that those schools affected faced. How did they cope with new demands in the face of FPE programme, is a question to be worth answering from the stakeholders' perspective. Hence, this study is worth doing, precisely to answer how schools facing this problem coped.

1.4 Statement of the problem

This study focused on the stakeholders' experiences of school financial management and how the challenges faced by the primary education were addressed in the face of Free Primary Education. Due to the implementation of FPE programme, the school fees was abolished and the primary schools experienced a severe lack of funds. The abolishment of school fees led to a financial challenge that remained as a financial problem in primary schools on the FPE programme. Following the financial constraints in primary schools, this study is intended to understand the stakeholders' experiences of school financial management and how the challenging experiences were addressed. In order to understand the stakeholders' experiences of school financial management the following research questions were posed:

- (i) What are stakeholders' experiences of school financial management?
- (ii) How do the stakeholders deal with financial challenges that emerged along in the face of FPE programme?

In order to answer the above key questions, the participants were asked to respond to what major financial challenges emerged during the implementation of FPE programme and how such challenges affected the effective functioning of the school.

1.5 Conceptual framework

This study is informed by the concept of systems theory introduced in the 1940s in the field of Engineering and Cybernetics. Heylighen (2003) asserts that

the systems theory is an assemblage of interrelated parts that work

together by way of some driving process to share the same common characteristics. The components of the system function as structures they are generalisation of reality, function in the same way and in a coordinated manner.

Such parts are the parents of learners, teachers and members of the community that form the external environment and the school as an organisation. The systems theory argues that there is dependency that exists between the organisation and its environment (Dalin, 1998). These parts produce common objective that does not belong to one unit but to the whole system. The systems theory implies that the existence of these units depends on one another. Similarly, schools, like systems, are made up of different parts that are interdependent to effective functioning of long-term survival. Within the context of this study, systems theory is presented through Lesotho primary schools that function under the supervision and control of the ASC that comprises the following stakeholders:

- One educators' representative,
- One Village chief,
- One principal of the school,
- Four Parental representatives and
- Two Church representatives.

All these members need to work in a coordinated manner for the common goal of the school. Each member is required to communicate and link up well with other members for the survival of their school. Based on systems theory, the schools as social systems are dynamic, and can be developed and arranged in hierarchies. In a systems theory, the stakeholders function as interdependent parts (sub-systems) aiming at one common goal and self-maintenance within the organisation. It is important for these parts (parents, educators and other members of the community) to coordinate their activities and work as a team. Therefore, their interconnectedness and interdependence

contributes to a total effective operation within the school system to achieve a success (Banghart, 1969).

1.6 The layout of study

The structure of this research project comprises five chapters. Chapter one presents the background to the research problem, which entails the rationale of the study as well as statement of the problem which will serve as basis of this research. The following sub-headings will be outlined in this chapter: location of the study, conceptual framework, focus and purpose of the study, limitations of the study as well as definition of key concepts which will come into play throughout this report. Chapter two presents and explores existing literature regarding the topic of this study by relating them to the challenges faced by the stakeholders of the two primary schools presented earlier on in this chapter.

Chapter three presents the research design and methodology of this study. In the same chapter the philosophical and epistemological position as well as the paradigm which informed the theoretical position of this study is discussed. This chapter further presents a detailed account of research design, methods of data collection, research instruments as well as the underlying principles that influenced the selection for data collection. The measures taken to analyse data will also be specified. Chapter three also examines issues regarding the trustworthiness, transferability, ethical considerations, as well as the limitations of the methodological design of the study. While chapter four focuses on data analysis, presentation, interpretation and discussion of the data collected, chapter five presents recommendations and a concluding section. In conclusion, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the research findings and methods are discussed shortly. The conclusion of this study deals with the extent to which the key questions of this study were answered.

1.7 Definition of the key concepts

The definitions of concepts are provided to clarify how they are used in this study.

1.7.1 Free Primary Education

This is a universal programme initiated by the United Nation (UN) countries to eradicate educational disparities among the Sub-Saharan communities (Jomtien, 1990). It is a programme designed to provide quality and free education to all school learners. This programme compels the member states to fund education in their countries to ensure the fulfilment of the concepts of Education for All (EFA). The Free Primary Education is the area of focus in this study where the experiences of the participants in this study reveal what challenging experiences that emerged in the context of FPE programme.

1.7.2 Experience

Experience refers to the nature of events someone has undergone and accumulates knowledge or skills that result from direct participation. According to this study the experience of the participants under study is hoped to reveal what challenges they came across through their participation in the face of FPE programme.

1.7.3 Stakeholders

Stakeholders are individuals or a group of people involved in a particular organisation, and hold shared responsibilities and interests towards the success of their organisation by delivering intended results. These individuals are affected by the activities of their organisation; they have direct and indirect interest on their organisation. Their responsibilities involve maintaining the viability of organisation's product and services (Freeman, 1980). This study, identified the stakeholders as principals, educators and parental representatives in their school governance and these people are

interrelated and work to achieve their organisational goals. The stakeholders are seen as the main source of information to respond to what challenging experiences emerged along the face of Free Primary Education and how such challenges were addressed.

1.7.4 Financial resources

Bisschoff and Thurlow (2005, p.8) define financial resources as

the money available to acquire or purchase real resources which are essential to ensure that operational and support services in the educational organisations are properly and adequately provided.

The financial resources in this study are seen as important element since this study is going to look into how insufficient funds in the context of FPE contribute in individual school governance under this study.

1.7.5 Financial management

According to Kruger (2003) financial management is a process of making use of available funds to achieve the set goals an institution and it is an activity concerned with the proper balancing of financial books in order to maximize the budget for what can be afforded.

1.7.6 Advisory School Committee

The Advisory School Committee (ASC) is a body of the parents of learners mostly represented and that has made parents voice to give a difference in the education of their children. The ASC supports the school's mission through the efforts of parents that participate towards the education of their children. This is a body of persons elected to form a school governance committee that entails the parents of the learners, professional staff, the village chief, and the proprietor who is the church

representative that owns the schools. The role of this elected body is to advise the principal and educators on how to improve and develop education quality (Bevins, 2000). According to this study the participants for the actual interviews are directly involved into the Advisory School Committees of the two primary schools under study.

1.7.7 Challenge

Challenge is an action-oriented methodology that utilises elements of risk taking, problem solving and purposeful reflection to enable individuals to learn and grow. It is a situation of being faced with something needing great mental or physical effort in order to be done successfully. This study is focusing into what major challenges the stakeholders experienced in this study and how challenging experiences were addressed in the face of the Free Primary Education.

1.8 Conclusion

The research on stakeholders' experiences of school financial management in the context of Free Primary Education: A case study of two primary schools in the rural areas of Berea district in Lesotho was conducted at Motlejoa and Rakotsoana primary schools. This case study research project was undertaken using the individual face-to-face interviews with research participants and I also utilised the document analysis from the two primary schools under study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study focused on stakeholders' experiences of school financial management in the context of FPE programme and how the challenging experiences were addressed. This chapter presents a review of relevant literature regarding this topic.

2.2 Review of existing literature

This chapter presents a critical review of the existing scholarly literature around the Universal Primary Education (UPE). This is a universal programme initiated by the United Nations (UN) countries to eradicate and alleviate educational disparities among the rich and poor communities by making education accessible to all kinds of people (Jomtien, 1990). In order for the government of Lesotho to fulfil the universal commitment of 'free education' like other Sub-Saharan countries, Lesotho initiated Free Primary Education (FPE) for the Basotho children. The implementation of FPE programme was followed by abolishment of school fees. As a principal for fifteen years in primary schools, I had observed that in Lesotho all the primary schools on FPE programme experienced severe financial constraints due to the abolishment of school fees. Clearly, the government educational support was far from meeting individual school needs. This is revealed by the prevailing diverse financial needs of individual schools that exceeded the government educational support. Admittedly, in response to a lack of enough support, primary schools needed additional financial resources. Therefore, parental contributions in a form of school fees can help to improve the supply and quality of schooling by complementing the resources provided by the government (Colclough, Al- Samarria, Rose and Tembon 2003). Many of these needs can only be provided easily through parental involvement in schools as they hold diverse expertise across various fields.

Niemann (1991, p.388) purports that

a school is closely linked to various external structures that are mutually dependent.

According to Campher, Preeze, Grobber, Lock and Shaba (2003) a school is a multicultural organisation; it has several interdependent components that function together for the attainment of the set goals. The interdependence of such components enhances active participation in all educational matters of their school. The working together of such components enhances their active participation in all educational matters of their school. Therefore, it is essential for such sub-structures to contribute towards the educational expenses of their children as well as in decision-making processes. It is also my view that for the school to succeed, all the parents and the community that surround the schools, must all be actively involved in the decision-making process at community level such as planning the budget of the school and allocation of financial resources. The working together of these sub-groups is seen as a way of facilitating stakeholders' ownership of their school (Davidoff and Lazarus, 2000). Therefore, it is essential to decentralize control and management of school finances to the school level. With school finances, the principal will be able to provide support to educators and learners.

In this regard, it is through an active involvement of such external structures namely parents and community members that the school can get additional financial resources. I believe that in order for primary schools to attain all basic financial resources, the school principals along with the Advisory School Committee (ASC) members need to institute a financial planning campaign for the school and set clear targets. Campher, du Preeze, Grobber and Shaba (2003) contend that financial planning entails goal setting; determination of various options, and chart ways of achieving organisational goals. Mestry (2005) is of an opinion that financial planning provides a school with a clear view of how it will make use of its resources. Therefore, this gives primary schools much

more freedom in managing their financial affairs in a day-to-day running of their funds in addition to support what is given by the FPE programme.

Thomas (1990) argues that decentralization of financial management and control of schools enables the School Governing Body (SGB) to manage financial issues based on school priorities identified. Due to numerous priorities, school governing body needs to involve parents in massive campaign of raising funds. As a role of the governing body, it is expected to supplement the financial support provided by the state (Mestry, 2005). In support of active participation of the SGB likewise the Advisory School Committee in Lesotho, MacPherson and Dlamini (1998) assert that where there is no adequate capacity building, the governing body is likely to be ineffective and, as a result, leads to a lack of credibility which influences the demise of such governing bodies. From my perception it is necessary for the governments that provide a 'free' education to empower the school governing bodies to be responsible to draw a yearly budget, generate funds for their school and allocate such funds according to their School Development Plan (SDP).

According to Kruger (2003)

school finance is always informed by draft budget. Thus, financial budget is seen as a mechanism that enables an institution to make its plans and estimation on how much is needed for its financial year. (p.236)

It is from this view that Anderson, Briggs, and Burton (2001) define a budget as the other way of expressing the organisational aims and prioritizing the financial activities of an individual school. Knight (2004) also concurs that a budget is a planning tool for decision modelling of managing a school during the next financial year. In this regard, it is through budgeting that primary schools,

like any other organisations, will align their financial resources with their educational purposes for their current financial year.

Bush and Heystek (2005) contend that it is essential to give the SGB budgetary powers so that they are accountable for all problematic decisions about the school financial income and school expenditure. Bisschoff and Sayed (1999) assert that financial empowerment of the SGB enables them to use their closer knowledge of learners and their family backgrounds in determining how resources could be utilised.

Since the schools are seen as independent organisations, Anderson, Briggs and Burton (2001) maintain that it is important that delegation of financial resources should be allocated to the school committee members who are in charge of prioritising and managing the school financial resources in accordance with daily demands of their school. I have used the systems theory to understand how the participants in this study function as interrelated sub-structures. The systems theory supports the inter-dependence of various sub-structures that function as a network for the success of their organisation. Therefore, the strategies within the systems theory enables me to understand what challenging experiences a single substructure experienced in their school governance and how such challenges were addressed in the face of Free Primary Education (FPE) programme as mentioned in chapter four. The participants' experiences and responses were related to other research findings conducted by different researchers as mentioned in chapter two.

Different researchers present different views regarding Free Primary Education. For example, the study conducted by Morojele (2004) focused on the strategies that informed the implementation of FPE at Pitseng Primary in Lesotho. The findings emerged that there is a perception that the implementation of FPE programme was to increase the educators' workload which has made the

educators to lose interest on their work and this has constituted a major disciplinary and administrative problem in the school. One of the findings showed that there is a lack of role clarity among the stakeholders particularly parents who are not willing to pay for their children's education. Additionally, that was followed by the perception of the members of Advisory School Committee (ASC) that there is a lack of cooperation among the stakeholders at Pitseng Primary school and that affected the effective implementation of FPE programme. It was also found that stakeholders from Pitseng primary school do not have in-depth insight of the de facto implications of FPE programme.

The other study conducted by Matete (2004) focused on how far the children in Lesotho benefit from Free Primary Education. With regard to this study, the followings findings from the three districts in Lesotho namely Maseru, Mokhotlong and Mofokeng revealed that the FPE programme provides for fees, learners' text books, stationery and feeding, leaving out other important aspects of support of children's life such as sports, school uniform and many others. Although the government is providing, there is inadequate supply of instructional resources and sometimes they are supplied late after the school term has begun. As a result of this, the school development projects have collapsed since parents have withdrawn their financial support they used to provide schools because education of their children is free. Further findings divulged that there is high teacher: pupil ratio which has compromised the quality of the education that all the Basotho children have to receive under the FPE programme. This study revealed that there are some Basotho children who are still left out and do not access education as a human right.

The study conducted by Brock-Utne (2000) focused on medium of instruction that facilitated the implementation of the FPE programme in the Sub-Saharan countries. The findings of this study revealed that in several Sub-Saharan countries the medium of instruction is English or French. Due

to the use of non-mother tongue as medium of instruction it has been observed that the learners do not perform very well. In several cases where the language of instruction is mother tongue the learners learn easily and become more proficient in all school subjects including English than the pupils educated through the medium of English. This study has divulged that more use of mother tongue enables learners to learn quickly. For example, in Madagascar the national and uniting language is Malgash which is a medium of instruction and has been used successfully up to secondary schools. Additionally, Somalians used their mother tongue as a medium of instruction in all schools and training centres at pre-university level. This shows that learners' first language plays a vital role by enabling children to perform much better and access education without language barrier.

Unlike the above studies, my study is worth doing because none of the studies conducted on stakeholders' experiences of school financial management in the face of FPE. The main concerns also included what major challenges emerged and how such challenging experiences were addressed. With reference to chapter four, the findings of my study revealed that there is a severe lack of funds that made the schools unable to maintain school buildings as well as school development projects. It has been revealed that parents are no longer willing to contribute financially since education is 'free'. Furthermore, the roles of the school committee members are not clearly maintained and such members claimed to be disempowered. There is also a severe shortage of instructional resources in primary schools.

Wolhunter, Steyn, and Steyn (2003) conceive education system as a joint responsibility of all citizens who have interests in the education. According to Heystek and Louw, (1999) the South African School Act (SASA) 84 of 1996 requires South African parents of learners to participate in

school governance as well as in fund raising activities. The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 p.21 states that:

the School Governing Bodies are obliged to do their utmost to improve the quality of education in their schools, by raising additional resources to supplement those which the state provides from public funds.

According to Lumby (2005) it is important to involve parents of the learners and the community members as stakeholders in the sharing of more effective education. Pampallis (1998) asserts that the SASA 84 of 1996 obliges the school governing bodies to develop a school budget, based on school fees to collect and money collected by renting out school buildings to generate funds.

It is obvious that every school should have the basic resources (human and material resources) to operate effectively. This can only be achieved if a school has sufficient financial resources. Such resources can be made available through payment of school fees. It has been identified that schools are not independent or isolated entities but they have to operate in contact with their social context. Barnard (1991) and Campher, du Preeze, Grobblers, and Shaba (2003) have a similar view that schools are multicultural organisations since they comprise a number of sub-structures which are interdependent components. Therefore, participation of parents and the community members in their schools is essential since it promotes a joint venture. These sub-structures form a whole that functions together to attain a common goal. It is essential for the parents to pay school fees to supplement the government subsidy in primary schools.

It is my view that school fees are essential for schools to survive, therefore, school fees should be reintroduced in all primary schools as a developmental levy. The reintroduction of school fees can be used to cover other expenses that government funding cannot. Bisschoff and Thurlow, (2005, p.9) contend that

although the governments are subscribing to the aims of 'free education for all' they acknowledge that provision is beyond their means.

This reveals that in primary schools there is a lack of financial resources. Such a lack of financial resources can be dealt with in a joint venture between the government and other stakeholders that are part of the school governance.

According to Motala (2005) the function of the SGB is to support schools in a number of ways including fundraising. In this regard, financial resources are considered as essential levy in the daily running of the school and school fees provide the basic needs of a school. In order for the organisation to achieve the set goals, Bisschoff and Thurlow (2005) are of the opinion that it is essential for the school to employ administrative principles. These principles entail planning, controlling, organising and allocation of school's financial resources. It is through the application of these administrative principles that the ASC can prioritize its financial activities according to School Development Plan (SDP). On the basis of this, the ASC members can utilize scarce financial resources to create prosperity in their schools. With reference to the views of several scholars locally and internationally about adequate finances as a life line of an individual organisation, it is hoped that the experiences of stakeholders in this study explain what is taking place in primary schools in Lesotho. Knight (2004) also purports that it is a sole responsibility of the SGB to plan the school budget so that they can prioritise the financial needs of their school as they are accountable for school financial management. Following the implementation of FPE in primary schools, it has been observed that several developing countries met with problems which will be explained shortly.

2.3 Studies conducted in some African countries

Studies conducted in several Sub-Saharan countries shown that during the implementation of FPE/UPE, these countries used various yardsticks to measure the extent to which an individual

country managed to fund primary education. Following their commitment there were several challenges they faced. For example, in Malawi, it was found that in 1990 school fees were charged as a cost recovery measure to supplement the government's budgetary resources, that was to cover sports and examination expenses while parents also bore the costs of purchasing text and exercise books, writing materials and school uniforms (Colclough *et al.*, 2003). Although this country tried to implement UPE, studies revealed that due to the increasing financial constraints in schools, the government of Malawi was compelled to increase school fees. In the lower grades, learners were made to pay at least 50 percent while in higher grades it was 25 percent. Other problems were a lack of money to buy school supplies and to pay for sports equipments, water, maintenance and other bills and that was followed by a severe decrease of school enrolment. Due to these problems, schools were compelled to request contributions from the households (ibid).

According to Colclough *et al.*, (2003) in Uganda it was discovered that the introduction of Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 1997 led to a sharp reduction of educational costs to the households. As a result, school fees were abolished for up to a maximum of four children per family. This triggered an enrolment of learners from 2.8 million to 5.3 million. Although the government of Uganda tried to universalize education but the government resources were not made available to compensate the schools for a loss of fee income. Children after going through primary education could not proceed to higher education and this resulted into high rate of dropouts after primary education.

The school funding system in Nigeria is based on local governments. Some local governments get bigger slices of funding than others. This has caused glaring disparities among the schools, resulting to some schools enjoying more benefits than their local counterparts. As a result, that led to the exclusion of a large number of children from accessing education as a human basic right. This is

observed whereby the state funding is distributed unevenly as the well resourced local governments get more while poorly resourced local governments get little share.

The Nigerians have divergent views regarding the 'free primary education'. This emanates from political differences at the state and local governments and that created a hot debate around 'free primary education'. As a result, the opposition parties consider the implementation of 'free primary education' as a political manoeuvre and the opposition parties convince a big part of citizens to hold back their contributions since education is 'free'. It is essential to involve parents as major stakeholders to participate and echo their views regarding their children's education.

The Ministry of Education in Lesotho in 1999 proclaimed that the education funding system would cover all Basotho children equally. The Free Primary Education would also cover the text books for an individual learner, stationery to be used by learners and educators, feeding expenses for learners and maintenance fee for school buildings. Considering what the Lesotho Ministry of Education can cover, very significant areas were not included in the funding system. These included sports equipments, educators' travelling expenses to attend professional development programmes and purchasing of consumable instructional materials for practical subjects such as Science, Agriculture and Home Economics were not covered under FPE programme. As a result, these subjects cannot include practical portions which ensure that learners have portable skills when the exit primary education.

According to Motala (2005, p.59)

there is absence of criteria for the distribution of state funds, and that has an impact on learners to access basic education declared as a universal right.

In Lesotho, inadequate funding was experienced and was identified as a severe problem also affecting the effectiveness of the Advisory School Committee (ASC) in primary schools. The consequences of this are that the ASC members are faced with financial constraints that are difficult to solve due to parental insufficient knowledge regarding 'free primary education'. The majority of such problems stem from a general assumption that the FPE programme is a 'political manoeuvre' and thus made most parents and community members to rebuff their financial support for the education of their children. As a result, the ASC members in primary schools in Lesotho are not well informed about their responsibilities especially regarding the fund raising in the context of FPE programme. The Lesotho situation presents a sharp contrast of what South Africa (SA) does as the South African School Act (SASA) 84 of 1996 defines clearly how schools are to be funded and the role of the SGB in educational development. The SASA 84 of 1996 notes that parents are expected to be actively involved in all educational activities and in raising funds for their schools.

It is clear that parents of the learners play a major role in schools to enhance a significant improvement. Mazibuko (2004) points out that the involvement of parents and community members in schools is essential because educational institutions are a natural extension of home. Therefore, parents and community members should participate and contribute in the educational development of their children as there is a need to supplement the state's funding. According to Colclough *et al.*, (2003), the introduction of school fees is another way of bolstering school revenue. It is of a great importance for the learners' parents to pay school fees since the primary schools experienced severe financial constraints.

Pampallis, (1998) points out that

unfortunately, due to a shortage of government funds for education even the poorest communities will be expected to contribute financially to the essential needs of their school
(p.166).

This shortage of educational funding was experienced in several Sub-Saharan countries which implemented 'Free Primary Education'. Campher *et al.*, (2003) purport that since it is too difficult for the developing states supply primary schools with sufficient funding; it is up to the ASC or School Governing Body (SGB) to generate extra funds for the schools in any means. Coincidentally, Bisschoff and Sayed (1999) are of an opinion that parental and community financial support is a vital source to supplement the state funding since the education funding does not meet all the needs for the primary schools.

I strongly believe that the states that offer a 'free primary education' should also take into consideration the rate of population growth which can possibly affect the proposed annual budget for educational funding. Such considerations must include, among other things, the annual budget of an individual government, geographical location of schools, learning differences of learners, social and economic status of the communities that surround the schools when allocating funds for education. Failure to do so may result to inefficiency for such states in promoting social justice in their communities.

Pampallis (1998) asserts that there is a gap between the policy intention and policy practice. This is maintained in several studies conducted in the developing countries where 'free and compulsory education' is introduced. Although several Sub-Saharan countries, had signed a universal declaration regarding free education, Geo-jaja (2006) claims that the failure of the Nigerian government to provide free education has caused the households and the non-governmental organisations to subsidise UPE. It is clear that parental financial support is still needed to supplement free education provided by the developing countries.

Although several developing countries cannot improve their education system because their governments cannot provide all necessary needs, but still do not require parents to pay school fees. It is my view that school fees are essential because they contribute to school improvement. Bisschoff (1997) also emphasises that it is the sole responsibility of the schools to generate more money to be used to develop and improve their practice. In Lesotho generally, the efficient planning of school fees starts from making a draft budget by the ASC members. Subsequently, such a planning needs to be approved by the School Management Team (SMT), which is in charge of the effective functioning of the ASC members in an individual primary school. Kruger (2003) points out that school budget is drawn to express the mission of an individual school in monetary terms. Similarly, Reschovsky (2006) describe the school budget as a powerful planning instrument that indicates and prioritises school activities and resources required to perform education-related activities. On the basis of this, it is important that all primary schools, like any other organisations, need to have their financial resources in order to avoid too much dependence on state funding. Campher, du Preeze, Grobber and Shaba (2000) allege that financial resources enable schools to attain their common goals as set in a School Development Plan (SDP).

In support of this background, I regard paying school fees as an important factor in order for primary schools to become self-reliant. For primary schools to achieve this, it needs to be seen as a joint responsibility of the parents through the ASC members. Drawing on my personal observations, the FPE programme has to be financially supplemented and supported for its goals including those that are not covered by the state funding, in order to be met and satisfy the needs of the community members and parents of the learners.

Financial contribution by parents is an essential aspect in education, for it plays a major role in promoting greater efficiency and effectiveness in schools (Preedy, 1999). Niemann (1991) concurs

with Preedy (1999) that for the maintenance of high levels of education, schools may depend on the community's financial support. In this study, although the Lesotho Ministry of Education (2001) has declared that the needs that were covered by the school fees will be catered for under FPE programme, the Lesotho government managed to provide such activities as maintaining and building additional classrooms, providing learners with meals and study materials such as textbooks and stationery. Stakeholders (parents of learners and members of the community with legitimate interest) were not required to make financial contribution to the essential needs for the education of their children. It is obvious that schools cannot survive without support from the relevant stakeholders. Foreman (1999) maintains that due to democratic school governance, schools in several countries are self-managed and that has empowered schools to be reliable and responsible for their school funds. This shows that it is essential for the government to increase and empower school governing members in primary schools to be more accountable for school funds, for better educational standards in their schools.

According to Bisschoff (1997) it is essential to make it clear to the parents that educational support received from the government is not enough. Therefore, parents have to pay for certain school expenses to supplement government subsidy. For example, studies conducted in Tanzania showed that educational needs are always greater than state budgetary provision (Colclough, *et al.*, 2003). As a result, schools need to raise funds to supplement the state educational funding. In Lesotho, it would benefit the primary schools if parents of learners pay school fees despite the government's declaration of free education. Thus, parental involvement will establish a joint venture with the government, parents of learners, as well as other members of the community in contributing towards educational expenses.

According to Motala (2005) the South African education funding categorises schools from four quintiles ranging from the most poor to least poor. The poorest receives 35% of resources while the least poor receives 5% of resources. Schools are funded according to their conditions and poverty degree within their community (South African School Act 84 of 1996). Schools are divided into two groups namely: section 20 and section 21. The school governing bodies under section 20 make applications for carrying out their procurements. Such applications include the following:

- Approval to maintain and improve their schools' property such as buildings;
- To determine the extra-mural curriculum and choice of subjects;
- Purchase of textbooks and educational material and
- Pay for services to school.

The section 21 schools receive a lump sum per learner from the state funding, schools deal directly with the suppliers and schools are obliged to keep documents or receipts as evidence of purchases and services paid for. The provincial education department will make a follow-up on how public funds are used. The SGB members in section 21 are expected to be accountable and demonstrate their capability to handle public funds (SASA 84 of 1996).

Section 20 schools are those schools which are not granted approval to procure their own goods and services. Such schools are funded according to the resource-targeting table. These schools are informed of their budget, which is in a form of a 'paper budget'. Schools are also funded according to their conditions and the poverty degree within their community (SASA 84 of 1996). In order to allocate resources fairly, the South African government initiated a resource-targeting table to enable school funding as represented by the table below.

Table 1:**Resource targeting table**

School quintiles, from poorest to least poor	Expenditure Allocation	Cumulative percentage of schools	Cumulative percentage of non-personnel and non-capital recurrent expenditure	Per learner expenditure indexed to average of 100
Poorest 20%	35% of resources	20%	35%	175
Next 20%	25% of resources	40%	60%	125
Next 20%	20% of resources	60%	80%	100
Next 20 %	15% of resources	80%	95%	75
Least 20%	5% of resources	100%	100%	25

Source: SASA 84 of 1996.

According to Reschovsky (2006), the poorest South African schools receive more educational funds as to make quality schooling possible without school fees. In order to achieve education for all, the SASA 84 of 1996 also grants some parents of learners from community schools with different exemption from paying school fees. For example, parents are categorised as those who are entitled for full, partial, conditional and no exemption. The table below presents the proposed qualifications of parents who are eligible or not eligible to pay for school fees.

Table 2**Fee exemption in public schools**

Full exemption	Partial exemption	No exemption	Conditional exemption
Combined annual gross income of parents is less than ten times of the annual school fees of an individual learner.	If combined annual gross of parents is less than thirty times but more than ten times the annual fees per learner.	If the combined annual gross income of parents is, more than thirty times the annual school fees per learner parents do not qualify for exemption.	This is a conditional and special offer for the parents who have special circumstances affecting parents' ability to pay school fees.

Source: SASA 84 of 1996.

However, in Lesotho the funding for 'free education' has one formula working assumption that schools have the same needs and those learners are from the same backgrounds. In fact, opposite in time, schools have different needs which are determined by the degree of poverty of the community

that surrounds that particular school. Funding formula for FPE in Lesotho does not differentiate learners in terms of needs. Brock-Utne (2000 pp. 48-54) alleges that:

those who earn most and often have the fewest school children pay most.

In this regard, those who are made to pay for schooling; they promote equity measures and a way of redistributing a society's resources from the richer to the poorer.

Although there is a universal commitment to strive for 'education for all', most developing countries rely on donations and, as a result, there are several impediments such as insufficient funds which hinder the children's constitutional right to access free basic education in primary schools. Such hindrances are due to insufficient funds from the states to finance primary education. This situation tends to contradict the idea of 'education for all', as schools are compelled to admit all learners regardless of insufficient funding from the state. Considering South African public school funding practice as indicated in SASA, I have a strong belief that Lesotho can learn from such practice and adapt to suit the Lesotho context. This however does not suggest that Lesotho must merely borrow from South Africa far from this. It is my view that FPE programme needs to be redefined in order to handle challenges already mentioned, particularly meeting the basic education needs.

Moreover, from my experience as a principal, admission of learners with different learning disabilities is also a problem since educators are not skilled to handle such learners. Borg and Gall (1979) argue that it is essential for educators to be given special training for different learners with learning disabilities. Another challenge emerges from opposition parties which, in many senses, present particular influence on members of the community to withdraw their support in the school financial activities on the ground that primary school education is under state funding. Some

opposition parties politicised FPE programme by communicating contradicting messages to encourage their followers not to contribute to the development of primary education as it is declared free. As a result, primary schools are faced with problems of how to raise funds as parents are no longer willing to contribute in such activities.

2.4 Conclusion

Drawing on the reviewed literature, this chapter shows that schools are not isolated organisations from their social contexts. Rather, they include the involvement of parents of the learners, the general members of the community as well as the government. This chapter revealed that there is an inter-dependence that exists between the school and its environment that contributes towards the survival of the school. Other scholars, such as Niemann (2004) and Wolhunter, Steyn and Steyn (2003) state that the working together of the stakeholders in the schools is seen as a way of facilitating the stakeholders' ownership of their school and sense of responsibility into the education of their children.

With reference to several developing countries where 'Free Primary Education' was implemented, this chapter revealed that such countries are experiencing major problems. Such problems include, among others, the parental misunderstanding of 'free education', massive enrolment that informs a high pupil/teaching ratio, lack of incoming funds as a result of an impact of HIV/AIDS pandemic where learners are affected and orphaned. This chapter also points out that other learners have learning disabilities and are not properly attended to by the educators due to inadequate skills required in handling learners with learning disabilities. The next chapter will focus on the research design, methodology and methods of data collection.

CHAPTER THREE

DATA COLLECTION AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This study was located in the two primary schools namely Motlejoa and Rakotsoana. These schools form Malimong dissemination centre, which is a cluster of schools established to ensure effective inspection by the ministry of education. The purpose of this study was to understand the stakeholders' experiences of school financial management in the context of FPE. In this study I utilised a case study of two primary schools at which the face-to-face interviews were conducted with the two principals, six educators and four parental representatives. These primary schools are situated in Berea district in Lesotho. In this chapter research design, methodology and methods of data collection are discussed in detail.

3.2 Research design and methodology

3.2.1 Research design

This study was located in the interpretive paradigm. The data collected was analysed, interpreted and explained from the individual's view point. I utilised qualitative research design, which takes the form of a case study at Rakotsoana and Motlejoa primary schools. Cresswell (1994, pp. 1-4) points out that

qualitative study is an inquiry process of understanding a social or a human related problem based on building a complex, holistic picture formed with words reporting detailed views of informants and conducted in a natural setting.

Best and Kahn (1989) describe case study as an approach of categorizing a social data for the purpose of screening social reality. Additionally, a case study is also defined as an inquiry that scrutinizes a contemporary in which multiple sources are used. In this context, a case study relates

to a rigorous study, which involves a very limited number of components, directed at the perspective of the exceptionality and peculiarity of a particular case in all its complexity (Yin, 1983). Their views have common factor that the central focus is specifically on a certain entity under study.

The above assertion influenced me to use a case study of two schools as the sources of data collection for my study. According to Merriam (1988) and Cresswell (1994) a case study is used to explore a single entity and to gather detailed information by using a range of data collection and practices. In this research, a case study of two schools was used to collect data from the participants' experiences of school financial constraints in the two schools as identified in chapter one of this study. The face-to-face interviews and document analysis were made how such constraints were dealt with in the participating schools.

3.3 Research process

In this study of stakeholders' experiences of school financial management in the face of FPE; I utilised a case study of two primary schools as my area of focus. I also employed ethnographic strategies that enabled me to have a very close and prolonged interaction with the participants under study at their schools. Patton (2002) points out that it is essential for the researcher to be able to facilitate and work very close to the unit under study. The main reason of interacting with the respondents under study was to build warm interpersonal relationships amongst the participants and the researcher. According to Gay (1992, p.231)

...establishing rapport and trust, the interviewer can obtain often data that the research subjects would loathe to give in a questionnaire.

On the other hand, the building up of warm interpersonal relationships had disadvantages. For example: some interviewees showed to be biased since they did not believe me to have progressed that far to the Masters' level. Some had known me as their professional colleague with a certificate and some of them took my presence lightly to an extent that others even showed no trust on me that I might had come to spy them.

In order to access the two schools in my study, I consulted with the District Education Officer (DEO) at Mapheleng in the Berea district. The consultation was followed up with a succinct explanation of my study and a written request to the DEO to conduct my study in the two primary schools (see appendix 2). The DEO granted me permission (see appendix 3) to use the two schools as the study sites at the two primary schools namely Motlejoa and Rakotsoana. After receiving permission, I visited the principals of the two schools on different days at their schools. Unfortunately, both of them were not at schools were attending workshops. I submitted the letters of request to conduct my study (see appendix 4) together with the letters of consent for all research participants (see appendix 5) and a letter of consent from DEO all those were left with the deputy principals. With the deputy principals, I also arranged to come to the two schools for the responses to my letters in January 2006. I revisited the two said schools at the end of January 2006 to get the responses, but the principals were also not available and they were attending workshops for 2006 national census. Due to their unavailability, I requested the cell phone numbers of an individual principal and I had to communicate with them over their cell phones to set appointments to arrange for the first introductory meeting into my study and future schedule for the actual interviews.

The third visit I made to the two schools was successful and the principals granted me permission to conduct my study in their schools. We agreed with each principal on what day I would visit the schools to share my intended study with the rest of the research participants. Before actual

interviews, I had to create a close and relatively prolonged interaction with the research participants from Rakotsoana and Motlejoa primary schools by making a five days visit to each school. I spent three hours in each school and I sat on participants lessons and I assisted some of them with marking learners' work. During breaks, I participated in the social discussions that transpired among the professional staff. These school visits and my participation in educators' activities helped to clear doubts about my intention of engaging in the research study with their schools. Secondly, it helped me to be viewed as part of the schools hence freedom to participate in the study.

On my visit to each school, I introduced them to the main purpose of my visit and also topic of the study. I explained how the study would benefit the respondents. Further, I maintained the importance of tape recording process as part of the interviews. During the initial meetings, I requested some participants to be tape recorded as a preparatory exercise before the actual interviews, later, I made them to listen to their voices. This was meant to familiarise the research participants with tape recording before the commencement of the actual research. After the preparatory exercise, I requested the two principals to request those who would like to volunteer to be the participants in the actual interviews. Subsequently, the principals gave me the names of the participants to be interviewed and the appointments were made to meet for the actual interviews.

3.4 Ethical consideration

In attempt to gain full access to the research participants, I presented a letter of consent from the District Education Officer (DEO) allowing me to conduct interviews in the two schools under study (see appendix 3). Schumacher and Macmillan (1993) state that every researcher needs to be sensitive to the rights and welfare of the research subjects. This is in accordance with the ethical considerations that the researcher must observe before collecting the data. Drawing on the above claim, the two schools involved in the study were informed in time. The research participants were

invited to take part voluntarily and, also informed of their rights to withdraw whenever they felt like doing so. According to Neuman (2006) research participants should never be coerced into participating; participation must be voluntarily. I informed the research participants that their names and the names of their schools would not be disclosed to anybody. Their identities strictly remained private, anonymous and, instead of their real names, pseudonyms would be used.

3.5 Sampling

The respondents were purposively because of some characteristics that they possess and their opinions were more valuable. The respondents were the educators and they were knowledgeable about the financial constraints that prevailed in their schools. There were no calculations made to sample the respondents. The research sites were Rakotsoana and Motlejoa primary schools. Rakotsoana primary is a Lesotho Evangelical Church (LEC) school and it is located adjacent to the boundaries that separate the Berea and Leribe districts. It draws most of its learners from several villages that surround it. This school is situated at the foothills of Joala-Boholo Mountain across Tsoaing River; its geographical location makes it relatively inaccessible. On the other hand, Motlejoa primary is a Roman Catholic Church (RCC) school located in Holy Cross mission. This school serves a relatively larger proportion of learners from more than ten villages. It is many kilometres away from a tarred road to Motsekuoa. Motlejoa primary is one of the largest primary schools with a high population in the Malimong dissemination centre.

Within Rakotsoana and Motlejoa primary schools, two school principals, six educators and four parental representatives from the Advisory School Committees (ASC) were the chosen respondents for this study. The principals were chosen with a strong believe that they were financial controllers in the governance of their primary schools. Therefore, all the financial needs could be explained better and in details by the school principals. The chosen educators were involved in this study due

to their involvement in their primary schools representing other educators in all school matters including school financial management. The parental representatives were chosen from the ASC as they represent parents of learners in their school governance. Their involvement in this study was hoped to bring forth information about the financial needs as discussed in the ASC meetings of the two primary schools.

Before the commencement of the actual interviews, I piloted interviews with two principals, six educators and four parental representatives. Apart from the participants for the pilot study, there were some participants who were involved into the actual interviews. Table 3.5.1 below shows the research respondents that participated in this study. The involvement of various participants was done with a belief that it could enhance greater chances to get different perceptions on the same aspects. Table 3.5.1 at the bottom, displays a description of research respondents.

Table: 3.5.1 Respondents description

Participants	Sex	Age	Position held	Experience	Respondents' sexual category in percentage
Participant 1	Female	45-50	Principal from school	25 years	25% of the respondents were the males.
Participant 2	Male	40	Assistant Educator	10 years	
Participant 3	Female	43	Assistant Educator	12 years	
Participant 4	Female	44	Secretary of ASC (educator)	9 years	
Participant 5	Female	60	Chairperson of ASC (church representative)	5 years	
Participant 6	Female	40	Member of ASC (parental representative)	3 years	
Participant 7	Female	58	Principal from school	12 years	75% of respondents were the females
Participant 8	Male	36	Assistant Educator	14 years	
Participant 9	Female	47	Assistant Educator	18 years	
Participant 10	Female	30-40	Secretary of ASC (educator)	13 years	
Participant 11	Male	54	Chairperson of ASC (church representative)	2 years	
Participant 12	Female	38	Member of ASC (parental representative)	4 years	

Table 3.5.1 shows that 4 respondents (33.3%) were parental representatives and 6 respondents (75%) of the educators were females while 2 respondents (25%) were the male educators. From my observation as a teacher, mostly in primary schools the number of female teachers is also more than the number of male teachers. Table 3.5.1 also shows that the research participants differed greatly in terms of ages and the researcher used the chronological difference as the other way to get various perceptions of interviewees.

The respondents' involvement in their school governance and their experience of school budget for educational development were deemed more valuable to provide an in-depth and broad data to answer the key questions for this study. Before the actual interviews, I had to conduct the pilot interviews at other two neighbouring schools.

3.6 Pilot phase

Yin (1989) contends that it is important to employ pilot interviews before the actual scenario. Bell (1993) also sees the importance of piloting as to detect all the problems that might crop-up when the actual study is done and how such problems could be dealt with before the commencement of the actual interviews. I visited the other two principals of the neighbouring schools to arrange for piloting the interview schedules. Permission was granted to run the pilot interviews by the principals and I made arrangements with the principals to request educators who could be interested in the study. The participants included two principals, six educators and four parental representatives from the Advisory School Committees (ASC) of two schools. The pilot of the interview schedules was done three weeks before the actual interviews.

With an aim of eliminating ambiguity of research questions, I conducted a pilot study at the other two neighbouring primary schools which were not included in my research sample because they were only for trying out the research questions before the actual interviews. Sibiya (1987) argues that no matter how statute the researcher has been in wording the interview questions, it essential to try them out with other respondents prior the commencement of the actual study. Since the objective of the pilot was also to make sure that the research questions were free of ambiguities, I introduced the research questions and I allowed the participants to go through the questions and I informed them that they were free to ask questions for clarity. During the pilot interviews, several problems cropped up such as unclear interview questions due to omission of words on some interview questions. The pilot interviews helped me to rearrange the construction of the interview questions, fill in words which were omitted, clarify questions that were not clear, I ordered the sequence of questions and identified questions that had no response. All that was done immediately after the pilot interviews which was prior the actual interviews. I took two days to conduct the pilot interviews in an individual school.

3.7 Researcher's effect during interviews

It is worth noting that as a researcher in this study, I am an employee of the Teaching Service Commission (TSC) in primary school under the Lesotho government. Most importantly, I am involved in administrative issues regarding school governance in the school where I am employed. As a result, this helped me to draw on my experiences when drafting the interview questions. I also tried not to influence respondents by exhibiting normal facial expressions that encouraged them to say more about their experiences. But this did not indicate that I agreed or disagreed with what they were saying. Against this background, Neumann (2000) asserts that the researcher's appearance, tone of voice and question wording could affect the respondents during a face-to-face interview. It is important to take note of interviewer's characteristics because it can be advantageous in that it provides insiders' understanding of the underlying principle of the study. Padget (1998) alleges that the researcher cannot circumvent involvement when engaged in a qualitative research.

3.8 Methods of data collection

Using the qualitative design in this study, descriptive human behaviour, experiences, actions, feelings and opinions of the subjects under study were easily factored in the discussion. Merriam and Simpson (1995) affirm a qualitative method to present a rich and holistic account that divulges the dynamic complexities of the social settings of the investigated phenomena. Using this approach, it became easy to understand the respondents' experiences of school financial management in the face of FPE programme. Cohen and Manion (1994) argues that

the interpretive paradigm is to understand the subjective world of human experience (pp. 36-37).

In this study, face-to-face interviews were conducted with the research participants. In order to gather an in depth data, I also employed document analysis. Document analysed included school

fees record books and the minute books of the two schools under study. These documents were analysed with an intention to understand how the two schools survived after the implementation of FPE programme.

Document analysis and interviews are multiple methods of data collection. Multiple methods of collecting data can be described as a triangulation. According to Cohen and Manion (1994) triangulation refers to detecting or gazing at something from different viewpoints or several angles rather than looking at it in one way only. Denzil and Lincoln (1998) purport that it is better not to rely on a single method of data collection because a single method of data collection sometimes cannot adequately reveal all the experiences of the interviewees under study. The inclusion of various sources of data collection enhanced the trustworthiness of the study. Babbie and Mouton (2004) assert that

triangulation is the best way to elicit the various and divergent construction of reality that exists within the context of the study and increases more chances to collect information about different events and relationships from different points of view (pp. 23-37).

3.8.1 Interviews

Interviews two-person conversation initiated by the researcher for specific reasons of getting relevant information for the study taken (Cohen and Manion 1997). Interviews are used to exchange views between two or many participants with mutual interest. This implies that interviews make both the investigator and the respondents to feel liberated to communicate their feelings about the prevailing challenges in their respective milieu. Along similar lines, Babbie and Mouton, (2004) asserts interview as method of data collection used when the researcher wishes to question the

participants at conscious level and intends to use personal networking with the research respondents. Similarly, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2001, p.267) assert that

interviews enable participants to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view.

In order to achieve the above, I utilised interview questions for all the interviewees (see appendix 6), to examine the research participants' experiences of school financial challenges that emerged along with FPE programme. I considered the interview schedule as the most convenient method to collect data for this study, for it allowed me to obtain large amount of data rapidly and enabled an immediate follow-up questions and clarification if so required.

Arnson and Faber (2003) state that interviews allow the interviewees to respond to research questions freely using their own words and there is a free flow of new ideas. Along similar lines, Mertens (1998) considers the interview schedule as involving items that bring in a frame of reference to the participants' responses. As such, items are flexible since they allow the researcher to probe the interviewees' responses so that he/she may get in depth of the sample of the study. According to Cohen *et al.*, (2001 p.267)

interviews enable the research participants (interviewer or interviewees) to discuss their own world in which they live and express their views on how they understand the situation from their own point of view.

In order to understand the stakeholders' experiences I used the research questions which were based from the two main questions:

- (i) What are stakeholders' experiences of school financial management?

- (ii) How do the stakeholders deal with the financial challenges that emerged along in the face of FPE programme?

These broad questions were broken down into smaller questions that were used during the face-to-face interviews. The advantage to have utilised face-to-face interviews it was because this method of data collection enabled me to read some facial expressions displayed by the interviewees during the interview processes. The face-to-face interviews were helpful since I was able to ask follow up questions if the need arose during the interview process.

In the data collection process, one-to-one interviews were employed to probe into participants' experiences of school financial management and how the challenging experiences that emerged in the face of FPE programme were addressed. The interviews enabled a face-to-face contact with the interviewees to learn and read more from other speech dynamics such as body language, tone of voice and eye contact, displayed by some interviewees during the interview process.

On the other hand, face-to-face interviews also gave me a problem whereby some interviewees responded in a lengthy way and dominated the interview process. The other problem of the face-to-face interviews was that the occurrence of interventions took place at any time and that agitated the interview processes.

Initially the interview questions were translated into Sesotho that was with an intention to remove language barrier and to accommodate other participants with varying literacy levels especially among the parental representatives. I conducted one-to-one interviews with two principals, six educators and four parent representatives from the ASC. The total number of interviewees was twelve for both schools.

After having identified the research participants, I coded them before the commencement of the actual interviews, so that I could differentiate their responses during data collection and data analysis. The following codes were used to present the principal of school A and the principal of school B respectively. For three educators from school A, I used E-1A for the first educator; E-2A for the second educator and E-3A for the third educator three from school A. For the educators of school B, E-1B was used for the first educator; E-2B for the second educator and E-3B for the third educator. In addition, PR-1A and PR-2A presented the parental representatives from school A. The parental representatives from school B were coded PR-1B and PR-2B.

The selection of the schools participated in the study was informed by the fact that those schools with problem of finances were talked about in the area, so most of the people including me were aware of such schools.

Before the commencement of the actual interviews with the principals of the two primary schools, I conducted the interviews with the educators in their classrooms. With the educators who were involved in the national census. I conducted the interviews in their homes. The parental representatives were interviewed at their homes as they preferred. I began with basic interview questions as designed in the interview schedule designed for this study.

3.8.2 Interview questions for the principals

The interview questions scheduled for the principals focused on their knowledge of the Free Primary Education (FPE) programme and the other question aimed at understanding principals' perception of the FPE programme. Other question focused on major challenges the primary schools experienced in the face of FPE programme. This question aimed at the foremost problems that emerged along the implementation FPE. The principals were asked to respond to how such

challenges affected the daily life at the school. The focus of this question was to reveal how far these challenges affected the school culture. For further understanding the interviewees were asked how such challenges were addressed. The principals were expected to state how their schools managed to address such problems especially as they implemented the FPE programme. The other question directed to the principals focused on their opinions regarding the future of FPE programme in primary schools.

The initial interviews with the principals were conducted differently in their school offices. One of principal's interviews was conducted after school while the other principal's interviews were conducted during the school hours at break time between 10.00 am and 10.30 am. On my arrival I met P-A at one of the classrooms and she requested me to wait at the office until break time at 10.00 am. During break time the principal-A took me to her office. Before I could start with P-A, P-B phoned to inform me that she could only be interviewed for thirty minutes because she ought to go back to her class immediately after break. In the process of the interview, the school bell rang to signal the end of the break and I had to stop the interview and switched off the tape recorder.

The principal of school A told me that she would come back for interview only when her class was dismissed and I had to wait in the office for three hours. After that break, the P-A returned to the office and I had to start the interviews from where we stopped. I continued with a question about how the FPE programme affected the life at school. Instead of responding to the question, she remained silent and scratched her head. I assumed that there might be something problematic or she was doubtful of her response. In order to break that silence, I reminded her that I was waiting for her response. The interviews took forty minutes which was more than the set time for the interview schedule.

3.8.3 Interview questions for the educators

In the case of this study, part of the interview questions which were constructed for the educators focused on their knowledge regarding date of implementation of FPE programme. Other question spotlighted on what instructional resources were provided in primary schools by the FPE programme. The aim of the question was to establish a broad understanding to the researcher of what teaching and learning resources were provided in primary schools. The educators were also asked to respond to the availability and abundance of the teaching and learning resources. Other question directed to the educators was about challenging experiences which emerged within FPE programme. The educators were asked to respond to how such challenges were addressed in the face of the FPE programme

Some of the first interviews with educators from school A and school B were conducted in the classrooms while some of the educators were interviewed from their homes. The interviews started with a question about the implementation of the FPE programme. In the process of the interviews, educators were asked to respond to a question about what teaching and learning resources were provided by this programme. While interviewing E-2A, there was a disturbance caused by the learners who popped in and talked to their class teacher. Due to that interference, I switched off the tape-recorder so that E-2A could attend to the learners. It took the educator four to five minutes to attend to the learners. After that break, I politely asked E-2A to request the learners not to come in until the interview process had finished. I requested E-2A that we better start from where we stopped. I switched on the tape-recorder and we proceeded with the interview although it was very difficult due to the learners' noise from outside.

Following the interview schedule, the educators were asked about the abundance and availability of instructional resources. E-3A said to me, "you are one of the teachers therefore you know what is

taking place unless you are a spy”. I ignored her response and directed other question on how the school addressed the challenging experiences. At one incident, before E-1B could respond to the question, some learners peeped through the windows and they made noise that destructed our attention. I had to stop the interviews, and turned off the tape recorder. I requested E-1B to keep the learners away. Although the interview process was conducted under unfavourable conditions but I had to continue until I have finished. The interviews stretched to forty-five minutes which was more than twenty minutes.

3.8.4 Interview questions for the parental representatives in the ASC

The question directed to the parental representatives in the Advisory School Committees (ASC) focused on their role in the school governance. The question aimed at the responsibilities of the ASC in their school governance. Other questions focused on their perception about the FPE programme. The participants were asked about challenges encountered in the FPE programme. Linked to the previous question, was asking participants how the problems experienced can be addressed.

The interviews with four parental representatives from the ASC were conducted in the late afternoon at their different homes because they were unable to come to their respective schools for interviews. PR-1B was interviewed under a tree in front of the house. The question directed to the parental representatives focused on their role in the school governance. Before the PR-1B could respond to the question, some neighbours gathered around to see and hear what was happening and I noticed quickly that their presence disturbed the interview process. I was compelled to switch off the tape recorder and I politely asked PR-1B to request the neighbours to leave since I observed that their presence stole away her concentration. In the process of the interviews, the parental representatives were asked to respond to what challenges were experienced in face of the FPE

programme. Instead of responding to the interview question, PR-2A said, “I do not understand what the question is all about”. I had to rephrase the question that was all about what problems were encountered by the primary schools following the implementation of FPE programme.

During the interview process, I did not write much about the participants’ observable behaviour (facial expression or gestures) because it was becoming dark and I could not read their facial expression properly. Instead, I depended on their voice tone. Due to the occurrence of disturbance during the interview progression, that caused a delay and altered the time which was set for the interview schedule. The whole interview process with an individual educator took fifty minutes which was far more than twenty minutes.

3.9 Document analysis

Sarantakos (1998) maintains that documents are habitually referred to as secondary stuff since they are not primarily developed for the study in which they are used. Along similar lines, De vos and Fouche (1998) refer to document as a ready-made source of data that is easily accessible to imaginative investigator. This means that documents do not require any additional effort; the only important aspect about them is to be accessed when they are properly arranged. I considered document analysis appropriate in providing additional information on the income and the expenditure within the school on daily basis. That was also intended to provide additional information to support participants’ verbal responses. Yin (1994) points that document analysis is relevant to a qualitative study because it provides a stable data and such documents can be revisited for further understanding. As I have mentioned earlier in chapter 3, I engaged with individual interviews with the participants under study and also conducted document analysis of the two schools. Initially I proposed to analyse the following documents:

- Record book for school fees for 2004 up to 2006,

- Bank statements for the last three years,
- Advisory School Committee minute books

My intention to analyse the school fees record books, bank statements and Advisory School Committee (ASC) minute books was to supplement further the interviewees' verbal responses about their experiences regarding school financial management, challenges that emerged in the process of FPE and check how much flew into the schools' account. But when I approached the two principals, both denied me permission to access the bank statements. They explained that those bank statements were confidential. As a result, only two documents were analysed for this study. Prior to a release of the documents for analysis, both school principals requested that I should not photocopy any part of the documents or take any of the documents away. My intention to analyse the minute books and the school fees record books was to supplement further the interviewees' verbal responses about their experiences regarding school financial management, challenges that emerged and, in the process, check how much flew into schools' accounts. The record books for school fees from 2004 up to 2006 were analysed. This displayed the income and expenditure which revealed the financial status of each school.

I analysed the ASC minute books that displayed what was discussed regarding financial challenges experienced in an individual school under study. The record books for school fees from 2004 up to 2006 were analysed this displayed the income and expenditure, which revealed the financial status of each school.

3.10 Trustworthiness of the study

This study is located within the interpretive paradigm. In order to ensure the credibility of this study and its findings, I piloted the interviews with other participants from the two neighbouring schools.

According to Bell (1993), a pilot study is the exercise to detect all problems that may crop-up, and such setbacks could be dealt with before the commencement of the actual investigations. For further trustworthiness in this study, I triangulated the methods of data collection so that I could learn more about the perception of stakeholders under study from more than one standpoint. According to Babbie and Mouton (2004), the use of multiple methods in research work enhances understanding both by adding layers of information by using one type of data to validate or refine the other.

The various methods of data collection can be exploited at the same time or after one another. According to Denzil and Lincoln (1998) no single method ever solves adequately. For further credibility, I returned the copies of interview transcripts to all the respondents to check for the soundness and the true reflection of what they said. Heck (2006, p.380) claims that

...it is essential to send back collected data and interpretations to the research participants to check whether the results analysis is correct.

Some interviewed participants gave back their transcript copies while others did not since they claimed that they did not have time to have gone through them. Of all the copies I received back, the respondents agreed with the transcripts. Very few of those who did not give back the transcripts telephonically they agreed with the transcripts. Out of twelve interviewees, three respondents did not give back theirs and I used those transcripts as they were.

3.11 Data analysis

In order to analyse the collected data I utilised qualitative and quantitative data analysis. The qualitative data was in the form of verbal responses which were tape recorded and the responses of the interviewees were transcribed and interpreted. The quantitative data was utilised in this study

because the verbal responses of the interviewees were in the form of numerical data. Therefore, I employed quantitative analysis.

3.12 Limitations of the methodology

The disadvantage of the methodology could be that, in many senses interviews can be biased towards what the interviewer chooses to hear during face-to-face conversation. When interviewing, it is difficult for the researcher to strike a balance between complete objectivity and trying to put the respondent at ease. This may well be reflected in the way the respondents answered the interview questions and thus influencing the quality of responses. Verma and Mallick (1999 pp. 87-119) concur:

the collection of data by interviews involves a complex set of social relationships that can contaminate the final product. The social relationships may result in the distortion of information supplied as well as being open to unconscious bias on the part of the researcher in assessing it.

One other limitation of this study was that, some of the interviewees took control of the discussion since they were willing to respond to the research questions. However, Arnson and Faber (2003) point out that throughout the interview process, the research participants should always develop a feeling of partly controlling the interviews process by dominating the discussion. In order to control that attitude, I reminded some interviewees that the time schedule for the interviews should not be lengthy. Since I conducted face-to-face interviews, I was faced with a problem of transcribing and analyzing interviewees' responses. Vockell (1989) asserts that the biggest problem with face-to-face interviews is the longer time the interviews take. Secondly, to transcribe and analyze the interview responses is too long. Other limitation was that I had a problem whereby some participants showed unwillingness to respond to some interview questions. However, I kindly requested them to respond because the

success of the interviews mainly depended on the respondents' willingness to give accurate information.

My study was limited by the assumption that my research participants, especially the principals and some educators, had a feeling that I might have come to spy on them. Some of them ended up, I believe, not revealing some information to me. Hitchcock and Hughes (1989, p.199) as cited by Cohen *et al.*, (2001) confirm that

...doing participant observation or interviewing one's peers raises ethical problems that are directly related to the nature of the research technique employed.

In order to control the above limitations, I had to remind my research participants that I would not divulge any part of the discussion to anybody and their written responses would be kept safely. I also had to convince them that I was not going to spy anybody I was there at their schools just for academic purpose.

3.13 Conclusion

The focus of this chapter was on the methodology and selected techniques for data collection. The chapter discussed the use of the research instruments to investigate the stakeholders' experiences about school financial management in the context of FPE at Motlejoa and Rakotsoana primary schools. Further, the chapter focused on the challenges faced and how such challenges were addressed. The next chapter will be on data analysis, which includes the responses of the principals, educators and parental representatives from Advisory School Committees (ASC), all of whom were taken from the two primary schools under study. I have a belief that the responses about experiences of participants from the two schools can inform the policy planners and initiators,

external stakeholders (parents of learners, community members) and the government, regarding the problems that hang around the FPE programme on school financial management.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an analysis of the data collected regarding the stakeholders' experiences of school financial management within the Free Primary Education (FPE) programme in Berea district in Lesotho. First, the data presented here were collected through the face-to-face interviews with two principals, six educators and four parental representatives from the Advisory School Committees (ASC). Second, the data was obtained through document analysis of the two primary schools under study. The responses of participants were presented in the thematic form based on the research questions raised. As described in chapter 3, the respondents were given codes so that their verbal responses can be easily differentiated. This chapter begins with the respondents' experiences of school financial management. Following this is the extent to which the challenges regarding financial experiences were solved. The identified themes are presented, interpreted and discussed.

As shown in chapter 1, many years prior to the implementation of FPE, all the primary schools charged school fees. It was from such school fees that the primary schools managed to provide necessary resources including paying salaries of security personnel and the cooks. Some money from school fees were used for school projects such as poultry and piggery. Primary schools employed additional temporary educators, maintained school grounds and supported sport activities. Using school fees, primary schools made their own budget and prioritised the needs of their school. An introduction of the implementation of FPE programme stopped primary schools from charging school fees, consequently, many school activities and projects that the school supported before the FPE, collapsed. Although the collection of the school fees demanded extra work including keeping receipts, demanding parents to pay in time, preparing financial statements, the benefits and school fees usage far out weight extra loading of collecting it.

4.2 Challenging experiences

There are many challenges in the FPE programme. One of the main challenges is that school stakeholders like parents were not abreast of how FPE programme worked and the benefits that came with it. Also, the public, particularly parents of learners did not know what amount of subsidy was provided by the government for each child. This view was expressed by the principals of schools A and B. This lack of understanding caused parents to assume that the government subsidy covered all what primary schools needed. If parents had been informed about areas that were covered by the government, they would have understood the importance of contributing to the schools. When school fees was stopped effective teaching and learning was negatively affected. Abolition of school fees affected the delivering of curriculum including teaching and learning processes. For example, learners' text books, stationery and instructional materials could not be purchased. Also school infrastructure could not be maintained.

Both principals stated that there was a severe lack of funds caused by a termination of school fees as prescribed by FPE programme. The principal of school B stated that "elimination of school fees made it difficult for me and other primary schools on the FPE programme to maintain school buildings". According to principal of school A, failure of the primary schools to do this, was regarded by many parents as incapability of the School Advisory Committees (ASC) and the schools to provide services. The principal of school A mentioned that "the government should allow primary schools on FPE programme to generate their own funds in order to meet these financial challenges". Along similar lines, one of the six educators (17%) suggested that "it is essential for primary schools to be empowered to generate extra funds to offset educational costs". Deducing from those principals' responses, it is obvious that primary schools should generate funds to be allocated according to the school's development plan.

In the absence of money obtained through the school fees, the principal of school A observed that it was no longer possible for the primary schools to maintain agricultural projects such as piggery and poultry. Piggery and poultry provided learners with skills to be self-reliant. Faced with this, a certain number of Basotho children could no longer be self sufficient. Young farmers and agriculturists could not be trained because of a lack of sufficient funds tools used for agricultural lessons were not serviced; seeds and seedlings could not be bought. The principal of school B stated that “the government should provide on year basis all the basic educational necessities including garden tools”.

The responses from principals A and B show that it was essential for the primary schools to maintain relevant learning environment that would enforce creative and vibrant learning experience for all learners in all subjects. This could only be achieved through sufficient financial resources generated by the schools. The two principals were aware of the prevailing financial constraints in primary schools that needed an immediate attention. Therefore, it is up to the government to increase the present educational funding to alleviate inadequate funds.

In the implementation of FPE programme, primary schools experienced financial challenges which affected a day-to-day running of the primary schools. Responding to this, the principal of school A and the principal of school B stated that “phasing out of school fees made it impossible to provide for basic school necessities such as office stationery, sport and agricultural equipments”. The repercussion of school fees abolishment affected the effective functioning of the primary schools on the FPE programme. According to the principals interviewed, school fees appeared to be the best way to enhance a joint responsibility of parents and the government.

In Lesotho, primary school curriculum included Health and Physical Education subjects. These subjects are important in promoting and encouraging learners to be developed physically. Primary schools required learners to participate in various sports activities at regional as well as at national levels. The principal of school A said that “primary schools are no longer able to pay for sports subscriptions as well as to buy sport equipments and uniform”. The same principal contended that financial constraints in primary schools also affected the learners’ social development. Additionally, she maintained that the failure of primary schools to support learners when taking part in sport-related activities had affected learners’ self-esteem and their academic performance in the classrooms.

When principals of school A and B were asked to comment on the challenges facing primary schools on FPE programme, they concurred that the primary schools were unable to buy consumable items for the first aid kit as their schools did not receive any money after an introduction of the FPE programme. Primary schools without first aid kit could not provide assistance when faced with emergency such as injuries or sudden illness of learners during the schooling hours. Also, principal of school B disclosed that “primary schools could no longer transport sick learners to the nearby health centres or hospitals because of insufficient funds”. Given this circumstances, in order for the primary schools to provide quality health programmes, independent funders and other sources of money other than the government, must be identified.

Although the abolishment of school fees was not welcomed by the schools, it had however, relieved the primary school principals of administrative responsibilities such as calling meetings with parents of learners who had not paid school fees. However, the two principals had a different view. Making their own budget, prioritising and allocating school funds according to their School Development Plan (SDP) based on their needs was empowering them. With this skills not practised,

they are disempowered. The principal of school A and principal of school B stated “that it would be better to reintroduce school fees, so that the primary schools could be able to meet their school needs through the collection of school fees”.

(i) Safety and security

One of the main school’s responsibilities was to create safe environment within the school. Before the school fees payment was stopped, the school could employ security personnel and raised fence around school premises to prevent intruders from entering the school premises. Responding to the question of safety related challenges, principal of school B stated that “since the implementation of FPE programme, primary schools could not provide security measures”. The inability of the schools to maintain strong security within school’s premises indicated that school properties and learners were no longer safe.

There was a wide perception among parents of learners that their contribution to schools was no longer essential in the face of FPE programme. A lack of parental involvement was confirmed by 1 (25%) parental representative when arguing that parents should be actively involved in all school activities even though the government declared primary school education ‘free’. The same parent made it clear that “the involvement of parents in school activities such as financial activities provide parents with greater and better perception of what financial constraints their school is experiencing”.

Parents’ full involvement in schools could make some parents understand what the school needs were. Preddy (1999) refers to parental contribution in the education of their children as a vital step to enhance a sense of responsibility. Another challenge the primary schools faced was that learners vandalised and defaced furniture. And the schools did not pay funds to repair the furniture. This was

confirmed by the interviewed principals. Because of the shortage of desks, sometimes many learners shared one desk that was designed to be used by two learners. This had affected the quality of teaching and learning.

When the educators were asked about sufficiency of teaching and learning resources, 5 educators (83%) claimed that “there are very few teaching and learning resources provided by the FPE programme and such resources are always delivered after the schools had long opened in the first term”. When learners were asked to bring to school items like sugar, salt, soap, sewing thread and needles for practical subjects from their homes, they refused. Further, one of six educators (17%) expressed that “learners’ parents felt that the resources should be provided by the school”. Out of 6 educators, 3 of them (50%) felt that parents should be made to understand that their involvement in the education of their children was important. Obviously, it was clear that parents did not understand the role they should play within the FPE programme since education is ‘free’.

Out of 6 educators 2 educators (33%) mentioned that “if we ask for support materials, the principals could not provide them highlighting a lack of funds as a source of the problem”. Therefore, 3 educators (50%) also felt that there was no need to improvise in their teaching as all instructional resources should be provided by the government in primary schools on FPE programme. This shows a lack of understanding from the educators’ side. In the face of inadequate instructional resources, one stated that “we could not provide individual attention to every child; instead we ended up teaching learners by using rote learning”. Therefore, a lack of teaching and learning support materials prevented effective teaching and learning to take place at the two primary schools under study.

Consequently, a lack of instructional materials encouraged educators to employ a teacher centred approach instead of a child-centred approach. This implies that educators were no longer facilitating learning so that learners could construct their own knowledge rather than expecting learners to memorise facts. Driver (1988) alleges that learners are viewed as constructors of knowledge, as they develop meaning and taking responsibility for their own learning.

In order for the primary schools to promote effective teaching and learning, it is crucial that educators are continuously and professionally developed. Educators when attending professional development programmes were not paid for travelling expenses. Yet the professional development enhances quality education, which informed effective teaching and learning. Responding further to the challenging experiences, 4 (67%) of 6 educators stated that “we are dissatisfied about a lack of schools’ support to cover travelling expenses when attending professional workshops”. They further argued that “we even use our money to attend the professional workshops”. With regard to this, 2 educators (33%) stated that “the failure of the primary schools to pay the travelling expenses was very unfair because the skills obtained at the professional workshops would be used to teach better thus benefiting the schools not the teachers as individuals”.

A failure of primary schools to support educators, made them reluctant to participate in the professional development programmes. From these educators’ responses, it showed that as long as the primary schools were not provided with enough financial resources, the professional development would be affected in the primary schools on the FPE programme.

FPE programme seemed to have positive effect. For example, 2 (33%) out of 6 educators, revealed that “the implementation of the FPE programme encouraged learners to attend school thus increasing pupil teacher ratio from 60:1 to 112:1”. However, this positive effect was counteracted

by overcrowding and shortage of instructional resources. In this situation, one educator (17%) claimed that “it became almost impossible for us to give attention to every learner in large classes caused by admission of children without paying any school fees”. Referring to teacher pupil ratio, 4 educators (67%) made it clear that their principals claimed that the school would not do anything about the overcrowding in the lower classes since there was no fund from the government to employ additional educators. It was obvious that a lack of subsidy from the government to support teaching and learning made it impossible to achieve scholastic goals. Morojele (2004, p. 48) contends that

failure of the government to provide the schools with adequate resources to implement the FPE programme made teachers see the implementation of this programme in a negative light.

Parents’ involvement in the education of their children is essential. Neimann (2004) alleges that parental participation is of strategic importance in promoting positive attitudes on the part of parents with regard to school finances. Responding to the challenges encountered, 2 parental representatives (50%) stated that “there is a problem to raise funds since there is a lack of guidelines for fund raising, misconception about Free Primary Education, political influences from opposition parties and parental reluctance in participating in school financial activities”.

Good contributions made by parents prior to the introduction of FPE programme were understood as no longer needed. They understood financial activities to be the government’s responsibilities. This showed that the ASC members had a problem of generating money to offset the financial challenges that prevailed in their schools. Responding further, 1 parental representative (25%) argued that “we can no longer prioritise as well as allocate financial needs according to the development plan of our school”. As a result, it was extremely difficult for the primary schools on

the FPE programme to achieve the set goals. Out of 6 educators 3 of them (75%) stated that “the government subsidy should be supplemented even if the government had declared education ‘free’”.

It was also stated that the ASC members were faced with challenging attitudes about parental misunderstanding of the ‘free education’. MacPherson and Dlamini (1998) assert that if there was no adequate capacity building, the governing body was likely to be ineffective. Consequently, a lack of credibility influences the demise of such school governing bodies. Similarly, Bush and Heystek (2005) note the importance of giving the governing bodies budgetary powers so that they could be accountable for all decisions about school financial income and expenditure.

The other important element in the administration of the organisations is to involve all the staff in the running of their institution. The staff’s needs to be revisited and explained. Job description motivates the involved parties to work towards the success of their organisation. Out of 4 parental representatives 2 (50%) stated that “our role is to advise the principal and the professional staff on all school matters”. The same parental representatives echoed that the ASC members’ role was not clearly specified in relation to the financial life of the school. They further specified that this had affected the ASC capacity as far as FPE programme is concerned. It was also suggested by 3 parental representatives (75%) that “the government should have a written document that gives out clearly roles of the ASC in primary schools on the FPE programme”. This implies that a lack of written roles affected the capacity of ASC members. Thus, many parents take advantage of becoming unaccountable for the education of their children by not making any contribution. Mestry (2005), states that one of the functions of the ASC is to supplement the financial support provided by the government.

4.3 The resolutions to the challenging experiences

When interviewing the parental representatives in the ASC, they were asked to suggest how the challenging experiences could be addressed. Responding to this question, 2 of the parental representatives (50%) stated that “the government should make it clear to the parents of the learners and the community members what FPE programme provides”. Out of 4 parental representatives, 3 of the interviewed parental representatives (75%) echoed that “Our roles should be clearly stated and the government subvention should be increased at least from R5.00 to R10.00 per child”.

It was found that the government’s funding through the FPE programme is contributing marginally to educational costs in primary schools. An introduction of no school fees to each standard progressively had gradually affected schools in a negative way. Addressing the question of dealing with such challenging experiences, the principal of school A and principal of school B stated that “schools rented out the school furniture such as benches at R2.00 each and a table at R3.00 each while a pot was R20.00 and a classroom was R100.00”.

Principal of school A stated that “the other strategy we use is to claim fees from the school cook responsible for cooking for learners in the schools; normally the cook is made to pay in advance”. Principal of school A stated that “we use to close the school earlier so that the cook could not provide meals to the learners”. The school had to claim for cash back from the cook for the cost she would have claimed to provide learners with meals. For example, a day meal was R3.00 that could be multiplied by the total of learners. The other principal stated that all that was done without the knowledge of the ASC members as well as learners’ parents.

Both the principals of school A and school B staged concerts to fund raise but all that did not succeed because some parents did not support it. Failure to this fund raising attempt could be attributed to the reluctance of parents to participate in the fund raising activities.

One of the principals stated that in the cases where learners were forced to participate in fund raising activities, their parents responded with anger accusing the principals of abusing their children. According to Morojele (2004, p.32)

parents always rebuke the ASC members on the grounds that they want to make them pay for their children's education, which is against the Prime Minister's will and other parents also claim to report the school to the Education Officers (EO) at the district level.

Parents' rejection of fund raising campaign was echoed by 2 educators (33%) saying it was not easy for the primary schools on FPE programme to involve learners into fund raising activities such as concerts and film show since they were faced with negative attitudes from parents. In addition to that, 2 parental representatives (50%) also mentioned that there was a problem to raise funds since there was a lack of guidelines for fund raising which made the ASC members feel disempowered. Additionally, 5 educators (83%) revealed that "many learners absent themselves from school during fund raising days so that they could not partake since they know from their parents that they are not supposed to partake in such activities as education is for 'free'". This showed parental misconception of 'free education' which they believed that the government provided every school needs. As a result of this, the primary schools on the FPE programme failed to achieve the set goals of meeting the budget.

The parents further demanded that the principals get funds from the government. The parents' reaction to learners' participation in fund raising indicated that parents did not see fund raising as their responsibility. This had made it difficult for the principals to involve parents into fund raising campaigns. Yet, Wolhunter, Steyn, and Steyn (2003) affirm education system as a joint responsibility of all citizens who have mutual interest in the education of their children.

It was clear that parents had a misconception that the government provided every need identified by the primary schools. The government did not provide any funding until 2005. Only R5.00 per child as a subvention paid to the schools by the government. The principal of school A suggested that "it would be better if the government increases the subvention to be in line with market demands". It was worth to mention that primary schools charged school fees of R140.00 per child before the implementation of FPE programme. It is clear that a R5.00 per child was far from covering the school's financial needs.

Responding further on challenging experiences, paradoxically the principal of school A argued that the FPE programme had to be maintained but the government should explain to parents and community members which educational needs were covered by the government funding and which would remain as a parental responsibility. The principal of school B suggested that "the government should reinstate the payment of school fees in the primary schools as a way of making the educational expenses a joint venture between the government, parents of learners and community members that have mutual interest in the educational growth of their children". Additionally, one principal made it clear that this education programme in primary schools should not even be called 'free education' because the government did not cover even the basic educational needs.

4.4 Document analysis

In addition to the face-to-face interviews conducted, I analysed school documents such as the school fees record books from 2004 to 2006, as well as the Advisory School Committee (ASC) minutes books from 2004 to 2006. The main aim was to triangulate the data collection.

In this section I am presenting the financial records of the two primary schools namely: Rakotsoana primary school and Motlejoa primary school. The financial records were analysed comparing the income from the government funding and the money collected from school fees. It is also important to find out what each primary school was able to do when school fees were collected and what each primary school was unable to do when FPE programme was phased in.

4.4.1 School fees record books of Rakotsoana primary school

The principal of Rakotsoana primary school provided me with the school fees records for three years; 2004, 2005 and 2006. The following table 4.1 shows the school fees record for 2004 including balance sheet for 2003.

Year: 2004

Table: 4.1 school fees record of Rakotsoana primary school

Class	Number of learners per class	School fees per learner	Estimated income from school fees	Amount received from school fees	Outstanding balance	Number of learners who paid school fees
1	143					
2	105					
3	96					
4	89					
5	47	121.00	5687.00	5324.00	363.00	44
6	41	121.00	4961.00	4840.00	121.00	40
7	48	121.00	5808.00	5566.00	242.00	46
Total	569		16456.00	15730.00	726.00	130

Amount received from school fees in 2004	15 456.00
Balance brought forward from 2003	<u>309.24</u>
Total income	15 765.24
Estimated income from school fees in 2004	16 456.00
Total income	<u>15 765.24</u>
Difference	690.76
Outstanding balance	726.00
Difference	<u>690.76</u>
Total	1 416.76

The information on table 4.1 reveals that in 2004 the school enrolment was 569. Of this number, 433 learners (76%) of the enrolled learners were on the FPE programme from classes one to four and were not required to pay school fees. Only classes five, six and seven were required to pay school fees and each child was expected to pay R121.00. As a result of some learners not paying school fees, only 130 learners contributed to school fees which amounted to the R15 730.00. Only 6 learners (4.4%) were still required to pay school fees but did not pay. The received amount was less by R726.00, which was due by six learners who owed school fees from classes five, six and seven. Thus, the received amount was very little and had limited the school from achieving its set goals. With this amount, the school could not provide educators with the necessary instructional materials.

If all 569 learners had paid the school fees, the school would have received R68 849.00. However, an introduction of the FPE programme caused the drop of R53 119.00. Such a big loss made primary schools not to be able to support a number of activities and programmes. The information above shows that the amount received for 2004 was R15 730.00 and when added to R309.24 which was the balance brought forward from 2003; the total income for 2004 was R16 039.24. According to the 2004 school fees records, Rakotsoana primary showed a deficit of R1 142.76. This showed that the school failed to achieve its School Development Plan (SDP) because of not receiving the projected amount.

The received amount was spent to pay the salaries of security personnel, to maintain building, to purchase sport equipments and cover travelling expenses for the professional staff. This was achieved despite the fact that 433 learners did not contribute anything since they were already on the FPE programme. The school fees record for 2004 showed that only 130 learners (96%) paid school fees and that became the only financial source for the whole school. The information on table 4.1 indicated that in 2004 financial resources at Rakotsoana primary school became extremely scarce as a result of non payment of school fees.

Table 4.2 at the bottom shows the record of school fees collected in 2005.

School fees record of Rakotsoana primary school

Year: 2005

Table: 4.2 school fees record in 2005

Class	Number of learners per class	School fees per learner	Estimated income from school fees	Amount received from school fees	Outstanding balance	Number of learners who paid school fees
1	167					
2	118					
3	96					
4	102					
5	78					
6	64	121.00	7 744.00	7 623.00	121.00	63
7	67	121.00	8 107.00	7 502.00	605.00	62
Total	692		15 851.00	15 125.00	726.00	125

Amount received from school fees	15 125.00
Balance Brought Forward from 2004	
Total income	<u>15 125.00</u>
Estimated income from school fees	15 851.00
Total income from school fees	<u>15 125.00</u>
Difference	726.00
Outstanding balance	726.00
Difference	<u>726.00</u>
Total	1 452.00

The information displayed from table 4.2 above showed that 561 learners (81%) of the enrolment was registered from classes one up to five and were not required to pay school fees as they were on the FPE programme. According to the 2005 admission records, 131 learners (19%) of the enrolment from classes six and seven were still required to pay school fees. The school fees records of 2005 showed that the school fees per learner was R121.00. If all learners had paid, the school would have received R83 732.00 from 692 learners. In 2005 based on enrolment, the school projected to receive R15 851.00 from the learners in classes six and seven but some parents could not afford to pay school fees, only 125 learners (95%) of the enrolled learners in classes six and seven managed to pay school fees totalling to R15 125.00. Out of this amount, 6 learners (5%) from classes six and seven caused outstanding balance of R726.00 and thus caused a deficit on the school estimated budget for 2005.

This simply implies that the estimated amount for school fees was R15 851.00 and the actual amount received was less by R726.00. The total income for 2005 was used to cater for standards six and seven learners as well as all classes from one to five which were not required to pay school fees according to the FPE programme. The school fees received for 2005 portrayed a clear picture of how scarce were financial resources and that led the school into deficit of R1 416.76. Therefore, a lack of funds was seen as a major financial challenge, which affected the effective delivery of curriculum because the school could not provide educators with instructional materials. These financial problems in Rakotsoana primary school remained a burden and the school ended up in deficit.

Rakotsoana primary school

Year: 2006

Table: 4.3 school enrolment in 2006

Class	Number of learners per class
1	173
2	151
3	110
4	119
5	86
6	81
7	75
Total	795

The information displayed in the above table 4.1 show that in 2006 Rakotsoana primary school enrolled 795 learners from standards one up to seven. Since FPE programme applied to all standards there was no money received as school fees. During this year, the school experienced a severe lack of financial resources, which prevented the effective functioning of the school. Instead of supporting schools financially, the government provided schools with R5.00 per child. According to R5.00 financial allocation in 2006, the school had to work under very difficult conditions. The following table 4.4 provides details of government subvention.

Government subvention at Rakotsoana primary school

Year: 2006

Table: 4.4 Record of government subvention in 2006

Class	Number of learners per class	Government subvention per child	Amount received per class
1	173	5.00	865.00
2	151	5.00	755.00
3	110	5.00	550.00
4	119	5.00	595.00
5	86	5.00	430.00
6	81	5.00	405.00
7	75	5.00	375.00
Total	795		3 975.00

The above table 4.4 shows that in 2006, Rakotsoana primary school received R5.00 per learner from the government and the amount provided was as follows:

Total enrolment in 2006	795
Government subvention per learner	$\times 5.00$
Total amount received in 2006	3 975.00

The above information shows that the government provided the school with R3 975.00 to cater for 795 learners, professional staff, non-professional staff, as well as for all other financial demands of the whole school. If the school was to charge the parents R121.00 per child, as was done in 2005, the money would have been R96 195.00 in 2006. Although the state provided schools with a subvention of R5.00 per child, the fact remains that financial constraints were a burden to primary schools on the FPE programme since the subvention did not provide enough to cater for all financial demands.

When comparing the previous school fees charged at R121.00 per learner to the government subvention of R5.00 per learner it is much better to charge R121.00. This shows a vast difference

that emerges as R5.00 could not buy a loaf of bread. According to the 2006 enrolment, the financial backing from the government was far less than what the school could have received from the school fees been charged. This shows that the current amount of government subvention can nothing to the prevailing financial problems in the two primary schools on FPE programme. It is not a surprise that primary schools on the FPE programme had heavy financial constraints. Due to financial inadequacy, it is essential for parents to subsidise what the FPE programme provides in order to teach effectively. Therefore, parental contribution is seen as a major support for alleviating the existing severe financial constraints in primary schools on the FPE programme.

One can conclude that financial contribution made by parents to primary schools in Lesotho primary schools was a major source to deal with financial problems, providing professional development and maintaining schools infrastructure.

4.4.2 School fees record books of Motlejoa primary school

Year: 2004

Table: 4.5 school fees record in 2004

Class	Number of learners per class	School fees per learner	Estimated amount from school fees	Amount received from school fees	Outstanding Balance	Number of learners who paid school fees
1	197					
2	136					
3	129					
4	95					
5	78	140.00	10 920.00	10 780.00	140.00	77
6	83	140.00	11 620.00	11 060.00	560.00	79
7	72	140.00	10 080.00	9 800.00	480.00	70
Total	790		32 620.00	31 640.00	1 180.00	226

Amount received from school fees	31 640.00
Balance Brought Forward from 2003	<u>786.33</u>
Total income	32 426.33
Estimated amount from school fees	32 620.00
Total income for 2004	<u>32 426.33</u>
Difference	93.67
Outstanding balance	1 180.00
Difference	<u>193.67</u>

Total

1 373.67

The information displayed in table 4.5 shows that in 2004, the level of enrolment from classes one to four was 557 learners (71%) already on the FPE programme. The school fees records indicated that the school fees were R140.00 per learner. The school projected to receive R32 620.00 from 233 learners (29%) of the enrolment from classes five, six and seven. However, due to some parental inability to pay school fees, the school received R31 640.00 from 226 learners from classes five, six and seven (27%) of the enrolment. The school had R786.33 as a balance brought forward from 2003. The total amount available in 2004 was R32 426.33. The received amount was spent on all 790 learners including the professional and non-professional staff. If the total of R32 426.33 was divided equally among 790 learners, each learner would have received R41.05, which was far less by R98.95 than the actual school fees for 2004. In this situation, school financial management continuously got to the alarming proportions and the school was no longer going to function properly to achieve the set goals.

During the time when the school was charging school fees, the school was able to allocate fees to the important activities and prioritise items on the amount received. The school managed to pay for several activities and services such as renovating of the buildings and replacing the consumable instructional resources. Although the school fees collection was time consuming but the primary school financial status was far better than after the implementation of the programme. It was found that the financial status of the primary schools on the FPE programme deteriorated drastically to an extent that the quality standard of teaching and learning dropped adversely.

Motlejoa primary school

Year: 2005

Table: 4.6 school fees record in 2005

Class	Number of learners per class	School fees per learner	Estimated income from school fees	Amount received from school fees	Outstanding balance	Number of learners who paid school fees
1	217					
2	168					
3	141					
4	111					
5	86					
6	94	140.00	13 160.00	12 880.00	280.00	92
7	68	140.00	9 520.00	9 520.00		68
Total	885		22 680.00	22 400.00	280.00	160

Amount received from school fees	22 400.00
Balance brought forward from 2004	
Total income from	22 400.00

Estimated amount from school fees	22 680.00
Total income	<u>22 400.00</u>
Difference	280.00

Outstanding balance	280.00
Difference	<u>280.00</u>
Total	560.00

The information given in table 4.6 above shows that Motlejoa primary school admitted 723 learners into classes one up five and they constituted 82% of the total enrolment. Those learners on FPE programme were not required to pay school fees. The school fees records revealed that 162 learners from classes six and seven (18%) of the enrolment were expected to pay school fees. In 2005, the school fees paid was R140.00 per learner.

According to table 4.6, the school projected to receive R22 680.00 from 162 learners (18%) of the enrolment from classes six and seven. Only 2 learners (1%) of the total enrolment did not pay school fees. The received amount from 160 learners (99%) of the total enrolment was R22 400.00. If this amount was divided equally among 885 learners, each learner could have received R25.30.

This is far less than what was charged by the school as school fees for an individual learner. Therefore, the financial status of the school reached the deficit and the school could no longer function effectively in the face of FPE programme.

It is clear that many years prior to the introduction of FPE programme, the financial matters at schools were a shared responsibility between the government, parents of learners and community members. The working together of these stakeholders made primary schools to function actively. As a result of this, teaching and learning was a success. It was after the implementation of the FPE programme that the primary schools could no longer achieve their development plan because education was no longer a joint venture. In the introduction of FPE programme, the partnership between the government, parents of learners and community members was destroyed. The result was that teachers could not teach effectively since a school could not provide necessary support to learners and teachers.

Schools, like any other organisations, need to receive financial support to provide relevant facilities to enhance teaching and learning. Bisschoff (1997) maintains that it is essential to make it clear to the stakeholders that educational support received from the government is far less to meet the primary school needs, and therefore, parents have to contribute a certain amount to supplement the government subsidy. This emphasises the importance of parental contribution towards the education of their children.

It was only when non payment of school fees was fully implemented that the government became aware of the importance of school fees. To support primary schools the government introduced a subsidy fee of R5.00 per child in 2006 as an alternative measure of minimizing insufficient financial resources. But this was insignificant to address any primary school needs although the government

had provided schools with a R5.00 per child, the primary schools ran short of funds thus affecting teaching and learning. The government subvention was not enough hence the primary schools could no longer be able to pay for other services such as buying petrol for the generator pumping water into the school tanks for learners to drink. Learners had to walk for a distance in order to fetch water and that affected learners' punctuality to arrive in classes during the day.

Government subvention Motlejoa primary school

Year: 2006

Table: 4.7 school enrolment in 2006

Class	Learners per class
1	209
2	197
3	158
4	134
5	84
6	102
7	78
Total	962

Table 4.7 indicates that in 2006, Motlejoa primary school enrolled 962 learners from classes one up to seven and no learners were expected to pay school fees since they were on FPE programme. As a result, there was no money received as school fees. Therefore, it was very difficult for the school to function efficiently. In order to address a lack of funds, the government provided schools with a R5.00 per learner, which amounted to R4 810.00. The R5.00 subvention was far less than the former school fees of R140.00 charged per learner. In the old system of collecting school fees, the school would have collected R13 4680.00 from 962 learners. When comparing government subvention of R4 810.00 to what the school would have collected as school fees, there was a huge difference of R129 870.00 and that showed the government subvention was very little to cover all the educational needs.

Motlejoa primary school

Year: 2006

Table: 4.8 Record of government subvention in 2006

Class	Number of learners per class	Subvention per child	Amount received from the government
1	209	5.00	1 045.00
2	197	5.00	985.00
3	158	5.00	790.00
4	134	5.00	670.00
5	84	5.00	420.00
6	102	5.00	510.00
7	78	5.00	390.00
Total	962		4 810.00

The above information disclosed that 962 learners were enrolled in classes one up to seven at Motlejoa primary school in 2006 and were all on the FPE programme. All the learners enrolled were not required to pay school fees. Table 4.6 shows the received amount as follows:

Total enrolment in 2006	962
Government subvention per learner	× <u>5.00</u>
Total amount received in 2006	4 810.00

The money received from the government subvention did not address the school financial constraints since the educational needs far exceeded the government funding especially in 2006. It was important for the government to increase the school funding and encourage parents and the community members to contribute in the form of money at school's level. The problem of insufficient funds needed to be tackled as a joint venture where the state, community members and parents of the learners equally share responsibilities of the school provisioning. The working together of these stakeholders is informed by interconnectedness of all the stakeholders.

4.4.3 Advisory School Committee minute books of Rakotsoana primary school

The Advisory School Committee (ASC) minute books of Rakotsoana primary school showed several meetings held by the ASC members between 2004 and 2006. The recurring issues discussed were related to financial constraints that were continuously affecting the effective functioning of the school. This implies that the ASC was faced with severe financial problems that prevented the school committee to achieve the set goals according to the School Development Plan (SDP). Included in the discussion was the making of school budget that would cater for all the needs necessary for the daily functioning of the school. One other issue at the top of the agenda was parental inability to attend the school meetings and their unwillingness to take part in school fund raising activities.

The minutes taken during the ASC meetings revealed that the committee members suggested invitation to the District Education Officer to the primary schools so that parents could be encouraged to be involved in the contribution to the education of their children such as participating in the fund raising activities and providing their children with some instructional resources. The ASC minutes book showed that during the parents meetings many parents could not accept the suggestion regarding their involvement in school financial activities as they believed that the government provided primary schools with enough money. This showed that parents had developed a misconception that education is 'free' even though the government had clearly shown the few areas that were covered by the state funding.

4.4.4 Advisory School Committee minute books of Motlejoa primary school

The minute books of Advisory School Committee (ASC) of Motlejoa primary revealed that the school called several parents meetings to discuss the importance of partaking in fund raising activities in order to lessen the prevailing financial constraints in the face of FPE programme. One

other concern discussed included asking for donations from the nearby private organisations such as factories, supermarkets and breweries. Unfortunately, applications for financial donations were unsuccessful. In addition, the ASC members decided to open a cafeteria to sell items to learners and staff. Regrettably, there was no interest generated. Hence, the school had to close down the cafeteria.

4.4.5 How financial challenges were addressed by the two primary schools?

(i) Rakotsoana primary school

In order to address problems of insufficient funds, the Advisory School Committee (ASC) members called parents' meetings. The major purpose of these meetings was to discuss the importance of parental contribution to the funding of the school as a way of supplementing the government funds since the state funding did not cater for all financial needs of the school. Although several meetings were held, many parents showed unwillingness to partake because education was understood free. From the face-to-face interviews, the principal of Rakotsoana primary school disclosed that the school also tried to organise concerts as an alternative of raising funds. However, the collection was very poor because very few learners turned up. The same principal revealed that sometimes the school made raffles as another way of trying to collect money but very few parents and learners participated to support the school and they ended up with very poor collection and the school could not address the school problems.

(ii) Motlejoa primary school

The findings from the minute book of Motlejoa primary school indicated that in order to address the financial challenges caused by non-payment of school fees, the school organised an open day for all parents, community members and the business people. The open day aimed to market the school to

the community but the findings showed that most of the invited stakeholders usually showed a lack of interest and very few community members attended.

The parents' participation in the open day could have helped the school to raise money to use to address the needs of the school. The principal of Motlejoa primary stated that "our school applied for financial donations from the nearby factories, supermarkets and embassies of various countries, which are partners with Lesotho. Unfortunately, all those applications were unsuccessful and our school received a reply that the applications were short-listed for the next coming financial year". In addition, the principal of Motlejoa mentioned that "we even opened a tuck shop but thieves regularly vandalised it and it was eventually closed down". Given the fact that many attempts were made by the primary schools and did not work, it was important that the government increased educational funding and encouraged parents to contribute to school in a number of ways.

4.5 Conclusion

The focus of this study was on the stakeholders' experiences of school financial management in the face of FPE programme and how the challenging experiences were addressed. The data was collected through an individual face-to-face interviews and document analysis. The respondents were two principals, six educators and four parental representatives from the two primary schools under study. From the discussion presented in this chapter, the researcher has found that there were severe financial constraints that affected effective delivery of teaching and learning at the two primary schools participated in this study. The interviewed participants from the two primary schools believed the implementation of FPE programme had created misconception that education was free, and everything was provided for to the primary schools. This disempowered ASC members from generating funds for the school. The chapter also revealed that parents were not willing to participate in fund raising activities, and this was due to a lack of understanding of what

'free education' entails. One of the findings of this study was that the government subvention introduced in 2006 had not contributed any change to deal with financial constraints in primary schools under the FPE programme. The principals, educators and parental representatives in the ASC were frustrated by the financial problems and they had no option but to look up to the government to address the financial constraints by increasing the government financial support and covering all the educational needs.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This study focused on stakeholders' experiences of school financial management within the Free Primary Education (FPE) programme. Investigations were conducted on how financial challenges that emerged at the two primary schools under study were managed. The researcher conducted individual face-to-face interviews with the two principals, six educators and four parental representatives from the ASC. The document analysis was also employed to collect triangulate the data collected.

The key questions of the research were as follows:

1. What are stakeholders' experiences of school financial management?
2. How do the stakeholders deal with financial challenges that emerged along in the context of FPE programme?

5.2 Summary

Chapter one presented an outline of the study while chapter two focused on a literature review on stakeholders' experiences of school financial management and how such challenging experiences were dealt with in other countries addressed. Chapter three focused on data collection and methodology. Chapter four looked at presentation of findings. Chapter five focused on recommendations and conclusions of the study.

The results of this study had shown that the two primary schools participated in this study had severe financial problems. The findings revealed that a large number of parents and community members had a wrong perception of the role they were expected to play in the education of their

children in the face of FPE programme. This perception caused parents not willing to participate in fund raising activities. Due to a lack of funds, the two primary schools could not pay for sport equipments, postal services, employment of security personnel and employment of additional educators to minimise educators' extra workload caused by influx of learners especially to the lower classes.

5.3 Limitations to the study

Though this study left no stone unturned to understand how the participating primary schools experienced financial constraints and how the two schools under study dealt with such financial constraints but there were unavoidable limitations to this study which were acknowledged before the commencement of the actual study.

(i) Methodological limitations

Since this study was a case study, with a limited number of participants, involving two primary schools it can not be generalised to represent all the primary schools in the whole country of Lesotho. The other limitation was that the two primary schools involved in the study were peculiar, and not have exactly same situation with other primary schools. Its findings could not be applied to all primary schools because the researcher wanted the data for the two primary schools under study.

5.4 Conclusion

Through the use of the key research questions, the following conclusions were drawn from the principals, educators and parental representatives in the Advisory School Committees of the two primary schools. It has become clear that the survival of primary schools in Lesotho lies in the hands of the government funding. It has become evident that the only way of addressing the financial

problems the primary schools face, is to re-orientate parents and members of the community to the FPE programme and the role they need to play in face of FPE programme.

Finally, the government of Lesotho may have to rethink the FPE programme, given the problems that primary schools face. Rethinking could involve a significant contribution the government would make to schools and or complementing FPE programme with a compulsory parental financial contribution in the form of school fees. It is from the findings of this study that it has come to my attention that the FPE programme cannot be sustained without parental financial contribution. Additionally, the FPE programme cannot work in African context since the economic status of several Sub-Saharan countries is very low and such countries are still developing.

With reference to the findings from chapter four and my experience as a principal in one of the primary schools in Lesotho, the ASC members seemed to have experienced financial predicaments which stemmed from the abolishment of school fees in primary schools. Although the government specified particular aspects such as book rental fee, building maintenance, stationery and feeding to be covered through this programme, a lack of insights (as well as political influences) on the whole issue of FPE programme made parents and a large part of the community members to become less supportive to school funding activities. Most parents and other members of the community eventually ceased to provide financial support as education was declared free to all children.

The findings of this study could help to inform the government policy makers and change initiators what to consider in the process of the implementation of an educational reform. In addition, some dynamics and challenges that came into play during policy implementation were highlighted to help educational reformers to become vigilant at the level of policy design. This study argues that the working together of the sub-structures those were connected and interrelated within the school's

system became paralysed due to the implementation of FPE programme. This situation was observed when primary schools suffered the extreme shortage of financial resources, which affected the school financial management as the school budgets could no longer cater for the entire financial needs of the school. Before the implementation of FPE programme, the budget in primary schools was drawn by the Advisory School Committee (ASC) whose role is to advise the principal and the educators about all educational matters.

In some cases, it had made almost impossible to pursue educational goals, as there was no more clear school financial management, which informed planning, organising, leading and controlling of how the organisational finances will be managed. According to Bisschoff (1997) primary schools could be seen to be failing to perform effectively and efficiently due to insufficient funds. Following the FPE programme, primary schools were compelled to provide estimated class enrolments for the next coming year so that the government could allocate the resources. This had limited the school financial management in the primary schools since there was no longer any money from school fees that flowed into the primary school bank accounts.

5.4 Recommendations

Findings of this study warrant the recommendations informed by responses of different views of the interviewed principals, educators and parental representatives in the Advisory School Committees (ASC) of the two primary schools participated in this study. Emanating from the findings, it is important that a new policy on school funding needs to be developed. This policy will require the parents of learners to pay 35% of the total school fees while another 65% will be subsidised by the government. It is obvious that all the stakeholders would be contributing the expenses of basic education. This, therefore, requires the primary schools to make their own budget for the following year and advise parents of the learners accordingly. For the parents who cannot pay school fees for

their children, they need to apply for exemption and the school principal with the ASC members should be given a mandate by this policy to assess and make a follow up on such parents who cannot pay for some legitimate reasons.

Since schools are multicultural organisations comprised of a number of sub-structures which are interdependent, it is essential to reintroduce school fees in primary schools. This will be viewed as a means of making educational expenses a joint venture between the government, parents of learners and community members that have mutual interest in the educational development of their children. The schools need to operate in contact with their social context to promote a team work of these sub-structures, to inform a sense of ownership in democratic school governance. Paying of school fees encourage schools to be self managing organisation.

The concept of “Free Primary Education” was interpreted by parents that they would not pay any money for their children. With regard to the “Free Primary Education” (FPE) as it was what the government of Lesotho tailored for the Basotho children, this educational funding in primary schools could be sustained but calling it ‘free education’ is misnormal. It should no longer be called “FPE” as this does not cater for all educational basic needs in primary schools. Therefore, the FPE programme should be called ‘Educational Support Programme’ (ESP). It is important for the government of Lesotho to start education campaign aimed at informing parents and the community members about the programme and their role they are supposed to play in the education of their children.

It is obvious that a shift from FPE programme could change and encourage the parents of learners and community members to understand that their contribution is important, all the people have a right to primary education and the educational expenses should be a shared responsibility with the government, parents of learners and the community members.

With regard to the financial constraints revealed by this study, it is essential that the government of Lesotho should give a special attention to primary education when distributing money. The Primary schools should be given enough financial resources since the government has to contribute a big amount than all other stakeholders.

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Some of the lessons learned from the achievements and problems in these countries included sceptical receptions to the idea as a cheap political manoeuvre. Critics in Malawi and Uganda doubted the preparedness and capacity of their governments to implement such an apparently expensive and cumbersome programme. In both Uganda and Malawi the programme covered tuition fees, textbooks, examination fees and school feeding programmes. Both programmes included all the primary Standards from the onset. This resulted in huge influxes of pupils which proved difficult to handle, thereby increasing the complexity of the learning process. Such problems were in the main overcome through major public expenditure reviews and an increased allocation of resources to the primary sub-sector.

1.5 The Free Primary Education policy

The fundamental underpinning the FPE programme is the desire to ensure that every Mosotho has access to basic education. This desire takes expression in the FPE policy objectives:

- to make basic education accessible to all Basotho;
- to ensure that all Basotho have equal opportunity to basic education;
- to ensure the provision of quality delivery in all the centres of basic education in Lesotho;
- to ensure that learners are provided with life skills relevant to

their context; and

- to forge appropriate linkages for Lesotho's primary education system.

In order to understand the practical implications of these policy guidelines an analysis of the financial investment made by parents to schooling was undertaken. It revealed that in addition to the basic school fees paid to proprietors, parents make significant contributions to registration, book rentals, stationery, feeding, maintenance, sports, excursions, entertainment, uniforms, and school projects. The Ministry of Education concluded that it would cover the following expenses under the FPE programme.

Book rental fee	M 15.00 / pupil in Standard 1
Stationery	Pupils (M 11.51 / class) and teachers (M 37.00 / teacher)
Feeding	With the exception of 562 schools that are still under World Food Programme (WFP), the government will pay M 2.00 / pupil / day to private caterers to prepare and serve food to Standard 1 pupils in 2000 and to Standards 1 and 2 pupils in 2001. For those schools still under the WFP, the government has absorbed the M 5.00

Appendix 1

that was contributed by parents.

Maintenance The Ministry of Education will pay for maintenance services to the tune of M 5.00 / pupil / year.

1.6 The Government of Lesotho's commitment

Under the terms of the Free Primary Education Programme, the Government will not force school proprietors to join the FPE programme. For those schools that do join the programme, the Government of Lesotho commits to:

- Assist in the establishment of new community schools
- Build additional classrooms in selected schools and provide classroom furniture
- Erect temporary structures, such as tents, in selected schools
- Pay casual labourers to undertake relevant tasks
- Train Principals and Standard 1 teachers
- Recruit, train and deploy para-professional teachers
- Pay teachers' salaries
- Provide teachers' stationery
- Provide teaching and learning materials



Appendix 2

University of Kwa-Zulu Natal

Edgewood Campus

Private Bag X03

Ashwood

1 November 2005

The Education Officer

Teya-Teyaneng

Berea

Lesotho

Dear Sir/ Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I request you to grant me permission to conduct interviews in the following schools Rakotsoana and Motlejoa Primary Schools. My research topic is **“Stakeholders’ experiences of school financial management in the context of Free Primary Education: A case study of two primary schools in the rural areas of Berea district in Lesotho”**. Persons involved will be two principals, six educators and four members of School Advisory Committee (SAC) from the two schools. Currently I am a student at University of Kwa-Zulu Natal in the faculty of Education specializing in Education Management and Leadership. To fulfill the requirements for master’s degree I am expected to conduct the research. In analyzing data, confidentiality and anonymity will be strictly observed and at no stage in my report that the names of schools and participants will be declared. The research findings will be forwarded to you for your records and comments if possible. For further inquiries you are free to contact my supervisor Mr. Bayeni, S. telephone **0027312607026**. I am looking forward to your response.

Yours faithfully

Margaret Malataliana

Contact no. 0027733765860

After hours: 27005150



Ministry of Education and Training

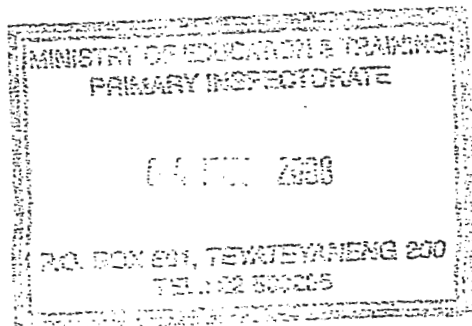
04/02/2008

ncipals
District

**PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN BEREA
DISTRICT PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN LESOTHO**

h to introduce Mrs. Margaret `Maretzelisitsoe Malataliana, an MEd research
ent from the University of Kwazul Natal interested in collecting information
rding "Stakeholders experiences of School financial management in the
text of Free Primary Education - A case study of two (2) Primary schools in
Berea district in Lesotho." She has been granted permission to conduct a
earch in our Primary schools.

ase accord her the necessary assistance as her study will enhance efforts in
ace in our education system and therefore will benefit us all.



Sincerely,

Phae Monaheng – Mariti (Mrs.)
SEO - Berea

Appendix 4A

University of Kwa-Zulu Natal
Edgewood Campus
Private Bag X03
Ashwood

1st November 2005

The Principal
Rakotsoana Primary School
P.O Box
Maputsoe
Lesotho

Dear Sir/Madam

I am a Med. student specialising in education management. In order to fulfil the requirements of Masters Degree, I have to conduct a research. My research topic is **“Stakeholders’ experiences of school financial management in the context of Free Primary Education: A case study of two primary schools in the rural areas of Berea district in Lesotho”**. I kindly request you to allow me to conduct interviews with you, three educators and two members of the School Advisory Committee. I will do everything to guarantee your confidentiality and anonymity. I will provide all the interviewees with the research findings. During the interviews, you are free to respond in your language of choice and you are not obliged to answer all the research questions. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point. For further inquiries contact my supervisor **Mr S. Bayeni at 0027312607026**. I am thanking you in anticipation.

Yours faithfully

Margaret M. Malataliana

Contact No. **0027733765860 or 27005150**

Appendix 4B

University of Kwa-Zulu Natal
Edgewood Campus
Private Bag X03
Ashwood

1st Novembers 2005

The Principal
Motlejoa Primary School
P.O Box
Maputsoe
Lesotho

Dear Sir /Madam

I am a Med. student specialising in education management. In order to fulfil the requirements of Masters Degree, I have to conduct a research. My research topic is **“stakeholders’ experiences of school financial management in the context of Free Primary Education: A case study of two primary schools in the rural areas of Berea district in Lesotho”**. I kindly request you to allow me to conduct interviews with you, three educators and two members of the Advisory School Committee. I will do everything to guarantee your confidentiality and anonymity. I will provide all the interviewees with the research findings. During the interviews, you free to respond in your language of choice and you are not obliged to answer all the research questions. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point. For further inquiries contact my supervisor **Mr S. Bayeni at 0027312607026**. I am thanking you in anticipation.

Yours faithfully

Margaret M. Malataliana

Contact No. **0027733765860 or 27005150**

Appendix 5

LETTER OF CONSENT

University of Kwa-Zulu Natal
Edgewood Campus
Private Bag X03
Ashwood

1st November 2005

Dear participants

I am a Med. student, specialising in education management and Leadership at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal. My research topic is **“Stakeholders’ experiences of school financial in the context of Free Primary Education: A case study of two primary schools in the rural areas of Berea district in Lesotho”**. Due to the interest I have about the stakeholders’ experiences about FPE programme, I wish to request you to interview you as part of my interview group. If you are willing to participate, I will make an appointment with you so that I can make further explanations regarding how interviews will be conducted. The interview process will take three days, while interview session will take about 15 to 20 minutes for one day. I am looking forward for your response, please reply through the above mentioned address or through the telephone. In analysing data collected, confidentiality and anonymity will be strictly observed. The research findings will be forwarded to you to confirm their correctness. For further inquiries you are free to contact my supervisor **Mr S. Bayeni at 0027312607026**. I am looking forward to your response.

Yours faithfully

Margaret M. Malataliana

Contact No. cell no. 0027733765860

After hours: 27005150

Email:simmymalats@yahoo.co.uk

Declaration

I(please write your full names) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and nature of the research project and I consent to participating in the research project. I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

Signature of participant.....Date.....

NOTE: Potential subjects should be given time to read, understand and question the information given before giving consent. This should include time of presence of the researcher and time to consult friends and/or family.

Appendix 6A

Interview schedule for the principals

1. From which class did the FPE programme start?
2. What major challenges has the school been experiencing in the context of FPE?
3. How do these challenges affect a day-to-day life of the school?
4. How did you address such challenges in order to maintain the effective running of your school?
5. Do you think there is a need to sustain, supplement or replace FPE? Please explain your view.

Appendix 6B

Interview schedule for educators

1. For how many years has FPE programme been implemented in your school?
2. What resources are provided by the FPE programme in your school?
3. Does FPE programme provide enough resources for teaching and learning? If yes or no please explain your views in details.
4. What challenges emerged along with the implementation of FPE programme?
5. How did the school address such challenges?

Appendix 6C

Interview schedule for parental representatives in the ASC

1. What is your role in the governance of this school?
2. What knowledge do you have about Free Primary Education programme?
3. What challenges does Advisory School Committee encounter in the context of Free Primary Education?
4. How do you think such challenges can be addressed?