

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN
PRIMARY SCHOOLS SITUATED IN
INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

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by

JERRY GEORGE MOFOKA

MINI-DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the degree

of

MAGISTER EDUCATIONIS

in

EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT

in the

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

at the

CAPE TECHNIKON

Supervisor: Mr. A.J. van der Bijl

March 2004

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SUMMARY

The study focuses on the level of parental involvement in the primary schools situated in informal settlements. The area of research was limited to the informal settlements of the Cape Flats in Cape Town. The identified areas were Philippi, Weltevreden valley, Khayelitsha and Crossroads. The principals, members of the governing bodies as well as a sample of parents not serving on governing bodies were interviewed on the level of involvement.

A case study of schools was undertaken on governance, communication, school involvement, home involvement as well as extra-curricular activities.

The findings of the research were that parents are not innovative when it comes to school activities. They expect too much from the schools. Parents do not ask too many questions. They accept what the schools tell them. Parents generally do not help children at home with their studies. They hardly ever watch their children while participating in extra-curricular activities. The researcher made conclusions and made recommendations.

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CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

As a teacher in an informal settlement of Philippi in Cape Town, the researcher came to realise that there was a lack of parental involvement in their children's schools.

Scholastic achievement in the schools situated in informal settlements is deteriorating. This is substantiated by the results of the past two years where the schools in the informal settlements have had an average pass rate of 50% in Grade 12, while in 2000 the pass rate of these schools was around 61% and 65% in 2001 (Western Cape Education Department, 2002).

As parents' involvement could make a difference, the researcher thought it worthwhile to analyse how parents in informal settlements involve themselves in the affairs of their children's schools. The aims of this study are to identify factors that hinder parental involvement, and to propose corrective management actions that should be taken.

1.2 Clarification of basic terms and concepts

The following is a list of primary terminology and concepts that appear in the research:

1.2.1 Parent

The South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 (South Africa, 1996:2),

defines a parent as:

- a) the guardian of a learner;
- b) the person legally entitled to custody of a learner; or
- c) the person who undertakes to fulfil the obligation of a parent or guardian towards the learner's education at school.

In informal settlement communities, biological parents are not always available because of problems related to work situations and marital problems such as divorce and one-parent families. In these cases grandparents, sisters, aunts and other relatives undertake the obligation of a parent by taking care of children; hence they act *in loco parentis*.

The researcher also views a parent from the perspective of the Xhosa-speaking community. As the focus of this research is on parental involvement in education in a predominantly Christian Xhosa-speaking community, the working definition of parent in this study refers inclusively to "guardian", meaning any adult with custodial responsibility over the child. In the informal settlements in the Xhosa-speaking culture, when a child loses both parents, the grand-parents frequently take over as parents of these children. In some cases the child does not know his or her real mother until a later stage of development, because many children are raised mostly by their grandmothers, whom they regard as their natural mothers.

These people should be involved as parents or guardians in the education of their wards. A parent is therefore the pedagogically responsible adult who has the calling to lead the child from helpless babyhood to adulthood. The parents make up the first prolonged interaction system that the individual child encounters. Through this system, the child discovers humanness and moves from his or her biogenetic instincts to learned responses.

1.2.2 Involvement

The Oxford Encyclopaedic English Dictionary (1991:747) defines involvement as “the act or process of involving”. From this definition, involvement is a process where someone is involved, for example, parents involved in the process of educating the child. The working definition of parental involvement in this study refers to the manner in which parents are involved in the process of education of their children in schools. Being a parent implies inalienable responsibility and concern to introduce the child to the world of human experience. Parents become involved in education when they undertake the task of educating, set aims and structure the educational experience of the child to give it direction and control its progress.

1.2.3 School

The term refers to a public school or independent school, which enrolls learners in one or more grades between Grade R (one year pre-school) and Grade 12 (South Africa, 1996:2). An independent school was previously officially known as a private school.

1.2.4 Informal Settlements

The term refers to the settlements in the urban area where houses tend to be made of zinc and timber instead of bricks. These are the settlements that embody poor socio-economic conditions. In most of these settlements there is not infrastructure, e.g. there are no plumbing facilities such as toilets and faucets/taps within the home/house, so that one has to walk a distance to fetch water, and there are no roads or electricity. People use gas or paraffin stoves and candles.

1.3 Objectives of the study

Parents should not be mere on-lookers and apathetic with regard to the education of their children. However, in most cases, the researcher has found in the informal settlements that parents, as primary educators, do not shoulder their responsibility in this regard.

The objectives of study are to:

- determine the level of involvement of parents in the informal settlements;
- determine the factors which hinder parental involvement;
- determine strategies that can be utilised by a school in an informal settlement to increase parental involvement;
- determine the role of the principal of a school in an informal settlement in trying to increase parental involvement.

1.4 Research Methodology

The research project has been completed by means of a literature study and a detailed analysis of at least sixteen relevant schools. The purpose of the literature study was to analyse existing research on parental involvement in informal settlements. A critical analysis of a school's parental involvement was conducted in order to find out what factors hinder parental involvement. Because of the apparent lack of research on the current situation, the literature study has been largely historical and comparative.

The empirical study made use of the case study method, which is the detailed description of a person, event, institution or community designed to create monothetic knowledge (van Rensburg *et al.* 1988:333).

The research entails:

1. Structured interviews with principals of primary schools in similar informal settlement communities;
2. Interviews with the chairpersons and members of the governing bodies of these schools;
3. Focus group interviews with parents who are not serving on governing bodies of these schools;
4. Distribution of questionnaires to certain principals.

From the above information, and against the background of information obtained in the literature study, the researcher proceeded to find answers to the question of how a principal can be instrumental in increasing parental involvement.

1.5 Delineation of the study

The Study concentrated on primary schools in the informal settlements of the Cape Flats in Cape Town in the Western Cape. The principals, members of their governing bodies as well as parents not serving on the governing bodies of their schools were interviewed.

1.6 Structure of the study

Chapter 1: Overview of the study

This chapter provides an overview of the actuality of the study undertaken by the researcher. The statement of the problem is given and the methods to be utilised are clearly stated. The study is demarcated and the purpose of the research is stated. Clarification of basic concepts is also done in this chapter.

Chapter 2: Literature review

In this chapter the researcher does a literature study on the following:

- History of parental involvement in South Africa;
- The value and necessity of parental involvement in education;
- The possibilities of parental involvement in a school;
- Problems encountered around parental involvement
- Summary of problems encountered around parental involvement;
- Strategies to improve parental involvement;

This literature serves to:

1. Inform the researcher why parental involvement is necessary;
2. Find reasons why parental involvement may be low;
3. Determine strategies to improve parental involvement;

Chapter 3: Research design and data collection

In this chapter an analysis of the situation of sixteen schools is done. A case study is undertaken. The focus will be on parental involvement in governance of the school; curriculum activities; extra-curricular activities; communication channels with the school's parents as well as reasons why parental involvement is so low. Focus is also placed on the strategies these schools utilise to increase parental involvement. The information will be obtained from interviews with principals and members of the governing bodies of these schools. These parents live in informal settlements and have children who are schooling in these communities. To avoid a biased viewpoint the researcher will use random sampling to select the parents.

Chapter 4: Analysis and interpretation of data collected

Data collected through interviews with principals, members of governing bodies and parents who are not on governing bodies is analysed and interpreted in this chapter. Interpretation and analysis is done under the following key themes:

- Governance;
- Communication;
- School involvement;
- Home involvement;
- Curriculum involvement;
- General involvement.

Chapter 5: Summary, recommendations and conclusion

In this chapter the researcher reaches conclusions based on the findings and makes recommendations. These recommendations are possible strategies that schools can utilise to increase parental involvement. These are based on the survey and literature study. The literature study and the unique circumstances of the community are brought together in this chapter.

Bibliography

The bibliography contains details of all references mentioned in the text as well as other materials that have been used, although not mentioned or quoted.

Appendices

The appendices contain all the instruments used during the research.

These instruments include the structured interviews that were undertaken as well as letters that were written to the Western Cape Department, various schools and parents requesting appointments with them.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The concept of parental involvement in education may not be new to education researchers or teachers, but few parents seem to be aware of the value of their involvement. Although academics and legislation recommend parental involvement, it is lower in schools in the disadvantaged communities than in schools in the more affluent areas. This low involvement is notable in the schools situated in the informal settlements of Cape Town.

It is the aim of this chapter to investigate parental involvement in schools in the informal settlements of Cape Town, South Africa. This will involve a general look at how the country values parental involvement as well as the possibilities of parental involvement in a school. This chapter will also focus on the development of the education system and the structures put in place to facilitate parental involvement. It will investigate problems encountered around parental involvement in the focus area concerned.

However, before delving into the latter, the researcher intends to trace the history of parental involvement with reference to the black communities in South Africa. To this end the education system as a social structure, concerned with education within the community is broadly outlined. Particular emphasis is placed on the educational role of major social structures with vested interest in education. The stakeholders, for the purpose of this study, are the parents, teachers and learners.

2.2 History of Parental Involvement in South African schools

Parental involvement in education has long been acknowledged in the South African education system. For many centuries prior to white settlement and for almost two centuries afterwards, parents were the main partners, if not the major providers, of education (Dekker & van Schalkwyk, 1995:484). For the purpose of this study we can divide the history of parental involvement in education into two separate eras:

2.2.1 Parental involvement before the 1994 elections

Parental involvement manifested itself in different forms in different racial groups. Education of black people was mainly characterised by resistance from parents, educators and school children due to the manner in which the schools of these people were administered.

Missionaries' main concern was christianising the black people. The views of the black people were not regarded as important. Under the Union government, as set up in 1910, education of the black people fell under the white Minister of Native Affairs who also did not listen to the concerns of the black people (Christie, 1985:50).

In 1949 the Eiselen Commission was set up to produce a blueprint for "Education for Natives as a separate race". Its report was published in 1951. Among its findings it recommended that there should be 'increased community involvement in education through parents' committees' (Lodge, 1983:116 and Christie, 1985:55).

The Bantu Education Act of 1953 transferred direct control of education from the provinces to the Native Affairs Department (Lodge, 1983:114 and Christie, 1985:55). The content of syllabus, the employment of teachers, the admission of pupils – all matters over which schools themselves had previously had a degree of autonomy in decision-making – were now subject to central authority (Lodge, 1983:115). The Bantu Education Act of 1953 was met with much resistance, especially from black students and parents. There were many boycotts organised in response to the Bantu Education Act. Although some of the protests were merely political, they could not be divorced from education (Christie, 1985:227).

When the National Education Policy Act of 1967 was introduced, it did not cater for the needs of the black people. It stipulated that education in government schools should have a Christian character and that if the student's mother tongue was English or Afrikaans, it should be the medium of instruction. This sidelined the participation of black parents whose language was neither English nor Afrikaans (Cross et al., 1998:4).

In 1976 there was uproar by students over school-based issues that were causing dissatisfaction. This led to a principle of "Liberation now, education later", which was met by resistance from parents (Christie, 1985:250). The parents of children at schools in Soweto, near Johannesburg, organised themselves into the Soweto Education Crisis Committee (SECC) to be able to deal with the problems facing the education of their children.

This indicated that these parents were interested in becoming involved in the education of their children.

After the 1976 uprisings the government introduced the Education and Training Act of 1979. This Act recognised the “active involvement of parents through parent-teachers’ associations or other local committees or councils”. Later the Department of Education and Training introduced the Parent Teacher Associations (PTA’s). This was a non-statutory organ subordinate to the school committee, which created channels through which black parents could make recommendations in supervisory capacity to schools (Christie, 1985:56; Makoanyane, 1989:80 and Shikwari, 1999:28).

There were of course other forms of representation in various departments of education. The school committees operated in ‘Bantu’ schools, which were solely staffed by black teachers. Governing Councils were parent bodies involved in non-community schools. Such schools were, for example, Adult Centres for night schooling, state schools, i.e. schools that had both white and black teachers on the staff. The regional director was usually the chairman of the governing councils.

The government set up the De Lange Commission in 1981 to conduct an in-depth investigation into education and to make recommendations for an educational policy for South Africa. The De Lange Report recommended a single department of education for all, education of equal quality for all, and a changed schooling structure (Christie, 1985:56).

In 1983 the government issued a White Paper on education, accepting the De Lange guiding principles, but refusing to accept the major recommendation of a single education for all (Christie, 1985:57). The White Paper recommended that parents should be represented in school matters. Act No. 76 of 1984 made provision for the freedom of choice of parents with regard to the admission of learners to schools, and the say of parents as well as their responsibility with regard to formal education.

Although there existed structures that made parental involvement possible, the focus of education served to alienate parental communities. The Christian National Education Act No. 39 of 1967 as amended (CNE) maintained that education in schools should have a Christian character. In the historically white education, this National Education Policy Act recommended that parents must participate in the education system through the statutory bodies on local, regional and national levels. It stipulated that the parent community should be given a say through parent-teachers' associations, school committees, boards of control or school boards or in any other manner. Education in schools was to have a broad national character. However, the definition of 'nation' was very limited and specific. It referred only to white South Africans, and not to blacks (Christie, 1985:163-164).

Many black parents had, therefore, been made to believe that education was the sole responsibility of the school, and the school believed that education should be carried out far from the interference of the parents (Gololo, 1998:12).

Parents were, therefore, not aware of their obligations towards the school. They were under the impression that they should communicate with the school only when their children were guilty of an offence and were in trouble or when the school had allegedly wronged them. Gololo (1998:14) cites Mkwanazi as saying that, although there was enough room for parental involvement in the pre-election South Africa, it was used by the government to legitimise unpopular policies of apartheid, while the opposition used the term parental involvement to legitimate their resistance to unjust official policies.

The state of tension between the state and the parents resulted in lack of interest and withdrawal from school activities by parents. Parent's lack of interest in their children's education gave rise to the downfall of the culture of teaching and learning. Thus, poor results in South African schools obtained from lack of commitment from parents, some of who had shown little interest in their children's education (Gololo, 1998:14).

According to Van Wyk, as cited by Makoanyane (1989:81), there had been co-operation between educators and parents, but because of the political circumstances of that era, that co-operation was not effective. There was, instead, a measure of polarisation between education authorities on the one hand and parents on the other. Parental involvement was encouraged, but due to prevailing circumstances, parents, who are one of the main stakeholders in education, played a less satisfactory role in their children's education, and the impossible burden of dealing with disciplining learners was left to educators (Gololo, 1998:16).

2.2.2 Parental involvement after the 1994 elections

Judging by various official documents like the White Papers and the Schools Act released since 1994 relating to education, it appears that the government elected in 1994 has made attempts to address the issue of parental involvement in education at all schools. This is because none of the official documents dealing with education are exclusively for a particular racial group nor do they exclude any particular racial group. All the policies adopted apply to all racial groups.

2.2.2.1 The White Paper on Education and Training 1995

The changes envisaged for education in South Africa as set out in the Department of Education and White Paper on Education and Training highlighted the importance of parent and community involvement in education.

This can be illustrated by the following extract, "The principle of democratic governance should increasingly be reflected in every level of the system, by the involvement in consultation and appropriate forms of decision-making of elected representatives of the main stakeholders, interest groups and the role players. This is the only guaranteed way to infuse new social energy into the institutions and structures of the education and training system, dispel the chronic alienation of large sectors of society from the education process, and reduce the power of government administration to intervene where it should not" (South Africa, 1995:22).

2.2.2.2 The Hunter Report of 1995

The Hunter Report, chaired by Professor A.P. Hunter was released on 31 August 1995. In this report various suggestions relating to school governance (or formal parent involvement) were made. The Hunter report acknowledged that "...parents have both the right and responsibility to participate in the education of their children", and recommended that schools should establish governance structures that would enable elected representatives to assume active and responsible roles in the determining and adoption of policies in schools (Shikwari, 1999:32).

2.2.2.3 The White Paper on Education No. 2, 1996

The White Paper on Education No. 2 of 1996 entitled 'The Organisation, Governance and Funding of schools' was based on the proposals set out in the Hunter Report. Its suggestions included school governing structures involving all stakeholder groups in active and responsible roles, encouraging tolerance, rational discussion and collective decision-making. According to the White Paper, the parents and guardians should have the largest representation on the governing body (South Africa, 1996:17).

2.2.2.4 The South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996

In order to ensure parental involvement in education, the new department of education came up with the Schools Act No. 84 of 1996. This paradigm shift placed more emphasis on school governance that involves parents, educators and non-educators, and in secondary schools, on learners.

The aim of the Schools Act is to consign to history the sub-standard and unequal schooling of our apartheid past and to create a single school system that can work together to improve the quality of education in the country and to ensure that all children have an equal opportunity to learn (Potgieter et al., 1997:1 and Gololo, 1998:12).

The Schools Act was designed as a means to democratise the education system where all stakeholders such as parents, teachers, learners and other people, such as members of the community near the school, must participate in the activities of the school (Potgieter et al., 1997:7).

Among the functions of the governing body as stated in the Schools Act No.84 of 1996, the following are worth mentioning:

- To support the principal, educators and other staff in performing their professional functions;
- Administer and control property, buildings and grounds occupied by the school, including hostels, if applicable;
- Recommend to the Head of Department the appointment of educators and non-educator staff at the school subject to the Educators' Employment Act (Act No. 138 of 1994);
- Encourage parents, learners, educators and other staff at the school to render voluntary services to the school (South Africa, 1996:8-9).

The Schools Act generally confines parental involvement to the activities of the school governing body (SGB). It is meant to ensure that there is true representative governance at school with all the stakeholders, i.e. the parents, educators, non-educators and learners in secondary schools, represented in the governing body. The Schools Act states that the governing body is responsible for the governance of the school (South Africa, 1996:17). The idea is to involve parents much more fully in school governance, enabling them to support schools actively (Potgieter et al., 1997:1). A clear line is drawn between the management of the school and its governance.

Since 1994, the emphasis has been on co-operative governance at schools wherein all stakeholders namely parents, educators, learners (in secondary schools) and non-educator staff at school must co-operate and accept responsibility to ensure that the culture of learning is restored and maintained. For the re-establishment of this culture of learning and teaching there is a strong need to ensure that there is active participation and support of all parents in their children's education (Gololo, 1998:20).

The Schools Act ensures that school governance is transformed by insisting that parents should be in the majority among all the voting members of school governing body (Potgieter et al., 1997:16). The new education dispensation is therefore more directive in approach than the previous one because everything with regard to roles, functions and structures of the SGB is highlighted through the Schools Act.

In the light of the above information, it becomes clear that with regard to parental involvement, the Schools Act lays a strong foundation for upholding the rights of all parents, promoting parents' acceptance of co-operation with the state; hence it promotes co-operative governance and partnership through the school governing body.

It appears from the Act that the state initially gave Governing Bodies too much power and the SGB could make a crucial decision on behalf of the parent body although that decision might not be a popular one. There have recently been many amendments to the South African Schools Act, an example of which is the introduction of the Progressive Discipline Bill. This bill takes away the right of the governing bodies to discipline educators or workers at the school. This right is vested in the principal who is the representative of the Department at school (South Africa, 2001:3).

The Department maintains that the salaries of the workers are paid not by the governing body, but the Department, which means that the representative of the Department should take the responsibility on behalf of the Department. If the principal deems an offence to be too serious he/she should refer the matter to a higher authority of the Department (Circular 0010/2002). This may also lead to different policies in different schools in the sense that one principal may have his/her own view or interpretation of statutes which may result in particular implementation.

Due to the complexity of the functions of the SGB there is a strong need to workshop and train the SGB members effectively. The principal must ensure that the SGB receives the necessary support and guidance in the execution of their functions.

The acknowledgement of the government that parents have a right to be involved in decision-making at school is commendable. However, it is lamentable that there is a lack of encouragement or incentive to expand parent involvement to other aspects of education. School governance is of great importance, but does not involve the majority of parents, other than allowing them to vote for members of the governing body (Shikwari, 1999:34). The level of education of the parents, as well as their socio-economic condition, is not taken into consideration when statutes are passed into law.

It is the responsibility of the government to make sure that its Acts are implemented. The newly elected governing bodies cannot function properly unless trained, because they are incompetent and are not sure of the tasks ahead of them. As a result the Western Cape Education Department has a Schools' Act Co-ordinating Team (SACT) department in each Educational Management and Development Centre (EMDC) that looks into the interpretation of the Schools Act, especially the training of the governing bodies. It would be a good undertaking to train every parent even if they are not elected so as to be of help to those elected. Parents ought to be told of their right and obligation to be involved in education. This, in my opinion, would make them effective members of the parent bodies of their schools.

A sure recipe for successful parental involvement may be found in the establishment of parent communities where spheres and areas of interest and involvement can be determined. In this way, parents could channel their opinions into the goals of the sub-structures, which must always be subservient to the goals of legally elected governing structures. Chaired by capable and willing parents, these sub-structures can become an enormous asset to the school and a real helping hand to the principal. Representatives establish legitimacy, accountability and transparency, while involved parents are trusted and given the opportunity to expand on the school's natural fields of interest and capability (Brand, 1998:165).

2.3 The value and necessity of parental involvement in education

Mathye (1998:9) cites Lemmer & Squelch as saying that parental involvement is important because of the following:

- It helps to strengthen parent-child relationships, and can positively influence children's attitudes towards school, their academic progress and their behaviour.
- Parental involvement, in general, improves and promotes home-school relations, reduces misunderstandings and conflict, prevents the school from becoming isolated from the community.

Parental involvement should be well planned, comprehensive and long-lasting and serves to integrate the child's experiences at home and school (Long, 1986:3).

Children do best when parents are enabled to play four key roles in their children's learning:

- Teachers – helping children at home
- Supporters – contributing their skills to the school
- Advocates – helping children receive fair treatment, and
- Decision-makers – participating in joint problem-solving with the school at every level (Liontos, 1994).

Parental involvement improves children's school performance, and merits close attention (Long, 1986:2). Engel cites president of the National Professional Teachers of South Africa (NAPTOSA), Mr Taunyane, as saying "...the creation of an environment conducive to learning will only materialise once all parents realise the absolutely vital role they can and must play in this regard". Greater parental involvement in the education process is, therefore, a necessity (Engel, 1998:51).

Parents can be held responsible for a considerable share of the scholastic progress of the child and for at least a similar percentage of the moulding of his/her personality and character. Parents should be aware of the responsibilities of parenthood, their role and task as well as the limitations and possibilities of their co-operative activities. It is, therefore, essential to ensure the full co-operation of the parent in the education of the child (Engel, 1998:52).

Parents and learners' relationships are strengthened, especially when parents understand the school's mission, aims and objectives. Learners' progress and behaviour can be better controlled because parents will visit schools to check on learners' progress. Their behaviour should conform to the code of conduct set up by parents with learners in that school (Mathye, 1998:9).

Parents remain the most potentially valuable resource in education and to ignore this largely untapped resource would need a great deal of justification. Failure to ensure parental participation will definitely cause problems to the system.

Within the partnership between parent and teacher, each partner has a particular obligation, related to the different life tasks and roles which they as parents and teachers are normally expected to fulfil within the community (Jesse, 1997:24 and Van Rensburg et al. 1988:468).

Parents are able to make the work of the teacher much easier when they are involved. Habelgaarn (1997:16) puts it much clearer: "*Ouers wat betrokke is, kry geleentheid om eerstehands kennis te verkry oor dit wat in die skool gedoen word. Indien leer-en gedragsprobleme ervaar word, kan dit makliker en effektiewer opgelos word. Doeltreffende ouerbetrokkenheid kan ook lei tot verhoogde werkprestasie. Ouers wat betrokke is by hul kinders se onderrig en onderwys, dra ook veel by tot 'n gesonde en positiewe verhouding tussen kinders en ouers.*"¹ Everybody benefits when parents are involved.

¹ Translation: "Parents who are involved, have the opportunity to gain firsthand knowledge of what happens in school. If learning or behavioural problems should occur, these may be dealt with more effectively. Effective parental involvement may also lead to increased achievement. Parents, who are

“Die kind sowel as die ouer kan veel baat vind indien die ouer effektief betrokke is by die kind se onderwys en skool”² (Habelgaarn, *ibid.*). When the schools work together with families to support learning, children are inclined to succeed not just in school, but also throughout life.

This participation of parents is critical not only in the very beginning of educational process, but throughout a child’s academic career (Liontos, 1994). Parents are, after all, their children’s first and most important teachers. Parents, primarily mothers, have a predisposition to protect and look after the child, which not only promotes formative education, but also carries it along. A parent has important knowledge about his/her child’s likes, dislikes, needs and problems of which the school may not be aware. Parent participation strengthens the teacher’s efforts. It is, therefore, essential to ensure the full co-operation of the parent in education of the child.

Parents are involved as the primary educators of their children before school or nursery, and it makes sense to continue this involvement in the early years of formal education. Van Schalkwyk, as cited by Makoanyane (1989:10), says parents, as primary educators, cannot always provide for all the educational needs of the child.

involved in their children’s education, contribute greatly to a healthy and positive relationship between children and their parents.

² The Child as well as the parent can benefit greatly from effective parental involvement in the child’s school and education.

Consequently, school education assists the parent in this regard, but the parent remains responsible for ensuring that schools offer the child education according to his/her expectations, and the school education should comply with the parent's requirements.

Makoanyane (1989:11) cites Postma as indicating that language forms the medium through which a child conceptualises. Parents should, therefore, see to it that a child masters his/her home language well before he/she attempts school learning. The principle of mother tongue should be retained in order to make the child's learning easy, and parents should be involved in the child's education to ensure that schools adhere to this principle.

The religious background of parents also is important. Christian parents made a baptismal promise that they will guide the child to recognise, accept and learn all about the teaching of the Holy Spirit. At the same time, parent involvement in the child's religious education should not be a word of mouth only. Children copy easily from parents and, therefore, the daily life of the Christian parent should display godliness (Makoanyane, 1989:12-13).

Parents introduce their children to some form of discipline from infancy. From a tender age, a child already knows what he/she is permitted to do, and what he/she is forbidden to do. Parental discipline enables the child to control emotional outbursts at home and at school; and such children adapt more quickly to school discipline. For these reasons, parents need to be and are obliged to be involved in the education of their children (Makoanyane, 1989:13-14).

The following can be summarised as the main reasons for parental involvement in the education of children:

- Parents as primary educators;
- Parental love for the child;
- Parental care for the child's physical development;
- Language development;
- Parent baptismal promise as advocated by Christian parents;
- Parent's religious background;
- The child's cultural heritage;
- The child's feeling of security;
- Parental discipline;
- Parent's confidence and trust, and
- Parent's time with the child (Makoanyane, 1990:15).

Unfortunately, for a long time in South Africa, as in the rest of the world, parental involvement has been confined to parental responsibilities of finance, discipline and crisis in schools. Parents have been made to believe that education is the sole responsibility of the school, and the schools believed the education should be taken away from the interference of the parents (Gololo, 1998:12).

The new South African education system came up with a paradigm through the Schools Act No.84 of 1996 which places more emphasis on a school governance structure that involves parents, educators and non-educators and, in secondary schools, learners, which could break the internationally accepted mould for parental involvement.

However, it is clearly the responsibility of all school personnel to communicate effectively with parents and to develop good working relationships. Thus schools need to take the initiative in this area. Often, school leaders and teachers react to parents, or view the relationship as a back-burner priority. This should not be the case, as schools need to be proactive when communicating with parents regarding all issues, from a new programme to an individual child's progress report (Robbins & Alvy, 1995:207).

2.4 The possibilities of parental involvement in a school

The school is the basic unit of an educational system. It is here that parents come closest to the concrete realities of education, its benefits, successes or failures, its relevance or inadequacies. Normally, from the school's point of view, parent participation or involvement in education falls into two broad categories, namely:

- Working with parents on an individual basis, and
- Working with parents as a group.

An extremely important question is one that pertains to activating the parent to fulfil his/her responsibility in respect of the education of the child. Jesse (1997:23) cites Johnson as saying that an important fact to keep in mind when attempting to strengthen a parent involvement programme is that it may take considerable effort to get low-income parents involved. This is relevant to the parents in the informal settlements. Parents and teachers have to be trained in parental involvement. Parental involvement in education may be effected through the following:

2.4.1 Involvement in school learning processes at home or at school

A strong element of effective parental involvement is communication between parents and teachers. For the most part, parents seem to prefer informal relationships with their children's teachers (Jesse, 1997:23). Parents have to help their children with home study. Parents can read literature selections with their children at home or talk about the stories with them. Parents can ask questions about the meaning of the stories and encourage their children to go further (Lindstrom, 1997:28).

Learners like to see their parents at school because it lets the children know that their parents care about their education and are involved. Everybody is a winner when parents participate in their children's education. It lets the parents know that the school appreciates them and it tells them that the school, as partners in their children's education, wants them (Lindstrom, 1997:29).

2.4.2 Involvement in school governance

As parents are regarded as the first or primary educators, they should know what happens in schools. Since the parents have the right to know what is going on in schools, they also have the responsibility of being involved in the management and governance of schools. They should know why key decisions have been taken and they should support these decisions (Mathye, 1998:1).

Involvement in school governance, as set out in the South African Schools Act, gives parents an opportunity to be involved in decision-making (South Africa, 1996:9). Parents may be involved in making decisions that affect the structure of the educational systems that serve their children. The rationale for parent participation in decision-making is based on the belief that people will not be committed to decisions in which they had no involvement. Parents know their situation best, and hence, must be involved in planning for their children's education (Gestwicki, 1987:66).

2.4.3 Involvement in school support

School support encompasses a wide range of activities, which do not directly involve parents' working with their own children. During a meeting organised by a school, the services of parents could be enlisted for the benefit of the learner population of the school. The parent population might have some parent sportsmen, experienced leaders or organisers of youth movements. Activities involving parents may include the following:

- Fund-raising – fetes, etc.

- Direct assistance – repairs to apparatus, help in the library, etc.
- Child supervision – trips, visits, etc.
- Parents as resource teachers – talking to groups about their own expertise, e.g. Police officer.
- Social or cultural events – assemblies, festivals, etc. (Liontos, 1994).

2.4.4 Home-school relations

Parental involvement improves and promotes home-school relations (Mathye, 1998:10). The relationship between the teacher and the school is the key factor. Teachers are professionals who manage a variety of instructional resources. Parents are an essential resource in the learning process of their children.

The shorter the distance between home and school, the more successful children are. If there is a high degree of mutual trust between parent and teacher, there will be an effective flow of information in both directions, and parent involvement projects will have a good chance of success. These may include the following:

- Home contacts – visits, phone calls, letters;
- School contacts – open days, individual parent-teacher meetings, parent meetings;
- Parents' rooms/library;
- Parents' survey/questionnaire – to determine areas of concern, and problems, or evaluate home-school relations;

- Written communications – posters, calendars of events, class newsletters, school newsletters;
- Parent handbook – basic information, contacts, suggested home activities;
- Media announcements – local press, local radio (Acosta et al., 1997:24).

2.5 Problems encountered around parental involvement

As stated above, schools alone cannot successfully educate children, as they are dependent on the collective efforts of parents, teachers and learners. However, there is evidence to suggest that some parents do not show any commitment to their children's education even when it is obvious that they have to do so. On the face of it, the idea of parental involvement in school education looks very simple and practicable. However, there are some practical problems that may stand in the way of the implementation of this idea. *“Die graad van direkte ouerbetrokkenheid by baie skole is glad nie na wense nie. Daar is verskeie faktore waarom baie ouers verkies om nie betrokke te raak by die onderwys van hul kinders nie”*³ (Habelgaarn, 1997:22). The following are some of the important factors, which may influence parental involvement in education:

³ The degree of direct parental involvement in schools is not satisfactory. There are several reasons why parents may choose not to be involved with their children's education.

2.5.1 Socio-economic status of parents

The most common practice that is employed in the schools of the disadvantaged communities is that teachers “talk to” the parents and not “with them” (Dean, 1987:187). Some parents thus become more concerned about their own educational inadequacies. They end up thinking that teachers will not listen to them because they are not capable of understanding the complexities of the school’s educational programmes.

This is especially true of many black illiterate and semi-literate parents who come to school meetings reluctantly, fearing that their views will be regarded as naïve, uninformed or unimportant (Gabela, 1983:92).

2.5.2 The parent – teacher relations or attitudes

In most school systems the relationship between teachers and parents is not close enough. Many parents, particularly in the lower income group, especially if they have experienced failure, view schools as hostile and forbidding institutions. In some cases parents who come from a high-income group may have a low opinion of teachers whose earning and social status may be considered lower than the parents in question. Under both circumstances co-operation is not encouraged.

Parents have grown to feel powerless or reluctant to press for change in a school, because schools have earned themselves the notorious reputation of being resistant to intrusion from outside. Some parents have unhappy memories of school that make them less ready to visit.

Other parents want meetings to be two-way communication where they make a contribution to the teacher's knowledge of their child, and not simply meetings where the teacher talked to them (Dean, 1987:187). Teachers should listen to parents and not come in too quickly as experts. This makes parents apathetic about becoming actively involved in local school affairs. Furthermore, this makes it impossible for parents to attend to problems or needs which are immediate and which have a high probability of being resolved with organised parental concern.

The principal and teachers should understand and accept the right of parents to organise themselves into a collective force for implementing change. The school should have some knowledge that the parent organisational strategies should be supported and, in fact, allowed to develop within the context of the school programme. Parents are likely to be willing and effective supporters of the school in which the teachers and the principal help to provide encouragement and professional direction to their quest for meaningful participation (Gabela, 1983:94-95).

2.5.3 Political climate of the country

The position that a parent occupies in society may influence his involvement in school affairs. During apartheid the situation in black schools did not invite involvement of parents. White personnel headed some black schools, which were either partially closed private institutions or state or territorial institutions in which the black parent's say was limited. If a school or department has leadership with political connotations, then that department or school does not invite participation of the parents by virtue of leadership.

This means that the climate should be such that participation is invited and the atmosphere conducive to participation.

2.5.4 Management style of the Principal

The manner in which the principal manages and leads the school is the most important determinant of the school climate. The principal should apply an open door policy to enable people to come freely to discuss issues with him (Habelgaarn, 1997:22).

2.5.5 Poor progress of the learners

Most parents do not like to be involved because of the progress of their children. They are embarrassed that the poor progress of their children could be associated with them. Habelgaarn cites Van der Linde as saying: *“ouers wil nie verwyf of verkwalik word vir hul kinders se foute nie”*⁴ (1997:23).

2.6 Summary of problems encountered around parental involvement

Many researchers have identified a wide variety of factors that may inhibit healthy relations between the school and parents. The following problems with parent-teacher relations have been identified:

- Problematic attitudes (parents and teachers alike);
- Communication problems;
- Time;
- Distance or location of school.

⁴ “Parents do not wish to be reproached or held responsible for their children’s mistakes”.

Parents' prior negative experience of their own schooling may be the single most important factor challenging parental participation, and it is imperative that teachers be aware of it (Thorp, 1997:263). Parents' lack of interest is often associated with aggressive or negative attitude encounters with educators (Shikwari, 1999:58). Parents may not always feel welcome at school because they were told, on the first day of their child's schooling, to leave their children in the safe hands of the teachers. This may have remained with them as an understanding that the teachers know what they are doing.

In many cases parents see themselves as having no real power in their interactions with the professionals, and they therefore cease to try. At the same time professionals may begin inadvertently to discourage parental involvement on the basis of stereotypes such as lack of interest and education level. Professionals may assume that these parents are so overwhelmed with addressing daily needs that it would be asking too much to invite them to school.

The other stereotype is that families of certain cultures are more passive or accepting of what professionals may say (Thorp, 1997:264). Some parents may not come to school because of special circumstances, e.g. being the family breadwinner, having a large number of children, lack of transportation, meetings scheduled at the wrong time, lack of confidence in the ability to contribute or fear of rejection by the principal or teacher.

Schools ought to understand that lack of participation by parents does not mean they are neglecting their responsibilities. They often simply may not have the time. *“Baie ouers erken dat hulle eenvoudig nie tyd het vir hulle kinders nie omdat hulle saans na werksure ook hulle huislike pligte binne beperkte tyd moet afhandel”*⁵ (Habelgaarn, 1997:25).

Parents work until very late and they travel many kilometres to and from work. At weekends parents may be very busy with social activities such as funerals, weddings, parties and so on. Because of limited time the parents do not have time to come together with teachers to discuss their children’s problems (Shikwari, 1999:56). Some black parents are still too illiterate to cope fully with the demands of the school. Some of them do not attend general meetings out of ignorance (Mokoka, 1997:37).

2.7 Strategies to improve parental involvement

Improving parental involvement in schools is not an easy task. It will require consideration, effort and planning. A school should develop a programme, suitable in the context of the particular school and community, for contact with parents.

Floyd and Riley maintain that if educational institutions are serious about improving parental and family involvement, they would change their approach. School personnel could make it their business to learn about the ethnic groups they teach, and find out what customs and values they have.

⁵ “Many parents admit that they do not have time for their children as they have to attend to household chores within a limited time period in the evenings after work”.

Being knowledgeable will make it possible to plan appealing projects based on parents' and students' interests (Floyd, 1998:135, Riley, 1997:20). Schools in an urban area differ in terms of infrastructure and one method may not be suitable for every school.

Jesse and Riley have suggested a number of programmes to be followed in improving parental involvement of which the following are relevant to the situation of the schools in the informal settlements in South Africa:

- Developing a school-wide communications plan;
- Holding open days at times when parents can attend;
- Arranging for more formal private talks, preferably twice a year;
- Having regular meetings to discuss homework, behaviour and curriculum;
- Inviting parents to help in a variety of activities at school:
- Finding out why parents are not involved;
- Making a special effort to contact parents who do not visit schools;
- Conducting special parenting skills seminars;
- Teaching parents how to help their children with home study;
- Using the telephone as an instrument of good news;
- Writing reports on children (preferably in the form of a letter) at least once a year; ensuring that the child's work is seen by the parents;
- Encouraging parent volunteerism;
- Encouraging parents to become educated themselves;
- Creating opportunities for students and parents to learn together;
- Offering community education classes to get parents to come to the school

(Riley, 1997:20 and Jesse, 1997:23).

Schools could help by assuring parents that the school-parent meeting will serve in part as an open forum at which their concerns and viewpoints are encouraged and heard. Parents who perceive that they are receiving frequent and positive messages from teachers demonstrate a tendency to become more involved in their children's education than do parents who do not perceive that they are receiving such communication (Jesse, 1997:23).

Waler (1998:46) says that if principals are serious about parental involvement in education, they need to "reach out and touch" parents and other citizens in personally meaningful ways. The following guidelines are suggested:

- Develop and publicise a plan to promote parent and community involvement;
- Foster a climate of hospitality and openness that gives parents and others information and confidence they need to become actively involved in school activities;
- Focus on the needs of parents and community members, not on the needs of the school and its personnel, when creating involvement opportunities;
- Build a personal knowledge base of occupations, interests and affiliations of parents and community members;
- Target specific persons for tasks and issues in which they are most likely to have an interest and competence;
- Use casual encounters with parents and others as opportunities to invite them to become involved in important school issues;
- Train teachers to seek, welcome and use parent and community involvement effectively;

- Respect the cultural sensitivities and life experiences of those whom you wish to become involved with the school;
- Link involvement and educational opportunities with activities that draw strong parent/community interest;
- Show your commitment to involvement by taking as much care with parent and community meetings as you would with other professional gatherings;
- Celebrate the accomplishment of parent and community involvement.

Meetings could be organised in such a way that the majority of parents are able to attend without being inconvenienced. These meeting dates could be set with the help of parents. Teachers could send home newsletters that have tear-off sections where parents indicate time that suits them. This would enable teachers to draw up timetables for meetings on the basis of parents' responses. Non-attending parents should be given special attention. For instance individually addressed letters could be written and new dates set for these parents (Sithole, 1999:37).

In the next chapter the researcher reports on the interviews he conducted with the principals, chairpersons and members of governing bodies as well as parents who are not serving on governing bodies of schools in the identified informal settlements. The purpose was to find how they are coping with the issue of parental involvement. The researcher also wanted to know what problems they were encountering and what suggestions they might make to improve the level of parental involvement.

From these possibilities and problems the researcher would be able to draw some conclusions as to what ought to be done to improve the level of parental involvement in the education in the schools situated in informal settlements.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The first two chapters of this research have illustrated the need for parental involvement in education. Based on this need, this chapter focuses on the process of data collection and data analysis. This involves the methodology that the researcher used to collect, analyse and interpret data for this research. The research process included gaining entry into the investigation sites, the actual process of data collection as well as the procedures followed when analysing data. The investigation sites are the primary schools and homes in the informal settlements of the greater Cape Flats in the Western Cape. Data collected from the people in these sites will be presented.

3.2 Research Design

In this study the Communication Method of data collection is based on the questioning/interviewing of respondents (Erwee, 1988: G3), and was used to gain an in-depth understanding of how parents are involved in the education of their children. The advantage of this communication method is its versatility. It is versatile because data can be collected on a wide range of information needs (Erwee, 1988:G3-G4).

Qualitative data was gathered using questionnaires and in-depth interviews, which are unstructured personal interviews that use extensive probing to enable an individual respondent to talk freely and to express detailed beliefs and feelings on a topic (Erwee, 1988:G8).

A qualitative design was chosen because it gave the researcher the opportunity to provide a detailed description of the involvement of parents in schools situated in informal settlements. In-depth interviews and questionnaires were used with principals and members of the governing bodies. Focus group interviews were used with parents not serving on governing bodies of the identified schools. In focus group interviews a group of five to eight people are interviewed at the same time (Nkatho, 2001:37).

All audio-taped interviews were transcribed verbatim. Interviews were in English to principals and in Xhosa to the parents and members of governing bodies. A qualitative design was chosen because it gave the researcher the opportunity to provide a detailed description of involvement of parents in schools situated in informal settlements.

Trustworthiness of the research is based on the fact that the researcher made sure that the interviewed parents were real parents of the learners of the particular school. The researcher went through the register of the schools to see if these parents were real parents or guardians of the learners in the particular school.

3.3 Research methodology

3.3.1 Field of research plan

As this study focuses on parental involvement in schools, the research was undertaken in the primary schools in eight informal settlements of the Cape Flats in Cape Town:

Crossroads;
Philippi West;
Philippi East;
Samora Machel (Weltevreden Valley);
Site C in Khayelitsha;
Site B in Khayelitsha;
Makhaza (Maccassar) in Khayelitsha;
Harare in Khayelitsha.

There are 34 primary schools in these informal settlements. There are five primary schools in Philippi West; two primary schools in Philippi East; two primary schools in Samora Machel; five primary schools in Site C; five primary schools in Site B West; five primary schools in Site B East; three primary schools in Makhaza; four primary schools in Crossroads; three primary schools in Harare.

3.3.2 Sampling

Of the 34 primary schools in the informal settlements of the Cape Flats sixteen primary schools were chosen because of their geographic position and the researcher's strategy of trying to reach all informal areas of the Cape Flats. The demographics were also considered because the majority of informal settlements are based in Khayelitsha. This was done regardless of financial implications and the constraints of time to reach all these areas. The list of chosen schools appears at the end as Appendix D.

It is important to note that principals, parents and members of the governing bodies of these schools are representative only of the population of informal settlements in South Africa.

3.3.3 The procedure

The interviews were planned over eight weeks. The interview time-scale is shown in Appendix A and interview questionnaires and questions are shown in Appendix B. Prior to the interviews, letters requesting participation in the study were prepared. The details of the letters are shown in Appendix C.

The researcher made telephone calls to the school principals to secure appointments for delivery of the letters, which the researcher himself delivered as this was an opportunity to procure further appointments and introduce himself to them. Copies of letters from the Cape Technikon and the Western Cape Education Department are also shown as Appendix C.

The researcher introduced himself to the respondents and explained that he was currently engaged in research under the supervision of Mr. A. van der Bijl of the Faculty of Education at the Cape Technikon. He informed the respondents that the prime objective of the study was to investigate the reasons for the lack of parental involvement with the aim of identifying and suggesting management actions. The respondents were told that their input would be treated as strictly confidential and would be used solely in a processed form for research purposes only.

During the visits to the schools the researcher also asked the principals to allow him to interview chairpersons and at least one other member of the governing body separately. The researcher informed the principals that he also wished to interview at least five parents from the parent body, with whom he wished to conduct focus group interviews. The researcher requested them to allow him randomly to choose any five parents from the list of parents of these schools.

These parents were to be informed by the principals of the researcher's intention. The idea was to put the parents at ease by understanding that their principals had granted permission, and that whatever they would say would not be contrary to their constitutional rights.

The researcher did not interview all the principals of the schools he had chosen. Five principals were given questionnaires to fill in to be collected at a later date. The remaining eleven principals were interviewed. This is because five principals were not available on the days of interviews due to problems at their schools. However, the principals who were given questionnaires were contacted to verify their responses and obtain any further explanation of their responses in the questionnaires.

The researcher made sure that interviews were held at times and venues most suitable and convenient for the interviewees. All the focus group interviews were held at the schools where these parents send their children.

Where focus group interviews were used the following steps were followed:

- **Pre-session strategies**

The creation of an atmosphere of trust, friendliness and openness was imperative from the moment the researcher arrived for the interview. Purposeful small talk facilitated a warm and friendly environment and put the participants at ease.

- **Physical arrangement of the group**

Because the objective of the interview was discussion, participants were usually seated in such a manner to allow eye contact. In the case of focus group interviews, participants were seated around a table. To enhance rapport among all participants, nametags were placed on the table in front of the participants.

- **Recording of the interview**

A tape recorder was used as means of recording the responses of the participants. Members were informed at the outset that the discussion was to be recorded in order to capture everyone's comments. The tape recorder was chosen because the researcher wanted participants to respond without interruptions. Note taking could have caused disruptions and would have interfered with the spontaneous nature of discussion, because the researcher would sometimes have to request participants to repeat what they had said so that their views could be noted.

This is based on Nkhatho (2001:37), who quotes De Vos as saying that a focus group interview is a data collection method relevant to the qualitative approach. The researcher made sure that the respondents felt they were needed and that the researcher valued their inputs.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA COLLECTED

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the research method and techniques that were used to collect data for this research. This chapter follows up on the previous chapter by presenting the data that was gathered in the questionnaires and interviews conducted with principals of sixteen different schools, the members of their governing bodies, and parents who are not on governing bodies. The presentation of findings is based on the following areas:

- Responses of principals
- Responses of members of governing bodies
- Responses of parents who are not on governing bodies.

Key themes of discussion with these people were the following:

- a) Governance;
- b) Communication;
- c) School involvement;
- d) Home involvement;
- e) Curriculum;
- f) General involvement.

The ensuing paragraphs present in-depth discussions of the key themes as identified and used in the course of data collection. In presenting the identified themes it is not intended to exhaust all aspects that are involved in each theme, but will be limited to those outstanding characteristic features that are most salient.

Extracts of the interviewees' responses taken from the recorded interviews will be used to support and enrich the discussions that will ensue. In this regard note should be taken of the fact that in the majority of cases interviews proceeded in the interviewees' vernacular language, which is Xhosa. It was, therefore, necessary to translate most of the extracts that were used in the ensuing presentations. In translating, an attempt was made not to lose the essence of the various responses, thus minimising misconceptions and distortions as far as possible.

4.2 Interpretation and analysis of findings

4.2.1 Profile of people interviewed

Sixteen Primary schools were visited. From each school the researcher had to interview a principal, chairperson of the governing body as well as one other member of the governing body. The researcher also interviewed five parents, who were not serving on the governing body of each school, making use of focus group interviews. This meant that the researcher had to interview sixteen principals, sixteen chairpersons, sixteen members of governing bodies and eighty parents who do not serve on the governing body.

In five schools the principals were given questionnaires to complete to be collected at a later date. The remaining eleven school principals were interviewed. The researcher was able to interview all sixteen chairpersons and all sixteen members of the governing bodies of the identified schools. None of them were given questionnaires to complete.

In the focus group interviews the researcher was able to interview 90% of the expected eighty parents. This is because only ten schools were able to send all five parents; four schools sent four parents each and two schools sent three parents each. The total number of parents interviewed was seventy-two.

4.3 Findings from principals

4.3.1 Profile of the people interviewed

Of the sixteen principals, nine were males and seven were females. Their average age was 40-49 years, and, on average, had been principals for twelve years. Their average qualification was a B-Degree. Fifteen schools were state schools and only one was a community school.⁶ Average enrolment in these schools ranged from 1000 to 1400 learners. All the principals were co-operative, friendly and welcoming.

The key themes of discussion for the principals were:

- a) Governance;
- b) Communication;
- c) Budgeting
- d) School involvement;
- e) Curriculum;
- f) General involvement.

⁶ A state school is totally dependant on the government. A community school is partly dependant on the government, but salaries are paid by Non-Government Organisations although they adhere to policies of the Department of Education.

(a) Governance

All sixteen schools have governing bodies elected in 2000. All of them have had to hold by-elections or have had members co-opted due to the fact that certain members were no longer active. All principals have given their governing body members copies of the manual, in Xhosa, for the functioning of governing bodies. A principal from Site B East said governing bodies depend on the principals for the interpretation of the manual. A special meeting had to be held at this school to interpret the manual. It was at this meeting that the training of the governing body was arranged for this school (Principal C: 21/05).

All principals in the sample afforded their governing bodies an opportunity to attend some form of training in their duties. Principals claimed that governing bodies rely on principals to arrange workshops on any facet of development that the principal feels they ought to have. A principal in the Samora Machel area said the governing body members do not suggest to the principal that they need training in a certain aspect. Some of their duties end up being taken over by the teachers serving on the governing body (Principal M: 20/06).

One principal in the Crossroads area supported this statement when he mentioned that the members of the governing body who are employed at school carried out some of the duties of the governing body. These are the two teachers, one member of the non-teaching staff and the principal. This is done on behalf of the parent members who are not at school at all times.

The parent members are only informed in a meeting about what the other members have done in their absence. Such duties include the renting out of classrooms to outside organisations, maintenance of buildings, budget, requisition and receipt of correspondence and signing of documents on behalf of the governing body (Principal H: 12/06).

b) Communication

The principals claim that they inform parents of what is going on at schools through circular minutes sent via the learners. They also mention that they hold meetings with parents to discuss certain issues of the school. Not a single school in the sample has a policy or programme for parental involvement. In all schools the principal and staff decided the curriculum. Twelve principals (seven from Khayelitsha, one from Crossroads, two from Philippi and two from Samora Machel) attribute this to the assumption that parents might not be in a position to make a decision on this matter, because the level of education of parents is such that they are not in a position to make such decisions. Parents would not be in a position to know anything about the curriculum as they do not know how the Department of Education operates. Parents were, therefore, only informed. Eight principals claim that parents were not informed on the assumption that they do not know what the curriculum ought to be (Principal B: 19/05). Four principals confessed that they never thought it necessary to inform parents about the curriculum. One principal said that he is not sure if all teachers know what the curriculum is.

Principals from all schools in the sample claim to have constitutions in their schools. In seven schools the principals were able to show a copy of the school's constitution to the researcher. None of the other schools could show a copy to the researcher. Three principals in Khayelitsha, two in Philippi, one in Samora Machel and one in Crossroads had involved parents in the formulation of the constitutions. Eleven school principals said that they had given copies of the constitution to the members of the governing bodies only. One principal, in Site B – East, said he gave a copy of the constitution to all parents at school (Principal N: 23/06). The rest of the principals said they have not given copies to anybody but the staff who were responsible for its compilation.

The reason given by these principals for not involving parents in the drawing up of the constitution was that parents might not know much about what should go into the constitution. As a result principals had to make use of the teachers who are better informed. In some instances principals claimed that parents were never available to have input for constitutions. In two cases principals drew up the constitutions themselves and shared it with teachers. In cases where parents were not involved the constitution was only read to the parents in a meeting.

c) Budgeting

Out of sixteen schools, only eleven drew up their budgets for the year. The remaining five principals confessed that they did not do any budgeting for their schools.

Three principals claimed that they do their school's budgeting themselves. Principals alleged that teachers were too busy, unwilling or unable to draw up the budget. Two principals made use of their Finance Committees, which involved parents. Six principals used teachers who were serving on the Finance Committee to draw up their school's budget. In such schools, the budget is presented to the teachers and later to the parents for approval. One principal in Philippi is quoted as saying that it is a futile exercise to involve parents in budgeting because they are receptive to everything that the teachers have to say (Principal L: 19/05). Parents did not contribute. However, all principals claimed that they ensured that they presented the expenditures of the finances when they gave the annual financial report to the parents.

d) School involvement

The principals in the sample claimed that parents should be involved in the school learning of their children. This involvement means making sure that their children did have homework and that they did it, and helped them with it. They expected parents to make sure that their children looked after their books well, and that they wore their uniforms properly. Principals expected parents to attend meetings regularly and at the same time help out at school voluntarily.

Principals were not happy with the level of involvement of parents in the education of their children.

All principals interviewed maintain that they always mentioned the importance of involvement of parents in the education of their children. This was always done at parent meetings. However, all principals complained that they were preaching to the converted about the importance of involvement.

At a school in Samora Machel the principal claimed that one parent, when summoned to school, said she was not going to school anymore and should not be bothered about what her child was doing at school. "I sent my child to school. Teachers are paid to teach our children and not to bother us" (Principal E: 10/06). A principal of the Macassar area in Khayelitsha mentioned that parents have "upside-down priorities". This meant that parents did not know what was important and what was not. This principal said that parents gave priority to their personal problems at the expense of their children's education, as they would rather excuse themselves from coming to the school and attend a social function in the neighbourhood (Principal G: 11/06).

A principal in one primary school in Site-B West said parent-teacher evenings or days at her school were announced three weeks before the due date. These were meetings where a parent was given an opportunity to meet the teacher of his/her child. On average the attendance at parent-teacher evenings or days at this school was 30%, despite the emphasis this school puts on the importance of these meetings (Principal P: 25/06).

Parents who do not attend are noted down and follow-up is done. Learners are given letters to give to their parents, in which it is mentioned to the parents that the school would definitely love to see them about the progress of their children at school. However, these letters complicate the situation at schools as parents normally come at times convenient for them, thus disrupting tuition.

The only time parents come to school voluntarily is when they have to get a school stamp on forms for birth certificates, social grants or ID documents (Principals E & G: 10 & 11/06).

e) Curriculum

All principals indicated that they had made repeated efforts to inform parents about curriculum matters such as Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) and assessment policy. One principal in Philippi and one in Site B West even went on to mention that their schools had arranged two different meetings where one was for the Foundation Phase and the other was for the Intermediate and Senior Phases. In these meetings matters such as assessment, portfolios, profiles and report forms were discussed. These particular schools had already set dates aside to workshop parents in the Revised National Curriculum (Principals D and L: 21/05 & 19/06).

A principal in Philippi was able to tell the researcher that parents of his school knew what happened to a class whose teacher was absent from school. At this school, if a foundation phase teacher was absent, a parent was normally invited to take care of the class.

In the other grades the Head of Department assigned another teacher to take care of the class or took care of the class him/herself (Principal L: 19/06).

In general, principals were happy with the manner in which parents were concerned about the progress of their children. This was evident as parents would always be willing to fetch their children from school on the day that learners were given their progress reports. Some parents fetched the progress reports themselves. Six principals made use of these days to hold meetings with parents knowing that attendance at these meetings would be approximately 70%. 2% of parents at these schools visited schools uninvited to come and check their children's progress with the teachers.

f) General involvement

Different activities are held at different schools. Fundraising efforts are held in all schools. The principals are not happy about the level of support they get from parents in their fundraising efforts. The principal of a primary school in Philippi said parents hardly ever attend concerts organised by the school. Gain is minimal. On a good day the school makes about R400, 00. This is because parents do not attend (Principal B: 19/05).

• Year plans and meetings

The other principal in Philippi said they had cultural days and open days on their year-plan where talks were organised through outside agents. These were poorly attended. On a successful day only about 120 parents attended.

As a result, parents missed out on what these people had to say. However, parents who did attend appreciated the idea. They did not want it taken off the school calendar (Principal L: 19/06).

- **Parents invited to certain functions**

Principals do their best to inform the parents of every activity that takes place at their schools. However, no school principal and staff have ever thought of inviting the parents to be part of preparation of functions such as farewells, tours and excursions. This is because schools always feel that teachers can handle such preparations efficiently.

- **Level of education of parents**

All principals attribute poor involvement to poor level of education. They maintain that parents feel intimidated by the language used by teachers. A principal in Crossroads said most parents at her school felt uneasy in the school environment because they felt that they were entering the environment of the educated who know everything (Principal H: 12/06). One principal reported that one parent confessed to him that she always felt uneasy when called to school because she knew that she had not paid any school fees for her child (Principal G: 11/06).

- **Work-related problems**

In some instances principals maintain that parents always say that they are unable to attend to school activities because of work-related problems, e.g. being at work at the time of the meeting or that day being the only day they were available at home to attend to their family problems.

- **Unstable families**

A principal in the Samora Machel area said he thought most parents were unable to attend because of unstable families. He said he knew of families in his school where there were many arguments between parents that normally lead to separation or divorce, and contributed to parents not being concerned about the education of their children (Principal E: 10/06).

- **Crime and violence**

Two principals maintained that parents complained of lack of accommodation. These parents were unable to attend meetings at school because they were not happy at their places of abode and were always looking for better accommodation. Three principals said most parents complained about crime and violence. The route between home and school was not safe, especially in the evenings. At the same time, they feared burglary at home when they had to attend an evening meeting at school.

- **Growth of epidemic diseases**

Four principals mentioned the growth of epidemic diseases, HIV and AIDS, as one of the factors that discourage parents from attending school activities.

Most parents suffer from these diseases and are mainly concerned about their own health condition.

Principals from all the identified areas made an effort to invite people to come and give talks to the parents on issues affecting them. On the agenda of every meeting held at one primary school in Philippi, time is reserved for 'free talk' at the end of the meeting where the principal is given a slot to talk to parents on any issue he is not happy about. He tried to show parents the value of their involvement in the running of the school. This principal said he invited parents to give suggestions on how to involve the non-conforming parents (Principal L: 19/05).

Suggestions from both the teachers and parents were that this principal should invite people from outside the school to give motivational talks to the parents. These people include social workers who could inform parents about the welfare of their children; police to inform them of their responsibility for looking after their school and for reporting any form of suspicious movement around their schools, and nurses to look at the health of their children.

At the school of Principal L, the circuit manager was once invited to talk to the parents about the value of their involvement in the education of their children. The circuit manager also informed parents about the legal implications of neglecting their children. He had a long argument with parents about the suspension of corporal punishment.

The circuit manager informed the parents that if parents were involved in the education of their children, learners would give their best because they would know that their parents were involved and would not like to disappoint them. At the same time, the school would benefit because teachers would do their best knowing that parents were watching them with interest. This principal made all this effort to increase parental involvement and to show parents that their school cares about them and would like to see them involved (Principal L: 19/05).

4.4 Findings from Governing body members

4.4.1 Profile of the people interviewed

Thirty-two members of governing bodies were interviewed. Eleven of the members of governing bodies were males aged between 39 and 57 years of age. Twenty-one of them were females aged between 37 and 52 years of age. None of them have an education beyond secondary school. None of them have been co-opted. They were elected in the general elections. Six of them were either domestic workers or labourers. Nine were self-employed either in their own informal business such as shops or selling liquor (owning a shebeen), and seventeen were unemployed.

The key theme of discussion with the members of governing bodies was governance, because questions pertaining to home involvement, school involvement and general involvement were asked of parents not serving on the governing body.

(a) Governance

All members of governing bodies in the sample acknowledged that they had received the manual for the functioning of governing bodies and had gone for workshop/training as was confirmed by the principals. Nine governing body members had read and understood the manual. Five said they had not finished reading the manual. Two parents admitted that they could not read the manual with understanding. These members preferred to be told what to do by word of mouth. All members of governing bodies felt that training was insufficient and the task ahead of them was immense.

Most of their training had to do with employment of personnel. They felt that there were areas that needed to be covered to make them more efficient members of governing bodies. A workshop on financial management was the one all parents seemed to want to attend. All members of governing bodies agreed with principals that they had never suggested to their principals that they be trained in any area of development.

• Training

Because of lack of thorough training they were not sure how far their scope stretched. They felt that training/workshops should be an on-going activity and should take more than 5 hours a day on a specific area of development. The department did not do follow-up on their progress. The previous governing bodies were of no help to the newly elected ones. Eleven members of governing bodies in the sample were eager to see their terms come to an end.

All members of governing bodies agreed with their principal's statement that the principals themselves decided the curriculum at their schools. None of them knew that they ought to be involved in the decision-making process of the school's curriculum.

- **Knowledge regarding the school's constitution**

Governing body parents from eight schools did not know about the school's constitution and did not know how it was drawn up and by whom, while a few had only been given copies of the constitution. Three chairpersons did not know what the school's constitution was.

Four members of governing bodies from Khayelitsha and one from Samora Machel said the principal had drawn up the constitution and handed it to them. They were supposed to go through it and would be adopted at the next meeting. Only two chairpersons acknowledged that all parents in their schools had copies of the constitution (A & B: 08/05 & 13/05). These two chairpersons maintained that their newly elected governing bodies had made some amendments to the constitution of the previous governing body before adopting it.

- **Involvement in budgeting, etc.**

Two members of governing bodies from the same school agreed that they were involved in the drawing up of their school's budget. Three members of governing bodies agreed that it had been presented to them in a meeting.

The rest of members of governing bodies said that they only knew of the school finances when the annual financial report was presented in a meeting situation. They did not know how it was drawn up or who was responsible for it. These parents were aware of the Finance Committees that existed in their schools. Some of them were members of these committees. They also did not know that they had to be involved in the drawing up of the budget of the school. They appreciated the fact that principals informed them about the finances of the school.

- **Level of education of parents**

The chairperson of a primary school in Site C recommended that the Department of Education first look at the level of education of parents who had been elected to serve on the governing body. This was because most schoolteachers talked to them using English terms that were often unfamiliar to them. As a result they felt intimidated by these teachers. At times they felt unwelcome at their children's schools because of their low level of education. Furthermore, the Department used circulars to address them. These circulars were in English causing the principals to interpret most of these circulars to the members at a meeting (D: 17/05).

4.5 Findings from parents

4.5.1 Profile of people interviewed

Of the seventy-two parents interviewed, forty-nine of them were females and twenty-three were males. Forty-five of them were single parents. The ages of these parents ranged between 30 and 50 years. On average, half of them were, in reality, the grandparents of their school-going children. Their level of education varied between primary and secondary school. None of them had gone beyond secondary school. Thirty-nine of them were employed either as domestic workers or labourers. Fourteen of them were self-employed, (e.g. have shops). The remaining nineteen were unemployed. None of them were professionally employed.

a) Home Involvement

Parents were generally involved in the education of their children at home. One parent from Site C is quoted as saying, "My children know that I do not stand a child who does not attend school" (H: 28/05). Few parents read to their children. They hardly ever listened to their children read. In fact four of the parents (one chairperson and three other parents) confessed that they had never bothered to read to their children, or listen to them read.

All parents claimed that they ensure that their children do homework regularly, although about 30% of them claimed that they actually helped children with subjects such as Xhosa, English and Mathematics.

A parent at a primary school in Samora Machel said that other subjects were a bit of a problem to the parents as the syllabus 'changed daily' and they always referred their children to other people to help them. Even the methods applied at schools were different to ones that were used when they were still schooling. Parents agreed that teachers had tried to explain OBE and assessment to them, but they were still unfamiliar with them (C: 20/05).

One parent from a school in Site-B West even went on to say that she was not happy about the progress report forms used. They were not impressed with the idea of not knowing the positions of their children in class, although the level of operation is mentioned. They want to know the level compared to other children, like it used to be when they were at school (O: 17/06).

Generally, all parents seemed to be more involved during the early years and started withdrawing as the child progressed through the grades.

b) School Involvement

Of the seventy-two parents interviewed, including members of governing bodies, six parents agreed with their principals that they knew what happens to a class whose teacher is absent from school. Four parents from one primary school in Philippi claimed they were responsible for the formulation of that policy in their schools (M: 10/06).

All the interviewed parents were aware of parent-teacher evenings or days and all claimed to attend them when they could.

They all indicated that they regarded such meetings as important because a parent was afforded an opportunity to interact with the teachers of their children. Forty-four of the seventy-two parents interviewed did attend parent-teacher evenings or days.

Twenty-three of the parents said they always contacted their children's schools voluntarily to find out how their children were progressing. Two parents even reported that they had the telephone numbers of their children's teachers and would phone them to find out how their children were coping. Some parents said they only came to school when invited and had never thought of visiting to see the progress of their children. The reason they all put forward was they were not sure if they would be intruding in the affairs of the school.

One parent is quoted as saying: "If schools could inform us of our value and importance we would be glad to be of help. We always think that teachers know what they are doing and do not need our help. We view the school as a place for the educated" (B: 20/05).

The parents put forward the following reasons for hardly ever attending meetings at their children's schools.

- **Level of education**

Most parents felt that they were not educated enough and feared being involved in matters of the educated.

One parent from a primary school in Site-B East said that he sometimes felt that he did not understand what was discussed in the meeting. The teachers were so fast that parents sometimes felt that they could not ask questions because they initially did not comprehend. They claimed that they could not ask questions on issues of which they had a slight understanding. They had left school early in their life, and felt that school affairs were for the educated (P: 18/06). A parent from a primary school in the Samora Machel area said she still did not comprehend why the Department of Education did not allow teachers to use corporal punishment on the learners. She said they sent their children to school so that they could report them to the teachers for their misbehaviour so that the children could receive the punishment they deserved. Now they felt that the schools were not doing their part (K: 04/06).

- **Work related issues**

Parents felt that they could not attend meetings regularly because of work-related issues. At a primary school in Site C, Khayelitsha, all the parents said they were doing their level best to attend activities at school. The reasons put forward by their friends were that they came home late from work. Meetings were scheduled in the evenings when they were tired. Sundays were the only days parents had at their disposal and were able to be at home. It was the day they had to attend to other family affairs or go to church (H: 28/05).

"We are domestic workers who travel by public transport and come home late. We are afraid to ask our employers to allow us time off to attend to the education of our children.

We have never asked for permission from our employers in fear of being regarded as people who are not serious about work”, one of them said (H: 28/05).

- **Personal problems**

“In our community if one does not attend other people’s functions one is isolated. Weekends are days to attend functions of the community. One has to make sure that one attends such functions and is visible”, said a parent from a primary school in Site C in response to a question about what they think are the reasons for parents not attending school programmes (H: 28/05).

A parent in Philippi said: “We live in a community where one is watched carefully. A funeral is the most important function in our community. Everybody likes to have a proper funeral. If you do not attend other people’s prayer meetings or funerals nobody will come to your funeral.

Some parents hold positions or are members of community structures such as South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO), civic structures and/or political organisations. These structures hold meetings almost every day demanding participants to be present. In these structures people who do not attend are noted and may be isolated. This is what we have to attend, sometimes at the expense of the school. If a meeting coincides with such activities in the community, that school meeting is sure not to be a success. Attendance will be poor “ (M: 10/06).

- **Attitudes of teachers**

In a focus group interview held on the 28th May 2003 in Site C, Khayelitsha, all the parents said they did not have a good relationship with some of the teachers. They did not like the attitudes of some teachers. If a parent has much to say in a parent meeting, that parent is regarded as being too forward. They claimed that at the beginning of the year when Grade 1 learners come for the first time, teachers tell them to leave the children in the safe hands of the teachers. Later the same teachers call them to ask for their help, thus contradicting what they said earlier (H: 28/05).

In meetings, teachers seemed to be the experts. They had answers to every problem. "Teachers come in very quickly when we express our views, yet they are the ones who call for our help." "If a parent says anything against a suggestion of a teacher that parent is regarded as notorious. Even if they do not say it, one can always see by the reactions of these teachers," said a parent from a school in Philippi (B: 20/05).

- **Meetings scheduled at wrong times**

"School principals and their governing bodies do not consult us to find out which days are suitable for holding meetings," is the view of one parent from a school in Crossroads. This parent said that before the general elections they, as members of the community, are only concerned about what will happen in the elections. When there is a crisis in the community they are the people who try to resolve it and anything else is unimportant.

Month-end and the first Sunday of the month parents are sure to attend to their monthly matters (L: 10/06).

- **Parents invited to certain functions**

It became apparent that parents were not happy with the level of involvement. Teachers and principals seem to invite them only to certain functions. "If only teachers could give us a list of activities in which they would like our assistance. We are not invited on educational excursions, or school tours. When our children have been selected for Provincial sport we are only invited when we have to pay something. When there is a problem at school they start to invite us and ask our opinion. When our children misbehave we are invited" (K: 04/06).

- c) **General Involvement**

Parents never have an opportunity to watch their children participate in extra-mural activities because they are never informed of any extra-mural activity at school. Some parents did not even know if their children were participating in extra-mural activities until they were told by their children's friends or by the children themselves. The schools never informed nor invited them to come and watch children.

Parents complained that they were only informed about a function at their schools and were never invited to be part of the organisation of that particular function. They were only invited to help in some functions such as tours. Parents always thought that teachers were capable of running such functions without their help. "Our expertise is undermined because we are uneducated.

The only time that we were invited and involved was when we had to prepare for a feast. This was the inauguration of our school” (I: 02/06).

Parents are involved in school concerts and expected to contribute financially. In school tours one or two parents are invited to come and help prepare food for their children. An unemployed parent from Site B confessed that they did not help in the school's tuck shop or school's nutrition programme because they expected to be paid for their efforts (N: 11/06).

The figure below illustrates a summary of responses to various themes by three groups of people as interviewed and given questionnaires to which to respond. These themes are not applicable to everyone.

Figure 1: Table of Responses

Themes	Principals	School Governing Body	Parents
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Given members copy of the manual ◆ Arrange workshops for members ◆ Act on behalf of Governing body 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Received manual ◆ Training was insufficient ◆ Not involved in drawing up of curriculum, budget constitution ◆ Intimidated by English 	Not applicable
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Inform parents of activities at school ◆ Arrange meetings ◆ Decide on curriculum ◆ Draw up constitutions ◆ Draw budget for their schools ◆ Draw up financial reports 	See Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Not sufficiently informed of activities at school. ◆ Attend meetings ◆ Not involved in curriculum, constitution and budgets of schools
School Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Motivate parents to be involved ◆ Frustrated by level of involvement of parents 	See Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Attend meetings ◆ Contact schools voluntarily ◆ Disturbed by level of education, work-related issues, personal problems, attitudes of teachers and being invited to certain functions
Home Involvement	Not applicable	See Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Help in certain subjects ◆ Not familiar with OBE and assessment methods ◆ Not happy with progress reports used
Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Workshop parents on latest developments such as OBE and Assessment ◆ Monitor learners in the absence of teachers 	See Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Never involved in formulation of curriculum
General Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Arrange fundraising ◆ Administer school fees ◆ Arrange educational excursions ◆ Attribute violence, safety, work-related problems, HIV and AIDS ◆ Arrange talks from outsiders 	See Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Not involved in extra-mural activities ◆ Not involved in organisation of functions ◆ Expect to be paid for their efforts

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter data collected by means of interviews and questionnaires was analysed and interpreted. Analysis and interpretation related purely to the responses of the interviewees. The aim of this chapter is to integrate information gathered in this research study. The literature study in Chapter Two will be integrated with the data analysis in Chapter Four. The findings of this research will be discussed. Thereafter recommendations or guidelines and conclusions will be made concerning areas that have been identified in this research.

5.2 Summary of findings

This section has to do with the findings of the literature study as well as findings of the interviews. The findings of the literature study will be discussed first and then the findings of the interviews. Thereafter literature study will be integrated with data analysis in Chapter Four.

5.2.1 Findings of the literature study

- **Value and necessity of parental involvement in education**

Schools need to make sure that parents are involved in the education of their children, and need to involve parents in every aspect of their children's learning. Parental involvement helps to strengthen parent-child relationships and can positively influence children's attitudes towards school, their academic progress and their behaviour.

This parental involvement should happen at home as well as at school. Children do best when they know that their parents are involved. When schools work together with families to support learning, children are inclined to succeed not just in school, but also throughout life.

- **Possibilities of parental involvement in a school**

Among the possibilities of parental involvement in a school the following are worth mentioning with regard to schools situated in disadvantaged communities:

1. Involvement in general school governance. Parents ought to know why key decisions have been taken.
2. Involvement in school learning processes at home or at school. This involves parents being teachers at home and helping teachers at school.
3. Involvement in school support such as fundraising, direct assistance, child supervision and parents acting as resource teachers.
4. Home-school relations such as open days, written communications and home contacts.

- **Problems encountered around parental involvement**

The collective effort of the school and the parents can make the education of the children a success. The socio-economic factor that involves the level of education of parents may discourage parents from being fully involved in the education of their children, because parents find themselves being talked to and not talked with. Some fear that their input may be regarded as naïve and unimportant or uninformed.

Teachers always regard themselves as experts when it comes to education. This makes most parents feel intimidated and apathetic about becoming involved in school affairs. The political affiliation of a parent or his or her position in the community should be unimportant to the school. These parents should be treated like any other parents at school. The manner in which the principal runs or manages the school is also a concern to many parents. Principals should apply an open door policy thus enabling everybody to have access to his or her office to discuss issues relating to the school. Parents whose children are not doing well should not feel out of place. They should not think that they would be told or asked about their children's failure. Their contribution is as important as any other parent's.

- **Strategies to improve parental involvement**

Schools need to formulate strategies to improve parental involvement. Schools do not seem to be adhering to such suggested strategies. Principals and schools need to know the customs and values of the ethnic groups they teach. Schools should maintain informal relationships with parents of their learners. This can be achieved if there is effective communication between parents and teachers. This should start with the arrangement of meetings so that the majority of the parents are not inconvenienced.

5.2.2 Findings from the interviews

Findings from the interviews held with principals, chairpersons of governing bodies, members of governing bodies and parents who are not on governing bodies are presented under the following headings:

5.2.2.1 Governance

School principals seem only to have given copies of the manual for the functioning of governing bodies to the members of governing bodies, but did not ensure that the members of governing bodies had read and understood the manual. The governing bodies had received the manual, but some of them had never read it with understanding. Workshops have been organised by principals and the Department of Education, while governing bodies have never bothered to voice their preference of training.

5.2.2.2 Communication

School principals do not seem to involve parents fully in the formulation of the policies of the school. Budget, constitution and curriculum are done without consultation with the parents. Parents are only given reports of such activities, and do not seem to know of the school's budget. Very few parents know about the school's constitution and none of the parents know how the curriculum was formulated.

5.2.2.3 Home involvement

Parents do not seem to be keen on playing their part at home. They hardly look at their children's work at home. Although some of the parents claim to help with homework, not many of them do, in fact, help. Teachers have never given them any advice on how to help their children at home. Parents are sceptical about helping, as they are not sure whether they are doing the right thing.

5.2.2.4 School involvement

Parents are not familiar with what is happening at their children's schools. They either do not have time to attend the meetings, or meetings are scheduled at wrong times. Even when they do attend, they do not ask too many questions. They just accept what the teachers have to say about their children.

5.2.2.5 Curriculum

Parents seem to blame the new curriculum for their lack of support and involvement with their children's home study. Principals inform parents about the new curriculum, but this is not enough. Teachers have to attend a series of workshops on the new curriculum, yet they only make it part of their agendas in parents meetings. This is not enough and this leads to parents feeling intimidated by the new curriculum.

5.2.2.6 General involvement

Most schools do not seem to have a policy for parental involvement. As a result most parents do not know what happens to a class whose teacher is absent from school. Activities at school are normally arranged at times suitable for the teachers. If parents do not attend, it does not seem to matter and no follow-up is done. Communication between the school and parents is lacking. Parents are normally invited to certain functions, but are not involved in the preparations of these functions.

Parents have never been invited by the schools to come and watch their children participate in extra-mural activities. They all wish to be informed of their children's participation in extra-mural activities. Just to be told that their children are participating in a certain extra-mural activity excites the parents and they make sure that they take some time out to go and watch their children participate.

Parents seem to have the same reasons as mentioned in the literature review for not attending functions at schools. These include meetings scheduled at wrong times, work-related problems, and attitudes of certain teachers, level of education and the thought or perception that their ideas would be regarded as naïve and out of line.

5.3 Recommendations

Recommendations refer to what the schools as well as parents ought to do to enhance learning and parental involvement at their schools. Both parties have to be directly involved in the education of children. The data analysis conducted by the researcher highlighted a significant lack of involvement on the part of parents in the education of their children. Teachers and parents are jointly responsible for this significant lack of involvement by parents in the education of their children. Parents were generally not involved in policy-making at schools. If parents could be involved in policy-making they would easily commit themselves because they would be part of making those policies at their schools. It is easy to buy in when one has been a part of making the policy.

Principals should give every parent a copy of the school's draft strategic plan for the whole year. In this strategic plan parents could be invited to indicate in which areas they would like to be involved and how they could contribute. Parents could always indicate the times they think these activities could be held. In this manner schools would make sure that they keep parents posted of every activity at school. At the same time schools would be sure that every scheduled meeting would not inconvenience parents as they would have decided on the times themselves.

A programme for parental involvement should be compulsory in every school. Every teacher should have his or her own way of involving parents. At the beginning of the year teachers should discuss ways of involvement with their parents.

Teachers need to inform the parents what is expected of them at home. This must appear in the teacher's record book and must be approved by the supervisor or principal. Principals need to enforce it. Follow-up should be done on parents who shy away from school. Their reasons should be recorded, discussed and a joint solution should be reached on how to motivate them to be more involved. The attitudes of both teachers and parents should make the process of working together possible. This could be achieved if there is a constant communication between the two parties. Principals and schools should take into account the socio-economic factors of parents such as level of education when dealing with parents, and should ensure that parents understand his/her style of management.

All these may be factors that really discourage parents from being very active participants at their schools.

Training of teachers at Universities and Technikon should include a programme for parental involvement. This would make teachers realise that they have a duty to involve parents in the education of their children.

Principals, schools, governing bodies and parents are aware of factors that hinder parental involvement, yet they all do nothing to address those factors.

Parents are also not making enough of an effort to make their voices heard. They wait on principals and schools to dictate terms of involvement to them. Parents harbour ill-feeling about the mode of involvement at their schools, but are doing nothing to correct the situation.

A solution is possible only if principals and parents sit in a meeting and address these issues amicably. This is because everyone would have been a part of the decision-making process, and would do everything in their power to uphold the decisions agreed upon.

When parents are involved in the education of their children, the life of the teachers becomes easy and learning is enhanced. This is because learners will do their best when they know that their parents are involved.

5.4 Conclusion

What parents do at home with their children is extremely important to the total educational effort. The schools need to let parents know that they value both their contributions at school and their participation at home. Parents are the primary educators as well as the major stakeholders in their children's education. It is therefore clear that effective educative teaching is the responsibility of both the educators and the parents.

Parental involvement helps in the strengthening of parent-child relationships, influencing children's attitudes towards school, their academic progress and behaviour. Parents and learners' relationships are strengthened, especially when parents understand the school's mission, aims and objectives. Learners' progress and behaviour can be better controlled because parents will visit schools to check on learners' progress. Thus everybody (teachers and learners) will be on his or her toes. Everybody is a winner when parents are involved. Learners improve on their learning. Teachers know that the learners are learning and parents know that their children are getting their money's worth.

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APPENDICES AND TABLES

Appendix A – Tables of Interview Time-scales

Table 1.1 below indicates appointments with Principals

Table 1.1 Appointments with Principals

School	Date	Venue
A	15 May 2003	Site C
B	19 May 2003	Philippi West
C	21 May 2003	Site B – East
D	21 May 2003	Site B – West
E	10 June 2003	Samora Machel
F	10 June 2003	Harare
G	11 June 2003	Macassar
H	12 June 2003	Crossroads
I	13 June 2003	Harare
J	18 June 2003	Site C
K	18 June 2003	Macassar
L	19 June 2003	Philippi West
M	20 June 2003	Samora Machel
N	23 June 2003	Site B – East
O	24 June 2003	Crossroads
P	25 June 2003	Site B - West

Table 1.2 below indicates appointments with Governing Body Chairpersons:

Table 1.2 Appointment dates – SGB Chairpersons

Parent	Date	Venue
A	08 May 2003	Site B – East
B	13 May 2003	Site B – West
C	15 May 2003	Samora Machel
D	17 May 2003	Site C
E	20 May 2003	Philippi West
F	21 May 2003	Philippi West
G	22 May 2003	Site B – West
H	23 May 2003	Site B – East
I	28 May 2003	Samora Machel
J	12 June 2003	Harare
K	13 June 2003	Macassar
L	14 June 2003	Harare
M	15 June 2003	Crossroads
N	20 June 2003	Macassar
O	20 June 2003	Site C
P	22 June 2003	Crossroads

Table 1.3 indicates appointments with Governing Body members:

Table 1.3 Appointment Dates – SGB Parents

Parent	Date	Venue
A	17 May 2003	Site C
B	20 May 2003	Site B – West
C	22 May 2003	Site B – West
D	22 May 2003	Philippi West
E	23 May 2003	Site B – East
F	24 May 2003	Philippi West
G	27 May 2003	Crossroads
H	28 May 2003	Samora Machel
I	29 May 2003	Macassar
J	12 June 2003	Harare
K	14 June 2003	Samora Machel
L	15 June 2003	Harare
M	20 June 2003	Site C
N	21 June 2003	Macassar
O	22 June 2003	Crossroads
P	23 June 2003	Site B – East

Table 1.4 below indicates appointments with ordinary parents of schools to conduct Focus Group Interviews:

Table 1.4 Appointment Dates – Parents

School	Date	Venue
A	19 May 2003	Site B – West
B	20 May 2003	Philippi West
C	20 May 2003	Samora Machel
D	22 May 2003	Site C
E	22 May 2003	Crossroads
F	23 May 2003	Macassar
G	27 May 2003	Harare
H	28 May 2003	Site C
I	29 May 2003	Harare
J	02 June 2003	Macassar
K	04 June 2003	Samora Machel
L	10 June 2003	Crossroads
M	10 June 2003	Philippi West
N	11 June 2003	Site B – East
O	17 June 2003	Site B – West
P	18 June 2003	Site B – East

Appendix B

The interview protocol

As a brainstorming session for the focus group's interviews, participants were asked to explain how they were involved in the education of their children.

The following is the manner in which the questions were formulated to the respondents:

- Section A is the biographical information that the researcher wanted to know about the chairpersons of the governing bodies. A questionnaire had to be completed by the respondents individually.
- Section B contains the interview questions to the chairpersons of the governing bodies.
- Section C is the biographical information on members of governing bodies.
- Section D contains the interview questions to the members of the governing bodies.
- Section E is the biographical information of parents not serving on governing bodies.
- Section F contains the Focus Group questions to the parents.
- Section G is the biographical information about principals.
- Section H contains the core questions to the principals: Questionnaires
- Section I contains the interview questions to the principals

Section A: Biographical Details – Governing Body Chairpersons

1. Please make a cross (X) in the appropriate box

1.1 Sex	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.2 Age	20 – 29 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
	30 – 39	<input type="checkbox"/>
	40 – 49	<input type="checkbox"/>
	50 and above	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.3 Highest educational qualification	Primary education	<input type="checkbox"/>
	High School	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Matric + Tertiary	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.4 Occupation	Self employed	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Unemployed	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Labourer	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Cleaner/Domestic	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Professional	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.5 Nature of family	Single	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Married	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Separated	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Divorced	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.6 How many children do you have?	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
	3	<input type="checkbox"/>
	4 or More	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.7 How many attend this school?	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
	3	<input type="checkbox"/>
	4 or more	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.8 What are the ages of your children?	6 – 7 years old	<input type="checkbox"/>
	8 – 9 years old	<input type="checkbox"/>
	10 – 11 years old	<input type="checkbox"/>
	12 years and above	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.9 What are the genders of your children?	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.10 What is your educational aspiration for your child?	Matric	<input type="checkbox"/>
	College	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Technikon	<input type="checkbox"/>
	University	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section B: Interview Questions to Chairpersons of Governing Bodies

The Following are the core questions posed to the chairpersons at interviews:

1: Technical Questions (exclusively for members of the governing body)

- (i) Did you receive a manual for the functioning of the governing body?
- (ii) Have you read the manual for the functioning of the governing body?
- (iii) Have you understood the manual?
- (iv) How much training did you receive after being elected to the governing body?
- (v) Please tell us what type of training would you welcome to make a bigger contribution to the development of the school?

2: Governance Questions

- (i) Were you involved in the formulation of the curriculum of the school?
- (ii) Does your school have a constitution?
- (iii) Were you involved in the drawing up of the constitution of the school?
- (iv) Does every parent in your school have a copy of the constitution of your school?
- (v) Did you involve yourself in the drawing up of the budget of the school?

3: Home Involvement Questions

- (i) Are you aware of your obligation to be involved in your child's education?
- (ii) Do you ever read to your child?
- (iii) Do you ever listen to your child read?
- (iv) Do teachers give you ideas about assisting your child at home?
- (v) How often do you ensure that your child does his/her homework regularly?
- (vi) How regularly do you assist your child with homework?
- (vii) How often do you enquire about school from your child?
- (viii) How often do you ask for your child's written work either from the teacher or your child to determine how your child is coping?
- (ix) Which subjects/learning areas are you comfortable with so that you can help your child with at home?

4: School Involvement Questions

- (i) Are you aware of the policy of the school concerning a teacher who is absent from school?
- (ii) How often do you attend activities at the school of your child?
- (iii) Does the school hold parent-teacher evenings/days during which parents are afforded an opportunity to meet subjects or class teachers to discuss the child's progress?
- (iv) Do you or your spouse regularly attend these meetings?
- (v) Do you think parent-teacher evenings/days are necessary?
- (vi) How often do you communicate with the teachers of your child in order to discuss your child's progress?
- (vii) If you have never spoken to the teachers of your child regarding his/her progress, you may have good reasons for it. Can you tell us some of the reasons?

5: General Questions

- (i) How often do you watch your child participate in extra-mural activities?
- (ii) Please tell us what role you play in the development of the school.
- (iii) What discourages you as a parent from being involved in the education of your child?
- (iv) What would you like to see done by the school to encourage parental involvement?

Section C: Biographical Details – Governing Body Parents

1. Please make a cross (X) in the appropriate box

1.1 Sex	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.2 Age	20 – 29 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
	30 – 39	<input type="checkbox"/>
	40 – 49	<input type="checkbox"/>
	50 and above	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.3 Highest educational qualification	Primary education	<input type="checkbox"/>
	High School	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Matric + Tertiary	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.4 Occupation	Self employed	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Unemployed	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Labourer	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Cleaner	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Professional	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.5 Nature of family	Single	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Married	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Separated	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Divorced	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.6 How many children do you have?	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
	3	<input type="checkbox"/>
	4 or More	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.7 How many attend this school?	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
	3	<input type="checkbox"/>
	4 or more	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.8 What are the ages of your children?	6 – 7 years old	<input type="checkbox"/>
	8 – 9 years old	<input type="checkbox"/>
	10 – 11 years old	<input type="checkbox"/>
	12 years and above	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.9 What are the genders of your children?	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.10 What is your educational aspiration of your child?	Matric	<input type="checkbox"/>
	College	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Technikon	<input type="checkbox"/>
	University	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section D: Interview Questions for members of Governing Bodies

The Following are the core questions posed to the parents during focus group interviews:

1: Technical Questions (exclusively for members of the governing body)

- (i) Did you receive a manual for the functioning of the governing body?
- (ii) Have you read the manual for the functioning of the governing body?
- (iii) Have you understood the manual?
- (iv) How much training did you receive after being elected to the governing body?
- (v) Please tell us what type of training you would welcome to make a bigger contribution to the development of the school?

2: Governance Questions

- (i) Were you involved in the formulation of the curriculum of the school?
- (ii) Does your school have a constitution?
- (iii) Were you involved in the drawing up of the constitution of the school?
- (iv) Does every parent in your school have a copy of the constitution of your school?
- (v) Did you involve yourself in the drawing up of the budget of the school?

3: Home Involvement Questions

- (i) Are you aware of your obligation to be involved in your child's education?
- (ii) Do you ever read to your child?
- (iii) Do you ever listen to your child read?
- (iv) Do teachers give you ideas about assisting your child at home?
- (v) How often do you ensure that your child does his/her homework regularly?
- (vi) How regularly do you assist your child with homework?
- (vii) How often do you enquire about school from your child?
- (viii) How often do you ask for your child's written work either from the teacher or your child to determine how your child is coping?
- (ix) Which subjects/learning areas are you comfortable with so that you can help your child with at home?

4: School Involvement Questions

- (i) Are you aware of the policy of the school concerning a teacher who is absent from school?
- (ii) How often do you attend activities at the school of your child?
- (iii) Does the school hold parent-teacher evenings/days during which parents are afforded an opportunity to meet subjects or class teachers and to discuss the child's progress?
- (iv) Do you or your spouse regularly attend these meetings?
- (v) Do you think parent-teacher evenings/days are necessary?
- (vi) How often do you communicate with the teachers of your child in order to discuss your child's progress?
- (vii) If you have never spoken to the teachers of your child regarding his/her progress, you may have good reasons for it. Can you tell us some of the reasons?

5: General Questions

- (i) How often do you watch your child participate in extra-mural activities?
- (ii) Please tell us what role you play in the development of the school.
- (iii) What discourages you as a parent from being involved in the education of your child?
- (iv) What would you like to see done by the school to encourage parental involvement?

Section E: Biographical Details – Parents not serving on governing bodies

1. Please make a cross (X) in the appropriate box

1.1 Sex	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.2 Age	20 – 29 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
	30 – 39	<input type="checkbox"/>
	40 – 49	<input type="checkbox"/>
	50 and above	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.3 Highest educational qualification	Primary education	<input type="checkbox"/>
	High School	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Matric + Tertiary	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.4 Occupation	Self employed	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Unemployed	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Labourer	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Cleaner/Domestic	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Professional	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.5 Nature of family	Single	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Married	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Separated	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Divorced	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.6 How many children do you have?	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
	3	<input type="checkbox"/>
	4 or More	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.7 How many attend this school?	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
	3	<input type="checkbox"/>
	4 or more	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.8 What are the ages of your children?	6 – 7 years old	<input type="checkbox"/>
	8 – 9 years old	<input type="checkbox"/>
	10 – 11 years old	<input type="checkbox"/>
	12 years and above	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.9 What are the genders of your children?	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.10 What is your educational aspiration for your child?	Matric	<input type="checkbox"/>
	College	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Technikon	<input type="checkbox"/>
	University	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section F: Focus Group Questions to the parents in the interview

The Following are the core questions posed to the parents during focus group interviews:

1: Technical Questions (exclusively for members of the governing body)

- (i) Did you receive a manual for the functioning of the governing body?
- (ii) Have you read the manual for the functioning of the governing body?
- (iii) Have you understood the manual?
- (iv) How much training did you receive after being elected to the governing body?
- (v) Please tell us what type of training would you welcome to make a bigger contribution to the development of the school?

2: Governance Questions

- (i) Were you involved in the formulation of the curriculum of the school?
- (ii) Does your school have a constitution?
- (iii) Were you involved in the drawing up of the constitution of the school?
- (iv) Does every parent in your school have a copy of the constitution of your school?
- (v) Did you involve yourself in the drawing up of the budget of the school?

3: Home Involvement Questions

- (i) Are you aware of your obligation to be involved in your child's education?
- (ii) Do you ever read to your child?
- (iii) Do you ever listen to your child read?
- (iv) Do teachers give you ideas about assisting your child at home?
- (v) How often do you ensure that your child does his/her homework regularly?
- (vi) How regularly do you assist your child with homework?
- (vii) How often do you enquire about school from your child?
- (viii) How often do you ask for your child's written work either from the teacher or your child to determine how your child is coping?
- (ix) Which subjects/learning areas are you comfortable with that you can help your child with at home?

4: School Involvement Questions

- (i) Are you aware of the policy of the school concerning a teacher who is absent from school?
- (ii) How often do you attend activities at the school of your child?
- (iii) Does the school hold parent-teacher evenings/days during which parents are afforded an opportunity to meet subjects or class teachers to discuss the child's progress?
- (iv) Do you or your spouse regularly attend these meetings?
- (v) Do you think parent-teacher evenings/days are necessary?
- (vi) How often do you communicate with the teachers of your child in order to discuss your child's progress?
- (vii) If you have never spoken to the teachers of your child regarding his/her progress, you may have good reasons for it. Can you tell us some of the reasons?

5: General Questions

- (i) How often do you watch your child participate in extra-mural activities?
- (ii) Please tell us what role you play in the development of the school.
- (iii) What discourages you as a parent from being involved in the education of your child?
- (iv) What would you like to see done by the school to encourage parental involvement?

Section G (i) is biographical information that the researcher wanted to know about principals.

A questionnaire had to be completed individually by the respondents.

Section G: (i) Biographical Details - Principals

1. Please make a cross (X) in the appropriate box.

1.1 Sex	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.2 Age	20 – 29	<input type="checkbox"/>
	30 – 39	<input type="checkbox"/>
	40 – 49	<input type="checkbox"/>
	50 and above	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.3 Experience as principal	0 – 4 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
	5 – 9 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
	10 – 14 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
	15 – 20 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
	21 years and more	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.4 Highest academic qualification	Junior Certificate	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Senior Certificate	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Diploma	<input type="checkbox"/>
	B. Degree	<input type="checkbox"/>
	B. Ed/Hons. Degree	<input type="checkbox"/>
	M. Degree	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section G: (ii) Demographical Details

2. Please make a cross (X) in the appropriate box. Note that more than one X is possible here.

2.1 Classification of school	State school	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Combined school	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Community school	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Lower Primary	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Higher Primary	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.2 Learner enrolment	Less than 600	<input type="checkbox"/>
	600 – 799	<input type="checkbox"/>
	800 – 999	<input type="checkbox"/>
	1000 – 1 199	<input type="checkbox"/>
	1200 and more	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.3 Size of staff	10 – 19	<input type="checkbox"/>
	20 – 29	<input type="checkbox"/>
	30 – 39	<input type="checkbox"/>
	40 and more	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section H: Questionnaires – Principals

(i): Technical Questions

Please make a cross (X) in the appropriate box:

1. Does the school have a Governing Body?

Yes	No

2. When was your Governing Body elected?

6 Months ago	
2 years ago	
3 years ago	
4 years ago	
More than 4yrs	

3. Are all members of the Governing Body still active?

4. Did all members of the Governing Body receive the manual?

5. Is your Governing Body familiar with the contents of the manual?

Yes	No

6. How much training did you afford your members of the GB?

None	
1 – 2 hours	
3 – 4 hours	
5 – 6 hours	
6 and more	

7. Does the school have a constitution adopted by the parents of the School?

Yes	No

(ii): Communication Questions

Please make a cross (X) in the appropriate box:

1. Does the school have a policy/programme for parental involvement?

2. Does the school inform parents of every extra-mural activity?

3. Were parents involved in drawing up the curriculum of the school?

4. Did you involve parents in the formulation of the constitution of the School?

Yes	No

(iii): School Involvement Questions

Please make a cross (X) in the appropriate box:

1. What is the average attendance of parents when you hold parent-teacher evenings or days?

10 – 20%	
30 – 40%	
50 – 60%	
70 – 80%	
90% and more	

2. Does the school emphasise to parents the importance of parent-teacher Evenings or days?
3. Does the school do a follow-up to find out why some parents are not Attending school functions?
4. Are the parents of your school aware of their obligation to be involved?

Yes	No

(iv): Curriculum Questions

Please make a cross (X) in the appropriate box:

1. Did you inform parents about OBE and Assessment policy
2. Do parents know what happens to a class whose teacher is absent at School?
3. Do parents at your school enquire about the progress of their children from the teachers?

Yes	No

(v): General Questions

1. How regularly do you involve parents in the activities of your school? Please state:

Section I: Core Questions to the Principals during an interview

A: Technical Questions

1. Does the school have a governing body?
2. When was your governing body elected?
3. Are all the members of the governing body still active?
4. Did your governing body members receive the manual for the functioning of the governing body?
5. Is your governing body familiar with the contents of the manual?
6. How much training did you afford your members of the governing body after being elected to serve on the governing body?

B: Communication Questions

1. Does the school have a policy/programme for parental involvement?
2. Were parents involved in the drawing up of the curriculum of the school?
3. Does the school have a constitution?
4. Were parents involved in the drawing up of the constitution of the school?

C: School Involvement Questions

1. What is the average attendance of parents when you hold parent-teacher evenings or days?
2. Does the school emphasise the importance of parent-teacher evenings or days to parents?
3. Does a school do a follow-up to find out why some parents are not attending school functions?
4. Are the parents of your school aware of their obligation to be involved in the education of their children?

D: Curriculum Questions

1. Did you inform the parents about OBE and Assessment policy?
2. Do parents know what happens to a class whose teacher is absent from school?
3. Do parents at your school enquire about the progress of their children from the teachers?

E: General Questions

1. Please tell me how regularly do you involve parents in the activities of your school.
2. Please tell me of the steps you are taking to increase parental involvement in your school.
3. Please state what you think are major reasons that discourage parents from attending activities at your school.

APPENDIX C: List of letters

1. Letter to the Department of Education
2. Letter from the Technikon
3. Letter from the Department of Education
4. Letter for gaining entry to institutions
5. Thank you letter

Letter 1:

Masivuke Primary School

P.O. Box 33020
Nyanga
7755

Tel. 374-4095
Fax 374-4093

Ntambanane Street
Village 4

Philippi 7755

09 April 2003

E-Mail: admin@masivuke.wcape.schools.za

Dr. Ronald Cornelissen

Deputy Chief Education Specialist: Researcher
Western Cape Education Department
Private Bag X 9114

CAPE TOWN

8000

Dear Sir

APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT SCHOOLS

I am a teacher at the above-mentioned school in the **EMDC: South Metropole**. I am currently registered as a Masters student with the **Cape Technikon** under the supervision of Mr. A. van der Bijl of the Faculty of Education. The topic of my research is **Parental Involvement in Primary schools situated in informal settlements**.

My research requires that I interview principals and members of governing bodies as well as parents who are not on governing bodies of these schools. I therefore feel it appropriate to request permission to conduct these interviews. I am enclosing a copy of the letter from my institution stating my registration. The list of schools is attached.

I have already contacted these schools and made them aware that I am awaiting a letter from the department. The promise was that they will arrange dates for such interviews. In some schools I will only leave questionnaires to be collected in the future.

I thank you very much.

Yours truly,

J.G. MOFOKA

Letter 2:



25 September 2000

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This serves to confirm that Mr JG Mofoka (9664416) is completing research towards a Masters thesis at the Education Faculty of the Technikon.

Any assistance given to him will be greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. van der Bijl".

**ANDRE VAN DER BIJL
SENIOR LECTURER: EDUCATION FACULTY**

PO Box 652 Cape Town 8000
Keizersgracht, District Six
Telephone 27 21 460 3911
Facsimile 27 21 460 3695
e-mail postmaster@ctech.ac.za
Website www.ctech.ac.za

Letter 3:

Navrae
Enquiries Dr Ronald Cornelissen
IMibuzo

Telefoon
Telephone (021) 467-2286
IFoni

Faks
Fax (021) 425-7445
IFeksi

Verwysing
Reference 20021119-0004
ISalathiso



Wes-Kaap Onderwysdepartement

Western Cape Education Department

ISebe leMfundo leNtshona Koloni

Mr JG Mofoka
12 Starlight Walk
Ikwezi Park
KHAYELITSHA
7784

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS SITUATED IN INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS.

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
5. The investigation is to be conducted during **14th April – 27th June 2003**.
6. No research will be allowed during the fourth school term.
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Dr R. Cornelissen at the contact numbers above.
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal of the school where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to the list of schools submitted to the Directorate: Education Research.
10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Education Research.
11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:

**The Director: Education Research
Western Cape Education Department
Private Bag 9114
CAPE TOWN
8000**

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.

HEAD: EDUCATION

DATE: 2003 04 11

MELD ASSEBLIEF VERWYSINGSNOMMERS IN ALLE KORRESPONDENSIE / PLEASE QUOTE REFERENCE NUMBERS IN ALL CORRESPONDENCE /
NCEDA UBHALE IINOMBOLO ZESALATHISO KUYO YONKE IMBALELWANO

GRAND CENTRAL TOWERS, LAER-PARLEMENTSTRAAT, PRIVAATSAK X9114, KAAPSTAD 8000
GRAND CENTRAL TOWERS, LOWER PARLIAMENT STREET, PRIVATE BAG X9114, CAPE TOWN 8000

Letter 4:

12 Starlight Walk
Ikwezi Park
Khayelitsha 7784

The Principal

_____ Primary School

Dear Sir/Madam

Permission to conduct interviews

My name is **Jerry Mofoka**. I am a registered Masters student under the supervision of Mr. A. van der Bijl of the Faculty of Education at the **Cape Technikon**. The topic of my thesis is **Parental involvement in primary schools situated in informal settlements**. The idea is to find out what problems are encountered around parental involvement and what corrective measures we should undertake to improve the situation. With the permission of the department of education I would like to interview the following persons:

- ✓ The principal
- ✓ The chairperson and one member of the governing body (individually)
- ✓ Five ordinary parents of the school in a focus group interview

I humbly request from the principal to secure me an appointment with these parents to allow me to go to their homes and interview them at the time that suits them. I hope to get the addresses of these parents and suitable dates to interview them. The duration of the interview is approximately 30 minutes. I hope to get a response within the following week so as to arrange my time and diary accordingly.

I hope my application will receive your favourable consideration.

Humbly yours

J.G. Mofoka

Letter 5

12 Starlight Walk
Ikwezi Park
KHAYELITSHA
7784

23 July 2003

The Principal
_____ Primary school

Dear Sir/Madam

I wish to express my gratitude for being of assistance to me during my research at your school. You were able to take some time off to help me with my interview and also organised parents to help me with my research. Please convey my undivided gratitude to all involved as well.

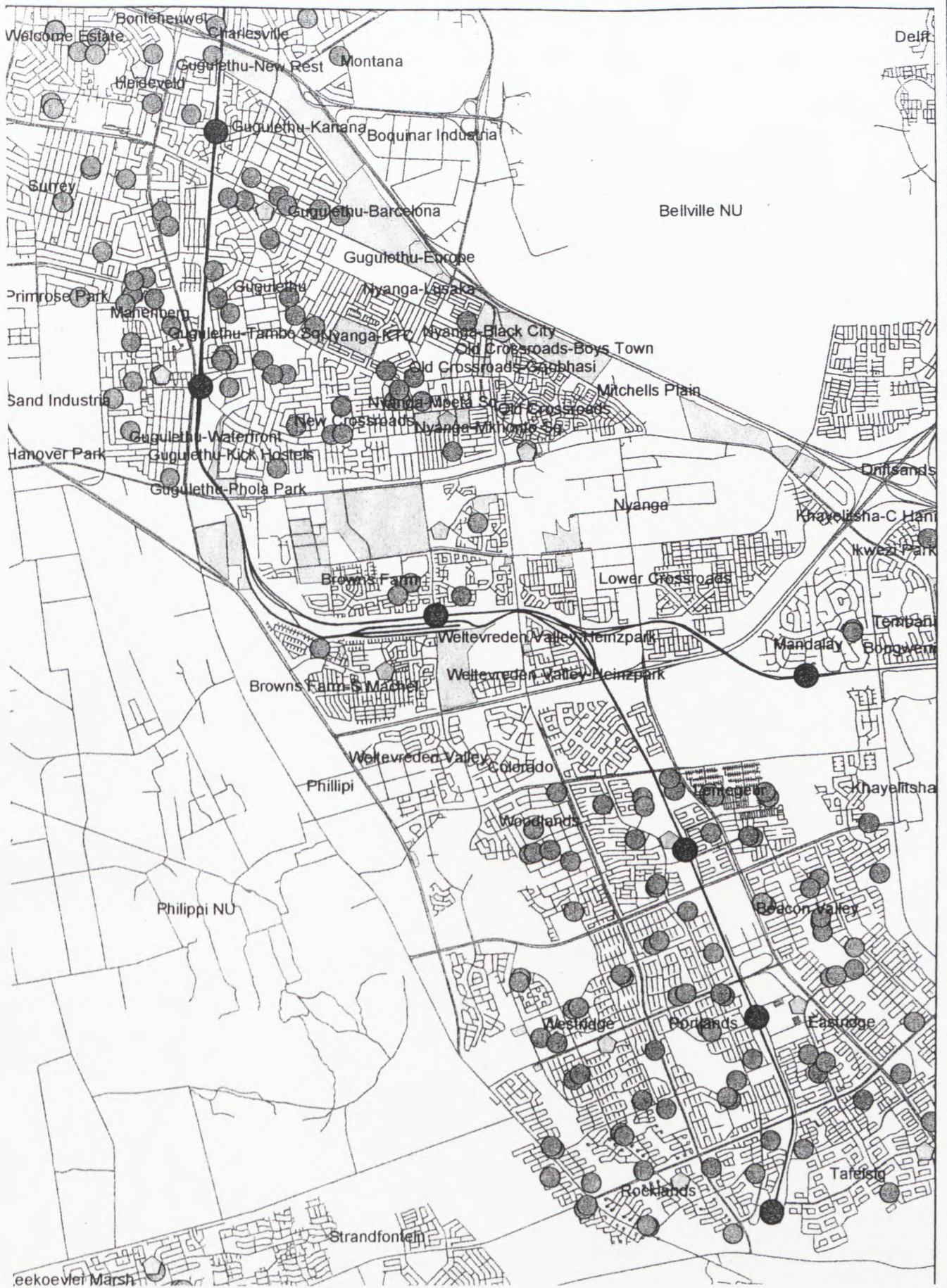
Yours truly,

Jerry G. Mofoka

The table below represents the list of schools in each area visited.

Table 1.5 Informal areas and schools visited

Area	School
a) Philippi	1. B – school
	2. L – school
b) Weltevreden Valley (Samora Machel)	1. E – school
	2. M – school
c) Site C	1. A – school
	2. J – school
d) Site B – East	1. P – school
	2. D – school
e) Site B – West	1. C – school
	2. N – school
f) Harare	1. F – school
	2. I – school
g) Macassar	1. K – school
	2. G – school
h) Crossroads	1. O – school
	2. H – school



CAPE PENINSULA
UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

