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University of Cape Town

Faculty of Humanities

***Intervening in Schools –  
An Evaluability Assessment (EA) of the  
Secondary Schools Partnership Project (SSPP)  
in the Western Cape, South Africa***

A minor dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the award of the degree of Master of Education

by

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October 2002

## **Declaration**

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

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October 2002

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## **Abstract**

The Secondary Schools Partnership Project (SSPP) of the Schools Development Unit at UCT is a typical example of a school intervention project. Focusing on mathematics and science, 18 months of intervention took place at two target secondary schools from Khayelitsha, and two from Mitchell's Plain. This study aims to discuss the issue of the evaluability of educational projects through a case study of the SSPP. In addition, the research raises the importance of programme theory for credible evaluation to take place.

The theoretical background of this study is "Evaluability Assessment"(EA) provided by Smith (1989). The focus of EA is to clarify programme goals from the stakeholders' point of view and to analyse a programme's structure to determine the programme theory behind it. The EA framework of this study comprised three questions, namely what were the "Overall Goals", "the Programme Theory", and "the Policy Sharing Status" of the programme.

The study consists of two phases, document analysis and interviews with stakeholders. The author analysed six different reports of the SSPP. The interviews with stakeholders identifies both common understandings and major differences among stakeholders in their perceptions about what the programme is trying to accomplish and how it is being implemented. Interviews with the SSPP school teachers, principals, coordinators and policymakers were conducted.

Using this data, the study indicates that most of the critical conditions for the evaluation of the SSPP, such as overall goal clarification, well-developed programme theory, and policy sharing among stakeholders, were not satisfied mainly because of the lack of sound management. Finally, the study tried to contribute to the idea of better programme theory development for other education programmes by addressing three critical conditions, namely, a time frame consciousness, a clarification of cause-effect relationships, and some limitations of programme evaluation.

## List of acronyms

DET	The Department of Education and Training
DoE	The Department of Education in UCT
EA	Evaluability Assessment
FASID	Foundation for Advanced Studies on International Development
HG	Higher Grade (of Matric)
HoR	The House of Representatives
OBE	Outcomes Based Education
ODA	Official Development Assistance
SDU	The Schools Development Unit
SoE	The School of Education in UCT
SSPP	Secondary School Partnership Project
TLRC	The Teaching and Learning Resources Center
UCT	The University of Cape Town
UWC	University of the Western Cape
WCED	Western Cape Education Department

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# **Chapter 1 Introduction**

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## **1.1. Aims of the Study**

This study aims to discuss the issue of the problem of the evaluability of educational projects through a case study of the “Secondary Schools Partnership Project” (SSPP) in the Western Cape, South Africa. In addition, the research raises the importance of programme theory for credible evaluation to take place.

## **1.2. Entry into the Field of the SSPP**

### **1.2.1. Motivation for the Evaluation of Education**

The budget of the Official Development Assistance (ODA) in Japan is approximately R100bn every year. This is the second largest project of this scale in the world following the United States. Even though Japan suffers from a serious recession, people treated this budget as “sacrosanct” and try to retain the same scale every year. However, from the end of the 90’s, people began to criticize the ODA, not only for the huge amount of money it took, but also for the lack of clarity of the projects. Truly speaking, most of the government’s projects have not been evaluated properly.

The public opinion affected me very much because I was dispatched to Zambia by the Japanese government. For two years, I was assigned to work as a physics teacher at a rural secondary school in Zambia. During my service, no one evaluated my work. I did not even consider that my work would be evaluated by someone else. But now I realize that there are social pressures towards

requiring project evaluation. Therefore I have personally been thinking over the problem of project evaluation, especially with regard to the field of education. I have been asking myself “Who can evaluate the achievement of education?”, “What is to be evaluated?”, and “Is an education programme really evaluable?” These questions have haunted me for a long time, ever since I finished my service and returned to Japan in 1998.

With these unsolved questions, I came to South Africa for the purpose of searching for an answer. In the course of last year, I fortunately had an opportunity to participate in the conference of a school intervention programme at University of Cape Town. The programme was called “The Secondary School Partnership Project” (SSPP) and this programme gave me an opportunity to conduct the evaluation which is the basis of this thesis. In the next section, I briefly introduce the background of the SSPP.

### **1.2.2. Brief Introduction of the Secondary Schools Partnership Project**

The Secondary Schools Partnership project (SSPP) was one of the Schools Development Unit’s (SDU) programmes at the University of Cape Town (UCT). The project was established in 1998 with the support of a substantial grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. According to the first proposal of the SSPP, the main purpose of the project was to “assist partner schools in developing learners”, and “make pilot school students understand the range of programmes offered by tertiary institutions.” (SDU, 1999: 3) Criteria for participation in the project were that the schools should be functioning but have a poor record in terms of matric results. Four schools from the townships of Cape Town were selected as pilot schools; three of them were in the bottom 10 per cent of

secondary schools in the Western Cape. And the fourth school is in the bottom 30 per cent in terms of their matriculation results. Interventions were to focus mostly on Mathematics and Physical Science and be integrated into the programme of the schools. Short-term interventions, such as "Tutorial Programme" and "Holiday Programmes" were planned working with the Matric class of 1999 from mid-1998 onwards, to see if the Matric results could be improved and whether students could be better informed about career choices. Longer-term interventions, such as practical work and assessment supports, were planned to support teachers in developing sustainable programmes in their schools around the goals of the project.

My first contact with the SDU and the SSPP was at the final conference of the SSPP in September 2001. The SSPP sounded as if it was a typical intervention programme for secondary schools. So I decided to take this project as my research topic and study how the SSPP was evaluated. The next section explains what I found from the evaluation of the SSPP, and how I reached the topic of "Evaluability Assessment".

### **1.3. The SSPP and Evaluability Assessment**

#### **1.3.1. Analysis of the SSPP Evaluation Reports**

At the conference of the SSPP, the final evaluation of the SSPP was announced. My research began with the intention of analysing the data and method of the report. It was reported that matric performance at the four pilot schools had improved after the 18 month period of intervention. Then I tried to confirm or disconfirm the conclusion that the matric performance of the schools

had really improved.

In the process it became evident that a key problem with SSPP was not only with the outcomes of the intervention and the evaluation techniques, but with what seemed to be coming from the programme theory of SSPP. To understand the programme framework of the SSPP, I then decided to examine more of the SSPP programme documents. However, each document showed different purposes and outcomes for the projects. Furthermore, these goals and outcomes were not linked coherently.

The analysis of programme documentation which I mentioned above illuminated some crucial aspects in the evaluation of outcomes of the SSPP. It became clearer that the credibility and quality of programme evaluation relies heavily on how the programme was planned and designed; whether goals and indicators were clearly articulated, rather than how outcomes data were analysed.

As a result, it was difficult for me to understand what the project had set out to do, and what it was able to achieve finally. To assist in clarifying these issues, I utilized the technique of Evaluability Assessment which is discussed below.

### **1.3.2. Evaluability Assessment**

Evaluability Assessment (EA) is a formal study of a programme which provides information as to whether or not there is clarity about the goals and objectives of an intervention. It begins as a process for analysing a programme's structure to determine the extent to which it is suitable for effectiveness evaluation. While traditional ways of outcome evaluation are concerned mostly

with “successfulness” and “effectiveness” of the programme, Hamilton *et al* define the focus of the EA as “...[t]o measure ‘plausibility (clear goals, objectives)’ and ‘measurability (clear indicators for the outcome)’ of the project” (1996:3).

Evaluability Assessment clearly mentions the concept of clear goals and indicators by using the words “plausibility” and “measurability”. These are the areas that I realized were the most problematic part of the SSPP. What the SSPP needed to be evaluated on was not the outcomes, but on its “Programme Theory” – clarifying programme goals and articulating activities with the goals. This project therefore uses the method of EA, to describe the conditions and limitations of credible evaluations not only for the SSPP but also for other general educational intervention programmes.

## **1.4. Shaping the Research Questions**

### **1.4.1. Hypotheses of the Study**

Through the pre-research of the documents, I formulated three hypotheses for the Evaluability Assessment of the SSPP. My first hypothesis was that there was an absence of programme theory of the SSPP. The SSPP had neither clear goals nor clear indicators of student performances. This is the key problem of the SSPP.

My second hypothesis was that there was a haphazard implementation of activities of the SSPP. This happened because of the absence of the programme theory, and caused problems for the evaluation of the project at the final stage.

And my final hypothesis was that there was a lack of consensus among

the stakeholders of the SSPP about the programme goals.

#### **1.4.2. Research Questions of the Study**

To confirm above hypotheses, this research asked three preliminary questions. The purpose of these preliminary questions was to find each stakeholder's perceptions about the goal and objectives of the SSPP.

- Preliminary Question 1: *"What is the overall goal of the SSPP?"*
- Preliminary Question 2: *"Was there any programme theory applied in the course of the SSPP intervention?"*
- Preliminary Question 3: *"How did each of the stakeholder groups share the policy of the SSPP?"*

Then the research examines the paradigm of the programme theory amongst the stakeholders. At last, the final question of EA is asked.

- Final Question: *"Is the SSPP evaluable as an education programme?"*

#### **1.5. The Structure of the Dissertation**

The dissertation consists of six chapters to answer above the questions.

- Chapter 1 is the *"Introduction"*. I explain my motivation and the entry into the SSPP and programme evaluation. The research questions are mentioned in this chapter.
- Chapter 2 is *"Shaping the Research Questions"*. This chapter is devoted to

a discussion of design issues and a detailed discussion of the evaluation objectives of the SSPP through an analysis of available documentation. In this process, I describe the SSPP and also show how one goes about articulating an evaluation problem.

- Chapter 3 is the "*Theoretical Framework*". Some of the basic concepts and principles of programme evaluation are discussed. Comparing with basic evaluation designs, I explain the structure, uniqueness, and limitations of Evaluability Assessment in this chapter.
- Chapter 4 is "*Methodology*". I describe methodologies I will use in my Evaluability Assessment. Data collection techniques, such as interviews, analysis of programme documents, and analysis of findings are mentioned. I also mention the limitations and ethical conditions of this study.
- Chapter 5 is "*Data Presentation and Analysis*". Here I present and analyse data from the interviews with school principals, teachers, coordinators and policymakers of the SSPP. The interview asks about "Programme goal", "Outcomes and Indicators", and "Policy Sharing Status" of the SSPP. I attempt to examine the extent to which the purposes and goals of the SSPP were shared by the different stakeholders.
- Chapter 6 is the "*Summary and Conclusion*". I attempt to answer the research question by referring to the framework and data analysis of this study.

## **Chapter 2 Shaping the Research Questions**

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As was briefly explained in Chapter 1, the SSPP is a typical case of school intervention programmes undertaken in South Africa. Focusing on mathematics and science, 18 months of intervention took place at four target secondary schools in Cape Town.

The purpose of this chapter is to understand the goals and activities of the SSPP and the relationship between these as captured in the documentation, policies and Evaluation Report that are available. From this research, three key questions are developed. In general though the aim of this section is to introduce the idea of programme theory (the linking of goal, outcome, and indicators to measure these), which conceptual frame is detailed in Chapter 3 and fully explained in Chapter 5.

The structure of this chapter is twofold. Firstly, I introduce the background of the SSPP project. The origin of the project and the target school information are given in this section. Secondly, I explain the detail of the SSPP programme looking at things such as the overall goals, the management system, the activities and the evaluation.

### **2.1. The Background of the SSPP**

#### **2.1.1. Origin of the Project**

The origin of the project dates back to 1997. At that time, the Vice Chancellor of the University of Cape Town was able to facilitate a substantial

grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation for a series of social development programmes. TLRC (Teachers' Learning and Resources Centre: forerunner of the SDU), which is an external organisation and part of UCT, received information regarding this grant through the Department of Education at UCT, and drew up a proposal for a partnership project with local disadvantaged schools. At that time, the Vice Chancellor also made a tour of schools on the Cape Flats and realized that UCT did not have strong links with the community and townships of Cape Town. The project was therefore approved by the Foundation with the support of UCT and launched as "The Secondary Schools Partnership Project" as one of six projects funded by the Foundation. According to the first proposal, the SSPP had a programme purpose as follows:

- *"to assist partner schools in developing learners who have the necessary knowledge and skills to access university education"* (SDU, 1998a: 3)

Initially, the SSPP was planned to work with six secondary schools over a period of four years. However, due to constraints on funding allocation, the programme had to be reshaped to work with four schools for an 18 month period. The total budget allocated to the SSPP was about \$200,000 U.S. Dollars.

### **2.1.2. Target School Selection**

Various factors were used as criteria for selecting the schools to be involved. These included matric results, geographical location, and most importantly, the willingness of the principal to participate. Firstly, two schools (School A and B) were chosen based on the criteria that both principals had

positive responses to the intervention programme. Both were ex-DET (Department of Education and Training) schools and located in Khayelitsha. Their matric performance for the years of 1996 and 1997 were amongst the bottom 10% in Western Cape. The other two schools (School C and D) were chosen from ex-HoR (House of Representative) schools which are located in Mitchell's Plain. Although their matric results were slightly higher than the criteria of selection (between 20% to 30% from the bottom of results in the Western Cape), the geographical location was ideal since it was accepted that partnership schools should ideally form clusters; thus reducing travel and ensuring greater ease in working between schools. Finally, these four schools were selected by the SDU and formed the SSPP programme which began in 1998.

This is the project background of the SSPP. The proposal was approved in March 1998 and the actual programme began in August of the same year. In the next section, I develop the research questions while summarising the SSPP project.

## **2.2. Project Summary and Research Questions**

The aim of this section is to explain the detail of the SSPP programme in order to try to link the purpose or goals of the SSPP to the outcomes of the SSPP. To do this, I examine the following topics which seem to be linked to the programme theory of the SSPP: the overall goals, management of the programme, activities of the SSPP, and the evaluation.

The first topic I raise is the 'Overall Goals' of the project. Without understanding the goal of the programme, no one can explain the programme properly. I therefore quote the overall goals from different documents and

demonstrate that the goals were basically inconsistent.

The second topic is the 'Management Systems'. The analysis of the management system should show how programme theory was developed and shared with different stakeholders of the SSPP. There were mainly four different stakeholder groups – Policymakers, Coordinators, School Principals, and School Teachers. The main issue I point out here is that these groups did not play their actual role as initially intended.

The third topic deals with the 'Activities' of the SSPP. I examine how the documented goals are linked with the actual activities of the SSPP, which consisted of five student interventions and five teacher interventions. Analysis of these activities should illustrate the programme theory used by the SSPP.

And finally, I detail the 'Evaluation' of the SSPP. This analysis will clarify how the evaluator of the SSPP conceptualised the programme components of the SSPP, such as intended goal, activities and outcomes. This is crucial information not only to understand the programme but also to grasp how the policymakers perceived the SSPP programme.

### **2.2.1. Overall Goals**

The first topic explaining the detail and issues of the SSPP is the 'overall goal of the SSPP'. I have already mentioned the goal of the SSPP in the first proposal, which was *"to assist partner schools in developing learners who have the necessary knowledge and skills to access university education"* (SDU, 1998a: 3). Nonetheless, I realized that this goal of the SSPP shows some inconsistency when looked at side by side with other SSPP documents. The following sentences are quotes of project goals and objectives from the other SSPP

reports. All statements are arranged in time sequence:

- *“to assist partner schools in developing learners who have the necessary knowledge and skills to access university education”* (SDU, 1998a: 3)
- *“building partnerships for the development of effective teaching and learning strategies in four disadvantaged secondary schools”* (SDU, 1999: 3)
- *“to contribute to models of change for high school development through a partnership model”* (SDU, 2000: 2)
- *“to increase student interest and accessibility to tertiary institution”* (SDU, 2001a: 2)
- *“to ascertain what were the inhibiting factors and what kinds of interventions might bring about a change in the profile of the school”* (SDU, 2001b: 5)
- *“...students’ performance is clearly the major focus of interest for the project.”* (SDU, 2001c: 4)

Each document appeared to have slightly (some considerably) different goals for the programme. For example, while the first document above (SDU, 1998a: 3) explains the programme goal as *“Developing learners to access university”*, in 1999, the main goal suddenly became *“Building partnerships for the development of effective teaching and learning strategies”* (SDU, 1999: 3). These changes have not however been acknowledged or explained in any of the reports. In addition, most of the goals of the SSPP were not linked to specified outcomes. Again, for example, the third document above (SDU, 2000: 2) explained the programme goal as *“to contribute to models of change for high school development through the partnership model”*. This was so unspecified that the causal relation between this goal and actual activities was very unclear.

As a result of these various goals, it is difficult to understand what the

project either set out to do, or what was finally achieved. This then creates the first question to be raised about the SSPP, viz., '*What is the overall goal of the SSPP?*'.

This observation also leads me to the next issue of how the policymakers of the SSPP managed and controlled the programme with such unspecified goals.

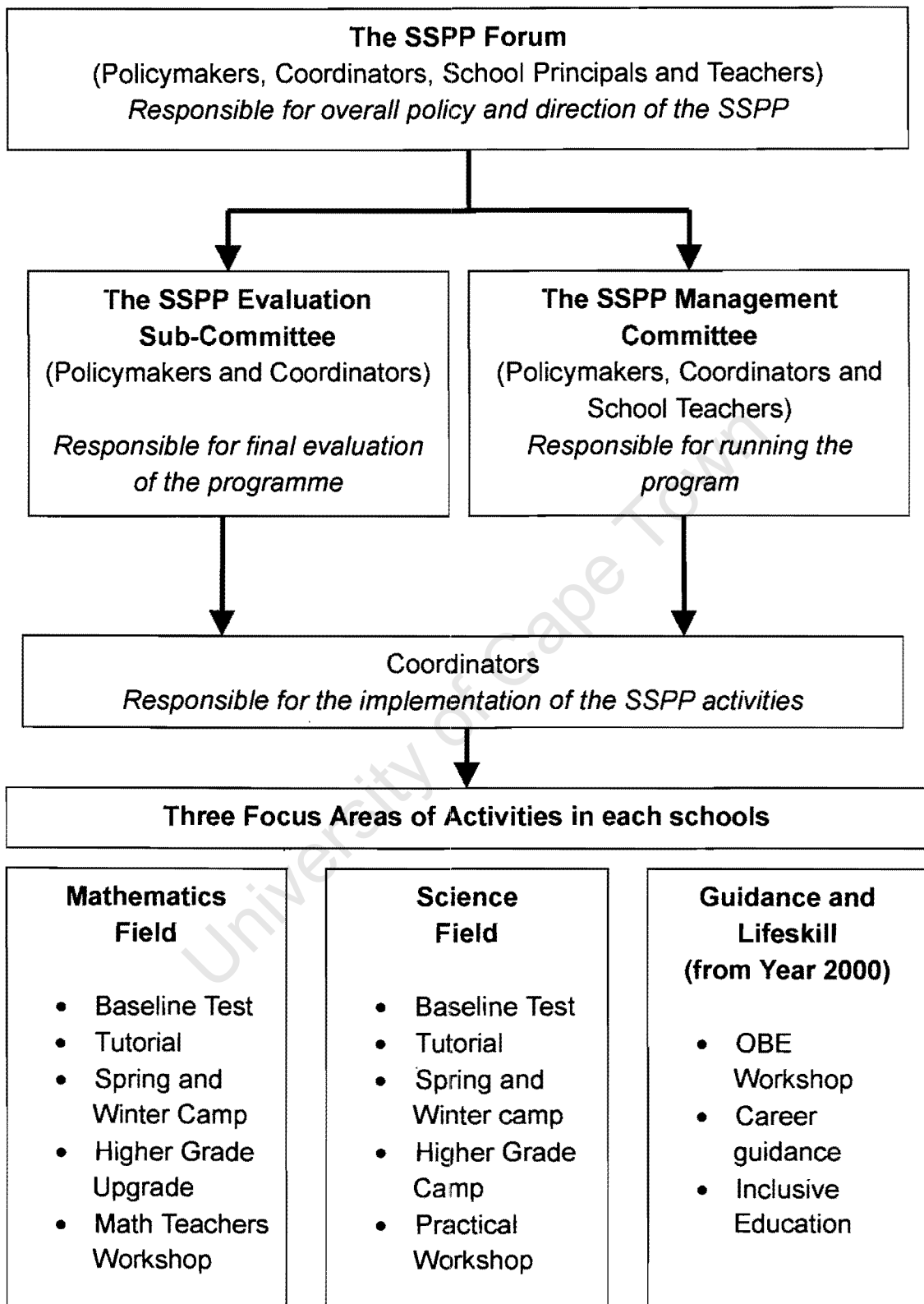
To answer this, I explicate the management system of the SSPP in order to understand the mechanisms which were in place to possibly resolve these two questions.

### **2.2.2. Management Systems**

This section explains the type of management groups in the SSPP and discusses their expected and actual functions. Figure 1 (see p. 14) reflects a vision of the management system of the SSPP. There were three tiers of management groups. The SSPP Forum was to guide the project in matters of policy and direction. The SSPP Management Committee had to take decisions regarding the day-to-day running of programme, and the SSPP Evaluation Sub-Committee was responsible for the evaluation of the programme and establishing research questions and procedures.

Among these three tiers of management groups, four tiers of stakeholder groups could be identified, namely, the Policymakers (the Western Cape Education Department staff and UCT staff including DoE staff), the Coordinators, (the Subject Coordinators and the General Manager), and the School Principals and Teachers. I will now briefly describe the members and characters of each committee, based on the SSPP official documents.

**Fig.1: The Management structures of the SSPP**



(Source: SDU, 1998: 13)

- The SSPP Forum

The Forum represented all major stakeholders and was supposed to be the main committee guiding the project in matters of policy and direction. The initial membership of the forum consisted of 20 people from different stakeholder groups. The first group of the Forum I called the 'policymakers'. This consisted of five representatives from the Western Cape Education Department (WCED), and seven UCT staff members (three from the Department of Education and two from the Centre for Higher Education Development). The second group was the 'coordinators', which consisted of four SDU staff members. Other than that, four 'school principals' and eight 'school teachers' (Mathematics and Science Teachers in each school) were also involved in the Forum (initially, school teachers were not involved in the Forum). The Forum, which met once a school term, was formally constituted as the highest decision-making group of the project. From the available numbers of the minutes, I found that six meetings of the Forum were held during the 18 month intervention period.

- The SSPP Management Committee

The Management committee had the task to negotiate the details of specific partnerships and activities, and to act as the organization which would mediate between policymakers and school teachers. However, it would appear from the only available minutes that the Committee met once only. Furthermore, despite their policy that "[they would] act as the organization which would mediate between policymakers and school teachers"(SDU, 1998a: 6), there was no one from the schools side according to these minutes (Six staff from UCT and two SDU staff attended). In general, despite its apparently key role, this committee seemed not to function as intended.

- The SSPP Evaluation Sub-Committee

The evaluation sub-committee comprised two staff members from the UCT and the four staff members from the SDU. While the Forum and Management Committee were responsible for policy decisions and day-to-day running, the Evaluation Sub-Committee were responsible for evaluation of the project and establishment of research questions. Committee meetings were held at least six times.

Above, I have described the management system of the SSPP. It can be seen that it was structurally possible for all the SSPP stakeholders to participate in the management of the SSPP. Unfortunately however, each committee did not actually work properly. The Management Committee seemed to be dysfunctional, meeting only once. The Forum at least was the place where all the stakeholders could share the ideas and accountability of the programme. The following two quotes indicate the roles of the Forum.

- *“...Forum as an important channel for communication between the different sectors of the partners.”* (SDU, Letter of Commitment: 1998b)
- *“An important guide to the success of a partnership is that all members work towards the success of the project, through agreeing on a common goal. In order to succeed it is important that there are checks and balances, as well as the opportunity for all partnership members to be involved in the Forum.”*

(Minutes of the SSPP Forum, 27/08/98: First Meeting)

From the above quotes, one could know that the SSPP Forum meetings were expected to ‘communicate to different sectors’ and ‘to agree on a common

goal'. Nevertheless, as already explained, most of the overall aims did not show consistency and preciseness. Furthermore, I found from the minutes of the committee that not all of the stakeholders were interested in the SSPP programme. Considering the six sets of minutes of the Forum meetings for the 18 months, I noticed that the SSPP policymakers were often absent from previous Forum meetings. The attendance record for each stakeholder group is detailed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: *Attendance at Forum Meetings from each stakeholder group.*

	1 27/08/98	2 26/11/98	3 15/04/99	4 10/06/99	5 05/08/99	6 28/10/99
<b>Policymakers (UCT &amp; WCED)</b>	8	6	2	2	1	2
Coordinators	3	3	3	3	3	3
Principals	3	2	1	2	2	1
Teachers	2	8	10	8	8	9
Total	16	19	16	15	14	15

While the total number of participants was almost the same through six meetings, the commitment of the policymakers significantly dropped. Most of the policymakers did not attend after the third Forum. Sometimes even the Forum Chair did not show up (the Chair was absent at the third and fifth Forum). I assume that school teachers were mainly mobilized to fill the gap in the policymakers absence, because teachers were not supposed be among the Forum members in the first proposal. As a result, in the second year (1999), the Forum became a meeting simply between coordinators and school staff. In general, the Forum ceased to act as a policy making body and the minutes indicate that most business was simply of a reporting nature. In practice therefore,

by default, the real policy was made at the level of the coordinators.

I therefore generated another key question about the SSPP, viz., *'How did each of the stakeholder groups share the policy of the project?'*

So far, I have explained about the SSPP aims and management systems, and raised the two questions. From the next section onwards I examine the activities of the SSPP programme.

### **2.2.3. Activities**

As was explained, the overall goals of the SSPP in the documents were mostly vague and some policymakers of the SSPP did not appear to be committed to the programme. Under such conditions, the SSPP activities were nonetheless implemented and evaluated. This section examines the contents of activities.

The SSPP activities were targeted at both students and teachers. The final report of the SSPP (2001) explained that the "project needed to show substantial results over a short period of time". Therefore, the project adopted a dual developmental strategy:

- *"A student Development Programme was implemented to impact directly on students, and therefore on student results, and;*
- *A teacher Development Programme was implemented to improve teachers' knowledge and skills, so that when the pilot ended, teachers would be empowered to continue aspects of the project."* (SDU, 2001c: 6)

All the SSPP interventions were planned according to these two

strategies. Table 2 (see p. 20) shows all of the student and teacher interventions of the SSPP during the 18 month period. The intervention period consisted of two parts, namely, preparation and research periods (during 1998) and main intervention periods (during 1999). I will now briefly explain the contents of each programme activity. All the information about activities was obtained from the SSPP official documents.

- **Student Development Activities**

Student development activities were basically focused on the areas of Mathematics and (Physical) Science. These programmes were roughly divided into five different and distinctive types described below. Generally speaking, the student interventions were more concentrated in the area of Mathematics rather than the field of Science. The periods and participants of the programme are available from Table 3 (see p. 21).

1. **The Baseline Tests**

Baseline Tests in Mathematics and Science were conducted at all schools for grades 10 to 12 students in August of 1998, 1999, and even 2000. The aim of this baseline test was described in the SSPP coordinators report to establish the competency level of each schools. Each grade wrote the same tests. Every year, more than 300 students participated in these tests. The testing originated from a request from the evaluation committee.

Table.2 The SSPP Intervention Programme (1998–1999)

1) Activities for students

		98/7	8	9	10	11	12	99/1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
for Students in 1998	Math.		Base line Test	↔ Spring School			Mat. Exam													
	PS																			
for Students in 1999	Math		Base line Test														Sept. Exam	↔		Mat. Exam
	PS			↔ Tutorial Programme										June Exam	↔	↔	Spring revision			
				↔ Tutorial Programme										↔	↔	Base line Test	↔			
				↔ Winter Camp										↔	↔	↔	↔		↔	Spring revision and Higher Grade Upgrade

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2) Activities for Teachers

		98/7	8	9	10	11	12	99/1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
for School Teachers	Math	↔ Needs Assessment																		
	PS	↔ Needs Assessment																		
		↔ Practical work																		
		↔ Teacher Development Programme (Irregularly held)																		
		↔ Curriculum Planning																		
		↔ Teacher Collaboration																		
		↔ Assessment support																		

**Table 3 : The SSPP Activities**

	From	To	Periods*	Subject	Target Groups	Schools	No. of Participants	Total	
Base Line Test '98	Aug. 98	1 day	1 day	Math.	G8-G12	A	54	258	
						B	50		
						C	39		
						D	115		
				P.S.	G8-G12	A	0	137	
						B	22		
						C	30		
						D	85		
Base Line Test '99	Aug. 99		1 day	Math.	G8-G12	A	57	196	
						B	29		
						C	31		
						D	79		
				P.S.	G8-G12	A	40	149	
						B	17		
						C	15		
						D	77		
Tutorial Programme	Jan. 99	May. 99	17 days	Math	G12	A	38	94	
						B	9		
						C	17		
						D	30		
	Mar. 99	Aug. 99	12 days	P.S.	G12	A	22	55	
						B	8		
						C	11		
						D	14		
June Exam	Jun. 99		1 day	Math.	G12	A	61	236	
						B	43		
						C	38		
						D	94		
September Exam	Sep. 99		1 day	Math.	G12	A	61	226	
						B	37		
						C	34		
						D	94		
Spring Camp '98	28/9/98	08/10/98	8 days	Math.	G12	B	24	101	
						C	19		
						D	58		
Winter Camp	Jun. 99	21/06/99	24/06/99	4 days	Math.	G12	A	10	40
							B	10	
							C	10	
							D	10	
				P.S.	G12	A	10	35	
						B	10		
						C	7		
						D	8		
Spring Camp '99	Sep. 99	27/09/99	01/10/99	5 days	Math.	G12	n/a	n/a	n/a
							P.S.	G12	B
Higher Grade Upgrade	Jun. 99	Sep. 99	4 days	Math	G12	A	9	14	
							D		5

\* Implementation data varies with each school  
n/a Not Available

## 2. The Tutorial Programme

From their size and duration, the tutorial programmes seem to be the most crucial part of the SSPP interventions. The aim of the programme was to improve the matric results of students at end of 1999. Therefore, the focus of the project was only grade 12 students. As the pilot school teachers had tight teaching schedules, all the lecturers of the tutorials were hired from outside the schools. However, the school teachers were always welcome to observe the class. 94 students were participants in 17 Mathematics sessions during a five month period , and 55 students were participants in 12 Science sessions during a six month period.

## 3. June and September Examinations (Mathematics only)

While baseline tests measured the basic competency of students, the June and September Exams were of a similar standard to the final matric exam. Although these two tests were originally planned to give an indication of the tutorial performance, these were used as mock exams in the end. Therefore, these two tests became a part of the activities rather than an outcome indicator. Each time, more than 200 Mathematics students sat on this examination, but there was no such kind of examination for Science students. No explanation for this was obtained.

## 4. The Holiday Programme (Spring and Winter Camp)

During the school holiday season, numbers of off-campus short period interventions took place. The objective of the project was to improve the matric performances of the grade 12 students. As in the case of the tutorial programme, all the lecturers were hired from outside. While many participants were allowed to participate in the spring camp in 1998, due to financial restrictions, during the following year only 10 students from each school were selected for the winter programme.

## 5. The Higher Grade Upgrade

Both the Mathematics and Science coordinators implemented HG students programme in the pilot schools because there were fewer schools offering Higher Grade. While Mathematics provided an extra period as part of the tutorial programme for the HG students, Science provided an intensive tutoring schedule during the spring camp. The reason of these policy difference was not mentioned in the documents.

- **Teacher Development Activities**

The approach to teacher development activities by the subject coordinators was quite independent each other. The Science programme seemed to be focused more on teacher development activities than was the Mathematics programme. In terms of these teacher development programmes, all of the documents use fairly descriptive language and have no quantitative data records such as frequencies of meetings and numbers of participants. Therefore, the following section is similarly mainly descriptive.

### 1. In-service Training (Mathematics)

Teacher Development Interventions in Mathematics took place on an irregular basis throughout the 18 months. A number of courses were specifically designed for project schools. The themes of workshops were for example “Matric Preparation”; “Common Exam Errors”; “Diagnostic Assessment” and so on. Neither contents of, nor minutes of workshops are available, so that exact frequencies are not known.

### 2. Practical Workshop (Science)

According to the science report, (SDU, 2001b), almost no practical experiments were being conducted at two of the pilot schools, and very few at the other two schools. This

was due both to a lack of equipment and to the teachers' lack of experience. Therefore, equipment was borrowed for this programme and a couple of practical workshops were held at pilot schools. Again no records of the workshop have been kept.

### 3. Curriculum Planning (Science)

The Science coordinator mentioned that there was no significant teaching planning by the science teachers for the forthcoming year of 1999. He then explained how the lack of forward planning affected class management and asked teachers to submit a draft of a teaching plan for 1999. By giving effective advice, the programme ensured that there was a year teaching programme for all the science classes in the pilot schools. The report says the process took nearly three months. No frequencies of the meetings was mentioned.

### 4. Teacher Collaboration (Science)

During the curriculum planning stage, the coordinator set dates for joint meetings at the beginning of the school year and called for all the science teachers to attend. The aim of the meetings was to let them get to know each other and to share more about their particular context and to discuss what they were doing in their teaching.

### 5. Assessment Support (Science)

The science coordinator worked with teachers to identify the skills they wished to assess. The new requirement of the WCED of formative and summative assessment motivated the teachers to learn how to assess students. On an individual school basis, the coordinator planned workshops and explained assessment criteria and mark schemes.

The above section dealt with the SSPP interventions during the 18 months period. Firstly, I found that all of the student interventions, except the baseline tests were planned and implemented for the grade 12 students' matric skills improvement. Therefore, I was not very clear about reason why they implemented the baseline tests, particularly as the results of these were not used to plan activities. Secondly, it can be seen that the approach for the activities of the SSPP differed between the Mathematics and Science coordinators. This was significant in the teacher development activities. As seen above, they planned and implemented different contents, and this raises the issue of whether or not the SSPP had an agreed programme design underpinning the whole SSPP activities. This concern was strengthened when I examined the Evaluation Report of the SSPP.

#### **2.2.4. Evaluation**

The focus of this analysis of the Evaluation Report analysis was to try to find the 'intended outcome' and the 'intended indicators' in the programme in order to understand how the evaluators (as part of the management team) interpreted the goal of the SSPP. In September 2001, the final Evaluation Report of the SSPP was issued by the evaluation sub-committee of the SSPP (SDU, 2001c). On the opening page, the report says that the SSPP was implemented under very severe time constraints as it was only of an 18 month duration. Therefore, the report has the following to say about the focus of the evaluation:

- *“what we are looking at in this project, and seeking to evaluate, is not a deep and long term intervention that has been able to reflect and retreat, but an intense and*

*concentrated focal area of performance in the schools.”*

(SDU, 2001c: 1-2)

As mentioned above, the report specified “student performance before and after intervention” as the main focus area, and did not say much about the interventions for teachers. Indeed, no visits to schools or interviews with educators were undertaken. Therefore, all of the evaluation topics were drawn from the area of student interventions which had quantitative data, viz. “Baseline Tests”, “Matric Scores”, and the “Relation between Matric Scores and Tutorial Attendance”. To start the analysis of the Evaluation, I describe the overall conclusion from the Evaluation Report.

- *“Having made this observation, what we can say is that the project achieved its goals of improving the schools’ results in Mathematics and Science...However, despite the success of the intervention, the intervention does not change the fundamentals [basic competencies] in the schools.”* (Author inserts) (SDU, 2001c: 11-12)

In the final Evaluation Report, a positive evaluation was made with regard to the relationship between tutorial attendance rates and matric performances. And the report concluded that the 18 months of the intervention had resulted in some improvement in terms of the matric results but that it was not connected to the improvement of ‘fundamentals’ [basic competencies]. The evaluator’s comment above implies two important points. Firstly, one of the major focuses of the SSPP programme evaluator was basic competency improvement, even though the subject coordinators did not use it to plan activities. Secondly, the evaluator concluded that the intervention succeeded anyway apart from this

basic competency. In the following section, I discuss these two points in more detail through an examination of the baseline test and the tutorial attendances which were the core of the Evaluation Report.

#### 2.2.4.1. Evaluation of the Baseline Test

The report picked up the changes in baseline test performance from 1998 to 1999 as a first analysis. The method was quite simply a comparison of the mean scores. In considering this analysis, the evaluator reported the following comments with regard to competency:

- *“Clearly as these results of '98 showed, Mathematics and Science competency levels in the schools were poor...[In 1999,] Mathematics competency levels improved for all grades, most clearly in grade 12. But here the increase was a matter of four percent only... The situation is slightly better in science but the students continue to produce failing results in these competency tests.”* (Author inserts) (SDU, 2001c: 5-7)

We can infer that one of the major focuses of the SSPP programme evaluator was the basic competency improvement. However, it is clear that the essential character of the SSPP student interventions was totally different from the essential character of the basic competencies. All of the student interventions, such as the Tutorial programme and the Holiday Camps were aimed at improving the matric performance of the grade 12 students. Therefore, the baseline tests, which linked with the basic competency of the student, were not appropriate to evaluate the outcome of the programme.

#### 2.2.4.2. Evaluation of the Relation between Matric Scores and Tutorial Attendance

Table A in Appendix 1, reproduces the table “Tutorial Attendance and Matric Performance” in the Evaluation Report (2001c: 9-11). This data implies a relationship between the tutorial attendance rate and the matric pass rate. The evaluator commented as follows:

- *“Those who paid the most attention to the intervention, who attended the programme most regularly were doing much better than those who weren’t. Having made this observation, what we can therefore say is that the project achieved its goals of improving the school’s results in Mathematics and Sciences.”* (SDU, 2001c:11)

However, this conclusion was drawn ignoring a statistical point of view. To check the statistical rationality of these conclusions, I attempted a correlation test between matric performance and the tutorial attendance ratio<sup>1</sup>. Figures 2 and 3 (see pp. 29-30) show the result of this analysis which describes the distribution of the attendance rate and the average matric score for Mathematics and Science. In Mathematics, Schools A (0.332), B (0.376), and C (0.393), show weak correlations between the matric result and the tutorial attendance rate. School D (0.162), which was assumed to be the best school in the project, showed a marginal relationship between the matric score and tutorial attendance rate (This is because the learners were adequate anyway!).

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<sup>1</sup> This research applied the Kendall's tau-b nonparametric correlation test. Possible values range from -1 (Absolute negative correlation) to +1 (Absolute positive correlation). The interpretation of correlation coefficient value is as follows. (see Iwanaga *et al.*, 1996: 122 for a discussion of interpretations of correlations)

1.0  $\geq$   $|r| \geq$  0.7 : Very strong correlation

0.5  $\geq$   $|r| \geq$  0.4 : Mediate correlation

0.3  $\geq$   $|r| \geq$  0.2 : Very weak correlation

0.7  $\geq$   $|r| \geq$  0.5 : Strong correlation

0.4  $\geq$   $|r| \geq$  0.3 : Weak correlation

0.2  $\geq$   $|r| \geq$  0.0 : No correlation

Figure 2: Correlation of Tutorial Attendance and Matric Average Score (Mathematics)

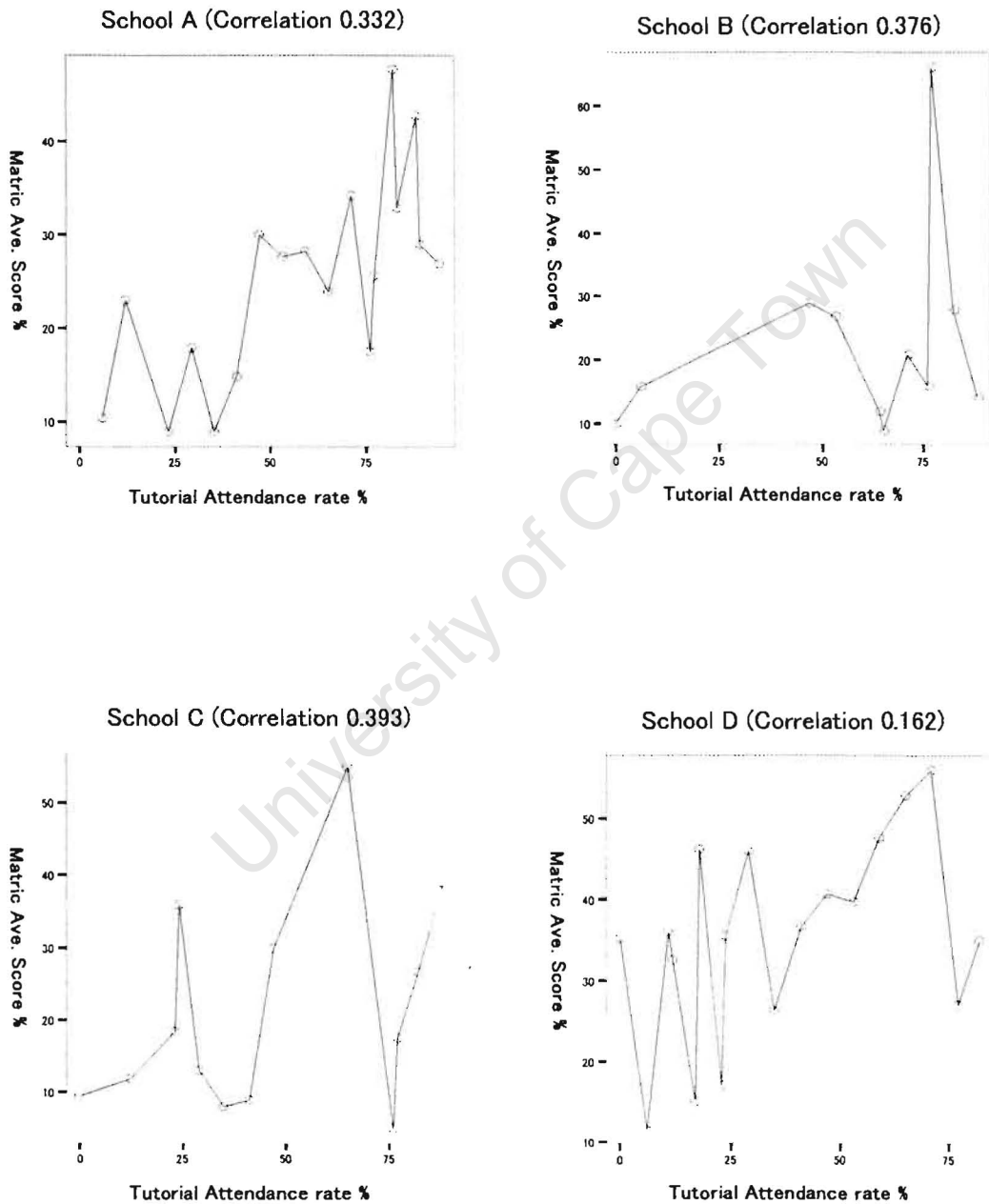
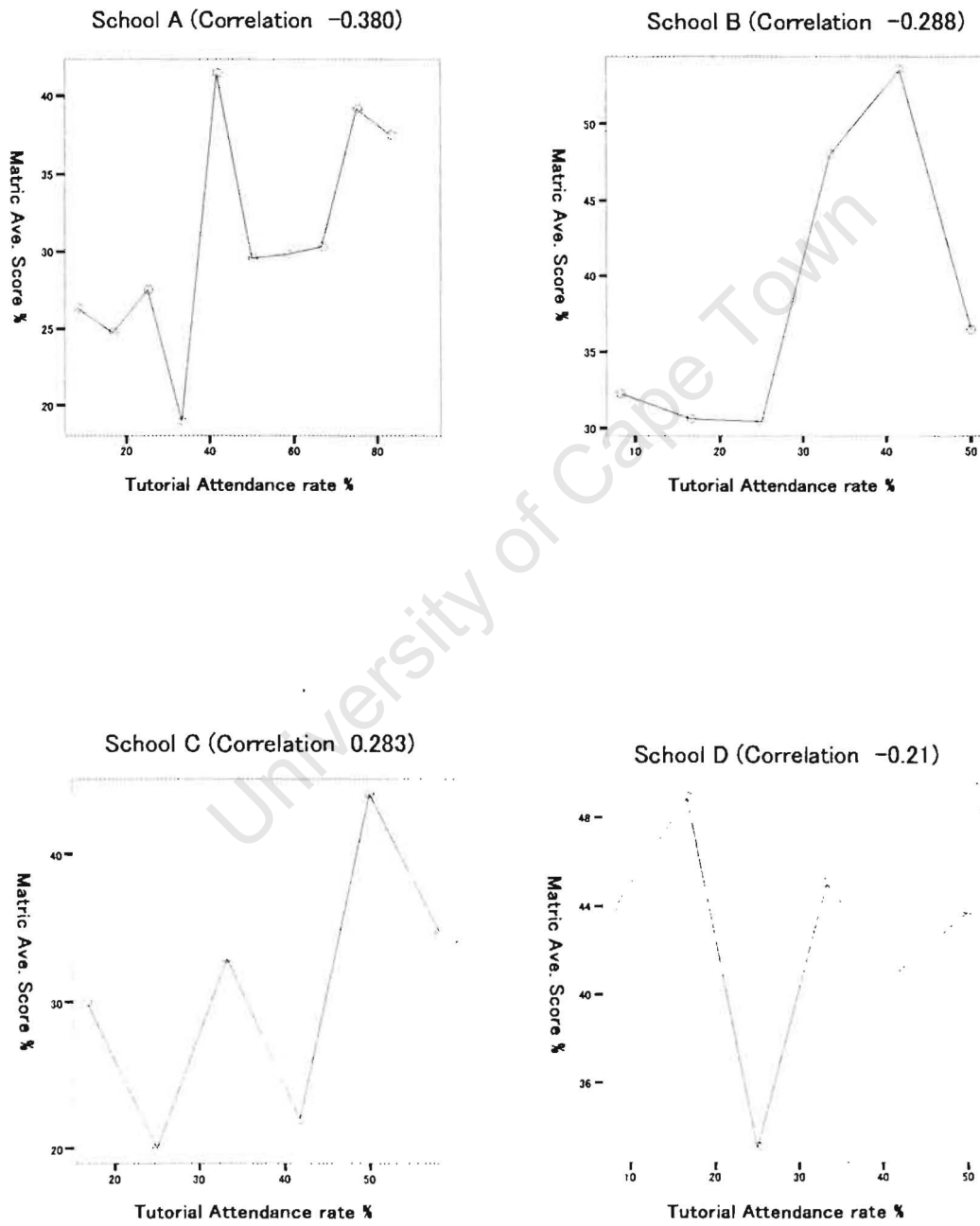


Figure 3: Correlation of Tutorial Attendance and Matric Average Score (Science)



Things became much clearer in the Science field (Figure 3). Except for School C (0.283) which had a very weak correlation, all the other schools (School A: -0.380, School B: -0.288, and School D: -0.210) had negative correlations.

From these observations, it is obviously impossible to conclude that the attendance on the intervention programmes made a significant impact on matric results in 1999. Therefore, this point in the Evaluation Report of the SSPP is not statistically confirmed.

To sum up the discussion about the activities and evaluation of the SSPP, one could mention that activities and outcome indicators of the SSPP were not accurately articulated and evaluated. From this it was possible to define a third question about the SSPP, viz., '*Was there any programme theory applied in the course of the SSPP intervention?*'. Once again, the programme theory means the coordination between goals, activities, and outcome indicators.

### **2.3. Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have discussed issues regarding the overall goals of the SSPP, the management system, the activities, and the SSPP evaluation. Through the discussion in this chapter, I raised three key research questions:

- *What is the overall goal of the SSPP?*  
(Derived from the overall goal analysis)
- *Was there any programme theory applied in the course of the SSPP intervention?*  
(Derived from the Activities and the Evaluation Analysis)

- *How did each of the stakeholder groups share the policy of the programme?*

(Derived from the Management System Analysis)

These three questions illuminate a crucial aspect of the evaluation of the outcomes of the SSPP. They clearly demonstrate that the credibility and quality of a programme evaluation is dependent on how the programme was initially planned and designed; and whether the programme was driven by theory bases, rather than on how outcome data was analysed. When I first learnt about the SSPP, my interest was to evaluate the outcome of the SSPP by using statistical methods. However, I realized at this point that what the SSPP needed to be evaluated on, was not the outcome of the programme but on the planning and design of the programme theory. Thus I became much more interested in describing the conditions and limitations of the programme theory and its subsequent impact on a credible evaluation, the so-called "Evaluability Assessment" (EA). EA thus now became the critical focus of my research.

In the course of the next chapter, I will explain the basic concepts of programme evaluation and the theoretical background of Evaluability Assessment, which forms the main theoretical focus of my research.

## **Chapter 3 Theoretical Framework**

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Through the preliminary research, I noted that the credibility and quality of programme evaluation heavily depends on the initial planning and designing of projects, so-called 'Programme Theory'. I also perceived that such theory might not exist in the case of the SSPP programme. My underlying question then asks whether my perception is true or not, and if true, why it happened. In principle, programmes should be driven by theoretical backgrounds, and if not, the programme evaluator should point this out through the final evaluation. Neither case appeared to happen with the SSPP.

Bearing these questions in mind, in the following section I firstly study what the basic concepts and general programme evaluation are. Secondly, I examine some evaluation programmes to fit my research question into a sound evaluation framework. Thirdly, I explain the concept of Evaluability Assessment (EA). As a core framework of this study, I try to clarify the programme goals of the SSPP from the stakeholders point of view, and to analyse the programme theory of the SSPP.

### **3.1. Basic Concepts in Programme Evaluation**

Evaluation, the process of setting goals, collecting data, and making better decisions, is nothing special in our daily life. We evaluate every day. We do, however, have to evaluate systematically and deliberately because of the volume of input which is transacted on a daily basis, some of which might not be relevant. In terms of knowledge, educators have to make decisions about the impact of

curricula on students' academic futures and about the effectiveness of curricula and/or programmes, on the students' progress. Under such conditions, research relating to evaluation has become one of the most prolific domains not only in education but also in applied social study.

Before starting the discussion of EA, I explain the general background of evaluation. Firstly, I introduce the general definition and function of programme evaluation. Secondly, I describe four kinds of general evaluation studies. And finally, I explain "black box evaluation" (Voorhis and Brown, 1996: 2), which is the one of the common errors in evaluation studies.

### 3.1.1. The Definition of Programme Evaluation

Rossi and Freeman, who are amongst the pioneers of programme evaluation, define programme evaluation as follows:

- *"Evaluation research is the systematic application of social research procedures for assessing the conceptualisation, design, implementation and utility of social intervention programmes."* (Rossi and Freeman, 1999: 5)

While this comment identifies aspects of programmes that are the objects of evaluation research, these aspects will be classified later in the chapter. What I would like to emphasise in this quotation is that evaluation research must be "systematic". To obtain credible evaluations, Mouton (1999) has the following to say:

- *“One should keep in mind that for programme evaluation to become scientifically acceptable, it had to employ objective and systematic research methods and procedures.”* (Mouton, 1999: 3)

It is crucial for all evaluators to know how to implement systematic evaluations. I would like to move to a discussion of the reason why evaluation research is undertaken, before reviewing the classifications of different types of evaluation research.

### **3.1.2. Purpose and Function – Formative and Summative Evaluation**

Scriven (1980) was the first person to explain the general purposes of project evaluation, dividing these into two major categories. His comment is as follows.

- *“Evaluation may be done to provide feedback to people who are trying to improve something; or to provide information for decision-makers who are wondering whether to fund; terminate or purchase something.”* (Scriven, 1980:7)

Scriven (1980: 7) identified two purposes for evaluation, Firstly, he notes that “evaluation can strengthen the plans for services and their delivery in order to improve the outcomes of programmes or to increase the efficiency of programmes (Formative Evaluations)”. Secondly, on the other hand, evaluations can “help to decide whether a programme should be started, continued, or chosen from other alternatives (Summative Evaluations)” (Scriven quoted in Posavac and Carey, 1997: 12).

A detailed definition of formative and summative evaluation is given in Smith (1989). He mentions the following in regard to evaluation:

- *“There are several types of programme evaluation. One type – sometimes referred to as formative – is conducted while a programme is ongoing; its purpose is for programme improvement. A second type – sometimes referred to as summative – is conducted after a programme is stable and expected to have achieved intended effects; its purpose is to gather data on the results of a programme.”*

(Smith, 1989; 13)

While programme developers require formative evaluation during the implementation stage, summative evaluation would be required when the programme has almost reached its end. Mouton (1999) concludes with regard to both types of evaluation that :

- *“ultimately every field will benefit if a correct balance between formative and summative evaluation is achieved.”*

(Mouton, 1999: 14)

Having examined the two types of evaluation, formative and summative, we will now move on to discuss the various classifications of different types of evaluation research.

### **3.1.3. General Types of Evaluation Studies**

Many field researchers distinguish between and classify different types

of Evaluation (Rossi and Freeman, 1999; Posavac and Carey, 1997; Mouton, 1999). Their classifications do not however differ much from each other. The categories below are quoted from Posavac and Carey (1997: 7-10) and Mouton (1999: 6-7) who have classified programme evaluation studies into four types as follows:

#### 3.1.3.1. The Evaluation of Need

An evaluation of need seeks to identify and measure the level of unmet needs within an organization or community. Posavac and Carey (1997: 7) explain the importance of assessing need as a precondition to effective programme planning. The evaluation questions for this category are as follows:

- *What are the particular unmet needs of a target population with respect to the type of programme being considered?*
- *What forms of service are likely to be attractive to a particular group?*

#### 3.1.3.2. The Evaluation of Process

Once a programme has been developed and begun, evaluators turn to the task of documenting the extent to which implementation has taken place, the nature of the people being served, and the degree to which the programme operates as expected. The expected questions in this evaluation are as follows:

- *Is the programme being implemented as designed?*
- *Are services delivered as originally intended?*

#### 3.1.3.3. The Evaluation of Outcome

Once it has been established that a programme has been implemented according to plan, the attention of evaluation shifts to the outcomes of

programmes, such as attudinal changes, better services, and so on. Evaluation of outcome is probably the most frequently chosen evaluation style. It aims to establish the relative success or not of an intervention. The expected questions in this evaluation are as follows:

- *Are programme recipients performing well?*
- *Is the programme leading to an improvement in production or achievement?*

#### 3.1.3.4. The Evaluation of Efficiency

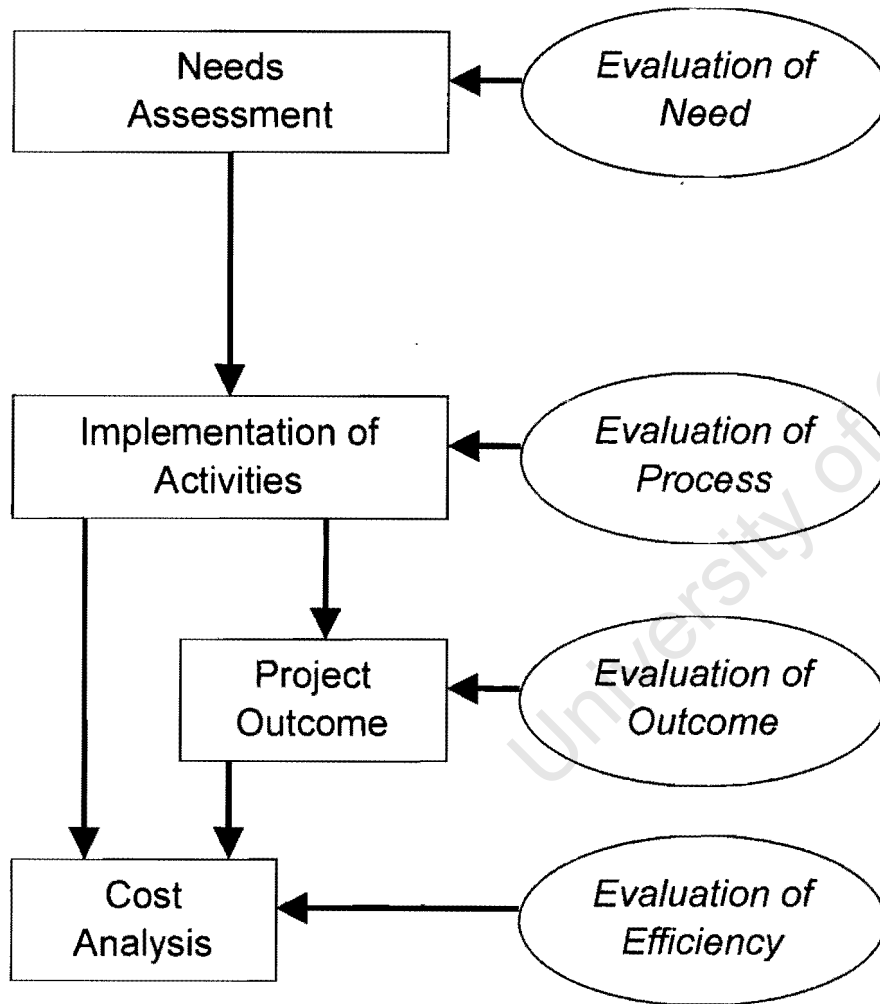
Even when evaluators can show that a programme has helped participants, they must also deal with the question of costs. This evaluation measures the cost of an intervention against the benefits that accrued to the target population. The expected questions in this evaluation are as follows:

- *Are funds spent for the intended purpose?*
- *Does the programme achieve its success at a reasonable cost?*

Figure 4 (over) visually summarizes the types of programme evaluation and evaluation questions which I have mentioned in Chapter 2. From the documents, I understood that the SSPP Evaluation Report by the evaluation committee is a kind of outcome evaluation. The report tried to establish the relative success of an intervention. However, the report did not pay attention to the theoretical framework of the programme. The next section deals with such kinds of problematic evaluations.

Fig.4: General Models of Programme and Evaluation

**General Type of Programme and Evaluations**



**Evaluation Questions**

- *What are the particular needs of a target population?*
- *What forms of service are likely to be attractive?*
  
- *Is the programme being implemented as designed?*
- *Are services delivered as originally intended?*
  
- *Are program recipients performing well?*
- *Is the programme leading to an improvement in production or achievement?*
  
- *Are funds spent for the intended purpose?*
- *Does the programme achieve its success at a reasonable cost?*

### 3.1.4. “Black Box Evaluation”- Evaluation without a Logical Sequence

With regard to the four kinds of general evaluation study, Posavac and Carey (1997) also draw our attention to the fact that there is a logical sequence. They mention that:

- *“Without measuring need, planning cannot be rational; without effective implementation, good outcomes cannot be expected; and without achieving good outcomes, there is no reason to worry about efficiency.”*

(Posavac and Carey, 1997:10)

Voorhis and Brown (1996) particularly warn about the evaluation of outcomes which lacks the evaluation of needs and implementation. They describe this as follows:

- *“... some of the evaluated programmes had been too difficult, if not impossible to evaluate – but they are evaluated anyway. In fact, many of the evaluations described poorly designed programmes which evidenced unclear goals and no clear understanding of what activities would produce the desired results.”*

(Voorhis and Brown, 1996: 2)

Therefore, without evaluating the coordination between goals, activities, and outcome indicators, (programme theory), one cannot get a reliable result from the outcome evaluation. Such outcome evaluation is called “Black Box Evaluation”, which refers to those evaluations that examine the outcome of a programme without examining its internal operation (Voorhis and Brown, 1996). No matter whether the programme succeeded or not, the evaluator of the black

box evaluation would not know why it really happened, and would not know what to suggest for the programme.

In Chapter 2, I explained what I found difficult to fully comprehend about the SSPP programme, i.e. inconsistent programme goals, seeming apathy of policymakers, and an absence of programme theory. All these uncertainties regarding the SSPP emanate from the programme planning and designing stages rather than from the evaluation stages. Nevertheless, the outcomes of the SSPP were evaluated in the final report, using limited numerical data, such as the baseline tests scores and tutorial attendance ratios. Having considered the basic concepts of the programme evaluation which I have described above, It is not unreasonable to conclude that the evaluation of the SSPP falls into the category of Black Box Evaluation. The final Evaluation Report of the SSPP did not clearly mention what theory the project had been based on and how the activities were articulated with the project goal. This leads us to consider how one needs to shape focus questions and the issue of research design which I will cover in the following section.

### **3.1.5. Shaping the Research Design**

Following the types of programme evaluation and evaluation questions in figure 4 (see p. 39), I searched for a research design that had the most potential to correspond with these research questions. As mentioned in Chapter 2, I raised the following three questions for this research.

- *What is the overall goal of the SSPP?*
- *Was there any programme theory applied in the course of the SSPP*

*intervention?*

- *How did each of the stakeholder groups share the policy of the project?*

Firstly, since my major concern is the programme planning and designing stage of the SSPP, the evaluation of outcome and efficiency are ruled out. Secondly, I examined the possibility of evaluation of need. But those evaluation questions do not supply answers to my focus questions. The evaluation of need answers “particular needs” and the “attractive service of the target population” (Posavac and Carey, 1997: 7). What I wanted to know is whether the project theory of the SSPP was well-prepared or existed, rather than whether the SSPP goal fits into the needs of schools.

The evaluation of process seemingly comes under my focus area. However, these evaluation questions ask whether “the programme was implemented as designed” or “service was delivered as originally intended” (Posavac and Carey, 1997: 8). So it is clear that the evaluation of process is based on the precondition that the project has some sort of programme design or intended theory. My focus questions are whether the SSPP has any programme design or theory, and if any, how it was prepared and shared with the SSPP stakeholders. Therefore, the evaluation of process also does not perfectly fit into my focus questions.

In the process of working through the issues outlined in the above discussion, I realized that the general model of evaluation does not precisely correspond to the “evaluation of the programme theory”. The evaluation of the programme theory is a type of cornerstone of the general evaluation model between the evaluation of need and the evaluation process.

The next section explains the general concept of “Evaluability

Assessment" (EA) which attempts to fill the gap between the evaluation of need and the evaluation of process in the general evaluation model. It consists of EA's history, definition, outcomes and limitations.

## **3.2. Concepts of Evaluability Assessment**

### **3.2.1. Brief History and Definition of EA**

EA originated in the early 1970's as a way to improve programme evaluation. From the end of the 60's, evaluation research emerged as a growth industry (Rutman, 1980). A large technical and scholarly discipline appeared, and every federal agency in the United States was mandated to conduct or assist in evaluations of new or existing initiatives (General Accounting Office, 1977).

On the other hand, evaluators often found programmes with grandiose goals and few concrete objectives in many of the programmes. As a result, most of the programme evaluations became "rhetoric" and as muddled and vague as the programmes themselves. Joseph Wholey (1979), who was the originator of EA, decided to bring programme "rhetoric" and "reality" together in order to realise some form of credible evaluation. He was deputy assistant secretary for evaluation in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services at that time. He made various efforts through the evaluation of department programme which are enumerated below. They were an:

- *"Effort to reduce barriers between evaluators and evaluation users;*
- *Effort to avoid the 'goal trap' which comes from the gap between rhetorical and actual programme objectives; and*

- *Effort to reduce probability to collect data which is unarticulated with implementations.”* (Wholey, 1979)

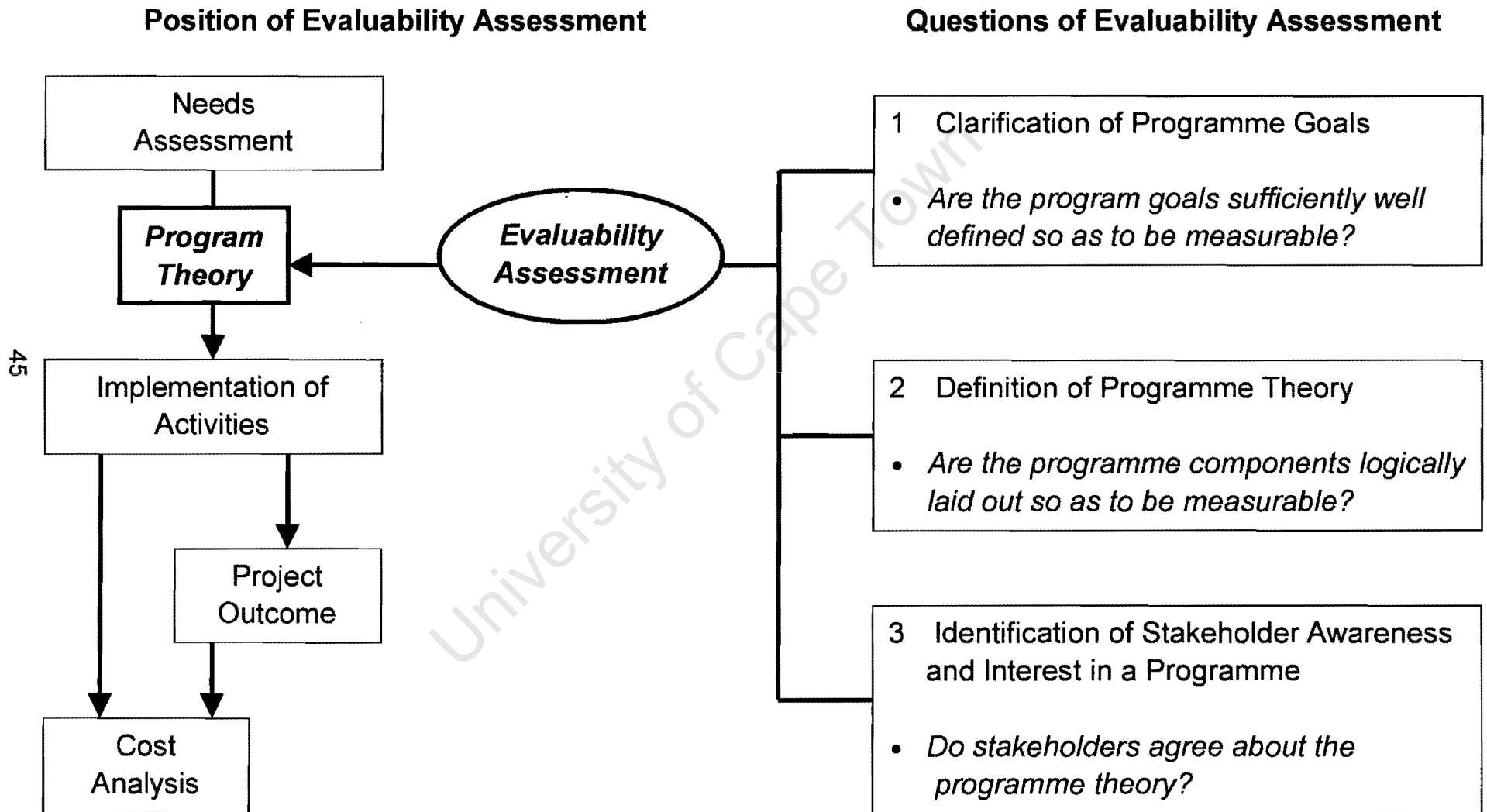
These efforts became the original idea of the Evaluability Assessment. As I discussed in the preceding section, the four general types of programme evaluation models do not account for programme theory. Such evaluations could not succeed as a result of theory failure and/or implementation failure. Since then, EA was developed as a form of programme assessment to focus on the link between the programme and evaluation, and to give advice to the stakeholders regarding what programme should be (or should have been) done for credible evaluation. Figure 5 (over) visually shows the position of EA in the programme model. It is located between the evaluation of needs and process. Years later, the definition of EA was stipulated by Wholey, when he states that the purpose of EA is:

- *...[T]o clarify programme goals from the point of view of policy makers, managers, staff, and key interest groups” and “to analyse a programme’s structure to determine the extent to which it was suitable for effectiveness evaluation.”*

(Wholey, 1983: 35; see also Wholey *et al*, 1989: 7)

In the next section, I explain the outcomes and usage of EA and discuss its preconditions and responses to it.

Fig.5: Evaluability Assessment Model



### 3.2.2. Outcomes and Usage of EA

Literally explained, the main outcome of EA is to establish evaluability - whether the programme can successfully be evaluated or not. Midge Smith, who has generalized the modern theory of EA and characterised it as one of the programme evaluation styles, mentions the following preconditions for credible evaluation of programmes.

1. *“Clearly identified goals and effects;*
2. *A logical set of well-defined activities or components (programme theory);*
3. *Criteria and procedures for measuring achievement of intended goals; and*
4. *Necessary and sufficient resources to implement the activities”*

(Smith, 1989: 12-13)

The evaluation questions of EA can fully respond to the conditions outlined in numbers one through three and part of number four. (Evaluation of process fully covers the question about resources of the programmes.) In addition, EA can also respond to the issue of whether these conditions are shared by the programme stakeholders (see Figure 5). Next, I explain the three major outcomes of EA.

#### 3.2.2.1. Clarification of Programme Goals

Wholey (1979) mentions that one of the common failures of a particular programme comes from what he terms the “goal trap”, which term characterises the gap between rhetorical and actual programme objectives. Mouton (1999) explains very clearly what it means as follows:

- *“Most social programmes, at least initially, contain very general statements of goals to be pursued... such general ‘slogan-link’ goals as ‘empowering teachers’ (and so on). These statements are only useful to the extent that they express certain values and ideals, but are much too general and ambiguous to be helpful in designing social programmes. Programme goals need to be formulated in as concrete and observable a manner as possible...A goal such as ‘improving quality of schooling’ needs to be ‘translated’ into measurable outcomes such as: increased student pass rates, and so on. Clear and unambiguous programme goals and objectives are essential.”*

(Mouton, 1999: 11)

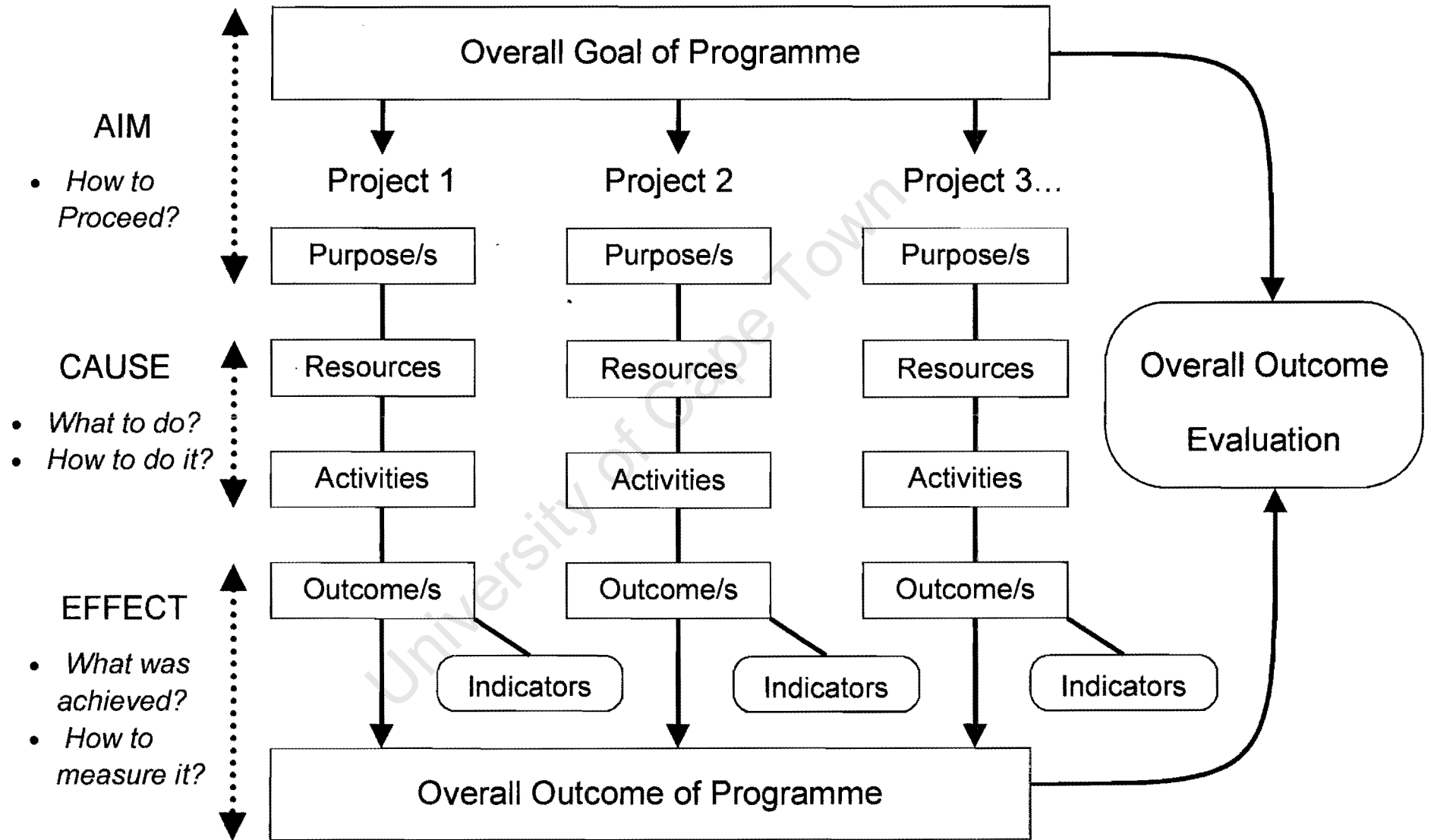
Through the document analysis and interviews with the stakeholders, EA will clarify whether the programme has concrete and observable goals, and can then prioritise the overall goals of the project in order to examine the programme theory of the SSPP. The evaluation question in this field is as follows:

- *Are the programme goals sufficiently well defined so as to be measurable?*

#### 3.2.2.2. Definition of Programme Theory

Figure 6 (over) illustrates the logical model of programme theory which was adapted from Smith (1989: 55). The boxes represent expected events and the arrows represent causal assumptions.

Fig.6: Logic model of programme theory



As seen on the illustration, a programme theory model contains the essential components of the programme connected in a causal sequence to overall outcomes. The key factors of programme theory consist of three components, firstly, “the direction of programme” (overall goal of programme and project purpose in Fig.6); secondly, “functional aspects” (resources and activities); and finally, “indications of types of evidence” (project & programme outcome indicators). When these components are well defined and linearly placed, an “underlying logic” (causal and effect relationships) to the programme theory will be gained. (Section 3.2.4 presents some more descriptions of programme theory).

Bickman (1987) and Scheirer (1987) describe how a good programme is supposed to work systematically, delineating cause and effect relationships. Therefore, the link between programme theory and evaluability can be stated quite simply. Poorly planned and designed programmes (poor theory programmes in other words) cannot and should not be evaluated. However, many programmes do not pay any attention to their own theory. Regarding the unconsciousness of programme theory among stakeholders, Smith (1989) cautions as follows:

- *“Sometimes the expectations (of programme theory) are clear but more often than not, they are implicit and/or incomplete and/or unconscious to programme staff. Sometimes the lack of clarity is due to insufficient knowledge about an area.”*

(Smith, 1989: 16)

To define the programme theory of the SSPP using an EA framework, firstly, I extract the programme components and check their definitions. Then

secondly, I examine the coherence of each component as based on interview and document resources. The evaluation question in this field is as follows:

- *Are the programme components, such as goals, activities, outcomes, and indicators, clearly defined and logically laid out so as to be measurable?*

### 3.2.2.3. Identification of Stakeholder Awareness and Interest in Programme

Identification of stakeholders awareness and interests means their perceptions of what a programme is meant to accomplish, their concerns/worries about a programme's progress toward goal attainment, their perceptions of the adequacy of the programme resources, and their interests in or needs for evaluative information on a programme. Voorhis and Brown (1996) state :

- *"If staff, policy makers, and programme funders, have different ideas concerning the programme's mission and its criteria for success and want different information from an outcome evaluation, the success of programme evaluation will be compromised, as will the evaluator's ability to carry out the evaluation."*

(Voorhis and Brown, 1996: 7)

Programme theory and components need not only to be clarified but also to be shared with all of the stakeholders. Interviews with the stakeholders will bring out the paradigm of programme concepts among stakeholders. The evaluation question in this field is as follows:

- *Do stakeholders agree about the programme theory? If not, what areas of disagreement were detected and what is the likely outcome of these disagreements?*

The three areas which are mentioned above are the main outcomes of the EA. The next discussion is the timing of the EA implementation in the programme. While the outcome of an EA is widely agreed upon and accepted, the usage of EA as a means of programme evaluation still seems to be debateable in the sense of whether or not it is best used in a formative or summative sense. This is discussed below.

### 3.2.3. EA as On-going Evaluation and Ex-post Evaluation

I have clarified the expected outcomes of the EA in the former section. This section discusses whether EA should be used as on-going evaluation or ex-post evaluation. To start the discussion, I introduce what Bowden (1988) states concerning on-going and ex-post evaluations, as follows:

- *“Evaluation of a programme either takes place while the programme is being implemented (so-called ‘on-going evaluation’) or after the programme is completed (‘ex-post evaluation’).”* (Bowden,1988: 86)

The contrast between on-going evaluation and ex-post evaluation can be likened to a formative evaluation and summative evaluation. In other words, we often use on-going evaluations to improve the outcomes of programmes while ex-post evaluation is for helping to decide whether a programme should have been implemented or not. For example, evaluation of outcome and efficiency is a typical example of summative evaluation. On the other hand, evaluation of need is used as the formative evaluation for most programmes.

Originally, EA was developed as formative and on-going evaluation for

securing an upcoming credible outcome evaluation. EA has historically been recognized as “pre-assessment of evaluability” (Horst *et al.*, 1974) and a “highly desirable pre-step to outcome evaluations” (Wholey, 1979). If EA is truly only credible and valuable as a pre-step of outcome evaluation, EA could not be usefully applied to any programmes which had already been finished and evaluated.

On the other hand, at the end of the 1980s, Smith (1989) introduced the other possible usage of EA, namely to be used as a summative and ex-post form of evaluation. He mentioned that the process of EA is useful in identifying the programme theory pertaining to summative evaluations as well as to formative evaluations. The three outcomes I mentioned in the first part of this chapter are all based on this view of summative evaluation. Mentioning these outcomes, Smith (1989) modifies Wholey’s view about the usage of EA as follows:

- *“...however, the process (of EA) has grown into an evaluation tool in its own right - as a way for determining stakeholder awareness and interest in a programme and for determining what needs to be done in a programme to make it likely to produce results.”* (Smith, 1989: 3)
- *“EA could be a powerful tool for programme improvement both before and after implementation.”* (Smith, 1989: 14)

The SSPP is a typical case of a programme that did not have clear programme theory. The SSPP seems to have been implemented without having clarified its goals, activities, and outcomes, and yet nonetheless finalized with an evaluation. It goes without saying that no formative and on-going evaluation of the SSPP is possible at this stage. Although the programme is over, we should

not dismiss the SSPP just as a finished programme. Experiences gained by the SSPP are crucially important for the further improvement of programme designing and planning. Such questions as “Why wasn’t the overall goal of the programme simply defined?”; “What caused the programme to ignore theory-based implementation?”; and “For what reasons weren’t the programme components shared with the stakeholders?” would aid in pointers as to improving any subsequent programme.

During the course of covering the above discussion, I came to realise that formative and summative evaluations are somehow two sides of the same coin. Formative evaluation of a programme will be used on its own, summative evaluation at the final stage, and all the summative evaluations are going to be formative evaluations for upcoming programme planning. Therefore, whether the evaluation should be used as on-going or ex-post evaluation depends on the evaluator’s objectives. Payne (1994) clearly states this points as follows:

- *“The summative-formative distinction among kinds of evaluation reflects differences, for the most part, in intent rather than different methodologies or techniques. This suggestion has been made that formative and summative evaluation differ only with respect to the time when they are undertaken in the service of programme development.”* (Payne,1994: 8)

In this section, I mainly explained the rationale of EA as summative and ex-post evaluation. I argued that EA, as a summative ex-post evaluation, could illuminate what had happened in the programme planning stage of the SSPP more clearly than any other evaluation method. Simultaneously, however, I need to take into account the limitations of EA. The next section deals with the major

and minor concerns relating to EA.

### 3.2.4. Possible Limitations of Evaluability Assessment

EA is particularly useful as a necessary pre-step of outcome evaluation so that the result of the outcome evaluation will be much stronger and more reliable. However, while only the positive sides of EA tend to be emphasised and praised, we should also recognize that there are weaknesses to EA.

The main concept of EA is the evaluation of programme theory. EA can respond to the issue of whether the programme is evaluable or not through the analysis of programme theory. As we have seen in Fig.6 (see p. 48), programme theory is strongly based on cause-effect relationships. The linkage among "Goals" as aim (How to proceed?), "Activities" as cause (What to do?, and How to do it?), and "Outcomes" as effect (What was achieved?, and How to measure it?) is linear and straight forward. For example, Wholey (1983) explains EA as a *"result-oriented management"*, and Scheirer (1987) describes EA as a *"cause-effect relationship"*. This cause-effect framework is the main characteristic of programme theory and it surely helps programmes to prevent equivocal activity implementation and ambiguous outcome evaluations.

However, we should keep in mind that cause-effect relations sometimes focus on only one side of various aspects and neglects the other dynamic aspects of the programme. As a result of the cause-effect framework, programme theory requires clear outcome indicators as well as clear goals. Therefore, we tend to focus only on quantitative and numeric outcomes, such as test scores and attendance ratios. Consequently, we tend to ignore the more qualitative and descriptive outcomes, such as the motivation levels and commitment of

participants. Ndhlovu *et al.* (1999) explain in detail regarding these different approaches to school study as “School Effectiveness” (quantitative, goal-oriented) and “School Improvement” (qualitative, process-oriented). The following statement is quoted from their work “Creating People-Centred Schools”:

- *“A school effectiveness approach which generally uses quantitative methods, for instance the ‘counting’ of resources or qualifications, to develop criteria that characterize schools defined as effective because of their good results.”*
- *“A school improvement approach which is more action and development oriented. It uses more qualitative research, such as interviews and classroom observation, to explore the processes of teaching, learning, and change.”*

(Ndhlovu *et al.*, 1999: 74)

What is important to note here is that both approaches merely prioritise different features. The statements of Ndhlovu *et al.* make sense and it is very important to examine both responses. However, it is difficult to set up impartial and objective indicators for qualitative outcomes. Interviews and observations are relatively subjective compared with a numeric outcome indicator. For this reason, sometimes programme theory does not fully respect or give sufficient importance to the “improvement” side of programmes. In the case of the SSPP, the final Evaluation Reports of the SSPP mainly focused on quantitative data as the outcomes.

Patton (1980) also mentions “improvements” as covering invisible aspects. He states as follows:

- *“Improvement involves a judgement about whether or not something is better,*

*whereas impact (effectiveness) involves the more limited question of whether or not something is different... Impacts can be observed, improvements cannot."*

(Patton, 1980: 70)

The adoption of a cause-effect relation model surely helps to define clear outcome evaluation. However, this is not a sufficient reason to justify evaluation that might ignore the qualitative impacts. For most educational programmes, qualitative impacts are as crucial a part of outcomes as quantitative outcomes. Sometimes qualitative impacts are much greater than quantitative impacts in the education field. The SSPP was no exception and had many teacher development interventions. Without focusing on these qualitative aspects, no EA is persuasively conclusive.

Therefore, this EA research for the SSPP tries to concern itself with the qualitative aspects of programme as fully as possible, and includes this in the programme theory. Through the data analysis, I always keep in mind that qualitative achievements need to be fully considered even though they sometimes do not have objective indicators.

### **3.3. Conclusion**

This chapter explains why I chose EA as the framework of this study as well as explaining why the general evaluation model does not perfectly fit into the SSPP. Through this discussion, I emphasize how EA impacts crucially on the programme planning stages. As an ideal situation, Wholey (1979) argues that EA should be performed by all the programmes sequentially before evaluation, so that future outcomes are credible and reliable enough to implement sound

evaluations. In the case of the SSPP, unfortunately, EA was not performed before the programme was implemented and not undertaken even after implementation. In the course of my research however, I realized that the areas I focused on and the questions I raised about the SSPP perfectly matched with the purposes and outcomes of EA. Again, I describe the three research questions as follows:

- *What was the overall goal of the SSPP?*
- *Was there any programme theory applied in the course of the SSPP intervention?*
- *How did each stakeholder groups share the policy of the project?*

Applying EA to the SSPP as a summative and ex-post evaluation, this research aims to clarify the status of overall goals, programme theory, and policy sharing status among stakeholders. EA for the SSPP can manifest whether the programme was successfully implemented or not; why the outcome evaluation of the SSPP was not rational; and most importantly, whether the SSPP was originally planned and designed as an evaluable programme. Through this process, aspects relating to the 'improvement' of the SSPP always need to be considered and included in the research framework as much as possible.

I am convinced that this entire research process can illustrate the problematic implementation of educational intervention programmes which do not have theoretical backgrounds, and teach us many valuable lessons which will enable improved programme planning and designing in the future. The SSPP is thus a case study for this topic.

In the next chapter, I explain the methodology which I employed to implement an EA for the SSPP.

## **Chapter 4 Methodology**

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The purpose of this study was to examine, through a case study of the SSPP, the implementation of an educational intervention programme which has been under-theorized. To demonstrate the issue, I used the Evaluability Assessment technique as the key framework. Through the process of EA, the status of the 'Overall Goals', 'Programme Theory', and 'Policy Sharing Status' among the SSPP stakeholders would be clarified.

In the following section, I firstly explain the main three steps of EA which I employed in the main methodology for this research. Secondly, I mention the related issues for this research, i.e., Trustworthiness, Limitations, and Ethical Conditions of this research.

### **4.1. Implementation Steps of EA for the SSPP**

The implementation steps involved in EA are the same for any other evaluation study - data is gathered, comparisons are made, and conclusions are drawn. The methodology of this particular EA research is based on the work of Smith (1989), which consists of the three steps, viz., 'Analysing Programme Documents', 'Interviewing Stakeholders', and 'Making Comparisons and Drawing Conclusions'. In this section, I explain how this study undertook each of these stages.

#### **4.1.1. The first step : Analysing Programme Documents**

My task in the first step was to analyze the SSPP programme documents.

This task was threefold, i.e., describing the programme components, clarifying the programme theory of each document, and developing one possible programme theory underlying the SSPP. This EA research for the SSPP took into account six different types of official documents as follows:

- *“A proposal for the establishment of the University of Cape Town Secondary Schools Partnership Project”* (SDU, 1998a)
- *“The Secondary Schools Partnership Project: Annual Progress Report”* (SDU, 1999)
- *“Final Report of the Secondary Schools Partnership Project - submitted to the W.K. Kellogg Foundation”* (SDU, 2000)
- *“Secondary School Partnership Project, Aug’98 to Dec’99”* [Mathematics Report] (SDU, 2001a)
- *“Secondary Schools Partnership Project, Science Programme – Report for pilot stage July 1998 to December 1999”* (SDU, 2001b)
- *“Partnership for Change”* [Evaluation Report] (SDU, 2001c)

It was the early analysis of those documents, reported on in Chapter 2, which led to the formulation of the main research questions. These questions found the basis of the interviews reported on below.

#### **4.1.2. The Second Step : Interviewing Stakeholders**

The second stage of the EA was to interview the stakeholders involved in the SSPP. This research defined the following five groups of stakeholders. In total 19 people were interviewed as indicated below:

*1. The SSPP Pilot School Principals (4 Principals, one from each school)*

Interviews with the principals took place in the principal's office of each school. Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes. One of the principals (School D) was new and did not know much about the SSPP. Therefore, I repeated the questionnaire with the deputy principal of that school. He was actually the man in charge of the SSPP and I found his answers were as fruitful as those of the other principals. All the principals were very cooperative and happy to speak of their experience of the SSPP.

*2. The SSPP Pilot School Teachers (3 Mathematics and 4 Science Teachers)*

Interviews with the teachers also took place at each school. Because of interviews being conducted shortly after the first term, most of teachers were quite busy with marking. I had to go to schools a couple of times and find the teachers in their spare time. Basically, all of them were very cooperative. In each school there was one mathematics teachers and one physical science teacher who had participated in the SSPP. Two teachers (mathematics teacher of school B and physical science teacher of school C) out of the eight had already moved to different schools at the time of the interviews. I could track down the physical science teacher of school C, but not the mathematics teacher of school B. Therefore, I conducted interviews with seven teachers out of a possible eight.

*3. The SSPP Programme Coordinators (Mathematics, Science, and Lifeskill coordinators, and the General Manager of the SSPP: 4 people)*

I began the interviews with the coordinators soon after I had finished the interviews with the school staffs. Since I had been researching the SSPP

with them for more than a half year, I did not have any trouble in conducting interviews with them. They were always very co-operative towards me and understood what I was doing. These interviews went very smoothly. (Since the interview comments from the Lifeskill Coordinator did not directly relate to this research topic due to his late arrival in the SSPP programme, I did not quote his comments in the research.)

4. *The SSPP Policymakers (the Chair of the Management Committee, the Chair of the Evaluation Sub-Committee, the Former Director of the SDU, and a Forum Member of the SSPP: 4 people)*

The interviews with the policymakers comprised the final stage of my research. At the beginning, I planned to interview about six of them. However, during the appointment making stage, I found that some policymakers were reluctant to talk about a project that had been completed more than two years previously citing the reason that they had not been significantly involved. They introduced a new dimension by suggesting that I interview a further person who might well have been committed to the SSPP. It was a fairly time-consuming process for me. As a result, I could conduct interviews with only four of them who seemed to be quite involved in the programme.

The interview questions used in the course of this EA study were developed to draw out stakeholders' perceptions of three question area of this research, i.e. *"Overall Goals"*, *"Programme Theory"*, and *"Policy Sharing Status"*. These are reproduced in Appendix 2. The interview process took place between June/July 2003, and each interview lasted approximately 30-60 minutes. The results of these are presented in Chapter 5.

### **4.1.3. The Final Step : Making Comparisons and Drawing Conclusions**

The final step of the research is to identify both common understandings and major differences among documents, and among stakeholders regarding the overall goals, programme theory, and policy sharing status of the SSPP. The three questions I intended to ultimately answer were as indicated in Chapter Two (pp. 31-32):

- *What was the overall goal of the SSPP?*
- *Was there any programme theory applied in the course of the SSPP intervention?*
- *How did each of the stakeholder groups share the policy of the project?*

Finally, I draw conclusions and recommendations with regard to the problematic implementation of educational intervention programmes which have limited programme theory structures.

## **4.2. Trustworthiness of the study**

Evaluability Assessment is a qualitative evaluation research method based on document analysis and interviews. This type of qualitative research tends to be criticised on the grounds that the research is too subjective, or the number of cases is too small, or that mere talking is never a scientific method, and so on. Although the “Validity” and “Reliability” of qualitative research is discussed by many researchers, the most often quoted concept of the problem of establishing validity is probably the notion of “Trustworthiness” that was developed mainly by Lincoln and Guba (1985: 290). “Trustworthiness” is defined

as a useful and easier criterion to understand the validity and reliability issues of qualitative research (ibid). The notion of "Trustworthiness" has four elements: Credibility, Transferability, Dependability and Conformability. This section discusses how this study secured the trustworthiness of an evaluability assessment of a programme.

#### **4.2.1. Credibility**

Credibility relates to how the reconstruction of the researchers fits the realities and views the participants express in the process of the inquiry (Shaw & Oka, 2000: 13). To establish credibility, prolonged engagement is required, which is the investment of sufficient time to achieve certain purposes to build trust with the participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; quoted from Huberman and Miles, 1994: 301).

My involvement period to the SSPP started in September 2001 and lasted about a year. Since the SDU office is located near the Department of Education of UCT, the rapport between myself and SDU staff was well developed. On the other hand, due to the distance from university to programme site, I met and had conversations with project schools' principals and teachers only a few times. Therefore, I had to recognize that my physical and emotional conditions were not neutral to all the stakeholders and that I needed to be very careful to avoid a biased analysis.

#### **4.2.2. Transferability**

Transferability refers to the possibility that what was found in one context

by a piece of qualitative research is applicable to another context (Shaw and Oka, 2000: 13). One of the big limitations of this EA was the scarcity of other examples. Because EA is historically new and minor compared with other general evaluations, the case study of the EA is very rare. I could not find any EA report in education fields. This situation limited the transferability for other studies.

To maximise the transferability under such condition, the description of document analysis and interviews has to be explained as “thickly” as possible. “Thick description” of the study allows readers to judge whether the findings are applicable to their own settings.

#### **4.2.3. Dependability and Conformability**

Dependability and conformability are the qualitative researchers' equivalent of the conventional term 'reliability' and 'objectivity'. In quantitative research, the same tests should produce the same results. However, this kind of reliability and objectivity is impossible for qualitative research because the research design is flexible and the research findings are produced by constantly changing interactions between researchers and participants (Shaw and Oka, 2000: 14). This study was no exception to it. For example, programme theory was such a flexible framework that it was almost impossible to develop theory applying conventional methods.

Dependability and conformability can be improved by auditing of the collected data. Schwandt (1997) defines “auditing as a procedure whereby a third-party examiner systematically reviews the audit trail maintained by the inquiry” (1997: 6). Ideally, the qualitative data in this research, especially the interview transcription, should have been audited by a number of readers, such

as the interviewer, proof reader and/or supervisor. In practice this is an expensive and time-consuming process, and it was therefore limited to two other readers.

### **4.3. Limitations of the Study**

In the former section, I discussed how I attempted to improve the trustworthiness of this research. On the other hand, of course, no research can be exempted from limitations (see MacMillan and Schumacher, 1993: 35). This section explains three possible limitations of this research.

The first limitation of this research was the lack of case studies of EA. As was explained previously, EA reports are limited by the short history and under-developed situation of EA. Most of the EA texts I found mainly describe general theory and implementation methods rather than case studies. If I could have obtained more practical data of EAs, this study could have built its own framework to perfectly suit the SSPP. But it was not possible. Therefore, the framework and methodologies of this EA research was faithfully borrowed from Smith's work (1989).

The second limitation of this study was the time lag between programme implementation and evaluation. Because two years has passed since the SSPP was officially finished, it was not possible to interview all of the stakeholders of the SSPP. For example, the chairman of the SSPP forum has already moved to another institution. In addition, even though I could conduct interviews, so some stakeholders did not remember what happened two years ago. Therefore, I had to consider that interview responses from stakeholders were not always correct and might have involved some error.

The final limitation of this study is the absence of funding organization

commitment. The African branch of W.K. Kellogg Foundation, which was the funding organization of the SSPP is located in Harare, Zimbabwe. Due to time and budget restrictions, I could not interview them. Therefore, this study might not accountably reflect the intention of the funding organisation. However, it does not mean that this study ignored them. I tried to conceptualise their intention by analysing their policy documents, evaluation question, and other available resources.

#### **4.4. Ethical Conditions and Considerations of the Research**

Ethical issues related to evaluation research are very important and have been much discussed. All qualitative researchers in evaluation should give serious thoughts to these issues particularly as the nature of qualitative research adds its own complications. In this section, I deal with three ethical issues which seems to relate to this research. The topics are quoted from a document drafted by Lillian Artz, Institute of Criminology (UCT) and used with her permission.

##### **4.4.1. Anonymity**

Very few people would willingly express their private work condition, opinions and emotions in public documents knowing that their names would be published. Thus, confidentiality is a vital requirement for credible research. More importantly, Berg (1998) mentions that "mere anonymity is sometime insufficient for confidentiality to be safeguarded" (1998: 48-50), because the reader can assume and identify the location and individual name from other contexts.

This study adopted full confidentiality for the four pilot schools. On the other hand, the programme implementers' side of the organisation, such as the

Schools Development Unit and the Department of Education at UCT were disclosed in this study, because without describing their social background, this study could not stand up as evaluation research. Therefore, informed consent about my research purpose amongst SDU and DoE staffs was very important (see 4.4.3. [over] for more about this topic).

#### **4.4.2. Privacy**

Qualitative interview research gives inquirers many opportunities to involve the participants emotionally about sensitive topics (Renzetti and Lee, 1993). It goes without saying that the researcher must respect the privacy and dignity of the research participant on the participant's terms. On the other hand, if the interviewer has good listening skills, he may provide participants with a chance to release their emotional frustrations. Weiss (1994) points out that "this 'therapeutic' nature of qualitative interviews might cause a more complicated ethical dilemma" (1994: 134).

Therefore, it was important that the interviewer should not have taken all of the interview responses as unconditional resources for the research. The interviewees might have expressed their opinion just to relief their stress but not to have meant for the research. I had to take reasonable steps to ensure that records, data, or information were preserved in a confidential manner consistent with the requirements of this Code of Ethics (UCT, 2002: 4).

#### **4.4.3. Informed Consent**

Gaining informed consent is essential for all sorts of research and the

flexible nature of the qualitative research design causes particular problems. Because of such an emergent design, Bartunek and Louis (1996) emphasize the importance of repeatedly confirming informed consent.

As I explained in Chapter 2, this research project has originally begun as the quantitative outcome evaluation of the SSPP, but research focus and design has shifted from quantitative to qualitative analysis. Therefore, I obtained informed consent from stakeholders not only prior to the interview but also whenever I needed to change research design. The information about research needed to be updated and informed to all of the stakeholders.

#### **4.5. Conclusion**

In this Chapter, I have examined the methodology I employed in this study. I began by identifying the three necessary steps for applying and implementing an Evaluability Assessment to the SSPP. Then I proceeded to discuss the trustworthiness of this type of qualitative research by examining various issues. Finally I examined ethical considerations. In the next chapter I will go on to the data presentation of the Evaluability Assessment of the SSPP, which was based on the document analysis and stakeholders interviews.

## Chapter 5 Data Analysis and Presentation

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This chapter presents the results of the interview analyses. Here I examine how the SSPP stakeholders conceptualized the programme components of the SSPP. Since most of the document analysis was done in chapter two, the main focus of this chapter is interview analysis. The chapter is divided into three parts with regard to my focus questions, i.e., *“The Overall Goals”*, *“Programme Theory”*, and *“Policy Sharing Status”*. Each of these sections re-visits the results of the document analysis which I conducted in Chapter Two in order to compare the results of the document analysis and interviews. This process will clarify the variation in programme objectives between those which were initially outlined in the documents and those which were actually implemented by each of the stakeholder groups. The programme theory of the SSPP will be developed by this process. Interviews were conducted with four different stakeholder groups, namely the Principals, the School Teachers, the SSPP Coordinators and the SSPP Policymakers (see Appendix 2 for interview schedules).

In this section, I present the interview data of each of the stakeholders and analyze how they conceptualized the programme components of the SSPP.

### 5.1. Overall Goal Analysis

Through the document analyses of the overall goal of the SSPP in chapter two, I stated that six of the key SSPP documents appeared to have different programme goals (see p. 12 in Chapter 2). In addition, most of the goals

of the SSPP were not linked to outcomes. As a result, it was difficult to understand from the documents what the project either set out to do, or what was finally achieved. Therefore, I set up the research question, 'What is the overall goal of the SSPP?'.

The aim of this section is to present the stakeholders' perceptions of the overall goal of the SSPP through interview analysis. The section consists of four different stakeholders, namely, 'School Principals', 'School Teachers', 'the SSPP Coordinators', and 'the SSPP Policymakers'.

#### 5.1.1. The School Principals

When asked about the overall goal of the SSPP, all of the principals told me that the main aim of the SSPP was teacher development. Their answers were as follows;

- *"My perception of the programme goal [of the SSPP] was more emphasis and focus on Educators. If we have the person that is capable to sustain that improvement, then [we] will be better off, instead of focusing heavily now on a bunch of Learners that are going to leave us from next year."* (School A)
- *"The teacher development was the key issue of the project, because teachers development has got positive spin-offs to Matric performance, and because the learners will perform better if the teachers are better equipped. That's why we could see that particularly last year there was some improvement."* (School B)
- *"The focus of SSPP, I think, was more on the educator than the Learner and I'm not saying that's a bad thing and that is why perhaps, in my opinion I think that the motivation was more stronger amongst the educators than learners."* (School C)

- *"I would say the teacher's development is my impression as the aim of the SSPP and I think that student development would be a spin-off from that."* (School D)

They all had a common perception of the aims of the SSPP, and stated that it was aimed at teacher development. I also found that all of them had a positive impression regarding this.

The next section represents the response to the same question from the school teachers.

### 5.1.2. The School Teachers

While all of the principals answered 'teacher development' as the overall goal of the SSPP, most of teachers gave me different answers from the principals. Five teachers out of the seven answered that the main aim of the SSPP was related to both student and teacher development. They also saw teacher development and student development as synergetic and complementary.

- *"I would say, it [aim of the SSPP] was both student development and teachers development. To me I think the SSPP would not separate the development of the teachers and the Learners. Those I think they go hand in hand."* (School A, Science)
- *"It [the SSPP activity] is a chain reaction. It was coordinated. If a Teacher is more motivated and we got motivated by attending the workshops, we can deliver that, wherever you've learnt in the workshop, in the class, get the pupils more motivated for their activities."* (School D, Mathematics)

The other two teachers mentioned that the aims of the SSPP was

weighted on the side of the development of teachers. They said:

➤ *“Teacher’s development was bigger than student’s development. Because they [coordinators] brought up new methods of doing things to make things easier for the learners.”* (School A, Mathematics)

➤ *“The SSPP was refreshing for me, for teachers. In that sense this kind of project is very good. But I’d like to see a similar project but with more learners involved.”*

(School B, Science)

Neither of them was saying that the teachers programme was the only aim of the SSPP. What they mentioned was that the weight of the SSPP was more on the teacher side than on the student side. In the case of the Science teacher from School B (second above) there seems to be a nuance of negativity with regard to this balance.

So far, I have presented the interview comments from school principals and teachers. Their views were straightforward. Six out of eleven school staff (four principals and two teachers) told me that teacher development was the goal of the SSPP. The other five teachers told me the goal of the SSPP was both teachers’ and students’ development. Generally speaking, it sounded to me that they simply picked up on the areas they saw as interventions as the programme goal, and none of them showed a much broader idea of the programme goal of the SSPP, such as access to university. Their expression of the goals was experience based. Despite attending the various Forum meetings, the Management Committee meeting and inter-acting regularly with the coordinators, none of the school-based respondents was able to see or saw as significant any

wider goals of the SSPP. This clearly indicates some communication/management difficulties within the SSPP. How differently the other stakeholders saw the goals is explored below.

### 5.1.3. The SSPP Coordinators

The following section presents the responses from the SSPP coordinators about the overall goal of the programme. The Mathematics and Science coordinator views are presented first then contrasted with those of the General Manager. The comments of the Mathematics coordinator about the overall goals of the SSPP were as follows:

- *“At those [pilot] schools there were very few students going to tertiary institutions and what we then needed to do to get students to access university, we needed to improve their results and that’s where all those programmes come in, so that’s the sort of, the ultimate aim why we do all these things, is for them to access university.”*

*(Mathematics Coordinator)*

The Mathematics coordinator mentioned that the ultimate aim of the SSPP was to improve access to University. He continuously told me the strategies of mathematics.

- *“We had two key strategies. One was working with students and one working with teachers. We develop the teachers so that they can then work with students over a long period, but we had immediate goals to improve immediate results so that those students could access tertiary education.”*

*(Mathematics Coordinator)*

From the above comments, I found that although the Mathematics coordinator tried to develop both teachers and students, he focused more on the student side because of the importance of immediate outcomes. In all, there were nine student versus two teacher interventions (see Table 2, on p.20).

The next comment is from the Science coordinator of the SSPP. He used the word 'partnership' to explain the overall goal of the SSPP.

- *"Building partnerships' To me that's what most encapsulates the whole thing of what SSPP was. I think the whole idea was to build a partnership between the university and the schools where there'd be an impact on the quality of teaching and learning in schools. So the Matric improvement was part of that."* (Science Coordinator)

His words "building partnership" seems to encapsulate the broader concept of the programme rather than just saying "to access tertiary education". However I found that his overall goal setting, which consisted of 'teaching and learning impact', were not considerably different from what the Mathematics coordinator told me. Their goal setting was fundamentally the same.

However, the Science coordinator mentioned that he emphasized teacher development more than student development. He said:

- *"My opinion is that anything we did with the kids, was simply to demonstrate to the teachers what could be done...The purpose of working with the children, was to demonstrate to the teachers what could be done with the children. To me, the teacher Development program was the one that had the most likelihood of being the most valuable over the long-term."* (Science Coordinator)

Although there were five teacher and five student interventions, he spent 14 months working continuously with teachers because of this belief in the Longer-Term benefit (see Table 2 on p. 20).

This is the significant contrast between the Mathematics and Science coordinators. Their difference is clarified in the following comments:

- *“Although we [Math and Science] were one project, we worked separately and very, very differently. Because we all devised programs around the needs of the Teachers. That is the first thing. The second thing is we also devised strategies and programmes around our expertise. We each developed our own framework.”* (Mathematics Coordinator)
- *“I think Math’s focus was hugely on Matric improvement initially and hence to access. To him, based on his experience and where he was coming from, that was something tangible that he could get his head around, was Matric. Whereas I had just come from five years working on a project which was about Teacher development.”*

(Science Coordinator)

While the Mathematics coordinator emphasized immediate outcomes and student activities, the Science coordinator put more accent on sustainability and teacher activities. These policy approaches appeared directly in their actual activities. The issue here was that the policy for each subject was determined by the coordinators’ ideas, not by the overall programme policy of the SSPP. This issue was neither discussed in advance through the management committee nor in the Forum.

These differences did not appear to be mediated by the General Manager. He was the person who was supposed to control the policy and set up the

activities. I asked him how he conceptualized the goal of the programme.

- *If [the SSPP goal] is a Lotus flower with different petals. The stem of the flower should be the University and how the University is going to use this information.*

(General Manager)

He expressed the goals of the SSPP as the 'petals of Lotus flower', meaning that around core goal/s would be a number of subsidiary goals. He mentioned such goals as "improving matric results", "motivating teachers", "bringing students from the township to UCT", and so on. His idea was that the SSPP was a multi-goal programme because of this. But he did not specify any core activities. I repeatedly asked him how he engaged in the SSPP policy as the general manager. He replied as follows:

- *I would say the primary people that came up with the curriculum of SSPP were basically the people that were working in SSPP. It was subject coordinators and myself.*

(General Manager)

In his interview, the General Manager did not mention the discrepancy between the Mathematics and Science policy. So it became apparent that the activities (curriculum) of the SSPP were decided by stakeholders without any obvious strong leadership. It seemed that the General Manager did not see this as an issue, preferring a '*laissez-faire*' approach.

The next comment from the Science coordinator expresses this ineffectiveness which paradoxically also appears as a strength.

- *"One thing that's helped to make SSPP work was that the project was not strongly*

*centrally managed. That was partly because [General Manager's name] was a weak Manager, it was partly also because [Mathematics Coordinator's name] and I both came in with two, with sets of strong ideas and we didn't fight about each other's ideas."*

(Science Coordinator)

Thus, despite there being neither a united framework nor a strong manager for the coordinators, this 'helped' make the SSPP work. As a result, coordinators did what they could, or what they wanted to do, under the pretext of the multi-purposes of the SSPP. However, despite this 'benefit', there were major consequences for the development of programme theory. This is discussed fully in 5.2 on p. 82.

The problem is two fold. Firstly, organization and structures and activities were not cleared by the Management Committee or Forum. But this was not critical because these were responses to teachers' needs. The real problem was in not specifying outcomes in relation to activities.

#### **5.1.4. The SSPP Policymakers**

Finally, I conducted interviews with four policymakers who seemed to be well involved in the programme - the Chairperson of the Management Committee, the Chairperson of the Evaluation Sub-Committee, the Former Director of the TLRC, and a member of the SSPP Forum who was also an Evaluation Sub-Committee member. Their responses confirm the 'loose' and under-specified goals of the SSPP that the interviews with the other stakeholders revealed. All four respondent identified different priorities.

The first comments about the overall goal of the SSPP is from the Forum

member of the SSPP.

- *“Effective Teacher development, effective teaching and learning were, I would say no. 1. ‘To improve the scores of Matric students’ and ‘To get more Higher Grade registration’ are the same as this. so I don’t see these as completely different, but I would say this [effective teacher development] is the priority.”* (The SSPP Forum member)

While she mentioned the prior goal of the SSPP as ‘effective teacher development’, her goal setting was also based on the multi-goal nature and fundamentally the same as the coordinators. She told me that the number of goals that appeared in the documents were not completely different each other.

The next comment was from the Evaluation Committee Chair of the SSPP.

- *“The focus on the matric wasn’t going to be the only objective of the programme. The programme was intended to try and move the school, move the school’s capacity in math and Science.”* (Evaluation Committee Chair)

He stated that the SSPP was a comprehensive programme so that it is not easy to define one explicit goal. To explain his perception of the goal of the SSPP, he introduced a new concept, namely *“Move the Schools’ capacity”*. This was the first time I had heard this concept mentioned as a goal of the SSPP. He interpreted this as improving the ‘basic competency’ of the schools. In short, he perceived the overall goal of the SSPP was to develop the basic competency of the Mathematics and Science.

The goals explained by these two policymakers are firstly, not incompatible with the document goals and interpretations of these by principals

and teachers, and secondly, consistent with the multi-goal nature of the SSPP. The difficulty though is that there was little formal integration of these goals into a coordinated plan of activities. Part of the cause of this has to do with the political/financial purposes of the SSPP which were revealed by the two major stakeholders, the Chair of the Management Committee and the Former TLRC Director.

The two opinions of the overall goal of the SSPP that follow were completely different from other stakeholders. Firstly, I describe the comment from the Chair of the Management Committee of the SSPP. At the beginning of the interview, he explained the origin of the SSPP which had never appeared in any documents.

- *“Someone had contacted the Head of Department in the SoE (School of Education: forerunner of the Department of Education in UCT) and he was quite convinced that the people who were interested in funding partnerships with schools were not prepared and this Kellogg Foundation were already prepared to put a lot of money into this kind of a project. The SoE had been approached and there was a potential to put in for applications for a project. At the same time the TLRC [Teaching and Learning Resources Centre: forerunner of the School Development Unit] was quite seriously short of money as usual, and was looking around for all kinds of different ways to find money. We were aware of the fact that no-one had made a proposal from the SoE, because they had to put in a proposal to get the funding. So we suggested, what would it be like if the TLRC were to put in the proposal instead of the SoE. Obviously there was some discussion about this, but it was then agreed that the TLRC would put in a proposal for a project. That was in many ways quite a good thing for the TLRC, because it enabled the TLRC to immediately keep on some of the staff that it might have lost otherwise. So we then had*

*a situation where the TLRC was taking up this partnership initiative.”*

(Management Committee Chair)

In short, he told me that the SSPP had been started primarily to solve the financial problems of the TLRC, which was the forerunner of the SDU. Then, I contacted the former-director of the TLRC, who had written the very first proposal relating to the SSPP, and asked the real motivation underpinning the SSPP.

- *“There was a goal that underlined all of this which would never have gone on paper. One would never have put it into a proposal, but the real motivation for getting the SSPP going, was to get funding into the TLRC.”*

(Former Director of the TLRC)

She openly told me all I wished to know about the SSPP. Her comment affirmed that of the Management Committee Chair. She also added that:

- *“That’s why a lot of what you’re finding in the papers isn’t cohering with the real thing. It was nothing to do with all of these high goals. ‘Partnership’ was a big word in funding from Kellogg. It’s terrible to admit, but that was what was uppermost in my mind, was the salaries of people.”*

(Former Director of the TLRC)

Although I felt there was little consistency of the SSPP programme goals, I have never imagined that such a political reason was directly connected to the programme proposals. She told me that even the word “partnership” was just a key word to win support for the project from the sponsors. This political stance meant that beyond the security of finance, some of the key players did not focus on the activities as clearly they may have.

### 5.1.5. Summary

Through the interview process, I found that most of the stakeholders recognized that the SSPP was a multi-purpose programme. This situation itself is nothing special in school intervention programmes. It seems that the problem the SSPP had was in managing this complexity. This is evidenced by firstly, the document analysis of the SSPP which showed a number of unspecified and inconsistent programme goals in each of the documents. Secondly the management system of the SSPP did not aid the coordinators in clarifying programme goals. The management committee met only once, and most of the policymakers, sometimes even the Chairperson, did not attend the Forum. The absence of key policymakers may have caused the poor development of the programme documents. But again this may not have been critical if there had been tighter programme management.

These observations lead to the conclusion that because of both under-developed documents and a lack of policymakers' commitment, the coordinators developed SSPP policy by default just by doing activities as they wanted to without control by the General Manager of the SSPP. Consequently, the policy of the SSPP was developed as said "by default".

These discussions now shift to programme theory analysis. The following section deals with the issue whether the SSPP 'policy by default' had an effect on the development or clarification of cause-effect relations of activities, and on the development of sound outcome indicators.

## 5.2. Programme Theory Analysis

Following the above overall goal analysis, this section presents the programme theory analysis of the SSPP. In chapter two, I examined the programme theory of the SSPP through the activities and evaluation. Firstly, I found that the outcome indicators in the Evaluation Report were not properly articulated with the actual activities of the SSPP. As mentioned, the report adopted the baseline tests, which linked with the basic competencies of the students, as the outcome of the SSPP. However, such policy was not intended, nor related with the actual activities of the SSPP. Secondly, I also found that the evaluation methods in the report were not statistically confirmed. The Evaluation Report of the SSPP was based on 'eyeball analysis'. These two findings generated the second research question, '*Was there any programme theory applied in the course of the SSPP intervention*'.

This section presents the interview results about the programme theory of the SSPP, and finds out whether each of the stakeholders had any idea of a programme theory for the SSPP in their minds. To repeat, the existence of a programme theory signifies whether or not there is a cause-effect relation between activities and outcomes. This related to the issue of goals in the sense that without clear goal-means relationships, evaluation became problematic. Since the concept of the word 'programme theory' might have been unfamiliar for the stakeholders, I used the terms 'outcomes', 'indicators', and 'evaluation' of the programme in the interviews so that I could conceptualize their programme theory of the SSPP.

### 5.2.1. The School Principals

Here the principals were asked about the outcomes of the SSPP in order to find whether principals' outcomes were accurately articulated with the goals they mentioned, namely teacher development. As they previously mentioned, three out of the four principals indicated that matric improvement of students in 2001 was the main outcome of the SSPP. Here are the first two examples of the answers:

- *"Our results [of pass rate] improved last year [2001] for the matric from 43 % to 84.2 %. So I believe that impact is caused by the educators involved learning to practice what they've learnt from SSPP...So basically, I strongly believe that teachers involvement was quite beneficial for the learners."* (School A)
- *"Last year [2001] we had improved. We attribute then to interventions [of the SSPP], because even the programme has gone, teachers are still there."* (School D)

The SSPP was already finalized in 2000, and there was no intervention in 2001. Despite that, the above two principals still mentioned that the matric improvement of 2001 had happened because the SSPP programme developed their teachers. In other words, they indirectly appraised teachers from the student matric improvement.

The next opinion talks about both the improvement of matric performance and the improvement of tertiary education access.

- *"Matric results have tremendously improved the last year [2001]. As a result, it [tertiary institution access] has improved, such as Cape-Tech, Pen-Tech and UWC. The only two institutions which remains a problem, is Stellenbosch and UCT. But access to Higher*

*Education is actually clearly improved”.*

(School B)

Although this principal mentioned the improvement of tertiary education access, he told me that the school cannot track the students who have gone on to Higher Education. He did not mention the exact numbers.

The next opinion is the only case in which a principal indicated teachers development as the outcomes and supplied a direct reason, as seen in the following statement:

- *“Definitely I do see the improvement of teachers... She [Science teacher] has obviously learnt something, even in terms of organizing activities and the ways of engaging and motivating the Learners themselves, because last year she took it upon herself to organize a camp on her own. That for me, it was [one] indicator.”* (School C)

Qualitative improvement, such as teacher development is always difficult to appraise with objective evidence. The above comment made by the principal is a good example of objective evaluation of the outcomes.

To recap the above discussion, I found that three out of four principals used matric improvement as the teachers’ development indicator. And there was only one principal who directly observed and linked the teachers’ improvement to changes in teachers behavior. There was also only one principal to mention tertiary education access as the programme outcome.

While there is a clear logic to these explanations, what they told me was just logic, but not programme theory. The problem is that their indicators were not strongly linked with the actual activities of the SSPP, and they just felt teachers and students were generally improved after the programme. Such logic without

clarifying the cause-effect relation between the activities and the outcomes is totally different from what is called 'programme theory'. Programme Theory needs to be based on a stronger cause-effect relationship between programme activities and outcomes.

The following section discusses the school teachers' responses about the outcome and indicators of the SSPP.

### 5.2.2. The School Teachers

This section presents the teachers opinions about what kind of outcomes the school had experienced through the SSPP. Firstly, I pick up on an opinion which emphasized matric improvement in mathematics as the outcome of the SSPP intervention.

- *"You see before SSPP came in, we had about a 58 % pass rate of mathematics. And then with the intervention at the end of the year 1999, the pass rate shot up to 72 %. and then the following year it came down a little to 68 %, but it maintained that. The SSPP played a major role in helping us to achieve that record."*

(School D, Mathematics)

Here she saw a clear causal relationship between the Mathematics interventions and the Mathematics results even though she could not specify which of the interventions made the greatest difference. By contrast, all of the other teachers referred to the overall matric pass rates as opposed to subject specific or intervention related results as an indicator of the SSPP. An example of their comments is as follows:

- *“You look at the end results. The ‘results’ escalated comparing to the previous year [of intervention] , so that on its own is an indication that the programme did have an impact, did have a change in the system. The end-year results [overall pass rate]showed up very nicely.”* (School A, Mathematics)

I asked her what she meant by “results” in her comments and I found out it meant “overall pass rate of *school A*”. She continued that the SSPP caused a change in the entire school system although she could not specify exactly how this took place. It was clear from this and other comments that most of the teachers linked the overall matric pass rates to the programme even though this is inaccurate. The Science teachers in schools B and C also gave me the same kind of response as above. I therefore realized that some teachers had misconceptualized how to assess the impact of the programme. In the case of a subject specific intervention, it seems unlikely that general matric improvement would be an objective and reliable indicator except in a very indirect way.

Moreover, the next three comments about the impact of the Holiday Camp shows the different ways in which teachers approached impact achievement. This variety of responses further illustrates the lack of precision around programme theory for the SSPP.

Firstly, I asked the Mathematics teacher in school C about the impact of holiday camps. She states that:

- *“ Winter and Spring camps was an indication of how we need this kind of intervention.... When the Learners came back from that [Camp], they seemed so motivated. The kids were really involved and they also enjoyed it. They had great fun, but I think they also worked and that was what I observed there.”* (School C, Mathematics)

Even though she did not mention any performance improvement for those students, she said *'she did evaluate'* the Holiday Camp positively because students were motivated. Her evaluation of the Camp was based on the qualitative impact on students.

Secondly, I pick up the comment of the Science teacher in School C about the impact of the camp. Her comment was different from what above teacher told me.

- *"Unfortunately those who attend the Camps are the best students which I had. So they remained the best. Because they were more exposed and they had more practice. Top remains top and the lower remains low."* (School A, Science)

She told me that only ten students from each school were allowed to participate in the Camp, and School A decided to simply pick the top performance students. She said that because only the best students attended the Camp, *'she could not evaluate'* the impact. Therefore, the Holiday Camp was an unevaluable programme for her, not because of the outcomes but because in her view these students would have performed well anyway. In this sense, she said she could not evaluate the programme.

Finally, I pick up the comments of the Science teacher in School B. He expressed his general impression with regard to the evaluation of the SSPP as follows:

- *"Basically it [evaluation] is not my problem. I'm not a Mathematician. I am unable to evaluate the standard of the SSPP."* (School B, Science)

His opinion is quite different from the other two teachers comment. He told me that *'he would not evaluate'* the impact of any kinds of activities of the SSPP because he did not think that teachers should evaluate the programme.

These three teachers' responses 'I did evaluate', 'I could not evaluate' or 'I would not evaluate' the impact reflected the range of teachers' views. So, while the school teachers generally had a positive impression of the programme, they clearly did not have a common framework for precise evaluation. This indicates the lack of programme theory on the school side.

Through the analysis of interviews with principals and teachers thus far, I found that although schools had an interest in the programme, they did not necessarily have a strong incentive to evaluate outcomes. Overall, however, it was also clear that evaluation was not seen as part of the programme or indeed part of the schools' responsibility. Nor, to judge from the comments of the coordinators, was it seen as part of their responsibility. Their views are discussed next.

### **5.2.3. The SSPP Coordinators**

This section aims to examine whether the coordinators had an explicit (or implicit) programme theory of the SSPP. As discussed, the document analysis showed that the Mathematics and Science coordinators had different goals for the programme. Furthermore, the Evaluation Report focus on basic competency was also different from their focus. This already indicates the probability of a lack of programme theory.

In order to establish this further, I firstly tried to clarify what the actual

achievements and outcomes of the SSPP were for both subject coordinators. The following comments answered this question.

- *“If we worked with the children, it wasn’t to help the children. That wasn’t the purpose of working with the children. The purpose of working with the children, was to demonstrate to the Teachers what could be done with the children. To me then, the teacher development program was the one that had the most likelihood of being the most valuable over the long-term.”* (Science Coordinator)
- *“As far as I’m concerned, I think we did turn quite a lot of things around at the schools, so for me I think it was a very successful program and Teachers benefitted, students benefitted, we benefitted from the experience...Particularly the students could go to higher education. Matric improvement was strongly connected to it [the goals].”* (Mathematics Coordinator)

The above two comments signified their different approaches to the programme. On the one hand, the Science coordinator indicated that the SSPP activities was actually mainly for teachers development. On the other hand, the Mathematics intervention did not necessarily target only the teachers. He strongly emphasized student development, which related to higher education access.

Against this background, I asked them how the programme should have been evaluated in order to figure out their programme theory much clearly. Firstly, I posed this question to the science coordinator.

- *“I think that it would have to include quite a lot of classroom observations, talking to Teachers, maybe a questionnaire where you find out a little bit about their background.”*

*What you call, a very “deep” description of each Teacher. Certainly the learner tests“.*

(Science Coordinator)

His intended method of evaluating his goal was to employ a qualitative methodology, such as classroom observation and questionnaires. I continuously asked him whether he had applied these method, and if not, why he had not done so.

- *“I think that one of the problems with SSPP was that it ended up only looking at the easier questions and it didn’t really engage as properly as it should have on the harder questions and I say that for myself as well. So my approach had that weakness, that I tried to do something that actually wasn’t doable within the time constraints, whereas at least it improved the Matric results for one year was doable within the 18 months“.*

(Science Coordinator)

Next, I asked the same question of the mathematics coordinator. As he emphasized that the intended outcome of the Mathematics programme was “to access university”, I asked him whether he or someone else had counted the number of students who went on to tertiary education before and after the intervention. Then he told me that it had not been done yet, for the following reason.

- *“We can only set up the structures. So let’s say, none of them can afford to go there [tertiary institution]. Because of an external factor outside of our perimeters. We can’t give them money, so there are other factors that would impact this as well. So maybe you could say, there are external factors, the lack of money, transport, a whole range of*

things.”

(Mathematics Coordinator)

His comment revealed that his original goal of “accessing University” requires certain other social conditions to pertain, such as money and transport, so-called “external factors” in his words. In other words, his goals would never be achievable without first finding solutions for those factors which are outside the scope of the programme. In the project planning field, these kind of factors are called “Killer Assumption” ones because they can externally kill programme goal achievement (FASID, 1997: 40; see also FASID, 2000: 12).

I am not saying that his goal setting was too ambitious or unrealistic. However, maybe I can say that his goal could change the focus slightly so that he could get rid of killer assumption, e.g., improving matric scores, or higher grade registration, or focus on those student who have applied for tertiary education with the assistance of bursaries. These goals could be measured in the framework of the programme.

I also got the following comment from a Lifeskill coordinator who had supported the same goal as the mathematics coordinator. He told me the problems he experienced when he tried to count the number of students who went on to further education. He explained as follows:

- *“I tried to contact [Institutions’ Names] to ask them for how many students from these four [pilot] schools [has entered] to tertiary. They did not give me the information. In fact, one or two of them never got back to me so it was a bit difficult to get that information. Not all of the students will inform the Teachers. If I think we give it another shot, we should actually be able to get that information.”*

(Lifeskill Coordinator)

This is another aspect of the difficulties relating to the evaluation of tertiary access as the goal of the programme. But I think that every child in the class should have been asked to inform the school if they went on to University or to a Tertiary institution. In that way we could have got more accurate figures even though they would not be perfect. I assume that this is a good example to demonstrate that late evaluations do not always succeed. They should start right from the beginning.

To conclude the discussion so far, I found that the mathematics and science coordinators had their own policies, goals, and evaluation methods. And I also found that their activities were logically consistent within themselves, e.g., the tutoring in Mathematics should lead to better Mathematics results. But the issue here was firstly, although the coordinators had their own implicit programme theory in their mind, it was never explicitly stated and shared. As said before, the General Manager of the SSPP had a '*laissez-faire*' policy towards the coordinators and did not take it as issue in the programme. Secondly, despite the coordinators having their own implicit policies for various reasons, they did not evaluate their goals. The Mathematics coordinator did not even have sound indicators. Consequently, these discrete activities may not link to the overall programme theory/goal especially if the goals and the means to get there are not specified in these independent programmes (see Figure 6 in Chapter 3 on p.48 for an illustration of how to link discrete programme goals).

The next section discuss the policymaker's perception toward the programme theory of the SSPP. One of the big issues in the section is to discover why the SSPP Evaluation Report focused particularly on the baseline tests, as not all of the coordinators were in agreement about this point.

#### 5.2.4. The SSPP Policymakers

Finally, I asked policymakers of the SSPP about their programme theory. One of the big issues in this section was to discover why the SSPP Evaluation Report focused particularly on the baseline tests. The following comment expressed what coordinators felt about the Evaluation Report of the SSPP:

- *“Evaluation Report looked particularly at the baseline. The tests tried to draw relation between basic competency and matric performance. And I think that’s tricky, because it [baseline tests] was not designed to do that”.* (Science Coordinator)
- *“I think it [SSPP] was a very successful programme and teachers benefitted, students benefitted, we benefitted from the experience. But evaluation didn’t take that [into account]. The concentration was on comparing baseline tests with performance in the Matric exam”.*

(Mathematics Coordinator)

Their comment implied that the coordinators were not agreement in the evaluation of the SSPP by the Evaluation Sub-committee. The person I needed to ask about this issue was of course, the Chair of the Evaluation Sub-committee. He replied to my question as follows:

- *“My interest as the Evaluator was simply seeing what this movement was between the first [baseline] test and the second [baseline] test. Coordinators were doing just what I’d asked them to do, so they did these. All I needed, all I wanted from them were these two tests.”*

(Evaluation Committee Chair)

I think this comment is quite crucial in answering my question. He implied

that he focused on the baseline test as evaluation, not because of the relationship between it and the programme but because of his particular interest in it . He added that:

- *“Competency enables them to perform better. So there is that lack between the competencies and their performances. The [baseline] tests were ‘diagnostic’, and the tests were intended to help us see where these students most were deficient. And that shaped the interventions, and that shaped the kinds of [tutorial] classes.”*

(Evaluation Committee Chair)

Things became clearer with this comment. I have never seen it stated in any policy documents relating to the SSPP that “competency enable them to perform better” and neither was this ever heard in any of the other interviews. As I explained, there are simply two kinds of interventions in the SSPP, one for matric student improvement and the other for teachers’ development. However, there were no actual activities designed to build competency in the SSPP. But he told me explicitly that the SSPP interventions were shaped to help student “competency”, and this is the reason why he chose the baseline test as one of the outcome indicators.

It was therefore apparent that there was a communication and philosophical gap between him and coordinators in terms of the activities of the SSPP. On the one hand, the coordinators told me that the policymakers did not contribute anything pertaining to activities so that they planned the SSPP activities by themselves. On the other hand, the Evaluation Committee chair told me that he intended the SSPP activities to help student competencies. This is one reason why the contents of the Evaluation Report did not reflect the actual

activities of the SSPP. I think that the baseline test was a sort of extra activity tacked on to the framework of the SSPP, but it was definitely not seen as part of outcome assessment by the implementers.

The Management Committee chair also explained about the evaluation of the SSPP as follows:

- *“As a research activity, it [SSPP] was a very interesting research activity in its own right and that’s what [Name of Evaluation Committee Chair] was really interested in, was doing the research as an evaluation activity. It’s not necessarily the right evaluation to use to evaluate the project. It’s the right thing to research, but it’s not necessarily the right thing to evaluate as a partnership project and I don’t think the partnership project itself was actually ever really properly evaluated in terms of the partnership. We still thought that it was important to try and do the evaluation, because we were trying to get them to extend the project.”* (Management Committee Chair)

I immediately could formulate my next question. If what he told me truly happened in the SSPP, the group most perturbed by this had to be the sponsors, because the programme was not properly evaluated. So I asked the Evaluation Committee chair what kind of feedback he got for after submission of his report. He answered that:

- *“I don’t know what document was sent on to them in the end, which Evaluation Report was sent on to them in the end.”* (Evaluation Committee Chair)

He did not know which report was sent to the sponsors, and was thus unable to supply any further information. So I asked the same question of the Management Committee chair. He explained that:

- *“For us we were interested in the SSPP as a project, but I don’t think Kellogg was particularly interested with the SSPP. Kellogg was interested at the time with working with UCT. And it would be interesting that there wasn’t really feedback after the evaluation at all. It was as though, ‘Thank you for sending the evaluation’, that’s the kind of thing and there was nothing else they told us, because they weren’t really interested in trying to improve the project or trying to work with it.”*

(Management Committee Chair)

Before this research, I had a strong sense that the programme evaluation would be deeply connected to the sponsors because money is visible and directly represents responsibility. And that responsibility will usually filter down from sponsors to the lower stakeholders so that they are pressurized to undertake sound evaluations. In other words, the programme sponsor was a sort of “final arbiter” of programme evaluation. But in the case of the SSPP, this did not happen right from the beginning to the end.

#### **5.2.5. Summary**

Reviewing the interview process about the programme theory of the SSPP, I found firstly that the school staff did not have a sound logic of programme evaluation. This is because basically, there was no incentive for them to evaluate the outcome of the programme. Secondly and related to this, the coordinators also did not have a sound evaluation framework. Their vision for the evaluation was poor and limited. Thirdly, the evaluation sub-committee chair explained his intention toward the programme activities, which was different from what was actually implemented. This communication gap produced a largely irrelevant

Evaluation Report. And finally, I discovered that even the sponsors themselves did not have a particular interest in this programme and did not take the evaluation seriously. This seems to encapsulate finally what the SSPP is all about for me. It began based on political motivation and finished in the same fashion. In the former chapter of this research, I strongly emphasized that evaluation, or evaluability in other words, is a necessary condition for any kind of programme. Now I would be forced to conclude that there is no evaluability in the SSPP, not because the project did not have it, but because the project did not inherently need it.

This idea leads to the next topic I need to discuss, which is the policy sharing among the SSPP stakeholders, that is, the ways in which the evaluation planning became distorted.

### **5.3. Policy Sharing Analysis**

Through the discussion in the former section, I found that one of the reasons for the absence of programme theory in the SSPP arose from the lack of communication internally and externally among different stakeholder groups.

In Chapter Two, I referred to a number of official documents to examine the management system of the SSPP. I stated that the SSPP Forum was the place where all the stakeholders should have shared the basic ideas of the programme. Nonetheless, the set of minutes of the SSPP indicated that a number of critical decisions, such as the planning of future activities and data collection methods were made by the coordinators and not by the Forum members. Many of the policymakers of the SSPP did not even attend the Forum meetings particularly in the second year of the SSPP (Table 1 in Chapter two

clearly shows this - see p. 17). In addition, the Management committee met only once during the intervention period. Given these structural problems, I therefore generated the research question, *“How did each of the stakeholder groups share the policy of the programme?”*

This final interview analysis aims to explain how each stakeholder tried to share their ideas, and what prevented their smooth communication. Smooth policy sharing is a crucial condition for both sound goal setting and programme theory development. Needless to say, even if the overall goal and programme theory are clear, these would not be effective without being shared amongst stakeholders. This is made worse if there is under-developed programme theory, as was the case in the SSPP, in addition to poor communication. This section begins with reviewing the principals' experiences with regard to policy sharing.

### **5.3.1. The School Principals**

Firstly, I asked principals how they communicated and shared the ideas of the programme. All of them emphasized the devoted work done by the SSPP coordinators as the communication media. The following comments are examples of their answers.

- *“I was so impressed particularly by the role played by coordinators. They played a very crucial role and materials which they assisted our teachers were quite, very, very helpful. SSPP was a ‘hands on’ programme. I will explain what I mean by ‘hands on’, that the character that I’m talking about would come and spend some time with teachers”.*

(School A)

- *“It was really democratic and mutual both ways. As the manager I was kept well informed about all the developments and the fact that the coordinators spent a lot of time. They would come and meet with the teachers.”* (School C)
- *“Coordinators was the bond between the project and the teachers, and that helps in certain instances. You will see all of the coordinators going to class with the teachers, the kind of mutual relations between the project and the educators was enormous and also the involvement of learners”* (School D)

As mentioned above, principals emphasized the strong connection between schools and coordinators as the policy sharing system. They told me that the coordinators visited schools once a week on average and schools could explain their ideas and position through the coordinators. In contrast, there was only one principal who mentioned the Forum meetings and the policymakers as a part of the policy sharing system. He said:

- *“In all these Meetings that we would attend, quarterly or once in a semester, they [policymakers] would be there. They would be part of those Meetings. So whatever we raised, they were there.”* (School B)

He might have meant that it was structurally possible to communicate with the policymakers, but nothing was more than that. He seemed to have some kind of negative feeling regarding the policymakers. He added that:

- *“I acknowledge that the University of Cape Town has found it necessary to come to disadvantaged schools so that we open up the access for them to go to tertiary institutions, but my anxiety is that the University of Cape Town could not admit them, so which becomes then a futile exercise. UCT does not take into consideration our Learners.”*

*UCT will still discriminate against our Learners. We found that these [coordinators] are the people with heart. This is why we accepted these programmes here. They are right people bringing this programme, but the institution, 'no'.* (School B)

I have not read any statement which mentions anything regarding special treatment for the SSPP students on the part of UCT. Neither have I heard any hearsay regarding this. I am thus not in a position to either support or contradict his opinion. One thing I have to state is that he expected the commitment of the policymakers to the programme to be quite different from what the policymakers intended. This was the reason why he had some negative feeling regarding UCT as an institution throughout the SSPP programme. There seems to be little doubt about the poor or limited communication between the school side and the policymakers' side.

To recap and summarize the above discussion, I found that while all of the principals enjoyed good communications with the SSPP coordinators, no one particularly mentioned communication with the policymakers. The principal in School B seemed to have a negative impression about their absence. Because both the SSPP Forum and the Management Committee were not functioning as designed, programme theory as well as responsibility for the evaluation disappeared from both school staff and coordinators. As a result, the conclusion of Section 5.2, that both school staff and coordinators did not have sound programme theory is not surprising. The Coordinators made their SSPP policy by default, and brought it to the schools without having any interference from the policymakers. If the programme had good communications and stronger commitment from the policymakers, the SSPP "policy by default" may have been different.

### 5.3.2. The School Teachers

Next, I describe how school teachers saw the policy sharing of the SSPP programme. All of the teachers again praised the dedicated work of the SSPP coordinators. I pick up a couple of comments as examples as follows:

- *"They [Coordinators] wanted us to initiate something, then they will come in and help us. They didn't like that you will come and impose some activity, but they were very happy if I said: 'I want to do this activity. Can you help me?' They were pleased when I took the initiative which I admit, I think that's what I have to do, even with any other person."*  
(School A, Science)
- *"You will find that the SSPP was more on a personal basis, when they come, they do not to change the teacher as such, 'Come, do it our way'. But what they did, they sat down with us and collectively we looked at our needs. We did the programme together. They came here and they measured and it was tailor-made for us. Even though there were four schools on this project, never did they ever use exactly the same approach for the four schools."*  
(School D, Science)
- *"Those people [Subject Advisors of Education Department] don't come to the schools. They only come to the schools in November during exam time just to moderate their marks, which is very unfair. Because they're supposed to be here for the whole year. People need them, need their opinions for the whole year. The SSPP people were like the staff of this school. They were so friendly, working with us, unlike the Subject Advisors that come in November only to moderate the marks."*  
(School A, Mathematics)
- *"I have attended workshops of the Department, etc., but those were all general workshops. These workshops with the SSPP were focused on specific problems that Teachers experience."*  
(School D, Mathematics)

All of their comments were filled with admiration for the coordinators. While I was very impressed with their response, I found that, as I imagined, no teacher particularly mentioned the commitment of the policymakers to the SSPP project.

On one level, it would not have been a significant issue provided that the coordinators were representing policy from the Forum. However, as I mentioned in the former section, from the comments of the school principals, I doubt it. Indeed, the next section clearly shows this was not the case.

### 5.3.3. The SSPP Coordinators

From the above interview analysis of the school principals and the teachers, it became obvious that the school staff had a good relationship with the SSPP coordinators. This section asks coordinators about their policy sharing status. Firstly, I asked all coordinators whether any of the policymakers committed themselves to programme planning or not. The answers were as follows:

- *“The primary task, the primary people that came up with the curriculum of SSPP were basically the people that were working in SSPP. Most of the ideas came from the SSPP people [coordinators] themselves.”* (Mathematics Coordinator)
- *“They [policymakers] didn’t have input in the nature of the programmes. They didn’t design the programme. We did. They didn’t say, “This is what you must do” so we then designed a programme to reach the goal.”* (Science Coordinator)

Other than that, the General Manager of the SSPP also mentioned that the policymakers did not seriously take responsibility for the SSPP. From the coordinators' comments, I could establish that the policymakers were not involved in planning. This must be the reason why all of the SSPP activities reflected the coordinators' aims. Except for a couple of "cooperative members" in the policy member group, they were generally not particularly satisfied with the relationship between themselves and the policymakers.

The General Manager of the SSPP acutely expressed his major disappointments:

- *"I found that the collegiality of people, especially in the Department of Education is minimal, They [DoE] just gave it, passed it on to the SDU. That's my understanding of the situation. The Department of Education were not interested. Maybe one could say they did take the initiative because they managed to get the money. But then they took the money and just passed it on. They passed it onto us in order to run with the ball".*

(General Manager)

He told me that the stance of UCT towards the SSPP was not a cooperative one. He emphasized that the role of the Department of Education in UCT was just that of a "Funding Coordinator" for the SSPP and there was nothing more than that through the programme even though assistance was sought on several occasions. But one thing I have to mention was that even though all the stakeholders complained about the lack of support from the policymakers, there was only one coordinator who regarded the lack of policy consensus among the coordinators as a problem. However, he also noted that this lack of management which created the problem also created opportunities:

- *“One thing that’s helped to make SSPP work was that the project was not strongly centrally managed. That was partly because [General manager’s name] was a weak Manager, it was partly also because [Mathematics Coordinator’s name] and I both came in with two, with sets of strong ideas and we didn’t fight about each other’s ideas.”*

(Science Coordinator)

While the Science coordinator mentioned the above issue, the General Manager of the SSPP did not speak about the internal miscommunication issue to me. Instead, he mainly emphasized how he tried to involve the SSPP policymakers in the SSPP. Therefore, I assume that the General Manager might have decided that his main job was to draw support from the policymakers, mainly from the university. Whatever the reasons through, he seemed unable to do this in a material sense. At the same time his day-to-day administrative management of the SSPP activities was weak, and this allowed different policy interpretations among the coordinators.

The next section moves on to the interviews with the policymakers. The focus of the discussion was why they did not commit to the programme in spite of taking management positions in the SSPP.

#### **5.3.4. The SSPP Policymakers**

My final question asked how the policymakers of the SSPP felt in terms of commitment to the project. To begin the discussion, I introduced the comments from the former director of the TLRC. Although she was one of the policymakers of the SSPP, her office was on the same floor as the coordinators’. Therefore, her comments about the relationship between SDU (TLRC at that time) and UCT’s

Department of Education (School of Education at that time) were close to the ones from the coordinators.

- *"The School of Education [SoE] was not part of writing the Proposal. I and [assistant name] did it ourselves. I think we might have had one meeting [with SoE], a sort of political thing. We got somebody from the Department and Administration, quite high up. We got those people onto the Board. But there was nothing, nothing very, they didn't really give very much. It didn't come out of SoE funds. It wasn't particularly supported by SoE. [Name of general manager] got very concerned about bursaries and he tried to get UCT interested in working with the schools. He really battled to get a connection between [UCT and pilot schools]. He asked UCT, for example, to offer bursaries to Learners from those particular schools, etc. But nothing ever came of it."*

(Former Director of the TLRC)

What she told me was exactly what the coordinators told me. She emphasized that the SoE at UCT did not commit to the programme to any great extent. The next comment, which was from the Management Committee chair, who gave me a straightforward statement regarding the policymaker's stance towards the programme.

- *"It [the SSPP Forum] was quite funny meetings. We had completely different agendas and basically what the schools were wanting was for the University basically to give them not necessarily more money, but to give them more support to spend more money on ...things like extra lessons and providing extra coaching and that kind of thing. And we wanted to build up the capacity of the school themselves to do these kinds of things without having to provide for the schools, because obviously the model is not going to*

*work if it depends on having somebody from the outside to come in to help teach Maths and Science, so we had to be very careful on our side, because we weren't wanting to have a situation where we kind of took over the teaching of Maths and Science or put ourselves in place of the teaching that was being offered. We were never strongly involved. We were only involved in the sense that we kept a check on what was happening. We obviously gave advice, but beyond that, there wasn't a strong sort of sense of the School [of Education] being involved."* (Management Committee Chair)

He clarified his policy as "decentralisation", or "hand-off" for the SSPP. The coordinators however were looking for guidance and support (refer to the Manager interview on p.76). This gap in communication was confirmed as the lack of sense of "partnership". When I asked him how he conceptualized the partnership in the programme, he answered as follows:

- *"The Kellogg Foundation was prepared to put this money into developing University partnerships. So in that sense, the partnership was always between the University and the schools. It wasn't just the Department [School] of Education. It did represent the University more widely throughout, but the interesting thing is there wasn't really anybody from the Department of Education itself that was going to get involved with running it, because the money was going to be used to pay the salaries of the people who were working for the TLRC."* (Management Committee Chair)

Even though the SSPP policy of the Management Committee Chair was different from that of the coordinators who saw partnership as 'mutual support and assistance' amongst stakeholders, this was not the immediate problem of the SSPP. In many programmes, different stakeholders have different policies.

However, the problem of the SSPP was that neither the coordinators nor the policymakers recognized this policy difference and took it as an issue. If the coordinators could have communicated better and understood what the policymakers thought, they may have changed their programme approach. However, there was no coherent approach amongst the implementer's side.

On the one hand, the University of Cape Town, the Department of Education at UCT, and the School Development Units must all be viewed as distinct groups from the internal point of view. On the other hand, they are all in one university from the external point of view. Most of the school principals and teachers did not clearly separate these groups, and I think that was quite natural. This internal distinction may have exacerbated the poor communications that were evident. There appeared to be no structure nor any individual who was willing to take a holding or supervisory role. The SSPP management structure certainly did not play this role. This must be one of the reasons why the programme ended up being poorly implemented and misevaluated.

#### **5.3.5. Summary**

Through the primary document analysis about the policy sharing status, I raised the research question asking "*How did each of the stakeholder groups share the policy of the programme?*". According to the document, the attendance of the policymakers to the Forum meetings was very poor. In addition, the Management Committee was held only once during the intervention period. Therefore, I assumed that there must be poor communications between the policymakers and other stakeholders.

The interview analysis in this section ended up with confirming the above assumption. While there was good communication between the schools and the coordinators, the SSPP coordinators did not communicate with the policymakers. The Management Committee Chair explained that the policymakers had chosen not to become involved in the programme because of making the programme independent from outside assistance. But in reality, there seemed to be also a political background to their decision, such as no fund allocation to the University side. Naturally enough, it follows that there was no consensus about the programme policy between the coordinators and the policymakers. However, it must be more important to point out that there was no consensus of the programme theory even among the coordinators. As already mentioned, the Mathematics and the Science coordinators had different approach to the programme, and the General Manager of the SSPP did not properly coordinate the daily activities by managing coordinators. As a result, the policy of the SSPP was developed by the coordinators' and by default.

Through the research, I found that there were two ways for the stakeholders to commit to policy. One was through being involved in 'theory development', and the other was through 'policy sharing'. The first means of commitment, 'theory development' is a kind of ideal situation. It is generally better if programme theory is developed under a wide range of stakeholder's commitment. However, such conditions are not always produced because of the political factors, time and money constraints, and so on. This is clearly seen in the SSPP, where the policymakers did not commit to programme theory development, and the policy was developed by the coordinators. This though is not immediately a problem as long as someone takes responsibility for that process.

On the other hand, the second mechanism for commitment, 'policy sharing' by stakeholders, is indispensable for the sound implementation and evaluation of the programme. Once programme theory is developed and determined, all the stakeholders need to accept the outcome. This process is supposed to avoid adopting ambiguous programme theory which has diverse or absent lines of responsibility. However in the SSPP, both 'policy development' and 'policy sharing' by the stakeholders did not occur. While the General Manager of the SSPP chased the policymakers to get them involved in the programme, the policymakers tried to keep away from this responsibility. As a result, the subject coordinators were freed from management control and did not share their policy even among themselves. Consequently, there was no one who ever really had managerial responsibility for the programme. In this sense, the lack of policy sharing generated the problems referred to above.

#### **5.4. Conclusions**

Table 4 (over) captures all of the interview responses from the stakeholder groups. The table shows the stakeholders perceptions with regards to the key questions of this research, such as "Overall Goal", "Programme Theory" ("Achieved Outcome" and "Indicators"), and "Policy Sharing Status". To summarize all the discussions in the chapter, this section is organized around the three key question in this research.

Table 4: Stakeholders' Perceptions of the SSPP Programme Components

Stakeholders (No.of people - 19)	Overall Goals	Programme Theory		Policy Sharing Status
		Achieved Outcome	Indicators	
Pilot School Principal (4)	· Teacher development (4)	· Student Matric improvement (2)	· Overall School Pass rate (2)	· Good communication with Coordinators
		· Student Matric improvement and Tertiary institution access (1)	· Overall School Pass rate and Tertiary students number (1) (No detail data was available)	
		· Teachers motivation(1)	· Observing teachers attitude (1)	
Pilot School Teachers (7)	· Teacher development and student development (5)	· Student Matric improvement (5)	· Overall School Pass rate (3) · Subject average score (1) · No explicit indicators (1)	· Good communication with Coordinators
	· Teacher development (2)	· Student motivation (2)	· Observing student attitude who participated in Camp (2)	
The SSPP Coordinators (4)	· Tertiary institution access (2)	· Student matric improvement (2)	· Counting tertiary students (not implemented) (2)	· Good communication with School Staff, but not with Policymakers
	· Multi-goal programme (1)	· No detail was available (1)		
	· Building partnership (1)	· Teachers development and description of school nature (1)	· Class Observation and interview, (not implemented) (1)	
The SSPP Policymakers (4)	· Multi-goal programme (1)	· Teacher development (1)	· Class Observation (implemented but data was not available) (1)	· Kept away from the programme except few members
	· Develop competencies (1)	· Student competency improvement (1)	· Baseline test analysis (1)	
	· Fund raising for TLRC (2)	· Fund allocated to TLRC (2)		

- First Question : *What is the overall goal of the SSPP?*

Through the analysis of both documents and interview results, I found that most of stakeholders have recognized that the SSPP was a multi-purpose programme. As Table 4 shows there were at least six discrete goals named by the respondents.

However, because of both under-developed documents and the lack of an effective management body in the programme, that multi-purpose of the SSPP was interpreted by the subject coordinators and implemented by them as they liked. Consequently, the policy of the SSPP was developed, as said, by the coordinators, and by default.

Therefore, the actual issue in terms of the overall goal of the SSPP was not goal setting itself, but the lack of its management. The lack of management induced the ambiguity of the programme goals of the SSPP.

- Second Question : *Was there any programme theory applied in the course of the SSPP intervention?*

This question originally arose from the analysis of the Evaluation Report. The analysis of the Evaluation Report in Chapter 2 showed that one of the major outcome indicators in the report (basic competencies) had no direct linkage with the actual activities. That is why I suspected that there was no programme theory in the SSPP. The document review also did not show any explicit linkage between goals and means to achieve these goals. The subsequent interview analysis confirmed this point. Table 4 shows that stakeholders did not have a sound linkage between outcomes and indicators. As a result, there was weak programme theory which undermine the evaluation. Part of the reason for this was also that school staff did not have an incentive to evaluate, the coordinator

group blamed the evaluation committee, the evaluator focused on mainly his interest area to evaluate the programme, and the sponsors did not take the programme seriously in terms of evaluation.

I suggest therefore, that there was no evaluability of the programme, not only because of the absence of programme theory, but also because of the absence of its requirements.

- Third Question : *How did each of the stakeholder groups share the policy of the programme?*

According to the document analysis, the SSPP seemed to have had a very limited involvement by the policymakers. The policymakers' attendance at the Forum meetings was very poor (see Table 1), and the Management Committee met only once during the intervention period. Table 4 shows that both school staff and the SSPP coordinators mentioned that communication with the policymakers was poor. The interviews with the policymakers suggested that this was not accidental, but also because of their "decentralization", or "hands-off" policy. For various reasons, the policymakers were basically indifferent to the SSPP. In addition, there was no policy consensus even among the coordinators, and the general manager paid little attention to internal issues among stakeholders. As a result, neither the policymakers nor the General Manager controlled the programme policy which was implemented by the subject coordinators.

In the SSPP, no policy was shared among stakeholders. Whenever I interviewed the SSPP stakeholders, they each were able to explain their own programme logic. But none of these explanations were systematic enough or shared enough to be used as a programme theory for the purpose of evaluation.

As mentioned above the three key questions of Evaluability Assessment manifested that the SSPP programme was hardly evaluable, because none of the critical conditions for the evaluation, such as overall goal clarification, well-developed programme theory, and policy sharing among stakeholders, were satisfied. I found that there was one consistent issue throughout the discussion to explain this, that is the lack of management of the programme. Firstly, the overall goal of the SSPP became ambiguous due to poor management of activities. Secondly, the responsibility of programme evaluation by the Evaluation Sub-Committee was not carried out as the SSPP proposal intended, so that the programme theory of the SSPP, particularly the part of outcome evaluation, were poorly managed. And finally, both the General Manager and the policymakers did not manage the communication amongst stakeholders. Significantly, the lack of management made the SSPP an unevaluable programme.

To conclude the discussion relating to my analysis, I would like to quote the one more final comment from the Evaluation Sub-Committee chair. He was one of the policymakers who was very appreciated by all of coordinators in terms of his deep commitment. In the interview he told me his views regarding the nature of the programme implementation.

- *"It [SSPP] is an example of what happens when I think a complex team working on an intervention. It's almost inevitable, I would argue that, that you've got different interpretations of what people are doing. Now from my point of view as the evaluator, we were looking at impact if you like and trying to understand what the impact of this intervention, this math and science intervention mainly was, not so much all of these other things".* (Evaluation Committee Chair)

There is nothing I can deny in what he said. It seems that it is inevitable that one cannot avoid the complexities related to teams working in many types of programme implementation. And that is the reason why I brought in the concept of programme theory for this programme. Programme theory attempts to secure, a credible evaluation, and also to minimize unintentional implementation errors. Programme theory allows programmes to be controlled by the aims of the programme itself and not by any particular person's intention. This did not appear to be the case with the SSPP. Chapter 6 provides a summary and outlines some implication of this.

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## **Chapter 6 Summary and Conclusion**

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This chapter concludes the discussion about the Evaluability Assessment of the SSPP. As mentioned in Chapter 1, this study had two main aims. The first aim of the research was to discuss the issue of the evaluability of educational projects through a case study of the SSPP. Section 6.1 below describes the key issue of evaluability for education programmes. The main lesson of this research is given in this section.

The second aim of the research was to raise the importance of programme theory for credible evaluation to take place. Section 6.2 tries to contribute to the idea of better programme theory development for other educational programmes by examining three key conditions for credible evaluation which derived from the SSPP research, namely, a time frame consciousness, a clarification of cause-effect relationships, and some limitations of programme evaluation.

### **6.1. The Evaluability of Educational Programmes**

In Chapter 3, I demonstrated firstly, that evaluations are important to provide feedback to improve programmes, or to provide information for decision-makers about what to do next. Secondly, I showed that better programme theory provides for better programme implementation and evaluation. In other words, I showed how poorly planned and designed programmes (those with poor programme theory in other words) cannot and should not be evaluated. The main concept of Evaluability Assessment is to respond to the issue of

whether the programme is evaluable or not through the analysis of programme theories embedded in projects. This research then applied EA to the SSPP as a summative and ex-post evaluation to clarify the status of the overall goals, the programme theory, and the extent of policy sharing among stakeholders. Using the official documents and interviewing the stakeholders, I tried to find out whether or not the SSPP was an evaluable programme. In summary, I realized that most of the SSPP activities were carried out without reference to any policy and in a manner which allowed the implementers to in fact create the policy. This is the reason why I concluded that the SSPP was not originally planned and designed as an evaluable programme.

The main lesson of this research was that most of the critical conditions for the evaluation of the SSPP, such as overall goal clarification, well-developed programme theory, and policy sharing among stakeholders, were not satisfied mainly because of the lack of sound management. Weak management of the SSPP could not deal with the complexity of the multi-goal policy, and allowed the coordinators to create programme policy "by default." The research indicated that the evaluability of a education programme heavily depends on its management being able to clarify, develop, and implement theory throughout the programme periods. Poor programme management leads to poor programme theory, and ends up with poor programme evaluation.

In addition, this Evaluability Assessment research also tried to indicate what would be important conditions for sound programme implementation and evaluation for other school intervention programmes. The next section explains these implications from the EA research of the SSPP.

## **6.2. Implications of the Research Findings**

As mentioned above, this research has drawn the general lesson that the SSPP was an unevaluable programme mainly because the lack of management induced an absence of programme theory. This section tries to contribute to the idea of better programme theory development for other education programme by addressing three critical conditions, namely, a time frame consciousness, a clarification of cause-effect relationships, and some limitations of programme evaluation. All of these are conditions which I found through the research to be relevant to credible programme theory development, implementation, and evaluation.

### **6.2.1. A Time Frame Consciousness**

The first implication of the research is the importance of Time-Frame Management. Although the SSPP was downsized from four years to 18 months, the project was simply compressed and did not take this time-frame change into account. As a result, short-term activities and long-term activities of the SSPP were jumbled in the SSPP, and the outcomes did not appear clearly.

For school intervention programmes, the time-frame is crucial because it directly affects what outcomes could be expected. Generally speaking, while school improvement approaches (such as teacher development by the Science coordinator) can lead to sustainable outcomes, it requires a longer term period to get its outcomes. On the other hand, while school effectiveness approaches (such as direct student intervention by the Mathematics coordinator) allows the programme to have short-term outcomes, it does not always promise sustainable development. What is important here is that these approaches should not be chosen simply by the implementers' preference, but by the time frame of the

programme. The Programme implementer needs to plan the activities by considering what outcomes should be achieved within the time-limit.

### **6.2.2. A Clarification of Cause-Effect Relationships**

The second implication of the research is the cause-effect relationships between the activities and outcomes. In the interview process, most of the stakeholders showed an understanding and could provide a logical explanation for the activities of SSPP. For example, some responded that the *“teacher development programme of the SSPP improved the overall pass rate of matric”*, others told me that *“the tutorials for students gave them an opportunity for tertiary education access”*, and so on. Nonetheless, these comments were basically based on their subjective observations. They were largely unable to clarify how the actual SSPP activities directly impacted on their ‘observable’ outcomes. Consequently, most of the stakeholders simply linked the activities of the SSPP to whatever they felt improved during the 18 months.

Importantly, the managers of the programme did not specify the overall goals and overall outcomes. As a result, the project had left policy to the coordinators and became unevaluable, because no one could clarify the cause-effect relation between activities and outcomes. Although stakeholders pointed out some improvement, no evidence was provided to show that such outcomes were achieved by the programme.

Once the needs analysis was done, the overall goal of the project needs to be decided and controlled under strong management. People in the field, like programme coordinators and school staff, tend to focus on whatever observable outcomes arise even if these are not necessarily related to the overall goal of the

project The absence of tight programme management often creates programme policy 'by default', and evaluation in these circumstances is going to be very difficult.

### **6.2.3. Some Limitations of Programme Evaluation**

The final implication of the research concerns the limitations of programme evaluation. Programmes inherently involve lots of purposes, because different stakeholders will have different aims and different expectations often creating multiple lines of activity and goals. As a principle of evaluation, programmes need to be evaluated for all stakeholder groups and on the multiple activities. In practice though, as was the case of the SSPP, this does not always happen. For example, the teachers and student groups at the schools were not evaluated in the programme.

The main problem is that comprehensive evaluations are mostly impossible due to time and cost constraints. In other words, evaluations often reflect partial interests. Again in the SSPP, the Evaluation Report followed one policymaker's interest, i.e., basic competency improvement, in a way that did not seem to the programme coordinators to be the appropriate outcome evaluation of the actual activities. This is a typical limitation of programme evaluations. In this research, I consistently stated that better programme theory produces better programme evaluation. However, even though programmes should have sound programme theories, the focus of programme evaluations needs to be pragmatically limited because of time and money constraints.

Therefore, evaluations should clarify their focus and their limitations as fully as possible. The issue of evaluation is neither who evaluated nor which area

was evaluated, but it is very important to know how the project was evaluated and how it was verified.

### **6.3. Conclusion**

A year has passed since I first learnt about the SSPP. I still clearly remember the very first day I met all of SSPP staff members and school teachers at the final conference at UCT. Everyone looked so pleased to be given the opportunity to express their experience of and achievements during the programme. I immediately decided to pick up this project as my research topic. Fortunately, or unfortunately, now I have completed my research. Moreover I am a trifle concerned that the results I have presented in this study may demotivate some people who have been very committed to the programme. Honestly speaking, I have to admit that the SSPP programme did not make the most of its potential for a variety of reasons.

However, I also found that this programme was filled with peoples' passion and dedication. And I strongly believe those are the most important conditions for the success of any kind of social programme. In that sense, I really hope that all of stakeholders of the SSPP will have a second chance to engage in this kind of programme again. If that should happen, I would definitely come back and join the programme. I am looking forward to that possibility.

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Table A :Tutorial Attendance and Matric Performance (Maths)

## School A

Attendance %	No. attending	No. passing	No. failing	% passing
60-100%	31	20	5	64.5
30-59%	21	9	4	42.8
1-29%	7	1	4	14.2
Non-attendance	0	0	6	N/A
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>50.8</b>

## School B

Attendance %	No. attending	No. passing	No. failing	% passing
60-100%	9	2	7	22.2
30-59%	3	2	1	66.6
1-29%	5	1	4	20.0
Non-attendance	23	0	23	0.0
<b>Total</b>		<b>5</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>12.5</b>

## School C

Attendance %	No. attending	No. passing	No. failing	% passing
60-100%	11	6	5	54.5
30-59%	9	5	4	55.5
1-29%	6	2	4	33.3
Non-attendance	6	0	6	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>40.6</b>

## School D

Attendance %	No. attending	No. passing	No. failing	% passing
60-100%	11	10	1	90.9
30-59%	30	24	6	80.0
1-29%	38	27	11	71.0
Non-attendance	14	8	6	57.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>74.1</b>

Source: SDU, 2001c: 9-11

**Table B : Tutorial Attendance and Matric Performance (Science)**

**School A**

Attendance %	No. attending	No. passing	No. failing	% passing
60-100%	16	16	0	100.0
30-59%	9	8	1	89.0
1-29%	19	11	8	58.0
Non-attendance	0	0	0	n/a
<b>Total</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>80.0</b>

**School B**

Attendance %	No. attending	No. passing	No. failing	% passing
60-100%	4	4	0	100.0
30-59%	5	5	0	100.0
1-29%	12	8	4	66.0
Non-attendance	3	2	1	66.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>79.0</b>

**School C**

Attendance %	No. attending	No. passing	No. failing	% passing
60-100%	11	8	3	73.0
30-59%	2	1	1	50.0
1-29%	1	1	0	100.0
Non-attendance	1	0	1	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>67.0</b>

**School D**

Attendance %	No. attending	No. passing	No. failing	% passing
60-100%	8	8	0	100.0
30-59%	11	11	0	100.0
1-29%	26	26	0	100.0
Non-attendance	6	5	1	83.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>98.0</b>

Source: SDU, 2001c: 9-11

## Interview Schedules for SSPP Stakeholders

### Interviewer's background

- Name of interviewer                      Motoe Nakajima
- Position of interviewer                      UCT Masters' student

### General purpose and conditions of the interview

- The purposes of this interview are to find each role-player's perceptions of the SSPP goals, activities and evaluation methods.
- Therefore, this interview is not about the SSPP outcome evaluation, such as measuring of program's successfulness or failure.
- All the interview information will be dealt with anonymously.
- Interviewees do not need to answer the question if interviewees do not want to.
- Final results of the research will be shared with all of SSPP stakeholders and interviewers.
- Length of the interview is between 30 to 45 minutes

### Question List

#### 1 Background questions

**1.1 Please explain your present position**

**1.2 SSPP has been done a number of interventions within 18 months. Please explain your commitment to SSPP briefly.**

## 2 Perceptual question

### 2.1 *Programme Goals*

- 2.1.1 What was your perception of the overall goal of the SSPP? (e.g. the purposes of the SSPP you have heard, or read, or found)
- 2.1.2 What group did you think the main target of SSPP?
- 2.1.3 Was the overall goal of the SSPP reasonable for you? If not, please explain what it should be.
- 2.1.4 Is there anything you feel should be changed about the goals and objectives of SSPP?

### 2.2 *Programme Theory (Outcomes and Indicators)*

- 2.2.1 Have you noticed outcomes of the SSPP, if any, at your school? If yes, please specify which area is affected.
- 2.2.2 Could you tell me how you have noticed the above impact?
- 2.2.3 Has any of the SSPP evaluation at *your school* (Internal evaluation) been done so far? If yes, please specify how and what you evaluated.
- 2.2.4 Have you applied any particular criteria or measurement for above evaluation?

### 2.3 *Policy Sharing Status*

- 2.3.1 Do you know how the programme content of the SSPP was decided?
- 2.3.2 Did you participated in the process of deciding programme goals and activities?
- 2.3.3 Have you had any opportunities to express your ideas to the programme stakeholders?

### 2.4 *General Impression*

- 2.4.1 Please explain your overall impression of the SSPP program.
- 2.4.2 Is there anything else I should know or anything you would like to add?
- 2.4.3 If SSPP was to start from tomorrow again, what would your expectation be?