



***Exploring the Need for a Community Liaison Person in
Facilitating Family and Community Involvement in
Schools in the Western Cape: A Case Study of Schools in
the Joe Slovo Park Informal Settlement***

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Abstract

This study assessed the viability of a Community Liaison Person (CLP) in facilitating family and community involvement in schools in the Western Cape. A sample of sixteen participants consisting of five educators, four learners and four parents was drawn from two schools in the Joe Slovo Informal Settlement area. Furthermore, representatives of three NGOs were selected based on the focus of their work in education in various informal settlement areas around Cape Town. This study adopted an exploratory qualitative design using semi-structured interview schedules to guide face-to-face interviewing. Purposive non-random sampling procedures were adopted in selecting the participants. The data was analysed using Tesch's (1990) approach.

The main findings were:

- Fourteen participants indicated that the non-involvement of parents in their children's learning was largely due to time constraints and being uninformed about the role of their children's learning outcomes.
- Parents indicated that there was a lack of communication between themselves and the school, and did not know what happens at school. The principal believed there to be a breakdown of communication between parents and the school.
- All sixteen participants indicated that having a Community Liaison Person (CLP) would be beneficial to the learner and saw the main role of the CLP as being the link person between the school, the family, the community and other stakeholders. Furthermore, the majority of participants believed that the CLP could create a support networks amongst various stakeholders.

The main recommendations were:

- Training should be provided to school volunteers either by the Western Cape Education Department or a Non-Governmental Organisation so that school/family/community linkages can be formed.
- That further research (mixed methodology) be taken to determine the need and feasibility of implementing such a role as a CLP.
- Specially trained community persons or someone who has a social work/community development background could fill the role of CLP.

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List of Abbreviations

- CBOs Community Based Organisations
- CLO Community Liaison Officer
- CLP Community Liaison Person
- DECS Department of Education and Children's Services
- NGOs Non-Governmental Organisations
- PI Parental Involvement
- SASA The South African Schools Act
- SGB School Governing Body
- WCED Western Cape Education Department

Chapter One: Introduction

1. Introduction

Besides poorly trained teachers, one of the many issues affecting the South African educational system is the poor schools facilities that children are expected to learn in (Medley, 2012, 1). The environment in which a child learns can be a barrier to growth and development and has an effect on a growing child's mind. The learner's socio-economic background plays a significant role in the progress of the learner. South African schools have been faced with challenges which are a direct result of the country's controversial Apartheid history.

Under the Apartheid government, the Bantu Education Act, 1953 (Act No. 47 of 1953) was set out to further segregate the already segregated educational system of South Africa. "Blacks were not to aspire to certain positions in society and so education for such positions was not deemed necessary" (Christopher, 1994, 150). Education under Apartheid rule consequently set out to produce a docile and subservient black population who would provide labour in certain sectors like farming and mining during a time of increasing mechanisation. Schools segregated along racial lines perpetuated the dominant Apartheid ideology.

Education provided for non-whites was thus inferior to that provided to white learners as the educational system set out to achieve the interests of the white minority. It denied black people access to quality education and denied them equal access to resources. The Apartheid government used its Calvinist Christian thinking to substantiate notions that the whites were masters of the non-white races and were justified in controlling them as 'children' in need of guidance. Blacks were to live in "Bantu society" with a separate "Bantu Education" and partake of a limited "Bantu Economy". The Black African populations were portrayed as traditional and rural and the educational system treated the population as if they were minors in need of white supervision and who needed to be kept "in their place" (Kallaway, 1984, 51).

In 1994, the newly elected democratic government stepped into power and took control of what was the most inequitable education system in the world (Republic of South Africa (RSA), 2008, 7). Physical learning environments were poor at best and learner outcomes were dismal. The majority of learners attended school in dangerous buildings and had no electricity, clean water or facilities (RSA, 2008, 7). According to a publication by the South African government, there is a high correlation between the environment in which a child

learners and the outcome of that child's education and abilities. Poor environments have been shown to contribute to lower attendance of both learners and teachers, and learners prematurely dropping out of schools (RSA, 2008, 7).

The newly elected government, aware of these challenges, set out in 1994 to document the extent of the problem. Within two years, evidence was produced showing the inequalities and low standards of the teaching environments, and the Department of Education began the arduous task of closing the inequality gap between previously white and previously black schools (RSA, 2008, 7). The government was tasked with making a host of changes in the school environment which included education for all specifically stating that no child should be turned away (RSA, 2008, 20).

The most recent study conducted by the Department of Basic Education shows that in 2010 there were 12 644 208 learners enrolled in the educational system in South Africa across all sectors (SAinfo, 2012, 1). These learners were divided amongst 30 586 learning institutions. Of these learners, 93.4% attended public schools while only 3.6% attended independent schools. Of this total number of learning institutions, 6 231 made up the total number of secondary schools. In these schools 3 831 937 learners were taught by 88 408 teachers. The country's average ratio of teacher to learner is currently sitting at 1 teacher for every 29.3 learners. Independent private schools had smaller classes with seventeen-and-a-half learners per teacher.

South African expenditure on education is relatively higher than most other countries and is usually 20% of the States total expenditure. This is currently the largest share of government spending. In spite of this, the legacy of Apartheid can still be felt especially in rural areas where black children are still receiving poor education (SAinfo, 2012, 1). Current illiteracy rates are estimated to be 18% of adults over the age of fifteen, totalling almost nine million adults. In townships, most teachers themselves are poorly trained. In spite of these challenges, the educational system made some positive steps (SAinfo, 2012, 1). In 1993, almost half of students who attended higher education institutions were white, while a meagre 40% of those attending were black, with only 6% of coloured and 7% Indian students in the educational system. Just over ten years later, by 2005, the number of white students in secondary schools had decreased to 25% while black students, on the other hand, had increased to an impressive 61%. Sadly, however, this increase in black students at tertiary level is not apparent with only 14.8% of black learners entering higher education levels.

A challenge which has not been sufficiently addressed is the lack of quality education in the poorer rural communities. Education in provinces such as Gauteng and the Western Cape are often better resourced but even in these areas the rural community schools and schools in areas of informal settlements are often severely neglected and under resourced. The government has developed an action plan for 2014 whereby they aim to improve literacy and numeracy and attract well-trained teachers as well as ensuring that learners have access to textbooks. Part of this action plan is to improve school infrastructure. Bursaries have also been set aside for teacher training and development in conjunction with the development of a new syllabus which ensures that teachers are teaching for the full allocated time slots covering all aspects of the curriculum.

Education of the poor is a priority which is being addressed through the provision of ‘no fee’ schools and other educational institutions which are completely funded by government. These types of schools are situated in the country’s most poverty stricken areas. Another attempt at improving the state of education in poor areas is the “National Schools Nutrition Programme” which ensures that over seven million school children receive a cooked meal five days of the week. Further programmes to address these challenges include HIV/AIDS awareness programmes, as well as basic adult education and training (SAinfo, 2012, 1).

1.1 Problem Statement :

A high number of parents in the poor communities, in particular, are not involved in decisions that impact on their children’s educational growth and development. This may be due to several reasons such as:

- Educators find it difficult to get parents involved.t.
- Parents are often not contactable or do not present themselves for meetings.
- Parents themselves may feel intimidated due to their own literacy levels and/or educational status.

The socio-economic circumstances of the children’s families may contribute towards the ‘disconnect’ between the parents and the school.

A Community Liaison Person could facilitate greater dialogue between the school and the families (Rammala, 2009, 45). Thus it would be essential for a Community Liaison Person (CLP) to work more closely with parents to facilitate their involvement in their childrens’ learning. Furthermore, working with the school system, the CLP could link parents to the school system in various ways. Special meetings could be arranged to provide such parents

with guidelines as to how they could help with homework and address the parents' own lack of confidence in understanding the work assigned to their children.

Furthermore, in a country as diverse as South Africa, with eleven nationally recognised languages, the language barrier often poses a challenge between staff members and families. Other factors at play involve difficulty in attending the school meetings due to transportation problems as well as poor communication about the meetings by school staff members. Parents often lack confidence or do not have time to attend school functions and there is little effort on the part of the schools to ensure that parents understand the importance of attending meetings (Mncube, 2011, 1).

1.2 South African Public School Governance

The South African Schools Act (SASA) of 1996 outlined the need for a School Governing Body (SGB) which was set up in order to deal with the many challenges facing schools post 1994. The SGB should consist of parents, educators, non-teaching staff members and learners in the case of secondary schools. The main function of this body is to ensure that the overall school administration was conducted in a manner which would better ensure accountability and enhance school effectiveness. Parents are legally bound to chair the SGB in South African schools in an attempt to empower parents and encourage their participation in school activities and decision making (Mncube, 2011, 4).

Constant reformation of policies has been a central focus of the government in an attempt to bring about redress. In 1996 the South African Schools Act (SASA) was passed which outlined the partnership which was necessary between the State, learners and educators in accepting joint responsibility for the running and governance of public schools (Roos, 2010, 57). As a part of this initiative for change, the SASA outlined the necessity for a School Governing Body which would be made up of educators, parents and community members and would be responsible for the schools major decision making processes (Roos, 2010, 58). However, despite efforts to 'democratise' the governance of schools, one of the most important challenges has been a lack of suitably qualified teachers (Roos, 2010, 58).

The SGB is responsible for determining the language of the school, school fees and the hiring of various school staff members. This mandate assumes that parents have the time available to participate in such important decision making. Time is one of the challenges contributing to low levels of parental involvement in schools (Mncube, 2011, 8). Parental Involvement (PI)

theory indicates that the involvement of parents leads to better educational outcomes. According to PI theory, when parents are entrusted with definite responsibilities, they have the feeling of ownership and are inclined to invest more in schools and their children's education (Mncube, 2011, 22).

Schooling is compulsory for learners between the ages of seven and fifteen. Learning is divided into three phases: the Foundation Phase, which is Grade R to Grade 3; the intermediate phase, which is Grade 4 to Grade 6; and the Senior Phase, which is Grades 7 to 9. During the foundation phase, learners focus on literacy and numeracy as well as life skills. The intermediate phase focuses on language, literacy, mathematics, arts, culture, life orientation, social, environmental and management sciences as well as natural sciences and technology. At the senior phase, learners focus on all the categories from the intermediate phase but also focus on economic management sciences. A successful completion of Grade 9 entitles learners to a General Education and Training Certificate (GETC) (Western Cape Government, 2012, 1). Learners receive a matriculation certificate when they complete grade 12 successfully. This may allow them into tertiary education.

1.3 Study Context and Geographical Location

This section will describe the study's context and its geographical location within the Western Cape.

- **Marconi Beam**

The Marconi Beam settlement area began as a settlement area for the racing horse grooms who worked at the Milnerton Race Course (Haysom, 2009, 1). Due to its location, the settlement grew over the years to accommodate more migrants who brought in new skills and new occupations in their search for work in Cape Town. Marconi Beam residents have suffered harassment, raids and evictions over the years but in 1990 they entered negotiations with ratepayers and developers and demanded their right to remain in Milnerton. Eventually, in the late 1990s, they were granted a five hectare portion of land and a public-private community partnership for low cost housing. By securing low cost housing delivery on prime land, the settlement area upon which Joe Slovo Park was later founded had challenged Apartheid policies and asserted their rights to live on land which is based in close proximity to their places of employment.

- **Joe Slovo Park Informal Settlement**

Joe Slovo Park is a small informal settlement in Marconi Beam in the Milnerton area of the Western Cape. The history of townships goes back to 1927 when Langa Township was

established for black workers. The history of this is important because knowing where a nation comes from helps to understand where it is today and informal settlements need to be considered in this light (Telschow, 2003, 8). During Apartheid, specific land was allocated to non-white members of society. The Natives Act or Natives (Abolition of Passes and Co-ordination of Documents) Act No. 67 of 1952 was enacted, which stated that black people were allowed into the city solely for the purpose of providing services to the white minority. The informal settlements were thus erected on the outskirts of the cities to accommodate such workers and soon became over-crowded, which in turn caused severe social problems (Telschow, 2003, 8).

- **Schools targeted in this study**

The schools that this study targeted are the only primary and high schools in the Joe Slovo Park Township in Marconi Beam. These schools are Marconi Beam Primary School and Sinonjengo High School. Both schools are known for their status as low income schools and receive funding from the government. Although the schools are based in a severely impoverished community which has a high unemployment rate, they also depend on income generated from school fees. These schools are in close proximity to the upmarket areas of Milnerton.

- ***Sinonjengo High School***

Sinonjengo High School in the impoverished Joe Slovo Park, Milnerton, serves an extremely impoverished community with a high unemployment rate and high levels of child-headed households (Charity Challenge, 2012, 1). The school is currently attended by 731 learners and employs 22 educators. That means that for every educator there are 33 learners; a ratio which is more or less the norm in the public school system.

In spite of the high unemployment levels in the area, learners are required to pay a fee of R250 a year to attend the school, an amount which many learners cannot afford. The school itself has limited resources and has no access to a school hall, library or resource centre. The teaching staff has no staff room and there are no sporting facilities or field for the learners to play sports on.

The sponsorship provided to the school by the Rabie Property Group coupled with additional maths, English and science teachers enabled the school to raise its matric pass rate from a shocking 27% in 2008 to an impressive 90% in 2011. In 2011, 56 of the 77 matrics that passed their final exams qualified to attend tertiary education (Mkani-Mpolweni, Cape Argus,

2011).

- ***Marconi Beam Primary***

Marconi Beam Primary serves one of the poorest communities in Cape Town (Khanya, 2012, 1). The school currently has 1079 learners with only 27 educators, a ratio of 40 learners per educator. Thus resources available to this school are much more limited in comparison to the high school previously mentioned.

However, both of the schools which are the focus of this study face challenges which result from a lack of funding and other resources. Some challenges which exist in these schools will now be discussed.

1.4 Challenges faced by learners

What happens at home, in the community, at school and in the country as a whole affect learning outcomes to a greater or lesser degree. There are a number of factors which affect learning at home. These include absent parents who may not have the time to supervise homework. This may also include the lack of learning resources (Catsambis & Beveridge, 2001, 3).

The schools' structural issues, such as poor unsafe facilities, also impact learning. If teachers are often striking for better wages and are absent from classes, learning is compromised. If staff have not been adequately trained, their quality of teaching will suffer and learners will not reach their full potential regardless of how hard they work. The socio-economic situation of the community and country will also impact learner outcomes. Cultural issues and language barriers will also have an impact on learning potential (Bronfenbrenner, 1976: 6).

Learners will also be impacted upon by relationships with their peers i.e. by bullying behaviour; by poor relationships with teachers; by lack of books and other learning resources; by family problems and other challenging issues. Thus the challenges which may be faced by learners come from various sources.

Given the current educational crisis in the South African context, a concern is the lack of parental involvement in learners' education and their absence of meetings where important decisions are made about their children. An increased level of parental involvement is needed at family and community levels.

1.5 Rationale and Significance of the Study

Not much research has been carried out in this particular informal settlement. The schools crisis in South Africa has however been researched from many perspectives, for example teenage sexuality, violence, drugs and gangsterism (Unterhalter, 2003; van der Berg, 2007; Yamauchi, 2011; Burton & Leoschut, 2013).

However, holistic strategies need to be developed to address these crises. This research takes the view that the learner is impacted upon by his/her school, family and community in ways that affect learning. There is a need to understand these interacting forces and develop greater involvement of parents.

This research specifically explored the potential for a Community Liaison Person to facilitate family and community involvement in informal settlement schools. In this regard, this research, albeit a ‘pilot study’ in terms of its limited sample size, may offer valuable insights which could contribute to new ways of addressing the schools crisis in South Africa.

1.6 The Topic:

The topic of this study is exploring the need for a Community Liaison Person in facilitating family and community involvement in schools in the Western Cape: A case study of Joe Slovo Park.

1.7 Aim

The research is a broad angle scan which can be described as a “needs assessment” that explores the need for a Community Liaison Person by targeting learners, parents, educators and other key informants.

1.8 The Main Research Questions

1. How do the major stakeholders perceive the communication/participation of families and communities in relation to their involvement in schools?

2. What are the main challenges in bringing about a greater improvement of families and communities in the learning needs of school learners?
3. What are the perceptions amongst the stakeholders about a Community Liaison Person (CLP) who could play a role in facilitating communication/participation of families and communities in the schooling of their learners?
4. What are the perceived challenges in initiating such a role as the Community Liaison Person?

1.9 The Main Research Objectives

1. To determine how major stakeholders perceive the communication/participation of families and communities in relation to schools.
2. To explore what the main significant challenges are in bringing about a greater improvement of families and communities in the learning needs of school learners.
3. To establish what the perceptions amongst the stakeholders are about the potential for a Community Liaison Person (CLP) to play a role in facilitating communication/participation of families and communities in the schooling of their learners.
4. To uncover any perceived challenges in initiating such a role as the Community Liaison Person.

1.10 Clarification of Terms and Concepts

- **Stakeholders**

In this study, stakeholders will refer to people, groups, organisations or those members of a society who have a legitimate interest in the learning outcomes of students and can be affected by such outcomes of actions, and are thus likely to put pressure on those responsible for policy and programmes (Davids, Theron, and Maphunye, 2010, 53).

- **Western Cape Education Department**

The Western Cape Education Department (WCED) is responsible for public schooling in the province from grades one to twelve. Their focus area is on reading, writing and mathematics in primary schools with the aim to develop the foundations necessary for learning at a later stage. They aim to increase the number of learners who pass from grade to grade, as well as increase the number of matric learners passing and increase the grade which they obtain at matric level. The WCED is also responsible for providing support to educators, school management, parents and learners in order to enable successful learning and teaching. The WCED thus works towards promoting an environment that enables effective teaching and learning (Western Cape Education Department, 2012, 1).

- **Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Community Based Organisations (CBOs)**

An NGO is an institution created by a legal entity or a person, which operates independently from government. NGOs are private, self-governing and promote people centred development (Davids *et al*, 2010, 68). A CBO is also a non-governmental structure which is usually formed by community members and works within the community in which it is based. NGO staff usually operates in a number of areas in which they do not live and may be highly skilled professionals. Members of the CBO normally live and work in the area in which they are based. CBOs are distinctive in that they usually consist of a clear membership with an elected leader and define their existence largely by their location (Davids *et al*, 2010, 68).

- **Types of Schools in South Africa**

Schools in South Africa are classified as either independent (private) or public schools. While both types of schools receive funding from the state, private schools usually also have a much higher fee paid by parents of the learners who attend the school. Consequently, private schools are better resourced than public schools. Public schools are further classified as either Section 20 or Section 21 Schools. Section 21 schools are allocated some government funding but they have the responsibility to pay for their maintenance, extracurricular activities, and services to the school, as well as textbooks and educational material. Governing bodies of such schools thus have greater responsibilities. Section 20 schools, on the other hand, are provided with necessary textbooks and have their electricity and water bills paid for them by the government. Thus, the governing bodies of section 20 schools do not have as many resources as the SGBs of section 21 schools. All repairs at Section 20 schools are done by someone from the government department of Public Works (Education and Training Unit,

2011, 1). It is thus the responsibility of the SGB, as listed under Section 21 of the Schools Act, to ensure that the school and its property is properly maintained and that all services are paid for. It is furthermore the responsibility of the SGB to ensure that textbooks are purchased and that extramural activities occur at the school (Ministerial Review Committee, 2004, 103).

- **School Governing Bodies (SGB)**

The South African School Act No. 84 of 1996 describes the functions of the School Governing Body regarding any decision-making which is important for the functioning of the school and which promotes the best interests of the school. The SGB is responsible for providing support to educators and principals as well as administration which occurs at school level. The SGB is also responsible for determining the functioning hours of the school day as well as involving parents to undertake various duties and the appointment of various educators who work within the school. The main role of the SGB is to coordinate various strategic role-players in such a way to improve the school environment as well as teaching and learning outcomes.

- **School Community**

The definition of School Community used in this research refers to those who work in the school as well as those who live in the area. The focus is on those who play a role in the running and day-to-day life of a school. In other words, the school is made up of various stakeholders which make up the school community. The parents and families of learners, learners, educators, principals, administration staff, including the SGB all form part of the school community. As Redding aptly puts it, “the school community is an assemblage of the people intimately attached to a school- its teachers, administrators, learners and learners’ families” (1991, 7).

- **Parental Involvement and Participation**

Parental Involvement, according to Desforjes and Abouchaar (2003, 12), includes home activities as well as school-based activities. This refers to homework, attending meetings at the school, attending functions as well as taking part in the governance of the school. The term ‘parent’ is used in this research to refer to any legal guardian or carer of the learner. Participation is thus defined as parents paying more frequent visits to school and paying more attention to homework and school activities (Christenson and Reschly, 2010, 475).

- **Ubuntu School Leadership**

Ubuntu refers to the idea that “I am because you are” (Msila, 2008, 70) and this philosophy is extended into the leadership style of schools where the approach used by teachers is one that values compassion and kindness and places respect at the centre of teaching. The researcher considers the idea of parental or family involvement as only being successful when these ‘parents’ are valued for who they are and are empowered through capacity building to play a more meaningful role.

- **Community Liaison Person (CLP)**

The Community Liaison Person (CLP) is the researcher’s adaptation of the Australian Community Liaison Officer (CLO). The CLP is thus the person who acts as an intermediary between families and schools ensuring better channels of communication between schools and families regarding learner behaviour, wellbeing and educational progress. It is essential that such a Community Liaison Person understands the context in which they are working and is sensitive to the cultural and traditional values of the community.

- **Informal Settlements**

Informal settlement is the term used to define makeshift housing units set up in areas usually not designated for housing, which frequently have no electricity or sanitation, and are often erected in close proximity to urban areas. Houses in such settlements are usually constructed from waste material, cardboard, metal sheeting and wood, and lack services that formal housing areas receive, such as water and waste removal.

The following section introduces the reader to some of the main ethical considerations.

1.11 Ethics

Ethical research does not sacrifice the well-being of others in the quest for the truth. Thus a balance between the two is important to maintain the ethical code of conduct (Babbie and Mouton, 2009, 520). Being ethical refers to conforming to the standards of a group (Babbie and Mouton, 2009, 522).

General ethical standards uphold ‘no harm’ voluntary participation; no deception; privacy/confidentiality and researcher competence.

- Harm can occur in a number of ways and can include the release of personal information or sensitive material which might result in trauma. Importantly, tact was applied during any sensitive questioning. Names were replaced with pseudonyms and individual well-being was always a priority (Babbie and Mouton, 2009, 523). Lastly, learners were purposively selected by the principals and educators of each school so that no ‘vulnerable’ child was exposed to this research.
- Importantly, any participation in research must be voluntary on the part of the research subject. No one was forced into participation and respondents were made well aware that non-participation was their right. Participants were informed that withdrawal from the study at any point was perfectly acceptable. In this way it was ensured that voluntary consent was upheld (Babbie and Mouton, 2009, 522).
- There was no deception in the way this research was conveyed to the gatekeepers and to the respondents. Permission to conduct this research was obtained from the Western Cape Education Department and each principal was personally approached by the researcher in order to gain entry into the school. The study objectives were clearly laid out and once permission was given, the researcher continued to practise transparency in her direct dealings with all respondents so that no unrealistic expectations were raised.
- The learners, teachers and parents were all briefed about the nature and scope of the study and what the intended outcomes of the research are.
- With regards to privacy/anonymity and confidentiality, the names of any participants were not used so as to maintain anonymity. The quotes used in this study will not be identified as belonging to particular respondents. The data will be kept in a secure place and will only be open to scrutiny by the supervisor and examiners. After five years, all transcriptions will be destroyed.
- The interviews were all recorded electronically and notes were taken as well. All interviews occurred during break times and learning periods were not disrupted for the sake of the interview.
- Having completed an honours level project, the researcher deems herself competent to

carry out research in an ethical and rigorous manner.

1.12 Reflexivity

The researcher's personal characteristics will inevitably play a role in the ways in which research is approached and undertaken. The way the data is analysed will be affected by the researcher's experiences and this will be reflected in the commentary in response to the research (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2008, 507).

The researcher was anxious in undertaking this research which required entering informal settlements which could have been dangerous. At the same time the researcher was committed to doing this research and managed to 'gain entry' after much persistence and a struggle to meet with respondents due to their time constraints. However, the researcher gained much from this experience.

1.13 Conclusion

The following chapter will introduce the reader to various theories, models, frameworks and policies that underpin this study.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2. Introduction

This literature review introduces the reader to various theories, models and frameworks that provide the conceptual landscape for this study. At the heart of this research is the school/community/family nexus. The study sought to explore the need and/or benefit of a Community Liaison Person who could play a bridging role in linking and facilitating resources within these contexts (family/community/school) that will ultimately impact positively on the learner.

The following theories, models and frameworks will be discussed:

- Social Exclusion
- Sen's Capability Approach and Development as Freedom
- Community Development and an Assets Based Approach
- Empowerment Model
- Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model

Furthermore, a conceptual diagram will be presented followed by a discussion on linking schools, communities and families. Epstein's Parental Involvement theory will also be presented. Finally, the Community Liaison Model will be outlined.

2.1. Social Exclusion

Social exclusion is defined as the process whereby a group of individuals is excluded from fully participating in society and is considered to be a group based experience and affects whole groups of members of societies. Learners can be excluded because of a lack of income or lack of admission to schools because of poor grades (Thorat, 2007, 1). Group based exclusion is usually connected to identity and this 'out group' is often excluded from access to resources available to other groups in societies (Thorat, 2007, 1). At a macro level, this is especially true when it comes to the history of education in South Africa, where access to education was based on the colour of a person's skin. Those with the "wrong" colour skin were denied access to decent education and discriminated against by exclusionary policies. Empowering or affirmative measures are necessary to counteract these effects of exclusionary policies. At a micro level, the learners in informal settlement areas face other factors which

could lead to social exclusion, such as poverty, lack of support systems and a lack of school supplies.

Social exclusion is addressed through the act of inclusion. Inclusion can occur through increasing levels of participation amongst those who have been excluded. Participation strengthens levels of inclusion by encouraging social development, building organisational capacity and changing the environment (Checkoway and Gutierrez, 2006, 6). Youth participation is specifically concerned with youth having a role in decision making and thereby effecting change (Checkoway and Gutierrez, 2006, 6). It is through such participation that youth, as well as adult members of the community, can engage in problem-solving, social action and civic participation. Participation at all levels for all groups would thus lead to inclusion. In this study, the school's context (informal settlement) feeds into exclusion and if parents do not get involved in their child's learning, this exclusion is deepened.

2.2. Sen's Capability Approach and Development as Freedom

Development can be described as the process of expanding people's choices. In order to provide people with their freedoms, the 'unfreedoms' which they are subjected to must be removed. Unfreedoms exist through deprivation and limitations placed on people by discriminatory practises and policies and social liberties being denied to individuals and groups. Such freedoms are gained when people can participate how they want to and are able to make the decisions for the type of lifestyle that he/she sees best fit for themselves (Sen, 1999, 3).

For Sen, unfreedoms are those inequalities that plague society (1999, 15). This definition is context based and unfreedoms in one setting are not necessarily considered unfreedoms in another. However, limited access to quality education and constrained lifestyle due to poverty are major limiting unfreedoms in the South African context. Being denied the right to decent education as well as other opportunities that enhance learning outcomes, such as the limited involvement of parents in a child's education, diminishes capabilities. Parental involvement in the education of learners can expand the capabilities of both learners and their parents and should be promoted rigorously.

"Capabilities" are thus the combination of things that a person values doing and the ability to do those things (Sen, 1999, 75). Being able to achieve one's goals and fulfil one's potential forms the premise of this approach where a life worth living is determined by a person's free

choices and opportunities to do and become whatever he or she values.

Thus poverty itself can be seen as being the deprivation of capabilities where the context in which a person exists prevents the valued outcome that may be achieved. Deprivation occurs because the surroundings limit what a person can do or achieve (Sen, 1999, 89). Thus, any deprivation of capability is poverty in itself. Poverty is not having access to the necessary information to make the informed choices. Poverty is not having the power to attend school functions. Poverty is the limitation which is placed on interaction between the school community and the family community which limits the relationship which could exist between the various components of the school-family partnerships. Poverty is when a child lacks resources at home (food, proper place to study, supervision of homework) and lacks adequate resources at school (unqualified teachers, large classes, no books, punitive discipline). All of these poverties diminish capabilities.

2.3. Community Development and an Assets Based Approach

Community development may be considered an approach that is based on long term goals of creating sustainable and self-reliant communities by removing the damaging power structures which exist as a result of social injustices in a society, such as Apartheid. It is a process whereby communities take the initiative to change their own living conditions (Davids *et al*, 2010, 21). Community development is thus a bottom up approach which works when members themselves take action to achieve their goals. The approach is most commonly used in areas which have suffered from disadvantage and where the populations are still currently at risk and living without the necessary resources.

This approach is dependent on collectively using shared skills and knowledge in order to enhance the situation of the greater whole. It improves the outcomes for all members of the society and not just an individual within that system. Stakeholders in community development can exist at varying levels. They can be members of government, the private sector, non-governmental organisations and community sector stakeholders (Swanepoel and de Beer, 2010, 17). Such community development strategies could be used by the Community Liaison Person to facilitate school-community linkages. The CLP could mobilise community members and parents to forge better partnerships with the schools.

Assets based community development is an approach to development which aims to use the strengths which exist within the community. This means that the CLP could initially assess

the community to determine what types of skills and resources already exist within the community and families. This approach is based on the idea that communities possess the solutions to their own challenges and builds on the various strengths that communities and organisations (schools) at local level possess and gives people the confidence to address various challenges using their own resources as well as those of other stakeholders (Cunningham and Mathie, 2002, 1).

Assets based community development depends on the social capital which exists in the communities and focuses on the power of internal agency. It places priority on the strength of the community working together to achieve their goals (Wilke, 2006, 5). According to Wilke (2006, 6) this process is achieved through a number of processes, namely:

- ***Collecting stories***

This involves a number of informal discussions which help to determine common goals of the group as well as talents which exist at a local level. A CLP should be a great networker and facilitator of discussions

- ***Organising a core group***

The next step is to gather together a group of individuals who are concerned about the current situation and who are prepared to act towards making change happen but who also have the skills set to achieve these goals. Part of the CLP's role is to set up a task group who can mobilise others.

- ***Mapping the capacities and assets of individuals, associations and local institutions***

This step is vital in drawing the links between various challenges and the skills and interests of individuals. This enables members of the group to see a way forward by looking at who can do what and how the pooling of resources can bring about change. The CLP could identify the skill sets and values of the school community, of the broader community, of the learner's families, and supervise efforts for the common good, such as improved learning outcomes.

- ***Building a community vision and plan***

A plan should be devised which outlines the leaders, skills and goals set. The plan should have a time frame which is achievable so that people do not become frustrated and it needs to strengthen the skills which exist within the group while bringing people together. Decision-making should be done with all members involved. Action needs to be executed in ways that demonstrate change and movement towards goals.

- ***Leveraging activities, investments and resources from outside the community***

Once the local resource base has been exhausted, the CLP and community members should begin to look externally for solutions from external agencies. Community members should have developed a greater sense of confidence and are less likely to be intimidated by external actors and resources.

Thus a CLP using such a model could bring together major stakeholders to impact positively on the learning environment of learners.

2.4. Empowerment Model

Empowerment is the ability to raise the morale of individuals to the point where they are able to take control of their own lives. It enables people to get in touch with their own power, their own capacities, their own choices and, where possible, to build capacities. It is the process through which people learn to do for themselves (Davids *et al*, 2010, 21). Thus, empowerment is changing the balance of power in favour of those who were previously disempowered (United Nations Development Programme, 2000, 141). The previous political dispensation disempowered the majority of South Africa's peoples.

In developmental terms, empowerment is the process through which the powerless, be they individuals or groups or organisations, become aware of the dynamics at work and become more proactive at taking charge of their situations, and lives in a way which is non-invasive to those around them. This happens through a process of self-realisation which occurs with an awareness of one's own potential (Davids *et al*, 2010, 21).

Empowerment in relation to this research is about taking back the educational space that should be for all. It's about providing a decent educational space which is more inclusive of learner needs but also appreciates the diverse cultural backgrounds of the family members of learners and not only embraces that but offers a space of inclusion by attempting to get families and parents more involved in school communities. Empowerment seen in this way is achieved through the development of structures and institutions in the hope of bringing about equitable access to educational resources and life opportunities (Ife, 2002, 60). It's about increasing the power that the disadvantaged have over their own educational space (Ife, 2002, 53).

2.5. Ecological Model

Bronfenbrenner's ecological model for human development sees development as being composed of a number of interlocking systems which are dynamically affected by the surroundings and timing in which they occur (Bronfenbrenner, 1976). The ecological model will be discussed in this paper in terms of the school-family partnerships perspective. It is based on the idea that a student's learning occurs at varying degrees, the success of which is determined by life events and experiences (Christenson and Reschly, 2010, 3). Families provide core value experiences which shape the personality, while teachers influence the ways in which a person learns. However, the relationship which exists between the school and the family is often overlooked. The ecology of the schooling system is characterised as an organised system of relations amongst persons such as parents, teachers and students, settings such as home and school, and institutions such as community and government, which are all geared towards the education of the learner. The ecological model takes into account the changes which occur from year to year and how the various links between these systems change in relation to time, context and other influencing factors (Christenson and Reschly, 2010, 4).

Ecological systems theory is guided by a number of principles which are directly related to the understanding of family-school systems. These are listed below as defined in (Christenson and Reschly, 2010, 7.)

- ***Students are part of an open system***

This principle is based on the idea that students are an open system which change based on context and surrounding and leads to adaptation of both the individual and the surroundings.

- ***Relationships between systems are more than just the sum of their parts***

Another principle is that relationships are formed upon interaction between two systems. In other words a relationship grows out of the interaction between the student and the parents or the parent and the teacher. The intensity of their interactions is thus responsible for the formation of their relationships.

- ***Systems and patterns of interactions between systems change over time***

The surrounding environments are forced to change as students grow and develop. Each of these is a new system in itself which influences development of the individual. The external

circumstances of an individual will affect their behaviour and relationships with others.

- ***Multiple pathways to student outcomes are not just possible but probable***

This is based on the idea that multiple pathways will still lead to the same outcome or end result but could also mean the exact opposite. The same output may be achieved through variations of techniques while at the same time the same technique may produce an array of varying results. This may be due to the interaction which occurs between a number of varying systems acting together and shape the outcome.

- ***Systems operate at many different levels***

The systems in which students operate occur at varying levels. While some of these levels are closer to the individual learner and others are further away, all these levels are interlinked and have a ripple effect on each other. In this way, even the furthest level from the individual has an effect on his or her outcomes. For example, a global recession may lead to a parent being retrenched which leads to the family income being affected which affects the learner.

- ***Nested levels of ecological model***

Bronfenbrenner's ecology of human development occurs at a number of varying levels. These systems occur at five varying levels: the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem, the macrosystem, and the chronosystem. Each is interrelated and affects the individual in a variety of ways, directly and indirectly.

◆ **Microsystem**

The microsystem is the principle context in which development occurs and refers to the learners, immediate caregivers and families. The family or the direct caregivers have the most influence on shaping the developing child. Whether the child is well nourished and receives positive emotional and physical care are all important factors.

◆ **Mesosystem**

The relationship between the various systems such as the family and the school or the family and the church community or health clinic constitute this mesosystem. If the breadwinner has lost his job and the family's capacity to feed their children is compromised, this will affect the child's school performance.

◆ **Exosystem**

The exosystem is the level which is not directly experienced by learners but still has an impact on them and affects outcomes? An example of this would be a parent having to work the night shift.

◆ **Macrosystem**

This level is the sociocultural context in which the micro-, meso- and exosystems exist. For example, government policy and cultural or racial biases affect all levels of the systems.

◆ **Chronosystem**

The chronosystem is an added dimension to Bronfenbrenner's ecological approach and stresses the importance of the temporal element of the ecological system. It reflects the changes which happen in all the systems over time and how these influence the learner.

What the ecological model shows is that the outcome of a learner's success is dependent on a number of interlinking systems and cannot be considered in a vacuum. The effects of these varying systems must be considered in relation to the learner's growth and development in order to achieve a holistic outcome. In other words, when considered in relation to the family-school context, the systems approach shows the multi-dimensional approach which should be adopted.

2.6. Conceptual Diagram for the Study

The following diagram represents the manner in which the various theoretical frameworks come together as a conceptual map for the study. At the heart of the diagram is the learner. All the surrounding spheres point to an ecological embeddedness of the learner acting and reacting to multiple systems. That which occurs at the various outer spheres can also have a very strong influence on the outcomes of the learner. The influence of the Student Governing Body as well as the educators also contributes to the performance of the learners. Similarly, the family plays a role not only in learner outcomes but also in the success of the SGB and the school system based on their levels of involvement and participation in learning. The community also has an impact on the various systems. The income levels of the community as a whole and the geographical location play a role in influencing the learners as well as the parents and the educators in the schools. The NGOs which exist within the community impact on the services rendered and the kind of community participation that takes place.

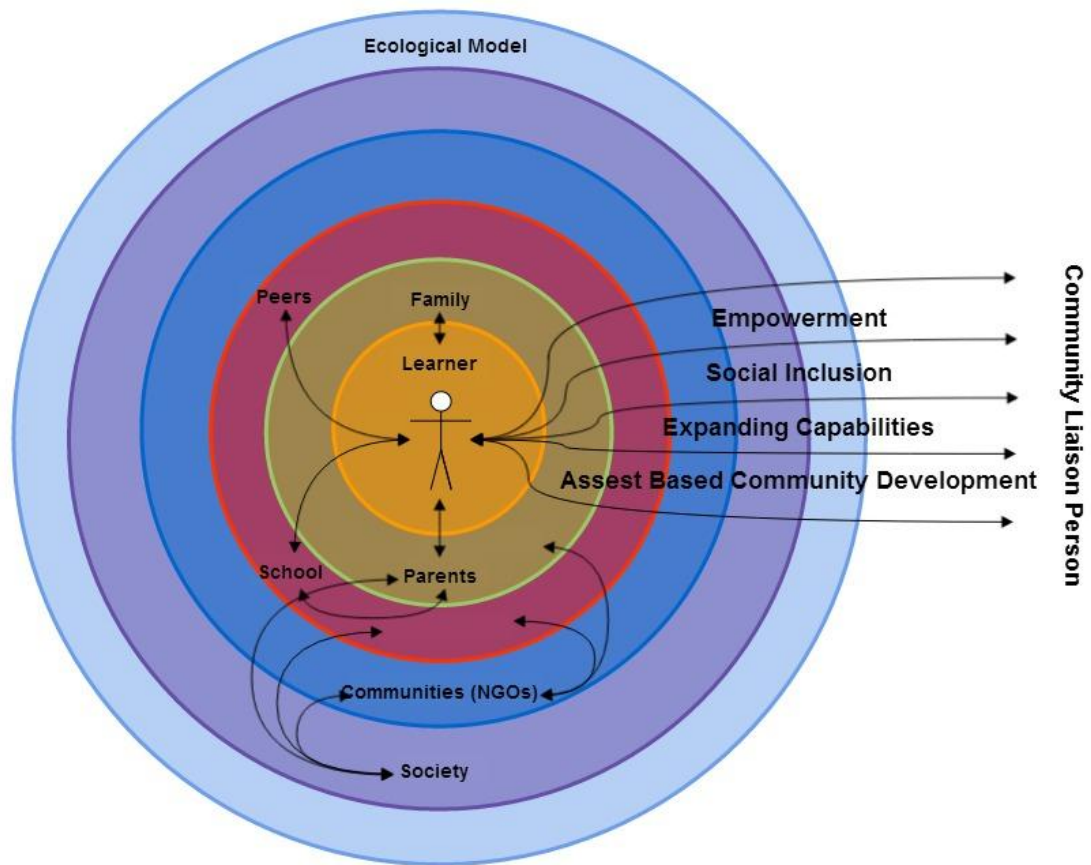


Figure 1. Conceptual Diagram

The ecological model of Bronfenbrenner (1976) applied to this study means that the learner is impacted upon by various systems of interrelationships. The learner's individual characteristics are shaped by family, peers, community and broader society. What happens in any one system would affect the others. Connected to this ecological model would be dimensions of social inclusion or social exclusion. In this regard, Sen's Capability Approach is central in that expanding opportunities and freedoms of the learner to become all that he or she can become is crucial. Empowerment of learners depends on empowerment of teachers, empowerment of families and communities. Thus the CLP should have the skills to facilitate processes within these different systems to bring about effective outcomes.

- **Linking Community, Family and Schools**

All the sectors, community, family and school have been impacted upon by Apartheid policies. This has compromised the educational system and the relationships which exist between communities and schools. School communities are the most vital learning environments where children are exposed to both negative and positive influences. Social

practices and ways of engaging are developed at this sphere. It is important for teachers to understand the backgrounds and cultural contexts from which children come. An approach to education is necessary in which one which embraces the potential of learners while understanding their personal backgrounds and nurturing them in a holistic manner. This can only be achieved through enhancing relationships between families and schools and an in-depth understanding of the families and communities from which these learners come.

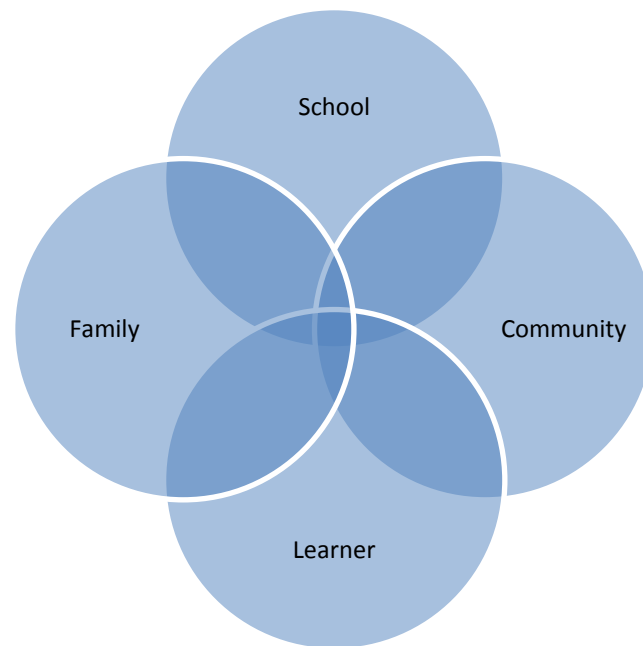


Figure 2. Ecological Model – interrelationships

This diagram highlights the linkages between schools, families, learners and communities.

- **Linking Schools to Communities**

Systems Theory Perspective argues that the environment surrounding a child forms the child's ecosystem. In this sense, the environment of the school, which includes the family, the neighbourhood and the various institutional forces which influence the school system, forms a system of its own (Bowen, 2007, 61). The school exists as a social system which is affected by the broader community and in turn directly influences the outcomes of children at school level. Thus communities are a vital part of the learners' ecosystem.

Improved involvement and participation can be achieved by focussing on the levels of parental/family involvement in the child's education as facilitated by a Community Liaison Person. As Bowen argues, schools exist to achieve goals through the collective effort of

individuals and groups (2007, 62).

- **Linking Families to Schools**

Partnerships between families and schools are based on a shared responsibility for the education of the child. These partnerships are important because they influence learning and development and have been proven to relate strongly to improved learning, attendance and behaviour, regardless of the learners personal and cultural background (Australian Government, 2008, 2). The aim of the partnership between families and schools is to provide a sustainable relationship between teachers, families and learners which views each partner as making a valuable contribution to learning outcomes. The partnership further benefits the school system through the creation of better programmes and learning opportunities for learners. It also provides family members with the space to be a part of decision making which exists at school level as well as contributing to overall satisfaction levels of educators involved (Australian Government, 2008, 2).

The Australian Government (2008, 4) provides an outline of the principles which underlie an effective partnership between families and schools. It is based on the idea that

- Both families as well as schools want what is best for the child;
- All children have a right to reach their full potential;
- Families are the primary source of education for their children;
- Effective schools offer a nurturing environment where a child's growth and development continues;
- Partnerships are based on common values and mutual respect and responsibilities;
- Partnerships have been proven to improve learner outcomes and results;
- Partnerships can involve external agencies and stakeholders which play a role in schools and families and can enable better outcomes at all levels.

Family/school links are often marred by various challenges. The school places limitations on parents by implementing timeframes that suit educators but are not feasible for working parents. Furthermore, lower income parents may feel inadequate when confronted by school professionals who are unable to facilitate non-threatening and inclusive meetings that take into account the literacy levels and the language and culture of parents. A Community Liaison Person could be a key resource in facilitating such meetings (Australian Government, 2008, 2).

2.6.1 Epstein's Parental Involvement (PI)

Joyce Epstein and her colleagues at Johns Hopkins University developed a framework for measuring levels of involvement and designing family involvement programmes (Davis, 2000, 2). This framework is designed around the categories of partnership which exist at various levels of the school community, i.e. between schools, community and families. These categories are parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making and collaborating with the community (Davis, 2000, 2).

- Parenting is the idea that a partnership should exist which enables the appropriate home environment to be established which supports children as learners. Families can be assisted with skills in understanding child behaviour and child rearing in order to make their home environment more suited to the children's needs.
- Communication involves the use of effective home/school communication strategies, with regards to the various school programmes, which are in place as well as the various skills required to assist the learner with passing his or her subjects.
- Volunteering refers to the recruitment and management of voluntary support which occurs in schools.
- Learning at home occurs when the information is provided to families about how to get more involved in learner homework and decision-making as well as providing other home learning tools.
- Decision-making is based on the idea that family are successfully involved in schools if they are a part of the decisionmaking process which occurs at schools. Parents, learners and community members should all have a say in the decisions of the school.
- Collaborating with the community is the process of identifying resources available in the community which are available to strengthen the school programmes and family practices.

Parental involvement has been proven to show progress levels of up to 15% more in maths and reading in children between the ages of eleven and sixteen. These benefits have also shown to be consistent in the long term progress of the children. The opposite is true for those children whose parents are not involved. The importance of parental involvement is heightened by the fact that between the ages of five and sixteen, children will only spend 15% of their lives in school, meaning that what they learn at home constitutes the other 85% (Long, Ryan and Turnbull, 2006, 14).

The following section discusses the role of the Community Liaison Officer.

2.7. The Community Liaison Officer (CLO) – Australia

The Community Liaison Officer (CLO) is a position established by the Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS) in Australia in order to address the issues of parental participation. The CLO works in schools in collaboration with learners, school leaders and teachers, school counsellors and guidance officers, community organisations and parent groups, school councils and government agencies.

The main role of the CLO is to gain an understanding of the cultural backgrounds of learners in schools and provide information about the educational system in Australia. The DECS aims to improve outcomes of schools by providing access to various educational programmes through a centralised position in schools (Government of Southern Australia (GSA), 2007, 2).

The CLO provides a strong support network to parents, learners, educators, community members, and other school staff members by liaising between various stake holders as well as working with learners to develop their understanding so that they can participate fully in school life. The CLO assists learners in finding appropriate study groups or facilities and contributes to caregiver participation in school-based events. The CLO is also responsible for disseminating information about careers and employment opportunities available to learners. Lastly, the CLO is also responsible for all necessary liaisons between community and state agencies such as family and youth services (GSA, 2007, 2).

- **Australian Framework for CLO**

The Australian family-school partnership is based on seven dimensions which should be used for planning partnerships. These are:

- Communicating – schools go out of their way to make families feel involved and welcome. Channels of communication occur between parents and schools and provide opportunities for schools and parents to learn more about each other. This allows for better and clearer understanding between parents and school staff members and helps to close the cultural gaps which may exist (Australian Government, 2008, 6).

- Connections between learning at home and learning at school – families and educators work hand in hand in creating positive attitudes towards learning and valuing the skills which

the child brings both from the family as well as from the school. Schools offer the space for parents to grow and develop new skills which can be further beneficial to children's development and growth (Australian Government, 2008, 6).

- Development of community and identity – this is based on the idea that by embracing the cultural aspects and individuality of the learners' community, the school is helping to develop a sense of community in each learner. Schools can also act as a focal point for community members to come together and work towards capacity building (Australian Government, 2008, 6).

- The importance of the role of the family – this dimension acknowledges the vital role that parents play in the development of children's attitudes. Parents further play an extremely central role in the formation of children's values and goals. Schools can embrace this by offering strategies for parental involvement as well as ways that parents can encourage their children. This can be done through workshops held at the schools which are focussed on homework assistance and discussions on family participation.

- Decision making based on consultation – this dimension is based on parents being involved in all aspect of decision-making concerning their children. This approach creates a sense of sharing the responsibilities of decision making in the partnership and ensures that parents' interests are always heard and enables the school to be held accountable. This approach to decision making ensures a more inclusive approach is taken to children's education (Australian Government, 2008, 7).

- Collaboration outside of the school - this key point refers to the importance of appreciating the wealth of resources available within the community. The community outside of the school can provide a plethora of services which can be used by teachers and parents to strengthen and develop the school system. Collaborations commonly exist with businesses, after-school care providers, and community based foundations and organisations (Australian Government, 2008, 8).

- Participating – this is perhaps the most vital of the key dimensions involved in the partnership. Participating involves families working with learners in classrooms as well as outside of classrooms in extramural activities but also activities which exist completely outside of the school system (Australian Government, 2008, 8).

2.8. Community Liaison Person (CLP) - Proposed Framework for South African Schools as Based on CLO Framework

While there are various relationships at play in the network between communities, families, schools and learners, the focus of this framework lies in the link which exists between the family and the school. The influence of the community cannot be ignored. The school represents the principals and administrative staff, the educators of the school, as well as the learners, whereas the family represents the parents or caregivers of the learners, as well as the learners themselves.

The following diagram presents a potential framework for a CLP model which includes the family, the school and the community.

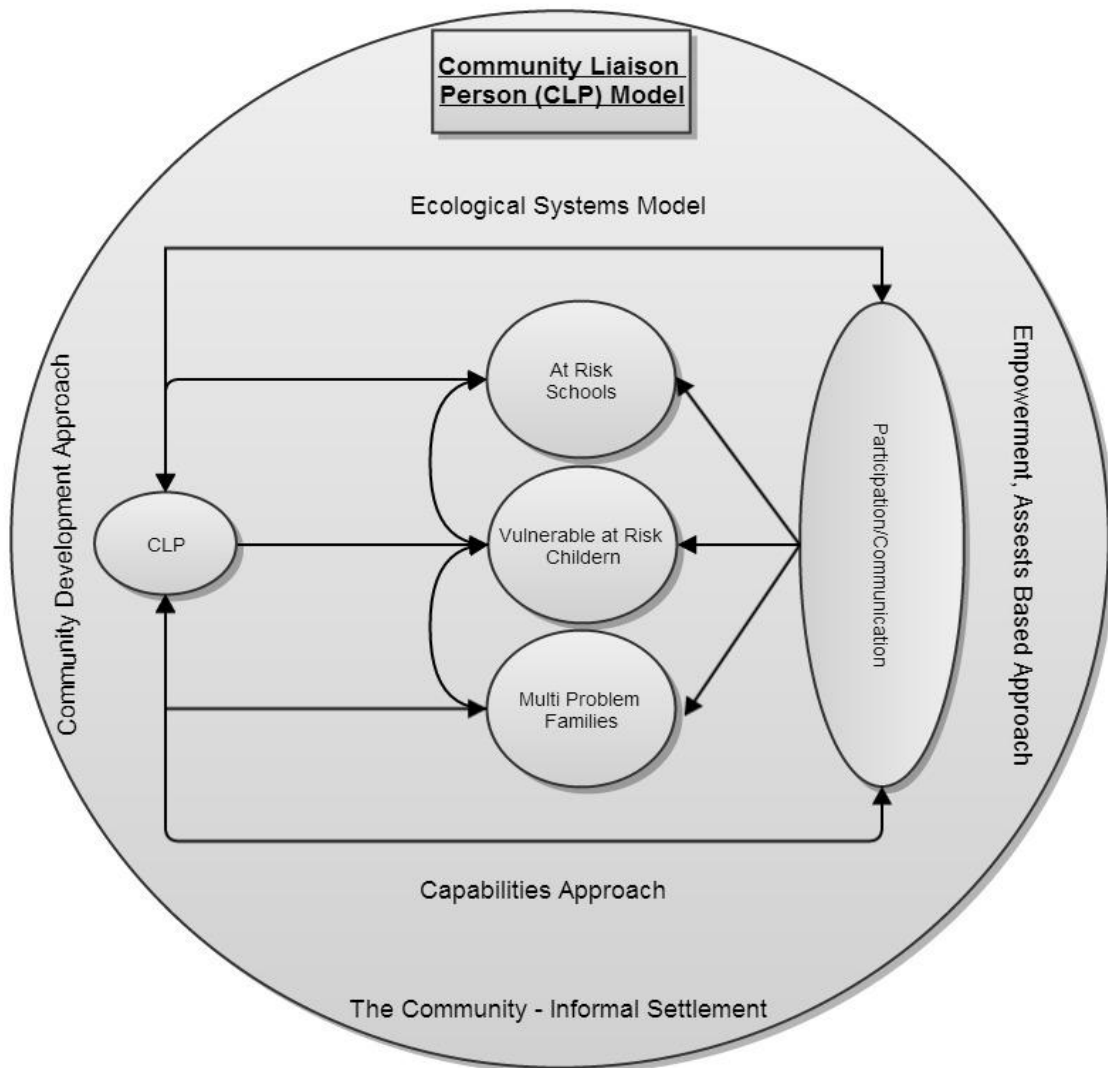


Figure 3. A framework for a CLP Model

2.8.1 A framework for a CLP model for South Africa

As outlined by the diagram in Fig 3, the framework is based upon four approaches to development: the capabilities approach, the community development model, the ecological systems model and the empowerment-assets based approach. The Community Liaison Person acts as the link, using these approaches between the various systems i.e. the schools, the children, families and the community. Each system is considered through the lenses of the various approaches by looking within the informal settlement for locally available skills sets and resources.

At school level, the teachers may be prepared to teach parents how to better assist learners with homework, while community members may volunteer to spend afternoons with neighbourhood children doing reading and homework. The local school may be willing to allow the school hall to be used for after-school homework sessions or other cultural fun weekend activities where parents can get more actively involved in the lives of their children. The role of the CLP is that of facilitator, ensuring that relationship networks are developed between the various systems and that empowerment can occur. In this way, participation and communication channels open up between the systems and strengths can be maximised for local development and growth.

The potential Community Liaison Person in South Africa could be someone with a certificate or a degree in Community Development/Social Development, or a person with a Social Work or a Community Psychology degree. The financial implications of establishing such a person is something that the WCED would have to consider together with the respective schools, Student Governing Body and Ward Councillors. The roles that such a person would undertake are outlined below.

2.8.2 Roles of the CLP

The CLP could provide support for parents in three key ways:

- a) Giving parents and families a voice;
- b) Providing parents and families with information; and
- c) Encouraging parents and families to be more involved in school based activities.

The CLP could provide support for schools by:

- a) Liaising with school staff;

- b) Liaising between parents and school staff;
- c) Assisting with events to facilitate more activities where schools and families can get together;
- d) Meeting teachers to discuss learner progress and
- e) Facilitating referrals for specific behavioural issues.

The CLP could provide support for learners by:

- a) Raising awareness among educators about cultural and socio-economic circumstances of the learners;
- b) Discussing learner concerns with parents and teachers;
- c) Sharing information with learners and learners' parents about possible future options and career choices;
- d) Encouraging community activities as well as extra-mural activities
- e) Making necessary telephone calls to check on absent learners and, where possible, also conducting home visits.

The following chapter will discuss the methodology employed.

Chapter Three: Methodology

3. Introduction

The following section will discuss the methodology used in this research. The chapter will discuss the design of the research, the sampling methods used, and the data collection techniques used. Furthermore, this chapter will discuss the data analysis as well as the data verification and limitations of the study.

3.1. Research Design

Due to the nature of the research topic, an exploratory qualitative approach that focuses on the meanings that participants gave in response to research questions was adopted. De Vos, Strydom, Fouche, and Delport (2005, 240) state that qualitative research is a “multiperspective approach to social interaction, aimed at making sense of, interpreting or reconstructing this interaction in terms of the meanings that subjects attach to it”. The goal of this approach according to Babbie and Mouton (2009, 53) is to describe and understand, rather than explain and predict, human behaviour. This study thus attempted to gain an in-depth understanding of the participants’ individual realities.

3.2. Sampling

The sampling technique used was purposive sampling. De Vos *et al.* (2005, 202) state that this process involves selecting a particular case because it possesses certain characteristics or processes that are of significance to the research. Schools in an informal settlement in Marconi Beam were purposively targeted.

In the Western Cape two schools were selected according to their location in Marconi Beam and the greater Joe Slovo Park settlement area. Each school’s principal was directly contacted in order to gain permission to conduct the research within the schools.

The research was conducted at Marconi Beam Primary School and Sinonjengo High School as they are the only primary school and high school in the area. Educators, members of the School Governing Body and learners were also purposively selected. In addition, members of NGOs were also interviewed.

The sample was drawn from various stakeholders. These stakeholders have been clarified in the following diagram.

Stakeholders

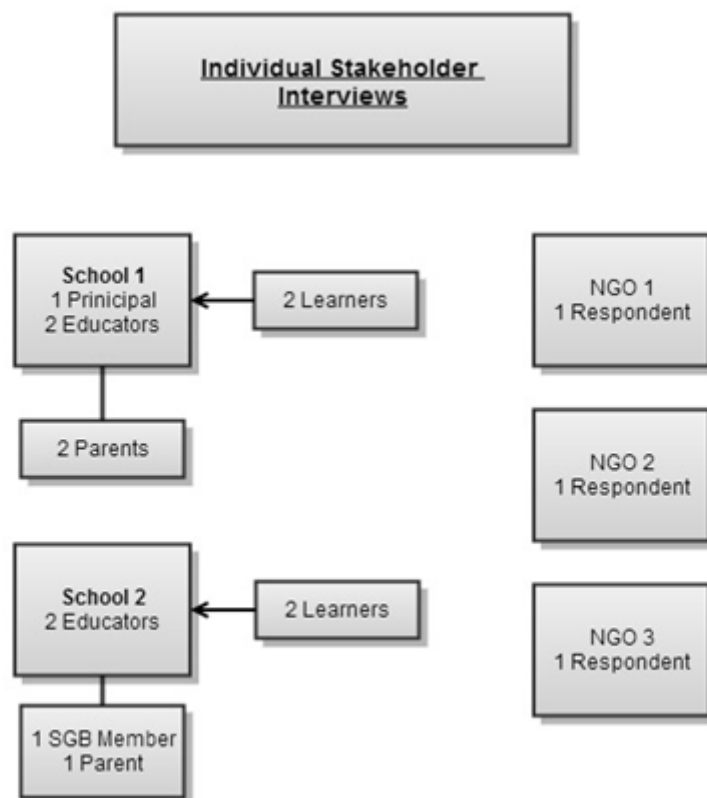


Figure 4. Individual Stakeholder Interviews

In total, sixteen individual interviews occurred during this research; these individuals have been outlined in the diagram above. They consisted of one principal, four educators, four learners and four parents, and three representatives from different Non-Governmental Organisations.

3.2. Data collection

Qualitative researchers attempt to explain the world around them and the various social situations which occur. They do this by interpreting the information made available to them through various methods of data collection such as interviews, focus groups, desktop research and surveys. De Vos *et al.* (2005, 287) assert that in qualitative research, interviewing is the predominant method used in the data collection process. The research aimed to identify what various stakeholders understand of the concept of a Community Liaison Person and how this would benefit the school community.

- **In-depth face to face interviewing**

Bearing in mind the ethical considerations, it was felt that in-depth, face-to-face semi-structured interviews would be most appropriate for the exploration of this topic. According

to De Vos *et al.* (2005, 292), these types of interviews are defined as “those organised around areas of particular interest, while still allowing considerable flexibility in scope and depth”. The researcher will be able to gain detailed responses from the participants and the method allows for flexibility.

- **Data Collection Tools**

A semi-structured interview schedule was used as a data collection tool. The semi-structured interview schedule is a “set of predetermined questions that ... [can] be used as an appropriate instrument to engage the participant and designate the narrative terrain” (De Vos *et al.*, 2005, 296). It should be noted that four interview schedules were constructed (one for principals and educators i.e. Appendix B: 74 a schedule for parents and SGB members i.e. Appendix C:81, a schedule for learners i.e. Appendix D:89; and a schedule for NGOs i.e. Appendix E:96).

A tape recorder was used to record the interviews and allowed the researcher to concentrate on exploring the topic, noting the non-verbal cues, and be more attentive and involved in the interview process.

3.3. Data Analysis

Data was analysed using an adapted version of *Tesch's steps of data analysis* (Tesch, 1990, 154-156, in De Vos, 1998, 343-345). This approach is described below:

- Firstly, read through all the transcriptions.
- Select one interview: understand what the participant is saying in relation to the objectives of the research. The main themes are linked to the objectives.
- Jot down some words (phrases) in the margins that capture the meaning that the participants are giving. Add any notes that raise questions.
- Start labelling these phrases.
- Use coloured pens and begin to colour code labels that seem to be linked to each other. Use a different colour for each different set of categories that belong to a theme.
- Repeat this process with all transcriptions, being mindful of one’s labelling process – one may want to re-label one’s transcriptions based on careful re-reading and keeping the objectives in mind.
- Once all the labelling has been carefully considered, begin to group labels under a main theme or categories of that theme. Go back to the objectives and make sure that

the main themes reflect issues linked to your objectives.

- Rework the themes so that they are mutually exclusive. Now develop an initial schema that sets out your main themes with categories of those themes (there may even be sub categories).
- Refine the table/framework so that it flows logically, is coherent and mutually exclusive.
- Read through all previous attempts to ‘code’ one’s data and check to see if one has not gone overboard with categories and subcategories. By grouping together topics/labels that relate to each other, the number of categories can be reduced and the data analysis made more manageable.
- Once satisfied with the table, use it as a framework/format for discussing the analysis. Follow the logical sequencing of the framework when writing up the findings.
- In the discussion, introduce the issues linked to the themes with the actual quotes of the participants.
- Each major section which is linked to a theme will thus have several quotes attached to it. Quotes (findings) should then be linked to other research done. Refer to authors in the literature review.

3.4. Data Verification

To ensure the trustworthiness of qualitative research, a number of measures can be put into place to test issues such as credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. A number of steps were taken by the researcher to ensure that the findings are trustworthy and rigorous.

Credibility refers to internal validation which seeks to ensure that the study measures what it sets out to test (Shenton, 2004, 64). To ensure credibility, specific and detailed research methods were established and followed throughout the research process. The sample of participants was chosen through a purposive sampling approach and ensured that any unknown influences were spread throughout the group (Shenton, 2004, 65). Triangulation, the process of using two or more methods to test reliability in research (Shenton, 2004, 65), was achieved through the use of a varied group of informants who were able to discuss the topic from various perspectives. Furthermore, individual viewpoints were cross checked between different participants to ensure that data provided was accurate. Participants were also interviewed from various NGOs who work in the community were also consulted to gain a thorough un-

derstanding. All participants were given the opportunity to refuse participation in the research and thus, those who participated did so of their own free choice. Constant probing was done to ensure that data was detailed and iterative (Shenton, 2004, 65). Where possible, existing, albeit limited, information on Joe Slovo Park itself was referred to throughout the write up and analysis. Information regarding the CLP was regularly referred to and cross referenced throughout the research (Shenton, 2004, 69).

Transferability is the extent to which the findings of the research can be applied to another situation (Shenton, 2004, 69). The researcher has ensured through a detailed methodology that the study can be replicated in another situation. The researcher has included detailed tables of information pertaining to the individuals that were interviewed as well as the numbers of people who were involved. All data collection methods have been meticulously recorded (Shenton, 2004, 64).

While achieving dependability in qualitative work is difficult (Shenton, 2004, 63), the researcher should take precautions to ensure that the work can be repeated in future studies. The researcher should thus take a number of measures to ensure this. The researcher must describe in detail both what the design of the research was, as well as the execution of the research. The report should reveal how data was gathered, what techniques were used as well as what was done in the field. The researcher should also ensure that the process of inquiry is fully transparent.

To guarantee confirmability, steps must be taken which eliminate the bias of the researcher. This ensures that the findings and results of the research are as far as possible; it is participants' contributions and not the researcher's bias which influence the outcomes. A key deterrent to biased research is the ability of the researcher to admit to his or her own prejudices. The role of triangulation is then to ensure that the findings can be confirmed through a number of other inputs and that the data is not a misunderstanding on the part of the researcher (Shenton, 2004, 72). Finally, to ensure credibility, a detailed list of the methods used throughout the process as well as recognition of any shortcomings of the researcher were listed and acknowledged (Shenton, 2004, 63).

The following section will discuss the limitations of the study.

3.5. Limitations of the study

The limitations of the study will be discussed in relation to the research design, sampling approach, data collection approach, data collection instrument, use of the tape recorder and the competence of the researcher.

❖ Research Design

A qualitative approach was adopted since it is the most appropriate for the study since it is an explorative study that sought to understand ‘meanings’ given by the respondents. The researcher is aware of inherent qualitative limitations with respect to subjectivity. Reliability of results is believed by Vithal and Jansen (2010, 33) to be the most serious threat to qualitative research. This has been partially addressed in section 3.5.

❖ Sampling Approach

A probability purposive sampling approach was adopted. The sample used was fairly small (sixteen participants). The small sample is a limiting factor and, furthermore, the findings cannot be guaranteed due to the non-randomness of the sampling approach.

❖ Data Collection Approach

There are a number of limitations involved in collecting data face to face interviews (Babbie and Mouton, 2009, 289-293). It is time-consuming and specialised interviewing skills are needed to probe and seek clarification.

Location – Each location has characteristics which can affect the outcome of the interviews as surroundings will have an effect on the mood and attitude of the participant. These interviews, which occurred in the school for example, were affected by school schedules which placed limitations on timing and length of interviews. Noise in the school at break time also affected the quality of interviews.

❖ Data Collection Instrument

Limitations of a semi-structured interview are (Babbie and Mouton, 2009, 289-293):

- The flow of the interview is dependent on the researcher’s ability to follow up on answers and probe for clarification. Skills of the researcher therefore influence outcome.

- Researchers run the risk of sticking too closely to the schedule. This research however will be based on the flow of conversation rather than the strict adherence to the questions. Flexibility means that the researcher will be able to discuss topics which arise through the discussions and were not necessarily planned for initially but may have an impact on the findings.

❖ **Use of the Tape Recorder**

- Tape recorders can be distracting to participants who may not feel comfortable having their answers on record. The researcher however overcomes this challenge by stating at the onset of the interview that anything discussed during the interviews will remain confidential between the participant and the researcher.
- Lack of private interview space in one school and a noisy and distracting environment, meant a lot of questions were not dealt with thoroughly and the recording device did not capture all responses. Batteries ran flat during one interview and hand-written notes had to be taken which were not as efficient or as accurate as the recordings.
- Two parents were not willing to be recorded on tape and this meant that responses were written down during the interviews and may have been inadequately recorded.

❖ **Competence of the Researcher**

- The outcome of any research is dependent on the skills of the researcher and is strongly influenced by the personal bias of the researcher. The researcher has beginner researcher skills.
- The language barrier of the researcher, who can not speak Xhosa, the predominant language spoken in the school was problematic when interviewing parents and meant several questions were lost in translation.

❖ **Participant Bias**

- The parents interviewed were those already at the school and thus were most likely not a proper representation of the parent constituency.

- A significant gatekeeper (WCED) did not participate.
- One of the school principals did not participate in the research.
- Although most participants indicated a willingness to participate in a focus group, scheduling a time and venue that suited all the necessary participants could not be done in time. This was mainly due to time constraint issues that affected both teachers and parents and thus no focus group took place.

The following chapter will present and discuss the findings.

Chapter Four: Presentation and Discussion of Findings

4. Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings from a study undertaken in the Joe Slovo Park Informal Settlement area. Qualitative in-depth interviews were carried out with sixteen participants. A profile of participants will be presented in Table I. Table II presents the framework for discussing the findings. The findings of this research will be compared and contrasted with other studies at the end of each major theme. Furthermore, insights gained from various theories and models linked to social exclusion, the capabilities approach, community development and the ecological model will also assist in the understanding of these findings. This chapter will systematically present various themes and categories of these themes which emerge from analysis. These themes and categories have evolved from responses gained in answer to the following objectives:

1. To determine how major stakeholders perceive the communication/participation of families and communities in relation to schools.
2. To explore what the main significant challenges are in bringing about a greater improvement of families and communities in the learning needs of school learners.
3. To establish what the perceptions amongst the stakeholders are about the potential for a Community Liaison Person (CLP) to play a role in facilitating communication/participation of families and communities in the schooling of their learners.
4. To uncover any perceived challenges in initiating such a role as the CLP.

4.1. Participants Profile

Table 1. Profile of Participants

School A N of teachers*** – 28 N of learners – 1160 N of learners per class – 45 Majority learners' language – Xhosa Tuition language – English							Organisations		
Principal 1	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Parent 1*	Parent 2*	Learner 1**	Learner 2**	NGO 1	NGO 2	NGO 3
Time in position - 6 years	Time in position - 5 years	Time in position - 7 years	School fees – R240/year Job - Cleaner	School fees – R80/year Job - Driver	Age – 17 Grade – 11 Home language – Afrikaans (CT) # in household – 6	Age – 14 Grade – 7 Home language – Swahili (Burundi) # in household – 6	Focus - Education Role - Project manager on parental involvement project Location - Khayelitsha	Focus - Education Role - LEAP Schools Principal and Teacher Location - Langa	Focus - Education Role - Researcher on WC educational challenges project Location - Observatory
School B N of teachers – 26 N of learners – 735 N of learners per class – 45-54 Majority learners' language – Xhosa Tuition language – English									
Teacher 3	Teacher 4	Parent 3*	Parent 4*	Learner 3**	Learner 4**				
Time in position – 7 months	Time in position - 7 years	School fees – R250/year Job – Domestic worker	School fees – R250/year Job – Domestic worker	Age – 12 Grade – 6 Home language – English (De Aar) # in household – 4	Age – 18 Grade – 12 Home language – Xhosa (EC) # in household – 3				

*Note: All parents had electricity and phone access. None had computer access and some receive financial assistance.

**Note: All learners' parents interviewed attended meetings and paid school fees.

***Note: N=Number

4.2. Framework table for discussing findings

Table 2. Framework for Discussion of Findings

Themes	Categories
Participation challenges (Objective One)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long work hours and time • Education is a school responsibility • Parent literacy • Immature parents/ alcoholism • Lack of encouragement
Communication challenges (Objective One)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication channels • CLP facilitates communication
Community challenges (Objective Two)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drugs, violence, gangs • Poor conditions for studying
CLP roles and benefits (Objective Three)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinating parents/schools/ community linkages • Establishing support networks
Challenges in initiating the CLP role (Objective Four)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust and accountability • Cost of CLP • Confidentiality and dealing with conflict • Other challenges

4.3. Discussion of Findings

This section will cover the main themes and categories which emanated from the research findings.

Five main themes were extracted from the findings of this research. These were:

- Participation challenges (linked to Objective one);
- Communication challenges (linked to Objective one);
- Community challenges (linked to Objective two);
- CLP roles and benefits (linked to Objective three); and
- Challenges in initiating the CLP role (linked to Objective four).

4.4. Participation Challenges

Participation is one of the most vital dimensions of any partnership in this research as it involves families gaining access directly to the school and the school's extra mural activities both within and outside of the school context. Getting parents and communities involved in the education of learners is the way forward and participation is the only way through which this can be achieved (Australian Government, 2008, 8).

Stakeholders perceive the communication/participation of families and communities in relation to school to be limited by a number of important factors, such as work hours, parental education levels, parental alcohol abuse, parental ignorance of their own role in the school, and a lack of encouragement from the school. These will be discussed in the following sections.

- **Long work hours and time**

The representatives of the various NGOs as well as teachers that were interviewed listed some factors such as poverty, working long hours, and lack of transport and time as reasons for non-involvement.

“The main reason is usually due to time constraints. Many parents work long hours and late shifts and then have to come home and cook or clean and as such do not have the time to attend [SGB] meetings. Another issue is transportation. Many parents do not own cars and cannot afford the bus/taxi fares to get to schools. Students often come from areas that are far away from the school.” (NGO 3)

Interestingly, teachers stated similar reasons for a lack of involvement of parents, claiming that often parents work long hours and cannot afford to come to meetings at the school.

“They are too busy. Some parents go to work at 5 o'clock in the morning, and they come home late, so there's no chance for them to be here. They don't even know if the child comes to school or not.” (Teacher 2)

Furthermore, the learners also indicate that their parents do not have the time to assist them with their education, they said

“They [my parents] wouldn't participate in my education because they work hard

and they sometimes come late home and I have to cook and even help my little brother with his homework.” (Learner 3)

“They just can’t come to support because most times they’ll be at work.” (Learner 1)

When asked what the challenges would be for the parents, one parent replied

“Time for the parents. The children must read the books in my house and you must sit them down and look for the books.” (Parent 1)

- **Education is the school’s responsibility**

It appears that parents see their children’s education as something that should take place at school and, at the same time, are also dependent on their children assisting at home.

“A lot of parents shout at their kids for staying after school because they need to do chores and there is the issue of ‘why aren’t you doing your work at school?’ They don’t see school work as something that should be brought home afterwards; it’s not their responsibility.” (NGO 1)

“They [parents] don’t consider education to be something that happens at home: it’s meant to be happening at school... as soon as you get down to impoverished areas, education gets shoved into formal education and they neglect family education, and don’t believe that churches and the media have anything to add. It’s not seen as important.” (NGO 1).

Individual “capabilities”, the combination of things that a person values doing and the ability to do those things (Sen, 1999, 75) are clearly highlighted as being neglected in favour of the needs of the larger group. Poverty in itself can thus be seen as being the deprivation of capabilities. Deprivation occurs because the surroundings limit what a person can do or achieve (Sen, 1999, 89). In this case, parents who do not engage with their children’s learning are in fact depriving their children.

- **Parental literacy**

Parental literacy levels are another factor which contributes to their lack of participation.

“They [parents] might be interested in getting involved but then the problem is that they are illiterate so they don’t know what you are expecting from them. You can send a child home for help but it’s useless because they don’t know what you want. A high number of parents are illiterate and not working, and they don’t know a thing about the school. Even if you call them to parents meetings, they come, they hear what

you're saying and sometimes they are involved but sometimes they just come because we call them and they don't participate in anything. They don't understand why we are here." (Deputy Principal).

"A lot of parents will try their best and encourage their children to do their best but they feel so self-conscious about their knowledge and they don't want to pass that down to their children, and they feel like they can't shout at their children for coming home late or not doing their homework because they never did their homework." (NGO 1)

When asked if parents assisted with homework the following responses were revealing:

"No, she doesn't – she doesn't know about the things I'm doing." (Learner 1)

"You know, the children don't even tell you when there is homework but you know there is and you have to ask them about it. I help all my children with their homework." (Parent 2)

"From a parent's perspective, they're not educated themselves." (NGO 2)

Thus, it is clear that the parents themselves are experiencing forms of deprivation (Sen, 1999) since some are illiterate and are unable to help their children with their homework.

- **Young parents/ alcoholism**

Young and immature parents tend not to get involved with their children's education. Some parents have alcohol problems.

"Often, the case is simply that many parents are quite young and just do not seem interested in their children. The parents drink a lot and the kids don't get enough time from their parents. The parents are young ladies so they want to enjoy themselves and they don't have time for their kids." (Teacher 2)

"The other day when a parent came to see me, I could smell the alcohol, so definitely those parents who drink definitely don't have time to come to the meetings and their kids will be affected because they don't have time for their children." (Teacher 3)

"Drinking [prevents a child from doing well]-- it's wrong but you must take the bottle away and tell them that buying beer is wrong. The parents drink every day; they start Friday and leave the bottle Monday morning. You must stop those parents," (Parent 2)

However, the parents interviewed felt that involvement was essential.

“They [learners] need their parents to support them; when they come home in the afternoon to check his homework and books and see that he wasn’t absent from school. That’s why a lot of teachers call us because of a lot of absent children and to tell us as parents that your child wasn’t at school today and did you know about it? Then they say I didn’t know but the problem is that they don’t know because they don’t look after their children. As a parent, you must get involved.” (Parent 1)

In this regard, the CLP thus needs to facilitate that space so that parents are able to grow and develop new skills that can be beneficial to their child’s learning and development (Australian Government, 2008, 6).

- **Lack of encouragement from school**

The school is often unsuccessful or unable to encourage parents’ participation in their children’s education.

“I don’t know about anything that goes on at the school: they never send home letters for us as parents.” (Parent 4)

“We participate in sports but parents are not invited.” (Learner 4)

Often the school lacks the necessary facilities for having meetings with parents:

“We don’t have the hall to accommodate them so if we call a meeting, we have to look at the weather so if the weather is like today’s [cold], we can’t have the meeting because they don’t attend so we have to plan around that. We can’t hold them in the classes because a class can accommodate only 40 or 50 so we can’t do that.” (Principal)

Another challenge is that some teachers are unaware of certain school policies regarding learner support:

“I might have them in my file but I never read them because of the load that we have. I don’t even have time to go and look at those policies.” (Teacher 1)

When asked if the school encourages parents to get involved, a learner responded:

“No, not at all.” (Learner 1)

And another, when asked if her parents attended any sporting events responded:

“They were not even invited.” (Learner 1)

When asked if their mother ever comes to meet with the teachers, a learner responded:

“No, only when the teachers say that parents must come and talk to them.” (Learner 1)

Community development strategies would also be used by the CLP to facilitate school-community linkages. Assets-based community development depends on the social capital which exists in the communities and focuses on the power of internal agency. It places priority on the strength of the community working together to achieve their goals (Wilke, 2006, 5). A CLP using this model could bring together major stakeholders to impact positively on the learning environment of learners.

By increasing levels of parental literacy education, parents could be more able to engage in their children's education. Assisting the parents to gain a better understanding of the school system could empower parents to involve themselves in their child's learning.

4.5. Communication Challenges

The main communication challenges were: understanding the communication channels, lack of means of communication, language barriers, and lack of encouragement.

- **Communication Challenges**

Students were commonly thought to be unreliable messengers. When asked what some of reasons are that parents might not attend meetings one learner and one parent responded:

"Maybe because the learner did not give the parents the letter so parents did not know." (Learner 1)

"Sometimes the principals phone you to come in, and maybe the children didn't give you the letter, and they remind you if you didn't know about the meeting because the children just put it there and go to play, you understand, and then you don't see the letter. Now we are reminding each other. I also ask, the people I know in Joe Slovo or Phoenix, did you know about the parents meeting and they say, no, they don't know there was a letter, and I say you must remember there is a meeting there. I also invite people to come to the meeting." (Parent 2)

Furthermore, it appears that parents disregard the proper channels of communication.

"They just come in here; they don't phone. They just come in and then they have to wait if the principal is not here and I'm also teaching... normally, they don't know how to make appointments and we have to sign those grant forms. We explain to them that they must come at 1pm because sometimes the principal is busy and I'm also in the class and I'm back here at one but they just come whenever they feel like it. They don't understand. It's a problem because sometimes the principal is absent or doing something else but she is the one to authorise and that interrupts the learners and teaching because they are supposed to take the book to the teachers, and the parents

interrupt that and don't listen to that and just come whenever they want to. They don't have phones to phone school and say, I'll be there at that time, so we try and accommodate them because we all come from that community so we try and accommodate them because we understand.” (Principal)

Another important factor mentioned by a learner was the language barrier which exists in the school.

“[The] teachers only speak Xhosa and then she [her mother] doesn't understand so then she goes home.” (Learner 1)

Learners are sent home until parents respond to the school's request.

“If the parents don't come, we send the learner to at home and then it works for us...the learner has to stay until the parents come...we write letters because they don't have any phone; we write letters until the parents come.” (Teacher 1)

- **CLP facilitates communication**

The role of the CLP could be to address this issue of communication between parents and the schools.

“It would help the schools because sometimes the parents aren't taking note of us; they are sick of us. If there would be someone that they don't know from the department, they might open their ears and listen what it's all about. We call them and they get tired of us saying come and see your child's work. If it's someone they don't know then it would be better. It would make them listen.” (Teacher 4)

“Life would be easier if we could speak with that person (CLP) because we could just tell him what he is supposed to do.” (Parent 2)

“You want them (the CLP) to help the students and the teachers who are so scared of the students. There are students who don't understand their books but they must be helped. They must come outside [to homes] and say we need to focus on the children.” (Parent 1)

This allows for better and clearer understanding between parents and school staff members and helps to close the cultural gaps which may exist (Australian Government, 2008, 6). According to Swanepoel and de Beer (2010, 17), stakeholders can be involved at various levels of community development, which leads to the formation of partnerships from which skills and knowledge can be drawn for the collective wellbeing of a community. The links between the parent-CLP-school networks are thus developed through improved levels of communication.

The following section discusses challenges which occur at the community level in the Joe Slovo Park Informal Settlement.

4.6. Community Challenges

Four key challenges were evident: gangsterism and violence; drug abuse; noisy neighbours; and a lack of resources or space for studying. In Joe Slovo Park, some gangsterism and violence is prevalent, albeit on a smaller scale. The schools occasionally experience this as it penetrates the school grounds and learners discuss the problems associated with gangsterism and how it affects their lives as they commute to and from school.

- **Drugs, violence, gangs**

“You [the parents] must come here to the school and tell the principal what what and maybe they don’t have money and alcohol is a problem. Drugs are also a problem. There is too much violence like children being raped and health is bad for the children and there is murder. There are too many guys outside in the night and it’s bad. Gangsterism is bad in Joe Slovo, and also robbery.” (Parent 2)

“I don’t live here but I can hear that there are gangsters in Joe Slovo, but that is on and off. It’s not regular.” (Teacher 4)

“I was chased once when it was dark but he didn’t do anything,” (Learner 2)

- **Poor conditions for studying (facilities, noise)**

Learners are also exposed to drugs, alcohol abuse, and noise in their home environments. One learner speaks about the challenges of trying to do homework while living in close vicinity to a shebeen.

“In the community there’s no time to stop those who are selling alcohol, they [the community] open their radios very loud. Then you don’t have the time to concentrate on your books. Because you are staying next to this situation and nobody will go there and tell that person, no it’s enough now, you need to stop, because it is during this time. The people in the community do whatever they want to do because nobody will stop them. And that causes the problem. Then there are many places that sell alcohol and the learners like those places.” (Teacher 1)

“I think alcohol and drugs are the biggest challenges because some of these kids stay in shebeens... I’ve got a child in my class who says he must leave class to go serve beer at home and he said every weekend he works there. And you know, when people are drunk they do things in front of the child and then on Monday he has to come back to school. That itself is an issue. Alcohol also contributes to their work.” (Teacher 3)

“Most of the Nigerians where I live do drugs in my community and the police there are in on it...most of the Nigerians sell drugs and everyone knows in the community.” (Learner 2)

Learners are affected by the lack of quiet study space available to them often meaning that they have to go to the library in a nearby suburb. Better facilities in the area would mean that learners do not have to walk far distances to access resources which enable them to learn efficiently.

“There is a lot of music and the noise makes it hard to study so I have to go to the library two days a week.” (Learner 4)

“Unless my uncle is around, he plays music the entire day and I hate it but then I just go to the library by Sable Square [shopping centre].” (Learner 2)

Thus the learners in informal settlement areas are socially excluded from resources and support systems that will facilitate learning. Learners are also impacted upon by low incomes (Thorat, 2007, 1). Assets-based community development depends on the social capital which exists in the communities and focuses on the power of internal agency. It places priority on the strength of the community working together to achieve their goals (Wilke, 2006, 5).

A CLP using this model could bring together major stakeholders to impact positively on the learning environment of learners. Empowerment can be achieved through the development of resources/facilities which gives access to all members of society (Ife, 2002, 60). This could be achieved with the introduction of the CLP who would aim to facilitate the involvement of disadvantaged parents.

According to Cunningham and Mathie (2002), solutions to these challenges lie in the community themselves whereby the solutions come from the local communal skills. Outsourcing may not be necessary as the people themselves often have the solutions to their own challenges. Goals are achieved by the community working together (Wilke, 2006, 5).

The following section discusses the roles and benefits of the Community Liaison Person.

4.7. Community Liaison Person Roles and Benefits

According to participants in this research study, the Community Liaison Person should have a number of duties. These duties include but are not limited to: educating parents on

responsibilities and roles within the schooling system; organising sponsors; improving communication between stakeholders; acting as a fulltime representative of parents at school; and acting as a fulltime representative of WCED at school.

The findings show that there are several benefits associated with the implementation of the CLP in schools. Various participants offered differing views and opinions as to what these benefits would be. These are discussed in the following section.

- **Coordinating Parents/Schools/Communities**

“The biggest things I’ve learned is that give the teachers time to do their jobs and that’s the key to getting things right so the CLP would be able to deal with parents on a much more holistic level and not just deal with the parents but find a parent and say, “Your kid isn’t wearing shoes half the time,” and then go and visit the houses and take the responsibility off the principal’s hands, and find out why, and say, “You can do it; you just have to dedicate yourself to it and work a little bit harder.” (NGO 2)

“[The CLP needs to] look at the needs of the community compared to the needs of the school, the community and the school and communicate between them. If the school needs something from the school or community and act as a contact between the two.” (Teacher 1)

“The CLP would be able to provide the schools with a means of improving their resources and facilities.” (NGO 3)

“They [CLP] will be the person to know what’s going on between the school, government and parents and children. They will be very important for communication.” (Parent 4)

“There would be someone who is free to talk between the teachers, students, staff and parents...It would be nice for them [the learners] to have someone other than the staff to talk to and help them” (Parent 3).

Another benefit mentioned by a parent was:

“Someone who can deal with problems when we have them like children who steal maybe those who smoke or do drugs.” (Parent 2)

The learners also saw various benefits of the CLP in schools:

“If I’m doing my homework and you’re drinking, not everyone is drinking without music and I’m doing my homework, then you’re disturbing me, then that person will call them and tell them about not drinking alcohol near children.” (Learner 2)

“Teachers are busy with their own classes and teaching, and if the parent did not come for the meeting, then they try to come the next day, but then the teacher says, “I’m busy teaching; you must come another day.” So if there was someone who could take care of that, it would be good.” (Learner 1)

When asked what a CLP would be responsible for doing, one learner responded:

“Phoning parents, speaking to teachers, finding funding for students, helping learners get food who don’t have food. Helping children who struggle at school with their homework, finding transport for people who don’t have.” (Learner 4)

According to the Principal, the main benefit of the CLP would be in reducing strain on educators.

“That [the CLP] would be a good idea because sometimes we don’t have a chance to be at the meetings and the principal is busy so if there is a chance to be an outsider who can be the liaison person between the school and the family that could be useful. It would a good idea.”

A research consultant interviewed believed the CLP would be responsible for a number of things, namely

“following up on school-community issues such as absences, lack of parental involvement, coordinating community-school events, maybe even finding sponsors from local businesses or encouraging CSI...The CLP would also provide the schools with a means of improving their resources and facilities.” (NGO 3)

- **Support Network**

Lastly, learners believed that the introduction of a CLP would assist in creating a support network for families and learners.

“If he or she [parents] has problems or problems for his child and has no time to come to the school, we can say that in the meeting that the teachers should go to the house and find out what happened because there is a phone number for the parents and there is an address. We think they should go to the house and find out how the child lives and if maybe there is a problem at the house and they aren’t living right in that house. Then we should send some people to the house to find out what is going on there.” (Parent 1)

“In the locations there are people who want to help parents at home, even for food and stuff but some people don’t know how to approach the community so maybe that person can show them or give them the details of the people who want to help them. Sometimes, there might be people who can help them but we don’t have the time so having that somebody who can help and hear their needs would be useful.” (Principal 1)

These networks would improve overall relations within the community and would, in the long run, lead to the upliftment of the community as a whole.

“I think it will help because if you don’t care about what is happening in the community then you don’t have any respect for the community and what happens and there is nothing that you can do, but if the community sees that it’s good that there is a school and what happens in there affects them, then they make sure that they get involved and come and clean the school because they see that the school belongs to them and they should see that the school is theirs and not for the teachers.” (Teacher 1)

The community outside of the school holds a multitude of resources which can be accessed and used by teachers and parents to strengthen the school system. Collaborations with after-care facilities, businesses who can offer funding and community based foundations can offer a variety of solutions to the challenges faced by schools (Australian Government, 2008, 8).

Due to its proximity to the greater Milnerton area, residents of Joe Slovo Park can access a plethora of benefits. One of the city’s main industrial sites is located within walking distance of the settlement. There could be a number of partnerships which would assist the schools and encourage development in the area but these are not fully embraced.

The main role of the CLP in South African schools is to provide a strong support network to parents, learners, educators, community members and other school staff members by liaising between various stake holders as well as working with learners to develop their understanding so that they can participate fully in school life. The CLP would be able to help families to develop the relationships with the surrounding areas and in doing so, open up new opportunities for the school and the family.

Joe Slovo Park was originally intended to be a more formal township erected to address the informal shack settlement of Marconi Beam (Robins, 2002, 1). However, today, the new parts of Joe Slovo are indistinguishable from the shack settlement it was intended to replace. The reality of South Africa is that unemployment levels are currently at 25.6% with 49% of that statistic representing unemployed women (Statistics South Africa, 2013, 1). Parents turn to alcoholism, drugs and prostitution as a coping mechanism and a way to put food on the table (Heller, Schensul & Kracker, 2010, 5).

The CLP aims to empower the community, the schools and the individuals so that they may take back their educational space and change the legacy of an Apartheid government. Ife (2002, 60) specifies that empowerment is achieved by developing structures which bring equal access to educational resources and opportunities. The CLP could advocate and mobilise so that the people have access to these opportunities.

The following section discusses the challenges in initiating the CLP role.

4.8. Challenges in initiating the CLP role

The following factors became evident when analysing the findings: trust and accountability; cost of employing the CLP; confidentiality; and dealing with conflict and other challenges.

A few concerns of members of the NGOs interviewed were about issues of accountability, trust and support of the community and transport issues. When asked about the challenges to the role, participants made the following suggestions:

- **Trust and accountability**

“Gaining the trust and support from parents, students, and the greater community will probably be a big issue. The person must really know how to deal with people from various backgrounds and cultures and be good with handling tense situations and conflict. They will need to be a very well-organised individual and know how to get people on board with an idea or endeavour. There will probably be a lot of driving around, so having their own car would be quite advantageous.” (NGO3)

[In terms of who is accountable in the school context and who the CLP would report to]“...sometimes the boundaries are blurred.” (NGO 2)

- **Cost of employing a CLP**

The principal interviewed believed that the only real obstacle involved was the lack of resources available to the school:

“The salary would be the main thing: we don’t know where to get the money from, that would be the only problem. Otherwise, there is no motivation so who would come without money involved?”(Principal 1)

Two educators interviewed also believe the salary to be a challenge to the position:

“Hmmm, I’m not sure, money for paying that person.” (Teacher 4)

“We don’t have money here at the school but if there is someone who can finance it then it would be good to have them here full time.” (Teacher 1)

“I think the school should be [responsible for employing the CLP] aided by the department. “(Teacher 1)

- **Confidentiality and dealing with conflict**

Learners believed that challenges to the role include issues of confidentiality and dealing with conflict.

“They [parents] might not want to discuss private things with them and their issues. They might think their things are private and someone shouldn’t get involved.” (Learner 4)

“if they approached someone about drugs, the person will swear at them and ask them what they know about drugs and drinking.” (Learner 2)

“There might be [challenges] like if the person will go to your home and ask the parents, ‘Why did you not come to the meeting?’ and then the parents start saying, ‘No, the learner did not give me the letter,’ and so there might be problems there.” (Learner 1)

“Supporting the school and the family would be difficult for them because the communities are difficult because a lot of people live there and are struggling. It’s too big a job and difficult.” (Learner 3)

“If you told her a secret and she told everyone.If she promises to get funds but doesn’t manage.” (Learner 4)

- **Other Challenges**

Parents identified possible problems to include the individual’s personality, safety issues and the limited time of parents:

“Time for parents...the community liaison must commit, come to the school and talk to the community; tell the school what is going on.” (Parent 1)

“It may be very dangerous to come into our community if you’ve never been here before; it might not be very safe.” (Parent 4)

“If we don’t get the right person, it could be a problem, but also people must respect the role of this person in order for it to work.” (Parent 3)

One parent, however, mentioned that the challenges must be overcome for the sake of

improving the situation:

“We would find a way to make it work. When we have problems we try and sort it out. We would work around the obstacles and try to make it work. Maybe we can ask the neighbours to speak to the parents who make it difficult. When the parent won't assist us, we can ask the neighbour what they see, like maybe the parent is always late or the child doesn't go to school.” (Parent 2)

In spite of the various challenges to the implementation of the role of the Community Liaison Person in schools in the Western Cape, it should be noted that research has proven that the CLP brings empowerment to the people and allows them to grow through their strengths by forming a collective. Wilke (2006, 5) refers to this as placing the priority on the strengths of the community by allowing the people to work together and achieve their own goals. This sentiment is echoed in Bowen (2007, 62) where it is argued that schools exist to achieve their goals through the collective effort of individuals. It is only in this way that the communities can, through collective effort, be responsible for the outcomes of their children's education.

Furthermore, as is echoed in research by the Australian Government (2008, 6-8), the CLP would provide a strong support network to the various stakeholders by increasing communication between the various stakeholders, developing a sense of shared identity, bringing to light the importance of the role of the family, and collaborations outside of the school.

A previous study conducted in a former 'model C' schools - schools in South Africa, reserved for white learners during Apartheid - found that although parents are willing to participate, they often feel excluded by the school by not being properly educated on how this can occur. The study also found that parents were unable to attend meetings because of the inconvenient times in which they are held (Mncube, 2009, 96).

While Joe Slovo Park may be a resource poor area, it is surrounded by a wealthier suburb. The communities need to come together to make mutually beneficial changes. It is clear that more needs to be done to bridge the gap between parents and schools and it is in this regard that the CLP has a role to play.

The following section will conclude the research findings.

4.9. Conclusion

This research shows that, due to various challenges in the learners' families as well as at schools, there are currently low levels of parental involvement. These challenges include the proliferation of gangsterism, and alcohol and drug abuse. This research depicts the dire situation with which many families and schools in the Western Cape are faced. Findings show that many parents lack the understanding of how important their child's education is and how to participate in their child's learning outcomes.

Additionally, the findings of this research show that the CLP would be beneficial in helping to educate parents on their responsibilities and also to get them more involved. Moreover, this report shows that the CLP would help to grow support networks as well as reduce the current strain on educators. Most importantly, this research shows that by gaining trust of the various stakeholders, the introduction of the CLP would improve the levels of parental involvement in schools. It shows the importance and need for a Community Liaison Person and facilitates the interaction between schools which are underfunded and teachers whose capacities are being stretched by large numbers and few teaching resources.

The challenges in implementing such a CLP role includes acceptance by the WCED, community, families, schools and learners. A Community Liaison Person would be someone who acts as an enabler in bringing the parent, the school, and the community onto common ground by taking that step further and ensuring that the parents are aware of the situation in their child's school, as well as the need for support structures to be implemented in the home and community environment.

The following chapter discusses the conclusions and recommendations.

Chapter Five: Conclusions and Recommendations

5. Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations proceeding from this research study. The study clearly investigated the potential of implementing the CLP into schools in the Western Cape. The challenges are grouped into the following themes: Participation Challenges, Communication Challenges, Community Challenges, CLP Roles and Benefits and Challenges to Initiating the CLP role.

Sixteen individuals, which included a principal, educators, parents and learners from two schools in the Joe Slovo Park Informal Settlement, and members of three NGOs across Cape Town who are involved in the education sector and work in informal settlement areas, were interviewed.

5.1. Conclusions

The main conclusions drawn from the research findings will be presented in relation to the objectives of the study: (see chapter 1:9 and chapter 4:40).

5.1.1 Objective 1: To determine how major stakeholders perceive the communication/participation of families and communities in relation to schools.

The main findings of the participation challenges were:

❖ **Long work hours**

- Eleven of the sixteen participants agreed that time constraints were a major factor in preventing parents from participating in their children's education.
- Three out of four parents claimed to struggle to participate at schools due to their work schedules which often overlap with meeting times and other school events.
- All four teachers interviewed cited time as being a major factor in parents not participating at schools.

❖ **Transportation costs**

- Six of the participants agreed that parents often struggle with costs involved with getting to and from school and as a result often are unable to attend meetings and

school events.

- One parent, however, claimed that this was not a problem as most parents live in the neighbourhood.

❖ **Poor levels of education**

- Eight participants agreed that a low level of parents' education was an issue which led to low participation levels of parents in the education of their children. Parents claim to be unable to assist their children with homework due to low levels of education themselves.
- Two parents indicated their lack of education which impacted on their inability to help their children with homework.

❖ **Lack of encouragement**

- The principal mentioned an encouragement policy at the school but none of the teachers at the school interviewed were aware of any such thing.
- All four parents and two learners interviewed indicated or mentioned a lack of encouragement, with the exception of invitations to the usual parent-teacher meetings which occur regularly.
- One of the NGO members also mentioned a lack of encouragement to get parents more involved in schools.

Findings linked to communication challenges were as follows:

❖ **Communication channels not understood**

- One of the parents mentioned that they had no knowledge of the appropriate channels of communication.
- The principal mentioned that parents turn up at the school without following the proper channels of communication which leads to disrupted learning as the teachers have to leave the class to assist the parents with their needs.

❖ **Access to phones**

- Two teachers and a principal mentioned that one of the main challenges in communicating with parents was that parents had limited access to telephones which made getting messages to parents problematic.

❖ **Messages not received**

- A further six participants indicated that there were challenges associated with learners delivering messages. One learner claimed to sometimes not deliver messages to parents.
- Two parents mentioned a lack of communication from the school

5.1.2 To explore what the main significant challenges are in bringing about a greater improvement of families and communities in the learning needs of school learners

The major challenges in the community and families were linked to drug abuse and poor study conditions.

❖ **Drug abuse**

- Two learners mentioned drugs in the community being an issue.
- One NGO mentioned there being issues of drug abuse in the community.
- Two parents interviewed mentioned alcohol and drug use being a problem in the community and in some families.
- Three teachers mentioned drug abuse as being an issue in the community.

❖ **Conditions for studying**

- All four learners mentioned having to go to the public library to do their homework.
- Two learners cited this as being due to noisy or crowded conditions at home.
- All parents interviewed mentioned a lack of resources at home.
- One parent mentioned a lack of space at home.
- All teachers and the principal mentioned the lack of resources or space being problematic in learner homes.

5.1.3. To establish what the perceptions amongst the stakeholders are about the potential for a Community Liaison Person (CLP) to play a role in facilitating communication/participation of families and communities in the schooling of their learners.

Participants highlighted various roles and benefits that the CLP could provide.

Coordinating parents/ schools and the communities was deemed to be important, as well as establishing support structures.

❖ **Educating parents**

- The principal felt that the CLP could help educate parents regarding their duties and roles in their children's education.
- Two teachers mentioned that parents do not know what their roles are in the education of their children.
- Two out the three members of NGOs interviewed mentioned that parents do not always know what their role should be in their children's education.

❖ **Communication networks**

- All NGO members interviewed mentioned maintaining the communication networks as a prime role of the CLP.
- Two parents agreed that communication should be the primary focus of the CLP.
- The principal and three teachers believed that maintaining the communication network was the prime role of the CLP.

❖ **Improved communication (with regards to family, learners, parental involvement)**

- Three out of four learners felt that the CLP would improve communication and parental involvement.
- All the NGO members interviewed felt that the CLP would improve communication.
- Three parents and three teachers also agreed that the CLP would improve communication between the various stakeholders.

❖ **Support system for school and students**

- All learners interviewed mentioned that the CLP should create a support system for students.
- All NGOs felt that the CLP could create a support network.
- The principal interviewed believed that the CLP would be able to create a support network between various stakeholders.
- All teachers interviewed from both schools believed that the CLP would create a support network for schools, families and communities.

❖ **Reducing educator stress**

- One NGO member mentioned that the CLP could reduce educator loads
- Two parents, two teachers and the principal also agreed that the role of the CLP would help to reduce educator stress and work load.

5.1.4 Perceived challenges in initiating such a role as the CLP

Various challenges emanated from the findings.

❖ **Cost of a CLP**

- Four participants interviewed mentioned that getting the Western Cape Education Department on board may be a major challenge since it involved a resource/cost factor.

❖ **Funding for post**

- One member of an NGO mentioned that funding may be a challenge for the CLP.
- One parent also mentioned that funding might be a problem for the CLP.
- Two teachers and the principal thought that funding of the post would be the major challenge for the implementation of the CLP.

❖ **Trust and accountability/ confidentiality**

- Four participants mentioned accountability of the CLP but were of differing opinions as to who the CLP should be accountable to.
- One NGO member thought that the CLP should be accountable to either an NGO or to the school's principal.
- One teacher mentioned that the CLP should answer to the school one believed that the CLP should answer to the school and the government; and a third was of the opinion that the CLP should be accountable to the WCED only.

❖ **Gaining trust and cooperation**

- Two NGO members mentioned that gaining the trust of the stakeholders might be challenging.
- All learners interviewed believed that gaining the trust and confidentiality of individuals might be problematic.

- Two teachers and two parents also believed that trust issues would be a large concern in establishing the role of CLP.

❖ **Dealing with conflict**

- Two members of NGOs believed that violence and gangs were a problem in the informal settlement community.
- One learner mentioned violence and safety as being an issue in their community.
- Two parents mentioned that safety in their communities was an issue due to violence and gangs in the community.
- Only one teacher believed that gangs were an issue in the informal settlement.

Thus the main findings showed that parents were not actively participating as they should have been due to a number of factors. These challenges included long work hours, transportation costs, poor levels of education, lack of encouragement, poor communication as a result of limited access to phones and messages which were not received by parents (see section 4.4: 43-47).

The research findings also showed that the learners' community context had a number of factors which were not conducive to learning such as high levels of drug abuse: poor conditions for studying which included high noise levels and inadequate learning space with few resources (see section 4.6: 49-50). The introduction of a CLP would have various benefits including the development of stronger support structures for learners in schools and at home. The CLP would help with the education of parents on school related matters as well as helping to improve communication networks and coordination between the various spheres of school, family, community and learner. The CLP could reduce levels of stress amongst educators so that they concentrate on teaching (see section 4.7: 51-52).

However, there were a number of perceived challenges which might arise in initiating the role of CLP. These challenges include: the cost of appointing a CLP; sourcing the funding for such a CLP long-term as well as clearly defining the boundaries of privacy and confidentiality when intersecting with learners, parents and educators. Gang violence was also thought to be a concern (see section 4.8: 54-56).

5.2. Recommendations

Given the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are made in developing the role of the Community Liaison Person Program in relation to various stakeholders.

5.2.1 WCED

The WCED is a significant role player with regards to resources in schools in the Cape. However, the study was unable to solicit their opinions on the possibility of a CLP. Despite this, recommendations for the department's participation have been listed.

- Encourage businesses to form partnerships with schools and thus fund necessary resources such as an appointment of a CLP as a 'pilot' initiative.
- Offer leadership training to parents who wish to participate on the SGB.
- Encourage volunteers at school – especially parents who wish to participate more actively in their child's learning outcomes.
- Open up the schools after hours for adult learning classes

5.2.2 Communities

The communities have been found to be an important resource but have also at times shown to hinder to learner progress. The following recommendations are made to enhance outcomes. The schools could facilitate this with the assistance in the communities.

- Encourage partnerships between schools.
- Encourage meetings to discuss school and community issues and concerns.

5.2.3 Schools

- Survey parents to assess the needs of parents so as to understand the children's backgrounds and make attempts to incorporate other languages.
- Encourage greater involvement of parents in the school and in their child's learning.
- Contact parents directly and at times convenient to them.
- Encourage parents to volunteer at school and participate in events.
- Offer training sessions for volunteer positions and roles.
- Encourage parents to attend workshops where best practise for homework, learning needs of students, discipline and other matters relating to parenting are

discussed.

- Appoint a Community Liaison Person who is responsible with following up on meetings and other communication with parents.
- Encourage home visiting programs for parents who cannot attend parents' evenings.

5.2.4 Parents

Should be encouraged to:

- Attend and participate in all parents meetings.
- Participate and play an active role in homework.
- Check learner bags and discuss schooling with their children.
- Ensure that teachers have updated contact details.
- Contact teachers on a regular basis.
- Participate in school activities.
- Encourage other parents to get involved in the school.
- Volunteer at school and in classes.
- Ensure that other parents are aware of school events and activities.
- Ensure that the parents are always represented at school meetings and that those who are unable to attend are kept informed.

5.2.5 Learners

Should be encouraged to:

- Communicate more effectively with parents.
- Ask for assistance with homework at home.
- Invite parents to attend school meetings and events.

5.2.6 CLP

The roles/functions would be to:

- Work in collaboration with government, schools, community organisations, the business sector, parents groups and other stakeholders.
- Identify funding and resources in order to establish and develop the CLP role.
- Schedule regular meetings at school with parents and with the community.
- Keep an up-to-date contact details register of all stakeholders.
- Provide a structured training manual for the duties and roles of the CLP and

distribute it to all stakeholders so that the role may be utilised fully.

- Encourage volunteers and job shadowing of the position.
- Establish student committees to work with the parents, teachers and CLP.
- Expand links between schools, families and the community.
- Conduct research to further develop the program and identify possible expansions in the area.
- Establish partnerships with businesses which work towards eliminating social challenges in the community.
- Provide support to school leaders, staff, parents and learners.
- Liaise with community leaders.
- Provide information about the schools policies and activities to parents and caregivers.

5.2.7 Further Research

- Much more extensive research into the feasibility of establishing a CLP role is needed.
- A larger study comparing scholars in settlement areas with other schools in non-settlement areas could be undertaken.
- Research into clarifying the distinctive/similar roles of the school social worker *vis-à-vis* the Community Liaison Person may be helpful.
- Research adopting a mixed methodology approach (qualitative as well as quantitative methods) could be meaningful if applied to this area of concern.

5.3. Concluding Statement

The Community Liaison Person, known as a Community Liaison Officer in Australia, is responsible for the dissemination of knowledge but also for building partnerships between parents and schools and enabling the coming together of these individuals and, in doing so, increase parental involvement levels which ultimately leads to the improvement in learner outcomes. The framework provided by this report is aimed at advocating such a role in the South African situation. The position of Community Liaison Person would go a long way in addressing some of the educational deficits the country is currently experiencing.

This research has outlined the various roles and duties of the CLP. It has also reflected on the various challenges which may come into play but has shown that the benefits associated with

the implementation of the role far outweigh the possible challenges. The addition of a Community Liaison Person into schools across the Western Cape could lead to increased levels of parental involvement in schools, the formation of various partnerships between the stakeholders and will, in the long run, lead to increased and improved educational outcomes.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Permission to Carry Out Research – WCED

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Private Bag x9114
Cape Town, 8000
wced.wcape.gov.za

REFERENCE: 20120702-0023
ENQUIRIES: Dr A T Wyngaard

Mrs Jonelle du Pont
Department of Social Development
UCT

Dear Ms Jonelle du Pont

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: EXPLORING THE POTENTIAL FOR A COMMUNITY LIASON PERSON TO FACILITATE FAMILY AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOLS IN THE WESTERN CAPE

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

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Approval for projects should be conveyed to the District Director of the schools where the project will be conducted.
5. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
6. The Study is to be conducted from **16 July 2012 till 08 August 2012.**
7. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr AT Wyngaard at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number.
9. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
10. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
11. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
12. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:

**The Director: Research Services
Western Cape Education Department
Private Bag X9114
CAPE TOWN
8000**

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.

Signed: Dr Audrey T Wyngaard
for: **HEAD: EDUCATION**
DATE: 03 July 2012

Appendix B: Interview Guide for Principal and Educators

The University of Cape Town
Department of Social Development
Masters in Social Development
Jonelle du Pont

“Exploring the Need for a Community Liaison Person in Facilitating Family and Community Involvement in Schools in the Western Cape: A Case Study of Schools in the Joe Slovo Park Informal Settlement.”

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE
Part 1 – Principals and Educators

Introduction

Hello, my name is Jonelle and I am a Masters student at the University of Cape Town. I am currently working on my dissertation. My research topic is based on the potential for a Community Liaison Person in Schools in the Western Cape.

Thank you for granting me permission to interview you. The aim of my research is to gain a better understanding of the potential of a Community Liaison Person for facilitating parental/family/community involvement in the learners' educational needs. How often do we hear that parents are not involved in the learner's education and how difficult it is to promote their participation? Your insights will assist this research in discovering whether or not such a role could be feasible.

I would like to record the conversation so that I do not miss anything you say or misinterpret it from my notes. Anything you say will be confidential and pseudonyms will be used in all reporting of my findings.

Participation is completely voluntary and if at any point you feel uncomfortable with a question please feel free to stop me or refrain from answering the questions.

Please try and answer the questions as fully as possible as you have a deeper understanding of the problems impacting on learners. If there is anything I need to clarify, please ask me.

Thank you,
Jonelle du Pont.

Part 1 – Principals and Educators

Participant Particulars

1. Name of School
2. Name of participant
3. Gender
4. Position held/Role
5. Number of years involved in this school
6. Place of Residence (Town)
7. Training and education

General Background Questions for Schools

1. Main language medium for teaching
2. Home language of majority of learners
3. Number of students in school
4. Number of teachers
5. Average Teacher :student ratio
6. Funding sources
7. Ethnicity of learners
8. Ethnicity of educators
9. After school activities
10. Pass rate
11. School Fees

Section one

Perceptions about family and community participation in schools

1. What kind of family participation would you find helpful? (Probe...)
2. What kind of family participation would not be helpful? (Probe...)
3. What kind of community participation is needed? (Probe who, how, why...)
4. What kind of community participation would not be needed? (Give examples)
5. What levels of parental involvement currently exists at your school? (Describe...)

6. How could parental involvement be increased? (Give some ideas)
7. What school policies are in place that encourages such involvement?
8. What events take place at school that could generate greater family/community involvement? (Share some experiences...)
9. What kinds of channels already exist for parents to participate? (Name some of the processes that are in place and whether this needs to be improved upon)
10. What kinds of issues are dealt with when parents are called in? (Name some of the issues)
11. What are the procedures should parents wish to see/speak to educators/principals? (Give examples of what has already happened and what the issues are)
12. How often are the parents/staff meetings scheduled during the school year? (What are these meetings like? Who sets up the agenda? What are the key issues usually discussed?)
13. What are some of the ways in which you communicate with parents regarding learners' progress? (Please give detailed explanations...examples)
14. Which after-school activities are there for the children?
15. Do you personally participate in any after-school activities?
16. Have the community members or family members ever been involved in such activities?
17. What are some of the possible problems that prevent parents from taking on a more proactive role in their children's education? (Give some reasons: why they may not get involved; why they seem reluctant to come to PTA meetings; why they do not supervise homework sufficiently...)
18. What have you personally done to make them more aware of their responsibilities?
19. Discuss some ways that parents/families/communities can become more involved.(Give some examples...)
20. Why do you think it is important that parents / families/ communities do become involved?

Section Two

Perceptions about the challenges to greater family and community involvement in the learning needs of school learners

1. What do you think are the learning needs of school learners? (Probe)
2. What, in your opinion, are the most significant challenges to families with regards to learning needs of the students? (Probe finances, adequate food, clothing, space to study, home atmosphere/stability)
3. In your opinion, what are the three most significant factors that impact on student learning in the classroom that are directly related to their home circumstances? (Specify the three challenging home circumstances)
4. What are the three most challenging factors in the community that impact on learners? (Name the three issues that you think are significant and say how they impact on learners)
5. Give some examples of how parents have shown interest in their children's education. (Probe)
6. Give some examples as to how they have not shown interest in their children's education. (Probe)
7. Are educators bilingual? (If so, which languages do they speak?)
8. Are educators able to communicate with learners, parents, and community in the language that is commonly spoken? (Please explain...)
9. In which way can schools help with more effective communication? (Explore the use of translators provided at school meetings: is it possible? Does it happen? If not, why not?)
10. Are meetings scheduled with the parents' concerns in mind? (Explore how the parents are encouraged to talk; whether childcare is available during school meetings; and whether meetings are scheduled to attract greater parent attendance, whether transport is considered)
11. What resources are available to families and learners to assist with learners' needs? (e.g. access to a library, after-school care, facilities to do homework in, meals for learners etc.)
12. What is the level of violence in the school/community/home? (Explore...)

Section Three

Perceptions about the possible role a Community Liaison Person (CLP) could have in facilitating communication/participation of families and communities in the schooling of their learners

1. Who is currently responsible for community/ liaising with parents/families?
 - Whose job is it to update parents/call parents in/arrange meetings etc.?
2. What do you think a Community Liaison Person is?
3. What duties do you think they would have?
4. What duties do you think would be necessary?
5. Is there such a person at your school?
6. What are the benefits of having a CLP?
 - How do you think a CLP could help a school?
 - How could they help families?
 - How do you think this will help learners?
7. Would you be interested in having access to a person of this nature?
8. Would you be interested in having a person of this nature at your school?
9. What do you think is the importance of engaging all stakeholders in the education of learners?
10. Would it help to have someone whose job it is to liaise with parents and communities and plan events and meetings?
11. Would you be willing to invite a person who does this to work through your school if there were no cost implications?

Section Four

Perceptions about the challenges that could hamper the role of a Community Liaison Person

1. What do you think about the role of a Community Liaison Person? (Describe some of the crucial roles you think this person could play...)
2. What would be some of the obstacles in establishing such a role? (Explore who should employ such a person, to whom should such a person report)
3. What do you think the learner reaction would be to this initiative? Do you think they would be willing to make it work, or at least be open to it?
4. Would educators be in favour of such a Community Liaison Person? (Why? Give reasons, benefits, as well as possible difficulties)
5. Would parents/families be open to such a Community Liaison Person? (Give reasons, pros and cons as to why such a role could be difficult)
6. What are some of the practical issues that could confront a Community Liaison Person in trying to carry out her/his role? (Explore some of the issues...)
7. Describe some other factors that might limit the success of a CLP initiative.
8. Do you think the WCED would be willing to work towards such an initiative? (Probe some of the pros and cons that they may see about the implantation of such a role).

It was great to listen to your insights and experiences and you have most certainly raised many significant issues for consideration. I am indeed grateful for your time and willingness to participate in my research. Thank you! One last favour!

Would you be willing to participate in a **focus group at a later date** with other members of the school community such as principals, parents, teachers and members of the WCED as well as NGOs? (See Diagram)

YES I WILL BE PART OF THE FOCUS GROUP

Name.....Role School.....

NO I CANNOT COMMIT MYSELF

Name..... Role..... School.....

Appendix C: Interview Guide for Parents and SGB Members

The University of Cape Town
Department of Social Development
Masters in Social Development
Jonelle du Pont

“Exploring the Need for a Community Liaison Person in Facilitating Family and Community Involvement in Schools in the Western Cape: A Case Study of Schools in the Joe Slovo Park Informal Settlement.”

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Part 2 – Parents and SGB Members

Introduction

Hello, my name is Jonelle and I am a Masters student at the University of Cape Town. I am currently working on my dissertation. My research topic is based on the potential for a Community Liaison Person in Schools in the Western Cape.

Thank you for granting me permission to interview you. The aim of my research is to gain a better understanding of the potential of a Community Liaison Person for facilitating parental/family/community involvement in the learners' educational needs. How often do we not hear that parents are not involved in the learners' education and how difficult it is to promote their participation. Your insights will assist this research in discovering whether or not such a role could be feasible.

I would like to record the conversation so that I do not miss anything you say or misinterpret it from my notes. Anything you say will be confidential and pseudonyms will be used in all reporting of my findings.

Participation is completely voluntary and if at any point you feel uncomfortable with a question please feel free to stop me or refrain from answering the questions.

Please try and answer the questions as fully as possible as you have a deeper understanding of the problems impacting on learners. If there is anything I need to clarify please ask me.

Thank you,

Jonelle du Pont.

Part 2 - Parents on the SGB

Participant particulars

1. Name
2. Gender
3. Relationship to school
4. Number of children in the school
5. Number of children in total
6. Ages of children
7. Origin
8. Current place of residence
9. Current job
10. Number of years on the SGB
11. Position on SGB

General background questions for Parents

1. How many people are there in total in your household
2. What language do you speak with your family at home?
3. Why did you send your child or children to this school?
4. Do you pay for your child/ren's school fees?
5. Do you get financial assistance for your child's schooling needs?
6. How much are your child's school fees?
7. What are the additional costs related to sending your child to school? (books, uniform, lunch)
8. Do you have electricity and running water at home?
9. Do you have access to a computer? (Either at work or home)
10. Do you have access to a phone?
11. Do you have access to the Internet?
12. Do you ever use a computer?
13. Do you use the Internet?
14. If yes, how often?

Section One

Perceptions about family and community participation in schools

1. What kind of family participation do you think would be helpful for your child?
2. What kind of family participation do you think would NOT be helpful for your child?
3. What kind of community participation is needed to help your child succeed at schools?
4. What kind of community participation do you think would not help your child at school?
5. How involved are you with your child schooling? (Describe)
6. How do you think you could be more involved in your child's schooling?
7. What school policies are in place that encourage you to be involved in your child's schooling?
8. What events take place at your child's school that you are invited to participate in and that generate greater family or community involvement?
9. What kinds of channels already exist at this school that encourage parents to participate? (Name some of the processes that are in place and whether this needs to be improved upon)
10. What kinds of issues are you aware of that parents are called in about? What are you called in about?
11. What are the procedures in place if you want to speak to educators/principals? (Give examples of what has already happened and what the issues are)
12. How often are parents meetings scheduled during the school year?
13. Do you attend these?
14. What are the meetings like? Who sets the agenda? What are the key issues that are usually discussed?
15. What are some of the ways in which you communicate with school staff regarding your child's progress?
16. What after school activities are there for the children at the school?
17. Do you personally participate in any after school activities?
18. Have the community members or other family members (that you are aware of) ever been involved in such activities?

19. What are some of the problems that you think prevent parents from taking on a more proactive role in their children's activities?
20. What are some of the reasons that might prevent you from taking part in your child's education? (Give some reasons why parents may seem reluctant to come to PTA meetings, why parents may not supervise homework sufficiently)
21. What have *you* personally done to make other parents more aware of their responsibility as parents?
22. Why do you think it is important for parents/families/communities to be involved in their children's education?

Section Two

Perceptions about the challenges to greater family and community involvement in the learning needs of school learners

1. What do you think are the learning needs of school learners?
2. What, in your opinion, are the most significant challenges to families with regards to the learning needs of students? (Probe, finances, adequate food, clothing, space to study, home atmosphere, stability)
3. In your opinion, what are the three most significant factors that impact on student learning in the classroom that are directly related to their home circumstances? (Specify the three challenging home circumstances)
4. What are the three most challenging factors in the community that impact on learners? (Name the three issues that you think are significant and how they impact on learners)
5. Give some examples of how you have shown interest in your child's education. (Probe)
6. Give some examples of how you have NOT shown interest in your child's education? What do you think you could have done better?
7. Are educators able to communicate with you in YOUR home language?
8. Are you able to properly understand the concerns of the educators?
9. In which way can schools help with more effective communication? (Translators at meetings: are they provided? Should they be? Why/ why not? Would it be useful?)
10. Are meetings scheduled with your concerns as the parent in mind? (Are you encouraged to talk during the meetings? Is childcare available during the meetings? Are meetings scheduled at a convenient time? Are transport issues considered?)
11. What resources are available to families and learners to assist with learners' needs? (Access to library, after-school care, facilitates to do homework in, meals for learners etc.)
12. What is the level of violence like in your community/family/school environment?

Section Three

Perceptions about the possible role that a Community Liaison person (CLP) could have in facilitating communication/participation of families and communities in the schooling of their learners.

1. Who is currently responsible for community/family liaison? Who currently contacts you from the school?
2. Do you think that having someone whose job it is to contact parents and the community would help with parental involvement?
3. What services would it be useful for this person to provide?
4. Do you think there would be benefits for having a liaison person? What would these be?
5. Do you think a liaison person would improve communication levels and involvement levels of parents?
6. What in your perception would the benefits of a liaison person be for the learners? Do you think it would improve their learning abilities?
7. Would you be interested in having a CLP at your child's school on a full time basis that would help liaise between parents and the school?
8. Would you personally be willing to work with someone in this position? Would you be open to using their services?
9. What role would you want them to fulfil? Where do you think they would be most useful?

Section Four

Perceptions about the challenges that could hamper the role of a Community Liaison Person

1. What do you think about the role of a Community Liaison Person? (Describe some of the crucial roles you think this person should play)
2. What would be some of the obstacles in establishing such a role? (Explore who should employ such a person and to whom this person should report)
3. What do you think the learner reaction would be to this initiative? Do you think they would be willing to make it work, or at least be open to the idea?
4. Would educators be in favour of such a Community Liaison Person? (Why? Give reasons, benefits, as well as possible difficulties)
5. Would you as a parent be open for such a Community Liaison Person and do you think OTHER parents would be.
6. What are some of the practical issues that could confront a Community Liaison Person in trying to carry out his or her role? (Explore the issues)
7. Describe some other factors that might limit the success of a CLP initiative?
8. Do you think that the WCED would be willing to work towards such an initiative?
9. What do you think are some of the pros and cons that they might see in the implantation of such a role?

It was great to listen to your insights and experiences and you have most certainly raised many significant issues for consideration. I am indeed grateful for your time and willingness to participate in my research. Thank you! One last favour!

Would you be willing to participate in a **focus group at a later date** with other members of the school community such as principals, parents, teachers and members of the WCED as well as NGOs? (See Diagram)

YES I WILL BE PART OF THE FOCUS GROUP

Name.....Role School.....

NO I CANNOT COMMIT MYSELF

Name.....Role School.....

Appendix D: Interview Guide for Learners

The University of Cape Town
Department of Social Development
Masters in Social Development
Jonelle du Pont

“Exploring the Need for a Community Liaison Person in Facilitating Family and Community Involvement in Schools in the Western Cape: A Case Study of Schools in the Joe Slovo Park Informal Settlement.”

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Part 3 - Learners

Introduction

Hello, my name is Jonelle and I am a Masters student at the University of Cape Town. I am currently working on my dissertation. My research topic is based on the potential for a Community Liaison Person in Schools in the Western Cape.

Thank you for granting me permission to interview you. The aim of my research is to gain a better understanding of the potential of a Community Liaison Person for facilitating parental/family/community involvement in the learners' educational needs. How often do we not hear that parents are not involved in the learners' education and how difficult it is to promote their participation. Your insights will assist this research in discovering whether or not such a role could be feasible.

I would like to record the conversation so that I do not miss anything you say or misinterpret it from my notes. Anything you say will be confidential and pseudonyms will be used in all reporting of my findings.

Participation is completely voluntary and if at any point you feel uncomfortable with a question please feel free to stop me or refrain from answering the questions.

Please try and answer the questions as fully as possible as you have a deeper understanding of the problems impacting on learners. If there is anything I need to clarify please ask me.

Thank you,

Jonelle du Pont.

Part 3- Learners

General background questions

1. Main home language
2. Legal guardians/ members of households
3. Age
4. Year/ school level
5. Years in school
6. Origin/where do you and your family originally come from?
7. Home location/where do you live now?
8. What after school activities do you participate in?
9. What are your hobbies?
10. Who pays for your school fees?

Section One

1. What kind of family participation would you find helpful? (Help with homework, parents talking to teachers, attending meetings etc)
2. What kind of family participation would you not find helpful?
3. What kind of community participation do you think is needed in your school?
4. What kind of family participation do you think is not needed in your school?
5. How involved are your parents or guardians in your schooling?
6. How does your school encourage your parents to get more involved at your school if they do at all? (Do they call them, arrange meetings, send letters, invite them to attend events?)
7. How could your parents or guardians be more involved in your school?
8. Have your parents ever been to your school or met with your teachers or principals? (Why, how, what for?)
9. What types of events happen at your school where parents are invited to attend? How often do these events happen if at all?
10. Do your parents ever attend them? Why not?
11. Do the teachers make the effort to invite your parents to school events?
12. Does your school have parents' evenings? How often do these happen?
13. How do the teachers communicate with your parents or guardians? (Letter, phone, through you etc.)
14. What types of after school activities are there at your school? (Sports, drama, music classes, etc.)
15. What after school activities do you participate in?
16. Have your family or community members ever participated in these events or been to watch you in them?
17. What do you think are the reasons that your parents would not participate in these events? What prevents them from joining in the activities such as meetings, sports events, parents' evenings etc?
18. Do you actively ask your parents to participate in your school activities or events?
19. Do you think that communities and parents should be more involved in your education and school life?
20. Why do you think parents/families and communities need to be involved in your school life?

Section Two

1. What is most important about school education for you? (Being educated, friends, clothing, food, reading, learning or nothing)
2. What are the biggest challenges for you about school? (Finances, uniform, friends, language, books, money for fees, food, home life)
3. What three things at home impact your ability to learn in the classroom the most? (Not having money, distance to school, family issues etc.)
4. What are the three biggest challenges for you in life? (Family, money, food, finding friends, etc.)
5. Can you give examples of how your parents show interest in your education?
6. Can you give me any examples of reasons why your parents might not participate in your education?
7. What language does your teacher teach in?
8. What language does she communicate with you in on a one-to-one level?
9. Do you understand the language that the lessons are taught in?
10. What resources are available to you and your family to make learning easier? (Library, tutors, assistants, school bus, funding, lunch for students, place to do homework, after-school care)
11. Are you exposed to violence at home, at school or in your community?
12. If yes, what type of violence?

Section Three

1. Who currently liaises with your parents about meetings/events/homework/ your behaviour at school, etc.?
2. Do you think that having someone whose job it is to liaise with parents/schools and communities would help you do better at school?
3. What would you want that person to discuss with your parents or what role would you want a CLP to play in your life?
4. Do you think a CLP in your school would help things at home in any way? How so? What? Why?
5. Do you think a CLP would make it easier to get assistance at school? Or help your parents to better understand your education? Or help your teachers to better understand you?
6. What types of duties do you think a CLP should be responsible for?
7. Where do you think the services of a CLP would be most necessary?
8. Is there currently a person in your school who fills any of these roles? (Talking to parents, discussing you issues at school, helping you explain your needs to teachers) If yes, who is this person? What do they do exactly?
9. If there is currently no one who fills this role, do you think that someone like that would provide a valuable service to you? If yes, how and why and in what way?
10. Do you think a CLP would be beneficial to other learners as well in your school? How or why? Do you think it would improve their ability to learn?
11. Do you think a CLP would improve the current channels of communication that exists in schools?
12. Would you be interested in having a CLP at your school on a full time basis who would help to liaise with parents and learners and communities and who could plan meetings and events to help encourage participation?
13. How would you personally ask the CLP to help you deal with the communication between your school and your parents? What would you want them to do for you as a person?

Section Four

1. What do you think the CLP would be responsible for doing or should do?
2. What do you think some of the challenges or difficulties that would face a CLP would be?
3. Would you personally be open to having a person like this in your school?
4. Would you be willing to make an initiative of this nature work?
5. Do you think that your parents/families would be open to such an initiative?
6. What do you think would be some of the reasons a CLP would NOT work in your school?
7. Describe some of the reasons that you think parents would give against a CLP?
8. Do you think that your family, friends, principles, teachers would be happy about a CLP or opposed to a CLP?

It was great to listen to your insights and experiences and you have most certainly raised many significant issues for consideration. I am indeed grateful for your time and willingness to participate in my research. Thank you! One last favour!

Would you be willing to participate in a **focus group at a later date** with other members of the school community such as principals, parents, teachers and members of the WCED as well as NGOs? (See Diagram)

YES I WILL BE PART OF THE FOCUS GROUP

Name.....Role School.....

NO I CANNOT COMMIT MYSELF

Name

.....Role School.....

Appendix E: Interview Guide for NGOs

Masters in Social Development

Jonelle du Pont

“Exploring the Need for a Community Liaison Person in Facilitating Family and Community Involvement in Schools in the Western Cape: A Case Study of Schools in the Joe Slovo Park Informal Settlement.”

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Part 4 - NGOs

Introduction

Hello, my name is Jonelle and I am a Masters student at the University of Cape Town. I am currently working on my dissertation. My research topic is based on the potential for a Community Liaison Person in Schools in the Western Cape.

Thank you for granting me permission to interview you. The aim of my research is to gain a better understanding of the potential of a Community Liaison Person for facilitating parental/family/community involvement in the learners' educational needs. How often do we not hear that parents are not involved in the learners' education and how difficult it is to promote their participation. Your insights will assist this research in discovering whether or not such a role could be feasible.

I would like to record the conversation so that I do not miss anything you say or misinterpret it from my notes. Anything you say will be confidential and pseudonyms will be used in all reporting of my findings.

Participation is completely voluntary and if at any point you feel uncomfortable with a question please feel free to stop me or refrain from answering the questions.

Please try and answer the questions as fully as possible as you have a deeper understanding of the problems impacting on learners. If there is anything I need to clarify please ask me.

Thank you,

Jonelle du Pont

Part 4 - NGO Reps

Participant Particulars

1. Name of NGO
2. Focus area
3. Location
4. Role at the NGO
5. Number of years working at the NGO
6. Training

General background Questions for NGOs

1. What are your NGOs priorities?
2. What schools do you usually work with?
3. What do you do with the schools?
4. What focus area is the bulk of your funding spent on?
5. Where do you get your funding from?
6. Does the government fund any education related programs?

Section One

Perceptions about family and community participation in schools

1. What type of participation do you think is most needed in schools today?
2. Conversely, what do you think is the least helpful participation in schools?
3. What type of community participation do you believe is most necessary and why?
4. What type of community participation is least helpful to learners?
5. In your perception, do you think there is parental involvement in the schools you deal with? What type is this?
6. How do you think that parental involvement in these schools could be increased?
7. Does your organisation do anything to encourage parental involvement? If yes, what is it?
8. Does your organisation ever get involved in or host school-based events that encourage participation of parents and communities at school?
9. In your opinion, what are some of the processes that exist that encourage participation of parents in the learning experience of learners?
10. In your opinion, what are some of the processes, which exist that encourage participation of the community in the learning experience of learners?
11. How regularly do you meet with educators to discuss challenges that exist in schools?
12. What are some of the challenges that are discussed in these meetings?
13. What do you think needs to be done in order to eliminate some of these challenges?
14. Are these challenges something that your organisation tries to address?
15. What does your organisation do to eliminate some of these challenges, if anything?
16. If not, what do you think your organisation COULD do? Or should do more of?
17. Do you personally deal with parents of learners?
18. Are you aware of what the parents themselves believe to be the main issues with the education of their children?
19. Does your organisation provide any after school activities for learners? (If yes, what, when, how often, for who?)
20. Do parents ever approach anyone from your organisation with ideas or suggestions that they would find useful? (In relation to participation and in general)
21. Have you or anyone you work with tried to make learners, schools, parents or communities more aware of the importance of parental involvement and participation in learning?

Section Two

Perceptions about the challenges to greater family and community involvement in the learning needs of school learners

1. What do you think are the learning needs of school learners?
2. What do you think are the needs of the families of learners?
3. What, in your perception, are the needs of the communities in which the learners live?
4. What do you believe to be the biggest obstacles to learning? (Finances, food, clothing, space to study etc)
 - a) For learners
 - b) For the families of learners
 - c) For the learners' community
5. What do you think are the most significant factors to learning that are a direct result of home circumstance? (Specify at least three)
6. What are the three most challenging factors in the communities in which you work that impact on learners? (Name three most significant and say why and how they impact on learners)
7. Can you give some examples of how parents have shown interest in their children's education?
8. Can you give some examples as to how parents have NOT shown interest in their children's education?
9. How do you think that schools could help with more effective communication between parents and schools? (Translators: is it possible? Does it happen? When? why not etc.)?
10. Are you ever invited to participate in school activities? Who gets in touch with you and invites you in? Have you ever asked to participate? What was the response?
11. What resources are you aware of that are provided to parents and families to help with learner needs? (Library, after school care, facilities to do homework, meals for learners)
12. Do you provide any services as an organisation to assist with education and learning?
13. What is the level of violence like in the community in which you work? What about in the schools where you work?

Section Three

Perceptions about the role that a Community Liaison Person (CLP) could have in facilitating communication/participation of families and communities in the schooling of their learners.

1. Do you directly correspond with the schools in the areas your organisation works?
2. Who do you normally contact at the school?
3. How open are the schools to meetings and discussion with you?
4. Do the schools ever invite you to participate in their events?
5. Do you think that having a Liaison Person who works at the school, and is responsible for communicating directly with the community and family members, would be useful?
6. How so, or in what way? Or why not?
7. Do you think that having a CLP in the schools would improve the current channels of communication that exist?
8. What do you think the benefits of this role would be on learners? Do you think it would improve their ability to learn?
9. Would you make use of such a contact person at schools who would liaise between your organisation and schools?
10. What role would you expect them to fulfil in schools and how do you think their services would be most helpful?

Section Four

Perceptions about the challenges that could hamper the role of a Community Liaison Person

1. What do you think about the role of a Community Liaison Person in schools? (Describe some of the crucial roles you think this person should play)
2. What would be some of the obstacles to establishing such a role? (Explore who should employ such a person, to whom such a person should report)
3. What do you think the learner reaction would be to this initiative? Do you think they would be willing to make it work or at least be open to it?
4. Do you think that educators would be in favour of a Community Liaison Person? (Why? Give reasons and benefits as well as possible difficulties)
5. Do you think that parents and families would be open to a Community Liaison Person? (Give reasons as well as pros and cons)
6. What are some of the practical issues that might confront a Community Liaison Person in trying to carry out his or her roles? (Explore some of the issues)
7. Describe some other factors that might limit the success of a CLP initiative?
8. Do you think that the WCED would be willing to work towards such an initiative? (Probe some of the pros and cons that they may see about the implementation of such a role)

It was great to listen to your insights and experiences and you have most certainly raised many significant issues for consideration. I am indeed grateful for your time and willingness to participate in my research. Thank you! One last favour!

Would you be willing to participate in a **focus group at a later date** with other members of the school community such as principals, parents, teachers and members of the WCED as well as NGOs? (See Diagram)

YES I WILL BE PART OF THE FOCUS GROUP

Name.....Role School.....

NO I CANNOT COMMIT MYSELF

Name Role

Appendix F: Non Plagiarism Declaration

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.

Signature: _____ Date _____