

**THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL IN ESTABLISHING A
HEALTHY SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIP**

by

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Abstract

The study was aimed at investigating the establishment and maintenance of healthy school-community relationships. The focus of the inquiry was the role that school principals can play in ensuring that harmonious relations exist between the school and the local community.

A decline in the culture of teaching and learning in schools, and the resultant poor educational performance of the learners is a matter of serious concern to all people and organisations with interest in education. It is for that reason that the new South African Schools Act encourages the establishment of a strong partnership between the schools and all stakeholders in education. The stakeholders mentioned in the Act include the business sector, state, and members of the local communities.

The partners in a partnership work together towards a common goal. In education the partners work together towards the optimal development of the potentials of the children. The children must be guided to become responsible members of their respective communities, and to contribute in the development of community life.

The schools are built in a community to serve the needs of the community members in its area. This makes a partnership between the school and the community, essential if the school is to meet the needs of the community. The school-community partnership can help to ensure that the education offered in schools is relevant and responsive to community needs.

Moreover, it is through community support that the school is able to carry out its tasks as expected by the stakeholders. The community is expected, inter alia, to help create a healthy climate within schools, and to promote the culture of teaching and learning. Community members need to be empowered in order to be able to contribute effectively in school activities.

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The investigation revealed that there are barriers between the schools and their local communities that isolate the schools from their communities. The schools, and the school principals in particular, are faced with the great task of breaking the barriers so as to enable the schools and their communities to work harmoniously together.

More importantly, the schools must realise the need to increase their clientele to include the whole community, and not only the community's children.

The study also discovered that the relationship between the school and the community takes place haphazardly. There is no plan as to how the school-community relations should be handled. The roles of the teachers and community members in the partnership are not defined. This makes it difficult to channel the actions of partners in school-community relationships to work towards a common goal.

The study has highlighted some of the causes of poor school-community relationship and the strategies that can be employed by schools, particularly the principals, to deal with such causes with the aim of breaking down the wall between the school and the community.

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SECTION 1: ORIENTATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This study aims at investigating the strategies related to the establishment and maintenance of healthy school-community relationships. The focus of the study will be on the role of the school principals in establishing and maintaining the school-community relationships. The importance of healthy school-community relationships cannot be overemphasised. The community and the school need to work together in the transmission of culture to the children, as well as in their development, so as to enable them to live meaningful lives, and contribute towards the development of their own communities. The school also needs the support of the community to carry out its functions effectively.

Carrasquillo (1993: 209) argues that community participation influences students' performance. Therefore, the time spent with parents and students outside the classroom, as well as teachers' involvement in school-community organisations and activities, will most probably result in better teaching and learning.

There is a considerable decline in the culture of teaching and learning in the majority of schools in this country. By strengthening the relationships between the school and the community, the situation might be improved.

1.2 BACKGROUND AND THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RESEARCH

The provision of education in the country during the apartheid era was based along racial lines. There were four state departments of education, namely, the department of Education and Training (blacks) ; the department of Education and Culture, Administration : House of Assembly (whites) ; the department of Education and Culture, Administration: House of Representatives (Coloureds) and the department of Education and Culture: Administration: House of Delegates (Asians) (Van Schalkwyk 1988: 76).

There was uneven distribution of resources, such as facilities and human resources, as well as an unequal allocation of funds for the provision of education to the different racial groups. It is these discrepancies and inequalities in the provision of education, particularly with regard to the discriminatory budgets, that contributed to the explosive rejection of government policy in education by the black youth in Soweto in 1976. This later spread throughout the country (Coutts 1992 : 4).

The unrest that followed disrupted the relationship between the schools and the communities they were expected to serve (White paper on Education and Training, 1995). The disruption of the relationship between the school and the community has resulted in the decline in the culture of teaching and learning. This is emphasised by the government in its education policy document, The White paper on Education and Training (1995: 21) which states that,

in many schools and colleges serving the majority of the population there has been a precipitous decline in the quality of educational performance which must be reversed.

It must be borne in mind that the unhealthy relationship between the school and the community is but one of the many causes of the decline in the culture of teaching and learning.



In trying to improve the quality of educational performance in schools, the new education policy, formulated after April 1994 by the first democratically elected government in the country, stresses the active involvement of all stakeholders and interested groups or individuals in education (Potgieter 1997: 8). The stakeholders include, the state, parents, the private sector and the community. As (Potgieter 1997: 9) states,

the schools exist in the community, they are part of the community and they should pursue goals not of their own, but of the society or community in which they operate. Parents and members of the community are often in the best position to see what the school really needs and what the problems in the school are.

This implies that the community can play important role in the creation of a healthy environment in schools. This is an environment which can make effective teaching and learning in schools possible. The effective teaching and learning, in turn, will help to improve the quality of education offered in schools, and consequently the standard of living of the community. The active involvement of the community in the running of the school will

ensure that the school does not only meet the educational needs of the children, but those of the community as well (Townsend 1994: 109).

1.3 MOTIVATION

This study was motivated by a lack of enthusiasm in the local community to get involved in school activities. As Donald (1985:10) puts it, the community members should have significant responsibility in the running of schools. This lack of interest in education by the community has unpleasant consequences, such as a decline in the culture of teaching and learning, a high drop-out rate, unemployment, and ultimately poverty.

The significance of the study is:

To provide the educational authorities with information concerning the strategies that can be used to improve the mutual relationship between the schools, their local communities, and the South African society as a whole.

To provide the educational authorities with the information on how the school-community relationship can help to restore the culture of teaching and learning in schools.

To contribute to research on the role the school principal can play in building and maintaining the relationships between the school and the community.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION

The primary question that this study seeks to answer is the following:

How can the school principal establish and assist in the maintenance of healthy school-community relationships?

Five secondary questions were identified to assist in the research process. They are listed as:

1. What are the problems the school principal experience in building and maintaining school-community relationships?

2. What kind of strategies can the school principals utilize to address problems related to the relationships between the school and the community?
3. What are the strategies that the school principal can employ to involve the community in school activities?
4. What are the contributions that the school could make towards the development of community life?
5. What mechanisms do school principals employ to encourage the school community to become actively involved in building and maintaining a healthy school-community relationship?

1.5 RESEARCH AIMS

The research aims are:



1. To explore the role of the school principal in the establishment and maintenance of a healthy school-community relationship.
2. To describe the problems experienced by the school principals in their endeavour to build and maintain healthy school-community relationships.
3. To describe the methods used by the school principals to address the problems affecting the relationships between the school and the community.
4. To describe the methods used by the school principal to encourage active community involvement in school activities.
5. To describe the methods used by the school principal to ensure that the schools make a meaningful contribution towards the development of community life.

6. To describe the methods used by the school principal to encourage all the school community members to become actively involved in building and maintaining healthy school-community relationships.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.6.1 Research design

The study is exploratory, descriptive and explanatory in nature. As a result, a qualitative design would be most suitable for this kind of study. The design would make it possible for a researcher to give a detailed description of the problems which exist between the schools and their local communities. Furthermore, the design would also give a researcher the opportunity to provide a clear explanation of the strategies that can be used to address school-community issues in order to restore the mutual relationship between the schools and their communities. Due to time constraints, the study delimits itself to secondary schools.

1.6.2 Instruments of data collection



The standardised open-ended interview was chosen by the investigator to collect data for the study. Patton (1990) defines the standard open-ended interview as the type of interview which consists of a set of questions that are carefully worded and arranged for the purpose of taking each respondent through the same sequence, and asking each respondent the same questions in essentially the same words.

The method was chosen because it will enable the interviewer to gather more information about the phenomena within a limited period of time. Patton (1990) states that in-depth interviewing probes the surface, soliciting detail and providing a holistic understanding of the interviewee's point of view.

Each method of collecting data has its own specific limitations. One of the limitations of the standardised open-ended interview is that it makes it difficult for the investigator to use different lines of questioning with different people based on their unique situations. By

employing different methods of data collection in a single project we are, to some extent, able to compensate for the limitations of each (Mouton, 1990).

In this study, key informants will also be used as the method of collecting data together with the standardised open-ended interview in order to compensate the limitations of each other. The key informants are people who are particularly knowledgeable, people whose insight can prove particularly useful in helping an investigator understand the phenomenon under study (Patton, 1990). Data collected from them can be triangulated with that of the subjects in the study, a process employed to ensure validity of findings.

1.6.3 Data analysis

The collected data will be analysed using the content analysis method. The procedure followed when using this method of data analysis is that the units of data are coded and then clustered to find the most relevant categories, patterns, and themes for interpretation (Patton, 1990). After the interviews have been completed, the investigator should first transcribe the data, which was recorded. The labelling of units of data or coding is the first step of data analysis. A detailed description of the process of data analysis will be provided in section three of this study.

1.7 CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS OF TERMS

The key concepts related to the study are clarified and put into context in order to eliminate ambiguity and confusion.

1.7.1 The role of school principal

A dictionary definition of the term “role” is a person’s or a thing’s characteristic or expected function (The Concise Oxford dictionary, 1990). The term is used in this study to describe the expected functions of the school principal in the establishment and maintenance of healthy school-community relationships.

1.7.2 The school-community relationship

The term “school-community relationship” is used in this study to describe the partnership between the school and the local community. The concept partnership as it is used in the business sector refers to a number of people who have a common goal, and who cooperate with one another by contributing something of value, for example, money or skill to a relationship, with the aim of making profit (Potgieter, 1997). In the educational sector, the profit is a better education for all learners. In order for the learners to have a better education, there must be a partnership between all stakeholders who have an interest in education. The members of the community near the school are some of the important stakeholders in education (Potgieter, 1997).

1.8 CONTEXTUAL ORIENTATION

The study is conducted in Qwa-Qwa, in the Free State Province of the Republic of South Africa. Qwa-Qwa is a rural area situated in the north eastern part of the province. The study will be conducted in one of the villages in Qwa-Qwa called Bolata. The majority of the adult population in this area is unemployed, unskilled and therefore very poor. Although, there are many schools in the area, the level of literacy is very low. The general educational performance of the learners in schools, particularly at the secondary school phase, is very low.

1.9 DELIMITATION

In order to make the study more manageable, it has been delimited to the secondary school phase only. Four secondary schools in the area will be studied. The secondary school phase was selected for study because of a considerable decline in the culture of teaching and learning in secondary schools in the area.

1.10 SECTION DIVISIONS

The study is structured as follows: section one provides an orientation and contextualisation of the research, the research problem, the motivation for the study, the aims of the investigation, and the methods of collecting, analysing and interpreting data. In section two a theoretical framework of the school-community relationship and its implications to the quality of education and community development, will be given.

Section three will provide an in-depth description of the methods and procedures of collecting and analysing data. In section four, a detailed description of data interpretations, a discussion of the findings, implications of the findings, and recommendations will be provided.

1.11 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the orientation and the contextual framework of the study was provided. The research background for the study was provided, and research questions, research aims and methodology were presented. The reasons for the delimitation of the scope of the study as well as the outline of the following chapters was also discussed.

SECTION 2: CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. INTRODUCTION

The government is spending a lot of public money on education. The money is used for, among other things, erecting buildings, and buying equipment and materials necessary for effective teaching and learning to take place in schools. These school facilities are usually utilised during the day for the education of children. There is little or no provision made by the schools for meeting the educational needs of the rest of the community. Most schools do not cater for the needs of, among others, the disabled persons, unemployed adults, and the out-of-school youth. The community, as a result, is not educationally connected to the school. This is because community members perceive schools as places that cater for the educational needs of children only.

Boocock (1972) states that the community affects both the school context, and student performance. The school can therefore benefit from a healthy school-community relationship in terms of improved academic performance of the learners. The quality of education offered in school, in turn, will determine the extent of community development. The schools should train students to become the agents of change in their communities (Boocock, 1972).

The purpose of this study is to investigate the kind of relationships that exists between the secondary schools and the community of Bolata Village in Qwa-Qwa. The study wishes to investigate, in particular, the role that is played by the school principal with regard to the establishment and maintenance of a healthy relationship between the school and its local community.

The question is not whether there should be a relationship between the school and the community, but whether existing relationships can be improved for the sake of more effective school teaching (Van der Westhuizen, 1991: 409).

The aim of the inquiry is to establish the methods employed by school principals at Bolata village to improve the school-community relationship.

2.2 THE CORE-PLUS SCHOOL

2.2.1 The meaning and purpose of a core-plus school

The core-plus school concept means that the school programmes must be planned and aimed at meeting the educational needs of the whole community, and not just those of the children (Townsend, 1994). The implication is that the concept of a traditional school must be changed in order to address the ever-changing needs of the community. The school programmes must be adapted to the needs of the local community in particular.

The core-plus model, if followed, could go a long way in trying to meet the needs of the community. The principle underlying a core-curriculum is that some goals and the content (core) of the curriculum is determined by the state, while other goals and content (plus) are determined by the local community (Townsend, 1994). The implication is that the state determined goals and content would be the same for schools throughout the country, whereas those determined by individual communities would differ from one community to another, depending on the community's needs.

In the case where a core-plus curriculum is implemented, a learner is expected to achieve both the goals determined by the state as well as those determined by the community. The purpose of the core-plus school with its core-plus curriculum, is to prepare the learner to become a responsible member of his or her community. The school curriculum in a core-plus school is more responsive to community needs.

The core-plus school philosophy prescribes that the community gets involved in the planning, developing and implementation of the school programmes Townsend (1994). The long term results of community involvement in the running of the school helps in effecting the necessary changes in the school policy and programmes which are in line with the community needs and expectations.

The aim of involving the community in the development of school programmes is to ensure that the education offered in schools is relevant and responsive to the needs of the local community. The community may also be encouraged to support and participate actively in school activities. As a result the relationships between the school and the community may

also be strengthened. Townsend (1994) argues that the good relationships between the school and community does not come easy, but demand a drastic change in the way the school operates.

According to Townsend (1994) the development of the core-plus school provides the opportunity for schools to be both architects and supporters of community development and change. The school curriculum should go beyond merely equipping learners with skills needed by industries, to the total development of the learners. This will enable them to become responsible members of their communities. The school curricula should offer learners the opportunities to focus on projects that can make a difference in their lives, as well as their community's (Smith, 1993).

Minzey and Kerenskey in Townsend (1994) support Smith's view on the role of the school in the community. They say that the schools should play an active role in meeting the individual and community needs. The school should also help to address community problems such as child abuse, broken homes, the youth drug and alcohol problems, poor attitudes towards education, and unemployment.



2.2.2 Activities in the core-plus school

The core-plus schools encourages the effective use of all available resources in the community for the benefit of the whole community. The principle underpinning the core-plus school is that the facilities used for training the student during the day could also be used to retrain adults in the evening, or at other times when they are not being used (Townsend, 1994).

Given the current high rate of unemployment in the country, and in the world at large, as well as the rapid changes in technology, the core-plus school would allow opportunity for those people who have left or dropped-out of school to upgrade their knowledge in particular jobs. In order to reduce unemployment, the core-plus school could equip people with knowledge and skills in order to become self-employed. The schools should encourage people to be creative, and to use available resources in their communities to satisfy their educational needs.

Townsend (1994) further states that the core component of the core-plus curriculum should include literacy, numeracy and computer literacy, as well as those activities that will foster the development of a positive attitude towards life-long learning, community service, retraining, decision making and problem solving. The curriculum should also cultivate in the community members, the understanding that schools are community facilities and that school-based learning is appropriate, no matter what one's age might be.

He further argues that the plus component would have to interpret the core activities in such a way that they become relevant to the local community. In other words, the plus component of the curriculum will have to ensure that the educational needs of the community are met. For example, the re-training of people should be relevant to their environment, urban or rural, so as to enable them to find jobs in their own areas. This may help to reduce the migration of people from rural to urban areas, as well as the problems related to this, such as unemployed city dwellers.

The core-plus school, therefore, requires a change in the method of teaching at schools. The learners should be taught to become critical about their community life. Paulo Freire compares the traditional method of teaching in schools with the banking system, where a teacher is regarded as the only source of knowledge which he has to deposit in the learners (Shor, 1990). Freire suggests that the classroom, together with the learner's surroundings, be used as educational resources. This implies that teaching and learning must be related to the daily experiences of the learners.

2.2.3 MOVING TOWARDS THE CORE-PLUS SCHOOL MODEL

When referring to how the core-plus curriculum should be structured, Minzey and Townsend argue that new educational programmes should satisfy the need to be realistic, relevant and responsive to defined community needs. Based on their argument, they maintain that it is the responsibility of the government to ensure that the core component of the core-plus curriculum is made relevant to the present and future needs of the learners (Townsend, 1994).

In order to achieve this objective, the government would need to assess and analyse the needs of the communities before drawing up the curriculum for schools. The structure of the school curriculum should therefore be guided by the present and future needs of the communities. Furthermore, the plus-component of the core-plus curriculum should be structured in such a way that it meets both the expectations of the government and that of the local community.

In order to ensure that the curriculum meets both the expectations of the government and that of the community, Townsend (1994) argues that the decision-making processes at the school level be improved first. He believes that the improvement in decision-making at the school level can be brought about by the continuous development of parental involvement in school activities, and by providing professional development programmes for both staff and parents in areas of decision-making and management. This will ensure that the decisions made about the curriculum, are most appropriate to the circumstances of the school.

Townsend (1994) maintains that the schools should ensure that the local community members, whether or not they have children in the school, be provided with the opportunity to make the school their own. He argues that by so doing, the school becomes an educational facility for the whole community. Far greater levels of support will be generated, both from the parents and other community members. It is believed that the schools will do their most satisfactory work when they function as community centres, and when they generally share in community life. To facilitate this transition, it is suggested that the full co-operation of residents, and all those interested in education, be sought.

2.3 COMMUNITY EDUCATION

DeLargy in Ricketts (1996) defines community education as a process that identifies the community needs, assesses available community resources, and uses the resources to develop available programmes and activities to meet the identified needs. Townsend (1994), on the other hand, refers to community education as a process that concerns itself with everything which affects the well-being of all citizens within a given community.

Community education aims at promoting a healthy working relationship between the school and the community. This relationship will encourage community participation in school

activities, thus helping to ensure that the education offered in schools becomes relevant to the needs of the local community. In other words, education offered in schools can, as a result, be adapted to meet the ever-changing needs of the community. Moreover, community education encourages effective and efficient use of available resources in the community. The resources referred to here include facilities, as well as financial and human resources.

The National Community Education Association defines community education based in the public schools as a comprehensive and dynamic approach to public education.

It is a philosophy that pervades all segments of education planning and directs the thrust of each of them toward the needs of the community. The school serves as a catalytic agent by providing leadership to mobilise community resources to solve identified community problems. This marshaling of all forces in the community helps to bring about changes as the school extends itself to all people (Ricketts, 1996: 12).

The essence of community education is that it uses the available community resources to address community problems. Community education philosophy dictates that the school facilities be made available to all members of the community. As Farrant (1980) puts it, the school must be seen as the focal point of the community's learning, sharing its resources with young and old alike, so that ideas of government property, prescribed courses and school leaving age become largely meaningless.

Community members should be actively involved in school activities. The ultimate goal of community education is to develop a process by which members of a community learn to work together to identify problems and to seek out solutions to these problems (Brookfield 1983). The school programmes must be related to the daily lives of the local people, and therefore help them in addressing their problems. The community should be involved in the decision-making processes within the schools.

The involvement of community members in the planning, development and implementation of school curriculum can go a long way in ensuring that education offered in schools becomes relevant to community needs. Minzey and Townsend in Townsend (1994) argue that the two major aims of schools should be to focus on the needs of the individual to become a self-fulfilled, active participant in society, and to emphasise that they serve the needs of the society.

Community education is aimed at addressing the inequalities which exist within a community. For example, the inequalities in terms of income, access to educational opportunities and political power (Shor, 1990). Education is seen as one solution to many of the community's problems. The school facilities should be opened to all members of the community to enable them to acquire the knowledge and skills they need to improve their living standards, and to solve community problems. Political, economical, social and technological changes are some of the causes of community problems. People must develop in order to be able to deal with their own problems effectively. It is through community education that people can be empowered to solve their own problems. People should be equipped with the knowledge and skills that can help them become employable or able to create their own jobs. They should also be helped to develop a critical view of the situations in their communities, so as to become actively involved in the development of their own communities.

2.4 THE SCHOOL AND THE COMMUNITY

The school is situated within the community which it is expected to serve. The school curriculum should, therefore, reflect the needs and values of the local community.

Thus, the school and the community should not be viewed as two separate entities. The two have a common goal that bind them together. The aim of both the school and the community is the development of the children's potential to the fullest, so as to enable them to become responsible members of the community, and to contribute towards the development of the community.

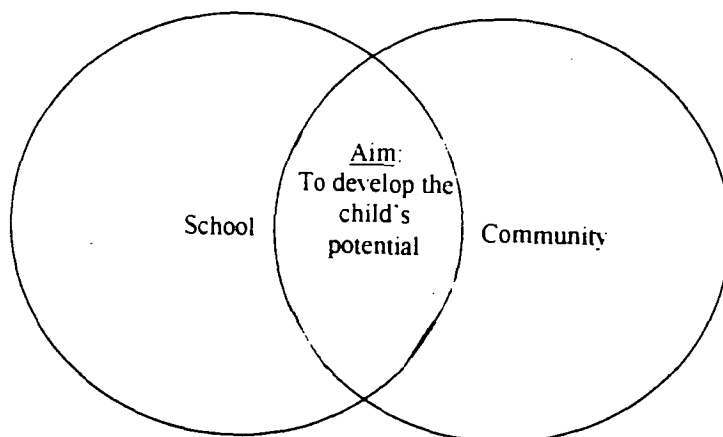


Figure 2. The aim of the school and the community.

Dewey refers to a community as a group of people sharing the same needs, values, norms and geographical area. He says:

Men live in a community in virtue of things they have in common; and communication is the way in which they come to possess things in common. What they must have in common to form a community or society are aims, beliefs, aspirations, knowledge - a common understanding - like mindedness as sociologists would say (Smith, 1994: 8).

However, as the community develops, that is, as it changes from an agricultural to an industrialised society, the relationships between community members also change. Segiovanni (1994) states that each of the societal transformations results in a shift away from *gemeinschaft* towards *gessellschaft*: away from a vision of life as a sacred community and towards a more secular society. He believes that this transformation of a community may have a negative influence on the relationships between the school and its local community.

Sagiovanni's view is shared by Vernon-Feagans (1996: xvii) who described United States communities from an era gone by.

In the years when the United States was a more rural and small-town country, communities truly owned their schools with the educational establishment part of the community. Teachers lived in the town where they taught. They personally knew the families of the children they taught. They knew children outside of school, in church and synagogue, and in community activities. Teachers saw the families of the children informally, and in this way valuable information was exchanged between families and the school. Children knew that their education in the classroom was linked inextricably to the life of the community, so that school in rural farming towns were fundamentally different from the school in industrialised factory towns. The schools reflected the needs and values of the community.

This used to be similar for South African communities too. The school principals are now faced with the challenge of changing the schools to reflect the needs, cultures, norms and values of their local communities. They must ensure that the schools' ownership belongs to their respective communities, by involving all stakeholders in school activities. Carrasquillo (1993) believes that for children to learn and develop successfully, their entire community, which includes parents, institutions of higher learning, other educational and cultural

institutions, religious institutions, social services, health agencies, must be engaged in a partnership with the school. He also maintains that the cooperation between the school and the community is vital because it helps motivate children to learn, and instills work habits, and reward achievement.

As Till (1978) explains, in a democracy the schools belong to the people as a whole. In other words, the whole community is involved in school activities because the school must serve the community. The community should be actively involved in decision-making processes within schools with regard to student discipline, curriculum, and general educational policies. Community involvement in school activities will ensure that a healthy environment is created in schools. This is essential for effective teaching and learning.

In order to be productive, community involvement in school activities must occur in a planned manner. Every member of the community should know exactly what his or her role is. This will prevent conflict and the duplication of duties (Van der Westhuizen, 1991). Bagin (1994) maintains that there must be structured, systematic and active participation on the part of community members, in the educational planning, problem solving, and evaluation of the school. He further argues that it is through active involvement in school activities that the community will be able to get first-hand information about the working of the schools.

Involvement in school activities may allow the community members the opportunity to ask questions about the functioning of the schools. It is through a critical look into the functioning of the school that the community is able to determine whether or not the school is able to meet its immediate and future needs. If not, the community members who are involved in decision-making processes will be in a position to bring about the necessary educational changes in schools. This will be in keeping with the social changes in the community (Townsend, 1990).

Townsend (1990), supported by Bagin (1994), emphasises the need for two-way communication between the schools and their local communities. The community should be informed about the value of the school activities for the community, and vice versa. The mutual relationship between the school and the community could help to create a healthy climate in schools, and to address the community's problems. The community can assist the school to address problems such as student discipline and ineffective administrators. The

school, in turn, can help the community to address its problems such as unemployment, crime, drugs and alcohol abuse.

In order to ensure that a healthy relationship exists between the school and the community, the school curriculum should include programmes that address the needs and expectations of every member of the community. The school programmes should include those which are targeted at assisting the out-of-school youth, the unemployed and the elderly. The classes for these programmes can take place out of normal school hours and over the weekends. By allowing adult members and out-of-school-youth the opportunity to use school facilities after hours, will ensure that community resources are used more effectively and efficiently (Towsend, 1990).

Engelbrecht (1980) argues that the school should develop in students a need to render important services to their communities. He believes that if the students are taught to take care of their school environment as well as to tolerate one another, there is a great probability that they may contribute effectively towards the improvement of their communities. The students must be encouraged to take part in community programmes which are coordinated by the school. Student activities may include fund-raising campaigns for the less fortunate members of the community, cleaning the environment, and doing voluntary work with welfare agencies (Engelbrecht, 1980).

He maintains that when students are actively involved in the rendering of community services, the community's interest in the educational programmes of the school will also increase. The community will, as result, also increase its support of the school system. The argument is that, if students are taught to be responsible at school, they will become responsible members in their respective communities. Moreover, involving students in community service programmes, will make learning at school to more meaningful to them.

2.5 CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

Paulo Freire regards teaching and learning as human experiences which have profound social consequences (Shor, 1990). According to Freire, learning should not be seen as the memorisation of information or the transferring of skills to the students. It should rather be

seen as a way of encouraging learners to think critically, about the subject matter, the learning process itself, and their society (Shor, 1990).

Freire's social pedagogy defines education as one place where the individual and society are constructed, a social action which can either empower or domesticate students. Empowering education enables the learner to think critically about the subject matter, his environment and society (Kampol, 1994). The school, as one of the institutions where teaching and learning takes place, should assist in the development of the learners' potentials to the fullest. This will enable them to play an active role in the development of their respective communities.

In order to achieve the objective of promoting critical thinking in the learners, Freire believes that the schools should move away from the traditional way of teaching (Kampol, 1994). He refers to this as the 'banking system'. He defines the 'banking system' as a way of teaching where a teacher is regarded as the custodian of knowledge and skills, and he defines his duty as being the transfer of knowledge and skills to learners.

On the other hand, the learners are expected to memorise the information provided by the teacher without questioning it and to practice or apply the skills acquired as determined by the teacher. In Kampol (1994), Freire rejects this method of teaching because he believes that it makes the learners passive and anti-intellectual. He further states that after a year of being in passive classrooms, students do not see themselves as people who can transform knowledge and society.

Paulo Freire refers to critical dialogues as the most effective method of teaching. He believes that it is through dialogue that learners can be encouraged to become actively involved in the teaching and learning process. In the liberating classroom, recommended by Freire, teachers pose problems derived from students' lives, social issues, and academic subjects in a mutually created dialogue (Freire, 1994). According to Freire (Shor, 1990), teachers should present the subject matter in such a way that will encourage curiosity and activism about knowledge and the world. More importantly, teachers should see learners as capable and responsible human beings. In other words, teachers should encourage learners to play an active role in their own learning.

Freire believe that the more students work at storing the deposits entrusted to them, the less they develop the critical consciousness which results from their intervention in the world as transformers of that world (McLaren, 1990). According to him, knowing means, being an active subject who questions and transforms. It is for that reason that he sees learning as the re-creation of the way we see ourselves, our education, and our society.

Paulo Freire (Freire,1994) says that the schools construct people year by year, developing the way they think about the world and how they act in it. He claims that traditional education orients students to conform, to accept inequality and their places in the status quo, and to obey authority. The Freirean critical education invites students to question the system they live in and the knowledge being offered them, to discuss what kind of future they want, including their right to elect authority, and to re-build the school and society they are part of it. As Freire puts it, the students should not simply memorise academic information about biology, economics, or nursing. They should rather face problems within their lives and society, through the special lens offered by academic discipline (Freire, 1994).

According Freirean democratic pedagogy, the curriculum is built around themes and conditions of people's lives. In other words, the school should reflect the conditions of the community in which they are situated. In order for the school to really reflect the conditions of the community, the community members must be involved during the planning, development and implementation of the curriculum. Traditionally, the school curriculum was compiled centrally by a team of 'experts' within the education department. Schools were then expected to implement it, without questions. Thus, planning occurred in isolation, and was a top-down process.

Freire states that traditional education invents its themes, language and materials from the top-down, rather than from the bottom-up. In the official curriculum, culture is defined scholastically as the Great Books, or as a Great Tradition of literature, music, painting, and so forth. Culture also refers to the correct usage of the upper classes, or as the information and experiences familiar to the elite. This culture and language are alien to the lives of most students. Most of the english, afrikaans and history books used in schools, reflect the European culture which is foreign to the majority of black African learners. This forces the learners to depend on the teacher for everything (Giroux, 1983).

Freire is totally against education that makes learners passive recipients of knowledge and skills. His view is supported by Giroux (1983). Giroux's notions of civic courage and a pedagogy of possibility, invite teachers to become change-agents in the school and society. They could attempt to make a change for critical thought and action, for democracy, equality, ecology and peace against domination, manipulation, and the waste of human and natural resources. Teachers must present the subject matter in such a way that will stimulate the learners to become actively involved in the learning process. Freire on the other hand talks about conscientization. He refers to conscientization as the process of developing consciousness. In addition, consciousness is understood to have the power to transform society (Giroux, 1983).

2.6 THE MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

The principal as the head of the school, automatically becomes the head of the management team of the school. By virtue of his or her position at, school the principal is always faced with situations in which he or she has to make very important decisions. This can affect the school community, as well as the local community in which the school is situated. The establishment of a healthy relationship between the school and the community is not an easy exercise. It is a process that demands great effort, particularly on the part of the principal. She has to formulate a vision and mission of the relationship, and has to make sure that they are realised as planned.

2.6.1 The planning of school-community relationships

Planning is an essential element of management. Proper planning is very important for the realisation of the goal of establishing a healthy school-community relationship. The potential and limitations of the relationship between the school and the community depends largely on its planning. Good planning leads to healthy school-community relationships, while bad planning, or lack of planning, leads to an ineffective relationship (Van der Westhuizen, 1991).

Van der Westhuizen's opinion about the importance of good planning is supported by Bagin (1994), when he says that good planning is nothing more than a way of determining where to go and how to get there in the most efficient and effective manner possible. It therefore

implies that if a school principal really wishes to establish and maintain a healthy relationship between the school and the local community, he or she will need to plan first. In other words, the principal will need to draw up a programme on school-community relationships. The programme will help them to achieve their goal with much less difficulties.

According to Bagin (1994), a school-community relationship programme may include the following five goals:

1. To develop intelligent public understanding of the school in all aspects of its operations.
2. To determine how the public feel about the school, and what it wishes the school to accomplish.
3. To help citizens feel a more direct responsibility for the quality of education the school provides.
4. To involve citizens in the work of the school and the solving of educational problems.
5. To promote a genuine spirit of co-operation between the school and the community in sharing leadership for the improvement of community life.

Proper planning requires the consultation of all stakeholders in education to ensure that the product will represent the views and expectations of all interested groups in education. They should all work together towards common goals. If planning is well-done, duplication of duties can be avoided as every participant in the programme will be given his or her specific role to play. Planning is therefore essential, because it will ensure that the principal makes effective use of all available resources, human resources, funds, and facilities.

2.6.2 School-community relationship plan

Bagin (1994) believes that the development of an appropriate plan and the determination of attainable goals are the early steps in creating and improving school-community relations. A properly formulated plan should describe the rationale for undertaking the programme, as well as the ways and means that will have to be used to effectively implement it. The principal has the responsibility of developing and implementing a school-community relationships programme plan.

Without the necessary knowledge and skills about how to formulate and implement a plan on school-community relationships, the task can be very difficult for him. A policy is very

important because it helps to direct all the activities which are aimed at achieving a healthy school-community relationship. If well formulated and effectively implemented, a plan can stimulate the community's interest in the activities of the school. As a result, the community will give the school the support it really needs in order to create a healthy environment. This environment will ensure that effective teaching and learning takes place at school.

Bagin (1994) argues that the school-community relations plan should bring about the development and continuance of a strong partnership between the school and the community. He believes that by bringing individuals and groups into a dynamic team, ideas can be exchanged, problems examined, practices reviewed and decisions reached. This will all enrich the quality of, and increase popular support of public education (Bagin, 1994). It is therefore important for a school to formulate and adopt a plan on school-community relationships in that it will, among others, help to acquaint the public with the position of the school, and encourage citizen involvement in educational affairs (Bagin, 1994). If the school does not have a standing plan on school-community relationship, new employees within the school will find it difficult to work harmoniously with the community.

2.7 CONCLUSION

In this section a theoretical background to the study was provided. The section discussed the various ways in which the school can be changed to meet the needs of the community. The significance of having a healthy school-community relationship was also explained. The next section will deal with the collection and analysis of data in the investigation.



SECTION 3: DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This section has as its focus the process of data collection and data analysis. The process will include gaining entry into the investigation site, the actual process of data collection as well as the procedures followed when analysing data. The aim of the investigation is to gather information on the strategies employed by the school principals in their endeavour to establish and maintain healthy relationships between the school and the community. A brief description of the research design and the data collection tools will also be provided.

3.2 THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA COLLECTION METHOD

The study is descriptive in nature which makes the use of qualitative methods more appropriate for the investigation. The study wishes to investigate the strategies employed by school principals in order to close the gap that exists between the schools and their local communities, while identifying problems that they experience in the process. A qualitative design was chosen as it will give me the opportunity to provide a detailed description of how the school principals try to ensure that there is a harmonious working relationship between the school and the community.

3.2.1 Setting

The investigation took place at Bolata village in the former homeland of Qwa-Qwa which is situated in the north eastern Free State. It is a big village, with a population size of about 28 945 people. Its population size is the second highest after that of the nearby town of Phuthaditjhaba, which has a population of about 28 968 people (Urban-Econ, 1992).

As a result of a lack of job opportunities, most of the young and educated people migrate to the metropolitan areas such as Gauteng, to seek employment. The majority of the people who remain in the area are the aged and those young people who have little or no formal training or education. They are mostly unemployed.

The area has one shopping centre and a number of smaller shops, but most people buy at Setsing Shopping Centre in Puthaditjhaba. There are five primary and five secondary schools, one clinic and a satellite police station. The village is supplied with water and electricity by the government. There are many communal taps placed at strategic places in the village to supply the community with water. Electricity is only available to those community members who can afford it, as it is not installed in every home. Those who can afford it install it themselves. The majority of people, therefore, still use coal, paraffin, candles and batteries as sources of energy.

3.2.2 Data collection Method and Data Collection

The interview process

The interview was chosen as the method for collecting data for this study. The aim was to gain a better understanding of the position of school principals with regard to the relationship between the school and the community. Apart from obtaining detailed information from interviewees, interviews would help me develop a better understanding of the feelings and opinions of principals on the situations which exist within schools (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The tape recorder and note-taking processes were used to record data.

I used the standardised open-ended interview format to collect data for this study. In the case of a standardised interview, the interviewees are asked questions in the same sequence. This implies that the wording, and the way questions are structured remains nearly the same for all interviewees. The aim for choosing the standardised open-ended interview was to get the investigation focused on specific issues, as well as to gather as much information as possible within the limited time that was available for the interview, and the study (Patton, 1987).

The procedure

The interviews were planned over four days, which means that I conducted one interview session per day with the four participants. Prior to the interviews the letters of invitation to participate in the study were drafted and typed. In the letter I clearly stated the aim, of the study which is to gather information on how the school principals establish and maintain healthy relationships between the school and its local community. The letter also included a proposed date, time and venue for the interview. I delivered the letters personally to the

participants a week before the planned start of interviews. The aim in delivering the letters personally was to gain entry into the school and to meet the participants. I also wanted to use the opportunity to address some of the problems or misunderstandings that they may have concerning the investigation. I then followed up the letters with a second round of visits to the participants in order to confirm everything written in the letter, that is, the venue, date and time. After everything was confirmed, a time-table for appointments was drawn up, which indicated the date, time and venue.

Table 1: Time-table for appointments

Name of school	Date	Time
A	07/09/98	10h00 - 11h00
B	08/09/98	12h00 - 1h00
C	09/09/98	10h00 - 11h00
D	10/09/98	12h00 -1h00

My intention was to include the principals of all five secondary schools in the village, but unfortunately one principal was not available for inclusion in this part of the investigation. The four principals who participated in the study were interviewed individually. The interviews took place in the offices of the respective principals as has been arranged and agreed upon.

I compiled demographic data on the schools and their staff to provide context for the study.

Table 2: The set up in schools that participated in the investigation

School	Type	Building	School Day	Principal	Staff
A	Junior secondary (grade 7 to 9)	Doors are broken and others are removed. Windows are broken Electric wires, globes and plugs are removed	8h00 -14h00	Reside in town	97% live in town
B	Junior secondary (grade 10 to 12)	Doors are broken and some are removed Ceiling is broken	7h45 - 13h30	Reside in town	95% live in town
C	Senior secondary (grade 10 to 12)	Doors are broken and others are removed. Windows are broken Ceiling and floor tiles are removed	7h45- 14h00	Reside in town	96% live in town
D	Senior secondary (grade 7 to 9)	Doors are removed, windows are broken	7h45-14h00	Reside in the village	98% live in town

Table 2 indicates that the majority of principals and teachers live outside their place of work. That makes it difficult for them to meet with the parents of the students informally after school in the community. The result thereof is that the principals and teachers cannot informally discuss issues that affect the school, parents and the community as a whole, with the parents. Consequently, the school will be unable to know what the needs of the community are, and vice versa. A gap is, therefore, created between the school and the community. It therefore indicates that if principals and teachers do not live in the place where they work, it is difficult to establish a healthy relationship between the school and the community.

On average, during the week, the schools in the area are open for six hours only. This means that the school facilities are used for only six hours a day. Since everybody leaves the school premises after school, this renders the schools vulnerable to thugs. That may be one of the reasons why there is a high rate of vandalism in schools in the village, as table 2 shows. By including additional non-compulsory programmes, the school day can be increased. Townsend refers to “the other programmes” as the plus component of the core-plus curriculum (Townsend, 1994). Consequently, the optimal use of the school facilities can be achieved and the rate of vandalism may be reduced.

The availability of school facilities for community use and the time spent by principals and teachers with community members are important variables that need to be considered when planning to establish a healthy school-community relationship.

The four principals who participated in the study were interviewed individually. The interviews took place in the offices of the respective participants as arranged and agreed upon

The interview questions were classified into the following four categories:

1. The definition of the concept community and the meaning of school-community relationship.
2. The opportunities in schools for active community involvement.
3. The attitude of the community towards school involvement in community activities.

4. The role of the principal in the establishment and maintenance of healthy school-community relationships.

Table 3 is a representation of the data harnessed.

Table 3: Interviews

Questions	Interview 1	Interview 2	Interview 3	Interview 4
What is a community?	A community can be a number of people who are living together in a particular area. Sharing the same values, culture and norms.	Community is a group of all people living in a particular area, or a society sharing the same norms, values and religion.	I see a community as just a group of people with similar culture, norms and values.	A community is all these people who are surrounding this school, and who are served by this school.
Is the school open for community use after school hours, weekends and during holidays?	The school is open for community, but now we have tried to reduce it. We encounter many problems. Facilities are broken. Windows are broken, chairs are broken and others are stolen.	Yes. But under the supervision of one school member such as the caretaker or a staff member.	Yes. <i>Hona le dikereke tse ka bang three le di youth clubs. Ba sebedisa di classroom, empa rena le problem ya vandalism.</i> There are three churches and youth clubs that use the classrooms, but we have the problem of vandalism.	Here we've got a small hall. The community sometimes uses this hall. The various church denominations use it on Sundays.
In what ways can the community support the school?	We need the community to support the school financially. Advise us as school managers. <i>Ka matsoho feela.</i> By provide voluntary services.	Fund-raising, promoting cultural activities and taking care of school property.	<i>Haholoholo ka taba ya ho hlokomela sekolo.</i> More importantly, by taking of school property.	Morally, financially, discipline of students, and encouraging students to learn.
What should a school principal do to stimulate community involvement in school activities?	By inviting ideas from parents and teachers.	Community members must be informed about improvements and problems experienced by the school.	Ke hore principal a leke haholo ho ba close le batswadi. A tsamaye dikopano tsa bona. The principal should try very hard to be closer to the community. She must attend community gatherings	The principal must inform community members about activities in the school.

All interviews were tape recorded . In addition to tape recording the data, key words and sentences were noted down by me. The aim of having written notes was to back up the tape-recorded information, in case anything happened during the recording, for example, if the voices did not come out clearly.

3.2.3 Organising the Data

Data analysis is a process of bringing all field notes together and organising them in such a way that they make sense. The aim of data analysis is to make the process of interpreting data much easier. According to Patton (1987) analysis is the process of bringing order to the data and organising what is there, into patterns, categories, and basic descriptive units.

Content analysis was used to analyse the collected data. When using content analysis to analyse data, the analyst looks for themes and patterns in the data. In explaining the procedure followed when using content analysis, Patton (1987) states that the analyst should first pull together everything related to a particular issue, and then subdivides the data into coherent categories, patterns and themes. The first step in content analysis is coding, thereafter comes the categorising of data.

As the interviews were recorded, the first step was to re-play the tapes and transcribe the data. The data was transcribed so that it could be analysed. The transcribed data was labelled to make it easy to identify. The label included the name of the school, the name of the participant and the date of the interview. Codes were used in the case of the names of the schools and the participants, in order to protect the interviewees' identities as requested.

The standardised open-ended interview was used to collect the data. After the data was transcribed, the interviewees' answers were matched to the questions asked. The aim was to determine the similarities and differences in the interviewees' responses to the same questions. The data was, as a result, classified according to the four sections of the interview schedule. The questions were structured in such a way to allow the participants to give their viewpoints regarding the following issues under investigation: the meaning of a community and school-community relationship; creation of opportunities in schools for active community involvement; the attitude of the community towards the schools' involvement in community activities; and the role of the principal in the establishment of healthy school-community relationships.

The responses of individual participants were then coded. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990) coding represents the operations by which data are broken down, conceptualised, and put back together in new and different ways. In order to make sure that the process of coding and data analysis as a whole is focused on achieving the desired result, I always kept the research questions in mind. Coding involves asking of questions about data in order to get a deeper meaning of the phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

I used line-by-line analysis, whereby I marked key words and phrases in a sentence. This method is one of the various ways of doing open coding. Open coding, according to Strauss and Corbin (1990), is the process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualising, and categorising data. The ideas and issues were marked using pens of different colours. The aim of using pens of different colours to mark the ideas and issues was to simplify the process of data analysis. The similar ideas and issues were marked with the same colour pen, and that made the process of categorising data, and the discovery of patterns and themes, easier. The ideas and issues were given labels. The labels were written on the left-hand side of the fieldnotes and the corresponding comments were written on the right hand side. After coding the first fieldnotes, tentative categories were named. Then, after all fieldnotes had been coded, the patterns and themes were discovered.

This table provides information about how the interviewees defined the concept community and their understanding of school community relationships.

Table 4.1: The definition and meaning of school-community relationship: 1.1 to 1.4.

Topics	1	2	3	4
Definition Community School- community relationship	<p>1.1 People living together, sharing same values and norms Occupying a particular area</p> <p>1.2 Total involvement of community in school curriculum School should serve community's interests, and community should support school</p> <p>1.3 School delivers values in society School trains people School recognises mountain school</p> <p>1.4 Teacher organisations, business, healthy, social work</p>	<p>1.1 The people around the school must not be seen as separate from community</p> <p>1.2 To promote the welfare of children. To teach children good morals</p> <p>1.3 Business Teacher-organisation</p>	<p>1.1 A group of people with similar culture, norms and values</p> <p>1.2 One stakeholder responsible in the running of school eg look after school building, check children's work Help in addressing school problems</p> <p>1.3 Discipline children: academic and behaviour</p> <p>1.4 NGO</p>	<p>1.1 The people surrounding the school People served by the school</p> <p>1.2 Community understands the school is theirs The school understands the role played by community in running of school</p> <p>1.3 For smooth running of school School and community have one aim, to develop in children human values: peace, love, truth etc. To fit in society</p> <p>1.4 NGO , Political organisations, Police, Nurses</p>

The table 4.2 provides information about the mutual relationship between the school and the community.

Table 4.2: School environment in the context of school-community relationship.

<p>School environment</p>	<p>2.1 Yes Used by churches 2.2 No 2.3 Parents can help with regard to late coming, encouraging pupils to study, discipline students, and help with extramural activities 2.4 Yes Teachers educate pupils to keep the environment clean. 2.5 Teachers visit community members and assist where there are problems eg. Contributions to bereaved families Lend community school furniture, eg tables, chairs 2.6 Financially Advises Role model Motivate learners 2.7. No Community come to school per invitation During meetings we encourage them to be involved</p>	<p>2.1 Yes Churches 2.2 No 2.3 Discipline Uniform 2.4 No Teachers seem to be interested in activities that have money. 2.5 Community uses school photocopier 2.6 Ideas Financially Community members accompany children when they undertake educational tours. They help with the feeding of school children. The community buy materials such as doors and chalk for the school.</p>	<p>2.1 Yes Used by churches, Youth club Political organisation 2.2 No The problem is money 2.3 Visit the school Check what is happening in the classroom Ask questions 2.4 Committee members only consisting of teachers, students and parents Some are involved in YES project 2.5 Help the community in cases of troubles, eg. Death 2.6 Take care of the school buildings and properties 2.7 Few people show interest School and the governing body must educate the community that the school belong to them</p>	<p>2.1 Yes Used by churches 2.2 No 2.3 Help draw budget Organising educational tours and feasts Participate in governing bodies 2.4 Yes Report to parents during meetings about specific school activities, eg. Sport, entertainment 2.5 No community programme Assist poor families in cases of death or disaster, eg. Fire 2.6 Moral support - visit school Financial - raising of funds Discipline Encourage students 2.7 Yes</p>
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The table below summarises the subjects' opinions regarding school involvement in community activities.

Table 4.3: Community responses to school involvement in community activities.

<p>Community attitude towards the school</p>	<p>3.1 Positive. They feel encouraged that are recognised as members of the school community. 3.2 Yes School is vandalised when open for community use. Doors and windows are broken. 3.3 Educate community about its responsibilities. Visit the children's home and talk with parents about things that affect the school and the welfare of children. 3.4 Yes 3.5 Assist in fund-raising for educational tours. 3.6 Yes 3.7 Improve communication between the school and the community. Involve community members in school activities.</p>	<p>3.1 Positive 3.2 The community wants to use school facilities without permission. 3.3 Procedures for the use of school facilities should be made known to the public. 3.4 Few parents show interest in the school activities. 3.5 The school has not yet managed to devise strategies to bring parents closer to it.</p>	<p>3.1 Positive 3.2 Yes Parents do not live with their children. They work outside Qwa-Qwa. They work in Welkom or Gauteng. The tables and chairs are broken. Doors are also broken. 3.3 The governing bodies, teachers and principal must work hard to educate and encourage parents to get involved in school activities.</p>	<p>3.1 Positive 3.2 Only few people do not want to cooperate with the school principal. 3.3 By meeting with the concerned people. 3.4 Yes 3.5 Encourage community members. Acknowledge what they have done. Educate the community about its responsibility. The church and government must assist in educating the community.</p>
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Table 4.4 highlights what the interviewees regard as the important tasks of the school principal in the establishment of healthy school-community relationship.

Table 4.4: The role of the principal in establishing a healthy school-community relationships

Principal's role				
<p>4.1 Let teachers involve community in school activities 4.2 Yes 4.3 Set school free, set teachers free Invite ideas from teachers and parents 4.4 Yes Community was involved in drawing school policy 4.5 No fixed timetable, depend on situations 4.6 Attend meeting Give guidance to pupils Hold assemblies Give scripture reading 4.7 Invite them to address pupils 4.8 Yes 4.9 Yes Literacy programme 4.10 Parents must be involved in the education of their children Parents must help with discipline, late coming, uniform</p>	<p>4.1 Educate community about the importance of school-community relationship 4.2 Community is consulted about anything that concern it 4.9 No 4.10 Policy in this regard</p>	<p>4.1 Must be involved in community activities where he works He must be exemplary – show the community light 4.2 Yes Parents are represented in the school governing body Help in drawing budget Help in addressing school problems Help in formulating school policy 4.6 Meetings only Check children's work at school 4.9 Yes YES project Youth club 4.10 No formal policy in this regard</p>	<p>4.1 Educate teachers about role of community in school activities Educate community about role of teachers in school Show them how they need each other Organise an activity where teachers and community members are encouraged to work together 4.2 Yes 4.4 Yes 4.5 Meetings at least once a term Governing body - every term or every month or week depending on situations 4.7 I talk to them, show them we need them 4.8 Yes 4.9 No</p>	

3.3 The final data categories / clusters

The open coding was followed by axial coding to complete the process of data analysis. The aim was to finally organise the data in such a way that it can be easily interpreted. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990) axial coding is a set of procedures whereby data are put back together in new ways after open coding, and the resultant making of connections between categories. One of the aims was to find out what expectations the principal hold for the school and the community.

Table 5: School and community expectations

Expectations of school according to principal	School expectations of community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The school should: <input type="checkbox"/> Teach community values <input type="checkbox"/> Train people <input type="checkbox"/> Teach people how to read and write <input type="checkbox"/> Teach children and the community about their culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The community should: <input type="checkbox"/> Support the school, e.g. financially <input type="checkbox"/> Advise the principal with regard to the running of the school <input type="checkbox"/> Play its role in the education of children <input type="checkbox"/> Take care of school buildings and properties.

Example of raw data:

Eh.. the community is having certain expectations, that the school must deliver certain values in the society we expect that the school should lead us, train our people, teach them, guide us

Eh ... *haholoholo ka taba ya ho hlokomela sekolo.*

More importantly the community should help to look after the school, that is, buildings and property

The next table, table 6, indicates the problems identified by the interviewees as the causes of unhealthy school-community relationships.

Table 6: Problems experienced by both the school and the community.

Community problems	School problems
<input type="checkbox"/> Decline in morality <input type="checkbox"/> Literacy <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployment <input type="checkbox"/> Teenage pregnancy <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of proper housing <input type="checkbox"/> Parents do not understand their responsibility with regard to the education of their children <input type="checkbox"/> Community still believe that the school belong to the government <input type="checkbox"/> Most parents work outside Qwa-Qwa	<input type="checkbox"/> Vandalism <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of support from the community <input type="checkbox"/> Abuse of drugs and alcohol by school children <input type="checkbox"/> Students' lack of discipline <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of funds

Examples of raw data:

There is this problem that parents do not understand their responsibilities. They think that the school is the one that must take the total responsibility of the child...

So, when we open the school for the community we find that we encounter many problems. Facilities are broken, windows are broken, chairs are broken and others are stolen.

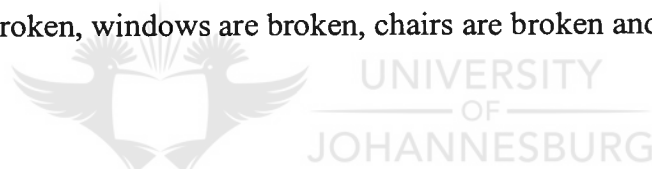


Table 7 provides the subjects' suggestions concerning the role which the school and the community can play to enhance their working relationships.

Table 7 The contributions of the community towards the smooth running of the school and the functions of the school in the community.

Contributions of community in school	Contributions of school to community
<input type="checkbox"/> Teach children traditional songs and dances, mangae, mokgibo <input type="checkbox"/> As members of the governing body, the community can assist with the drawing up of school budget <input type="checkbox"/> Take part in addressing school problems, eg. Poor academic performance of students <input type="checkbox"/> Help the school to organise educational tours	<input type="checkbox"/> Allow community members to use school facilities and furniture over the weekends and during holidays <input type="checkbox"/> Help the community in cases of death and disaster, e.g fire, by donations <input type="checkbox"/> Give advice to community members, eg. poor families with children about how and where they can find help <input type="checkbox"/> Teach children to be responsible members of the community

Example of raw data:

The community come to school to teach children traditional dances such as mokgibo, mangae. Eh we here we've got eh... small hall. The community sometimes use this hall... The various church denominations use it on Sundays.

The strategies which the subjects think can be employed to improve the relationship between the school and the community are described in the table below.

Table 8: Strategies to improve school-community relationship

The strategies employed by the school to enhance school-community relationships
<input type="checkbox"/> Improve communication between the school and the community.
<input type="checkbox"/> Teachers should visit children's home.
<input type="checkbox"/> Formation of committees consisting of parents and teachers.
<input type="checkbox"/> Start programmes at school to address problems in the community, eg. Literacy.
<input type="checkbox"/> Organise meetings regularly with the community.
<input type="checkbox"/> Educate community members about their responsibility with regard to the education of their children.
<input type="checkbox"/> Motivate community members to get involved in school activities, and acknowledge what they have done

Example of raw data:

Just encourage them and acknowledge what they have done. Apart from that there is nothing one can do. We still have to make them aware that this is their school...visit the school to come and check if we are still doing best things for their children.

In the table below there are tasks of the school principal in relation to the establishment of a healthy school-community relationships as stated by the participants in the study.

Table 9: The role of the school principal in establishing a healthy relationship between school and community.

Principal's role in establishing healthy relationships between the school and community
<input type="checkbox"/> Consult with the community regularly to discuss issues that affect the school and the community.
<input type="checkbox"/> Establish committees which will consist of both parents and teachers.
<input type="checkbox"/> Organise a programme or project which will consist of both teachers and parents
<input type="checkbox"/> Must be actively involved in community activities.
<input type="checkbox"/> Educate both the teachers and the community about the value of the relationship between the school and the community.
<input type="checkbox"/> Identify and address the problems between school and community.

Examples of raw data:

Set the school free, set the people free, invite ideas from the parents, invite the ideas from the teachers. It is also to educate the teachers that they should understand the role of the community in the running of the school. After educating your staff as the principal, then during your meetings you also educate the parents. As I said, they should understand the role of the teachers.

3.4 CONCLUSION

In this section a detailed description of the process of data collection and data analysis was provided. The data was prepared for the next step of the investigation which is the interpretation of the data.



SECTION 4: INTERPRETATION OF DATA, IMPLICATIONS, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This section will provide a detailed description of the categories and patterns identified in the previous section. The categories and patterns will be interpreted, the implications of the findings will be discussed, and recommendations will be made.

The inquiry intends to establish the strategies employed by the school principals to break down the wall between the school and community. Furthermore, the study wished to identify the problems experienced by principals when working with the community, as well as the methods they use to address them.

The involvement of the community in school activities is seen as essential for the smooth-running of the school. The school in turn should contribute, in one way or the other, to the development of community life. If the community problems can be addressed, this can help to address problems in schools. The data reveal that to establish a healthy relationship between the school and the community requires commitment from both parties to work together towards a common goal. The data also proves that without the necessary knowledge and skills it would be very difficult for the school principal to effectively handle the school-community relationships.

According to the participants, the principal should serve as a mediator between the school and the community. As mediator, the principal has to make sure that the two work harmoniously together.

4.2 THE FINDINGS RELATED TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF HEALTHY SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

The figure below provides a theoretical framework this section. The section will look into the problems which exist between the school and the community as identified by the subjects, as well as the strategies which can be employed to address them. The aim being to try to break down the barriers between the school and the community.

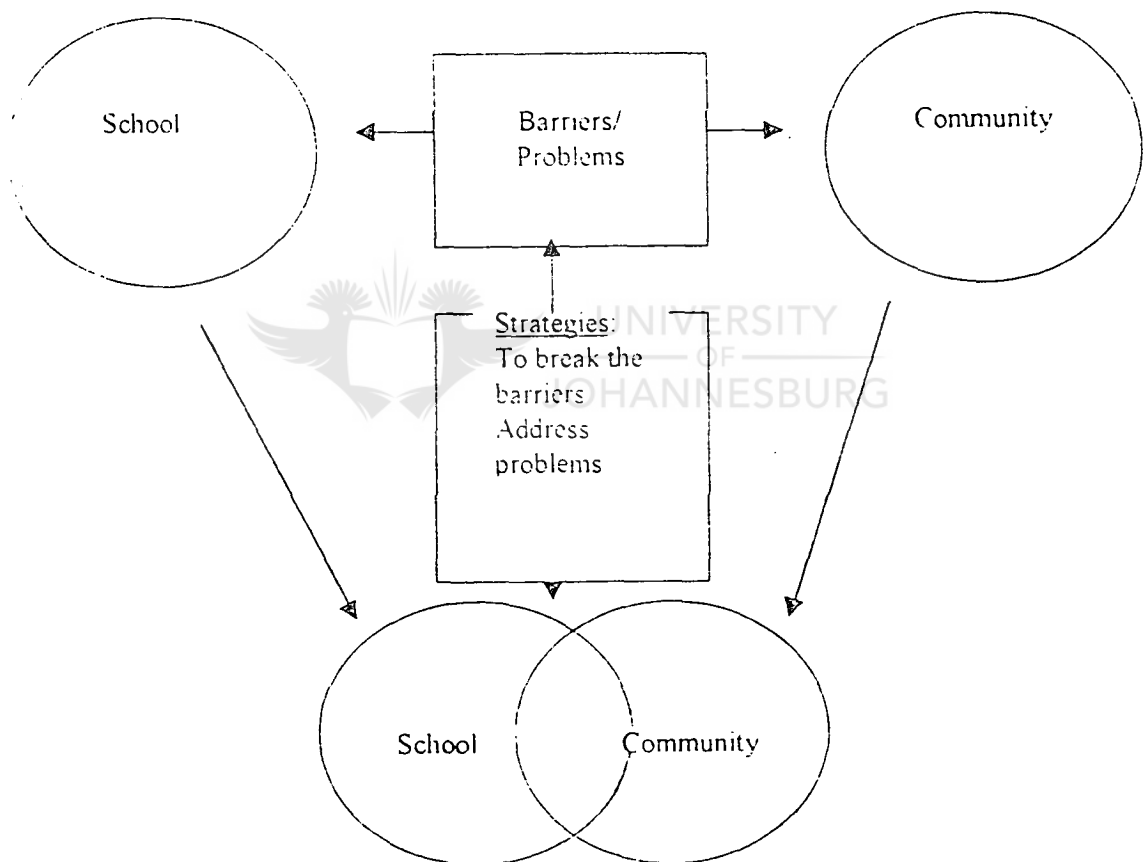


Figure 1. Linking the school and the community.

1. The school pays attention to one section of the community, namely the parents of registered students. Although the subjects defined as a community a group of people living together in the same area, and although the school should serve the whole community, what actually happens is that the schools are more interested in working with the parents of registered students only. When asked: When you have meetings at your school, do you invite everybody from the community or do you only invite the parents with children at your school? The responses were: “ Basically it is like that...” and “...We give the children eh... letters to parents regarding a meeting, and the parents respond to that”. This is an indication that there is no correlation between the definition of a community and those identified as community members, by the school.

2. The principal and staff are not community members. The majority of principals and teachers are not members of the community, they live in town. Bolata is a rural area with limited provisions of services. For example, there is no sewage system and no removal of wastes. The land still belongs to the tribal authorities. The government does not subsidise people who want to build houses on land owned by tribal authorities. That is the main reason why most teachers and principals leave the area, and take up residence in town.

3. There is no programme or project in place at the schools to suggest that there is an intention to improve the standard of living of the local community.

This is despite the fact that the subjects of the study have identified problems such as unemployment, illiteracy, drugs and alcohol abuse, particularly among young people. When asked whether the schools have programmes in place for the disadvantaged members of the community, such as the out-of-school youth and the unemployed, the answer was, no. Therefore, though there is cognisance of the community problems, the schools, particularly the staff have not acted upon it. Smith (1993) say that the school is established by the community, for the community, and its task should be the upliftment of community life. The responses of the subjects with regard to community projects were: “We still have to organise for the disadvantaged part of the community”, and “we do not have specific programme at this point in time ...”

4. The recognition by the principals of the significance of the mutual relationship between the school and the community. The subjects emphasised the fact that the school should serve the interests of the community, and that the community, in turn, should support the interest of the

school. This view of the subjects is supported by Smith (1993) when they say that the existence of the school supports the fact that the school must serve the interests of the community. They proceed to say that children attend school not only for the sake of schooling, but in order to contribute to the welfare and interest of the community. Moreover, the subjects said that the community should understand that the school is theirs, and the school should understand that the community also has a role in the running of the school. However, it is questionable that principals and their staff act upon these convictions.

5. The problems in the community affect the effective running of the school.

According to the subjects, the problems experienced in schools are directly related to the situations or problems in the local communities. The situation in the community is such that the community is experiencing economic, social, educational and historical problems. The problems that the subjects alluded to included the high rate of unemployment, decline in morality, literacy and the belief that the school belongs to the government. They made it clear that these problems are experienced by people throughout the country, and even throughout the world.

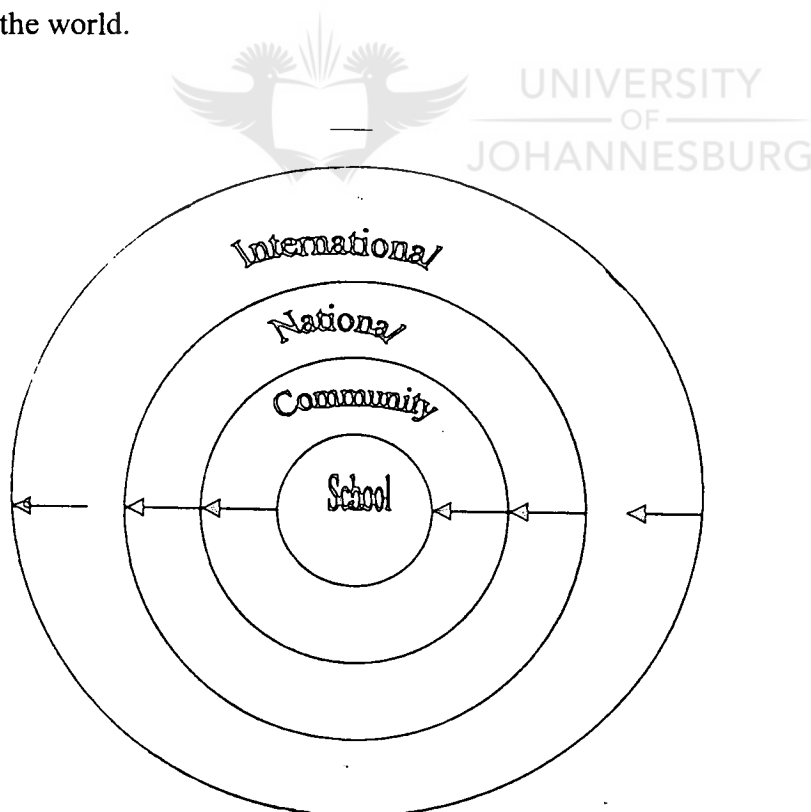


Figure 4.2. The inter-relationship between the school and the local, national and international community.

6. To a limited extent, there is a working together between the school and the community.

The subjects stated that as a result of the lack of job opportunities most people in the community work outside the area, in metropolitan areas such as Gauteng and Welkom. Most of the people who leave the area in search of employment are parents of children who attend the local schools, and the children are left under the care of their grandparents. As one interviewee said:

Problem enngwe e re nang le yona haholo mona Bolata ke taba ya ho re batswadi bongata ha ba dule mona; ba dula Gauteng, Welkom. O fumana ho re ho setse bana le nkgono.

The problem we have here at Bolata is that most parents do not stay here. They stay in Gauteng or Welkom. You find that children are left with the grandmother.

This situation of parents working outside the area and leaving the children with grandparents is identified by the subjects as the cause of many problems within the schools in the area. The schools experience problems such as irregular attendance by students, students who do not wear proper uniform and those who give serious disciplinary problems.

These community problems affect the smooth running of the school. The problem of a lack of employment opportunities, and consequently the shortage of proper housing, are cited as some of the causes of problems in schools in the area. Vandalism also play a major role. One interviewee said that the community members remove classroom doors to erect shacks, break windows, remove electric wires and steal school furniture. It seems as though the community does not regard the school as belonging to it, but to someone else.

7. Lack of communication between the school and the community. The findings suggest that a lack of communication could be the cause of a poor relationship between the school and the community. When invited to a meeting, parents do not come. The principal and staff live town. They do not have time to meet community members to address issues affecting both the school and the community as indicated in table 2. One of the strategies suggested by the subjects of the inquiry, to improve the school-community relationship, included the improvement of communication between the school and the community. They suggested that the principal should consult with community members regularly to discuss issues that affect

both the school and the community. The principal and teachers should visit the students' homes and be actively involved in community activities.

4.3 IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS

The information gathered in this investigation shows that the problems which exist in the community affect the smooth running of the school. This implies that, for schools to run smoothly it is important that the community's problems are addressed. This makes a healthy school-community relationship to become more important as the school can play an important role in helping the community to address its own problems.

An analysis of the data indicates that there is an interdependence between the school and the community. The school needs the support of the community in order to achieve its goals, and vice versa. The implication is that one cannot survive without the other. The schools are built by the community in order to serve the needs and expectations of the community. The principal as the head of the school, has the responsibility to ensure that the school meets the needs and expectations of the community. If the school can meet the needs of the community there are great possibilities that the school will get the necessary support from the community.

There is an acknowledgement of a mutual relationship between the school and the community, but only to a limited extent. In most cases the schools assist the community upon request, and the same applies for the community. The data collected shows that there is no active participation of the school in community activities. Does the community see itself the owner of the school? If so, how is vandalism of school premises explained? The implication is that something needs to be done in order to improve the working relationship between the school and the community.

The data shows that a drastic change is needed in the way in which the school relates to its local community. This creates more challenges on the part of the school principal. The principal, as the head of the school has the responsibility to lead and guide all the members of the school community. This includes teachers, students, administrative staff, as well as the non-professional staff.

4.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A first recommendation would be that the schools change the way they function, in order to be able to meet the needs of the whole community, not the needs of the community's children only. The schools must not isolate themselves from their community, as this may strengthen the community members' belief that the school does not belong to them, but to the government. Smith (1993) say that the school should strive towards the ideal situation where it is not an isolated island in the community but a "community school". They claim that, as a community school, the school will be in the best position to perform its function of community upliftment. Consequently, the community may give the school the support it really needs.
2. The school principal as the head of the school and a leader in his own right within the community, must take the initiative to enhance the relationship between the school and the community. This claim is emphasised by Van der Westhuizen (1991) when he says that the school principal finds himself in situations daily, which affect the school and the community, and which require dynamic decisions on his part.
3. The school principals must have a written plan of how they plan to ensure that there is a healthy relationship between the school and the community. Van der Westhuizen (1991) believes that the potentials and limitation of school-community relationships depend largely on planning. He says that good planning leads to healthy school-community relationships, while bad planning or a lack of planning leads to ineffectiveness. The written plan on school-community relationships will ensure that new members in schools are assisted to learn how they are expected to work with the community.
4. Through mobilisation by the principals and the community education authorities could be encouraged to provide the pre-service and in-service programmes on how to establish and maintain a healthy relationship between the school and the community. The introduction of workshops and seminars will go a long way in equipping the teachers and school principals in particular, with knowledge and skills on how to establish effective relationships between the school and the community.

5. The inquiry suggests that the school system needs to be restructured in order to allow principals and teachers the opportunity to be creative. The situations in schools may be such that they hinder the principal from implementing the knowledge and skills he has, on how to establish good relationships between the school and the community. Traditionally, the main duty of the school principal was to implement the policy of the education department. The South African Schools Act stipulates that the professional management of a public school must be undertaken by the school principal, under the authority of the head of the Department of Education in a province. This situation may render the knowledge of the principal obsolete. In Kampol (1994), Freire refers to de-skilling as the situation where the skills that a teacher has acquired from the teacher education institutions become “unusable” in practice. The principal should become aware of all those factors which inhibit him from establishing healthy relationships between the school and the local community. He should then work hard to overcome them. According Freire this process is called re-skilling (Kampol, 1994).

4.5 CONCLUSION

This section provided the interpretation of the data that was analysed in the previous section. A detailed explanation of the implications, as well as recommendations were also provided. The interpretation of the data revealed that schools need to continuously change if they are to remain relevant and useful within the community. The data further shows that school principals are faced with the great challenge of ensuring that they acquire new knowledge and skills on how to establish healthy relationships between the school and the community. Furthermore, the principals are faced with the challenge to ensure that the local communities, whether they have children in the school or not, are provided with the opportunity to recognise that the school is theirs, and take ownership of it.

It is through increased co-operation between the schools and their local communities that schools can be able to identify community needs and problems. This is essential in that the school curriculum can be adapted to meet community needs. The community, in turn, can give the school support it needs.

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APPENDIX A

Questions for individual interviews

1. Definitions of community and school-community relationships

1.1 What is a community?

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1.2 What is a school-community relationship?

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1.3 What are the reasons for school-community relationships?

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1.4 Which structures or organisations in the community have established relationships with the school?

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2. The creation of opportunities in schools for active community involvement in school activities.

2.1 Is the school open for community use after school hours, weekends and during the holidays?

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.....

2.2 Does the school have programmes in place for the disadvantaged members of the community, e.g. the out-of school-youth, and the unemployed adults?

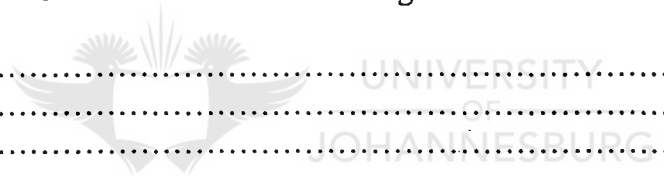
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2.3 What role do you think the community can play in the running of the school?

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2.4 Are all teachers actively involved in school-community relationships? If not, what is the cause and what should be done to make them to get involved?

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2.5 What services can the school offer that would bring significant benefit to the community?

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2.6 In what ways can the community support the school?

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2.7 Does the community show any interest in the functioning of the school?

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.....

3. The attitude of the community towards the school's involvement in community activities.

3.1 What is the community's response to the services rendered for it by the school?

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.....

3.2 Does the school experience any problem when working with community? Name them.

.....
.....

3.3 What should be done to address the identified problems?

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.....

3.4 Do community members show any interest in the functioning of the school?

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.....

3.5 If not, what could be the reason (s) for their behaviour?

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.....

3.6 If they do, how do they show their interest in the functioning of the school?

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.....

3.7 Do schools have to participate in community activities?

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.....

3.8 If they have to, how should they participate?

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.....

3.9 What should be done to improve the attitude of the community towards the school?

.....

4. The school principal and his or her role in establishing and maintaining healthy school-community relationships.

4.1 What role do you think the school principal should play in the development of the relationships between the school and the community?

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.....

4.2 Do you include community participation in school activities?

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4.3 What should a school principal do to stimulate community involvement in school activities?

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4.4 Is, or was, the community involved in determining the aims of the school?

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.....

4.5 How much consultation occurs between the school and the community?

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4.6 How do you involve the community at your school?

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4.7 What are you doing to communicate with influential leaders in the community?

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4.8 Do you believe that community participation in school activities is essential?

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.....

4.9 Is your school, presently, involved in any community project or projects? If so, please name them.

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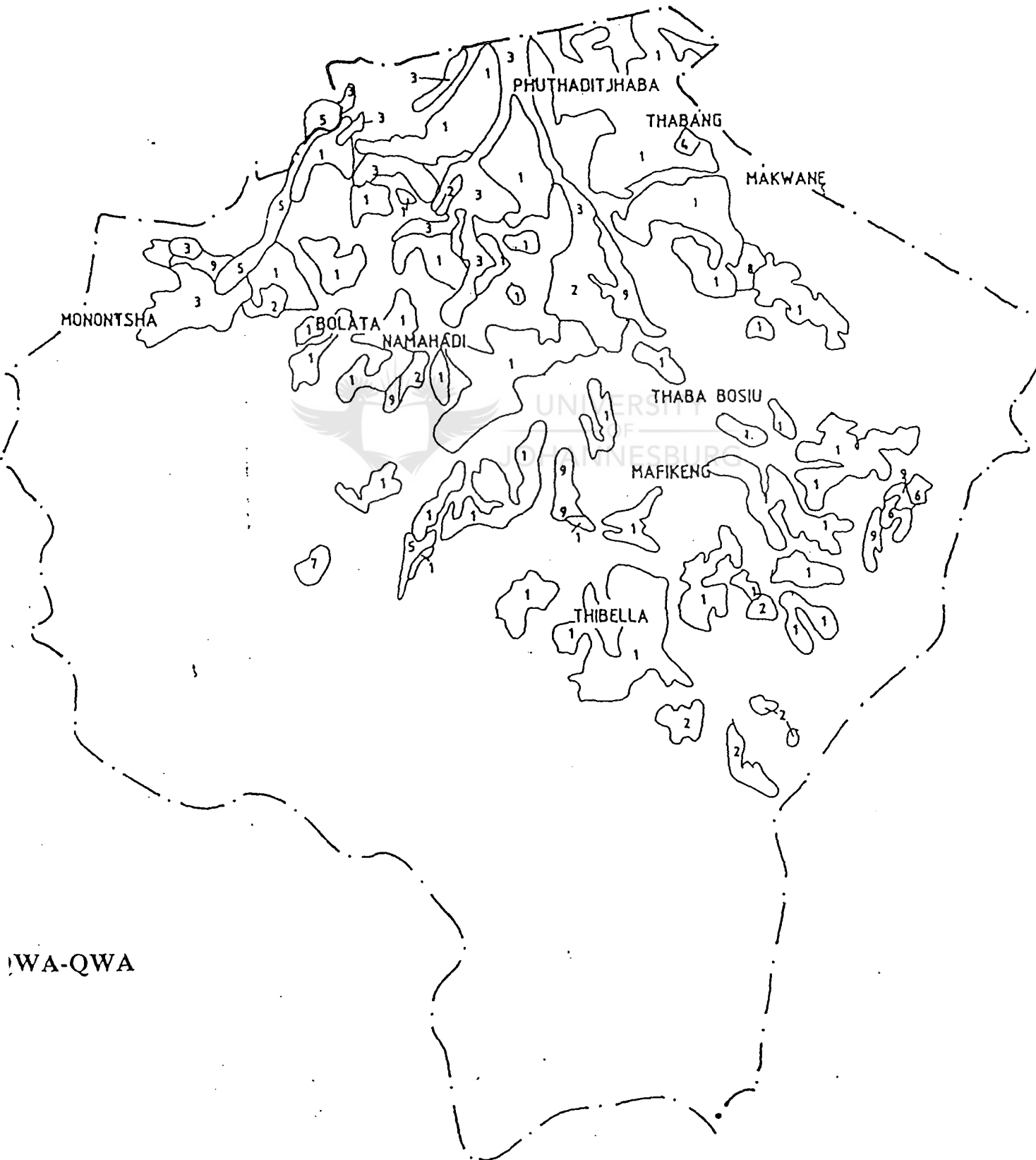
4.10 What is the policy of the school with regard to school-community relationships?

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.....

Thank you for your answers. Is there anything you want us to discuss about the relationships between the school and the community which I did not ask?



APPENDIX B



APPENDIX C

TABLE 3.1 : SIZE AND DISTRIBUTION OF THE ESTIMATED DE FACTO POPULATION OF QWAQWA, 1991

AREA (MAP 3.1)	URBAN AREAS/ SETTLEMENTS	HOUSING UNITS	1991 POPULATION	% DISTRIBUTION
1.1	Bluegum Busch	171	1 026	0,3
1.2	Phuthaditjhaba	4 828	28 968	7,4
1.3	Riverside	867	5 202	1,3
SUBTOTAL		5 866	35 196	9,0
2.1	Mphatlalatsane	1 539	10 773	2,8
2.2	Tebang	1 760	12 320	3,2
2.3	Makwane	1 820	12 740	3,3
2.4	Comet & Extension	1 549	10 843	2,8
SUBTOTAL		6 668	46 676	12,0
3.1	Thaba Bosiu	659	4 613	1,2
3.2	QoQolosing	727	5 089	1,3
3.3	Mafikeng	735	5 145	1,3
3.4	Moeding	586	4 102	1,1
3.5	Masianokeng	167	1 169	0,3
3.6	Sejwalejwale	294	2 058	0,5
3.7	Tsheseng/Phomolong	819	5 733	1,5
3.8	Matsoakeng	234	1 638	0,4
3.9	Rietpan	296	2 072	0,5
3.10	Thibella	1 244	8 707	2,2
3.11	Lejwaneng	574	4 018	1,0
SUBTOTAL		6 335	44 345	11,4
4.1	Ha-Rankopane	2 188	15 316	3,9
4.2	Boiketlong	1 660	11 620	3,0
4.3	Namahali	2 276	15 932	4,1
4.4	Ha-Sethunya	1 181	8 267	2,1
4.5	Mangaung	2 636	18 452	4,7
4.6	Matsieng	1 825	12 775	3,3
4.7	Mmakong	941	6 587	1,7
4.8	Thabang	625	4 375	1,1
4.9	Makeneng	1 361	9 527	2,4
4.10	Thabana Tshowana	2 178	15 246	3,9
4.11	Sekgutlong	369	2 583	0,7
SUBTOTAL		17 240	120 680	30,9
5.1	Bolata	4 135	28 945	7,4
5.2	Phahameng	1 579	11 053	2,8
SUBTOTAL		5 714	39 998	10,2

TABLE 3.1 CONTINUE