CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION

1.1   INTRODUCTION

The membership of the school governing bodies (SGBs) in South African public schools comprises of elected parents/guardians of learners, educators, principals (by virtue of their positions), non-educators, learners (in schools with Grade 8 and higher) and co-opted members, South African Schools Act (SASA) (RSA, 1996a: 18).   These members have to perform the prescribed functions (RSA 1996a: 14).   In order for the SGBs to perform these functions, the Provincial Head of Department (HoD) must ensure that principals and other officers of the Education Department provide them with capacity building SASA (RSA, 1996a: 14).

Since the introduction of the first democratic school governance in South African public schools in 1997 (Sadiki, 2003: 11), Provincial Departments have been providing capacity building to SGB members in accordance with the requirements of section 19 of SASA (RSA, 1996a: 14).   To date, according to the Report of the Ministerial Review Committee on School Governance (RSA, 2004: 175), SGBs in South African schools are under-capacitated and not sufficiently effective in engaging with the business of education and learning.

The purpose of this study is to establish the impact of capacity building on the school governing body (SGB) parent members of public schools in executing their functions towards school improvement.   The study will exclude the other components of the school governing body, namely, educators, non-educators and learners because the number of parent members in the SGB must be one more than half of all the members who may vote (Potgieter, Visser, Van den

Bank, Mothata & Squelsh 1997: 25) and can therefore always influence the decision-making in relation to the whole school development (RSA 2004: 173).

1.2 THE RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

The SGB is predominantly made up of people who are not professionally academically qualified but have the constitutional right to take part in school matters because they affect their lives and that of the communities they represent (Gann, 1998: 01). These people are parents or guardians of learners, as already stated above, in a school and they have to perform their mandatory functions in accordance with SASA irrespective of their experience, level of qualifications and available resources.

It is almost nine years since the SGBs were introduced in all South African public schools and to date some are dysfunctional or under performing (RSA 2004: 151). The Education Minister Naledi Pandor alluded to this anomaly in her opening speech at the 7th International Convention of Principals by saying that:

> "We have done very well at the policy and system level, but we are doing less well at implementation and practice." Cape Times 12 July 2005: 12).

The Minister's statement in a way calls for the investigation of the factors affecting the non-delivery of policy implementation and practice in the schools. Besides the roles played by other stakeholders, the functions of SGBs are pivotal to the school development if we are serious about the provision of quality education for all the learners (RSA, 1996a: 14).

We need to understand the management problems within the SGB parent members that are related to policy implementation and practice in the schools. If the Department of Education (DoE) does not know the challenges facing the SGBs, it will not be in a position to assist them to develop their schools. It is on

the basis of this, that the researcher needs to investigate the factors impacting on capacity building of the SGB parent members. The SGBs are required by law to be sufficiently effective in dealing with the business of the schools and the DoE has the obligation to capacitate them.

The Report of the Ministerial Review Committee on School Governance, (RSA, 2004: 174), indicates that they (SGBs) have:

"…to develop a better understanding of what it is they are governing."

Section 20 of SASA (RSA, 1996a: 16) and More (2001: 03) tabulate the mandatory functions of all governing bodies whilst Section 21 indicates their allocated functions. The governing bodies may apply to the Head of Department (HoD) in writing if they wish to be allocated any of the functions under Section 21. He/she may refuse to grant the governing body powers to perform some of these functions only on the basis of their incapacity.

These functions are part of the policy that the Minister of Education referred to above and the fact that the HoD can refuse to allocate certain functions to the SGB, is an indication that some of the governing bodies, given the history of South Africa, do not have the capacity to handle some of their functions with ease.

The Report of the Ministerial Review Committee on School Governance, 2004, also reveals the following weaknesses among the governing bodies (RSA, 2004:148-151):

- very few SGBs understand their core business;
- the majority of parents in South Africa have not been exposed to many years of schooling;
- skills deficits among the parent members on the basis of illiteracy;

- low participation in and attendance of workshops by parent members;
- dominance by other components of the SGB in decision making;
- implementing those decisions; and
- lack of black parent representation in schools situated in suburban areas.

It is clear from these statements that there is a problem that needs to be investigated.

1.3.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem under investigation is the impact of capacity building on the parent members of the SGB in carrying out their functions to improve their schools. The following questions will assist the researcher in putting the problem into perspective:

- What is capacity building?
- Which factors affect capacity building?
- How can the impact of capacity building on SGB parent members in relation to school development be appraised?
- How can the Department manage capacity building of SGB parent members?

The statement and the questions above will lead to the aim and objectives of this mini-dissertation.

1.4 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this research is to establish the impact of capacity building on the parent component of the school governing body in relation to their functions to develop schools.

In order to realize this aim, the researcher will pursue the following objectives:

- To investigate the factors affecting the capacity building of SGB parent members in carrying out their functions,
- To conduct a study on the experience of SGB parent members in carrying out their functions,
- To determine the relationship between capacity building of SGB parent members and school development, and
- To recommend a management strategy of how to deal with capacity building of SGB parent members.

The following subsection will address the delimitation of this research project.

1.5   DELIMITATION OF THE RESEARCH

This research will be conducted in the rural villages of Mabeskraal and Tweelagte situated approximately 100km north-west of Rustenburg in the North West Province.   The focus will be on the parent component of the school governing bodies of the six schools, namely, Motsisi Primary, Batlhalerwa Primary, Matutu Middle, Mphoto Middle, Rakoko High and Malefo High Schools. The researcher will involve the parents and educators who have been serving in the governing bodies of the above stated schools.

1.6   METHOD OF RESEARCH

A literature study will be conducted in order to find out what other countries are doing in capacitating the elected parent members of the SGBs. According to Merriam (1998: 50-51), the significance of this literature review is to contribute to the knowledge that already exists and to provide reference for discussing the contribution of the current researcher.

A qualitative method of investigation will be used to augment the literature survey on SGBs capacity building. The researcher will conduct two (2) focus group interviews with six (6) SGB parent and six (6) educator members of the six (6) selected schools in order to obtain their experience on the capacity building that they have been exposed to and how it (capacity building) assisted them (parents) to improve their schools. The researcher will physically go to the people who agree to be interviewed, collect and analyze data (Merriam, 1998: 07).

The focus group interview will be recorded on an audiotape in order to preserve it for analysis and will be transcribed verbatim and translated if needs be.

The next discussion will focus on the definition of the key concepts, namely, impact, school governance, capacity building, functions of SGBs and school development.

1.7   DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

1.7.1   Impact

The South African Concise Oxford Dictionary (1999: 578), explains impact as a marked effect or influence; having a strong effect.

Cambridge Dictionary Online describes impact as a powerful effect that something, especially something new, has on a situation or person; to have an influence on something,

1.7.2   School governance

School governance refers to a structure that 'should involve all stakeholder groups in active and responsible roles, encourage tolerance, rational discussion and collective decision-making.' It is part of the country's new structure of

democratic governance (RSA, 1996b: 10-12). Governance is widely agreed to be concerned with the formulation and adoption of policy (Pretorius and Lemmer, 1998: 21).

School governance is based on the core value of democracy in terms of the Constitution (RSA, 1996c: 21).

The SGBs are the custodians of the governance of the school, (Davies, 1999: 54).

Governance, according to the Report of the Committee to Review the Organization, Governance and Funding of Schools (1995: 53), is mostly concerned with the involvement of parents, educators, non-teaching staff and learners (in schools with Grade 8 and above) in the formulation and adoption of school policy that satisfies fundamental rights as enshrined in the Constitution.

1.7.3   Capacity building

Capacity building, according to Deborah Linnell in the article entitled, Capacity Building and Organizational Effectiveness, refers to the ability to improve in order to achieve the goals set or to do your work more effectively. For organizations, it means improved governance, leadership, administration (including human resource, financial management, and legal matters), programme development and implementation, fundraising, advocacy and policy change, marketing and planning.

Jansen and Sayed (2001: 180), describes capacity as having the skills and knowledge needed to support change.

International Strategy for Disaster Reduction describes capacity building as efforts that aim at developing human skills or the infrastructures of the community in order to reduce the level of risk.

1.7.4   Functions of school governing bodies

The powers and managerial duties that have to be carried out by the school governing bodies, a list of compulsory tasks or allocated tasks by the HoD in terms of section 20 and 21 of SASA (RSA, 1996a: 14-17).

1.7.5   School development

School development/improvement is not solely examination performance (RSA, 2004: 175), but keeping up to date with what is going on in education generally and particularly in the school (Wragg and Partington, 1980: 64).

School development is a development plan, getting voluntary helpers when needed, partnership with the community and relationships with other schools (First Steps, 1997: 07).

1.8   SUMMARY

The SGB members of all public schools have to perform prescribed and allocated functions irrespective of their capacity. Amongst others, these functions aim at developing the schools that can provide quality teaching and learning to all the learners.

In order for the SGB members to be able to perform their functions to the best of their ability, the Department must provide them with capacity building. Despite the fact that the Department has been providing capacity building, there are still reports of ineffectiveness amongst most of the SGB parent members in carrying

out their functions. This could be attributed to a number of factors that need to be investigated. For the purpose of this study, the researcher will investigate the impact of capacity building on the parent members of the SGB. The researcher will conduct a literature study of how other countries conduct capacity building amongst the parent members of the SGB, interview two groups of six (6) SGB parent and six (6) SGB educator members of six (6) different schools, tape record the interview, transcribe it verbatim, analyze and interpret the data.

The following Chapter 2 will review the literature in order to find out how the training of SGB parent members is done in other countries as compared to the South African situation.

CHAPTER 2

THE LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter outlined the different components of stakeholders that constitute the SGB and the legislative demand on the DoE to provide them with capacity building. Capacity building will assist them to carry out their mandatory functions with ease once they have been elected.

This chapter will give a brief overview of the historical and educational background from which the SGB parent members come, the stipulated functions of the SGBs in Section 20, the provisions of Section 21 of SASA for the allocation of additional functions such as taking responsibility for the maintenance of school property, payment of services, purchasing of textbooks, determining extra curricular needs of the school, supplementing the resources of the school and dealing with legal and human resource matters and a host of other SGBs responsibilities that call for intensive capacity building of governing body members.

The following discussion will give a brief overview of the origin of the SGBs in England and Wales, their functions and how they (SGBs) are capacitated to carry out their functions. The researcher will also present a brief synopsis of the origin of SGBs in South Africa, their functions, training provided and the challenges that go with it.

2.2 THE HISTORY OF SCHOOL GOVERNORS IN ENGLAND AND WALES

Gann (1998: 07-21), describes the history of how ordinary lay people became responsible for the administration of their schools through school governing bodies.

The Education Act of 1870 broadened the representation of board members and considerably extended their powers but did not clearly define their roles in the running of schools (Harding, 1987: 04 and 88) in Thody (1998: 06). This was the foundation of the modern school governing bodies. The 1944 Education Act, according to Kogan, Johnson, Whitaker & Packhood (1984: 03), prescribed partnership between the school and the parent community.

A notable change in the composition of governing bodies was legislated in 1986 and 1988. Parent membership was increased, extra governors were co-opted and the Local Education Authority (LEA) representatives were reduced. Governors were allocated more powers and responsibilities and this increased their autonomy and that of their schools. According to Thody (1994: 04), change in the power and composition of governing bodies, was to extend democracy, which was emphasized by the 1993 Education Act.

According to Deen (1993: 05), the members of governing bodies were made up of a large group of lay people and their interpretation of their roles, as stated by Thody (1994: 04), varied greatly and there was a need to clearly outline their functions and capacitate them on how schools as educational centres function.

2.3 THE FUNCTIONS OF THE SCHOOL GOVERNORS IN ENGLAND AND WALES

The Education Act of 1986, Gann (1998: 22), removed the local authority appointees from governing bodies and the new parent governors who were

elected and co-opted by the governing body in 1988 were in the majority. The new governors (who were not professionals) were for the first time allocated the following duties by the Department of Education and Science (DES):

- ensuring alignment and implementation of the locally produced curriculum with the National Curriculum;
- produce statement of policy on sex education;
- appoint a person responsible for the learners with special needs;
- sharing responsibility with LEA and school head of ensuring the teaching of religious education and daily collective worship;
- receive budget, decide how to spend it and keep accurate financial records;
- appoint staff in consultation with LEA, recommend their dismissal and to have disciplinary and grievance procedure in place;
- to decide on the number and allocation of staff allowance;
- to produce annual reports for parents;
- hold annual parents meetings; and
- control the use of premises outside the school day and develop the policy on community use of the buildings.

Quite a number of these duties were fairly new ways of doing school business and carried legal responsibilities for the predominantly lay governors. There was therefore a need to provide them with training so that they could take their new roles, responsibilities and functions seriously.

2.4   TRAINING OF SCHOOL GOVERNORS IN ENGLAND AND WALES

School governance depends on the willingness of the community to participate in the activities of their school. Historically the parents have not been part of the decision-making at school level and in order to build effective schools, the parents must be part and parcel of the school. Wilson and Corcoran in Fullan

(1991: 241), concluded that the community people represent a pool of people with creativity from which creative people can draw expertise. The success of governance will amongst others depend on schools to create an inviting atmosphere to encourage communities to access and participate in school related activities.

Around 1970 the National Association of Governors and Managers pressurized the state to provide governors with information and training. In the same year, according to Burgers and Sofer in Gann (1998: 19), the first handbook that intended to guide governors to perform their functions, was released.

Holt and Murphy (in the School Governance Reading Package: 145), indicate that stakeholders can perform well if they have been empowered through effective training programmes to make decisions on their mandate. The training may differ from country to country but the overall aim is to empower the local people to be part of the decision-making that affects the future of their children (Looyen, 2000: 02). In order for the school governors to discharge their functions effectively, the LEA provided them with free training or capacity building. Both the LEA and DES funded the training.

The four areas that new school governors had to overcome were uncertainty, unfamiliarity, lack of knowledge and isolation. In order to address these areas, a number of service providers or agencies and full-time departmental officials were employed to provide governors with capacity building.

Capacity building was preceded by induction. Induction overwhelmed governors with paper work that emanated from new legislation and this defeated the good intention of gradually introducing them to a variety of educational policies.

Section 57 of the Education Act prescribes training of school governors. Training was voluntary and attendance was often intermittent and episodic (School Governance Reading Package: 156) and had the following challenges:

- increased new legislation and training material;
- training material not keeping abreast of legislative changes;
- inadequate training resources;
- perceptions by professional staff that lay people do not have knowledge and expertise concerning school management and administration; and
- training did not match the available resources.

Gann (1998: 22), also points out that training was not always fully attended because some governors were too busy, training locality was not cozy, some head-teachers discouraged governors from attending training sessions, other long-serving governors did not see the need for training and schools budgeted very small amounts of money for the training of governors.

Following the 1988 Education Act, Thody (1994: 180-181), indicates that the central government budgeted over six million pounds in 1994 for the training of school governors. Although this seems to be a lot of money, reports indicate that parent governors received inadequate training priority, which resulted in many leaving their jobs due to frustration.

Some of the problems cited by Thody (1994: 180-181), as contributing to the governors' frustrations are:

- lack of commitment by the national department to the training needs of governors;
- declining powers of LEA to provide training;
- increased power acquired by governors within a short space of time;

- constant supply of new governors with very little or no experience to perform duties;
- more needs for induction training for the new cohort of governors;
- differential needs of governors;
- uncertainty about the job;
- contents and methods of training; and
- the fact that they have the key characteristics of adult learners.

In order to address the above frustrations of parent governors and to meet their training needs, Knowles in Thody (1994: 181), identifies the following key characteristics of adult learners: increased self directedness, reservoir of experience, readiness to learn and having a problem-centered as opposed to a subject-centered approach to learning.

2.5   SCHOOL GOVERNANCE IN SOUTH AFRICA

According to Mkhonto (1998: 07), the idea of school governance in South Africa dates back to the era of school boards, school committees and school councils. The schools were linked to their communities through these structures. Although these structures performed duties like building classrooms, signing educators' contract forms, looking after the children during school trips and signing cheques, they were not part of the decision-making at schools.

The political changes in South Africa led to the dawn of democracy in 1994. The new Constitution, which came into place in 1996 emphasizing equality for all the people, resulted in the promulgation of the new school legislation, namely, the South African Schools Act, No 84 of 1996 (SASA). SASA prescribed the introduction of school governance in all public schools. The introduction of school governance as explained by More (2001: 09), is 'a way of transforming schools and promoting parent participation'.

Section 16 of SASA legalizes the SGB, sections 20 and 21 prescribe their functions, 23 their membership, 28 states the number of members that can constitute the SGB and 31 indicates their term of office.

The following are the functions of the school governing bodies aligned to the preamble to SASA as a way of accepting responsibility for the organization, governance and funding of schools in partnership with the State.

2.6 THE FUNCTIONS OF THE SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

The functions of school governing bodies are prescribed in section 20 and 21 of SASA. According to section 20, the governing body of a public school must:

- promote the best interests of the school and strive to ensure its development through the provision of quality education for all learners of the school;
- adopt a constitution;
- adopt the mission statement of the school;
- adopt a code of conduct for learners at the school;
- support the principal, educators and other staff in performing their professional functions;
- determine times of the school day consistent with any applicable conditions of employment of staff at the school;
- administer and control the school's property, buildings and grounds which include school hostels;
- encourage parents, learners, educators and other staff at the school to render voluntary services to the school;
- recommend to the Head of Department the appointment of educators at the school;

- recommend to the Head of Department the appointment of non-educator staff at the school;
- allow reasonable use of the school for educational programmes under fair conditions of the facilities for educational programmes not conducted by the school;
- discharge all other functions given to the governing body by the Schools Act; and
- discharge functions that are set out by the member of the executive council in the Provincial Gazette.

The other functions of the SGB are prescribed under section 21 of SASA and can be allocated by the Head of Department if the SGB applies for them. These functions are:

- to maintain and improve the school's property, buildings and grounds;
- to determine the extra curriculum of the school and the choice of subject options according to the provincial curriculum policy;
- to buy textbooks, educational materials or equipment for the school;
- to pay for services to the school; and
- other functions consistent with this Act and any applicable law.

For a school to qualify for Section 21 status, it must comply with Section 38 (j) of the Public Finance Management Act No 1 of 1999 (PFMA), which states that, before transferring any funds to an entity, a written assurance from the entity that it implements effective, efficient and transparent financial management and internal control systems, must be submitted to the Provincial Education Department.

A school must therefore complete and submit a certificate of good governance to the Department confirming in writing that good governance practices are in place

and money from the government into their account will be used in compliance with PFMA stipulations.

The certificate of good governance that the school must complete and submit to the Department requires information on the constitution of the SGB, number of meetings held per year, annual financial reports, budget, parental involvement in determining school fees, maintenance of stock, inventory and asset registers, payment of services, staff employed and statutory deductions (tax, pensions and unemployment fund).

The information on internal control measures includes the availability of the strong room where valuable documents are kept, appointment of credible auditors, and establishment of a sub-committee on finance, maintenance of one current bank account with signatories, performance of monthly ledger reconciliation and the adoption of financial and procurement policies.

The information on transparency includes the availability of financial statements for scrutiny and that the authorized officials of the Department are free to confirm the declaration submitted from the school records.

Provincial education departments have already allocated Section 21 functions to some schools. These schools must have the skills, structures and systems in place to perform the allocated functions. If the department is convinced that the school has sufficient organizational, educational and financial competence, then they (department) transfer a certain sum of money on quarterly/half yearly basis into the bank account of the school.

The school then has the freedom to spend the money responsibly on educational, managerial and administrative activities. The department monitors the school regularly and requires it to submit reports quarterly or annually.

If there are problems, the provincial department can withhold or withdraw the transfer of money into the school account until they have ensured that the school is performing its functions properly.

The HoD may refuse to allocate these functions if he/she is convinced that the SGB does not have the capacity or ability to carry them out. On the other hand, the MEC may allow some SGBs to perform one or more functions without having to apply to the HoD if he/she is satisfied that they have the capacity to perform Potgieter et al. (1997: 32). These statements suggest that the success of SGBs lies in their ability or capacity to perform their functions.

The Act also places the following responsibilities on the school governing body:

- establish a school fund and administer it in accordance with the directives of the HoD;
- open and maintain a banking account;
- audit and keep financial records of the school;
- use school funds and any other assets of the school for educational purposes;
- enforce payment of school fees;
- must prepare a budget each year according to the guidelines provided by the MEC; and
- must present the budget to the general meeting of parents.

Out of the 64 sections of SASA, 22 sections deal directly with SGBs and 12 others make reference to them (SGBs). Furthermore, the Employment of Educators Act, No. 76 of 1998 refers to SGBs and should be read together with the Labour Relations Act, No. 66 of 1995 in order to protect the rights of employees (Davies, 1999: 58). Potgieter et al. (1997: 21), encourages the SGBs to familiarize their members with other Acts having impact on the provision of education. Some of the acts affecting education are:

- The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996;
- The National Education Policy Act, Act 27 of 1996; and
- Provincial Education Acts and regulations.

On the basis of the above information, one can deduce that SGBs are likely to be overwhelmed with their functions and responsibilities and will therefore need specialized training in order to master their roles in schools.

2.7 SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY CAPACITY BUILDING IN SOUTH AFRICA

The school governing body members have the right to training and the provincial education department must provide it. The department has the duty of providing them (SGBs) with developmental programmes and support (First Steps: 17).

Section 19 of SASA prescribes the enhancement of capacity of governing bodies out of the funds set aside by the provincial legislature. The HoD must establish a programme to provide introductory and intensive training for newly elected SGB members to enable them to perform their functions.

Introductory training involves, induction, orientation, crash course, giving an overall picture or summary of contents, preview, or as stated by Professor SME Bengu in the preamble to First Steps, 'providing basic and preliminary information to SGB members to get started with their functions'.

SASA does not prescribe the specific timeframe within which the SGB members should be given induction training. The training could be a month after the general elections because the National Guidelines on the election of SGB members recommends that the principal of the school must call the first meeting of the elected members within fourteen days after the election of the last

component of the SGB in order to assist them to elect the office bearers. Given the fact that the newly elected SGB members must begin to function as soon as the outgoing members have handed over to them, they must be provided with preliminary training shortly after the handover process. As to how soon the preliminary training could be provided after the general elections, is to a great extend determined by the availability of manpower, budget allocation and the provincial/regional/district plans in place.

The contents of the induction and orientation programme, according to Motara and Associates (2006: 02), cover legislative framework (SASA, Bill of Rights), roles and responsibilities of SGBs, meetings, minutes and challenges like HIV/AIDS and drug abuse in schools.

Once the work has started, the HoD should provide comprehensive and intensive training. This will assist the SGBs to ensure that they perform their functions effectively and efficiently. He/she, in terms of section 19 (1) (b) of SASA, must also provide continuing training to SGB members in order to promote the effective performance of their functions or to enable them to assume additional functions.

The HoD must ensure that the principal and other officers of the education department render all the necessary assistance to governing bodies in the performance of their functions in terms of SASA, 19 (2)). Besides the assistance rendered by the principal and officers of the department, the following are people and institutions that can also assist the SGB's to get information (First Steps: 17):

- staff of the school;
- education management governance and development (EMGD) officers at district/regional offices;
- teacher unions or associations;
- experienced members, if the school has had a governing body before;

- colleges of education, tertiary institutions and universities; and
- non-governmental organizations.

The staff and specifically the school management team (SMT) is made up of professionals who have been trained to deal with certain issues at school level. These professionals could enlighten the SGB parent members on issues that an ordinary lay man would not know. This will mean that the school must develop a programme where SMT members and educators are given slots to capacitate the parents.

Educator unions or organizations have the privilege of serving in Education Labour Relations Councils provincially and nationally and could cascade the recent policies and agreements to their members who also serve as members of SGBs. Union executive members at branch/district/regional level can also develop a programme in consultation with their area/district/regional management to capacitate SGB members on educational policies, professional and curricular matters.

Tertiary institutions and universities have the capacity to conduct research and develop relevant training manuals based on the findings of conducted studies about the SGBs. They could also impart their specialized knowledge to EMGD officers at national/provincial/regional level.

Training involves development of manuals and training the trainer. In the North West Province a consortium of service providers was tasked to develop these manuals. A team of officers of the department of education dealing with school governance had to preview, adopt the draft copies of the manuals and ensure that they conform to the Constitution, SASA and all other Acts and regulations nationally and provincially. As soon as the manuals are approved, they are translated from English into the predominant languages of the Province, namely, Afrikaans, Setswana and IsiXhosa.

From the funds allocated by the HoD, the newly elected members receive training. Training is divided into two phases, namely, crash course and intensive training. Schools are clustered according to circuits or area offices and each cluster comprising of approximately thirty (30) schools sends about five (5) members of the SGB per school to a central training venue. If there is more than one officer responsible for EMGD in the Area Office, the number of attendants could be split into smaller groups for ease of management. The five SGB members attending the training are usually two (2) parents, one (1) educator, principal and one (1) learner serving in the SGB (from schools with Grade 8 and above). These representatives will be expected to cascade the information to the remaining SGB members who in some of the schools with large enrolment of learners may be (19) nineteen. At the same time, the SGB will be expected to implement the information gained from the workshops.

The training sessions usually start at 08h30 or 09h00 up to 15h00 or even 16h00. Crash course or induction training takes a day and intensive training takes about (3) three days per module. The modules cover issues of human resource management, financial management, leadership and generic management.

The human resource management module addresses issues like, recruitment and selection of manpower, labour relations matters and conditions of employment of educators and other staff members.

The contents of the financial management module are school financial records, developmental planning and budgeting, financial sub-committee and its functions, fundraising, exemptions and financial reports.

The leadership module deals with the qualities of good leaders, shared vision and decision-making, conflict resolution and team work.

The generic module covers membership, functions, roles and responsibilities of the SGBs, the difference between governance and management, executive and sub-committees, meetings, minutes, development of vision and mission, constitution, policies and codes of conduct.

During training-the-trainer session, officers of EMGD receive training on facilitation skills and the contents of the manuals. The acquired method equips them with the skill of how to deal with cascading the information in the manuals to SGB members in their clusters or areas.

The attendance during workshops varies from rural to urban areas. In the rural areas where there is a high rate of unemployment, attendance is usually high, whereas, in urban areas, parental attendance is not always satisfactory if the training is conducted during working hours.

Most of the parents who serve in SGBs in rural areas are elderly people who are staying with their grand children because their biological parents are working or seeking work in urban areas. Some of them are illiterate or semi-illiterate and sometimes they find it difficult to understand the contents presented at the workshops.

Some parents travel a long distance by public transport on bumpy roads or on foot to workshops and by the time they reach the training venues, they are already too tired to concentrate for a long period.

The facilitators are sometimes not well trained to master the contents of the training manuals or do not apply suitable methods to teach adults.

The training localities are school halls or classrooms equipped with ordinary learner chairs and tables and may be uncomfortable for parents to sit and concentrate for five to six hours.

With all these in place, 'they (SGBs) are under-capacitated and not sufficiently effective in engaging with the business of education and learning', (RSA, 2004: 175).

2.8   CONCLUSION

I have briefly discussed the origin of school governors, their functions and how they are capacitated in England and Wales and South Africa respectively. The necessity for capacitating school governors in both countries is based on the background from which they come and the functions that they must perform in order to contribute effectively towards school development.

The challenge facing the SGB parent members is that most of them are ordinary lay people who sometimes do not know how the school functions. It is on the basis of this argument that introductory and intensive training must be provided. What the researcher would wish to establish is the impact of training/capacity building given to the parent members in order to comply with their functions.

The following chapter will then focus on the method of research used, why it was used and what the intended achievement was.

CHAPTER 3

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH USING THE FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW METHOD TO GATHER DATA

3.1   INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter the researcher presented a theoretical overview of the establishment of SGBs, their functions and how they are capacitated so that they can contribute effectively towards the overall development of their schools.

In this chapter, the researcher will explain the method of research used in order to gather data that will clarify the impact of capacity building on the SGB parent members in the performance of their functions.

3.2   QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Patton in Merriam (1998: 06), describes qualitative research as a notion based on reality that comes from the individuals who interact with their social world and make sense of the experience they have of life. It is an effort to understand a unique situation in a particular context or setting and what it means for the participants in that setting.

Strauss and Corbin in Hoepfl (1997: 02), define qualitative research, as 'any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification'. They further state that, without comparing qualitative and quantitative methods and the fact that both of them can be effectively combined, qualitative methods can be used to gain a better understanding of any phenomenon about which little is yet known, gain new perspective on things already known or gain in-depth information that may be difficult to convey quantitatively.

Merriam (1998: 05-08), has identified what he considers to be the prominent characteristics or features of qualitative research:

- the researcher is the human instrument of collecting and analyzing data;
- he/she must go to the people;
- the method employs a predominantly inductive data analysis strategy;
- its product or reports are descriptive, incorporating expressive language and the 'presence of voice in the text' (Eisner, 1991: 36); and
- responsive to changing conditions with the aim of discovering the meaning events have for the individuals who experience them and the interpretations of those meanings by the researcher.

It is clear from these characteristics that the researcher is an outsider using the natural setting as the source of data to observe, describe and interpret settings as they are. The meaning of what he/she wants to investigate is embedded in the peoples' experience. Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh (1972: 04), indicate that for a person to progress he/she must be able to learn from his/her experience because it 'is a familiar and well-used source of knowledge'.

In order to collect the data, the researcher must go and meet with the people. Lincoln and Guba in Hoepfl (1997: 05), identify the characteristics that make humans the instrument of choice for naturalistic inquiry which means that human beings can perceive reality in a very exact and faithful way. They indicate that 'humans are responsive to environmental cues and able to interact with the situation; they have the ability to collect information at multiple levels simultaneously; they are able to perceive situations holistically; …they can provide immediate feedback…'

The qualitative method of research uses open-ended questions, making allowance for individual variations. The researcher will therefore use the focus

group method in order to interview the people who have served as members of the SGB.

3.3   FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW METHOD

3.3.1   Definition

McNamara (1999: 01), defines the focus groups as interviews of 6-10 people at the same time in the same group, brought to a central location for an intensive discussion where one can get a great deal of information.

Denzin and Lincoln (1994: 365), indicate that the term 'focus group' refers to when the researcher or interviewer asks members of the group specific prepared questions about a topic after considerable research has been done. Krueger (1998: 18), explains it as a 'carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions in a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment'.

The following discussion will give a snapshot of some of the main issues to be considered when using the focus group interview technique.

3.3.2   Focus group in qualitative research

Qualitative research concentrates on words and observations to express reality and attempts to describe people in their natural situations. The important issue in this instance is to involve people and encourage them to disclose information in a suitable environment.

Qualitative research, also, taps into the attitudes and perceptions of people through interaction with other people during group discussion.   Although individuals may be influenced to shift their mindset by the comments or

submissions of others, the purpose is to gather information of a qualitative nature from the selected and restricted number of participants through interviews (Krueger, 1988: 26).

3.3.3   Use of focus groups

Stewart and Shamdasani (1998: 03), summarized the common uses of focus groups as:

- a way of obtaining general background information about a topic of interest;
- generating research hypotheses that can stimulate further research and testing using a qualitative approach;
- stimulating new ideas and concepts;
- diagnosing the potential for problems with a new programme, service or product;
- generating impressions of products, programmes, services, institutions or other objects of interest;
- learning how respondents talk about the topic of interest; and
- interpreting previously obtained qualitative results.

The focus group interview is essential for the evaluation of process and needs analysis during the life of the programme, at the end of the programme or sometimes after the programme has been concluded, in order to gather participants' perceptions on the outcome of the programme. It gives participants a chance to share their insight (Krueger and King, 1998: 56).

3.3.4   Participant selection

The selection of the participants depends on the purpose or nature of the issues being investigated. Morgan (1993: 37), is of the opinion that participants in the

focus group are determined by the 'characteristics of the individuals who are to be targeted for sessions'. It is not always easy to recruit participants but once they have been invited, they (participants) must have wisdom and insight that will benefit the community or the study (Krueger et al., 1998: 56).

In this research project, the SGB parent members and educators have been carefully selected from a particular region in the country, have served as SGB members in their schools and have attended most of the training/capacity building sessions offered by the officials of Department of Education, school principals or any other service provider.

3.3.5 Size of the group

Lewis (2000: 03), states that most focus groups consist of 6-12 participants and Morgan (1993: 30) suggests 8-10 participants. The persons are brought together to a central place to respond to questions on a topic of particular interest. Focus groups consist of homogeneous combination of people representing a particular section of the population.

In this instance, the participants constituted two groups of six. Two participants from each of the six identified three categories of schools, namely, primary, middle (secondary) and high schools. A group of six was decided upon because small groups are easy to handle from the recruitment stage up to the interview session. A pool of 24 participants 'who meet the qualification', Krueger et al., (1998: 52), was created in order to cater for those who refuse to attend or have scheduling conflicts.

3.3.6 Ensuring that people will attend

A letter from the Regional Chief Director of Education granting the researcher permission to conduct such research was sent to the participants through their

school principals a month in advance. The SGBs were requested to table the request in their meetings and agree on substitutes in the event the identified participant could not make it. The researcher requested contact details of the participants and substitutes so that he could confirm their attendance three days and a day before the interview.

A follow-up invitation witch included a proposed agenda, session time and a list of questions the group would discuss was sent to the participants with the researcher's commitment to provide each member with a copy of the report after every session.

3.3.7   Choosing the venue

Siegle (1999: 01), indicates that data in qualitative research 'is usually collected through sustained contact with people in the settings where they normally spend their time'. SGB members normally spend their time at school, holding meetings, assisting with fundraising and extra curricular activities, attending parents' evenings and sometimes feeding the learners through the National Schools Nutrition Programme.

Based on this background, one of the schools situated centrally, was used as a meeting point. Besides being a familiar place, free from distractions during interview and recording sessions, the aim was to reduce both traveling distance and costs. Transport, pick up points and times were arranged to ensure that it would be convenient for participants to attend and be actively involved in the discussions.

The researcher provided participants with tea, snacks and lunch. The hosting school was requested to provide the refreshments at a cost as a way of raising school funds.

3.3.8   Setting of the sitting arrangement

The researcher started interviewing the first group consistin of six parents who had served as SGB members before. The participants were requested to sit in a circle in order to maintain eye contact, have fairly equal access to the voices of group members and to allow the discussion to flow with minimal interruption.

3.3.9   Beginning the focus group discussion

The reseacher tried to create a friendly and relaxed atmosphere at the beginning of the focus group interview by welcoming and introducing everybody taking part in the discussion. He gave an overview of the topic, setting the objective of the interview, making members aware that each participant's opinions are valued and by providing basic ground rules.

The participants were made aware that their contributions would be recorded and therefore they were requested to speak one at a time. They were also informed that all information divulged would be treated with strictest confidentiality. This is how the discussion started:

Good morning ladies and gentlemen and welcome to the interview session. Thank you for taking time off your tight schedule to join us to talk about issues that affect the education of our children in this part of the country. My name is Molefi Shole. I am a student from the University of Johannesburg and collecting information from school governing body members who attended workshops in the past. Your principals told me that you have attended a number of workshops concerning your functions, roles and responsibilities. The university would like to know your likes and dislikes regarding the training you received and what needs to be improved.

There is no right or wrong answer to the questions that I will ask and therefore feel free to express your opinion or point of view even if it differs from what others have said. I am interested in positive as well as negative comments.

I have a cassette recorder with me to record our discussion because I do not want to miss any of your comments. If I use a pen and paper only, I might miss some of the important things you say because I cannot write fast enough to capture everything. Please be assured that everything mentioned will be treated as confidential. A report of this discussion will be given to the Department of Education in order to assist them to plan for the future.

Kindly tell me who you are, which school you represent and how long you have served on the SGB.

After the introduction, the researcher introduced the topic and asked the questions as attached in Appendix A.

3.3.10 Rounding off the focus group interview

At the end of each group interview, the researcher thanked the individual participants for attending the interview despite their tight schedules. He also offered them refreshments before he ferried them back home.

3.3   MEASURES TO ENSURE TRUSTWORTHINESS

In qualitative research, four measures are applied to ensure trustworthiness. These measures are: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

3.4.1   Credibility

In order to ensure the credibility of this research, the researcher wrote to the schools requesting to be able to meet with the participants, explaining to them

the focus group interview, the logistical arrangements made and what would be expected of them during the interview. The researcher also explained how the whole process would benefit their schools.

The research interview involved two groups of participants whose responses to interview questions were recorded on cassettes as well as in note form.

The recorded version of the interview will be available from the University of Johannesburg in the form of audiocassettes. A verbatim transcript of the recorded interview will be attached to this document as an appendix.

The researcher revealed the findings of the research report to the participants.

3.4.2   Transferability

The methodology was fully described so that other researchers can follow the same steps if they so wish. The literature study was explained and the quotes were included. The results of this research could be applied in similar contexts across the country.

3.4.3   Dependability

The entire research involved two groups of participants whose contributions were recorded on cassette as well as in note form. The findings emanating from the data collected remained consistent so that another researcher consulting them would concur.

3.4.4   Confirmability

Other researchers could confirm the results whilst the objectivity could be reached by obtaining similar or identical results by different investigators.

3.5 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

There were two groups of participants, namely, parents and educators having previously served as SGB members. These participants were asked more or less the same questions.

3.5.1 School governing body parents

The following questions were posed to a group of SGB parent members:

1. Do you think there is a need to train SGB members on their functions after they have been elected?
2. Did the training equip you with the necessary information to address the school's needs?
3. How was the training conducted? (Language, method, manuals and duration).
4. Were people of different language groups trained together in the same locality?
5. What are the functions of school governing body members?
6. Can you draw up a school budget and draft school policies? How do you do that? (The researcher was probing on question 5).
7. What do you think could be done to improve the training of SGB parent members?

3.5.2 School governing body educators

The following questions were posed to the educators:

1. What, in your opinion, is the role of the SGBs in schools?
2. Do you need to have a say in the training of the SGB members?
3. How did this training affect you?

4. Name any significant contribution made by the SGB parent members after undergoing training, for an example, in budgeting and policy development.

5. Do you think the training given to SGB members was sufficient for the development of your school?

6. What do you propose for their training?

3.6 CONCLUSION

The researcher explained the relevance of the qualitative research approach used in this research project, what a focus group interview is and how it was used to gather data. He went on to explain the trustworthiness of the research project and outlined the protocol used to gather data.

Chapter four will give an English version of the Setswana verbatim transcript of the responses given by the participants as well as a discussion of data gathered through recordings during focus group interviews.

CHAPTER 4

ENGLISH VERSION OF THE INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT AND DISCUSSION OUTLINE

4.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter will give a translated version of the Setswana transcript of data gathered during the focus group interviews. Where participants preferred to express themselves in English, such inputs were transcribed as such and reproduced in inverted commas.

Two focus group interview sessions were conducted on the same day with SGB parent and educator members respectively. The majority of participants preferred to be interviewed in Setswana because it is the language they understand better. The verbatim transcript of the data gathered will not be included in this chapter but will form part of this research project document as Appendix A.

4.2   TRANSLATED VERSION OF THE INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

4.2.1   School governing body parent members

4.2.1.1   Do you think there is a need to train SGB members on their functions after they have been elected?

Kgomotso   I think it is very important for us to be trained because we do not know much about how the school functions.

Interviewer   **What is the reason for that?**

Kgomotso   The reason is that we are not educators. We were only elected as SGB members. We are now being taught what needs to be done at school. What happens at school is not the same as what happens at home.

Eva   I think it is important that we be trained immediately after the SGBs have been elected. We must be trained because most of us do not understand what is happening at school. The community elects you out of love and yet you do not have a sound knowledge of the school. Training will assist us to know what we are suppose to do concerning the educators and our learners. This will help us to know our functions and our rights and that of other people. Every person has rights. You must respect other people/s rights. If you are not trained, you will not respect other people's rights. The educators and learners also have rights. You, as an SGB member, have rights too.

Interviewer   **Bini, would you like to add anything to the discussion?**

Bini   These were wise words.

Interviewer   **Do you agree with what was said?**

Bini   Yes, I agree.

Mothusi   The ladies have touched on some of the issues that we need to explain. Truly speaking, training is necessary. Even weak training on an irregular basis will assist us to function.

Interviewer   **What do you mean by weak training?**

Mothusi   The weakness in training means that workshops come after a long time and sometimes only one member is invited to attend once a year and a different member attends the next workshop. So, we are not exposed to similar information and therefore unable to assist one another in what we are doing.

Matale   I have heard all that was said. I am saying: Yes, we must be trained immediately after we have been elected because we must know how to behave, know how educators are expected to behave and how learners must behave. We must know what is needed at school. We, as elected members of the school governing body, must understand how a school operates.

Interviewer   **Is there any weakness in the training as already indicated by the former speaker?**

Matale   No, as already stated, I agree with the former speaker. Let us not repeat what was already stated in order to save time.

Interviewer   **What does it mean when you say training takes a long time? Is there a delay on the part of the Department to train you after you have been elected or do the training sessions last too long**?

Eva   It means the Department would workshop us maybe once, for two-weekdays in a year. A year would elapse before we are invited to another workshop.

Interviewer   **What would you like to see happening?**

Eva   Allocate at least a week in a month and let the members alternate. Not all members should attend at the same time.

Moleko   My colleagues said a mouthful. I do not disagree with anything. As I was scrutinizing the question, I realized that, 'yes, it is necessary that the new members must be trained'. I found the following point to be useful:

'If you look at the participation of parents in the education of their children and then looking at the policies and rules and regulations, those things are totally new to the new members because they never saw them before. Hence, now seeing the totality of their being new is a necessity that they should be trained, and then, other than that, even amongst the SGBs themselves, when you observe, you find that some of them, due to our level of education is low hence thorough explanation is necessary as to understanding of what are they elected for. So, according to me, that is necessary that the training immediately after the elections must take place so that we can at least try to adapt ourselves towards the education of the work that we are going to do as the SGBs because once it is shortened, the period there is shortened, we are just being warmed up and when you reach the floor now you become a flop because you grasped nothing'.

4.2.1.2 Did the training equip you with the necessary information to address the school's needs?

Moleko   According to me, 'Yes, the reason being that, because after training you are now part of formulation of policies. You are able now to formulate the policies of running the school and you know what are your functions, what are your duties in the school premises and you

even know the ways now because you have been trained to raise money, which is fund raising of the school. So, and then, even then, you know now that you are the owner of the school. So, that is why now you take responsibility to carry, taking care of the premises and the buildings of the school because they are yours. Hence, what we are taught there, equip us with a thorough knowledge as to who we are, what are our duties, what are we expected to do'?

Secondly, according to me, yes, the workshops are useful because once you are elected to be an SGB member, if your actions are not in line with what the community believes, you begin to tow the line. You must guard against lowering the dignity of the school at which you are an SGB member. You must be exemplary to the young and old so that they can realize you represent your school and the Department of Education. So, training is useful in the sense that you set a trend for the future generation.

Mothusi Training is necessary for us as SGB members because a person who starts any new work needs training in order to understand its requirements. People who are not trained say whatever they like and we are better able to assist them.

If you are an SGB member, you are able to keep matters confidential. You should not divulge confidential issues that were discussed in a meeting.

Matale I like it when you talk about confidentiality. What we say in a meeting like this one regulates us. As we leave the meeting, our actions in the community must be exemplary. The Bible teaches us about Paul and Timothy. Paul says to Timothy that he was given

responsibility of leading the nation when he was still young. So he had to lead by example in order to convince the people about the Lamb of God that he preaches. Training helps to mould our actions so that our children can learn from us. You must not send confusing message to the children.

Interviewer **Does it mean training assists you to deal with confidential matters in a professional manner?**

Matale   As indicated by one of the ladies, if you were trained you would be able to advise a person who talks badly about his/her school. If somebody talks about school fees saying Naledi Pandor said parents should not pay school fees, explain to him/her that while we are awaiting the State's money, lets pay and get the school running. If the Department pays as Naledi Pandor indicated, it would, we will refund your money. If you reason like this, then it is an indication that you were trained. We are able to address the concerns of the community in a meeting politely.

Mothusi   It is very useful to us in the sense that you are able to advise other parents to attend school meetings where explanations will be given on some of the issues that they do not understand. To show that you were trained, you talk politely without harassing people. You encourage people to attend school meetings.

Eva   I would like to add to what the gentlemen have said by saying that training is useful and it motivates us to deal with teenagers in the Middle Schools. I have realized that even if it looks like they despise their educators, when you talk to them politely, they show you respect. I personally give those letters calling for parent meetings to learners and they ensure that they reach home

because the attendance has improved. I feel motivated. The community elects people of different backgrounds onto the school governing body. Those who are always quiet, begin to talk once they have been trained. A spirit of camaraderie begins to prevail amongst us. We work closely with the educators. They do not feel isolated. The parents also work closely with you because they realize that you are the right person for the job. We encourage them to participate in meetings so that we can address learner-related problems together. It is our responsibility to ensure that we deal with disciplinary issues together. Parents must know that the welfare of the child is not only left in the hands of educators. We are able to assist with the general discipline of learners at school and this is as a result of having been trained.

We are able to question and reprimand a learner who is not at school during teaching hours and demand to know the reason why he/she is not at school. Learners do not smoke in front of us in the village. We think they respect us. That is why I say we are useful.

Kgomotso It is useful to be a member of SGB. SGB members are able to identify and assist learners from poor families and by so doing you earn respect from the community you serve. A good spirit of working together prevails amongst the SGB members. Learners come to you when they have problems. Those that fight listen to us when we call them to order. What we learn as SGB members assists us with the running of our families.

4.2.1.3 How was the training conducted?   (Language, method, manuals and duration).

Kgomotso   A very interesting question. We are concerned about our home language. We would like to understand the content of the training so that we would be in the position to explain to our parent members. Questions will come from the very same books that are used during training. Books could be in our language or maybe two languages could be combined so that we can understand what is required of us. This will assist us to reach the community we serve.

Matale   We are not bothered much by the weather conditions during workshops. We must be patient. It is fine as long as we have a roof over our heads. There is nothing we can do when it is cold. For us this is not relevant. Our schools have been poor for a long time. Some do not have electricity. We are fine in any weather, as long as we receive training in a room.

Concerning the training we receive, we would like to have both Setswana and English copies of the training manuals. This will assist us to reach our parents during meetings. We will save time in meetings when we use the language that the people understand. You must know what your client needs. We need to satisfy our parents who attend meetings. That should be our strategy when we deal with parents.

The fact that we have been trained places us in a better position to deal with the issue of no fee schools. We explain to the parents in advance and they are able to understand and they gain courage. They are able to discuss among themselves and draw their own conclusions about what was discussed in a meeting. If you only

give orders to parents, they become angry and they will not support you. You must be strategic, like a businessperson when you address parents. He/she will persuade you to buy, by using all available marketing tricks.

Mothusi   The method I observed being used during training, is one where too many people are trained in one locality and we end up not understanding anything. We end up not asking questions when we do not understand. The fewer we are, like now; there more we are able to understand what the workshop is about. In some instances, we attend workshops with learners and educators and to me this is not the right thing to do. We wouldn't like to be trained with learners. Learners must be trained separately. We are unable to say what we have to say concerning them. We can mix with them in other workshops.

4.2.1.4 Were people of different language groups trained together in the same locality?

Eva   I am not sure as to how to deal with this issue of language but it must be corrected. There are many expatriates working in our schools. It is because of this that Setswana is not used in workshops. These people are fewer than the Setswana speaking people attending the workshop. My thinking is that we are still oppressed. We satisfy five people at the expense of the majority.

The community elects us. Other people have not been exposed to formal schooling but they are willing to work and assist. When such people do not understand the language used in the workshop, they get bored. Next time you call them to a meeting they will not turn up.

Interviewer	**Are you suggesting that separate workshops should be held for different language groups?**
Eva	We suffer a lot by having people of different language groups trained together in the same locality. In the last workshop we attended, the people were bored. Those who did not understand English did not hear what was said. The majority did not understand what was said. The presenters used English and many Setswana speaking people did not understand what was said.
Kgomotso	Most of the issues discussed in the workshops are difficult to understand.
Eva	The facilitators forget that they are dealing with people who do not understand other languages. They use abbreviations like APO (Area Project Office), which the people do not know. The facilitators must come down to the level of the people they are training and give them clear explanation of what they are talking about.
Bini	Elderly people make sacrifices to serve on the SGB. Young people do not stay for a long time as SGB members. That is why we feel passionate about the use of Setswana as the language of instruction in workshops. We also wish to have copies of the books that are used in workshops even if it is a copy of the section that is relevant to SGBs.
Kgomotso	I have been serving on the SGB for the past three years at school A and it seems I am the youngest but I am able to address the parents in a meeting. If you really like to serve your community, age will not restrict you. In some schools people who are elected

onto the SGB do not stay for long. They want to be paid. In most cases I am the one who represents school A in meetings. I have been to Charora High School and many other White schools. I am requesting that White people be trained separately so that we can understand the training content. We must be able to ask questions freely.

Moleko
I have listened attentively to all that was said. I do get mixed up in some instances. 'The South African Constitution, it clearly states we've got eleven languages spoken in the country which means' all these languages must function. In most of the workshops that I have attended, I have realized that the medium of communication is 'English and its more understandable than Tswana, because' because the translation is not correct and the original meaning of the message is lost along the way. In the previous workshops that I have attended, I have realized that 'we have been using the two languages, the common languages of North West, which is Setswana as well as English, because once we start to isolate the other group from the other group then we will never have a common understanding which means' the Whites will have their own understanding of SGB. 'The Blacks will be having their understanding' of their SGB. 'And then that generation which is the next after we have left,' they have their own understanding and we will lose common issues. 'We will never have a common vision of where are we heading to. We know that Setswana is a language that is used at home. 'We are able to use it. You are able to express yourself. You can explain everything in that language. But now, here is somebody, poor somebody who you must assist taking him or her on board on educational life'. Once you have started a division 'the three divisions, because we got parents and we got the educators, we got the learners'. If we can have a separate training

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for these components, we will have the difficulty of commonality in what they are suppose to do at school. 'We want the principal, teachers and everybody. They must be on board. They must be taught one thing' so that we talk in the same voice. Once we talk the same thing, 'our education strategy and movement forward will have a common movement'. Once we are divided, we will not be taught the same thing and this will confuse the learner that we are to assist. We are elected into the SGB because of the child. If it were not because of 'you must have a child, the love of a child at heart, you wouldn't bother to be an SGB. If you leave this area and go to town, trained in your mother tongue, having the experience, you are unable to communicate in English. 'You have been using one language. Hence eleven languages if included in the training commonly now here in the North West. The main languages are two, Setswana and English. That is, those languages if they go concurrently together, then the message goes through. I cannot express myself fully in Tswana. So, in order for me to bring the message through, the language I usually use is English so that I'm sure of what I'm saying and then if you want clarification, I'm able to clarify whatever I said'.

Interviewer   **Kindly comment on the time allocated for training**.

Moleko   The time allocated for training is too short; hence we do not receive intensive training. The trainers do not go deeply into the aspects of our work because they are chasing time. We would appreciate it if we can be allocated a week and few days for training. Time must be set aside for discussions so that people can contribute towards the topic given. Group discussions show one's understanding. 'And other than that, the manuals that are being handed out to us, are of vital importance because now you can be able to refer on

them. Even the handouts that are going together with the manuals, if you read them thoroughly, they give the insight info in what you are'.

Interviewer **Do you receive a sufficient number of manuals for your SGB members per school?**

Moleko We only receive two or three copies, depending on the number that has   attended the workshop. You will have to devise a method of supplying other members with copies.

4.2.1.5   What are the functions of school governing body members?

Eva Immediately after training, we are able to realize that our work is to ensure that our school is attractive. It is our work to maintain the school building. We must look after the school surroundings. A school is a place that must be beautiful. We must ensure that the fence is in order.

We are also aware that we must look after our educators by checking if they come to work properly and on time. We also ensure that the learners are well behaved. We are aware of our responsibilities.

Matale You are able to test whether you know your work by responding to questions posed by the Departmental officials who visit the school. They are able to tell if you do not answer correctly or make a deduction from your answers what you intended to say.

Secondly, our work is to make sure that the learners are treated fairly. You should deal with them strategically.

A child must show life from birth by exploring. If a child is too quiet, you wouldn't know the day he/she is not well. In other words, we are not supposed to feel shy when dealing with SGB issues so that whoever is available can assist us where we go wrong.

Eva   We need to be fair when we address issues related to educator behaviour. Issues that were discussed in a meeting are to remain confidential. We must scold were necessary but we must address the issue and not the person. Learners must be treated fairly.

Matale   In addition, recently we had a case of a learner who misused school fees. His parent was called to a meeting and in order to cultivate trust in him, we requested the parent to repay the money through the same culprit. We do this in order to cultivate love and trust in him. Let us show him love. We monitored the situation and all went well.

Mothusi   To add to that, the workshops we attend assist us to understand our functions. SGB members motivate learners and show them the importance of attending school. We advise them to come home in time and not to visit taverns. We also assist with building a good relationship amongst educators.

Moleko   'My understanding of the question, the question itself: what are the functions of the school governing body members? The basic functions of the SGB's are:

1.   to develop and adapt a constitution, a mission of their school, is one function;
2.   to determine the admission policy of the school;
3.   to adapt a code of conduct for learners, not for educators;

4. to determine the times of the school day;

5. to recommend to the head of department of education the appointment of teaching and non-teaching personnel. We don't employ;

6. to administer and control the school's property, buildings, grounds and even we are having the right as SGB, to rent the school's properties for fund-raising;

7. and then the seventh one, to develop the budget for the school. The teachers and the principal cannot develop the budget because we are the ones who know the needs of the school, including determining the school fees for approval at the parents meeting. We only determine the school fees. School fees can be hundred rand but can only functions after the parents at the parents' meeting have approved it,

8. the eighth one is to support the site manager, the principal and the staff in the performance of their professional functions'.

4.2.1.6 Can you draw up a school budget and draft school policies? How do you do that? (The researcher was probing on question 5).

Moleko   Yes. 'I know my functions because I cannot know my functions unless I'm along that line'. I have been trained on how to deal with these issues. We must attend to the needs of the school, cost them and come up with a draft budget to present to parents.

Interviewer **The budget is the backbone of the school. I deliberately asked this question so that you should give me more information**.

Mothusi   We are able to draw up a school budget but we lack confidence. We need more specialized training in this regard. Training that is

offered by the Department is delayed and by now the newly elected SGB members (May/June 2006) have not been trained. The outgoing members should come and assist the new ones with the budget for next year (2007).

Matale   We indicated earlier that training is assisting us because we are able to apply what we have gained at school to our homes. If my wife goes shopping without a list or with a list and does not stick to it, she will buy unnecessary goods.

Interviewer   **Are you able to formulate policies?**

Matale   We are able to formulate policy. We know that in South Africa public schools must open their doors to all learners. If we do not have equipment for blind learners, we cannot admit them to our school.

Moleko   Well, we are able to draw up the budget and formulate policies. After we have been trained, we work closely with site managers who are of great help to us. They assist us to come up with drafts and to be partial. We give this task to a task team. They report to us for verification. This is an indication that the training we receive equips us with the knowledge to pursue the matter to a deeper level. In the past, the policies were drawn by principals and educators and imposed upon us for implementation hence we refused because we were not part of the initial drafting. We bear the responsibility together for any mistakes, which may occur because we are working closely with the principals and educators.

4.2.1.7 What do you think could be done to improve the training of SGB parent members?

Eva   I think the duration of training should be extended from a day or two to at least a week to improve our comprehension. It should not be a mere one-day session.

Moleko   In addition to what has been said, 'the duration of training should be longer not short because we need enough time to understand the workshop and not a summarized workshop where everything is done in one day. Let each aspect be treated fully in each day, e.g., when we are drawing budget of a school or financial management, we must have enough time. We must understand what these inside there are. But within a day or within two days, those things cannot be covered'. It will assist us if we could be offered a little more time for training. We need a little bit longer time even if it takes a day to deal only with budget. We will be well equipped when we leave the training centre. When we deal with financial management we should be able to know which records are kept. 'So, that's why duration should be lengthened'.

Matale   It is important to be able to produce records, should school inspectors demand them. We must not leave everything to the principal. We have to answer the questions asked by inspectors in order to prove that we understand what is going on at the school. It is important not to be too shy to ask questions where we do not understand; even if it means using your mother tongue.

Mothusi   I think what needs to be done is that training must be extensive and intensive. Supply all SGB members with SASA documents. Give us enough material to read at home. We encounter problems when

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we share documents. You end up not knowing where it is. You must read and understand what your role is.

Interviewer **What is your recommendation on the number of members to be trained?**

Eva We have many schools and if we all go for training at the same time, we might be too many. It is better to take us in groups.

Mothusi In most cases SGB chairpersons are the ones who are invited to attend the training and when they come back they do not cascade the information to other members. Attending in groups will assist us to get information.

Matale As a chairperson, it is also important that after attending a training session you must call other members and cascade the information to them. The same applies to groups attending training.

Eva My experience is that if most of the time it is only the chairperson and one other SGB member attending the training, the rest of the members become despondent and declare themselves useless.

Kgomotso The advantage of attending in a group of about three is that you are able to fill gaps in the information.

Matale If you are alone nobody will be able to tell whether you are reporting back correctly not.

4.2.2   School governing body educator members

4.2.2.1   What, in your opinion, is the role of the SGBs in schools?

Dikeledi   'The role of the SGBs in schools is to promote the best interest of the school and strive to ensure its development through the provision of quality education for all learners at the school and also to adopt the constitution of the school and to develop the mission statement'.

Rebecca   'They make sure that the school runs smoothly, raise funds for the school, take care of the school building and assist educators maintain discipline of the learners. The safety of the school is very important, learners and the school facilities is very important and is in the hands of the SGB and the code of conduct for learners'.

Amanda   'To market the school'.

Kgomotso   'Drawing of the budget'.

4.2.2.2   Do you need to have a say in the training of SGB members?

Maki   'Yes. I think SGB must develop recognition for the work they are doing'.

Interviewer   **What exactly do you mean by that?**

Maki   'You have to recognize them with something better, taking them somewhere as a school or as even Department. Recognition is very important. Take them somewhere for workshops, for refreshments or even give them something'.

Marks	'The other thing is also to differentiate between the governance and the professional duties if we have a say. We must be able to assist one another as far as our responsibilities are concerned'.
Interviewer	**Is there a clash at times in the carrying out of governance and professional duties?**
Marks	Yes. As already stated by one of the ladies, the SGB member might not be aware of what he/she is supposed to do. He/she may end up requesting to check the learners' class workbooks. 'We need to make those things clear'.
Kgomotso	They need to be appreciated for doing something very good like fundraising. Give them encouragement so that if you call them again they must come.
Rebecca	In addition to that, as a form of encouragement, the government must pay them a form of stipend for the work they do even if it can be on quarterly basis. 'Incentive', in order to motivate them.
Interviewer	**Are they not going to fight for these positions in future?**
Rebecca	They must be active. They must be willing to be elected.
Dikeledi	'If there is continued training, the governing bodies will promote their effective performance of their functions'. They will know what they are supposed to do. They will be able to assume additional functions if allocated to them.
Interviewer	**What do you mean by continued training?**

Dikeledi   There must be follow up immediately after training in order to check on the implementation of what was learned.

4.2.2.3 How did this training affect you?

Rebecca   If training is conducted during working hours and we are requested to accompany them, then it delays our schoolwork. Training sometimes takes a week which means a teacher stays away from class for a long time. A suitable time for training is in the afternoon after contact sessions with the learners.

Marks   'I think on a positive note the other side' is that I agree with the previous speaker that training during school hours consumes our teaching time. On the other side, training develops you as an individual, as a teacher, because at some stage you might be a principal of a school and a permanent member of the SGB. So, you have to be acquainted with everything pertaining to SGB's. I think this has a positive effect on us because we are also parents. If one day you become an SGB member you will know what is expected of you.

Maki   I sometimes become a mediator. I have to satisfy the principal with my professional work and at the same time act as a parent.

Rebecca   I once attended a workshop that lasted for a month. Some SGB parent members even complained that they spent a lot of money on transport. Training which is too long also exhausts the school money.

4.2.2.4 Name any significant contributions made by the SGB parent members after undergoing training, for example, in budgeting and policy development.

Dikeledi   Sometimes SGB members encourage parents, learners, educators and other staff members at the school to render voluntary service.

Marks   Yes, concerning the issue of budget, 'I think in most cases after their traning' there are indications of what they would like to achieve. For an example, they have a target to reach with the fundraising. 'It shows a sign of development on that point'. There is a difference on policy development after they have attended training. 'After the training they know what to do'. They are guided by policy and not by emotions or desires. There is a change even if it is not vast.

Amanda   In addition, 'you find that there is a difference' after training, in terms of differentiating between governance and professional duties. They are able to know what they are supposed to do. Therefore, training is vital for SGB members.

Maki   In most cases when they come from training, they contribute a lot in school meetings. In the past they only came to listen to what the principal had to say. Attendance at school meetings has improved.

Interviewer   **How do they assist in maintaining general learner discipline?**

Kgomotso   They assist with learner discipline during school functions. They talk strongly to the learners about their discipline and how they should behave. They read them the Code of Conduct.

Marks	'And then one other thing', depends on how the school involves the parent members. If the policy dictates that they must once or twice in a week take a turn at school, then they become more involved in the discipline of the learners. I think the schools should involve them a lot in the discipline of the learners. When the learners see them at school, they will know that he/she is for a specific purpose.
Rebecca	Regarding the issue of learner discipline, when we have a problem, they are able to show the parents of the ill-disciplined learners the importance of attending disciplinary hearings at school.
Interviewer	**What is your view regarding policy development?**
Marks	There is a development regarding the attitude of the SGB on that point because truly speaking, parents who are elected onto the SGB are ignorant. After they have been exposed to training they are able to develop their own policies in line with the Acts. In a way there is development. I think the workshops assist them to gather knowledge on policies.
Maki	In the past the chairperson and treasurer were only told to sign cheques but after undergoing training 'they are able to question certain things'.
Marks	'That is why nowadays' there are few principals who misuse school money because the SGB is monitoring the school funds.
Amanda	'They refuse to sign blank cheques'.
Interviewer	**Are they able to draw up a budget for the school?**

Kgomotso   'With the help of the principal and educators'.

4.2.2.5 Do you think the training given to the SGB members was sufficient for the development of your school?

Kgomotso   'I think it is insufficient'. They need extra training time. They should not attend workshops twice a year, but on a quarterly basis.

Interviewer **What do you mean by that? Is it the length of time spent at the workshop or the frequency of the training?**

Kgomotso   It is not the time spent at the workshop. It means if you took a long time before inviting them to the next workshop, they happen to forget what was taught in the past.

Interviewer **What do you think about the number of parents who attend the workshops?**

Marks   I think it is not sufficient. It is not enough. I would prefer a specialized training for subcommittees, like finance committee. I think if we can follow this pattern, SGBs can take our school somewhere. Their present workshops are not sufficient and they cover broad issues. Few people attend and they are expected to cascade the information to others. They are therefore not successful in achieving their aims.

Dikeledi   As already pointed out by Marks, it means that each and everybody elected onto the SGB must have the opportunity of attending a workshop. He/she must have an understanding of everything concerning SGBs.
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Amanda   In addition to that, for them to be able to give feedback, they must all attend the workshops.

4.2.2.6 What do you propose for their training?

Rebecca   The facilitator must use simple language. There are parents who do not understand English. If you use their home language they are able to understand. I also recommend practical demonstrations and case studies. They must be supplied with enough material so that they can read at home.

Kgomotso   Elderly people are like children. They (tape not clear).
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Amanda   The training is too formal. You need to treat them like children. I am not sure whether you understand what I am talking about? Every time you call them to school they get scared thinking that it is all about school money. You have to arouse their interest.

Maki   As already stated, the workshop must incorporate demonstrations and case studies in order to keep them awake and involved. In this way, they will not even realize that they have spent a lot of time at the workshop.

Amanda   Case studies capture their interest because they like stories about other people.

Interviewer   **What do you think about the amount of material they receive at one training session?**

Dikeledi   Give them little bits of content at a time. Vary methods of presentation in order to make the sessions interesting.

Interviewer	**What is your view on training parents, learners and educators together in the same locality?**
Maki	The parents do not feel comfortable attending training with SGB learners.
Marks	There are three levels that result in a clash of interest during arguments. My advice is that we be separated and trained according to categories.
Interviewer	**Is there a need for consolidation at a certain stage?**
Marks	It is also important that at a certain stage we come together as different categories. The other point is that workshops are conducted too long after the elections. They do attend meetings in the meantime.
Interviewer	**Do principals also assist with the training of SGB parent members?**
Maki	I am not sure whether the principals assist them. I only see them coming to attend meetings and getting used to the routine.
Marks	The assistance from principals is minimal. We cannot blame them because they have a lot to do at school. Principals are very busy. They have many responsibilities. They cannot pay enough attention.
Dikeledi	SGB members must be presented with certificates after they have attended training.

Maki	They must be given some incentive in order to motivate and recognize them.
Rebecca	Life is difficult. Our people are not employed. They run school errands and we expect them to look presentable despite the fact that they do not earn a salary. That is why we advocate for a form of payment for their work.
Marks	I propose one SGB serving two or three schools in the same village since the aims and the challenges of the community are the same. I am of the opinion that there must be a link amongst the primary, middle and high schools. You do find one parent serving in all these schools in the same community.
Kgomotso	I am also of the opinion that the SGB parent members should be given a form of payment as an incentive and encouragement to do their work. We do give them some money at our school after they have raised enough for a project during fundraising. Two or three of them do get free hotel accommodation when they accompany learners, for example, during matric dance.
Maki	There must be monitoring and follow-up at schools after the training sessions in order to check governance progress. It should not only be the responsibility of the principal or members who attended the workshop. The officials who conducted workshop should provide support at school level and check whether there is any form of development on the part of governance.
Dikeledi	I am suggesting that when learners give feedback after attending workshops, one of the educators must monitor what they report because they could give distorted information.

Rebecca   I am stressing the fact that SGB members be remunerated as a token of their importance in the community. Their efforts should be recognized.

4.3   THE DISCUSSION OUTLINE

4.3.1   School governing body parent members

Purpose   To obtain information on the impact of capacity building on SGB parent members.

Participation   The researcher personally delivered the written invitations and permission letters to conduct research in schools to the individual principals of the six (6) identified schools, briefing them on the interview to be conducted and requesting them to ask the SGB parent members to take part in the interview. In order to avoid non-attendance by the participants, the researcher requested for the names of possible substitutes in advance, in case some members would be unable to attend.

All six SGB parent members turned up for the interview.

Limitations   The researcher explained that there were no right or wrong answers to the questions and that each one was entitled to his/her opinion. He went on to say that they were free to disagree with any statements made by their colleagues.

Weaknesses   Although most of the participants preferred to be interviewed in Setswana, they ended up mixing Setswana with English. This created a problem for the researcher in that the tapes

first had to be transcribed verbatim and thereafter translated into English. Although all necessary precautions were taken during the translation, it is possible that deviation from the original meaning exists.

Some of the participants dominated the discussion.

Strengths   The group consisted of six (6) participants and it was thus easy to control and involve them all in the discussion. Each participant was given the opportunity of participating in the discussion by making inputs and recommendations. They found it easy to participate because they could express themselves in the language they understand better.

They acknowledged their shortcomings regarding their roles, responsibilities and functions.

Findings   The findings can be summarized as follows:

- there is a need to train SGB parent members;
- training is not sufficient;
- the language, method, duration of training and the number of manuals supplied during training need to be revised; and
- training needs to be intensified and specialized.

4.3.2   School governing body educator members

Purpose   To obtain information on the impact of capacity building on SGB parent members.

Participants   The researcher identified six (6) schools. He personally delivered the letters of invitation and those granting him permission to conduct research in schools to the individual principals. He briefed them and requested them to ask the educators to participate in the interview. On the day of the interview all the six (6) educators from the identified schools turned up.

Limitations   The researcher explained that there was no right or wrong answer to the questions and that each of them was entitled to his/her opinion. He went on to say that they were free to disagree with any statement made by their colleagues

Weaknesses   Most of the participants preferred to be interviewed in Setswana, but ended up mixing Setswana and English. This posed the problem to the researcher of first transcribing the tapes verbatim and later translating them into English. Although the researcher took all the necessary precautions to capture the contents of the interview with its original intended meaning, there are possibilities of deviating from the actual meaning of the content during the process of translation. The group seemed to have agreed with all that was said by their colleagues.

Strengths   The number of participants was small; hence it was easy to involve everybody in the discussion. They were free to express themselves because they used the language they understood best. They all expressed their opinions on the questions asked and gave their recommendations.

Findings   In this regard, the findings can be summarized as follows:

- SGB members need to be trained according to their categories, that is, parents, educators and learners separately or subcommittees separately; and

- the training given is not sufficient and needs to be specialized and intensified.

4.4   CONCLUSION

Two groups of SGB parent and educator members were interviewed in order to establish the impact of capacity building on the SGB parent members. It is clear from the submissions of the groups that the training given to the SGB parent members is not sufficient to assist them to fully develop their schools. Both groups felt that there was a need to provide them with training/capacity building immediately after election to the SGB, even before they start with their governance work. The suggestions on the provision of training varied from how, when and what they should be trained on.

Although the participants appreciated the endeavors on the part of the DoE to provide training, there is a need for a more specialized and intensified training sessions in the language that the participants understand better.

The next chapter will provide a detailed discussion on the findings and recommendations of the interview conducted including the limitations of the project.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1   INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter provided a summarized translated record of the interviews conducted with both the SGB parent and educator members on the impact of capacity building on the SGB parent members. The interviews indicated that in order for the SGB parent members to assist with the development of their schools, there is a need to revisit the provision of training.

The following discussions will provide the findings and recommendations of the submissions made during the focus group interviews and the concluding remarks of the entire research project.

5.2   FINDINGS

The findings will be categorized as follows:

5.2.1   The need for training

It was pointed out by both groups that there is a need to train SGB parent members because they are not always familiar with the policies governing schools or broad educational issues.

5.2.2   Language used during training

Participants felt that trainers use English predominantly during training sessions whereas most participants are Setswana speaking, often illiterate, semi-literate or literate.

5.2.3   Method of training adults

There was a general feeling that the method of training SGB parent members should be different from that of training other SGB component members like educators and learners.

5.2.4   Duration and frequency of training

On this issue, there was a general agreement that the duration of training was short. Too much content was piled up on one or two days. Trainers tend to rush through the subject matter without considering the people intended to benefit from the training.

Often a period of a year would pass before a follow up training session was provided.

5.2.5   Supply and use of manuals during training.

All the participants agreed that more manuals should be supplied. This should solve the problem of two or more individual attendees sharing one booklet. The number of booklets supplied to attendees always fall short of the number of SGB members per school and this poses a problem during the cascading of information to other members who did not attend the workshop.

Most of the manuals are written in English and do not always cater for the Setswana speaking sector of the audience.

5.2.6   Intensified and specialized training

Training covers broad issues on which two or three attendees are expected to report back or cascade to the remainder of the SGB members. Some issues are so specialized and in-depth that certain parents have difficulty in comprehending and sharing the concepts with others.

5.2.7   Training the trainer

Representatives who attend training on behalf of the other SGB members do not always find the time to report back. If they do find time to report back, they do not always give accurate information. They are also not necessarily people with the required training or reporting skills.

5.2.8   Size of the group

The participants felt that too many people are invited to attend the training sessions. They are sometimes overcrowded and congested in a small room. They do not receive individual attention, nor do they get sufficient opportunity to interact with the facilitator on matters that affect their individual schools.

They are also of the opinion that parents do not feel comfortable to be trained in the same room with their children/learners.

4.2.9   Monitoring, support and guidance

Officials of DoE do not visit schools to check on implementation of what was learned during workshops. They do not provide on-site support and guidance to SGB members.

5.3   RECOMMENDATIONS

5.3.1   The need for training

The SGB parent members should receive training immediately after they have been elected or before they start their work because most of them are not familiar with the business of education and learning. Training should include formal induction and intensive continuous training on their roles, responsibilities and functions.

School governors need to be consulted on the development of their training material and the provision of training.

5.3.2   Language used during training

The service providers or officials of DoE responsible for the training of SGB members must use the language that trainees understand. The attendees must be given the opportunity well in advance to indicate the language of instruction they would prefer, so that the facilitators can prepare thoroughly or find a substitute.   Arrangements should be made to train SGB parent members separately in the language of their choice.

5.3.3   Method of training adults

The method of training SGB parent members must be in line with the requirements of Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET). Trainers must also consider the level of literacy of the people to be trained because not all parents, specifically those from previously disadvantaged communities, have been exposed to formal education.

5.3.4   Duration and frequency of training

The length of time allocated for training must be structured in such a way that parents do not lose their concentration span.

The interval between training sessions and the on site monitoring and support must be done on a monthly or at least a quarterly basis, in order to detect progress and areas that need specialized support.

5.3.5   Supply and use of manuals during training

Manuals must be developed in consultation with stakeholders.   They must address their needs in accordance with SASA and the broader policy framework. The language used in training manuals must suit the clients they are intended to benefit.

A sufficient number of manuals to cater for each SGB member must be developed and supplied to trainees in order to encourage independent reading and sharing of information amongst members not attending official training.

5.3.6   Intensified and specialized training

The different sub-committees of the SGB should be given separate specialized in-depth training, specifically and relevant to their task, for example, the sub-committee on finance should be trained intensively and extensively on financial management and related issues and the disciplinary sub-committee should be trained on the formulation of the Code of Conduct for Learners and due processes to be followed concerning the discipline of learners.

5.3.7 Training the trainer

All the SGB parent members must have the opportunity of attending a capacity building workshop. Arrangements must be made to cater them in small groups. The trainees must guide the trainers in terms of establishing the most suitable time during the day or the week. Training should be done at a time that suits the trainee and not necessarily the trainer.

Training the trainer approach must be discouraged and avoided because some SGB parent members are employed and may not have the time to conduct workshops for other members. Some do not possess the skills of imparting or reporting on the issues discussed during workshops.

The cascading of information has never been reliable. Every time information is transmitted from one person to another it becomes imprecise.

5.3.8 Size of the group

The group must be of a manageable size of between 35 and 40 attendees per facilitator. Parents must be given separate instruction from their children/learners in order to encourage them to interact freely with the subject matter and the facilitator and grasp the contents at their own pace.

5.3.9 Monitoring, support and guidance

The service provider or DoE officials dealing with school governance must develop a monitoring timetable and instrument for the practical implementation of the information learnt during the workshops and provide SGB members with on site support and guidance on a regular basis.

5.4   PROJECT LIMITATIONS

This research project was conducted in the six rural schools in the Bojanala West Region of Education in the North West Province. The results of the study are therefore not generalizable because the nature of the qualitative research is to achieve a greater understanding of a particular phenomenon in a natural setting (Denzin and Lincoln, (1994:02). The findings of this study are not suggesting any similarity in all the rural parts of the North West Province or South Africa, but can be tested in similar situations.

This study could have gathered more data had there been resources to conduct extensive interviews with other members of the school governing body in other parts of the province.

The researcher had no previous experience in conducting a research and any errors, which may have been made, are unintentional.

5.5   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to Strydom (1998: 24), ethics is a set of moral principles that are suggested by an individual or group in order to offer rules and behaviour patterns about the most correct conduct towards the respondents. The ethical guidelines provide standards for the basis upon which each researcher ought to evaluate his or her conduct.

In an attempt to adhere to the ethical standards, the researcher personally introduced himself to the participants before the interview could start.   He obtained the consent of participants in that he disclosed all the information about the purpose of the study and the procedure he was going to follow during the focus group interview.

The researcher requested the participants' permission to be audio taped so that he could capture all important information that they would contribute for the

transcript. He assured them that the audiotapes would be given to the Johannesburg University for safekeeping. He also asked them for permission to take notes so that he would be able to keep track of the focus group interview process.

In order to ensure confidentiality and anonymity, the participants felt comfortable with the names as they appear in the interview transcript (as chosen by them for the purpose of the interview). A letter of alphabet was used in the place of the name of school mentioned during the interview.

The participants were informed that they had been selected by their school principals on the basis of their experience as school governing body members and that he wished to know and understand their views on the impact of capacity building on school governing body parent members.

The researcher appreciated the participants' efforts of attending the focus group interview despite their busy schedules and wished them a safe journey back home.

5.6   CONCLUSION

The education of children in the past was left in the hands of the educators. Parents had little or no say in school matters. Today, parents are important stakeholders in education. Their involvement in the education of their children is critical. They are vital to the total development of the school. It is important for them to know their roles, responsibilities and functions so that they can be effective and efficient in their work. It is therefore necessary to have them exposed to relevant intensive and extensive training on their duties.

It would assist to explore a variety of future training strategies linked to the role of SGBs because there is no single training method that can fully satisfy the needs of trainees. The application of different integrated training methods will at some

stage have to be researched in order to verify whether they make any impact on training.

Training should be centrally coordinated for efficient and effective use of resources. There is a need to increase the funding of the school governors' training either at institutional or district level.

The availability of technology for networking to facilitate information flow from school to national or even international level will assist the SGBs to learn from one another. This will in turn, result in spinoffs, which will benefit schools.

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