

**ACTION RESEARCH ON AN ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT  
INTERVENTION IN A SECONDARY SCHOOL IN THE ERONGO  
EDUCATION REGION OF NAMIBIA**

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## ABSTRACT

*Organisations that will not, that resist, that cannot, that are incapable, that lack the confidence or that believe it's not possible to change are likely to stagnate and die*

(Smith: work in progress).

Since independence in March 1990, the new Namibian Government has realized that the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of Namibian schools depends on the ability of teachers and other stakeholders to be innovators and facilitators of change, especially through effective communication, effective meetings, working through conflict, solving problems and making decisions.

Organization Development (OD) is an effective, planned change approach for improving organization workgroup processes. Resting on a foundation of values and assumptions about people and organizations, OD promotes collaboration, interdependence and interconnectedness, empowerment, participation and involvement in problem solving and decision-making for all members. Based primarily on a normative, re-educative strategy and secondarily on a rational-empirical strategy, OD assumes that people will change if and when they realize that change is advantageous to them.

OD makes use of interventions to determine areas requiring change. The intervention used for my research included a survey-data-feedback (SDF) where data was gathered, analyzed and fed back to the participants. The data was used as a basis for problem solving and training in organizational processes of communication.

The case study involved 23 teachers. Journal entries, observation, formal and non-formal interviews as well as focus interviews were used as data collection tools.

Participants wanted to see immediate organizational changes thus it was important to remind them that OD is a long-term change approach and that there is no quick fix. Initially, participants were used to the norm of fault finding to determine areas requiring

change. However, a year later, during problem solving sessions, I observed collaborative and positive involvement by all participants.

Finally, the outcome of the intervention based on the data from the communication workshop and the problem-solving meetings revealed that participants want OD to be institutionalized in all Namibian schools.

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## ACRONYMS

HIGCSE:	Higher International General Certificate of Secondary Education
IGCSE:	International General Certificate of Secondary Education
MEC:	Ministry of Education and Culture
OD:	Organization Development
PTA:	Parents Teachers Associations
SDF:	Survey-Data-Feedback
USA:	United States of America

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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I also declare that this thesis has not been submitted for a degree at any other university.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

#### **5.2 CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH**

*An innovative school is a school that has learned to learn ...*

(Dalin & Rolff 1993:5)

At the World Conference on Education held in Jomtien, Thailand in March 1990, 1500 participants adopted by acclamation a World Declaration on Education for All (Ministry of Education and Culture [MEC] 1993: 3-4). This coincided with the Independence of Namibia on 21 March 1990 and the subsequent adoption of “Education for All” as the new philosophy of education for the new nation.

At Independence, the Namibian Government inherited eleven education systems and authorities (MEC 1993: 28), which were characterized by acute disparities, inequities, tensions, discrimination and segregation. The new Ministry of Basic Education and Culture [MBEC] began to reform the education system. The MBEC established a unified national education system by merging the eleven ethnic administration authorities into one single Ministry with six departments (Amukugo 1993: 198) and also brought an end to segregated schools. Accountability and responsibility were invested in the six departments. Control and implementation functions were decentralized to the regional educational offices and subject advisors replaced subject inspectors. At the school level, decision-making authority and control responsibilities were given to the school management and school governing bodies. However, schools could not appoint new teachers to vacant positions and only make recommendations for the appointments.

By early 2002, as in South Africa (South Africa 1996: 12), there had been little preparation for how best to set up structures and process appropriate goals and procedures for the management of schools. Training to improve the capacity of education

managers at regional and school levels and of school governing bodies was ineffective. An education officer commented that he did not receive sufficient guidance when he took on the new responsibility of regional education officer (Ipinge 2002: 10). Similarly, a subject advisor commented, “Look, I know nothing about the Higher International General Certificate of Secondary Education (HIGCSE) and International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE), I barely keep up to Grade 10...” (Neshila 2002: 15).

Whitaker (1993: 6) suggests, “For an educational system to be in tune with change, it needs to be flexible, adaptable and responsive to constantly changing circumstances and needs”. Changes require new knowledge and skills to enable those involved to adapt successfully to new requirements and circumstances (Whitaker 1993: 49). Since independence in 1990, the Namibian Government has realized that the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of Namibian schools depend on teachers and parents being innovators, agents and facilitators of change, especially in effective work group processes (MEC 1993: 76). Work group processes include communication, effective meetings, working with conflicts, solving problems, making decisions and accessing change (Schmuck & Runkel 1994: 43; French and Bell 1995: 6).

Studies carried out in the United States of America (USA) (Schmuck and Miles 1971, Schmuck and Runkel 1994) and in South Africa (Davidoff, Kaplan and Lazarus 1995) have shown that Organisation Development (OD) is an effective change strategy in schools and can make a difference in the life and learning of educators and learners.

Organization Development is a planned change theory, practice and process for improving organizational processes. Planned changes make an organization more responsive to environmental shifts and are designed to address organizational problems or to help an organization prepare for the future (Smither, Houston & McIntire 1996: 4; Porras and Silvers 1994: 82). OD is based primarily on a normative, re-educative strategy. In order to make change effective, old norms and values have to be discarded and supplanted by new ones (French and Bell 1995: 102). The people affected by the



change must participate in their own re-education if they are to be re-educated (French, Bell and Zawacki 1994: 119). Secondly, OD is based on a rational-empirical strategy: people will change if and when they realize the change is advantageous to them -- the situation must be desirable, effective and in line with their rational self-interest (French and Bell 1995: 102).

OD makes use of a diagnosis to determine areas requiring change. An OD program involves an array of interventions designed either to help organization members address specific problems effectively and efficiently, or to improve the organization's functioning. Interventions relevant to my study include survey-data feedback, where data gathered and fed back to organization participants, is used as a basis for problem solving and training; for example, in the basic organization processes of communication and problem solving.

I carried out a planned OD intervention in a secondary school well known to me. This research was worth doing firstly to investigate the applicability of OD in a particular secondary school in Namibia. Secondly, the study could encourage further research on OD in Namibia and, finally, may encourage Namibian educators to be trained in OD in order to be able to conduct similar OD interventions countrywide.

## **1.2 GOALS OF THE RESEARCH**

The purpose of my research was to conduct and investigate participants' experience and perceptions of the process and outcome of an OD intervention in a secondary school in the Erongo education region in Namibia.

## **1.3 METHODOLOGY**

I conducted an interpretive case study of an OD intervention. While this study is concerned with change, my interest was in the participants' experience and perceptions of the change process and the meaning they made of it. As such it was based on the assumptions of the interpretive paradigm.

My method was a case study method. For Merriam (as cited in Winegardner 2001: 14) a case study is particularistic. It focuses on a particular situation and evaluates programs and interventions -- in my case, an OD intervention within a school.

### **1.3.1 OD Intervention**

The OD process is interactive and cyclical (French and Bell 1995: 138) and typically involves members of the organization participating actively in all phases of the process from its introduction, through data gathering and analysis, to action planning, implementation and review (Whyte 1995: 289-290). I adopted this participatory approach and all members of the school staff participated in the process.

The phases in any OD intervention are similar to those of action research (see section 3.3.2).

### **1.3.2 Data Gathering**

I used observation, journal entries and interviews as data gathering tools. At key transition points, such as the introductory OD workshop, the shared agreement and the SDF, I conducted informal interviews with some of the participants to determine how they found the intervention.

I analysed the data using interpretational analysis, which is “a process of close examination of case study data in order to find constructs, themes, and patterns” (Gall, as cited in Winegardner 2001: 5) that address my research goal.

## **6.1 AN OUTLINE OF THE THESIS**

In chapter two, I present an overview of the literature on change, specifically on educational change. The central theme of the thesis is an Organization Development (OD) intervention. Therefore, chapter two also briefly describes the history, goals and

key theories and concepts that inform OD.

In chapter three I describe my research methodology in terms of my research paradigms (critical and interpretive) and my research method, which is an action research case study. I also present a detailed description of the phases of action research, which I apply to the OD process. I also explain how I collected and presented the data. Ethical issues conclude this chapter.

The respondents' experience and perceptions of the OD process and the outcome of the intervention are presented under themes in chapter four.

In chapter five I present the discussion of my main findings.

Chapter six gives a conclusion by summarizing the main findings of my research and recommendations for future researchers and facilitators. The limitations of my study are spelt out, followed by a final section on my personal reflections.

## CHAPTER 2

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

*“Everything must change at one time or another or else a static society will evolve”*  
(anonymous, first year student on an English proficiency test)

The aim of this chapter is to look at what various authors have to say about change, specifically about educational change.

The first section briefly discusses the history of educational change. The second section examines the dynamics and aspects of change, while the third discusses types of strategies to bring about effecting change. The fourth section introduces Organizational Development (OD) as an approach for managing change and the fifth section examines theories and concepts that underlie OD. This leads to the next section, which covers some of the OD interventions that help to address specific problems effectively and efficiently. Finally, I attempt to give an overview on critiques of OD.

According to Dalin and Rust (1983), schools are living, organic and open systems in themselves. Schools are also the key organizational units of formal education and a primary force of educational change. Fullan (1991: 30) points out that change is natural, inevitable and a fact of life. However, he also points out that change for the sake of change will not help (1991: 15). He asserts that “the purpose of educational change should be to help schools accomplish their goals more effectively by replacing some structures, programs and/or practices with better ones”. Change according to McLagan (2002: 1) should add value and not take place because it is the latest fad.

The focus on educational change appears to emerge slowly. Prominent author in the area of educational change, Michael Fullan, confirms this when he points out that after 30 years of numerous attempts at planned educational change, much still needs to be done in order to bring about successful change (Fullan 1991: xi). Levine (1999: n.p.) concurs that in the past 30 years attempts at change in educational institutions have failed because the focus has been on the change itself and not on the needs and outcomes of the

institution and its clients, as reflected by their cultures.

Therefore, as Fullan *et al.* (1998: 220) point out, successful changes are only possible if one knows what change looks like from the viewpoints of all the stakeholders (teachers, students, parents, administrators) and combines their viewpoints with an understanding of organizational and inter-organizational factors, which influence the process of change.

What does the literature say about the change process?

## **2.2 THE GENERAL PROBLEM OF THE MEANING OF CHANGE**

According to Marris, “all real change involves loss, anxiety and struggle” (cited in Fullan 1991: 31). Marris further asserts that whether change is planned or imposed or happens by chance, the response is characteristically ambivalent. Initially, new experiences are always reacted to in the context of some “familiar, reliable construction of reality” in which people attach personal meaning to the new experience regardless of how others experience it. Fullan (1991: 31) points out that regardless of the cause of the change, the meaning of change will rarely be clear at the outset, the transition will be pervaded by ambivalence. In the words of Schon, (as quoted in Fullan 1991: 31-32) all real change involves “passing through the zones of uncertainty ... the situation of being at sea, of being lost, of confronting more information than you can handle”.

James and Connolly (2000: 16) assert that change is complex because it is inextricably linked to emotions such as anger, sorrow, anxiety, excitement and relief. According to them, anxiety is the dominant emotion in the management of both imposed and self initiated change. For Hargreaves (1998: 559) all organizations, including schools, are full of emotions, whether they are positive or negative, but discussion of the effects of these emotions is virtually absent from the literature and advocacy of educational change. According to Hargreaves (1998: 559) emotions are only acknowledged and talked about insofar as they help reformers “manage” and offset teachers’ resistance to change, or help them set the mood in which the “really important” business of strategic planning can take

place.

*“Change is a process, not an event”* (Hall and Loucks; Fullan & Park, as cited in Fullan 1991: 49). In other words, it is an unpredictable journey. Furthermore, Fullan (1991: 48) cautions those wanting to be involved in the change process that it is not a linear process, “but rather one in which events during one phase can feed back to alter decisions made at previous stages...”.

In the following section, I will use Fullan’s framework to take the change process to the implementation phase. “Implementation consists of the process of putting into practice an idea, program or set of activities and structures new to the people attempting or expected to change” (Fullan 1991: 65). Successful implementation of a change process is affected by nine factors organized into three main categories, namely characteristics of change, local characteristics and external factors. For the purpose of this review, I only discuss three factors that are related to the characteristics of change.

### **2.2.1 Complexity**

Complexity refers to “the difficulty and extent of change required of the individuals responsible for implementation” (Fullan 1991: 71). Fullan (as quoted in Davidoff and Lazarus 1997: 38) explains the complexity of change:

How is change complex? Take any educational policy or problem and start listing all the forces that could figure in the solution and that would need to be influenced to make for productive change. Then, take the idea that unplanned factors are inevitable – government policy changes or gets constantly redefined, key leaders leave, important contact people are shifted to another role, new technology is invented ... recession reduces available resources, a bitter conflict erupts, and so on. Finally, realize that every new variable that enters the equation – those unpredictable but inevitable noise factors – produces ten other ramifications, which in turn produce tens of other reactions and on and on.

The interconnectedness and interrelatedness of the different parts of the system make it complex. For Owen (as cited in Jaftha 2002: 21) a systematic approach underlines the

importance of manifestations of interconnectedness of issues such as causes, forces, problems and needs. As a result, any substantial change in one or more of the subsystems has a compensatory or retaliatory change in other subsystems.

Senge (1990: 128) express this point succinctly:

In effect, the art of systems thinking lies in seeing *through* [emphasis original] complexity to the underlying structures generating change. Systems thinking does not mean ignoring complexity. Rather, it means organizing complexity into a coherent story that illuminates the causes of problems and how they can be remedied in enduring ways.

The next factor that affects the implementation of change is that of “need”; it also draws on the aspect of readiness.

### **2.2.2 Need**

Fullan (1991: 69) asserts that many change innovations are attempted without examining whether or not they are perceived to be the priority need for the participants in the change process. The Rand Change Agent study revealed that identification of a need is strongly related to successful implementation of change.

Fullan notes that precise needs are not often clear at the start. Huberman and Miles (as cited in Fullan 1991: 69) remind us that by the early implementation stage people involved in the change must perceive that both the needs being addressed are significant and that they are making some progress towards meeting them.

The final factor that I want to discuss is clarity.

### **2.2.3 Clarity**

Gordon and Cummins (as cited in Weber & Weber 2001: 293) describe goal clarity as the degree to which an organization’s goals and the means for achieving those goals are clearly understood by the participants in the change process. Weber and Weber (2001:

293) suggest that clarity of vision and objectives during times of increased uncertainty, such as organizational change effort, are important.

According to Fullan (1991: 70), clarity about goals and the means for achieving those goals is a perennial problem in the change process because the actual goals are never very clear. This causes participants to be left with *false clarity*. False clarity occurs when people think that they have changed, but have only assimilated the superficial trapping of the new practice. As a result, Fullan argues that unclear and unspecified changes can cause great anxiety and frustration to those who try to implement the change (1991: 70-71). Fullan points out

Clarity of course cannot be delivered on a platter. It is accomplished or not depending on the *process*. Nor is greater clarity an end in itself: very simple and insignificant changes can be very clear, while more difficult and worthwhile ones may not be amenable to easy clarification.

Furthermore, Fullan asserts that successful change “is only possible if organizational members develop trust and compassion for each other” (1999: 37). He further points out that it is not so easy to build trust, because it is established more by deeds than by words and is sustained by openness in interpersonal relations. Therefore, building trust entails taking a very great risk.

Fullan (1991:105-107) suggests that there are ten ‘do’ and ‘don’t’ assumptions that are basic to a successful approach to educational change, namely:

1. Do not assume that your version of what the change should be is the one that should or could be implemented.
2. Assume that any significant innovation if it is to result in change, requires individual implementers to work out their own meaning.
3. Assume that conflict and disagreement are not only inevitable, but also fundamental, to successful change.
4. Assume that people need pressure to change (even in directions that they desire), but it will only be effective under conditions that allow them to react, to form their own position, to interact with other implementers, to obtain technical



assistance, etc.

5. Assume that effective change takes time: two to three years for specific innovations, three to five years for institutional reforms.
6. We should not assume that the reason for lack of implementation is outright rejection of the values embodied in the change, or hard-core resistance to all change. There are a number of possible reasons: inadequate resources to support implementation, insufficient time elapsed and value rejection.
7. We should not expect all or even most people or groups to change. The complexity of change is such that it is impossible to bring about widespread reform in any large social system. Progress occurs when we take steps that *increase* the number of people affected. Our reach should exceed our grasp ... but not by such a margin that we fall flat on our face.
8. Assume that you will need a plan that is based on the above assumptions.
9. Assume that no amount of knowledge will ever make it totally clear what action should be taken.
10. We should assume that changing the culture of institutions is the real agenda, not implementing single innovations.

In the following section, I will discuss Chin and Benne's planned change strategies.

## **2.3 PLANNED CHANGE STRATEGIES**

To bring about change, one needs to develop a plan or strategy on how to go about bringing about effecting change. Chin and Benne (as cited in French and Bell 1995: 102) describe three types of planned change strategies, namely normative re-educative strategy, empirical-rational strategy and power-coercive strategy. These will be elaborated on here, with emphasis on the normative approach that underlies OD theory and practice.

### **2.3.1 Empirical-rational strategies**

According to Chin and Benne (as cited in French *et al.* 1994: 112; French and Bell 1995: 102) it is assumed that change is proposed by an expert (facilitator) who knows of a

situation that is desirable, effective and in line with the self-interest of the individual or an organization which will be affected by the change. Furthermore, it is assumed that the affected person or organization will adopt the change if: firstly, it can rationally be justified and secondly, if the facilitator can show that the change will be advantageous to the person or organization. The chief enemy to change is seen to be ignorance, while education is believed to be the key. The implication for the practice of OD is for the facilitator to disseminate information and knowledge in the minds of the target group (French & Bell 1995: 102).

### **2.3.2 Normative re-educative strategies**

According Chin and Benne (as cited in French & Bell 1995: 102), these strategies are based on the assumption that norms form the basis of behaviour and changes come through a re-education process during which old norms are discarded and supplanted by new norms. In the words of Chin and Benne (as cited in French & Bell 1995: 102-103; French *et al.* 1994: 112):

The rationality and intelligence of men are not denied. Patterns of action and practice are supported by socio-cultural norms and by commitments on the part of the individuals to these norms. Socio-cultural norms are supported by the attitude and value systems of individuals' normative outlooks, which undergird their commitments. Change in a pattern of practice or action, according to this view, will occur only as the persons involved are brought to change their normative orientations to old patterns and develop commitments to new ones. And changes in normative orientations involve changes in attitudes, values, skills, and significant relationships, not just changes in knowledge, information, or intellectual rationales for action and practice.

French and Bell (1995: 121) summarize the following common elements/conditions within the normative re-educative strategy of change.

- Firstly, they emphasize the participants and their involvement in working out the program of change and improvement for themselves.
- Secondly, the problem confronting the participants is assumed to be in the

attitudes, values, norms and the external and internal relationships of the participant system, though the possibility of a lack of technical information is not ruled out.

- Thirdly, the change agent must learn to intervene mutually and collaboratively along with the participants in efforts to define and solve participants' problem(s).
- Fourthly, non-conscious elements, such as grudges participants might have about the finances of the school and procedures in the allocation of duties, must be brought into consciousness and publicly examined and reconstructed.
- Fifthly, methods and concepts of the behavioural sciences are resources that change agents and participants can learn to use selectively, relevantly and appropriately in confronting and dealing with future problems of a similar kind, aimed at human needs satisfaction.

Organizational Development (OD) is based primarily on a normative re-educative strategy and secondarily on an empirical-rational strategy for managing change (Davidoff & Lazarus 1997: 36).

## **2.4 ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT (OD)**

Changes in organizations are achieved by means of approaches and strategies. Various writers (Hanson; Bolman and Deal; Owen; Daresh and Playko, as cited in Van der Westhuizen and Mentz 1996: 135) perceive organizational change as an integral aspect of the functioning of an organization. Organizational Development (OD) is one of the means by which organizational change is achieved. For Vaill (as quoted in French and Bell 1995: 27) organization development is a "process for improving processes".

### **2.4.1 History of OD**

OD originated in the business world. Contemporarily, however, it has become an important strategy for building capacity in many different organizations, including schools. It underlies the whole school development movement.

For French and Bell (1995: 1) organization development is a change strategy that emerged in the late 1950s and early 1960s. It was based on insights from group dynamics, theory and practice related to planned change. The psychologist, Kurt Lewin, is known as the founder of OD after he directed an Inter-group Relations workshop as an experiment in change and as training for workers in inter-group relations (Schmuck and Miles, as cited in Schmuck and Runkel 1994: 9). According to Smither, Houston and McIntire (1996: 9), most researchers attribute the birth of organization development to the development of the T-group (a way of training people to become more aware of the emotions that typically develop in people working in groups) in the 1940s.

Smither *et al.* (1996: 9) view the psychological studies at the Hawthorne plant of the Western Electric Company, carried out in the 1920s and 1930s, as setting the stage for the development of OD. According to Schmuck and Runkel (1994: 9), it was a reaction against the dominant theory of organization – the “scientific management”, which advocates that the work of humans should be made as machine like as possible. The experiments showed that “workers would respond favourably with higher production, to interested and sympathetic attention from supervisors and managers”. Followers of Lewin discovered that “members of groups could examine explicitly the social processes that made their groups effective”. They also discovered that “members cared a good deal about their relationships with one another” (Schmuck & Runkel 1994: 10).

The history of OD is one of gradual evolution. According to Weisbord (1987: 112), the term, Organization Development (OD) was coined by Douglas McGregor and Richard Beckhard in the 1950s. It describes an innovative, bottom-up change effort they conducted that fitted no traditional consulting category or practice.

Later OD evolved into an integrated framework of theories and practices capable of solving most of the important problems confronting the human relations side of organizations (French and Bell 1995: 2).

According to French and Bell (1995: 28), organization development is

a long-term effort, led and supported by top management, to improve an organization's visioning, empowerment, learning, and problem-solving processes, through an ongoing, collaborative management of organization culture – with special emphasis on the culture of intact work teams and other team configurations – utilizing the consultant – facilitator role and the theory and technology of applied behaviour science, including action research.

The goals of OD are pointed out succinctly by Petrella, as quoted in Fullan *et al.* (1980: 125) when he says:

In my view, the core of our mission in OD is to help look IN HERE – into their own convictions -- for another species of truth...I simply mean helping a person examine his/her own thoughts and feelings, helping a pair of people understand and work on their own relationship, helping a group of organization understand its real operating norms...By helping individuals and organizations discover their IN HERE truth, we can help them discover that they have some power at their disposal to create a new and better future.

In the next section, I elaborate on some of the key concepts that are reflected in the literature of OD.

## **2.4.2 Key theories and concepts that inform OD**

The theory and practice, art and science of OD are informed by many concepts that form the knowledge base upon which OD is constructed. Some of them will be discussed in this section.

### **2.4.2.1 Readiness**

According to Runkel and Schmuck (as cited in Fullan *et al.* 1980: 136-137) success of OD consultation in facilitating change is influenced by the social-psychological readiness of the participant organization to change. They further assert that a certain amount of

organizational readiness is essential at the start of any OD effort in a school. They point out “it is folly to begin even a small OD project if it calls for resources, skills, commitment or value that are not there” (Schmuck *et al.*, as cited in Ellison and Burke 1987: n.p.). They further assert that readiness indicators such as administrative support and time commitment facilitate any organization effort, no matter how small. They point out that readiness is greatest in an organization that values openness of communication, where there are strong communication skills, where there is a widespread desire for collaborative work and where there is administrative support. Furthermore, they assert that readiness is greatest where there is agreement at the outset of the intervention about the educational goals to be achieved and where the participants do not have a history of undertaking one innovation after the other. Runkel and Schmuck also emphasize that readiness is strengthened through the principal’s commitment, as well as support and involvement at regional or district level. However, they believe that the success of OD consultation lies in “... bringing entire subsystem into the consultation ... and adequate time should be given for introducing what OD is and how it works to a potential client organization” to enhance readiness and to provide hope (Runkel and Schmuck, as cited in Fullan *et al.* 1980: 136-137).

Schmuck *et al.* (as quoted in Fullan *et al.* 1980: 137) put the point succinctly: “We believe strongly that the total staff should hold at least three or four meetings over a period of about two months to discuss OD”.

Eby *et al.* (as cited in Weber & Weber 2001: 291) are adamant that the participants’ perceptions of organizational readiness for change can serve to facilitate or undermine an organizational change effort. Their trust, support for improvement and perceptions of organizational readiness for change are seen as vital to successful organizational change.

#### **2.4.2.2 Systems theory**

According to French and Bell (1995: 89) the term “system” implies “interdependency, interconnectedness and interrelatedness of a set of elements that constitute an identifiable

whole or gestalt”. Senge (1990: 12) perceives systems thinking as the interrelatedness and interconnectedness of all the different parts. Davidoff *et al.* (1995: 174) emphasize that in any organization there are five main clusters of interdependent elements, namely culture, strategy, personnel, structure and procedures and technical support, which are connected and which make up that organization. Therefore, a change in one part of the organization will have a positive or negative effect on the rest of the organization. For Whitaker (1993: 69) systems thinking involves all participants in an organization sharing responsibility for the problems caused by a system and finding creative solutions to the problems.

According to French and Bell (1995: 89) systems theory views organizations as open systems in active exchange with their environments. Any malfunction in any one of these dimensions will have a negative effect on the whole system. However, Hanson (as cited in Van der Westhuizen 1996: 42) argues that organizations are not open systems in an absolute sense; rather, the openness is determined by the degree of interaction with the external environment.

Katz, Kahn and Hanna (as cited in French and Bell 1995: 89) contend that every system has a *permeable* boundary, which delineates the system. De Jong (1996) points out that a challenge for schools is to determine the nature of the boundary and the extent to which the boundary is explicit and implicit.

Open systems have *purpose and goals* that must align with the purpose or needs in the environment otherwise the organization will die. Feedback from the internal parts of the organization as well as from the external environment is important, because it determines to what extent the goals and purpose of the organization are achieved – are they still in alignment with their environment or are they not? Another characteristic is that of *equifinality* which denotes that there are different ways to an outcome - the principle being that there is “no one right answer”, which is consistent with a social constructivist view about the organization and takes a critical view that “there are multiple realities”. Finally, Katz *et al.* assert that there can be *subsystems* within the bigger system. In a

school as an organization, the different subject departments are examples of subsystems within the system.

According to Peter Senge (as cited in Smith: work in process) systems thinking is a prerequisite for a learning organization.

#### **2.4.2.3 The learning organization**

According to Dalin and Rust (1983: 21), all living organizations need to develop all the time. Similarly, Van der Westhuizen (1996: 135) asserts that all living organisms should change at one time or another otherwise they will stagnate and eventually decline. For Revans (as cited in Hitt 1995: 17), if learning is not equal to or greater than environmental change, then the organization will not survive. Hitt (1995: 17) warns that due to increased global competition, for an organization to be allowed into the league, the organization should not only focus on survival, but should also achieve excellence.

According to Davidoff and Lazarus (1997: 35) development of the school as an organization is not only possible, but is also a necessary aspect of integrated school life. “We need to build a school environment that is supportive of change – for the individual teachers, as well as for the school as an organizational whole -- namely a learning organization.” For Davidoff and Lazarus (1997:35) a learning organization is “an organization which is constantly and systematically reflecting on its own practice, and making appropriate adjustments and changes as a result of new insights gained through that reflection.”

Senge (1990: 3) defines learning organizations as

“...organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together”.



According to Davidoff and Lazarus (1997: 35) OD is the appropriate approach to bring effecting change in the whole organization (people and the school). Dibella and Nevis (as cited in Johnson 2002: 241) see the learning organization as an advanced level of OD. OD goals include collaboration, co-operation, teamwork, involvement and participation of all organizational members. Training, one of the OD techniques, includes team learning and experiential learning. In a learning organization, as defined earlier by Senge, people are continually learning how to learn together, making use of experiential learning workshops and team-building exercises.

By learning together, people in an organization learn to trust one another, to communicate effectively, to empower others and to be empowered. Belasco (as cited in French and Bell 1995: 95) believes that empowerment is the key to getting people to want to participate in change.

According to Hitt (1995: 25) one of the most challenging obstacles for the learning organization is to overcome the resistance of managers who have fully embraced the traditional organizational paradigm and are successful. Hitt poses the question -- "Why should they change? In the same breath he gives the answer as "the quest for excellence". A study done by Hoang (2002: 10) shows the same results. Hoang's respondents reported that their managers saw no reasons to change, because they believed that "What worked in the past would continue to work in the future".

Institutionalizing OD is a sustained attempt to train insiders and build in OD as an ongoing part of the culture of the organization (Fullan *et al.* 1980: 150). For Schmuck and Runkel (1994: 416) it is when people say, "That's the way we do things around here", or "That's not the way we do things around here". Furthermore, Schmuck and Runkel (1994: 413) point out that it is important to put OD facilitation in the hands of the people who are close to influential members of the school, who have had experience with OD either as participants or as facilitators and who would be present to speak when the topic is raised.

Furthermore, Schmuck and Runkel (1994: 416) suggest that some people should take the role of facilitator and others be participants. To institutionalize OD, the people in the different roles should behave according to the norms agreed upon when expressing approval or disapproval of an action. Schmuck and Runkel state: “OD becomes institutionalized when the norms support it – when the practice of OD itself causes no eyebrows to rise, when special skill in it draws compliments, and when deviations from its norms draw frowns”.

Finally, Schmuck and Runkel (1994: 417) suggest that a method of institutionalizing OD is to include people who can support OD in education when they interact with the community in matters such as conducting meetings and solving problems with Parents Teachers Associations (PTA) and youth groups.

#### **2.4.2.4 Teams**

Why teams? According to French and Bell (1995: 97), “work teams are the building blocks of organizations ... and are part of the foundation of organization development”. French *et al.* (1994: 108) point out that if teams function well, then the organization as a whole will function well as well. Smither *et al.* (1996: 31) support this when they state “in an organization, no individual can effectively function alone ... effective work groups are essential for organizational effectiveness”.

Further, building effective teams requires fundamental group skills such as paraphrasing and describing other’s behaviour, which are not innate, but must be learned and refined through practice (Smither *et al.* 1996: 309). OD provides team development programs and interventions in effective communication, running effective meetings, making collaborative decisions and how to work with conflicts.

Studies done by Katzenback and Smith (as quoted in French and Bell 1995: 99) reveal that a group of individuals will become a team, “when, and only when, they commit to

achieving high-performance goals.” Furthermore, they point out “leaders can foster team performance by building a strong performance ethic, rather than by establishing a team-promoting environment alone”.

Furthermore, Smither *et al.* (1996: 311) warn that not all groups are teams. Teams consist of two or more people who strive to achieve a common goal (Plovnick *et al.*, as cited in Smither *et al.* 1996: 311) and groups interact and influence one another (Shaw, cited in Smither *et al.* 1996: 311).

Research carried out by Roethlisberger, Dickson and Homans (as cited in Smither *et al.* 1996: 39) indicates that work groups play a key role in shaping organizational members’ work attitudes and motivation.

Team learning involves the capacity of team members to suspend personal assumptions and enter into a joined “thinking together” (Senge 1990: 10). This results in teams developing an extraordinary capacity for co-ordinated action. Senge (1990: 4) reminds us that “the team that became great didn’t start off great – it *learned* how to produce extraordinary results.” Hitt (1995: 18) agrees that a synergistic team is one in which the members learn together and manifest a level of collective intelligence greater than the sum of the intelligence of the individual members. Senge (1990: 10) makes it clear that team learning not only produces extraordinary results, but also individuals in the organization grow faster than they could have done otherwise.

#### **2.4.2.5 Organizational culture**

For Schein (1990: 111), culture in a particular organization manifests itself in

- (e) observable artifacts such as the dress code, the manner in which people address each other, the smell and feel of the place;
- (f) values, such as the culture’s espoused and documented values, norms;
- (g) basic underlying assumptions that determine perceptions, thought processes, feelings and behaviours.

Simpson (as cited in Levine 1999) asserts that educational leaders cannot approach change as if the organization has no “history, values, norms, rituals and ceremonies”.

By implication, the success of an OD intervention depends on how well the OD facilitator is able to diagnose, understand and change the culture of the organization.

Before successful intervention can be affected certain questions need to be asked. For instance: how are culture and change related? Every organization has a culture. If one wants to bring about permanent changes in an organization, then the culture must be altered (French and Bell 1995: 5). French and Bell (1995: 30) point out that change becomes permanent only when the culture changes and the new ways are accepted as the “right” ways.

To what extent does the change in the culture of the organization influence the performance of the organization? According to French and Bell (1995: 5), change in culture can exert enormous influence on the performance of the whole organization. Warner Burke (as quoted in French & Bell 1995: 5) asserts, “...organization development is a process of fundamental change in an organization culture.”

What role does the OD facilitator play in dealing with the culture of an organization? Schein (1990: 112) points out that it is important that OD facilitators do not make incorrect inferences from organizational artifacts such as symbols, stories and myths without first examining and understanding the deeper underlying assumptions behind them. This is done through open-ended interviews, intensive observation and through involving motivated members of the group in intensive self-analysis.

#### **2.4.2.6 Lewin’s 3-stage model of change**

For permanent change to take place, Lewin conceptualizes change as a three-stage process. The three stages are: unfreezing the old behaviour (or situation), moving to a new level of behaviour and refreezing the behaviour at the new level (French *et al.* 1994: 107; French & Bell 1995: 81).

#### **2.4.2.6.1 Unfreezing**

For Walker and Vogt (as cited in van der Westhuizen 1996: 144) unfreezing is an acknowledgement by those affected by the change that existing practices in an organization have to be altered. It normally occurs after feedback when people start to reflect. Once unfreezing has occurred, the next step is movement.

#### **2.4.2.6.2 Movement**

According to James and Connolly (2000: 26), this stage involves moving to a new, desired situation. Theron (as cited in Van der Westhuizen 1996: 144) points out that movement involves the development of new norms, values, attitudes and behaviours through changes in structures. For Davis and Newstrom (as cited in Theron 1996: 144) these new ideas are subjected to close scrutiny, developed and then applied in practices. James and Connolly (2000: 26) emphasize that those participating in the change will need support such as resources and time during this stage. As soon as the forces of change have had sufficient impact to bring about the desired changes, the step of refreezing can follow.

According to Kurt Lewin (as cited in French *et al.* 1994: 107; Van der Westhuizen 1996: 143) any existing situation within an organization (school) is a result of driving forces and resisting forces working against each other to a point of equilibrium. To identify the major forces that make up the field of forces, Kurt Lewin developed a technique called force-field analysis.

#### **2.4.2.6.3 Refreezing**

The new change is being stabilized into a new, quasi-equilibrium. This means that new forces are in place to support the new behaviour (French *et al.* 1994: 107; French and Bell 1995: 81). Theron (1996: 151) suggests that people need to be encouraged and

rewarded with positive remarks during the stabilization step to ensure that support for the changes is maintained and to prevent regression to old ways.

According to James and Connolly (2000: 26), Lewin's model has a shape and a natural logic in it, but has limitations: for example, it focuses thinking about change onto consideration of a time limited episode of one-dimensional change with no consideration of the multiple change effect of organizational change; i.e. there is no consideration that change in one part will have a knock-on effect in other parts.

For March and Olsen (as cited in Styhre, cited in James and Connolly 2002: 26) the model assumes a linear conception which to them is implausible because in the organizational change processes the three stages may appear at the same time or the refreezing activities may not be implemented prior to any unfreezing. Furthermore, James and Connolly argue that the fact that one cannot foresee what will happen once the process has been started, could create further problems in setting boundaries around the triggered change.

Kanter *et al.* (as cited in James and Connolly 2000: 26) argue that Lewin's re-freezing state would create another static and fixed state that is not desirable in a modern institution with a rapidly changing environment and where there is continual pressure to improve.

Styhre (as cited in 2002: 345) agrees with Kanter *et al.* and points out that the Lewinian model does not recognize that the organization's external environment at the time of "re-freezing" is not necessarily the same as at the time of its "unfreezing". For him, the model assumes a static context.

#### **2.4.2.7 Action research**

Kurt Lewin, recognized by many authors (Peters and Robinson 1984: 144; McNiff 1988: 22; French and Bell 1995: 137) as the founding father of action research, proposed action

research as a methodology in behavioural science. Lewin believed that research on action programs was imperative if progress was to be made in solving social problems (French and Bell 1995: 137). French and Bell (1995: 140) also note that action research is research conducted on action with the objective of making that action more effective while at the same time building a body of scientific knowledge.

According to Zuber-Skerritt (as cited in Cohen *et al.* 2000: 227), the aims of action research are to bring about practical improvement, innovation, change or improvement of social practice. It facilitates practitioners' understanding of their practice and can help them improve the quality of life in their own social context.

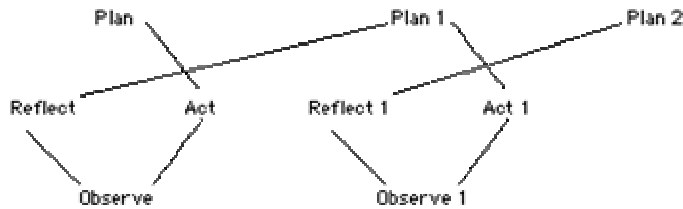
French and Bell (1995: 137) assert that action research is one of the cornerstones of organization development. It is often described as the planned change model (French and Bell 1995: 140; Smither *et al.* 1996: 187).

French and Bell (1995: 151) set out the relationship between OD and action research as follows:

The natures of organization development and action research are very similar. They are both variants of applied behavioral science; they are both action oriented; they are both data based; they both call for close collaboration between insider and outsider; and they are both problem-solving social interventions. This is why we believe a sound organization development program rests on an action research model.

French (as cited in French and Bell 1995: 138) asserts that action research can be used as a generic process in OD. The process is interactive and consists of cyclical steps. Each spiral is composed of a cycle of planning, action, observation and reflection (Lewin, as cited in McNiff 1988: 22).

The diagram below illustrates the four main phases of action research. A detailed explanation of each step is given in the methodology chapter.



**Figure 1:**

A diagrammatic representation of connected cycles of experiential learning producing the phenomenon of action researching. [Source: Roberts (2003: n.p.)]

### 2.4.3 OD interventions

According to (French *et al.* 1994: 175; French and Bell 1995: 156) the term “OD interventions” refers to “the planned activities clients and consultants participate in during the course of an organization development program” with the purpose of improving the organization’s functioning.

Schmuck and Runkel (1995: 28) distinguish four designs for OD and each one calls for different interventions from the OD facilitator. The reason for this according to French and Bell (1995: 156), is that organizations consist of different problems and each intervention should take into consideration the desired goals and outcome.

#### 2.4.3.1 Training

According to Schmuck and Runkel (1994: 28) this is the type of OD design most often carried out within organizations. They point out that the facilitator is expected to determine the learning outcomes for a particular period of time and organize and direct the activities. The facilitator should have certain skills, e.g. exercises and procedures that can be applied when he/she is engaged in training participants.

Weber and Weber (2001: 292) contend that with the introduction of a change effort participants tend to fear the unknown and demonstrate limited support for management



and the proposed change effort. Hence to improve participants' trust in management, perceptions of supervisory support for improvement and of organizational readiness for change, participants should be trained and have experience of how the change initiated will affect them.

#### **2.4.3.2 Survey-data-feedback**

According to Schmuck and Runkel (1994: 29) the success of this intervention is determined by how well the OD facilitator

- collects data and feeds the data back in a form that is understandable and energizes participants;
- gives significance to mundane data in order to capture participants' interests;
- finds ways to incorporate data feedback into the natural ebb and flow of the larger OD design.

Schmuck and Runkel describe a successful example of the survey-data-feedback design (1994: 387-396), but they warn that survey-data-feedback will only bear fruit when the participants go through the steps of problem solving after gathering feedback. That is, agreeing on a problem, generating alternative paths, listing helping and hindering forces, agreeing on the forces to be attacked first and on the best options to use and, finally, assigning people to the various actions agreed upon and scheduling meetings to review progress.

An overview done by Friedlander and Brown (as cited in Fullan *et al.* 1980: 152) reveals that survey-data-feedback by itself does not necessarily lead to change. Collaborative involvement of participants and facilitators with a focus on specific action steps is necessary. Fullan *et al.* (1980: 125) agree that although survey-data-feedback can lead to a positive impact, this depends on operating characteristics such as careful problem-solving efforts and support.

#### **2.4.3.3 Constructive confrontation**

Schmuck and Runkel (1994: 29) argue that the social relationships between two or more work groups can often be clarified by a constructive confrontation. They further point out that this strategy also sharpens and clarifies problems that are causing conflict between groups and helps them to communicate clearly the perceptions that each has of the other.

Schmuck & Runkel further assert that the facilitator's role is to help organize role-clarifying discussions, to provide training in communication skills so that the parties in conflict can uncover disagreements and arrange to work collaboratively on important problems.

#### **2.4.3.4 Process observation and feedback**

For Schmuck and Runkel (1994: 30) the purpose of this design is to help group members become more aware of how they are working together. Schmuck and Runkel suggest that the practitioner should sit with the group during its work sessions, observe the ongoing group processes and offer occasional comments and questions to turn the participants attention onto their way of working and how it affects getting the job done. The goal is to involve participants in talking about their working relationships and to agree, as a group, to change their ways of working together in the future.

#### **2.4.4 Criticisms of OD**

As well as those critics of OD referred to earlier in section 2.4.2.6.3, there are others who are described below.

A number of authors (Senior; Coram and Burnes; Burnes; Burnes and Salauroo; McConkie, as cited in O'Brien 2002: 444) point out that the application of OD in a public sector organization is full of difficulties. According to McConkie (as cited in O'Brien

2002: 444) public sector organizations demonstrate bureaucratic norms and behaviour patterns that would be at odds with the principles of OD.

Further, McConkie points out that there is too much emphasis on accountability and reporting relationships and the existence of multiple interests inside and outside such organizations can make it difficult to get support and approval for OD initiatives and ensure the smooth progress of the initiative.

Another example McConkie gives is that the decision-making power in public sector organizations lies at the top of the structure, whereas OD seeks to engage all the members in the decision making process.

However, Senior (as cited in O'Brien 2002: 444) stresses that changes that have already taken place in much of the public sector may have brought in a new outlook that would make OD more realistic and easier to apply. In spite of the above, Senior points out that OD practitioners have to recognize the need for flexibility in applying OD in these particular change scenarios.

## **2.5 CONCLUSION**

This chapter I have provided an overview of some of the existing literature on this topic – change with the emphasis on OD as a change approach. I have tried to be objective by taking a critical approach to provide as full a picture as possible.

In the next chapter I describe the paradigms and methods that underpin my study including methodological issues.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

*“Research that produces nothing but books will not suffice.”*

(Kurt Lewin 1948, as cited in McKernan 1991)

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, I take a closer look at the critical and interpretive research paradigms to indicate how the assumptions underlying these paradigms inform the philosophy on which my study is based. The assumptions determine the research paradigm and its ontological and epistemological viewpoint of the environment within which the study is conducted. This leads to the description of my method, which is a case study of an Organization Development (OD) intervention. I also explain my data gathering tools, namely semi-structured interviews and observation. Finally, I discuss ethical issues and give a brief description of the limitations of my research and my reflections.

##### **1.1 RESEARCH PARADIGM**

According to Bassey (1995: 12) a research paradigm is described as:

...a network of coherent ideas about the nature of the world and the functions of researchers which, adhered to by a group of researchers, conditions the patterns of their thinking and underpins their research actions.

Janse van Rensburg (2001: 11) suggests that researchers should have an understanding of philosophical frameworks that guide research activity, including the underlying assumptions of these frameworks. This is important because, depending on the researcher's question and goals, data is collected and analyzed according to a specific paradigm which will serve as a “compass-bearing” guide for the researcher through the research process.

Most authors distinguish between three paradigms, but I focus only on the critical and interpretive paradigms that underpin my research.

### **3.2.1 Critical Paradigm**

The assumption about reality, according to the critical paradigm, is that there are multiple realities (Cantrell 1993: 83), which are constructed in the human mind on both a subjective as well as an objective level (Burrell and Morgan, as cited in MacFarlane 2000: n.p.).

Subjectively, individuals should know themselves and their situations so that they can give meaning to their actions (Goodman, as cited in MacFarlane 2000: n.p.). Its objectivity lies in that it cannot simply support the status quo of the situation, but must look towards understanding change and improvement, as well as responding to problems this change brings about (Winegardner 2001:13; Burrell and Morgan, as cited in MacFarlane 2000: n.p.). Furthermore, reality is believed to be influenced by forces, in other words the context of the phenomenon (Fien & Hillcoat, cited in MacFarlane 2000: n.p.), meaning that when one looks at a situation, behavior, experience or perception of a phenomenon, it must not be separated from its context.

Because my research is concerned with raising awareness and change toward a more desirable state as determined by the research participants, it falls within the critical paradigm. Furthermore, this paradigm embraces research that helps to bring about transformation through the research process itself (Janse van Rensburg 2001: 24). Also, the critical paradigm aims to help the people involved in the process “emancipate” themselves from oppressive ways of thinking or dysfunctional conditions. Participants are empowered to make changes to their circumstances. Critical knowledge generated by inquiry can help participants understand their own situation with a view to changing it (Janse van Rensburg 2001: 19). According to Hosch (2002: 1), the outcome of the critical theory process is to improve participants’ conditions rather than for them to accept and cope with their present conditions. Critical theory is a catalyst for change

through discussion, understanding, interpretation and practical reasoning. It is therefore an appropriate approach to organizational understanding and change.

### **3.2.2 Interpretive Paradigm**

According to the interpretive theorists (Janse van Rensburg 2001: 12; Fien and Hillcoat as cited in MacFarlane 2000: n.p.), knowledge is constructed in the minds of people active in the research process and researchers should attempt to understand the “complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it” (Schwandt 1999: 221). Hence, their actions should be based on those understandings.

According to MacFarlane (2000: n.p.) the interpretive paradigm seeks to understand the world in terms of the experiences of the people involved in the change situation. This is achieved when the researcher becomes part of, and moves closer to, the people in the situation in order to listen to and share in their experiences and perceptions. This implies that the researcher has to spend a longer time in the specific context in order to understand it.

However, Goodman (as cited in MacFarlane 2000: n.p) stresses that social reality is not only made up of experiences and perceptions, but is also influenced by underlying structures and the effect social relationships have on individual perceptions. Therefore, structures and social relationships should also be considered even when the individual concerned might be unaware of them.

While this study is concerned with change, my interest was to listen, to share and to understand how the participants experienced and perceived the process and outcome of an OD intervention in their school. To have a deeper understanding of my participants situation, I have been involved in their daily activities throughout the research process as a co-participant on the one hand and a facilitator of the process on the other. I attended all their meetings; participated in extra-mural activities; presented workshops and feedback from those workshops; evaluated workshops and processed and conducted

interviews.

All the above locate my study in the interpretive paradigm.

### **3.3 METHOD**

My method is a case study of an OD or action research intervention.

#### **5.3.1 Case Study**

For Yin (as cited in Winegardner 2002: 4) a case study is an investigation into a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, in my case, an action research intervention within a school. Action research normally occurs within the real-life bounded context. Stake (as cited in Winegardner 2001: 10) asserts that the knowledge in a case study is context-specific and within the reader's own interpretation and experience. The reader generalizes the "new" knowledge in terms of what she/he already knows. For Merriam (as cited in Winegardner 2001: 14) a case study is particularistic, meaning that it focuses on a particular situation or event and evaluates programs and interventions.

A case study is a form of qualitative research. Qualitative researchers use an interpretative, naturalistic approach (Denzin and Lincoln, as cited in Winegardner 2001: 1). Qualitative research develops knowledge through intensive study of the case by means of language (Gall *et al.*, as cited in Winegardner 2001: 1). Therefore, the end product is richly descriptive, expressed in words and pictures rather than statistics (Winegardner 2001: 2). Patton (as cited in Winegardner 2001: 2) asserts that qualitative research shows interest in understanding how people make meaning of their world and their experiences in the world. Qualitative research strives for a deeper understanding as an end in itself, not to predict or to generalize to a universe.

Although I do not claim to generalize from my study, according to Stake (1994: 243), "the methods for casework actually used are to describe the case in sufficient descriptive

narrative so that readers can vicariously experience these happenings, and draw their own conclusions". Stake and Trumbull (1982: 1) refer to this as "naturalistic generalization". The reader experiences some things with empathy, thus associating them with his or her own situation and experience.

A limitation of a single case study according to Guba and Lincoln (as cited in Winegardner 2001: 10) is that it can "oversimplify or exaggerate a situation, leading the reader to distorted or erroneous conclusions about the actual state of affairs as distinct from the report itself". I counter this by using interviews and journal entries as data gathering tools.

For the purposes of this case study, I feel it is important to present the participants' personal experience of the OD intervention and their perceptions of its outcome.

### **3.3.2 Action Research**

Action research is "an intervention in practice to bring about improvement" (Lomax 1994: 156). Action research facilitates practitioners' understanding of their practice and can help them improve the quality of life in their social context (Zuber-Skerritt as cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2000: 227). According to Lomax (1994: 157), while action research typically involves a series of cycles, it "may represent a single cycle in a series of cycles that make up a grand design". Because of time constraints, I completed a single cycle only.

Action research is described as a planned change model and is a generic process in OD (French and Bell 1995: 140). According to French and Bell (1995: 151) "a sound organization development program rests on an action research model". The action research process is interactive and cyclical as in OD (French and Bell 1995: 138). OD typically involves members of the organization participating actively in all phases of the process from the initial design of the project, through data gathering and analysis to final conclusions and actions (Whyte 1995: 289-290). I adopted this participatory approach in



that all members of the school staff participated in the process.

*Feedback* [my emphasis] within and between each cycle is an important element of the process that facilitates reflection. Feedback is part of the good management of action research. It is important to let others know any results as soon as possible after the event. McNiff (1988: 70) sees feedback as a corrective device or an element that can give new direction to the project. It is through feedback that participants feel that their opinions are catered for and valued.

The phases in any OD intervention are similar to those of action research. Frohman, Saskin, and Kavanagh (as cited in Smither *et al.* 1996: 187) identified eight action research phases. I apply these to my OD process.

#### **a. Scouting**

The first phase in the OD process involves a general reconnaissance of the organization by the facilitator and an orientation to OD, its values and assumptions and how it works. I conducted an OD introductory workshop to give the participants, through experiential learning, a clear understanding of what OD is, how it works and what potential benefits it can offer the school. The purpose of the workshop was to raise the readiness level of the participants.

#### **b. Entry**

Ideally, a key person, or a group or an organization initiates the contact, but due to the nature of the circumstances – because I wanted to conduct an OD research in a school of my choice -- I initiated the contact. I approached the principal, then the management of the school and finally, all the staff members – a total of 23 teachers.

Once the school had given the go-ahead for an intervention, we discussed and recorded our mutual expectations and commitment in a memorandum of agreement that was signed by the participants and me (Appendix E).

A flaw in the agreement was the timeline. As this was my first OD program and the research being an action research, I could not anticipate the time-length of the research process. After we had concluded the agreement, I invited participants to work collaboratively with me on the steering committee so that they could develop the capacity and skills to conduct their own future OD processes. Three members volunteered.

### **c. Data collection**

At the start of the intervention, I conducted a survey in order to orient myself with the organization and to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the organization. Members of the steering committee drew up the questionnaires and also did the analyses. The questionnaires asked for views regarding how meetings were run, how decisions were taken, the communication among individuals and groups, the feedback process, individual and group relationships and how much influence a person has on organizational matters (see examples of questionnaire with results – Appendix F).

### **d. Data feedback**

After analyzing the data, I gave it back to the participants in a raw form because I wanted them to interpret the data themselves. Schmuck and Runkel suggest this method (1994: 365) on the grounds that the principle of the data feedback strategy is not to “tell or interpret for participants what you can get them to tell or interpret for themselves”. They suggest that participants should rather be encouraged to examine and interpret the data themselves by asking questions such as “Why?” and “What theory do you have to explain this?” or “What evidence can you present to back up that assertion?”

### **e. Diagnosis**

The participants interpreted the meaning of the data to identify problems and opportunities for change. This shared understanding helped to focus and coordinate

subsequent diagnostic and action planning activities. The emerging issues were prioritized in order of importance, namely: poor communication and lack of communication skills; lack of teamwork and collaboration; lack of transparency, openness, trust and motivation and finally decisions being dominated by management.

#### **f. Action planning**

Once key problems and opportunities were identified and prioritized, the participants and I developed specific strategies for change, of which the first served the purposes of this study. Communication was chosen for the initial planned change intervention.

#### **g. Action implementation**

The first step was to conduct a communication workshop for all 23 members. Six months passed before I conducted a successful workshop. (See respondents' comments on the success in sections 4.3.4 and 4.3.5). Respondents' data in section 4.2.8 will shed more light on why the workshop was delayed.

The participants were so impressed with the workshop that they requested that I conduct a second workshop on a similar topic for the members present and for the five members who could not attend the first workshop due to other commitments.

At the end of the workshop, the participants decided on an implementation strategy. For the strategic elements of the process, the participants agreed that a book should be circulated in which they would record issues on communication. They also decided that problem-solving meetings should be held at least once a month.

Prior to the first meeting the steering committee formulated the issues listed in the book into themes. Finance was identified as first on the priority list. Four communication-problem-solving meetings were held. Participants gave suggestions for the solutions to problems or suggested new action steps to solve them. Minutes of the first meeting are

attached as Appendix L.

The next meeting has been scheduled early next year (2004) on the first day when the school reopens for teachers.

## **h. Evaluation**

For the overall evaluation of the intervention, I conducted a four-member voluntary focus interview. The data collected was used for future planning (sections 4.2.8 and 4.3.2) and action planning (sections 4.2.6 and 4.3.6, last paragraphs). The findings helped to reframe problems and provided important insights that could guide future change efforts.

## **3.4 DATA GATHERING**

At key transition points, such as the introductory OD workshop, the shared agreement and the survey-data-feedback, as well as at the end of the intervention, I interviewed the principal, two heads of department and one teacher. I selected the principal because of his position as a “gatekeeper” (Weisbord 1987: 89; 91). My choice of the heads of department and the teacher were also purposeful, based upon their critical and thoughtful views and on account of their active participation during the OD process. As mentioned in the previous section, I also conducted a focus interview.

I used semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions (Appendix G). This allows for a more flexible style “adapted to the personality and circumstances of the person being interviewed” (Johnson 1994: 45). I tape-recorded the interviews with the participants’ consent. I wanted to know how the participants experienced the OD process, what specifically struck them and, at the end, their views on the potential for OD to assist with their school’s development. This I did by identifying a number of themes (see chapter 4).

I also gathered data by using a journal and informal observation when the staff interacted.

I gave copies of the interview transcripts to the interviewees to read and to make any corrections or additions, before they were analysed (McNiff *et al.* 1996: 35). All but one edited the language mistakes.

### **3.5 DATA ANALYSIS**

I analyzed the data (interviews, journal entries and observation) using interpretational analysis, which is “a process of close examination of case study data in order to find constructs, themes, and patterns” that address my research goal (Gall, as cited in Winegardner 2001: 5). To find the themes and patterns in my interview data, I read and re-read the data to develop my own themes. The themes tended to cluster around two main issues, namely elements of tension, hope and disappointment and elements of change. Through observation, I identified such things as the participants’ attitudes, emotions, roles, time and climate.

### **3.6 ETHICAL ISSUES**

The research was conducted in a school I know well. Before I embarked on my research, I negotiated access in writing from the regional education office (letter to inspector - A and letter from inspector - Appendix B) and also from the institution of my choice for permission to conduct my research (Appendix C). After being given the go-ahead, I obtained the participants’ informed consent to participate in the research through the memorandum of agreement as well as a written undertaking of confidentiality of information from both parties. I used pseudonyms when referring to the school (*Shetu Shaamu* Secondary School) or to the interviewees (Mrs. Ndikuhole, Mrs. Xam-xams, Mrs. Musuverua, Tim, Kim, Sim, Jim and Mr. P).

### **3.7 VALIDITY**

The possibility of preconceptions being given preference over research findings was reduced, by using a participatory inductive approach (Smither *et al.* 1996: 197). In addition, the feedback that the steering committee gave to the participants after each

action was a form of member checking (Winegardner 2001: 6).

### **5.3 LIMITATIONS**

My research was limited by one main factor namely, time. The time constraints of completing a half-thesis prevented me from interviewing steering committee members and management. A more detailed description of this factor can be found in section 6.3.

### **5.4 CRITICAL REFLECTION ON MY RESEARCH**

Reflection implies growth. The greatest challenge was my role as a facilitator as set out by Babbie and Mouton (2000: 318-319), namely to:

- establish a relationship of trust in aspects such as collaborative and participative involvement of the participants.
- fulfill a supportive role by being an active partaker in and, at times, the initiator of dialogue, e.g. during problem-solving sessions.
- be intellectually flexible and open to change, e.g. when the participants requested that I repeat the communications workshop, I had to accord with them because this was an indication that they realized that changes would only be possible if everyone in the organization was at the same level.
- develop a consciousness of working within a framework of certain values of the participants.

Final reflections can be found in chapter 6, section 4.

### **3.10 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, I have briefly discussed the ontology and epistemology of the critical and interpretive paradigms, which underpin my research. This led to the description of my research method – a case study of an OD intervention, its purpose and also the phases of the OD. I explained the plan of action used during the research and ethical issues involved in using action research as applicable to my study. Limitations and critical

reflections on my research conclude the chapter. In the following chapter, I present my analysis of the data.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **DATA PRESENTATION**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the data obtained from my individual interviews, focus interview, observation and journal notes. For the individual interview, I interviewed the principal, two heads of department and one teacher. For the focus interview it was a four-member group (Tim, Jim, Kim and Sim). The name of the school and the respondents' names used in this research are all pseudonyms.

I identified a number of themes and in this section I present these themes both in terms my research question and my research goals, being the respondents experience and perceptions of the OD process and the outcome of the intervention.

These themes tend to cluster around two main issues. The first set covers issues that trigger tension, hope and disappointment. The second set of issues covers the change and development brought about through the OD intervention exercises.

I present the data mainly in the respondents' words, but in some places I summarize the data to give clarity to the reader. In other places I take out extraneous words that clutter the quotes.

#### **4.2 ELEMENTS OF TENSION, HOPE AND DISAPPOINTMENT**

##### **4.2.1 High hopes for change**

One respondent, Mrs. Ndikuhole, revealed that with the OD introductory workshop, she had high hopes that OD would bring visible changes regarding openness between management and staff members.



Well to tell you the truth, when you introduce this OD process, I was having high hopes because as you know our school has a problem of openness. There is a break down of communication between the management and the staff – so transparency is the word I was looking for. I was hoping that now if we become transparent everything will be discussed openly and eventually develop mutual trust among (each other) the members of the staff.

We were having high hopes, especially I, myself. I thought: ‘these people, if they really can understand what is happening, what is wanted.’ This [is] why I said, ‘People this is not only for her (Mrs. Neshila) to write her paper or to write her research - is also to implement and to bring about a change. This is an action research change must be visible.’

Her assumption was based on the theoretical values of OD, such as personal growth, collaboration, interdependence and teamwork, but later in the OD process, she explained that she was disillusioned.

I think I haven’t seen much change in the direction of transparency because my hopes have been dashed to the ground, because I can see no change. The headmaster is still operating at the same level. The HOD’s are also. Let me say there is one who wants to come out with transparency, but the rest are still pulling into the style of, ‘We are in charge you do as you are told you don’t question our authority’, or what is that they are still in that old approach of ‘We decide there on top without consultation and come and tell these people and they have to do what we tell them because we are running the school’.

#### **4.2.2 Openness and transparency**

Data collected from the survey-data-feedback (SDF) exercise, prior to the intervention, revealed that there was a lack of transparency and openness in the school: “Management is still holding the key to communication. Transparency is their main problem” (Mrs. Ndikuhole).

Mrs. Musuverua has a similar perception: “One which was mostly looked at was lack of transparency, communication gap.” This to Mrs. Ndikuhole, led to a climate of tension “that is causing conflict, mistrust and animosity among staff members.”

After the intervention was underway, especially after the communication workshop, radical changes became apparent, especially from one head of department (HOD). According to Mrs. Ndikuhole:

This HOD is not happy with the way things are run by the management. And since she is not happy, she wants to come out with transparency, so they are excluding her from the decisions. So if she is not around maybe she is sick or she is on a course or wherever, then they take these major decisions and when she comes, then she doesn't know anything about it.

This HOD is so unhappy with the leadership that she has been alienated from the management team. In Mrs. Ndikuhole's voice:

I can see that she is trying to pull herself out because she said that she wants to be a class teacher only. So, she has delegated her management task also to other teachers so that she is alienated from another management team because she is for change, but the rest are not for it. That is why she is trying to sort herself out from the group and stay in the classroom.

An example given by Mrs. Ndikuhole regarding transparency of this HOD was when she came up with an idea of creating a funeral fund for the learners. "She didn't just force her idea on people, she came open with the plan while she was explaining the need to help, the need to show a caring attitude towards the bereaved".

Mrs. Musuverua's feelings about the apparent changes in openness were that although OD created 100% opportunities for people to open up, participants were still not ready to discuss issues in detail for fear of conflict. "People know that things at our school are taken personal". She recalled an example:

There is a book being circulated where we have to write the shortcomings and the problems that we see contradicting with OD principles. We started with a financial report. I think somebody was up in arms defending the person that is preparing the financial report, but at the end of the day we suggested that we want to see the books audited like at other schools. We want to see the break down of all the finances that comes in

the school and how they are spend. So instead of solving the problem, the general feeling that I got was that the headmaster was sort of trying to make the matter his while the person herself that is dealing with the matter was there as if he was shielding her from being attack.

This she attributed to management:

For sure that is the management that is closing the door... In our case, **it** is management who are blocking all the channels that might be helpful to open up, to make OD process a success at our school.

However, she admits: “It is for sure not all the management”.

#### **4.2.3 Readiness**

Although the participants agreed to participate in the OD intervention, interview data reveals that people are still taking things personally and not acting in the interest of the school. This causes some participants to withdraw during discussions for fear of hurting others’ feelings. Mrs. Musuverua described the situation:

When we came to dealing with those problems why did it happened like that, why did it happened like that, some started to withdraw saying nothing as not to hurt somebody. ...Things are taken personal. They know in their conscious, that if I call it by name then I will get opposition, to be called in perhaps by element A and told: ‘Why did you say this, you are busy with me?’

According to her, some of the participants felt that some things should rather be left alone:

Participants believe that once things have been said its okay, things are run smoothly, but in the mean time underneath it causes more damage since it is there, it is there it cannot be ignored.

For Mrs. Xam-xams, readiness was a personal thing:

As long as you are willing to change you can also be part of the new generation. Sometimes I really got the impression that we only take part

in the change process to please you.

In a soft note she continued:

But that is one thing that we have to accept in an organization that people will never be 100% supportive, there will be always some people who will not co-operate.

#### **4.2.4 Trust**

At the start of the intervention, data collected from the survey-data-feedback exercise indicated that there was a lack of trust among staff members themselves as well as between staff members and members of the management. This was reflected in what they value, as quoted in section 4.2.2. In Mrs. Ndikuhole's view:

Where there is no open communication then trust is lacking. Where trust is lacking there is no happiness. So I think they are having the key, because people do not trust one another.

Hence she felt:

If you do not tell me what is happening at the school, how am I supposed to know what is going on? Now, when you come and tell me something else while I don't know the full picture, I will never change and I will never want to change, because I'll be suspicious all the time.

She continued:

So people have a tendency of withdrawing. Maybe somebody would say I am attacking her; she is my friend [but] she might think I am attacking her. Even [if] she is not my friend I don't want to get in her bad books or whatever. The fear still exists because of this thing has going on for too long, that thing of favouritism, factions and whatever, so it is not easy.

However, data from Mrs. Xam-xams after the communication workshop revealed that management in some cases do trust the staff, but some of the staff members use that confidence entrusted in them to get back at the management when they are not on good

terms.

A person who demands to take the cheque made out in writing. ... 'Don't you trust us? Make it a cash cheque; maybe you see one thing at this shop and another thing at the other shop'. Afterwards you see, she like to make a very bad concern before the people and afterwards she came to your office and looking for excuses, 'Oh, I didn't mean on you'. You know - that childish manners.

#### **4.2.5 Implementation**

One respondent expressed her experience regarding the implementation of the changes.

She felt that when the staff wanted to change, but management did not want to change, then changes were not possible.

The problem is, you can discuss it, you can have several discussion about it, but the implementation of it will never, never [be] realized, will never happen, because you are not the top structure.

Furthermore, she stated that:

If you get a management which says 'No, no I don't have time,' etc, then you create more frustration because the staff want to change, but some of the management don't want to change. So you can never solve that problem because the other one are not willing to listen or even when he is willing to listen, he decided from the start, 'I am going to listen, but I will never get any change done. This is my way I am going to do it.'

She gave an example where a member made a suggestion about working on solving one issue until it was solved completely, even if it should take a year. The response from the top structure was:

No, you don't know how difficult it is to be in my chair, it is easy for you to bring ideas and opinions because you are outside, but the moment you are in my chair you will realized that that idea of changes is unacceptable or it is irrelevant it will not work.

#### 4.2.6 Power distance

Mrs. Ndikuhole described the power struggle in the school in general:

The problem is management, because as we know, most schools are run by old headmasters, so if [a] new teacher comes and knows OD and this class of things, or other young teachers are learning these skills like yourself, and you want to introduce these, then they think, 'Oh, is this for us? It is for her own paper to get her certificate.' So the older generation that are running the schools are [a] problem because they are sitting on their waste. They don't want to change their style of running the schools.

She further argues,

Why do people try to run the school like their own households? This is not their house this is a school. A school is an organization that belongs to many people and you can not run it from your point of view you have to accommodate other people that are working with you, in order to make them happy.

An example from my journal entry supported this view:

*The principal announced that the learners will go to their register classes the first period. Teacher N interrupted that she has a test during that period and wants her subjects learners. The principal, in an irritated voice, said that he was not through with what he wants to say, she must not interrupt him. Teacher N was very unhappy because the principal's decision was final.*

*Mrs. L was informed to look after Mr. S's class. She was not asked just instructed. Immediately her face expression changed. She frowned and looked straight in front of her without a word.*

However, according to Jim and Tim's views the power issue was not only at management level but on a staff level as well:

I think the staff thinks that you are only doing it for your qualifications and that is the end of the OD program. (Jim)

I think you should clearly spell out to the staff that it is not for your study only; your study is only a small part. The main thing is to improve the

school. (Tim)

Hence Tim felt that:

We should spell it out and tell the people what we actually are aiming for, what we can gain. I think people will respond more positively if they know we are working towards a specific goal, because I think they lost it along the way, they need to be motivated again, showing them what we can gain.

#### **4.2.7 Age**

From the interview data it was clear that the age of the principal and some management members also played an important role in the implementation of change.

Mrs. Ndikuhole's view of management was that management felt that they have been running the school according to their old style and it worked very well, and that they were not going to change, "So, basta".

Therefore Mrs. Ndikuhole's following comment referred to the age:

So the older people that are running school currently they don't know anything about OD principles. What is required from them in order to get their staff function efficiently, and their staff having job satisfaction, their staff having stimulating environment, all these they don't care.

Mrs. Musuveruas's perceptions:

Who doesn't want the school to progress, to move away from the negative to the positive? Everybody wants it. It is just a matter of difference in human beings and the age also we are in. If I am an old person I know I will retire soon, why should I open everything, let me close it soon in [a] short period of time, I will be out and they can face each other with those conflict. So for young ones, middle age people, they know they still have a long way to go in that system and they don't want to carry on like that they want to change, but the older ones feel like: 'Please, let it hang on for one more year already because I will be out, I will be out, I don't want to

be involved now', and this is where this story is coming.

Mrs. Xam-xams noted:

If the management of that organization is another class age group, it is very difficult to change the organization. So, I say, it also depends what the person's age is, definitely the age. If a person knows that he will retire one of these days, is not in a mood for new things.

#### **4.2.8 Action planning**

Six months passed by without action after the feedback of data from the survey-data-feedback and before the macro-design. The time issue was a point, which the focus interview members strongly felt needed to be looked at. Some of their views were:

It was not good/ it was too long - once you have identified what your problems are then you should start making plans to improve/work on and once six months has past obviously some of us are aging now it is not working out we forget. (Kim)

The reasons for the delay, according to the focus interview members, were:

Seeing that it was the first trimester we were involved in other programs, the extra mural activities involvement of the teachers - that was the real problem. (Tim)

Yes, everybody was really busy with extra mural activities. We never make time for OD - and if we were calling a meeting people had excuses which were given. You can recall when you want to run a OD meeting than people respond that, 'this afternoon we are having sports/soccer/netball', or what have you. So as a result we couldn't come together. (Jim)

I think the problem was that people from the management was not so serious. They did not think that it was something for school/ something that could brought improvement in the school, they thought it is something for your paper. (Sim)

But Tim felt that management was not the only one to be blamed:



I would say it is not only the management because at first I was also very guilty. I was busy with activities in the beginning of this whole OD, and I notice some teachers didn't know that they could actually also gain from this, so later gradually teachers start to co-operate. If that could have been spelt out at the beginning, this is what we can work towards, this is our goal, this is our main aim then I think they could have cooperated more positively and come to the meetings, because there were people who didn't attend it at all. (Tim)

However, a two word simultaneous response from the other focus interview members proved that goals and aims of the OD were clearly spelt out from the beginning: "It was!!!"

Another time issue emerged after the communication workshop and before the problem solving stage (section 3.3.2, no. 7). After the first problem solving session one and half month passed by without feedback to the participants. Tim and Kim (two of the focus interviewees) responded by blaming me, the facilitator:

You were not that forceful; you were not assertive to push. (Tim)

I fully put the blame on you the facilitator you are not persisted. We had that meeting/that workshop we tackled the finances and obviously that is a burning topic. Maybe because of the trend, the meeting took scared you off. Knowing you, one also knows what to expect from you when things are going this way. But what I can advise you [is] to focus on OD. OD, as you know, wants to help to eradicate that type of progress and one has to open up the wound to heal. I think that is where you got scared. (Kim)

My response to Kim was as follows:

I think the problem, which I did, was I went back to the key person, and then asked him when we could have the feedback on a full financial report as the participants requested it. Then the key person informed me that the teacher who works with the finance was absent due to illness within her family, but as soon as she is back he would inform her. I then went back to the key person again to remind him that the staff was still waiting to continue with the other issues. Then he said that how can we continue with other issues if the other one is pending? He then informed me that the report was ready, it was presented to management, and we must just wait until she returns from study leave. Now, the problem I did was keeping you in the darkness with out giving you feedback on the new

development.

Some of the focus interviewees' responses were:

What Mrs. Neshila should have done is not just to go to the key person in this institution but to the whole management because that is the brain that can open up that gate. (Tim)

If I may come in again, if a school system from the side of management is clean and most of the things going wrong are boiling down to teachers, then I think the management would be keen in assisting OD to be functional. But if it is visa versa, then for sure it wouldn't work. Then the facilitator has again to take it up with the management in that case and then remind them how much they have to gain as a school not as an individual and try and turn the table around. (Kim)

Kim's advice was:

I would also advise you that, you see we were in the darkness, the four of us who are sitting here now we know why things stopped. If you have the second session in plan and you went back to the key person and you were given an answer, which did not allow you to proceed, I think we deserve to get the feedback to know you are still in the process of getting the second session in line. You should always inform us and then we can direct you as a staff.

According to Mrs. Xam-xams, the participants were not really willing/ready to spend the whole day on the OD program. She felt that sometimes she got the impression that the staff members did it just to please me, the researcher. The staff members, to her, were forced, indirectly. She gave the example of the communication workshop. The communication workshop was scheduled on a day when 99% of the staff members would be present. It was scheduled on the first day of a new trimester (teachers only). She felt that the teachers were not at the workshop because they were not ready to sacrifice their time, but because they had to be there, or else complete leave forms. For her a more suitable time would have been at the end of the trimester when all the staff members were fully aware of all the problems that had occurred during the trimester. In her own words:

“Really, the people according to my opinion were not willing to spend the whole day on this program.”

Jim’s (one of the focus interviewees) perceptions were

We must also bear in mind that when it was announced that we are going to hold an OD meeting on such a day, then people were coming up with their excuses. Then we accept the excuses and postponed also the OD program. You know what happened last time, seeing that Friday is not a good time they are going to pick up their children and all of that those things they involved in are also hampering the process.

### **4.3 ELEMENTS OF CHANGE**

#### **4.3.1 Empowerment**

Data collected from SDF at the initiation of the OD showed that people tended to withdraw when it came to confrontation issues during meetings, in order to avoid conflict.

With the OD process, Mrs. Musuverua noticed changes in some of her colleagues who usually did not take part in discussions:

It struck me, in recent days, honestly speaking, that I was shocked to hear and see those colleagues of ours who we considered usually don’t speak out saying: ‘But this is not a case I did this and I also did this’. I said to myself, ‘Good, good.’ Usually they will just pretend as if they are not there, but they really went full force and either one said: ‘It look as if only some people are doing, but we are also.’ I said to myself: ‘Good, let their voice be heard.’ And that is one thing I give credit OD for, because they did not know they have the right to speak. Perhaps it was the system we used in the past. OD said: all of us are part of that school or organization. A part cannot be put aside while the other part is continuing.

If the people feel that they belong to an organization. If it is not so and so’s school, if it becomes our school, then we will become more positive, creative and innovative because we would feel that we make up the organization.

The participants felt that they were powerless, as can be noted from Mrs. Ndikuhole's comment:

People have to see that they are playing a major role in the effective functioning of the organization, otherwise if you have people that are suppressed or forced ... while suppressing their feelings, then people will be dissatisfied they won't have job satisfaction and won't feel valued.

#### **4.3.2 Institutionalizing OD at national level**

For most respondents, OD was more than just another change approach. Thus, they felt that OD should be made part of the Namibian education system, and they proposed the following:

Usually, when you bring in programs that you bring in a sort of mechanism to solve that problem whether it is an individual, group or whether it is a system you bring in to change. Once it is done [it] is done, once the problem is solved, it is over, then you continue normally, but OD is an ongoing process where once you have tackled a specific issue [and] another one comes up, you still continue, so you can apply it throughout. That is actually a very good thing. ...These are really exceptional things I do value the most about OD. (Mrs. Musuverua)

The first thing now is, after you finish with your M.Ed. you must go and make an appointment with the Minister of Basic Education and you must approach him about your course - what did you pick up and learn and you are an expert now in this OD approach and he must offer you a job, so that you can start implementing this whole OD approach in the education. So maybe by inviting all the education officers of the different regions, give them a workshop the same that you gave us here in our organization. After you visit them in their respective different regions, start selecting facilitators, give them training, motivate them go back and visit them six months afterwards...but only after the policy makers are aware of that, they must first be made aware on top then the go ahead will come from the top. (Mrs. Xam-xams)

To strengthen my proposal Mrs. Musuverua suggested that *Shetu Shaamu* Secondary School and I should write reports to their regional office describing the climate before and after the intervention. Furthermore, Mrs. Musuverua emphasised the policymakers' role:

First the policy makers must know there is an approach that can be used to the benefit of all the Namibian schools. Only after the policy makers are aware of OD, then the go ahead will come from the top.

You get started at our school and write down everything how it started, the aim and the outcome. Our school will also write a report on the situation before the OD intervention, how things were, how long before the OD we tried to solve issues, but without success. But when OD came, change started to become visible and then the outcome. Both reports should be sent to the Regional Director.

The Regional Director can take it up and then they can say in that region we also have schools with enormous problems. Let's see what these people are saying is the truth then all the OD conveners of these schools can be used to guide other schools in the region and see what the outcome is. I said in my previous explanation that since OD involves all the stakeholders that is precisely what our education system is about that is what they about and it fits 100% like in cloth and head, it fits and I don't think if they know that school has benefited that they will refuse.

She further suggested that, because the parents' and learners' voices are heard easily, according to her knowledge, parents should be involved as well.

However, Mrs. Musuverua was concerned about the challenge she foresaw for OD in Namibia:

How would you convince key holders who are about to retire and who doesn't believe in changes, about new approaches? For example, our neighbouring schools where both are aged and the schools do not have their rightful place in the community it is referred to as always 'those schools,' ours included.

#### **4.3.3 Survey-data-feedback**

Mr. P felt that the questionnaires which were completed by most of the participants helped to identify shortcomings and problems such as: decisions being dominated by management; lack of teamwork; lack of openness in interpersonal relationships; the agendas of meetings not being circulated well in advance and decisions not being implemented as agreed.

He felt that not only problems and shortcomings were identified, but also that the strengths on which the school could improve, such as relationships among members and how meetings were run, were identified.

Some views from the evaluation forms collected directly after the SDF feedback from three participants were as follows:

I felt at first as if members of the staff are not interested. They have mixed feelings; even some didn't say a word. I felt that it was the time for them to say where they need help, but still I felt the presence of *fear* in the presence of the principal. We still need more time with just the idea of that there *is* help.

It was good, nearly finding out what type of person you are as well as your attitude at school with your colleagues. The feedback guide us how to do our work in future, how we can approach our problems.

The feedback showed that there are problems and concerns. OD is a positive program, which might help us in a positive way. Some pending points will be discussed and the meeting procedures will be looked at and correct procedures will be followed from now on.

#### **4.3.4 Workshops**

On the question of how the workshops were presented, Mrs. Ndikuhole commented as follows:

I learnt a lot from the icebreaker - the ball of string. It was presented in a way that [emphasizes] all need each other in an organization in order to function fully. The organization is not a one-man show. We form a circle and throw a rope to one another to form a web. It was clearly shown that an organization can function effectively if all the members forming part of that organization are cooperating with each other. If it is not the case then you are bound to have conflicts.

On the second workshop on communication, Mrs. Ndikuhole said the following:

The assembling of the five-square puzzle as a communication in whatsoever was prohibited. However, it shows us that communication is important in carrying out any simple task that involves more than one person.

The ball throw created a relaxed atmosphere. Because initially, I was wondering what you were up to - this time when I saw you with the ball. It was great! (Mrs. Musuverua)

#### **4.3.5 Change in communication skills**

Data collected from the SDF on communication in the school, prior to the OD intervention, revealed that participants lack effective communication skills. After the workshop on communication, the respondents observed an increase in communication skills.

You see people are like this: the moment that they pick up something new they like to emphasize on it. The colleagues you can see they talk about it and the moment some of them mention that you are paraphrasing now, that was my point and things like that, so we can definitely say we learn something, but it is only a pity that the whole thing only stayed at the bottom -- it didn't go up. So that is the whole problem: as long it stays at the root level, that people also get fed up after a week or two they need a leader to remember them, to show them an example and then it is not a problem because if you know we are willing to work from bottom to top, then people will also accept each others' weaknesses because they know we are busy working on one thing for all of us and they will even forgive the weakness of the top structure easily – it need not always to be from top to bottom. (Mrs. Xam-xams)

Mr. P excitedly described his experience:

You know this morning, I experience it, ya, it is a very good example. Because in the past I get teachers who only inform me, Sir, you must do this, you must phone e.g. finance office. And this morning there was a teacher here, then she requested, 'Sir, can I please...?' or 'Can you please do that and that?' So that is actually a good example. Maybe, I believe, it can be a result of that discussion on communication.

Tim, also expressed her appreciation enthusiastically when information was disseminated through the right channels:

I have experienced it this week and I think if the person does it in such a way [that] is so clear and everyone knows in which directions they should go now and not necessarily that you should be dominating, but put it just clear and also just your tone of voice sometimes, I appreciated it so much because now I know it is coming from top structure and my teachers will definitely know what has been said instead of just by the way the teachers do not really know or just taking chances.

Mrs. Musuveraua said that she learnt something from the communication workshop, which was communicating to her colleagues that she comprehended their meaning. She explained:

Okay, I know Kim has got this shortcoming. When Kim says this, there is a big chance that Mrs. Ndikuhole and Mrs. Xam-xams did not get Kim. How can I help? I can help by saying; 'You mean this and this?' In this way Kim would clarify his meaning and say, 'Yes', or 'No, I mean this and that,' and that we would sort out something that could have been understood differently.

Tim, Kim and Mr. P supported the idea of paraphrasing when participants try to interpret each other's ideas, especially in the morning briefing.

An entry from the researcher's journal supports the above quote:

Mrs. Musuverua paraphrases Mrs. K's comment. She says: 'Mrs. K, do you mean that you will not give extra classes this afternoon?' Mrs. K replies: 'Yes, I mean, I have to attend a cluster meeting this afternoon and cannot give extra classes for my subject, the technical teachers can have my learners for extra classes this afternoon.'

Another change in communication that I noted was:

August examination started the previous day. Each teacher received a timetable indicating the length of each question paper for each subject per grade, for example (1h00; 2h00; 40 minutes). Now, because of the difference in time, it came out that some teachers either started earlier or



later which causes a disruption because the learners who started earlier finish before the end of the examination session. The following morning, the head of the examination arranged for a writing board in the staff room where she indicated when each grade should start so that all the learners would end at the same time. She said that she did this because she wants that every teacher knows exactly when to start and when to end so that there was not any misunderstandings like the previous day and in the past.

However, in spite of the changes observed, Kim's feeling was that much still needed to be done, especially to help the key person in the way he made announcements or when he reprimanded guilty teachers. She is of the opinion that one needs to address the person who is guilty and not to generalize.

#### **4.3.6 Involvement, collaboration and teamwork**

Data collected from the survey-data-feedback in the initial stages of the OD intervention showed a lack of collaboration, favouritism and individualism that led to factionalism and professional jealousy.

However, the OD intervention exercises (the ball throw and the five-square-puzzle) appeared to have a positive effect by increasing teamwork and collaboration (section 4.3.4 ).

According to Mrs. Musuverua this was reflected in the members' active participation in the meetings and also when the list was circulated to record issues, because many concerns were identified, such as communication, financial procedures for collecting money for the development fund, handling of donations, authorization for the purchasing of school materials, the need for detailed financial accounts reflecting income and expenses and information about daily events not reaching the teachers on duty for the week (see Appendix K).

The following journal entry also supported the spirit of teamwork:

When the principal asked Mr. "U" to arrange the "blood transfusion

group” he replied that he only did it last year and would not do it again. Then immediately Ms. “Y” volunteered to do the blood transfusion procedure.

Mrs. Musuverua commented:

OD involves the members the staff and the management in identifying the problem areas. It involves those same members who are the cause of the problems to come up with solutions [for] how do they want this to be solved. It involves the same members the staff, to solve the problems. The solutions will be identified with themselves, we solved it, we said we want from now on things to be done like that and I believe because they said they want to do it like that they will do it like that and once it is positive then everything in that organization because they did it, not an outsider, not someone else forcing them to do things the way is done, but the way - that is what really struck me - the involvement of the real people that is it.

Tim felt that for the school’s sake:

We have to make it work. We must now, as a group, decide we want this for us. This is our household. I think our colleagues lost it along the way; they need to be motivated again, showing them what we can gain ... because it is very important.

#### **4.3.7 Staff development**

Mrs. Xam-xams believed that OD offered opportunities for organizations to grow, change and to develop. This, she said, could be done by carrying out a survey to get new data about how people felt and how people viewed things and then feeding the data back to the participants. The new data would yield new insights for changes. This is stated in her following question: “How can you want to have a successful organization in this modernized world when you want to sit with old ideas?”

Mrs. Xam-xams felt that OD offered opportunities for training and learning about new methods, for people who are open and like to challenge new opportunities. “I see it as a way or method that you can really get new challenges. Not only for your organization, but also for you as a person yourself we have to cope with this changing world around us.”

She felt OD helped to develop self-confidence and also helped the “person” inside her to grow through working on her strengths and weaknesses and then accepting all the new changes.

Your OD approach offers us many different topics like communication, transparency, how to communicate with each other, how to address a problem and not to change a problem into a personal problem, and how to be aware and how to give your point you want to address so that everybody know what is the point you want to address. I realize with this OD program that I must never assume, even if it is a waste of time or it will bother some teachers.

This view was echoed by Tim, “We should be open to criticism, new ideas. Look at all of us; we are all studying, why? We want to upgrade ourselves with the latest to develop ourselves.”

#### **4.3.8 Problem-solving**

Data collected initially during the OD process revealed that problems were dealt with on the surface in order to avoid conflict (see SDF questionnaires’ results – Appendix I).

After the communication workshop, the participants agreed to tackle the listed issues (Appendix K) every fourth or fifth Friday, depending on whether it was an ‘out weekend’ or not (schools with hostel learners finish at 12 o’clock on Fridays if it is an ‘out weekend’). However, interview data indicated that although the respondents were present when the decision was taken, not all were in accord with the decision.

Mrs. Musuverua revealed that she was not happy with the procedures because she felt that problem solving should be a process of continuity:

You see, if there is a problem in the house, whether it is husband/wife/ children, I don’t think one would say: ‘Let us wait next week Friday, when pappa doesn’t drink.’ No, how hot is that issue? What damage can it cause in that house, should it be solved immediately? Then you would say, ‘Today, children, pappie, we have a family meeting at seven o’clock,

make sure your homework is done before time, you have read your newspaper on time, seven o'clock we come around the table and we must start talking.' If we cannot solve it that time, we say, tomorrow seven o'clock again, until we are satisfied, that is what I believe. I don't believe in a thing of saying, 'When we have staff meeting we must tackle that one.' No, that doesn't work for me. We as teachers can say okay, 3 o'clock we come together we talk and see how far we come and if there is something we tackle it. One tends to forget what you had said previously or who has said what. So, I think if an issue comes up it should be tackled immediately and then worked on. It is not a matter of tackle it, put it on one side and it repeats after two months. It should be a continued awareness that should be raised by saying, 'Madam whom, if you have a point to announce this is the appropriate method.' The madam should also get it in herself, that whenever I have [an] announcement, I have learnt from OD approach that this is the way I must do, this is not to offend or to cause conflict etc. It is a thing that should have an on going consciousness not to repeat the same mistakes again. That is what I believe in: there should not be a gap, there should not be a gap, and there should not be a gap.

Mr. P echoed the same view, "I do not support the suggestion of having problem solving discussions on Fridays once a month, as was decided by the participants, but should be done according to the immediate need of the issue."

However, with the OD intervention underway, the participants came to a consensus that the date of the next problem-solving meeting should be determined at each meeting.

#### **4.4 CONCLUSION**

This data came from formal interviews with seven teachers including the principal, informal interviews, journal entries and observations that I integrated so that the story would flow. I presented it in such a way that where there were commonalities, the data spoke to each other and where it differed, I noted it as such.

Data does not speak for itself, therefore, in the next chapter, I am going to discuss the findings as I understand and make meaning of the experience and perceptions of the OD intervention.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DISCUSSIONS OF THE FINDINGS**

#### **5.3 INTRODUCTION**

In chapter four I presented the data of the respondents' experiences and perceptions of the OD process and the outcome of the intervention. In this chapter I discuss the data and give meaning to it.

Patton (as cited in Undjombala 2002: 61) argues that interpretation goes beyond descriptive data:

Interpretation means attaching significance to what was found, offering explanations, drawing conclusions, making inferences, building linkages, attaching meanings, imposing order and dealing with rival explanations, disconfirming cases and data irregularities as part of testing viability of an interpretation.

In my discussions, I comment on the data in terms of the theory and literature of other researchers' findings into how respondents experience and perceive the OD process and the outcomes of OD intervention. According to Taylor and Bogdan (1998: 146), this helps to provide "fruitful concepts and propositions" to interpret data. However, I shall be careful not to try and fit my comments into the theory and literature, because in doing so my research will lose its uniqueness. Furthermore, Taylor and Bogdan (as cited in Undjombala 2002: 61) warn against this: "You should be careful not to force your data into someone else's framework. If concepts fit your data, do not be afraid to borrow them. If they do not, forget about them."

In chapter 4 (section 4.1 par. 2) I indicate that I identified a number of themes in the data collected. I have used those themes to serve as sub-headings in this chapter.

## **5.4 ELEMENTS OF TENSION, HOPE AND DISAPPOINTMENT**

### **5.4.1 Uncertainty and ambiguity**

Marris (as cited in Fullan 1991: 31) states, “all real change involves loss, anxiety and struggle”. Further, Marris asserts that no matter how those changes come about, whether the change happened by chance or design, whether one looks at it from the standpoint of individuals or institutions, the response is characteristically ambivalent. This happens because new experiences are always reacted to in the context of each individual’s frame of reference regardless of how meaningful they might be to others.

This appears to have happened in *Shetu Shaamu* Secondary School. Mrs. Ndikuhole mentioned that with the introduction workshop, specifically after learning about the goals of OD as set out in chapter 2, she had high hopes that OD would bring visible changes regarding openness between management and staff members. Furthermore, she said that she hoped that everything would be discussed openly and eventually mutual trust would develop among the members of the staff. However, she explained that her hopes had been dashed because she had not seen much change in the direction of transparency because the headmaster was still keeping matters that concerned the staff to himself. It appears that Mrs. Ndikuhole expected to see immediate visible changes.

One conclusion I have drawn from the above experience is that as a facilitator of change, for future interventions, it is important to keep reminding participants throughout the process that “there is no quick fix for real changes” and “change is a process, not an event” (Fullan & Park; Hall and Loucks, as cited in Fullan 1991: 49).

### **5.3.1 Openness and transparency**

Schmuck and Runkel (1994: 123) refer to openness as “giving information that both parties need in order to get work done or describing the feelings that are generated by people working together”.

Data collected from the survey-data-feedback exercise at the beginning of the intervention revealed that transparency was one of the issues that needed to be worked on. This was confirmed by interview data from Mrs. Musuverua and Mrs. Ndikuhole in section 4.2.2.

However, with the intervention underway, Mrs. Ndikuhole observed some transparency from one of the heads of department and some opening up in communication from other staff members. Regarding openness, Mrs. Musuverua described how during the first feedback session, people were shy to come forward because it was the norm for things to be taken personally. However, she was confident that OD created the opportunity to open up.

In this case the value of creating openness and transparency promoted by the OD intervention started to make significant impact.

### **5.3.2 Readiness**

Schmuck and Runkel (1994: 60) pointed out that some degree of readiness is essential at the start of any OD effort in a school. They further asserted that an organization is not ready if organizational members show signs such as staying apart from one another; trying to benefit themselves at the expense of others (and believing others to be doing the same) or being unhappy with life in the organization, but believing that they have no hope of making it any better themselves (p.56). Furthermore, Schmuck and Runkel (1994: 60) pointed out: “the level of readiness for OD is affected by norms about openness in communication, collaboration, willingness to spend extra time in meetings, and willingness to experiment with innovations”.

Interview data indicated that management members benefitted themselves at the expense of their subordinates. This caused unhappiness and frustration among the ordinary teachers. Therefore Mrs. Ndikuhole saw no hope for visible changes, especially

openness and transparency.

Interview data from Mrs. Musuverua and Mrs. Xam-xams supported this view. Mrs. Musuverua commented that some organization members were happy when certain things were kept in the dark, because at discussion time during feedback sessions those participants tended to withdraw. For Mrs. Xam-xams, readiness was a personal thing and she was of the opinion that people would never be 100% supportive of OD interventions; there would always be some who would not co-operate. She felt that the fact that the participants were not willing to spend the whole day on the OD program meant that they were not ready. That perhaps is what Fullan (1991: 31) tries to warn of when he says, “The meaning of change will rarely be clear at the outset and ambivalence will pervade the transition”.

The participants’ signing an agreement does not mean that they are ready to take up the challenge of being involved in the change process. Considering that this was a first attempt at a change program in the school and having collated all the data, my conclusion is that the participants agreed to go ahead with the OD intervention because they were impressed with the theoretical knowledge they received. They did not realize the extent to which they would have to be practically involved.

However, another question raises its head at this point: did my relationship with the organizational members have something to do with their agreement to commit themselves to the intervention?

As my relationship with the different groups within the organization was positive, I wondered whether the feelings of cohesiveness among the organization’s members (Schmuck & Runkel 1994: 57) and their support of the OD effort were of more influence than their actual state of readiness. Mrs. Xam-xam’s impression that the organization’s members only took part in the change process to please me supports this (see section 4.2.3).



To conclude this section I feel that is worth mentioning that only while I was writing this section did I realize that my theoretical knowledge of readiness at the initiation of the OD intervention, was not adequate. I feel it is important to read more about one's research topic before embarking on the practical work.

### **5.3.3 Trust**

Lack of trust was one of the factors mentioned in the survey-data-feedback exercise that limited participants' performance in *Shetu Shaamu* Secondary School. According to Schmuck and Runkel (1994: 122), trust is one of the features of effective interpersonal communication and an important sign of readiness to begin OD. The other features, namely being open, controlling one's emotions sufficiently to ensure proper communication and offering one's personal resources involve taking risks, which in turn depend on the presence of interpersonal trust, which is, in many instances, the key to enhanced communication (p.127). Furthermore, Schmuck and Runkel (1994: 127) point out that trust is built very slowly and in small increments, is established more by deeds than by words and is sustained by openness in interpersonal relations.

Interview data from Mrs. Ndikuhole and Mrs. Musuverua (section 4.2.4 and 4.2.2) also support the survey-data-feedback result. Mrs. Musuverua felt that the absence of open communication was a sign of a lack of trust, which in turn led to unhappiness. Both Mrs. Ndikuhole and Mrs. Musuverua attributed the lack of trust to management because they did not trust one another.

Throughout the interviews it was evident that a climate of mistrust existed in *Shetu Shaamu* Secondary School. Therefore words such as "mistrust", "unhappiness", "suspicious", "withdraw", "fear", "favouritism", "animosity" and "lack of transparency" were used by the respondents.

McGregor, (as cited in Schmuck & Runkel 1994: 127) defines trust as "confidence that the other person will not take unfair advantage of one, either deliberately or accidentally,

consciously or unconsciously”. Unfortunately that is what is happening in *Shetu Shaamu* Secondary School. As I have already indicated, Mrs. Xam-xams noted in section 4.2.4 that some staff members used the confidence entrusted in them by management to get back at some management members when they were no longer on good terms.

As OD is a process, an unpredictable journey, it is worth mentioning that at the time of writing this chapter the participants were busy with another OD problem-solving meeting in my absence (section 3.3.2, no. 7). What I found amazing was that the OD meeting was about the organization members themselves and it was scheduled to take place after school hours and during the year-end examinations when teachers are involved in marking internal papers as well as being national external markers and moderators for grades 10 and 12.

Unfortunately, due to the time factor it was not possible for me to do a follow-up formal interview after the meeting, but data from informal interviews with some participants indicated that participants were more open than in previous meetings.

It appears that with the OD process under way the level of trust between staff members and management and between members themselves has risen compared to the low level of trust, which prevailed at the initiation of the OD intervention. Furthermore, the value of openness and transparency as mentioned earlier (section 5.2.2) advocated by the OD intervention has made an impact: it has enhanced the possibility of more successful OD intervention in future. This intervention has started a process of readiness in *Shetu Shaamu* Secondary School.

#### **5.3.4 Implementation**

Fullan (1991: 65) describes the implementation process as putting into practice an idea, program or set of activities and structures new to the people attempting or expected to change. It is the means used to accomplish desired objectives.

Although only one respondent directly mentioned this phase in the change process, I find it noteworthy, because Fullan, who devoted his work to the study and practice of change and captured the evolution of the study of change over the past three decades, emphasizes the implementation phase. Literature on change, such as Goodland, Sarason, Smith and Keith (as cited in Fullan 1998: 217) documents that people were adopting innovations without asking why and, although they assumed that change was happening, in practice little was changing. An overview of the Innovative Process and the Users by Fullan (1998: 217) points out that the flaw with much of the literature at that time was the focus on innovation rather than the user.

Mrs. Xam-xams view on the implementation of the change was that even when staff wanted to implement change, management was not ready for it, so implementation would *never* [her emphasize] be realized because teachers were not at the top of the bureaucratic structure. She gave an example where a teacher suggested a way to implement a certain change. The response from the principal was that people do not know how difficult it is to be in his chair. The moment they are in his chair, they will realize that the idea of change is unacceptable or irrelevant and will not work.

This comment is in agreement with what Fullan (1991: 77) asserts about the opinion of many principals: that other people simply do not seem to understand the problems they face.

Literature claims that the principal has a strong influence on the likelihood of change, but it also shows that most principals do not plan instructional or change-leadership roles. Bergman and McLaughlin (as cited in Fullan 1991: 76) found that “projects having the *active* [their emphasis] support of the principal were the most likely to fare well”. Some indicators of active involvement from the principals’ side are whether they attend workshop training sessions and support teachers both psychologically and with resources.

In the case of the principal of *Shetu Shaamu* Secondary School, he met all the

requirements. He attended both workshop sessions; all five OD feedback meetings and he provided resources, such as the computer room, the staff room and the OHP. In some cases he agreed to let the learners leave an hour earlier in order to have an OD meeting. He also invited a special guest to one of the OD meetings to explain the procedure related to the additional support fund for the school. He also used his position of power to make sure that, when possible, all the members attended meetings and workshops.

As mentioned in section 5.2.4 of this chapter, implementation is currently taking place in *Shetu Shaamu* Secondary School. Is this because of a higher proportion of change-oriented teachers in the school or the change in the quality of working relationships among teachers during the OD process? Or (as described by researchers such as Huberman; Hopkins; McKibbin; Joyce; Gooland; Lortie; Sarason; Little; Mortimore *et al.* and Rosenholtz (as cited in Fullan 1991: 77)) is it because individual teachers are more self-actualized and have a greater sense of efficacy, which allows them to take action and persist in the effort required to bring about successful implementation?

In my view it can be attributed to the last two. Firstly, at the initiation of the OD intervention, a climate of individualism, non-transparency and mistrust prevailed in the school, but with OD under way this situation changed. Secondly, the four members of the focus interview made it a point to support OD (see interview data in section 4.3.6).

### **5.3.5 Power distance**

This discussion is based on Hofstede's description of power distance. Hofstede (1980: 45, as cited in Jaeger 1986: 179), described power distance as the extent to which a society *accepts* [emphasis original] the fact that power in institutions and organizations is distributed unequally. Power in organizations is low, medium or high. According to Jaeger (1986: 182) a low or medium power distance is necessary for organizational members at different hierarchical levels to interact openly in order for problems to be resolved.

At what level is the power distance at *Shetu Shaamu* Secondary School? Throughout the individual interviews and the focus interviews, the respondents commented strongly about management being an obstacle in the process of change. Respondents used phrases such as “management do not want to open up”; “management feels threatened by the change”; “for sure that is management that is closing the door”; and “in our case is management who is blocking all the channels”.

According to Mrs. Ndikuhole, if she wanted to introduce new skills then the management thinking was that it had nothing to do with them because it was for her degree. Jim and Tim were of the same opinion (see section 4.2.6).

Furthermore, Mrs. Ndikuhole felt that the principal did not want to open up for fear of losing his power; he could not reveal everything, because if he did people might take the power away from him.

Considering the status quo, I would have expected OD to be terminated by now. However, it is interesting to note that a year later the intervention is still continuing in an impressively relaxed atmosphere. In line with the definition above, the power distance in *Shetu Shaamu* Secondary School appears to be low or medium. This is based on what I have observed in recent OD meetings and the current relationship between management and non-management members. I have observed that management members do not dominate discussions as before and more and more non-management members are starting to take part in discussions. Another observation concerns the tone of the participants’ voices. Many of them are being considerate when speaking to one another. However, as suggested by Dowling and Osborne (as cited in De Jong 1996: n.p.) one must not lose sight of the fact that because of the hierarchical structure of a school, positional power is a central element of a school system.

Given the status quo described above, one wonders why the principal feels insecure. Is he a leader who does not have a sense of confidence, direction or clarity? Is he an ineffective leader? According to Davidoff and Lazarus (1997: 163), an empowered leader

is willing to share control and responsibilities with his/her subordinates; does not merely think about the “I”, but also the “we” and recognizes that he/she cannot do everything on his/her own, but needs to work collaboratively with others.

### **5.3.6 Age**

From the interview data it is clear that the age of the principal and management members also had an influence on the change process. Mrs. Ndikuhole and Mrs. Xam-xams made their views explicit on this matter. Mrs. Xam-xams pointed out that older leaders were afraid of change. Change was a challenge to them because they believed it might bring conflict and they did not want to face conflict if they had only a year of service to go. Mrs Ndikuhole pointed out that older management members were happy with their current leadership style because at least nobody was complaining and they did not want any one to upset the status quo.

Literature also claims that old managers, who have fully embraced the traditional organization paradigm and are successful, are resistant to change. As mentioned in chapter 2, a study done by Hoang (2002) revealed that some managers saw no reason to change because what worked in the past would continue to work in the future, but Hitt (1995: 25) postulates that the answer is - for the quest for excellence.

My findings at *Shetu Shaamu* Secondary School indicate that if a principal and some members of the management team are closer to retirement, or have embraced the traditional organization and are successful, they do not care about innovation.

### **5.3.7 Action planning and implementing phases**

Schmuck and Runkel (1994: 229) point out that problem solving is “the heart of OD”. If problem solving is the heart of the organization, in this case the school, what will happen if the heart stops? What will happen to the other parts of the “body”? Of course, the answer is obvious - death. In the case of a school, the other parts include the learners,

meaning they will also “die”.

Action research, as referred to in chapter 2, is one of the cornerstones of OD. It is an ongoing process not a “one-shot affair” (French and Bell 1995: 138). OD, as quoted from French and Bell (1995: 28) in chapter 2, is a “long-term effort”, which means that organizational change and development take time.

A meeting was held where participants prioritized communication problems and discussed action plans for solving problems. It was agreed that the next OD meeting would be on finance, but a specific date was not set. A flaw in the plan arose when, as reported in section 4.2.8, one and a half months passed without any action.

Data from one of the focus interview members in section 4.2.8 revealed that the facilitator was the one to be blamed. Encouraging, however, was that the respondent not only put the blame on me, but also proposed the next action step, which was that I, the facilitator, should always inform the participants so that they can direct the process. After I went back to the rest of the participants and informed them why I was delayed, the participants agreed on a date for the next OD problem-solving meeting. This supports what Weisbord (1987: 285) found in his consulting work: “People will commit to plans they have helped to develop”.

I had forgotten about the systems thinking approach to organizations. By not going back to the rest of the staff and giving them feedback about my discussion with the principal, I nearly caused the OD program to fail. Therefore, as OD facilitator, it is important to practice what one preaches otherwise the participants will lose faith.

Ralph Kilmann’s, *Beyond the Quick Fix*, stresses that organizational change and development takes time – one to five years -- to complete (French and Bell 1995: 83). For Kilmann “there is no ‘quick fix’ when it comes to lasting organizational improvement. ‘Improvement’ is a never-ending journey of continuous change” (French and Bell 1995: 28-29).

## **5.3 ELEMENTS OF CHANGE**

### **5.3.1 Empowerment**

To empower is to give someone power (French and Bell 1995: 94). Bolin (as cited in Hall, cited in Undjombala 2002: 70) describes empowerment as “investing in teachers the right to participate in the determination of school goals and policies and the right to exercise professional judgement”. One of the central goals of OD is to involve all those who are affected by the change and allow them to take part in decision-making.

One of the issues raised in the initial SDF data is that management dominated decisions. Also, data collected from the evaluation form after the SDF feedback session showed that there was fear among the participants because the principal was present.

Studies on group dynamics suggest that the involvement and participation of all those who are affected by the change has the ability to energize greater performance, produce better solutions to the problems and help to overcome resistance to change (French and Bell 1995: 94). Survey data reveals that before the initiation of the OD intervention, decisions were made top-down. Non-management members were not given the authority to participate, to contribute their ideas, to exert their influence or to be responsible.

The responses from the sixteen participants who completed the SDF questionnaires revealed that they felt that:

- decisions were never made through teamwork (7);
- people who do not know about things that affect others make decisions on their behalf (6);
- management never works with the staff to make decisions (5);
- things are organized so that participants never get a chance to help in decision making (5).

(The number in brackets is the number of participants who commented.)



In the opinion of French and Bell (1995: 94) participation enhances empowerment and empowerment in turn enhances performance and individual well-being. The comments of Mrs. Ndikuhole accorded with this view when she said that only people who are happy and have job satisfaction produce good results and that is not what is happening. At *Shetu Shaamu* Secondary School, people are frustrated because management runs the school like their own household (section 4.2.6).

However, it is surprising to notice that the condition did improve as the OD intervention got under way. Mrs Musuverua noted that she was shocked to hear some of her colleagues, who usually do not speak out, make their voices heard. That gave her such satisfaction that she said to herself, “Good, let their voices be heard.”

In addition, I think the principal believes in nurturing his staff’s power by trying to be a role model. As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, he attended all the OD sessions, meetings and workshops, he was punctual and often one of the first members at the venue. I conclude that he expected the same from his staff members. Also, by encouraging the three members to attend the OD meeting the principal indirectly helped to empowerment them.

Starting an OD intervention begins the process of empowerment for the participants. At the beginning of the intervention I encouraged and invited the participants to join me in facilitating the process through a joint steering committee. This would help the members on the committee to develop the capacity and skills to conduct their own, future OD processes when I stepped out. Three members volunteered.

### **5.3.2 The learning organization / institutionalizing OD**

One of the assumptions of OD is that it is a sustained effort. This means that the facilitator should try to help the organization’s members learn to manage themselves and others by diagnosing, solving problems and taking corrective actions themselves (French *et al.* 1994: 11).

In the literature chapter, section 2.4.2.3, I referred to authors such as Dalin and Rust; Van der Westhuizen; Revans; Hitt and David and Lazarus, who point out the importance of the development and survival of the school. That is only possible if the school is a learning organization. For Senge (1990: 3) as quoted in chapter 2, learning organizations are “...organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly require ... and where people are continually learning how to learn together.”

As already pointed out in section 5.3.1 of this chapter, immediately after we (the participants and myself) drew up the agreement, three organizational members volunteered to serve on the steering committee. These members expanded their professional knowledge by being conveners of OD meetings in their own school.

An ancient Chinese proverb (as cited in French *et al.* 1994: 13) asserts: “Give a man a fish, and you have give him a meal; teach a man to fish, and you have given him a livelihood.” Not only did the members of the steering committee learn OD techniques, but, through exercises, workshops (section 4.3.4) and being convernors of OD meetings (section 4.3.8), so did the other participants.

In chapter two, the literature review noted that one of the goals of OD is to help participants to make OD part of the culture of the organization, “That’s the way we do things around here” or “That’s not the way we do things around here” (Schmuck and Runkel 1994: 416).

Although data from chapter 4 reveals that only a few changes are visible, two respondents (Mrs. Xam-xams and Mrs. Musuverua) are highly motivated by the approach and even expressed their commitment to make OD part of *Shetu Shaamu* Secondary School. They also suggested procedures I could follow to make OD part of the entire Namibian Education system (section 4.3.2).

Their optimism about OD contrasts with Mrs. Ndikuhole’s skepticism mentioned in this chapter, section 5.2.1. This agrees with what I have discussed earlier in this chapter in

section 5.2.1, that the meaning of change depends on the context of each individual's frame of reference regardless of how meaningful they might be to others. Also, by encouraging the three members to attend the OD meeting, the principal indirectly helped to empower them.

In conclusion, it is worth mentioning that an OD meeting has been scheduled for early in 2004, on the day the school reopens. This is perhaps a sign of OD's sustainability in this context.

### **5.3.3 Communication**

The outcome of the SDF at the start of the OD intervention was a list of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Many of the weaknesses fell within the following themes: lack of teamwork, poor decision-making, no motivation, weak planning and poor communication. When these themes were prioritized, poor communication was felt to be the theme participants wanted to work on, hence a communication workshop was arranged with all the participants. The success of the workshop was noted in the data of all the respondents (section 4.2.4) and also from the evaluation forms completed directly after the workshop (see appendix J).

It was also revealed in the participant's willingness to attend the communication workshop twice. Of the six interpersonal communication skills, paraphrasing was the one the members made their own, especially Mrs. Musuverua, who made it her task to paraphrase staff members' statements in all meetings, as I noted in section 4.3.5.

Experiential learning, that places the responsibility for learning directly on the participant (as indicated in chapter 4), is basic to OD training (Schmuck & Runkel 1994: 371). Teachers are adult and adult learning, as the literature reveals, is based on experiential learning – learning by doing.

The five-square-puzzle exercise appears to have a positive influence on the results, as

described by Mrs. Ndikuhole in section 4.3.5.

Another contribution to the success of the workshop was the Johari Awareness Model, or Johari Window, Schmuck and Runkel (1994: 123). I used a poster as teaching aid. In this model, Luft (as cited in Schmuck and Runkel 1994: 122) assigned a behaviour feeling or motivation to one of four quadrants on the basis of who knows about it. The principal requested me to leave the poster in the staff room so that it can remind the staff members about openness.

Also presented in sections 4.3.4 and 4.3.5 are Tim and Mr. P's comments on how they experienced changes in the flow of information in the school after the communication workshop.

As four of the 23 staff members were not present at the communication workshop, the members present agreed that the workshop should be repeated when the other four members returned. The participants also agreed that all of them would attend the same workshop again because they had learnt so much.

That they attended the same workshop twice was a sign that the teachers of *Shetu Shaamu* Secondary School underwent a metamorphosis from individualism, lack of collaboration and professional jealousy to a new spirit of collaboration and teamwork. It seems to me that Mrs. Musuverua's belief in the OD value of involvement of those affected by the change has been realized (see her comments in section 4.3.6). This is in accord with the rule of thumb of OD: "Involve all those who are part of the problem. Have decisions made by those who are closest to the problem. Those who are closest to the problem or opportunity are the experts; treat them as such" (French & Bell 1995: 94).

#### **5.3.4 Involvement, collaboration and teamwork**

Collaboration, teams and involvement are some of the primary characteristics of OD (French and Bell 1995: 33). As mentioned in section 4.3.6, data about the climate in the

organization preceding the OD intervention revealed an unfavourable situation. Surprisingly enough, some of the respondents commented favourably on the new climate and showed a willingness to support and be involved in the change process. All four focus interview members volunteered as interviewees and all of them displayed the commitment they promised during the interview.

This is further endorsed by Mrs. Musuverua's experience that a climate of gradual collaborative involvement was clearly noticeable after the communication workshop (see section 4.3.5).

### **5.3.5 Staff development**

Organization Development embraces the concept of staff development. Hopkins, West, and Ainscow (as cited in De Jong 1999: 62) make the following proposition in analyzing the framework of school improvement:

Schools will not improve unless teachers individually and collectively develop. ... if the whole school is to develop then there needs to be many staff development opportunities for teachers to learn together.

Literature on communication indicates that the personal and professional development of the teachers who participate in OD in-service training courses is an area of success, specifically regarding improved communication skills (section 4.3.5).

## **5.4 CONCLUSION**

The purpose of this chapter has been to discuss and give meaning to the data about how the respondents in my research experienced and perceived the OD process and the outcome of the intervention. The discussions reveal that there was a mixture of feelings ranging from hope, disappointment, anxiety and tension to excitement. The meaning of change is rarely clear at the outset, thus ambivalence pervades the transition. Participants need to be reminded that lasting changes and improvements take time. Trust can be

raised the moment the participants realized that “fault-finding” is not the solution. Finally, participants who become more self-actualized, develop a greater sense of efficacy and can improve the quality of their working relationships during the OD process will contribute to the implementation of positive change in the organization.

In the final chapter, I give a summary of my main findings, and make recommendations firstly for facilitators and secondly for researchers. Finally, I spell out the limitations of my study and conclude with my personal reflections.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.3 CONCLUSIONS

Bureaucratic, hierarchical, authoritarian structures cause those who have positional power to exercise those powers, sometimes unconsciously, at the expense of others. This promotes division between management and non-management members and causes the less powerful members to believe that they have no hope of making the situation any better. The result is a situation that is characterized by individualism, competitiveness, mistrust, unhappiness, suspicion, fear, favouritism, animosity and lack of transparency (section 5.2.4 and 5.2.6).

However, the world in which such organizations have to operate is changing rapidly. With Namibia's Independence in 1990, the Namibian government adopted a policy of democracy at all levels of society, including the Ministry of Basic Education and Culture. Democracy is also one of the four major goals of the Ministry of Basic Education and Culture. "You can't talk about a kind of democracy unless those who are affected by decisions make those decisions" (Hayden, as cited in *The Namibian* 28.12.2003).

Certain theorists (French & Bell 1995: 94-95) believe that in order to get individuals, teams and organizations to function effectively, it is important to involve all those who are affected by a problem in their own problem-solving process using an appropriate approach. Organization Development is such an approach: it promotes collaboration between management and non-management members, interdependence and interconnectedness of organizational members, empowerment, participation and involvement in problem solving and decision-making.

In this section I summarize the key findings of my study.

Teachers at *Shetu Shaamu* Secondary School were used to the norm of “fault finding”, playing the “blame game” and finding a scapegoat when trying to solve problems within the organization. Even when opportunities were created to improve the situation, in the beginning, it was difficult for them to try to tackle the problem rather than each other. However, a year later, during problem solving sessions, slowly but surely, participants started to realize that putting the blame on particular people would take the school nowhere. Hence they realized that real changes would only be possible if they focused on the system as a whole.

The response from participants in *Shetu Shaamu* Secondary School to the OD intervention indicates some mixed feelings. One participant mentioned that she had high hopes that OD would bring immediate visible changes regarding openness and transparency, but she only observed changes from one head of department. I find that after eight months of an OD process, on the one hand, the values of openness and transparency promoted by OD did not make a big impact in the areas of openness and transparency, but on the other, participants wanted to see immediate, organization-wide changes. Hence, it is important to remind participants about the uniqueness of OD, that it is a long-term change approach and not a “quick-fix”.

Before the OD intervention most of the management members worked on the assumption that power is a zero sum activity – that the more they give away, the less they have. However, with the intervention under way, they realized that the more that influence is shared, the more power there is in circulation. The result is the implementation of some changes in *Shetu Shaamu* Secondary School (see section 5.2.5).

Signing an agreement does not necessary mean that participants are ready to take up the challenges of being involved in the change process. It might be that there are other factors that influence readiness such as the relationship between the facilitator and the organizations.



## **6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on my experience as a researcher and facilitator, I offer the following suggestions for other researchers and facilitators.

### **6.2.1 Facilitator**

In this section, I list suggestions to OD facilitators wishing to embark on OD programs with participants. These recommendations are offered as points for discussion among OD facilitators and not as a blue print.

- e) It is important to know one's topic very well before embarking on such a process. This will help one to focus and also to find the relevant literature.
- f) One should gather as much knowledge about the organization and the people one wants to work with before attempting to involve them in the program. It will give one a better understanding of the subject under research.
- g) One should familiarize oneself with the different styles of OD and the techniques they use, as set out by Ellison and Burke (1987), namely the:
  - size and complexity of the target group (individuals, teams and workgroups, inter-groups or total organization).
  - breadth of organizational domains targeted for intervention (goals and goal setting, communication, climate and culture, leadership and authority, problem solving, decision making, conflict and cooperation and role definition)
  - depth of interventions (the degree of client emotional involvement required by an intervention)
  - time requirements of interventions.

- h) One should read the recommendations and suggestions made by similar studies. I did not do this and only while I was writing my last chapter, did I realize how it could have helped me not to repeat the same mistakes of other researchers.
- i) One should discuss the value and the goals of the OD project and what OD can offer the organization explicitly with the participants. Keep on revising them so that the participants are aware of what they can gain and be motivated. (See the last two paragraphs of section 4.2.6).
- j) One can share ownership of the program with the participants by inviting them to join one in forming a steering committee at the start of the intervention until the end. As the committee members develop competencies, they should be encouraged to take over more of the facilitator's responsibilities.
- k) The agreement of understanding should contain the facilitator's role, the goals, project budget, and the time and effort all members are willing to devote to the project.
- l) One should try to find financial assistance – for OD retreats and workshop materials. Money might be an obstacle to carrying out action research successfully. This was my personal experience.
- m) Create a database of themes and main authors on the research topic. This will save a great deal of time when searching for “quotes” or specific “phrases”.
- n) If one intends to use a diary or a journal as a data collection technique, one should find out how they differ from one another. A diary is a *daily* event. I thought I was using a diary, but found out two months before I completed my thesis that I was keeping journal entries and not a diary.

- o) Interview skills (how to probe) are essential. Only while I was discussing my data, did I realize how superficial my data was.
- p) If participants miss a session, the facilitator should make it a point to brief them as soon as possible in order to avoid misunderstandings or to create loopholes for them to excuse themselves from sessions again with excuses such as, “I did not attend the last session, so I will not follow, could I be excused?”
- q) One should know how to use Internet in order to access electronic journal articles especially when one is an off-site student. Electronic databases contain the latest journal articles.
- r) The facilitator should make sure that the participants are aware of any current developments. It is essential that one is always conscious of the interconnectedness of the organization and does not discuss something with a key person and forget to give feedback to the rest of the staff. As I indicated in section 3.3.2, it is important to let others know any results as soon as possible, because feedback gives new direction to the project. Also, it is through feedback that participants feel that their opinions are catered for and valued.

### **5.3.1 Researchers**

In addition to the above I suggest OD researchers consider the following:

Taking into consideration my limited knowledge of research, especially action research, I feel that it would have been wiser to start with a small group such as management or one department in the school. Working with small groups has the advantage of saving time and taking decisions promptly. Due to time constraints I neglected valuable reflection opportunities with some of the participants.

There were times I felt I should have been better briefed about what it takes to do an

“action research” and that I would have been better off if I had taken a more formally structured and predictable research approach. However, after thinking about the advantages offered by the approach I took for my particular research, with participants understanding and taking responsibility for their own work situation and improving the quality of life in their own school, I feel my choice of action research as an approach to inform my particular case study is justified.

OD should not only be institutionalized in the school that is making use of OD, but also in those that have not yet done so. This is done by putting supportive role senders in schools that do not make use of OD and by establishing OD departments at central offices. The methods should include people who can support OD in education when they interact with the community in matters such as conducting meetings and solving problems with Parents Teachers Associations (PTA) and youth groups.

#### **5.4 LIMITATIONS**

Action research requires continuity and quality time, which was not available due to classroom teaching, administrative workload and extra mural activities of the participants. Taking into consideration the time constraints of a half-thesis, working with 23 teachers as well as being a full time employee, I am indebted to the management and the steering committee members. I would have wanted to have separate focus interviews with the management team as well as with the steering committee at the end of the intervention to find out how they have experienced the OD process, but unfortunately time did not permit this.

I indicated in chapter 5 that the participants were very impressed with the two OD workshops I presented. This is an example of using the OD technique for *training*. As OD is still new in Namibia, especially in schools, I suggest that offering training at regional level in skills such as communication, collaborative problem solving and consensual or joint decision making, might provide a positive impetus for institutionalizing OD nationwide.

## 5.5 PERSONAL REFLECTION

Having been a distance and part-time post-matric student since 1996, this has been one of the richest learning experiences in my life. The whole process was and still is a learning experience.

Only while I was discussing my data in chapter 5, did I realize how massive the data I had collected was and I sometimes did not know what to select and what to leave out. I was led in my data selection by my research goal. Nevertheless, it is possible that I have omitted some important data.

The question, that has haunted me throughout my research, is: what inspired me to attempt such a demanding research? The only answer I can come up with is: the love I have for the school, community and country as a whole.

*And now these three remain: **faith, hope and love.**  
But the greatest of these is **love.***

1 Corinthians 13:13

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## APPENDIX A: PERMISSION LETTER TO INSPECTOR

PO Box 1107  
SWAKOPMUND  
7 November 2002

The Inspector  
Mr Samupwa  
P O Box 4242  
SWAKOPMUND

Dear Sir

### RE: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT A RESEARCH

I hereby wish to seek access to your office to carry out my research at one of your school. I am a registered student at Rhodes University, following the Master degree in Educational Leadership and Management. The research will be conducted from November 2002 as well as in the course of next year.

My research topic is:

#### **An investigation of the outcome of a planned Organizational Development (OD) intervention in a secondary school: Khorixas Educational Region - Namibia**

I would like to assure you that anonymity and confidentiality are of the utmost importance. Hence, the identity of the institution or any other information I will be provided with, will be treated with confidentiality and will only be used for the stated purpose of the research and for no other purpose.

Attached are following copies: (a) letter from my Professor (Course coordinator)  
(b) letter of the intended school


Hoping for your favourable response.

Yours faithfully



Selma Neshila (Mrs)

## APPENDIX B: PERMISSION LETTER FROM INSPECTOR



**MINISTRY OF BASIC EDUCATION, SPORT AND CULTURE  
KHOIKHAKA REGION**

TELEPHONE:	064 - 4105000	P/BAG 5024
FAX:	064 - 4105158	SWAKOPMUND
INQUIRIES:	A. M. SAMUPWA	REF. NO.:
DATE:	20 NOVEMBER 2002	

Mrs. Neshu, Selma  
Student: Rhodes University  
P.O. Box 1107  
SWAKOPMUND

Madam:

**RE: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH**

Permission is granted for you to carry out research at any school in Swakopmund Secondary Cluster.

Please contact the specific principal(s) for modalities.

Yours faithfully



A. M. Samupwa  
INSPECTOR OF EVALUATION

cc. Principals



[illegible]

## APPENDIX D: LETTER TO INTERVIEW



## APPENDIX E: MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT



## APPENDIX F: SURVEY-FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRES AND RESULTS

### FORM A (TO ALL MEMBERS)

#### IMPROVING MEETINGS

Educational organizations of all types hold a lot of meetings, and much depends on their quality. Please think specifically of the meetings you have in your education organization.

Next to each item in the table below, please make a cross (X) to indicate your choice. The rate is as follows:

- 5 = This is typical of the meetings; it happens repeatedly.
- 4 = This is fairly typical of the meeting; it happens often.
- 3 = This is more typical than not; it happens sometimes
- 2 = This is more untypical than typical, though it happens now and then.
- 1 = This is untypical; it rarely happens;
- 0 = This is not typical at all; it never happens.

Q.	5	4	3	2	1	0
1. When problems come up in the meeting, they are thoroughly explored until everyone understands what the problem is.	3	1	2	5	2	0
2. The first solution proposed is often accepted by the group.	0	4	3	4	1	0
3. People come to the meeting not knowing what is to be presented.	5	0	2	2	2	2
4. Many problems that people are concerned about never get on the agenda.	2	3	3	1	4	0
5. Participants have a tendency to propose answers without really having thought through carefully the problem and its causes.	2	5	5	2		1
6. The group discusses the pros and cons of several different alternate solutions to a problem.	2	3	1	4	4	2
7. People bring up extraneous or irrelevant matters.	1	7	4	1	1	0
8. Someone summarizes progress from time to time.	1	2	5	0	2	5
9. Decisions are often vague as to what they are and who will carry them out.	4	1	4	4	1	1
10. People are afraid to be openly critical or make good objections.	3	2	4	5	1	0
11. The group discusses and evaluates how decisions from previous meetings worked out.	0	1	3	0	5	6
12. The same few people seem to do most of the talking during the meeting, others silent or respond minimally.	6	5	2	1	0	1
13. When a decision is made, it is clear who should carry it out and when.	1	5	2	5	0	0
14. The same problems seem to keep coming up over and over again from meeting to meeting	7	3	1	2	2	0

15. People don't seem to care about the meeting or want to get involved in it.	1	5	6	0	1	2
16. When the group is thinking about a problem, at least two or three different solutions are suggested.	7	3	2	1	2	0
17. When there is disagreement, it tends to be smoothed over or avoided.	4	5	2	2	0	1
18. Many people remain silent.	7	4	0	0	2	1
19. When the group is supposedly working on a problem, it is really working on some other "under the table" problem.	2	3	6	2	1	0
20. Solutions and decisions are in accord with the chairperson's point of view but not necessarily with that of the members.	5	2	4	2	0	0
21. The discussion goes on and on without any decision being reached.	5	2	2	2	2	1
22. People feel satisfied or positive during the meeting.	2	1	4	3	3	2

### DECISION MAKING

	Always ----- Never					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Decisions are made through teamwork.	1	2	3	7	1	3
2. Facts from those who know are used to make decisions.	0	4	6	2	2	0
3. You take a part in making decisions that affect you.	1	6	5	2	1	0
4. You or your peers help make decisions.	1	4	3	2	5	0
5. When decisions are made, they are based on information that you think is right and fair.	4	3	2	1	3	2
6. Decisions are made by those who know most about the problem.	2	6	5	1	1	0
7. The people who make decisions that affects you are aware of the things you face.	1	3	2	6	1	2
8. Decisions are made in such a way that you do not mind carrying them out.	1	2	4	4	3	1
9. Management work with the staff to make the decisions.	1	1	3	3	5	2
10. Things are organized so that you or your colleagues can help make decisions.	2	3	3	5	1	1

## COMMUNICATION

1. Suppose teacher X feels hurt and put down by something a colleague has said to him or her. In teacher X's place, would most of the teachers you know in your school be like to....

(a) Tell the other instructor that they felt hurt and put down?

- ☐ Yes , I think most would. (2)
- ☐ Maybe about half would. (5)
- ☐ No, most would not. (5)
- ☐ I don't know. (1)

b. Tell their friends that the other instructor is hard to get along with?

- ☐ Yes , I think most would. (6)
- ☐ Maybe about half would. (7)
- ☐ No, most would not. (1)
- ☐ I don't know (0)

2. Suppose Teacher X strongly disagrees with something B says at a staff meeting. In Teacher X's place, would most of the colleagues you know in your department ..

a. Seek out B to discuss the disagreement?

- ☐ Yes , I think most would. (3)
- ☐ Maybe about half would. (2)
- ☐ No, most would not. (8)
- ☐ I don't know. (0)

b. Keep it to themselves and say nothing about it?

- ☐ Yes , I think most would. (2)
- ☐ Maybe about half would. (5)
- ☐ No, most would not. (6)
- ☐ I don't know (0)

3. Suppose you are in committee meeting with Teacher X. The other members begin to describe their personal feelings about what goes on in the school, but Teacher X quickly suggests that the committee get back to the topic and keep the discussion objective and impersonal. How would you feel toward X?

- ☐ would approve strongly. (8)
- ☐ would approve mildly or some. (4)
- ☐ wouldn't care one way or the other. (1)
- ☐ would disapprove mildly or some. (1)
- ☐ would disapprove strongly. (0)

4. Suppose you are in a committee meeting with Teacher X. the other members begin to describe their personal feelings about what goes on in the school. Teacher X listens to them and tells them his or her own feelings. How would you feel toward X?

<input type="radio"/> would approve strongly.	(3)
<input type="radio"/> would approve mildly or some.	(6)
<input type="radio"/> wouldn't care one way or the other.	(0)
<input type="radio"/> would disapprove mildly or some.	(3)
<input type="radio"/> would disapprove	(2)

6. Suppose educator X were present when two others got into a hot argument about how the school is run. Suppose X tried to get them to quiet and stop arguing. How would you feel about the behaviour of educator X.

<input type="radio"/> would approve strongly.	(7)
<input type="radio"/> would approve mildly or some.	(2)
<input type="radio"/> wouldn't care one way or the other.	(2)
<input type="radio"/> would disapprove mildly or some.	(1)
<input type="radio"/> would disapprove	(2)

7. Suppose you are in a committee meeting with educator X and the other members begin to describe their personal feelings about what goes on in the school. Educator X quickly suggests that the committee get back to the topic and keep the discussion objective in impersonal. How would you feel towards educator X. the school is run.

<input type="radio"/> would approve strongly.	(7)
<input type="radio"/> would approve mildly or some.	(4)
<input type="radio"/> wouldn't care one way or the other.	(1)
<input type="radio"/> would disapprove mildly or some.	(1)
<input type="radio"/> would disapprove strongly.	(1)

8. Suppose you are in a committee meeting with educator X and the other members begin to describe their personal feelings about what goes on in the school. Educator X listen to them but does not describe his or her own feelings How would you feel about the of educator X.

<input type="radio"/> would approve strongly.	(1)
<input type="radio"/> would approve mildly or some.	(3)
<input type="radio"/> wouldn't care one way or the other.	(1)
<input type="radio"/> would disapprove mildly or some.	(7)
<input type="radio"/> would disapprove strongly.	(2)

## FEEDBACK IN THE SCHOOL

1. Do you get any information from other professionals that helps you to tell whether you are doing an effective job?

- ( ) No, none (3)
- ( ) Yes, about once or twice a year. (6)
- ( ) Yes, about once a month, maybe. (0)
- ( ) Yes, about once a week. (3)
- ( ) Yes, more than once a week. (2)

5. Would you say there is some particular aspect of the school's functioning where new ideas are especially needed?

- (a)
- ( ) No, things are working about as well as they can. (1)
  - ( ) No, no particular aspect more than another.  
We just need things polished up a bit all over. (7)
  - ( ) Yes. If yes, please describe a feature of the organization's functioning that needs attention: (6)

- Comments: communication (2)
- Parental involvement (1)
  - Interpersonal relationship (3)
  - Problem solving (1)
  - Discipline (1)

- (b)
- ( ) If you wrote in an answer above, how many people would you say agree with you?
- ( ) Many. (7)
  - ( ) Some. (2)
  - ( ) Only one or two. (1)
  - ( ) None. (0)
  - ( ) I don't know. (0)



FORM B (FOR INTERVIEWEES AND ALL MEMBERS)

1. What is *Shetu Shaamu* Secondary School's mission, and how does your task (job) relate to the mission?

I don't know

Learners education (7)

There is but all do not work towards it all the times (1)

2. How successful do you feel *Shetu Shaamu* Secondary School has been achieving its mission? Explain.

Fairly (4)

Well (3)

I don't know (1)

Depend on group that is presenting something (1)

6. What are the factors at *Shetu Shaamu* Secondary School that necessary limit your performance?

Favouritism (4)

Unclear mission (1)

Lack of cooperation (4)

Instigation (1)

Professional jealousy (1)

Lack of transparency (1)

Discipline (2)

Parental involvement (1)

Learners' laziness (2)

Lack of respect of management (1)

Lack of trust (1)

Faction (1)

Shortage of textbook (1)

Self righteousness (1)

7. What are the factors at *Shetu Shaamu* Secondary School that necessary facilitate your performance and/or the performance of others?

Self discipline (1)

Motivation (1)

Resources (1)

Well education (1)

Interaction (1)

Support from SOS (4)

Teacher pupil ration (1)

5. Suggest a new idea or procedure that would (if adopted) spur (encourage) yourself or others to increase performance.

More in-depth meetings	(1)
Involvement in decision making	(1)
Cooperation from all staff members	(1)
Computer literate program	(1)
Socialization	(2)
Better salary	(1)
Understand your learners	(1)
Transparency – hones	(2)
Teamwork	(1)
Advance planning (goals)	(2)
Afternoon duty	(1)

8. What do you think of the problem-solving process at *Shetu Shaamu* Secondary School?

Very ineffective [ 1      2      3 ]      Very effective [ 4      5      6 ]  
 Explain

Transparency	(3)
Avoid conflict	(5)
Lack personal interpretation of problems	(1)
Discuss problems with parents	(2)
Learners get away with wrong doings	(1)
Very effective	(1)

9. In what way could the problem-solving process at *Shetu Shaamu* Secondary School be improved?

Teamwork	(4)
Consultation with staff members	(1)
Transparency	(1)
Introspection	(2)
Immediate address of a problem	(1)
Freedom of speech	(1)
Separate personal issues from school work related	(1)
Individual talk (to the learners)	(1)

10. What do you think of the decision-making process at *Shetu Shaamu* Secondary School?

Very ineffective [ 1      2      3 ]      Very effective [ 4      5      6 ]  
 Explain

- |                             |     |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| Nothing happen              | (1) |
| Consultation of all members | (8) |
| No collaboration            | (1) |
| No follow-up                | (2) |
11. In what way could the decision-making process at *Shetu Shaamu* Secondary School be improved?
- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| Stick to the decision , feedback, control, planning in advance, inform all parties | (5) |
| Transparency   | (3) |
| Regular meetings – proper agenda – involve all members                             | (2) |
| Democracy  | (1) |
| Discussion   | (1) |
10. How are differences or disagreement handled when they arise?
- |                                   |     |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Principal mediator – private      | (1) |
| Very poor handling of conflict    | (2) |
| No openness (thorough discussion) | (1) |
| Unprofessional                    | (1) |
| Everything personalized           | (1) |
| Excellent – all depend            | (1) |
| Principal try to be just          | (1) |
| Verbal fighting                   | (2) |
| Ignore and hope to disappear      | (2) |
11. Is there feedback to persons who “get out of line” or “have problems”?  
Give example
- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| No – late coming, learners discipline, hidden agenda, sensitive Clearance – give feedback to rest of staff but do not discuss the conversation | (9) |
| Sometimes  | (2) |
| Yes if general   | (2) |
12. What is it about *Shetu Shaamu* Secondary School that keeps people here?
- |                             |     |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| Principal kind person       | (1) |
| SOS                         | (1) |
| Teaching learners           | (2) |
| I don’t know                | (2) |
| Job                         | (3) |
| Only Technical school       | (1) |
| No vacancy at other schools | (3) |
| Job satisfaction            | (2) |

Loyalty not even money (1)

13. What is it about *Shetu Shaamu* Secondary School that is not attractive to the people here, or might cause them to leave?

How the school is run	(1)
Lack of cooperation	(1)
Mistrust	(1)
Underestimation of other's teaching ability	(2)
Communication	(2)
Interpersonal problems	(1)
Oppression of some HOD's	(1)
How cases are handled	(1)
No job satisfaction	(1)
Discipline	(1)
Grade 10 failure	(3)
Way of speaking don't value people	(1)
Lack of parental involvement	(1)
No unity	(1)
I don't know it is personal	(1)
Lack of managerial skills and professionalism	(1)
Favouritism/nepotism	(2)
Backbiting	(1)
Lack of respect	(1)

#### (INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP RELATIONSHIP)

14. Describe the relationship between management and staff groups.

Poor					Excellent
1 (1)	2	3	4	5	6

Explain .....

(e) Is there a spirit of helping and supporting?

Little or none					Very much
1	2	3	4	5	6

Describe .....

(f) Is there much sharing of resources?

Little or none					Very much
1	2	3	4	5	6

Describe.....

5. Describe the relationship within your (staff/management) group

Poor Excellent

1 2 3 4 5 6

Explain.....

(e) Describe the degree of helping within your (staff/management) group.

None or very little Very much

1 2 3 4 5 6

Describe.....

(f) Describe the degree of sharing within your (staff/management) group.

None or very little Very much

1 2 3 4 5 6

Describe .....

6. What is the level of caring in this organization as a whole?

None or very little Very much

1 2 3 4 5 6

Explain: .....

**(QUESTIONS: 18 – 21) FOR STAFF ONLY NOT TO BE ANSWERED BY MANAGEMENT)**

18. Using descriptive words or phrase, how would you describe the management's group as a group (your image of them)?

Cooperative/supportive	(4)
Having personal hidden agenda	(2)
Effective but sometimes selfish	(3)

Dominating	(2)
Lack managerial skills	(1)

19. How would you describe your own group (what is your description of your own group's image)?

Supportive/helpful/cooperation/effective/good	(6)
Some lack cooperation	(2)
Some knowledgeable than others	(1)
No cooperation	(1)

20. How free do you feel to ask for help from persons in the management organization?

Not at all						Very much
1	2	3	4	5		6
Don't feel free						(3)
Feel free						(4)
Not always free to ask						(1)

21. How frequently do you actually ask for help from the management organization?

Seldom						Often
1	2	3	4	5		6
One sided						(1)
In crisis						(4)
Often						(1)
Only on issues concerned learners						(1)

**(QUESTIONS: 22 – 25) (FOR MANAGEMENT ONLY)**

22. Using descriptive word or phrase, how would you describe the staff group as a group (your image of them)?

No intact, no motivation, no vision, different visions  
Dedicated  
Average to above average

23. How would you describe your own group (self-image)?

Much better than staff members

Uncertainty and frustrated

Well functioning

24. How free do you feel to ask for help from persons in the staff group?

Not at all

Very much

1

2

3

4 = (1)

5 = (3) 6 = (3)

Know who to asks but challenge the other 2% frequently

25. How frequently do you actually ask for help from the staff organization?

Seldom

Often

1

2

3

4 = (1) 5 = (5)

6 = (1)

Regularly – depend on the need

### **TO BE ANSWERED BY ALL MEMBERS**

#### **(UTILIZATION OF INDIVIDUALS)**

Please circle the appropriate number on each item.

26. How “in” do you feel on important school matters?

Not “in at” all

Very “in”

1 = (2)

2 = (3)

3 = (1)

4 = (4)

5 = (2)

6 = (2)

27. How “in” would you like to feel on important school matters?

Not at all

Very much

1

2 = (1)

3

4 = (1)

5 = (6)

6 = (4)

### **HOW MUCH INFLUENCE DO YOU FEEL YOU HAVE ON THE FOLLOWING ITEMS?**

28. Policy decisions affecting your subject area?

No influence

Very influential





Smooth running of school – open communication	(2)
So much to change – I don't know where to start	(1)
Personal involvement with parents	(1)
Try to know learners grade 8-12	(1)
Everyday have assembly prayers (for discipline improvement)	(1)
Create platform where every one feels needed and important	(1)
Improve relationship between staff and management as well as Colleagues among each other	(5)
Being fair, transparent in all aspects communicate	(1)
Improve learners' discipline	(2)
Try to put teachers suggestions in practice	(1)
Teach staff members to have respect, loyalty, self-confidence, Be effective and motivated	(1)
Involve staff members in any organizational change endeavour	(1)

36. Is there anything you want to add that I haven't covered?

No (7)

Prefers to say descantly (1)

Back biting and hatred cause mistrust and lack of cooperation (1)

Stop over reacting and making simple issues big (1)

Always encourage and motivate learners (1)

## **APPENDIX G: OD INTERVENTION - INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

5. The past 9 months we have been involved in an OD process at our school. How did you experience the whole OD process? What was it like
5. OD is a change approach; do you think Namibian teachers are ready for this approach to change?
6. What specifically struck you about OD?
7. Communication was identified as one of the key areas that needed attention. After the workshop on communication, are there any observable changes within the organization?
8. If we could turn back the clock, which things could we/I have done differently?
9. What are the general feelings of your colleagues on the whole OD process?
10. For your what are the most challenges of OD?
11. Would you recommend OD approach at other Namibian schools? Why/Why not?
9. Does the school has any idea on how to make OD part of the school's daily life?

## APPENDIX H: EVALUATION FORMS OF INTRODUCTION WORKSHOP

APPENDIX H: EVALUATION FORMS OF INTRODUCTION WORKSHOP

1. Introduction

2. Objectives

3. Content

4. Method

5. Evaluation

6. Conclusion

7. Recommendation

8. Signature

9. Date

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## APPENDIX I: EVALUATION FORMS FOR SURVEY-DATA-FEEDBACK

The image shows two evaluation forms. The top form is titled 'APPENDIX I: EVALUATION FORM FOR SURVEY-DATA-FEEDBACK' and contains a series of questions and checkboxes. The bottom form is titled 'APPENDIX II: EVALUATION FORM FOR SURVEY-DATA-FEEDBACK' and contains a series of questions and checkboxes. Both forms are designed to collect feedback on the survey data feedback process.

**APPENDIX I: EVALUATION FORM FOR SURVEY-DATA-FEEDBACK**

1. How useful was the information provided in the survey data feedback report?

2. How clear was the information provided in the survey data feedback report?

3. How easy was it to understand the information provided in the survey data feedback report?

4. How helpful was the information provided in the survey data feedback report?

5. How satisfied are you with the information provided in the survey data feedback report?

6. How likely are you to use the information provided in the survey data feedback report?

7. How likely are you to recommend the survey data feedback report to others?

8. How likely are you to contact the organization providing the survey data feedback report?

9. How likely are you to provide feedback to the organization providing the survey data feedback report?

10. How likely are you to provide feedback to the organization providing the survey data feedback report?

11. How likely are you to provide feedback to the organization providing the survey data feedback report?

12. How likely are you to provide feedback to the organization providing the survey data feedback report?

13. How likely are you to provide feedback to the organization providing the survey data feedback report?

14. How likely are you to provide feedback to the organization providing the survey data feedback report?

15. How likely are you to provide feedback to the organization providing the survey data feedback report?

16. How likely are you to provide feedback to the organization providing the survey data feedback report?

17. How likely are you to provide feedback to the organization providing the survey data feedback report?

18. How likely are you to provide feedback to the organization providing the survey data feedback report?

19. How likely are you to provide feedback to the organization providing the survey data feedback report?

20. How likely are you to provide feedback to the organization providing the survey data feedback report?

**APPENDIX II: EVALUATION FORM FOR SURVEY-DATA-FEEDBACK**

1. How useful was the information provided in the survey data feedback report?

2. How clear was the information provided in the survey data feedback report?

3. How easy was it to understand the information provided in the survey data feedback report?

4. How helpful was the information provided in the survey data feedback report?

5. How satisfied are you with the information provided in the survey data feedback report?

6. How likely are you to use the information provided in the survey data feedback report?

7. How likely are you to recommend the survey data feedback report to others?

8. How likely are you to contact the organization providing the survey data feedback report?

9. How likely are you to provide feedback to the organization providing the survey data feedback report?

10. How likely are you to provide feedback to the organization providing the survey data feedback report?

11. How likely are you to provide feedback to the organization providing the survey data feedback report?

12. How likely are you to provide feedback to the organization providing the survey data feedback report?

13. How likely are you to provide feedback to the organization providing the survey data feedback report?

14. How likely are you to provide feedback to the organization providing the survey data feedback report?

15. How likely are you to provide feedback to the organization providing the survey data feedback report?

16. How likely are you to provide feedback to the organization providing the survey data feedback report?

17. How likely are you to provide feedback to the organization providing the survey data feedback report?

18. How likely are you to provide feedback to the organization providing the survey data feedback report?

19. How likely are you to provide feedback to the organization providing the survey data feedback report?

20. How likely are you to provide feedback to the organization providing the survey data feedback report?

## APPENDIX J: EVALUATION FORMS FOR COMMUNICATION WORKSHOP

**APPENDIX J: EVALUATION FORMS FOR COMMUNICATION WORKSHOP**

**Participant Feedback**

1. How useful was the information presented?

2. How clear was the presentation?

3. How well did the facilitator manage the session?

4. How well did the group work together?

5. How well did the group communicate?

6. How well did the group understand the concepts?

7. How well did the group apply the concepts?

8. How well did the group evaluate the concepts?

9. How well did the group synthesize the concepts?

10. How well did the group create a plan of action?

11. How well did the group implement the plan of action?

12. How well did the group evaluate the results of the plan of action?

13. How well did the group synthesize the results of the plan of action?

14. How well did the group create a final report?

15. How well did the group present the final report?

16. How well did the group receive feedback on the final report?

17. How well did the group use the feedback to improve the final report?

18. How well did the group use the feedback to improve the workshop?

19. How well did the group use the feedback to improve the communication workshop?

20. How well did the group use the feedback to improve the communication workshop?

## APPENDIX K: EXAMPLES OF PROBLEM SOLVING ISSUES ON COMMUNICATION



## **APPENDIX L: MINUTES OF PROBLEM SOLVING MEETING**

MINUTES OF THE OD MEETING HELD IN THE STAFF ROOM 12 NOVEMBER 2003

Present:

18 Teachers  
1 Special quest  
1 facilitator

Absent: Study leave (1)  
Sick leave (1)  
Marking (3)

This meeting was a continuation of the meeting held on the 5<sup>th</sup> November 2003.

A ball was in the hand of a participant when speaking.

### **1. Financial report**

It was mentioned that at the end of a trimester the staff should received a detailed financial report.

A question was raised about the deposit made but without an explanation. It was explained that the codes are referring what deposit is for.

Payment made out of the development fund for supervision when teacher absent was raised. An explanation was given that other schools are doing the same by using school funds and fundraising money to pay the relief teacher. The Education Act stipulate that nobody must be paid out of the development fund, how is the situation now, that supervisors are paid out of matric fund raised, etc? The suggestion was made that the relieve teachers must be paid out of fundraising function, like Miss Shetu Shaamu, etc. that must be started early in the next year. The teacher mentioned that we should bring in other measures to help boosting the fund. The other method could be applied that teachers has to contribute N\$10.00 to help pay the supervisors. Register classes and all the teachers must be involved in fund raising. It was felt that teachers were there to teach and not to collect money. The teachers should not carry the whole responsibility. It is high time that parents get involved in fund raising for their children's education. The school must look into ways how to get parents' involvement.

The development fund is also a duty of the school board members (parents) to find out how the money is paid. It was also mentioned that the agreement are signed, but class teachers don't know it.

Typing of examination question papers by the secretary and payment made in this matter

was raised. It was mentioned that the teachers should make use of the computers at an institution special for teachers. There are computers available, but the teachers are not using it. It was also mentioned that teacher XX offered free computer classes the whole first trimester, but only 6 teachers attended the classes. The computer room is mostly open throughout the week, sometimes until 4h30. Any teacher who wants to make use of the computer class must arrange with teacher XX for the keys.

It was agreed that a financial planning meeting should be held to plan for next year in advance.

The Mr YY (special guest) explained that the purpose of fund raising and stress that teachers should sacrifice their time to plan. The fact that people are not working as one group but in small groups will not succeed, but as one team. Due to time constraint, Mr YY was not given the platform to explain how finance procedure works, hence it was suggested not to rush over issues. Therefore the next meeting was scheduled for the 19<sup>th</sup> November 2003 at 2h30 in the staff room.

The meeting adjourns.



## APPENDIX M: MICRO-DESIGN FOR THE COMMUNICATION WORKSHOP

### PRE-ARRANGEMENTS

Preparation of the staff room (arrange chairs and tables)

Five-square-puzzle envelopes

Chalkboard

“A photographer”

A big poster - **Johari Awareness Model**

Handout on **communication**

Newsprints, kokie pens,

Evaluation forms

### AGENDA FOR THE OD COMMUNICATION WORKSHOP

VENUE: *Shetu Shaamu Secondary School staff room.*      DATE: 2 June 2003

TIME: 9H00

5. Welcome and introduction
6. Ice-breaker – Five-square-puzzle exercise
7. Objectives of the workshop
8. Expectations of participants
9. Types of communications
10. Features of effective interpersonal communication
11. Interpersonal communication skills
12. The way ahead
13. Evaluation and closure

## APPENDIX N: MICRO-DESIGN FOR THE PROBLEM SOLVING MEETING

### PRE-ARRANGEMENTS:

Preparation of the staff room (arrange chairs and tables)  
Beach ball  
Overhead projector  
Copies of financial report (from the treasurer)  
Evaluation forms

### AGENDA FOR THE OD PROBLEM SOLVING MEETING

VENUE: *Shetu Shaamu* Secondary School *staff room* DATE: 12 November 2003

TIME: 2H30

5. Opening and welcome
6. Select secretary and chairperson
7. Ice-breaker (ball throw throughout the meeting)
- 8. Financial report**
9. Evaluation and closure