

**AN ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTION IN A
NAMIBIAN RURAL SCHOOL IN OHANGUENA REGION**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

(Educational Leadership and Management)

of

RHODES UNIVERSITY

by

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December 2009

Abstract

Post independent Namibia adopted a decentralization policy which involved the transfer of decision-making powers and administrative authority from central government to government institutions, including schools, with a view to improving quality. However, despite new educational policies, Namibian educators continue to operate in a non-participatory manner and are unprepared for their role as change agents. This has created tension between the espoused benefits of decentralizing and the reality in schools. In such a turbulent situation schools need to be helped to understand the complexity of change in order to adapt, and OD plays a crucial role in this regard. OD is a consciously thought of and systematically implemented organization-wide improvement effort which aims at increasing organizational effectiveness and health through action research. Rather than a top-down change approach, the OD practice adopts a bottom-up approach to change.

This study introduced and investigated an OD intervention in a Namibian rural school in Ohangwena Education Region, with the purpose of exploring participants' perceptions and experience of the process and of the possible short-term outcome of the intervention. Its findings could be of significance to educators, organizations and future OD researchers. The study is an action research case study located in the interpretive and critical paradigms. Multiple data collection tools were used during this study, namely observations, structured one-to-one interviews and focus group interviews. Interpretive analysis was used as the data analysis approach.

The study found that despite OD being new to participants, it was embraced as a change strategy as it made significant impact on their understanding of organizations and conception of change which is radically different from the common top-down approach to change. The intervention further empowered participants with new skills of initiating change and problem-solving strategies. Apart from that, the intervention yielded a positive short-term outcome which motivated participants to adopt and apply OD in the future without underestimating challenges associated with the process.

Acknowledgement

First of all I would like to glorify the Almighty God for making it possible for me to engage in this study and for spearheading the entire process. Had it not been for His blessings, mercy and kindness all efforts would have been fruitless. I am also strongly indebted to the following individuals whose contributions and advice made the successful accomplishment of this study possible.

Professor Hennie van der Mescht, whose diligent, tireless and unselfish supervision accompanied by constant support and encouragement kept me on track during my study. Prof, you served as my inspiration. There were times when I required specific guidance in OD, hence my gratitude goes to Dr Clive Smith for his guidance and direction in that regard.

A word of thanks goes to the Rhodes University Education Department librarian, Mrs Judy Cornwell, who rendered her service to me with humbleness when I was in need. Judy, you are a true servant leader and your contribution to the Rhodes education students will always be valued.

To Yambuka Primary School staff members, my study was highly interactive and required much sacrifice of your time but you granted it to me. Your undivided contribution and support to the success of this study was enormous and deserves to be acknowledged. I am also highly indebted to Mr Hendrick Shiweda who took up my work load while I was on study leave, brother you are the man. Had it not been for your support and courage to face challenges, my study leave would not have been approved. Thanks once more for that.

I further want to extend special gratitude to my beloved family. My thanks go to my wife Rosalia and our children, Kongo, Ndeshi, Fortune and Faith for their understanding, emotional support and motivation throughout my study. I am sure it was not easy to live without my attention and full support as the head of the family for a year but you persevered. I owe you guys more than I can express here.

Finally I want to thank my colleagues, T.K. Ponny, Pontianus, Markus, Lydia, Mighty, Willem and Alima for mutual assistance, competition-driven motivation and comradeship spirit. You made the team strong, determined and focused for success and positive achievement.

Dedication

This work is dedicated to my late grandmother, Helmi Nakanyala (Gwaanaka), the foundation and tap root of the Kashikatu family's legacy. Granny served as my mentor and role model as she inculcated and planted the seeds of the value of education, hard work and focus on achieving individual visions despite hardship and challenges.

I further want to dedicate this thesis to my parents, Martha and Simon Kashikatu, for preserving the legacy of learning, facilitated by their support and encouragement in both physical as well as psychological needs in my life. The manner in which they raised and groomed me contributed massively to who I am and what I can do today.

Thanks a lot once more.

Uha pandula novaka.

Declaration

I, the undersigned, Lukas Kashikatu, hereby declare that this thesis is my own work, that it has not been submitted for a degree or examination at any other university and that all sources I have used are properly quoted and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signed.....

December 2009

Acronyms used in the thesis

CASS	Continuous Assessment
FSC	Future Search Conference
HOD	Head of Department
MIT	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
MoE	Ministry of Education
MRLGH	Ministry of Regional, Local Governments and Housing
OD	Organization Development
RCGD	Research Center for Group Dynamics
SDF	Survey Data Feedback
STP	Situation Pathways and Target
STS	Socio-Technical Systems
T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6	Teacher1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Context

One of the developmental initiatives adopted by post-independence Namibia was the decentralization policy, implemented in 1992 (Namibia. Ministry of Regional, Local Government and Housing (MRLGH), 1997, p. 16). This policy involved the transfer of decision-making powers, administrative authority and responsibility from central government to localized levels of government institutions, including schools, with a view to improving quality. The policy constituted a radical change from the previous dispensation in which education was governed in a top-down, autocratic way.

However, recent history reveals that the Namibian education system has not fully embraced the principles of decentralizing. Management and leadership related literature based in a Namibian context shows that educators continue to operate in a bureaucratic, non-participatory manner and that they are unprepared for their new role as change agents, despite new educational policies (Namibia. MoE, 2007a; Namibia. MoE, 2007b; Namibia. MoE, 2008; Pomuti, 2009). This situation presents a mismatch between the espoused benefits of decentralization and the reality in schools. In such turbulent circumstances schools need to be helped to understand the complexity of change in order to adapt. In this context Organization Development (OD) is playing an increasingly important role in helping organizations change themselves, hence my interest in exploring the effectiveness of OD in schools in a Namibian context.

OD is a planned change intervention based on normative-re-educative and empirical-rational strategies (Smith, 2003, p. 3). A planned change is one which is consciously thought about and systematically implemented (Smith, 2003). Some of the key assumptions underpinning OD are that people are rational and follow rational self-interest; that people can modify their norms when they realize the benefit of the envisaged change effort as well as when they realize that the existing norms can no longer work (Smith, 2003). OD adopts a set of values and assumptions which distinguishes it from other change theories in terms of its methods, goals, and practice.

OD asserts respect of humankind, and posits that reasonable progress is desirable and that people should be treated in a fair, just, equitable manner and that they should be free from the misuse of power. Therefore OD values tend to be humanistic, optimistic and democratic in nature (French & Bell, 1995, pp. 68-69).

In OD, it is generally believed that “Improvements at the school level that last are those which are identified, understood, owned and addressed by members of the school staff” (Gainey, 1993, p. 8). Therefore a central feature of OD is widespread participation and involvement of organization members in the change intervention. This requires an OD strategy that includes a series of activities, each intended to achieve an outcome that moves the organization towards the desired goal (French & Bell, 1995, p. 2). These include a process of diagnosing, taking action, re-diagnosing and taking new action, which suggests an approach similar to action research (French & Bell, 1995, p. 7). Action research employs a participative cycle of activities involving process initiation, process agreement, data collection, data analysis and feedback, data exploration and interpretation, action planning based on the outcome of the data interpretation, and implementation of the action plan (French & Bell, 1995, p. 7; Smith, 2003, p. 21).

OD has a number of intervention designs of which Survey Data Feedback (SDF) is one. SDF involves a sequential process of collecting data by the facilitator, organizing it for feedback, creating a setting in which feedback will occur, presenting the feedback, helping participants select issues on which problem-solving will focus, and lastly facilitating the actual problem-solving effort (Schmuck & Runkel, 1994, p. 365). This design has become the most frequently used in the OD field because it resonates strongly with the OD philosophy of sharing power with participants at all stages of the change process through gathering and analysis of data with constant feedback sessions (Schmuck & Runkel, 1994, p. 75). This was therefore the OD intervention design used in conducting this research. Previous OD studies carried out in the USA (Schmuck & Runkel, 1994), in South Africa (Davidoff & Lazarus, 2002; Mitchell, 2004), and in Namibia (Neshila, 2004; Hausiku, 2004; Layne, 2004 and Perestrelo, 2008) show that OD has the potential to be an effective change initiative in both educational and other organizations.

1.2 Rationale for the study

Society today expects its citizens to be capable of proactively dealing with change at a society and organizational level. This change occurs both individually as well as collaboratively in a context of dynamic, multicultural global transformations (Fullan, 1993, p. 4). This expectation frames the rationale for this study, which aimed at conducting an Organization Development (OD) intervention in a given organization (a rural school in Ohangwena Region of Namibia).

The purpose of the study was to explore the potential of OD to bring about a mindset that makes it possible for a school to understand the role it could play in bringing about a lasting change in a decentralized education system where proactive problem-solving becomes a way of working.

1.3 Research goals and potential value

The research goal was to conduct and investigate an OD intervention as an approach to planned change in a Namibian rural school. To be able to achieve this goal I attempted to seek responses to the following research questions:

- ✚ What was the participants' experience of the OD process?
- ✚ How did participants perceive OD as an approach to change in their context?
- ✚ How did participants perceive and experience the short-term outcome of the intervention?

This study could be of potential significance to educators and educational leaders who are continuously faced with challenges posed by constant change in education on one hand and circumstances attributed to local organizational contexts on the other. In addition, the study may be of interest to members of any organization that plans to engage into effective change; and may also encourage further OD research in a Namibian context.

1.4 Research methodology

This research was an action research case study located in the interpretive and critical paradigms. The case for the study was an OD intervention conducted in a single rural Namibian school. I

engaged in intensive interaction with participants as both a facilitator and a co-learner with the aim of understanding their experience and perception of the OD process. Of the different types of action research, participative action research best served the purpose of OD. I employed action research phases as discussed in Chapter 3.

The interpretive paradigm allowed me as the researcher to understand and interpret participants' experience and perceptions of the OD process well. The study fell also into the critical paradigm as it involved raising participants' awareness of the role they could play in a self-organizational improvement effort that is radical to a top-down, imposed approach to change. Apart from that it also had the potential to empower participants to exercise their own agency in improving their organization in future using the OD approach.

According to Conole, "qualitative research uses multiple data collection methods that are interactive and humanistic" (1998, p. 16). In light of this idea, I used multiple data collection methods during the research in an attempt to gather qualitative data, namely observation, semi-structured one-to-one and focus group interviews.

I analyzed the transcripts from semi-structured and focus group interviews using an interpretive analysis (Richards, 2005, p. 88) by coding and grouping the data into categories from which themes emerged (Maxwell, 2005, p. 96). This is in line with Cresswell's (2003) argument that "qualitative research is fundamentally interpretive" (p. 182). Furthermore, the quality of this study was maintained through adherence to research ethical issues, exposing data for member checking as well as by using multiple data collection methods which allowed triangulation. As Bush (2002) states, "triangulation is fundamentally a device for improving validity by checking data either by using mixed methods or by involving a range of participants" (p. 70).

1.5 Thesis outline

This thesis consists of five chapters including the introduction. In Chapter 2 the theoretical and methodological framework which underpin and inform the study are presented, drawing on change as well as Organization Development (OD) theories. This leads to Chapter 3, which

outlines the methodology for the study. In this chapter the research and data collection methods are discussed, as well as the data analysis approach employed during the study within the interpretive and critical paradigmatic framework. In addition, ethical and validity issues considered during the study are presented, as well as the limitations encountered during the study.

Chapter 4 presents two sections: on data presentation and discussion. The first section presents data in terms of the ethnographic background of the research site, and a narrative account of the OD phases and of participants' experience and perception of the OD process. Discussion of data is dealt with in the second section. During the discussion I attempt to link the findings to literature as presented in Chapter 2.

In the last chapter of the thesis, Chapter 5, I summarize the findings for the study and discuss their potential significance. This is followed by recommendations for practice and limitations of the study, as well as recommendations for future research. The last part of the chapter presents a closing remark for the entire study.

Chapter 2

Literature review

2.1 Introduction

According to Meyer and Botha (2004), “Organizations globally are challenged with a very volatile, fast changing environment” (p. 23). They further argue that only those organizations that develop the capacity to change constantly will survive in this environment (Meyer & Botha, 2004). On that basis this study aims at conducting an Organization Development (OD) intervention in a given organization (a school) with the view of investigating the effectiveness of the change approach and of exploring the participants’ experience and perception of the process. Hence, the study is both learning and a change process. In this chapter, the theories that have the potential to inform organization change are discussed. The chapter comprises two main theories: change, and Organization Development (OD) as a planned change theory. Under change theories, aspects of change and systems and complexity theories are discussed as they have practical implications for organization change. The OD section covers aspects of the theoretical and practical framework of OD. However, the two key theories of change are interwoven, and inform each other as I try to convey throughout the chapter. I also attempt – as far as possible – to illustrate the relevance of these theories to my study.

2.2 Organization change

2.2.1 Meaning of the concept ‘change’

Due to socio-economic challenges, change and renewal are perceived as universal requirements for ongoing group and organizational life (Smith, 2003, p. 1). At the organizational level, the turbulent rate of change and the innovation experienced in the operating context of organizations are equally evident, and the competitive pressures that give rise to major organizational change are becoming stronger (Van Tonder, 2004, p. 4). This triggers the question of what change really is. Meyer and Botha (2000) define change as the movement of people from a current state to a different, improved and desired new state (p. 223). Change, according to French and Bell (1995),

“means the new state of things is different from the old state of things” (p. 3), while Van Tonder (2004) understands change as a process which is dynamic or bound to time, and clearly not discrete. He argues “Change is evident in a difference in the state and/or condition within a state of an entity (organization)” (p. 6). These definitions focus on change from an old to a new state of doing things. Some definitions are more elaborate and have extra features, which confirms Evans’s (1996) argument that change means different things to different people, in fact, it usually means something different to each and every individual in terms of perspective and focus (p. 21). It is on this basis that the study introduces OD change to participants in a given organization, which has the potential to provide them with new set of lenses to view change.

In an attempt to explain how change occurs, James and Connolly (2000) remark that change is simply a matter of learning to do things differently, which in reality is extremely complex, especially if the change is significant (p. 16). Furthermore, change may be imposed upon us, or we may initiate it and carry it through ourselves (James & Connolly, 2000). However, change as a process is characterized by particular traits.

Some of the characteristics of change, according to Evans (1996), are that most of the changes are slow, incremental, and often barely noticeable; they are rarely rapid, formal, or overt, and some changes are almost never sought (p. 25). However, change of any kind “upsets the patterns we are accustomed to and thrusts us into new roles, new relationships, and new perceptions, challenging the way we cope with life” (Evans, 1996, p. 27). Understanding this feeling is crucial for the effective and successful implementation of change.

2.2.2 Resistance to change

James and Connolly (2000) regard change as an interesting idea, as it is all around us, and it is difficult if not impossible to escape from it, but any degree of change, they argue, “seems likely the organization’s ‘immune system’ will start to resist the infection from new ideas and practices” (p. 16). Change agents are reminded that any change initiative is not resistance free and readiness for it is required, which is another factor in this study.

Resistance to change is further elaborated on by Gustav (cited in Fink & Stoll, 1998, p. 299) as he relates the possible cause of resistance to and ambivalence about change. Gustav refers to people who are normally “afraid of drastic innovations, partly because they prefer the familiar, and partly because the vested interests of most people are normally bound up with the existing set-up”. He further remarks that any transition engenders mixed feelings, and understanding these feelings is crucial to successful implementation of change (Fink & Stoll, 1998).

Resistance to change is further perpetuated by the complex nature of change. As mentioned earlier, change may either come about because it is imposed on us or because we voluntarily participate in or even initiate it when we find dissatisfaction, inconsistency, or intolerability in our current situation. Whatever the case, “the meaning of change will be unclear at the outset and ambivalence will pervade the transition” (Marris, cited in Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991, p. 31).

Similarly, James and Connolly (2000) contend that change is complex because it is inextricably linked to our emotions. Imposed change can call up anger at the imposition and denial of personal autonomy, sorrow at the sense of loss of the old, and anxiety at the uncertainty that the new will bring. Self-initiated change is also intertwined with excitement at the anticipation of the new, relief that the old will be left behind, and again anxiety because of uncertainty and the unknown events that have been set in motion (p. 16). However, they remind us of the fact that emotional responses and ambivalence are essentially non-rational by definition, hence their management is crucial in change management (James & Connolly, 2000). This calls for effective leadership and management skills as well as extensive knowledge of organization improvement of individuals as well as organizations.

2.2.3 Organizational capacity for effective change

Evans (1996) argues that our capacity for changing the way we work and the way we educate our workers is critical to our ability to thrive in the 21st century (p. 24). Fullan (1993) further describes change by saying that what appears to be a linear track becomes a new world. He further argues that it is no longer sufficient to study factors associated with the success or failure of the latest innovation, it is no longer acceptable to separate planned from unplanned change, it is only by raising our consciousness and insight about the totality of change that we can do something about it (p. vii). He further argues that “it is not

possible to solve the ‘change problem’ but we can learn to live with it more proactively and more productively” (Fullan, 1993, p. vii).

Fullan (1999) in his book *Change forces: the sequel*, remarks that it is a theoretical impossibility to generate a theory that applies to all situations (p. 21). Theories of change can simply guide thinking and actions, but the reality of organization complexity tells us that “each situation will have a degree of uniqueness in its history and make up which will cause unpredictable differences to emerge” (Fullan, 1999). Based on Fullan’s views, organizations should therefore adapt to the current change and prepare themselves for even greater rates of change in the future, if they are to exist and grow.

Evans (1996) argues that, “change does indeed promise growth, mastery, development, and renewal” (p. 24). But according to Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991) real change, whether desired or not, represents a serious personal and collective experience characterized by ambivalence and uncertainty, as alluded to earlier, and “if the change works out it can result in a sense of mastery, accomplishment, and professional growth” (p. 32).

However, successful organization change requires a concerted effort. As Fullan (1999) asserts, if change attempts are to be successful, individuals and groups must find meaning concerning what should change as well as how to go about it (p. 20), and this depends on the response of the organization to change. In addition, Smith (2003) affirms, organizations that will not, that resist, that cannot, that are incapable, that lack the confidence or that believe it is impossible to change, are likely to stagnate and die (p. 1).

While there is a high demand for organizations to maintain constant change and adapt to a complex environment, Fink and Stoll (1998) caution that too much change can sometimes be more harmful than no change at all (p. 301). Therefore, change agents should strike a balance when introducing change.

Organizations are living systems and they operate in a complex environment, hence organization change activities can be examined in terms of a framework of systems and complexity theories.

2.2.4 Systems theory

Systems theory is one of the most powerful conceptual tools available for understanding the dynamics of organization and organization change (French & Bell, 1995, p. 89).

Ludwig Von Bertalanffy coined the concept of organization as a 'living system' in 1950, and Katz and Kahn applied the idea to organisations in 1966 for the first time (French & Bell, 1995, p. 89; Amagoh, 2008, p. 2). According to Smith (2003), a system refers to a bounded whole which has an identifiable inside (organization) open to an identifiable outside (environment) (p. 9).

While the closed system approach considers the external environment and the organization's interaction to be for the most part insignificant, an open system approach views the organization's interaction with the external environment as vital for organizational survival and success (Amagoh, 2008, p. 2). It is therefore essential that an organization has clear and effective communication channels with its environment to enable it to understand and harness this influence in the interests of the organization, which is crucial during the change process (Smith, 2003, p. 9). An organization that disregards its environment is likely to be strangled and die (Smith, 2003.).

The systems' constituent parts are said to be interrelated, interconnected, and interdependent. A change in one part of the system influences the rest of the system and this is called synergy, which holds the view that the sum of the parts is greater than the sum of the whole (Smith, 2003, p. 9; French & Bell, 1995, p. 89; Amagoh, 2008, p. 3). This systems' view emphasizes the fact that organization change will be effective, successful and satisfying when the force of synergy in an organization is harnessed (Smith, 2003, p. 10).

Open systems have purposes and goals which should align with purposes and needs in the environment (French & Bell, 1995, p. 90). Thus, feedback in the form of information, both from within the system and from the environment, about the system's performance is crucial, because it measures the extent to which the organization achieves its goal and purposes, and to what

extent these goals and purposes are in line with the environmental needs (Perestrelo, 2008, p. 23).

Systems can have sub-systems, which make the system become more specialized and complex. A complex organization, according to Smith (2003), can easily fragment and lose its focus, therefore well thought-out organization structures as well as effective communication structures and processes are essential in maintaining the organization's momentum (p. 11).

Another characteristic of open systems is equifinality, premised on the idea that there is no best way to achieve a particular outcome. Organization members together construct a system that best meets their aspirations, goals, and needs (Smith, 2003, p. 11; French & Bell, 1995, p. 91). This view reminds change practitioners to be context-sensitive in their practices.

Socio-technical systems (STS) are another feature of open systems, which hold that organizations comprise both a human (social) and a work (technical) system that are interdependent (Smith, 2003, p. 11). This idea holds that an ideal organization should optimize both systems for maximum individual satisfaction as well as high productivity. It is against this background that systems theory and systems thinking are invaluable for effective change (French & Bell, 1995, p. 94).

Systems theory is not without its criticism. Beeson & Davis, as cited in Amagoh (2008), argue that the application of system theory to organization change with its emphasis on environment, feedback and adaptive responses, assumes that management is the control centre which directs the organization's operations (p. 5). Based on this criticism, it is worth considering a more transformative model of organization change derived on the ideas of dynamic, non-linear systems, which seems to be captured by complexity theory (Amagoh, 2008, p. 5).

2.2.5 Complexity theory

The concept 'complexity' derives from the Latin root meaning 'to entwine'; the notion that an organism interacts dynamically with its environment, influencing and, in turn, being influenced by its environment, is a key principle of the emerging science of complexity (Morrison, 2002, p. 5).

The theory is an attempt to explain how an open system operates, as seen through holistic spectacles. Morrison (2002) states that according to complexity theory a system can be described as a collection of interacting parts which, together function as a whole; it has boundaries and properties. This interaction is complicated and cannot be predicted by linear equations because there are so many variables involved that the behaviour of the system can only be understood as an 'emerging consequence' of the sum of the constituent elements (pp. 7-8). McMillan (2004) sees complex science as concerned with the study of the dynamics of complex adaptive systems, which are non-linear, have self-organizing attributes and emergent properties (p. 25). These are discussed below.

2.2.5.1 Complex systems are characterised by dynamic interactions of elements

Complex adaptive systems comprise many interacting elements, which cause new elements to form and as result new phenomena, new structures and new rules of behaviour occur. Each element influences and in turn is influenced by the other elements in the system, and together they give rise to emergent new forms whose nature and structure are hard to predict (Morrison, 2002, p. 12). In an organizational change context, this view holds that each organization is unique with its own culture, its own environment, and its own complex web of living individuals. Thus transferring a set of organizational change initiatives and successful models from one organization to another cannot yield similar results (McMillan, 2004, p. 87). In line with this idea, this study is based in a specific context with its unique attributes as discussed above, hence participants' experience and perception of the process cannot be generalized.

2.2.5.2 A complex system self-organizes in connected networks

Morrison (2002) further states that order emerges through the self-organization of interacting elements and constant self-readjustment of the system. Re-organization takes place at points where an existing organism (organization) becomes so unstable that it has the possibility to develop in several different ways, and the new form cannot be predicted. Moments of decision occur simultaneously with problems, situations, and choice opportunities (p. 14).

Stacey (cited in Morrison, 2002) suggests that self-organization is a process in which organization teams and groups form themselves spontaneously around issues, with the participants themselves deciding what their boundaries will be. This can work against the management hierarchies, as order emerges from within and cannot be imposed (p. 14).

2.2.5.3 The system's self-reorganization yields emergence

Systems possess the ability to self-organize, with an organization emerging from itself as the result of the interaction between the organism and its environment, and new structures emerge that could not initially have been envisioned (Morrison, 2002, p. 22; Seel, 2000, p. 5). Self-organization sometimes leads the system to the edge of chaos (Morrison, 2002).

When the system is balanced on the edge of chaos, “it is neither too rigid so that it ossifies and dies, nor too chaotic that it disintegrates into disorder and anarchy” (McMillan, 2004, p. 94). Living at the edge of chaos has many advantages for the organization, for it is a good position to be in when the world is ever-changing. The organization can always experiment with different ways of doing things, and consequently avoid becoming stuck in one particular way of being (McMillan, 2004, p. 97). This requires a particular leadership approach, as discussed later in the chapter. In light of this, this study has the potential to transform participants’ perspective of organization change and to empower them to try new ways of doing things as far as organizational improvement is concerned.

Both systems and complexity theories form the basis of organizational change approaches that can be valuable in explaining the behaviour of organizations in coping with continuous change (Amagoh, 2008, p. 9). This study is located in an educational organization, hence, in the next part the concept of change in education is discussed.

2.2.6 Change in education

Change has always been a part of education. According to Fullan (1993) change in education refers to a fundamental shift of mind, and the study of this phenomenon started in earnest in the

1960s (p. vii). Fullan and Hargreaves, and Fullan and Milles (cited in Fullan, 1993), in their description of change in education state that “it is a world where change is a journey of unknown destination, where problems are our friends, where seeking assistance is a sign of strength, where simultaneous top-down, bottom-up initiatives merge, where collegiality and individualism co-exist in productive tension” (p. viii).

Fullan (1993) further argues that education, as an institution, has the potential of fundamentally dealing with change in the context of dynamic global transformations. He asks educators to see themselves and to be seen as experts in the dynamics of change, which can be facilitated by their quest to become skilled change agents with a moral purpose. In so doing they help produce greater capacity in society to cope with change (pp. 4-5).

Individual organizations’ culture and readiness to change play a major role in change. Evans (1996) claims that every organization is more than the sum of its individual members’ characteristics – it has traits of its own that shape its performance and adaptability. These traits affect innovation, both directly and through their impact on people indirectly. Therefore, “a school’s readiness – its organizational capacity to adopt and implement new innovations – is crucial to its success” (Evans, 1996, p. 119).

However, educational change is full of paradoxes such as caring versus competence, equity versus excellence and social versus economic development, because educational institutions are expected to provide a service to the society, therefore they should constantly adapt to local and global challenges, and these paradoxes can hinder change. Fullan (1993) advises that educators should not perceive these tensions as challenges but should reconcile them into powerful new forces for growth and development (p. 3). For this to happen, different organization change strategies (of which OD is one), leadership styles and communication networks are required, based on the grounds that “since no two schools are the same, there would appear to be no one best way to approach school improvement” (Fink & Stoll, 1998, p. 308).

Traditionally education change was dominated by a top-down approach to change that gave little or no opportunity for participative decision-making. This traditional approach calls for a different approach to education change as scholars suggest that change occurs best with a ‘top-down, bottom-up’ approach in which the large system provides direction and support to schools

through school-based decision-making and improvement planning (Fink & Stoll, 1998, p. 305). In the next section the school as an organization and change are discussed.

2.2.7 School as an organization and change

Fullan (cited in Davidoff & Lazarus, 2002) remarks that very often, when we think of educational change, we think of change that teachers need to make. This would allow teachers to improve their classroom setting by using new materials, developing new teaching methodologies, and possibly also changing old attitudes and values and developing new ones which suit new approaches (p. 41). They argue that we cannot develop an organization (school) without developing the people who work in the school, thus professional development is a necessary aspect of an organization and one way to achieving that is through OD (p. 41). As captured in the words of Bennis (cited in Davidoff & Lazarus, 2002):

Organization Development (OD) is a response to change, a complex educational strategy intended to change the beliefs, attitudes, values and structures of organizations so that they can better adapt to new technologies, markets and challenges, and the dizzying rate of change. (p. 42)

Furthermore, because an organization is a living entity, it needs to be developed all the time, and the essential purpose of OD according to Dalin and Rust:

is to improve the health and functioning of school organizations... Organization Development is holistic or systemic in that it concentrates on the organization more than on the isolated individuals or practice (cited in Davidoff & Lazarus, 2002, p. 42).

Therefore, OD can be described as a “normative re-educative strategy” for managing change, which is aimed at facilitating development of people and the organization as a whole for the purpose of optimizing human fulfillment and increasing organizational capacity (Davidoff & Lazarus, 2002, p. 42). In support, McMillan (2004) states that there is a widespread recognition that the ability to change and adapt to changing circumstances is necessary for organizational

survival and that embracing and enabling change are key management skills (p. 74). This is the theme of the next section.

2.2.8 Leadership and change

Successful organizational change needs leadership that does not waiver (Cummings & Worley, 2001, p. 171) as “in a changing environment the role of leaders is very critical in inspiring people to support and participate in the change initiative” (Susanto, 2008, p. 58). In support, French and Bell (1995, p. 291) suggest that the leadership practice required in an organization undergoing change must involve staff members at all levels of the organization. Delegation is critical for individuals’ empowerment, and important as the organization moves towards self-managed teams. Skills in consensus decision-making are required and individuals and teams need to see that they are influencing and contributing to the change effort.

Fink and Stoll (1998) argue that formal leaders not only need to foster coherence through organizational meaning but also to initiate, nurture and preserve relationships which promote organizational improvement. Furthermore, schools need a conception of leadership which recognizes the complexity of educational leadership roles necessary to face an unknowable future (p. 314). This suggests that schools which are able to confront complexity and confusion should be led by ‘leaders of leaders’, who lead less and disperse power, control, and resources to enable staff, students and other stakeholders to lead more (Fink & Stoll, 1998).

2.2.9 Implications of systems and complexity theories for leadership and management

Keene (2000) argues that we need to let go of the old leadership paradigm which is no longer capable of meeting the demands of leadership in an organization which is constantly changing (p. 18). She views the role of leaders in a complex environment as that of creating and determining the purpose of the organization – what is its identity and what is its overriding vision? – which determine the direction for the organization (system). She further argues that organization leadership should empower and explore potential of organization members to

become self-managed and productive co-creators of their organizational reality (Keene, 2000, p. 16). This can be achieved if leaders become servants who rely on the power of trust and stewardship in promoting collective change efforts in a complex and dynamic environment. Susanto (2008) asserts that leading and managing complex change requires leaders who have the capacity to learn from and adapt to change and to create organizational learning in an environment of openness and mutual trust that permits people to embrace change without feeling compelled (p. 54).

Furthermore, an understanding of systems and complexity theories enable organization leaders to facilitate and create an environment which allows elements within a system to interact freely, to create new forms of organizational reality, and to plan how best they can mobilize resources in order to bring about effective change (Amagoh, 2008, p. 9). Moreover, managers who are aware of the complex interactions of organization are better placed to understand the dynamics and behaviours of an organization and to guide strategy development (Amagoh, 2008). In the next section, planned change as one of the change approaches is discussed.

2.3 Planned change

According to Cummings and Worley, “conceptions of planned change have tended to focus on how change can be implemented in organizations” (2005, p. 22). Planned change theories describe the activities that must take place to initiate and carry out successful organizational change. In this section, types of planned change strategies are described. Planned change is defined as change that is consciously thought about and systematically implemented (Smith, 2003, p. 2). According to Chin and Benne, planned change is grouped into three strategies: empirical rational, power coercive and normative re-educative strategies (cited in French & Bell, 1995, p. 102).

2.3.1 Empirical rational strategies

This change strategy adopts an assumption that people are rational and will follow their rational self-interest, changing when they realize that the change is beneficial to them (French & Bell, 1995, p. 102; French & Bell, 1999, p. 95). The strategy involves the dissemination of knowledge and information, which are embraced by individuals once they realize that the change is in their best interests.

2.3.2 Power coercive strategies

These change strategies are based on the assumption that change occurs when people with less power in an organization comply with the demands of those with more power. This change effort is initiated externally and is characterized by authoritative and disempowering features, as these decisions are imposed (Smith, 2003, p. 3).

2.3.3 Normative re-educative strategies

Normative re-educative change is based on the assumption that norms form the foundation of behaviour, and change comes through a re-education process in which old norms are discarded and replaced by new ones. Chin and Benne elaborate this change strategy's nature:

These strategies build upon assumptions about human motivation different from those underlying the rational-empirical strategy but 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 system of individuals – normative outlooks that 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 change in normative orientations involve changes in attitudes, values, skills, and significant relationships, not just change in knowledge, information or intellectual rationales for action and practice (cited in French & Bell, 1995, p. 102-103).

Hence, holding normative re-educative strategies of changing, one presumes that norms and values should be changed, in addition to making the knowledge and information available to organizations. This can be done through educating members about new knowledge and re-educating them to change their norms and values. OD falls in the normative re-educative category, although it often reflects a combination of the normative re-educative and the empirical rational strategies.

2.4 Organization Development (OD)

Organization development (OD) is defined as:

a long term effort, led and supported by top management, to improve an organization's visioning, empowerment, learning, and problem-solving process, through an ongoing, collaborative management of organization culture - with special emphasis on the culture of intact work teams and other team configurations - using the consultant-facilitator role and theory and technology of applied behavioural science, including action research. (French & Bell, 1999, pp. 25-26)

OD helps leaders address and embrace change from a different perspective to the top-down approach to change and regard change as an opportunity, not just a threat (French & Bell, 1995, p. 3). Understanding the theoretical underpinning of studies of OD, and their impact, requires consideration of the historical development of this broad body of theory.

2.4.1 History

The history of OD can be traced back to 1946, from the work of Kurt Lewin (a prolific researcher, theorist, and practitioner in interpersonal, group, intergroup and community relations) together with his colleagues during their laboratory training work at the Research Center for Group Dynamics (RCGD) at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

This workshop led to the formation of T-groups: this refers to a small unstructured group in which participants learn from their own interactions and evolving dynamics about interpersonal relations, personal growth, leadership and group dynamics (Cummings & Worley, 2001, p. 6; French & Bell, 1995, p. 37; French & Bell, 1999, p. 32).

During the workshop two main conclusions were reached: feedback about group interaction is a rich learning experience, and the process of ‘group building’ has potential for learning that can be transformed to ‘back home’ situations (Cummings & Worley, 2001, p. 7). This discovery led to the formation of T-group institutions and conducting of further training programs in 1947.

In 1950s, the idea of T-groups expanded into business and industry programmes, with the efforts of Douglas McGregor and Richard Beckhard, and this application of T-groups in business companies spawned the term ‘Organization Development (OD)’ (Cummings & Worley, 2001).

However, Schmuck and Runkel (1994, p. 9) contend that the emergence of OD also has strong roots in the Hawthorne studies, which showed that workers would respond favourably, with high productivity, to interested and sympathetic attention from managers and supervisors: a finding which is radically different to the popular ‘scientific management’ theory that promoted the treatment of workers as machines. These findings became a part of the “human relations movement”, of which one important strand in its history is OD. OD practice is embedded in a strong values system, thus OD values, beliefs and assumptions are discussed in the next section.

2.4.2 OD values, beliefs and assumptions

A set of values, assumptions, and beliefs constitutes an integral part of OD, shaping the goals and methods of the field and distinguishing OD from other improvement strategies (French & Bell, 1999, p. 62). These values, assumptions and beliefs provide structure and stability for people as they attempt to understand the world around them (French & Bell, 1999).

OD values tend to be humanistic, optimistic, and democratic. Humanistic values proclaim the importance of the individual, respect of the whole person, treating people with respect and dignity, assuming that everyone has intrinsic worth, and viewing all people as having the

potential for growth and development (French & Bell, 1999, p. 62). These values prompted a search for better ways to run organizations and develop the people in them.

Optimistic values hold the view that people are good, that progress is possible and desirable in human affairs, and that rationality and goodwill are the tools for making progress (French & Bell, 1995, p. 69).

Democratic values assert the sanctity of the individual, the right of people to be free from arbitrary misuse of power, the importance of fair and equitable treatment for all, and the need for justice through the rule of law and due process (French & Bell, 1995, p. 69; Garrow, 2009, p. 3). Thus, the democratic values foster responsible involvement in the organization's goal setting, decision-making and problem-solving in the affairs that concern individuals and organizational work life (Hanson & Lubin, 1995, p. 35).

It is therefore crucial that OD consultants embrace and share these basic values, as they are facilitative in helping people and organizations to work more effectively. Similarly, participants are also likely to adopt and emulate these values in their work life after the OD intervention.

Apart from its value system, OD has a profound conceptual and theoretical framework which guides its practice, as discussed in the next section.

2.4.3 Key OD theories and concepts

2.4.3.1 Systems theory

The systems theory is one of the OD theories that regard organizations as open systems which are in active exchange with their environments (French & Bell, 1995, p. 89). This view of organizations is not discussed in detail here, since it has already been covered at the beginning of the chapter (see page10); however it is necessary to stress its implications in organizations. Some of these implications, according to French and Bell (1995, p. 93), are:

- ✚ In a system, issues, events, forces and incidents are not seen as isolated phenomena, but viewed in relation to each other.

- ✚ A system's view of an organization facilitates analysis of the organizational events from multiple cause perspectives.
- ✚ OD practitioners should expect multiple effects in their activities because a change on one part of a system has an influence on other parts.
- ✚ According to Kurt Lewin's field force, as discussed below, contemporary forces in the organization are relevant for analysis, by OD practitioners.
- ✚ The system cannot be changed in isolation from its parts, if one wants to change the system, one should also change its parts.

These implications inform this study as it focuses on the entire organization as a system, instead of subsystems. They further provide me with useful insights as an OD practitioner, and these are crucial for my study.

2.4.3.2 Lewin's change model

Kurt Lewin provides one of the fundamental models of planned change in which he conceives change as a modification of the forces that keep a system's behaviour stable. Lewin believes that "a particular behaviour at any moment in time is the result of two groups of forces: those striving to maintain the status quo and those pushing for change" (Cummings & Worley, 2005, p. 22). Furthermore, when both forces are equal, existing behaviours are maintained in a "quasi-stationary equilibrium" state. An increase in the forces pushing for change, or a decrease in the forces maintaining the current state, leads to a change of state (Cummings & Worley, 2005).

Lewin views this change process as comprising three steps (Cummings & Worley, 2005, p. 23-24):

2.4.3.2.1 Unfreezing

This step involves reducing those forces that maintain the organization's current behaviour. It can be accomplished through exposing the gap between the current and the desired behaviours in an organization, which may motivate members to engage in change activities.

2.4.3.2.2 Moving

The moving step includes intervening in the system to develop new behaviours, values and attitudes through changing the organizational structure and processes.

2.4.3.2.3 Refreezing

This step stabilizes the organization at a new state of equilibrium. It involves the use of supporting mechanisms that reinforce the new organization state.

This model provides a general framework for understanding organizational change, and for explaining how information technologies can be implemented more effectively.

2.4.3.3 Learning organization

According to Peter Senge in his book *The fifth discipline* (1990), learning organizations are:

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 aspirations are set free, and where people are continually learning to see the whole together. (Senge, 1990, p. 3)

Senge further states that the main reason for such organizations is that, in situations of rapid change, only those organizations that are flexible, adaptive, and productive will excel (Senge, 1990, p. 4).

However, for these organizations to excel requires continual expansion of their capacity and a fundamental mind-shift among their members. In support, Senge, Cambron-McCabe, Lucas, Smith, Dutton and Kleiner (2000) argue that if there were not fundamental shifts in how people think and interact, as well as in how they explore new ideas, not all change efforts would last (p. 20).

Another crucial aspect of a learning organization is vision. Senge et al. (2000) argue that an organization's vision is essential for its success as it can provide the power for the people to learn and grow even when their situation is disempowering (p. 20).

Therefore, an organization that learns how to manage continuous change in alignment with its vision can help itself keep pace in a dynamic environment, and have the skills to adapt and continually learn, which can be acquired through OD (Cummings & Worley, 2005, p. 482; Smith, 2003, p. 12).

2.4.3.4 Readiness

One of the fundamental axioms of OD is that people's readiness for change depends on creating a deep-felt need for change (Cummings & Worley, 2005, p. 157; Susanto, 2008, p. 50). This view is further supported by Schmuck and Runkel (1994) who point out that productive change in an organization is unlikely to occur unless a significant part of the organization acknowledges a discrepancy between an ideal and the actual state of affairs before an OD design (p. 30).

According to Smith (2003), readiness to participate in the organization change process refers to the desire, capability, confidence and belief that 'we can make a difference' in the members of the organization (p. 18). However, organizations or groups may be negative to change due to factors discussed earlier such as emotion and ambivalence (see pages 7-8).

Furthermore, organizations or groups may be aware of their need to change but do not know how to change, therefore capacity-building activities in change and basic organization processes such as communication, problem-solving, decision-making and conflict management are a prerequisite to successful change.

Smith (2003) argues that an introductory workshop on "What is OD and how it works?" can raise levels of readiness by inculcating a sense of "we can do this" and "let's try it" (p. 19).

Apart from that, Survey Data Feedback (SDF), one of the OD interventions still to be presented in this chapter, serves as a key readiness raising intervention (Smith, 2003). In terms of Kurt Lewin's three-stage change model (French & Bell, 1999, p. 14; Meyer & Botha, 2004, p. 99) –

unfreezing, moving, refreezing – the unfreezing stage seeks to get issues into the open, and to enable people to express fears and anxieties, and to become aware of their own contributions to situations, which releases emotional energy. Unfreezing normally takes place during the feedback meeting and it is most often the point at which readiness is triggered (Smith, 2003, p. 20).

Research suggests that information about why the change is occurring, how it will benefit the organization, and how people will be involved in the design and implementation of the change are most helpful in increasing readiness (Cummings & Worley, 2005, p. 158; Schmuck & Runkel, 1994, p. 56; Susanto, 2008, p. 54). In this study, contracting, the introduction to OD workshop and SDF are intended to serve this purpose. Finally, management support for change efforts is an essential attribute in creating readiness for change (Susanto, 2008, p. 53), through creating supportive policies and practices in the organization. The views raised by this topic emphasize the fact that, for an OD change initiative to become successful, participants' readiness is crucial, otherwise change will not be realized.

2.4.3.5 Participation and empowerment

Participation and empowerment form the basis of OD. In OD participation is not limited to the organization leaders, but is extended widely throughout the organization. Early OD research shows that increased involvement and member participation produces high performance and better solutions to problems, and enhances shared decision-making (French & Bell, 1995, p. 94). Furthermore, French and Bell (1995) stress the essence of participation as “participation is a powerful elixir – it is good for people, and it dramatically improves individual and organizational performance” (p. 94).

Similarly, empowerment involves giving individuals the authority to participate, to make decisions, to contribute their ideas, to influence and to be responsible and committed to decisions. Based on this view of participation and empowerment, OD intervention activities are deliberately designed to enhance involvement and participation by the organization members, with the view to empowering them.

2.4.3.6 Teams and team work

Teams and teamwork are part of the foundation of OD. According to Sheard and Kakabadse (2004), a team is a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable (p. 13).

Teams increase individual performance and satisfaction through empowerment, and they are crucial for many other reasons within the context of organizations and change.

According to French and Bell (1995), individuals' behaviour is embedded in the socio-cultural norms and values of the work team, therefore if a team's norms and values are changed, with the involvement of every team member; it consequently affects individual team member's behaviours (p. 97). They argue that complex tasks require a concerted rather than individual effort to be completed, thus teams serve to accomplish this purpose (French & Bell, 1995, p. 98). Hence OD programs involve all concerned organizational stakeholders in the change initiative, based on the assumption that the sum of team members' efforts is more than the sum of individual efforts (synergy).

Furthermore, teams nurture human nature, as they serve to satisfy team members' needs for social interaction, status, recognition and respect (French & Bell, 1995, p. 98). As Hanson and Lubin (1995) assert, it is essential for team members to recognize and accept their own needs, to be sensitive to the needs of team members, and to maintain some balance between these needs (p.20). It is therefore based on this perspective of the role teams can play that teamwork is indispensable during the OD process.

2.4.3.7 Parallel learning structures

According to Cummings and Worley (2005), a parallel structure is a committee that involves members in resolving their bureaucratic organization's ill-defined, complex problems and builds adaptability (p. 310). These structures provide organization members with an alternative setting

in which to address problems and to propose innovative solutions free from the existing formal organization structure and culture (Cummings & Worley, 2005).

The duties of these structures are clearly captured by French and Bell (1995) who maintain that the parallel learning structure has the responsibility to study what changes are needed in an organization, make recommendations for improvement, and monitor the change effort. With reference to this study, a committee close to a parallel structure is the implementation committee, which is responsible for overseeing the implementation process.

2.4.3.8 Organization culture

Organization culture according to Cummings and Worley (2005) is the pattern of artefacts, norms, values, and basic assumptions about how to solve problems that work well enough to be taught to others (p. 484). Cummings and Worley identify four major elements of organization culture:

2.4.3.8.1 Artefacts

Cummings and Worley describe artefacts as the highest level of cultural manifestation in an organization, which includes symbols such as norms, values, and basic assumptions. Artefacts further involve observable behaviours of organization members such as clothing, structures, physical aspects of the organization and many more.

2.4.3.8.2 Norms

Norms represent the unwritten rules of behaviour, which guide how members should behave in an organization.

2.4.3.8.3 Values

Values inform and direct organization members about what is important in the organization and what most deserves their attention. Norms and artefacts support values.

2.4.3.8.4 Basic assumptions

Assumptions are the taken-for-granted cultural awareness about how organization problems should be solved. These assumptions direct organization members how to perceive, think and feel about the environment, and about human nature, human activity and human relationships (Cummings & Worley, 2005, pp. 483-484).

Cummings and Worley (2005) further argue that culture lays the foundation of the organization's customs, which provide organization members with clear and widely shared information on issues such as "what really matters around here?", "how do we do things around here?", and "what do we do when a problem arises?" (p. 484).

Cummings and Worley (2005) state that considerable research on organizational culture suggests that culture has both a direct and indirect relationship with effectiveness (p. 484). Thus, indirectly, culture affects an organization's performance through its ability to implement change. It is therefore imperative for OD practitioners to familiarize themselves with the culture of the organization in which they are practising as well as that of the community within which the organization is located.

2.4.3.9 Action Research

According to French and Bell (1995), "Action research is one of the cornerstones of organization development, underlying both the theory and practice of the field"(p. 137). The concept is defined as a data-based behavioural change method that replicates the steps involved in the classic scientific methods of inquiry founded by Kurt Lewin (cited in French & Bell, 1995, p. 108; Cummings & Worley, 2005, p. 24; French & Bell, 1999, p. 13), and its research process

steps are similar to those of OD, which qualifies OD to be called ‘action research’. As Smith affirms: “OD is to all intents and purposes action research with a slightly different purpose and target group” (2003, p. 21). Action research or OD as a process involves a participative cycle of activities, involving process initiation, agreement on the process, data collection, data analysis and feedback, data exploration and interpretation, action planning based upon the data interpretation, and action implementation (Smith, 2003, p. 21; French & Bell, 1995, p. 138; Cummings & Worley, 2005, p. 8). This cycle is then followed by further data collection to determine the outcome of the change, which may prompt further change cycles (see Appendix D3).

Action research is also viewed as a collaborative problem-solving approach. Cummings and Worley (2005) assert that contemporary applications of action research treat both consultants and participants as co-learners who are heavily involved in identifying organization problems, defining methods for data collection, identifying actions and evaluating the consequences of the actions (p. 26). Action research is therefore a method for knowledge acquisition and also a method for implementing change actions.

In this section various concepts and theories underpinning the practice of OD were discussed, as well as the implications on change. In the next section OD interventions are discussed.

2.5 OD interventions

French and Bell (cited in Hanson & Lubin, 1995) define an OD intervention as a set of structured activities in which selected organizational units engage in a task or a sequence of tasks aimed at organizational improvement (p. 58). There are several OD interventions, but this chapter focuses on five, of which four are drawn from Schmuck and Runkel (1994):

- 🚧 Training
- 🚧 Survey Data Feedback (SDF)
- 🚧 Constructive confrontation

🚦 Process observation and feedback (p. 74).

The fifth intervention is Future Search Conference (FSC), to be discussed due to its popularity in the field of OD. Each of these intervention designs is essential, requires to be understood, and calls for special skills on the part of the OD facilitator.

2.5.1 Training

Schmuck and Runkel (1994) state that training OD formats are highly structured; hence they require a strong leadership role by the facilitator. These designs are used effectively when participants expect to be taught some skills and when the organizational problems of the target system are not pressing. Hence, the OD practitioner determines the learning outcomes for a particular period, and organizes and directs the activities (Schmuck & Runkel, 1994, p. 28). During the OD process, training can be necessary, but as a point of departure, it should only be used for staff members who are new to OD (p. 75). Examples of the OD training activities are communication, problem solving, and team development and many others.

2.5.2 Survey Data Feedback (SDF)

SDF has become the most frequently used OD design as it fits into the OD philosophy of power-sharing with participants at all stages of the change process (Schmuck & Runkel, 1994, p. 75). During SDF, information is collected systematically through data collection methods and then reported back to work groups for confirmation as a basis for diagnosis, problem solving and action planning (Schmuck & Runkel, 1994, p. 29).

2.5.3 Constructive confrontation

This design is the least used of the interventions discussed here (Schmuck & Runkel, 1994). It is suitable when there are obvious disagreements between sub-systems (e.g. departments) in a

larger system, and when the disagreements become disruptive (p.76). The OD facilitator's role in this design is to bring together the conflicting groups and help them communicate the perceptions that each has of the other; spell out the ways each views the other as helpful or unhelpful; increase openness; propose procedures for problem solving to facilitate collaborative inquiry into mutual problems, and finally to find common consensus among the parties involved (Schmuck & Runkel, 1994, p. 29-30). Schmuck & Runkel (1994) further warn that confrontation can be risky; hence the facilitator must be strong and skilled in keeping the confronting parties on task (p. 76).

2.5.4 Process observation and feedback

The aim of process observation and feedback is to help group members become more aware of how they are working together (Schmuck & Runkel, 1994, p. 30). The OD practitioner who sits with working groups during their work sessions, observes their processes and offers comments and questions to direct participants effectively does this. The prime goal of this design is to engage participants in talking about their working relationships and in making group agreements to improve their ways of working together in future (Schmuck & Runkel, 1994).

2.5.5 Future Search Conference (FSC)

The FSC is regarded as a powerful OD strategy. It is defined as a large group planning meeting that brings a whole system under one roof to work on a task-focused agenda and as an action guide to finding common ground in organization and communities (Weisbord & Janoff, 2000, p. xvii).

A typical future search involves 60-70 participants and normally takes place over four days (Weisbord & Janoff, 2005, p. xxiii). The agenda may include five explorations: past, present, future, common ground, and action. For each part, participants work in small groups of not more than eight people, present their deliberations to the whole meeting, engage in discussion on what they learnt, and consider the implications for actions (Weisbord & Janoff, 2005).

Studies on FSC conducted in Namibia show that participants regarded FSC as an effective tool for organizational self-renewal and adaptation to new challenges (Layne, 2004; Hausiku, 2004).

2.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, theories which influence organization change were presented. The first part of the chapter looked at the meaning of concept change within the context of organization, which is regarded as diverse and dynamic. Resistance to change was explored, and the conclusion that change of any nature is accompanied by ambivalence and resistance was reached. Leaders' capacity in dealing with and understanding resistance to change is essential during organization change. Organization change involves change in education which is premised on school improvement, and in this chapter light was shed on these factors, including leadership. Complexity and systems theories were also discussed as they have direct implications for the leadership and management of change in a complex and dynamic environment. The second part of the chapter explored OD.

The concept of OD was defined, and its origins, which embedded in a strong value system which underpins and informs its practice, were described and explored. The conceptual and theoretical framework of the theory was discussed, including key issues such as those of readiness to change and consideration of organization culture during OD interventions. The last part of the chapter discussed OD interventions.

This chapter presented the theoretical and methodological framework of the study where concepts of change and Organization Development are the main focus. The next chapter provides an outline of the methodology used for the study.

Chapter 3

Research methodology

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the methodology used during the study is discussed. The study was aimed at conducting and investigating an OD intervention as an approach to planned change in a Namibian rural school in Ohanguena region. In order to achieve this goal the concept of OD was introduced to the participants by means of a workshop and an OD intervention in their organization, in order to seek responses to the following research questions:

- ✚ What is the participants' experience of the OD process?
- ✚ How do participants perceive OD as an approach to change in their context?
- ✚ How do participants perceive and experience the short-term outcome of the intervention?

In order to answer these questions, the paradigm that underpins this study is first presented, followed by a description of the research methods that were used and an explanation of the data-gathering tools employed during the research. Towards the end of the chapter, some light is shed on the ethical issues of the research, aspects that were considered to ensure that quality was maintained, and finally the limitations of the study are discussed.

3.2 Research paradigm

Thomas Kuhn (as cited in Maxwell, 2005, p. 36) defines a paradigm as “a set of very general philosophical assumptions about the nature of the world (ontology) and how we can understand it (epistemology)”. Babbie (2007) argues that paradigms can open up new understandings, suggest new theories and inspire different kinds of research (p. 33).

According to Maxwell (2005), it is crucial for a researcher to make explicit which paradigm(s) his/her study draws on, since a clear paradigmatic stance helps to guide the research design decisions and to justify those decisions (p. 36). He further states that qualitative research paradigms include interpretivism, critical theory, feminism, post modernism and phenomenology (Maxwell, 2005), the first two of which are relevant to this study, which is an action research case study.

3.2.1 Interpretive paradigm

According to Connole (1998), “the task of the interpretive researcher becomes that of understanding what is going on, the definition of the situation, at least in the first instance. To do this requires not detachment but active involvement in the process of negotiated meaning, using the researchers’ social competence” (p. 14). This is in line with my research questions as they sought to understand participants’ experience and perceptions of the OD process. This exercise was conducted in the participants’ context, which in this case is a school, where I (the researcher) was part of the process serving as a participant-facilitator.

3.2.2 Critical paradigm

Change is a fundamental goal of critical research (Kincheloe, 1991, p. 24). According to Anderson (2000), a critical researcher advocates working for change in a society (organization in this case) that brings about social justice to all (p. 11). This study therefore falls under the critical paradigm as it involves raising participants’ awareness of the role they can play as described in the OD principles, values and assumptions in a self-organizational improvement effort that is radically different to a top-down, imposed approach to change. As Brown and Harvey (2006) affirm, “The goals of OD are to make an organization more effective and to enhance the opportunity for individuals to develop their potential” (p. xix).

Apart from that, the study further aimed at bringing about short-term change to the organizational issue that was identified for intervention (poor monitoring of afternoon study).

Furthermore, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) assert that the critical paradigm “seeks to emancipate the disempowered, to redress inequality and to promote individual freedom within a democratic society” (p. 28). In light of this idea, an intervention has the potential to empower participants to exercise their own agency in changing their organization using the democratic OD approach as the participants play a collaborative-participatory role during the study.

3.3 Research methods

The research methods employed during the study were case study and action research, which are now explored further.

3.3.1 Case study

Hancock and Algozzine (2006, p. 9) define a case study as an intensive analysis and description of a single unit or system bounded by space and time which helps researchers to gain in-depth understanding of situations and meaning for those involved. I support the claim of Locke, Spirduso and Silverman (as cited in Creswell, 2003) that the intention of qualitative research is to understand a particular social situation, event (OD intervention in this case), role and interaction (p. 198). The case for this study is an OD intervention that I conducted in a rural Namibian school. I engaged in intensive interaction with participants as both a facilitator and a co-learner. This feature of the study facilitated a deeper understanding of participants’ experience and perception of the OD intervention process as described by Koshy (2005) who said, “Case studies can bring a phenomenon to life and present the outcomes of research very powerfully” (p. 112).

3.3.2 Action research

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007, p. 297) define action research as “a small-scale intervention in the functioning of the real world and a close examination of the effects of such interventions”. Of the different types of action research, participative action research seems to best serve the

purpose of OD. It is defined as “an approach to social research in which the people being studied are given control over the purpose and procedures of the research (Babbie, 2007, p. 301). During the study participants collectively and collaboratively selected an organizational issue (poor monitoring of afternoon study), designed appropriate actions, implemented them and evaluated their short-term outcome. This was done in the participants’ real world: in a school for a period of a month and half.

In conducting this study the OD intervention process sought not only to bring about change in the organization but also to equip participants with the necessary knowledge and skills to carry out OD on their own in future (French & Bell, 1995, p. 140). Action research is a long-term ‘iterative’ process of data collection, feedback, and drawing from the data to design actions for implementation (French & Bell, 1995, p. 139). However, due to time and scope constraints I only investigated the process up to the first cycle of the implementation. Since literature on action research models is broad, for the sake of my research I used the seven phases action research model as presented by Lurey and Griffin (2002), French and Bell (1995) and Cummings and Worley (2001), namely: entry, contracting, data gathering and diagnosis, feedback, planning change, intervention, evaluation . A brief description of these phases is presented below.

3.3.2.1 Entry

The entry stage represents the change initiation effort and initial contact between the OD practitioner and the client group (organization). It involves exploration of the situation that prompted the client group to seek an OD consultant and to determine whether the two parties should enter into an OD relationship (French & Bell, 1995, p. 131). This is determined by the nature of the organization’s pressing issues and the appropriateness of the OD practitioner. In the case of my study, I (the researcher) initiated the change effort on behalf of the organization members.

3.3.2.2 Contracting

Contracting is an extension of the entry stage. It clarifies how the OD process will proceed, reaching agreements on the expenditure of time, money, and other useful resources and to clarify possible mutual benefits for the parties involved. The principle goal of contracting is to make a good decision about how to execute the OD process (Cummings & Worley, 2001, p. 75).

3.3.2.3 Data gathering and diagnosis

According to Cummings and Worley (2001), “diagnosis is the process of understanding how the organization is currently functioning, and it provides the information necessary to design change interventions” (p. 82). Information about the functioning of the organization is gathered via the use of data collection methods such as interviews, observations etc. Burke (as cited in French & Bell, 1995, p. 131) identified data gathering and analysis as two key activities during this OD stage. It is during this stage that OD practitioners help organization members identify an organizational issue on which to focus during OD.

3.3.2.4 Feedback

Feedback focuses on presenting the findings, analyses and any preliminary observations about the organizational life to the client group for exploration, clarification and authenticity confirmation. This stage marks the beginning of data ownership by the client group (French & Bell, 1995, p. 132).

3.3.2.5 Planning change

This planning change phase involves decision making on actions to be taken by the organization members based on the information learned during feedback.

3.3.2.6 Intervention

During intervention, the client group implements the sets of actions designed to correct or reduce the identified problem (French & Bell, 1995, 132).

3.3.2.7 Evaluation

It is during the evaluation phase that the client group assesses the effectiveness of the implemented actions and determines further alternative actions in case of an unsatisfactory implementation outcome (Lurey & Griffin, 2002). A detailed discussion of these phases is presented in Chapter 4.

3.4 Data collection

Cresswell (2003) argues that there are an increasing number of data collection methods available which involve the active participation of and sensitivity to participants who are in the study. It is on these grounds that “qualitative research uses multiple data collection methods that are interactive and humanistic” (Connole, 1998, p. 16). In light of this idea, I used multiple data collection methods during my research, namely observation, semi-structured one-to-one and focus group interviews.

3.4.1 Observation

Cohen et al. (2007, p. 396) argue that observation offers investigators the opportunity to gather ‘live’ data. This is premised on the view that the observation method is independent of respondents’ personal views and seeks explicit evidence through the eyes of the observer (Myles, 2002, p. 172). Since OD is an action research methodology, I used participant observation throughout the entire research process as it allowed me to be ‘part of the natural setting’ (Myles,

2002) and to record participants' reactions and responses to the OD intervention process which I recorded in a research journal. My observation focused specifically on the following aspects:

- ✚ General school atmosphere before, during and after the OD intervention process.
- ✚ Interpersonal relationship between organization members throughout the intervention.
- ✚ Participants' interaction during the process.
- ✚ Participants' level of participation.
- ✚ Participants' body language communication throughout the intervention.
- ✚ Impact of OD on the organization's culture at different OD stages.
- ✚ Flow of OD activities throughout the intervention.
- ✚ Unfreezing effect during SDF.
- ✚ Short-term outcome of the intervention.

3.4.2 Interviews

According to Babbie (2007), a qualitative interview is a conversation in which the interviewer establishes a general direction for the conversation and pursues specific issues raised by the respondents (p. 306). He further argues that interviews constitute an integral part of the entire research field (Babbie, 2007, p. 308). This influenced the structure of the interviews used during my study, such as semi-structured one-to-one and focus group interviews.

3.4.2.1 Semi-structured one-to-one interviews

Seidman (1991) claims that the semi-structured one-to-one interview provides opportunities for participants to tell their stories and yet enough focus to allow the interview structure to work (p. 13). Drawing from this argument, I used semi-structured one-to-one interviews before the entry stage as well as after the feedback and action planning stages, as these allowed me to probe for further clarifications and elaborations on participants' experiences and perceptions of the OD process. The method further provided an opportunity for data enrichment and quality enhancement. As Strydom, Fouche & Delport (2005) assert, during semi-structured interviews

“the participant shares more closely in the direction the interview takes and he can introduce an issue the researcher had not thought of” (p. 296).

3.4.2.2 Focus group interviews

Apart from semi-structured interviews, I used focus group interviews after the OD introduction workshop and the implementation stage to probe participants’ initial and final perceptions as well as their experience of OD. As Patton (2002) affirms: “in focus groups participants get to hear each other’s responses and make additional comments beyond their own original responses as they hear what other people have to say” (p. 386). I digitally recorded and transcribed all the interviews. With regard to sampling, the first interview respondents were selected in terms of the positions they held in the school (Principal, Head of Department and two teachers). I planned to tap responses from ‘gate keepers’ (Weisbord, 1987, p. 89) based on the view that they are crucial for an organizational change initiation effort and in cultivating a supportive environment during change (Susanto, 2008), while other informants were selected based on their attitude and level of participation during the intervention process.

Despite this, I encountered some shortcomings during interviewing. I noticed that I was not able to ask the necessary probing questions during interviews, which led to shallow data in some instances. In addition, it was impossible to conduct all interviews in the scheduled time due to unavailability of the interviewees, which resulted in delayed interviews. This was a factor which was beyond my control as a researcher and could potentially result in poor data quality as participants could forget some of the information (see interview questions, Appendix B).

3.5 Data analysis

The data collected during this study is qualitative data. I analyzed the transcripts from semi-structured and focus group interviews using an interpretive analysis (Richards, 2005, p. 88) by coding and grouping the data into categories from which themes emerged (Maxwell, 2005, p. 96). This is in line with Cresswell’s (2003) argument that “qualitative research is fundamentally

interpretive” (p. 182). I used data from observation notes for triangulation and for the organization’s ethnological account. My research aimed at understanding participants’ experience and perception of the OD process, views which emerged were inferred inductively. These themes were readiness to change; benefits of OD; OD compared to other change strategies; OD values, beliefs and assumptions; perceived challenges of the OD intervention, and a reflection on the OD process.

3.6 Ethical issues of the research

In conducting this study, I considered ethical issues as recommended by Koshy (2005, p. 105). I sought permission to conduct research in the school of my choice from the Education Regional Office (see Appendices A1, A2 and A3). Lewin (as cited in Weisbord, 1987) states that gatekeeper’s consent to and support for change efforts minimizes resistance to change. I therefore personally contacted the primary gatekeeper – the principal – of the research site well in advance (April 2009) to brief him on my research intentions and seek his consent. Furthermore, participants were guaranteed confidentiality, anonymity, and the right to withdraw from the research at any point. They signed consent letters during the contracting stage (see Appendix A4). Agreements on the period of the study and time to conduct OD activities were also reached.

3.7 Validity issues

Mason (2002) defines validity as finding various means of confirmation, such as asking a range of participants for their versions of similar events. In the case of my study, the data collected from all interviews was shared with participants for member checking and no changes were made. Since different data collection methods were used (observation and interviews), there was an opportunity for triangulation. Cohen and Manion (2000, p. 233) describe triangulation as an attempt to map out and explain fully the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint. In support, Bush (2002) states that “triangulation is fundamentally a device for improving validity by checking data either by using mixed methods or by involving a range of participants” (p. 70).

3.8 Limitation of the study

One of the limitations that I encountered during this study was that of the time available for data collection. This is a similar experience to studies conducted by Mitchell (2004), Neshila (2004) and Perestrelo (2008). Davidoff and Lazarus (2002) point out that conducting an OD intervention is a long-term process and not a quick fix (p. ix). On that basis, the one and half months I had available for my study was insufficient to see the process reach long-term fruition. However, I managed to observe the first cycle of the action implementation phase. Further discussion on limitations is dealt with in Chapter 5.

3.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed the research methodology, data collection methods and analysis approach which underpin and inform my study, which draws from an interpretive as well as a critical paradigm. I also presented ethical and validity issues that I considered during the study and finally I presented the limitations I encountered during my study. In the next chapter, the data collected during my research is presented.

Chapter 4

Data presentation and discussion

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter explored the methodology used during my study. This chapter presents a narrative account of the study, which was an OD intervention in a Namibian rural school in Ohangwena region, in two sections. The presentation draws from data collected from interviews (one-to-one and focus group interviews) and observations as they comprised my main data collection methods. In the chapter, respondents are identified by pseudonyms, namely the Principal and HOD for managers, while teachers are referred to as T1, T2, T3, T4, T5 and T6. The research site is identified as Yambuka Primary School.

The data is mainly presented in the respondents' direct words (verbatim), but in some instances I have clarified the data for readers' benefit, having verified with the respondents that this did not distort their views. The cultural background of my research site forms the basis of this chapter. In the first section I firstly present the ethnographic background of the research site, followed by the OD process based on OD phases as identified by Lurey and Griffin (2002), French and Bell (1995) and Cummings and Worley (2001). The last part of this section is devoted to participants' experience and perception of the entire OD process.

4.2 Section A

4.2.1 Ethnographic background for the research site

4.2.1.1 General school description

The school where I conducted my research (Yambuka Primary School) is a rural primary school that offers grades one to seven and is located in Ohangwena Education Region in Ohangwena political region, Namibia.

Yambuka Primary School was established in 1990; with grade one only of about sixty learners. The school grew from strength to strength and currently it has two blocks of six normal classes and three sheds. Its current capacity is about three hundred learners, eleven teachers and two support staff.

Most of the school's infrastructure is in a dilapidated condition. Some of the classroom windows are broken, some classroom floors have potholes, there was a fence but it has been destroyed, the school had portable piped water which was also destroyed, and to make matters worse there is no electricity. I further present elements of the organization within the context of Yambuka Primary school.

4.2.1.2 School leadership and policies

The school is in a leadership transition stage, as it has a new school principal who has been in the organization for ten months. However, informants expressed that they are satisfied with the current leadership as the principal is democratic, committed, knowledgeable and understanding. This is evident in T4's expression that "my principal is a good leader, he understands our problems, he understands what we think about and puts it in action, he is not a dictator therefore I say he is a good leader". In addition T1 commented, "The change that I noticed started last year, the leadership we had was not so good but currently I have seen some change". The above quotes seem to indicate that the current leadership has capacity to develop the school and to effect change.

Apart from that the school seems to lack some school policies and fails to effectively implement the available policies. As the principal confirmed, "You find teachers trying to attend funerals, visiting sick friends during teaching time, leaving learners unattended to". In addition the observation notes show that one teacher went for a workshop for a week, but it seemed nothing was organized for learning during her absence and the learners were told to keep coming and knock off earlier until their teacher came back (July 6, 2009). This may reflect that some internal school policies are missing and participants lack ownership of the available policies hence their implementation is at stake.

4.2.1.3 School Vision and mission

Respondents revealed that the school's identity requires some revisiting. According to my observation notes (July 6, 2009) the school has a short statement which bears two titles 'mission/vision' and it seems the new leadership is dissatisfied with it. In so far as the school vision and mission are concerned the principal stated:

I have to admit that the mission statement you refer to I found it here already made. I don't have much objection with it but I have to change it a little because I think it is a little broader. However when it was set up, individual staff members were all asked to set one individually and chose the one which sounded better at that time.

4.2.1.4 Curriculum and delivery

Some teaching staff members appear to display lack of commitment to teaching and learning as well as insufficient care for learners which may affect the school's performance negatively. Observation notes (July 8-29, 2009) reflect that much teaching time is wasted. Testimony to this claim is when some staff members went to comfort a bereaved family after a break as the deceased was related to one of the staff members. Similarly, one teacher complained, "Some teachers like to attend non-relative death events and it seems they do not have learners at heart" (Observation note, July 14, 2009).

Furthermore, much time is wasted before resuming teaching after break: teachers chat to each other and normally start teaching some minutes later. The school's general performance seems to be unsatisfactory, as T4 asserted: "our school's performance is very low and he [the principal] has to put more effort in monitoring the work of teachers and also to check the work of learners, do class visits and to check daily preparations well".

4.2.1.5 Interpersonal relationship and co-operation

Respondents felt that staff members in their school have co-operation, good communication, and good interpersonal relationships with each other and also with stakeholders. "I have been a

teacher for a long time, but I can assure you our staff is cooperative. We discuss matters and find collective solutions” the HOD remarked. In support T4 commented, “We have a good communication and good relationship with our colleagues. We are not like some schools where people fight each other. Here we have a good relationship”. The good relationship referred to in the quotes is a prerequisite for effective productive workplaces and provides as base for growth and development.

4.2.1.6 Structural arrangements and decision making

The school structure is not well developed, as indicated by the lack of a proper organogram, but the school has some committees in place. As the Principal stated, “at this school committees were not functional. I came up with the idea of changing committees by allocating staff members into committees according to their abilities and this idea was embraced by many. As a result the function of the school has improved”. However some of the committees are not fully functional: one teacher claimed that she is a member of the school disciplinary committee but she is not aware of the school’s disciplinary policy and the committee does not function (Observation notes, July 23, 2009).

With regard to decision-making procedures, participants felt that they have influence over decisions in their school and they feel involved. As a result they developed most of the school policies under the guidance of the principal. As evidence T4 (referring to some policies and school rules) said, “Those are our ideas; we came together and set up those policies. What we think is correct and good in contributing to the development of the school. First we met as staff, shared ideas on coming up with those, and then the school board and parents approved the rules”. This aspect of the organization can strengthen ownership of decisions and commitment to implementation.

4.2.1.7 School achievements and challenges

Under the current leadership, the school appears to experience a degree of success and change compared to the previous one, but there are also challenges. In line with this view the HOD contended, “There are few things that are going on well; many things have changed compared to

the past. We had no chairs and tables, now all learners have chairs and tables we have also new materials and books”. The observation notes confirmed that the school received a consignment of 60 tables and about 70 chairs from the government store as a response to the order placed by the principal. On the same day the principal also delivered tables which had been sent for renovation (Observation note, July 6, 2009).

On a different note the school is also encountering challenges in its day-to-day life. As confirmed by the principal, “I believe that every organization has challenges” hence, it is normal for their organization to have challenges too, as evident in prior discussions. Other perceived organizational challenges included the Principal’s remark that: “I have been explaining to teachers how things should be done by the law, e.g. procedures of applying for leaves but despite explanations, teachers are still taking un-communicated leaves”.

The Principal further stated that:

To be honest with you, our people are not really into democracy as such, we make rules but they still disobey them despite the fact that they were part of their making. In some cases, democratic process is a matter of majority rules but individuals who are negative disregard the consensus, since they have been negative from the start.

In addition, the HOD remarked “Some teachers and parents are not committed; the parents that are responsive to the school calls are ever the same. There are some teachers who are problematic but we are trying to motivate and educate them”. These challenges create a gap between the current and desired organizational situations.

However, respondents expressed that despite challenges and dissatisfaction with the general current state of affairs in their school, they were positive and anticipated to benefit from the OD process. As the HOD testified, “I am excited to have you here, because most of us will learn from you and we expect you to learn from us. I think that what we are getting from you will assist us on how to organize and make decisions”. With this background in mind I now describe the phases of the OD process I conducted.

4.2.2 OD phases

4.2.2.1 Phase one: Entry

The entry stage represents the change initiation effort phase and initial contact between the OD practitioner and the client group (organization). It involves exploration of the situation that prompted the client group to seek an OD consultant and to determine whether the two parties should enter into an OD relationship (French & Bell, 1995, p. 131). In case of my study, I (the researcher) initiated the change effort due to my need to conduct an OD research. I personally conducted the school principal in April 2009, to brief him of my intentions to carry out an OD research in his school, an idea that he embraced. I further forwarded copies of my research official request, permission letter from the Director of Education as well as letter of authority from my supervisor to the research site in early June 2009 (see Appendices A1, A2 and A3).

4.2.2.1.1 Appointment and initial contact

Perestrelo (2008) states that, having the support of the school management team, the ‘gate keepers’, those who directly control a situation (Weisbord, 1987, pp. 89-91) is crucial to OD because without their involvement it is difficult to sustain any change. In line with this idea I made an appointment with the school principal on June 23, 2009, with the aim of meeting the school management team. The principal sought the consent of the school management team first before he could respond to my request. I was finally granted permission to meet them on July 2, 2009 at 14h00. I took with me all the letters of authority mentioned earlier.

4.2.2.1.2 Meeting with the management team

In line with the agreement, I met Yambuka Primary School’s management team on July 2, 2009 at 14h00 in a store room which is used as the principal’s office. The meeting aimed at:

- ✚ Briefing the school’s management team on my intentions to conduct an OD research in their school.

- ✚ Introducing OD and how it works to the school's management team.
- ✚ Presenting my schedule of activities and discussing the way forward.

The meeting was attended by all four management members namely, the principal, HOD and two teachers. The agenda for the meeting consisted of items as discussed below:

Welcoming

The principal introduced me to the management team and gave me the floor after explaining my intention drawing from the permission letter. I introduced myself and emphasized my reasons for coming.

Brief background of the study

I explained to the members that I was a Rhodes University student studying for a Masters degree in Education Leadership and Management, with my research focusing on Organization Development (OD). I further informed members that the study was scheduled to last one and half months.

What is OD and how it works

During this point I explained the meaning of OD: that it refers to an organization self-improvement approach, undertaken by members of an organization with the assistance of external expert if there is no internal one. OD is a bottom-up, democratic, participatory and collaborative approach to change, radically different from the top-down change approach. I elaborated that in OD organizational problems are identified and solved by organization members themselves, not by outsiders.

I used the OD cycle model with phases (see Appendix D3) and another sheet with features of OD change and traditional change approaches (see Appendix D2) to explain the OD phases and the difference between OD and traditional approaches to change. During the explanation of the entry stage on phases, I clarified that a change effort should preferably be initiated by organization members rather than by outsiders, as in their case. I further clarified that selecting their school as my research site did not mean they had problems that prompted the need for OD. One member

asked “What do you mean we do not have problems?” (Observation notes, July 2, 2009). I thanked her and emphasized that if they had problems it was lucky that I chose their school, but the OD principle dictates that insiders initiate the change effort.

Before I moved to the next point, I asked members how they felt about the idea. The HOD responded, “OD sounds to be a good idea and the school is lucky that you decided to conduct your study here”. In addition the principal remarked, “OD may have potential to direct us in dealing with our day-to- day related problems and to expose us to new ideas of doing things, I think it is a good idea” (Observation notes, July 2, 2009). These views reflected that the school management team was supportive to the OD intervention.

Layout of the study and its possible activities

I used copies of the study schedule to explain the possible activities for the study and clarified that I would become a regular visitor at the school for observations and required some afternoons to conduct OD activities and interviews. The management did not object to the schedule and they did not ask any questions.

Way forward

Under this item, I informed the team that since they were positive about the study I needed to conduct an OD workshop with the entire staff. Hence, I required them as staff to decide on the date for the workshop. The principal indicated that the workshop would be held after a week as most of the staff members including the principal were not available in the following week due to workshops. French, Bell and Zawacki (2000) state that the client and consultant come together as relative equals, each possessing knowledge and skills different from but needed by the other (p. 7). On that basis I agreed to the principal’s suggestion.

The principal further explained that their school policy allows them to knock off at 14h00 on Mondays and Fridays, therefore the possible days for OD meetings were Tuesdays to Thursdays. While noting that, I advised the principal that the final decision lay with the entire staff, as in OD increased involvement and member participation produces better solutions and enhances shared decision-making (French & Bell, 1995). The principal finally phoned me to say that they had agreed for the OD workshop to be held on July 14, 2009.

4.2.2.1.3 Introduction to OD workshop

As mentioned in chapter 2, page 24, Smith (2003) argues that an OD introductory workshop can raise levels of readiness. On July 14, 2009, I met with the entire staff of Yambuka Primary School in a classroom for the OD workshop which started 15 minutes after the agreed time of 14h00. Eight of eleven staff members – the principal, HOD and teachers – attended the workshop. Three teachers could not attend due to matters that required their urgent attention.

I asked participants to sit around the pre-arranged tables in two groups of four consisting of three teachers and one manager. I deliberately arranged them in that way with the aim of observing group dynamics, especially in the presence of their supervisors. I asked participants to have a collection of workshop materials each and to go through the workshop programme. One participant asked, “Are we going to finish today?” (Observation notes, July 14, 2009). I assured them that the programme was short as the exercise should only take an hour, but the finishing time could be influenced by their level of participation, pace of discussion and understanding. The workshop programme consisted of nine items (see Appendix C1).

Welcoming and workshop objectives

Research suggests that information about why the change is occurring, how it will benefit the organization, and how people will be involved in the design and implementation of the change are most helpful in increasing readiness (Cummings & Worley, 2005, p. 158; Schmuck & Runkel, 1994, p. 56; Susanto, 2008, p. 54).

The principal welcomed all members to the workshop, reminded them of my aim as a researcher and gave me the floor. I emphasized key points and further motivated participants to be actively involved in the workshop as it held the key to the success of the entire OD process. I further briefed them of the workshop objectives, which were:

- ✚ To introduce OD to participants.
- ✚ To create an understanding of OD values, assumptions, designs and how it works.
- ✚ For participants to decide on OD intervention and to select co-facilitators.

✚ To make crucial agreements and explain the way forward.

What OD is and how it works

I presented a brief history of OD, defined it, explained how it works and its potential benefits to the organization and their members.

OD values and assumptions

A set of values, assumptions, and beliefs constitutes an integral part of OD, shaping the goals and methods of the field and distinguishing OD from other improvement strategies (French & Bell, 1999, p. 62). These values, assumptions, and beliefs provide structure and stability for people as they attempt to understand the world around them (French & Bell, 1999). After instructing participants to take the correct reading (see Appendix D1), I gave another short lecture on the topic, while participants followed in the handouts. Participants were actively listening to these new ideas and started to show interest in the workshop.

OD compared to other change approaches

During this part of the programme, participants sorted and pasted features of both OD and traditional change approaches in groups (see the source: Appendix D2). This activity raised participants' level of interaction and all members were actively engaged. After pasting we discussed the possible outcome and surprisingly all groups managed to get things correct. This success motivated participants which was evident in the smiles on their faces, and the activity also served as a measure for participants' level of understanding.

Since we were running out of time, at this critical point I reminded participants of this fact and asked them whether I could end and continue later. Participants advised me to proceed as the workshop was interesting. "It does not matter what time we finish, because OD can help us," one participant remarked (Observation note, July 14, 2009).

OD designs and phases

I used the OD cycle and phases handout to explain the different stages of OD while participants followed in their handouts (see Appendix D3). Participants showed interest in learning how OD

works in terms of phases and they followed attentively. I also explained OD designs with more emphasis on Survey Data Feedback (SDF) as it was the design for my study, drawing from the OD design handout (see Appendix D4).

OD intervention and its potential value to the organization

I asked participants what they perceived as benefits of OD in their organization. Three members responded, “We can learn how to find out and solve our own problems”, “We can get new knowledge and ideas” and “It helps us to develop skills on how to work in a team” (Observation note, July 14, 2009). These responses indicated that participants were benefiting from the workshop. I then explained the meaning of concept OD intervention and asked participants whether they wanted an OD intervention in their organization. All participants agreed.

The way forward

Under this item I explained the necessity and role for co-facilitators in OD projects and consequently requested participants to volunteer or select one or two since there were only a few of them. Participants agreed to have two co-facilitators who were elected through secret ballots. The voting process was done twice as in the first round some candidates gained equal votes as shown below.

Table 1: Co-facilitators election process

First round outcome		Second round outcome	
T1	////	T1	///
T2	////	T2	/
T3	////	T3	///
T4	/		

So, teacher 3 and teacher 1 came out victorious as co-facilitators.

4.2.2.2 Phase Two: Contracting

Contracting is an extension of the entry stage. It clarifies how the OD process will proceed, reaching agreements on expenditures of time, money and other useful resources, and possible

mutual benefits for the parties involved. The principal goal of contracting is to make a good decision about how to execute the OD process (Cummings & Worley, 2001).

I explained to participants how the study was structured and what activities were involved while they followed in the research schedule (see Appendix C3). I further used the opportunity to shed light on the period of the study, and time of conducting OD activities which they confirmed to be after classes on the days proposed by the school management. I further took participants through the consent letter and had it signed (see Appendix A4). All participants willingly signed the letter except the absent three, who signed it the following day. Staff members requested copies of the consent letters, which I gave them at a later stage. Finally we agreed on the date for the next OD meeting (July 16, 2009) for the selection of an organizational issue for intervention. The principal remarked at the end of the meeting that “the meeting was straight to the point and constructive” (Observation note, July 14, 2009).

4.2.2.3 Phase Three: Data gathering and diagnosis

According to Cummings and Worley (2001), “diagnosis is the process of understanding how the organization is currently functioning, and it provides the information necessary to design change interventions” (p. 82).

The meeting for selecting an item for intervention scheduled for July 16, 2009 was cancelled due to unavailability of staff members, and was rescheduled for July 21, 2009. I was then accorded a chance in one of the staff meetings to request staff members to come up with strengths and weaknesses of their organization individually or in groups for analysis and printing before the next meeting. Participants agreed to do it individually but on an anonymous basis and the due date was July 17, 2009. Data were collected on the given date and we (I and one co-facilitator) analyzed them over the weekend.

4.2.2.3.1 Selection of item for intervention meeting

We met in our usual room for OD meetings. I thanked staff members for coming and explained the purposes of the meeting, which were to:

- ✚ Create an understanding of how organizations work supported by the nature of the collected data, although it was tentatively proposed in the schedule.
- ✚ Select organizational aspect for intervention.

I then distributed copies of the analysis of weaknesses and strengths: see Table 2 below.

Table 2: Strengths and weaknesses analysis for Yambuka Primary School (first analysis)

Weaknesses (and their frequencies)	Strengths
No fence //// // Classrooms are not in a good condition //// Lack of teaching resources //// No water //// No administrations block /// Poor learners' performance // Lack of teachers' furniture // Broken window panes // Poor action taking by management // Poor parental understanding of the quality of education // Learners' indiscipline / CA not done properly / Notice boards are not in good condition / Poor acceptance and respect of policies (e.g. attending to private matters during teaching time) / Absenteeism of the school principal / Lack of proper planning / Ineffective delegation (not to responsible people) / Top-down management / Poor communication skills / Poor cleanliness / Poor skills for improvement and development / Poor involvement in extramural activities by all /	Cooperation among staff Enough teaching materials Punctuality of staff members Enough furniture for learners Good classroom environment Good school environment and working conditions Toilets are available Learners participate in extramural activities Committed principal Staff are willing to develop the school High motivation Inclusive education Active school board No teachers' absenteeism without reason Daily preparations are done Schemes of work and syllabi are available

During the discussion of the analysis, several conclusions were drawn, namely:

- ✚ Weaknesses outnumbered strengths.
- ✚ Some problems required more urgent attention than others, as reflected by their frequency.
- ✚ Some points featured on both strengths and weaknesses, which demonstrated individual perspectives.
- ✚ Some weaknesses could be solved by the school while some were beyond their control e.g. construction of administration block.
- ✚ Generally the weaknesses focused more on the organization than on staff members themselves, which raised more questions than answers.

After the analysis discussion I asked participants if it reflected the reality of their organization. They had to listen to a short presentation about how organizations work before they responded to the question.

I explained how organizations work, drawing from ‘a framework for understanding’ (Davidoff & Lazarus, 2002), while participants followed in a framework handout which I had distributed earlier (see Appendix D5). According to Davidoff and Lazarus (2002), the framework for understanding and working with schools provides a tool for understanding the key elements of the school life in such a way that it facilitates making sense of organizational dynamics with in educational context (p. 19). In explaining the relationship between different organizational elements, I used the notion of organization as a ‘living system’ drawing from human systems as well as systems and complexity theories (see Chapter 1, pages 10-13). I went on to explain individual elements of a living organization from ‘identity’ and finally ‘leadership’ as it drives the entire organization. This presentation influenced participants to the extent that they became dissatisfied with the strengths/weaknesses analysis they had produced and wanted to update the list.

Since this meeting could not reach all of its objectives, the selection of the intervention item was scheduled for July 24, 2009. The principal commented after the meeting that “the framework enhanced my understanding of how organizations work and I can now see a weakness for almost every element especially the identity, I want to deal with that” (Observation note, July 21, 2009).

Cummings and Worley (2001) argue that it is during diagnosis that OD practitioners help organization members jointly identify an organizational issue to focus on during OD (p. 82). During the delayed meeting for selecting an organizational item for intervention (July 29, 2009), ten members attended and in the welcoming I thanked participants for modifying their analyses and reminded them that OD is a long-term process rather than a quick fix (Davidoff & Lazarus, 2002, p. ix). See Table 3 below for the modified analysis of strengths and weaknesses.

Table 3: Strengths and weaknesses for Yambuka Primary School (second analysis)

Weaknesses(and frequencies)	Strengths
Indiscipline of learners <i>//// //</i> Poor learner performance <i>////</i> Absenteeism of both teachers and learners <i>///</i> Poor involvement in extramural activities <i>//</i> Learners absenteeism (Fridays) <i>//</i> CA not done properly in grades 5-7 <i>//</i> No school vision/mission and co-values <i>//</i> Lack of reward or positive encouragement of learners / Lack of teacher motivation / No disciplinary policy / Poor acceptance of policies (private matters) / Lack of proper planning / Top-down management / Disorganized committees / Poor sharing of information (circulars) / Learners late coming / Study not properly monitored / No school organogram / No proper communication channel / Language problem among learners / Poor morning devotion / Late coming of learners /	Active and committed principal Willingness of staff to develop the school Democratic policy formulation Good cooperation Good implementation of curriculum change Balanced leadership

The second analysis reflected a balanced organizational reality as most of the weaknesses were in line with my observations that the school had more problems, some of which were cultural and policy-oriented. Members were equally satisfied with the outcome of the analysis.

As the meeting aimed at selecting the organizational item for intervention, I distributed weaknesses and strengths sheets, glue, a pair of scissors and a poster (with elements of an organization) per group of five members. I further instructed participants to cut and paste weaknesses at the correct organization element. During the cutting and pasting all participants were actively engaged in the activity, they discussed and made decisions democratically. Upon finishing, the next activity was to discuss the outcome of the activity. I advised managers not to take things personally as the most clustered element was that of leadership and management (see Appendix D6), which confirmed my anticipation as issues of poor school policies were evident in my prior observations. We discussed the outcome of the activity and participants were very impressed and amazed to discover how reality comes out on its own in OD. As the HOD remarked, “OD is a good thing it is so practical” (Observation notes, July 29, 2009).

Before the selection of the item for intervention, I explained to participants that in future if they want to tackle their organization weaknesses, it is advisable to identify a correct entry point (Davidoff, Lazarus & Kaplan, 1994, p. 19). Organizations are led and guided by their vision and missions; they should start with those since they were also identified as weaknesses. I further clarified that we could not select the entire leadership and management as an issue for intervention, but to select one small issue which could be solved and implemented in a short period of time for the sake of the research.

The selection process was quite hectic as individual members had different priorities. The moment was characterized by unfreezing (see Chapter 2, page 22). Participants started to speak out openly and pointed fingers at each other. They raised real organizational issues. One participant remarked, “I want the issue for intervention to be Continuous Assessment (CASS) because upper primary teachers at this school do not assess learners properly” (Observation note, July 29, 2009). I deliberately allowed them to unfreeze and to experience a sense of relief. Finally one member suggested that they should vote by raising hands. Six out of ten participants

selected 'Poor monitoring of afternoon study' as the aspect for intervention, which falls under the leadership and management element.

Under the 'way forward' I informed participants that we had to conduct Survey Data Feedback (SDF) which involved further diagnosis of the selected issue, data collection and feedback to staff. It was agreed that a short interview involving all staff members should be conducted from July 29 to August 4, 2009. Participants considered poor monitoring of afternoon study as a policy-related problem. Against that background they agreed to have a training workshop on problem-solving and this was scheduled for August 5, 2009. We further agreed to integrate the feedback session and problem-solving workshop and to have actions implemented from the holiday due to insufficient time. Staff members kept the posters with organizational weaknesses displayed in their office, which reflected how much they valued the outcome of the exercise.

This was also mirrored in their responses to their experience and perception of the intervention aspect selection: "the process was good and democratic because all of us were involved. We were the ones that selected the issue for intervention with your assistance, so it was very good" T2 expressed. However, a concern for selecting an issue which was feasible for short-term outcome was raised by T1:

The selection of an organization issue for intervention was good. The problem was only that that time we chose one thing and then left it and took 'poor monitoring of study' which can be solved within a shorter time but the one we left was chosen by many people, but the way we did it was good and approachable, it was so easy to do it.

4.2.2.4 Phase Four: Feedback

Schmuck and Runkel (1994) state that during SDF information is collected systematically through data collection methods and then reported back to work groups for confirmation as a basis for diagnosis, problem solving and action planning (p. 29). The meeting held on August 5, 2009 aimed at giving feedback to participants and then train them on problem solving (see the meeting programme, Appendix C2)

Although the previous stage was also characterized by some feedback on the entire organization functioning, Cummings and Worley (2001) state that “only information used to control the future functioning of the system is considered feedback” (p. 86). I used the questions in Table 4 below to diagnose the supervision of study in the organization.

After interviewing eight organization members on poor monitoring of afternoon study, I analyzed the responses with the assistance of the co-facilitators and compiled a final analysis on the basis of questions for feedback. During the feedback session, I explained that the aim of feedback was to confirm or refute views raised by respondents. As Schmuck and Runkel (1994) advise: “don’t tell or interpret for participants what you can get them to tell or interpret for themselves” (p. 365). One of the co-facilitators distributed the analyses to participants, and then read one interview question at a time while participants drew from the analysis to comment on the issues raised. For all views raised, no objections or additions of any kind were made. According to French and Bell (1995) this stage marks the beginning of data ownership by the client group (p. 132).

All participants were satisfied with the outcome of the interview; hence no unfreezing took place (see the analysis with comments, below). It was confirmed by participants that the feedback was accurate and members’ views were correctly interpreted. “OD is a democratic process; the summary of feedback was just what we gave as staff, which indicates that you interpreted our views accordingly”, the principal remarked.

Table 4: Responses for the interview questions on poor monitoring of study

Questions	Responses	Participants’ comments (agree/disagree)
1. What does the school policy about study say?	The study is held on Tuesdays to Thursdays, whereby grade 5 is accorded 2 days while grades 6 and 7 have 3 study days. The school has no written policy on study but staff members have been encouraged to do something with learners on free will during study time and as a result no delegation in the form of study supervision roster is in place.	Agree

<p>2. How was the policy developed and who was involved?</p>	<p>This policy was an initiative of the school principal in response to the school culture of poor performance. The idea was received with mixed feelings as some staff members favored it while some did not.</p>	<p>Agree</p>
<p>3. What is your comment on the way the study is currently supervised?</p>	<p>With regard to supervision, no significant supervision is taking place as only very few teachers do supervise and most of them use to be in the staffroom. It seems nobody cares about learners, in most cases you find learners making much noise during study time instead of studying and one can hardly find a teacher helping them during study despite poor performance.</p>	<p>Agree</p>
<p>4. One of the school's weaknesses is that study is not well monitored, where do you think the problem is?</p>	<p>Lack of proper delegation, lack of vision, poor understanding of the importance of study among both teachers and learners, it seems the school has no culture of staying after 14h00. Other contributing factors are that there are normally too many meetings during study and learners do not know how to read and therefore not willing to study.</p>	<p>Agree</p>
<p>5. What do you suggest should be done to improve the situation?</p>	<p>Since the idea came from the principal, may be teachers do not respect and commit to it hence, it should be brought back to the staff for discussion. There must be a study supervision roster whereby an individual teacher should be seated in a class with learners during study. Lower primary teachers should also take part by helping with compensatory classes (especially reading and writing) through negotiating with the responsible upper primary teachers.</p>	<p>Agree</p>

The general outcome on why study was poorly monitored was that the school did not have a coherent internal study monitoring policy in place: the one that they were using was imposed by the school principal and was not documented. These views were shared in the remarks of one teacher:

Our study supervision procedure is not good. The principal allows people who want to supervise on free will to do that instead of having a proper allocation for study supervision and I suggest it should be revisited. In the past it was okay because teachers used to supervise according to a supervision roster (Observation notes, July 28, 2009).

According to Schmuck and Runkel (1994) SDF does not bear full fruit until participants go through the steps of problem solving (p. 365). Hence, the next activity was problem solving.

4.2.2.4.1 Problem solving workshop

After the feedback session we progressed to the problem solving part under the guidance of a short agenda which comprised:

- ✚ Ice breaker (a dual image paradox)
- ✚ Meanings of concept 'problem' and 'problem solving'
- ✚ Steps for problem solving
- ✚ Actual problem solving process
- ✚ Way forward
- ✚ Closure

The meeting aimed basically at:

- ✚ Empowering participants with the necessary knowledge and skills for analyzing a problem.
- ✚ Creating an understanding of concepts; problem, problem solving in the OD context and distinguishing different phases of problem solving.
- ✚ Generating and selecting the best solutions to solve the problem.
- ✚ Designing and implement an action plan for solving the target problem.

After feedback we moved on with problem solving preceded by an ice-breaker. I gave participants a dual image paradox (see Appendix D7) and asked them what they could see on the picture. One participant saw a beautiful lady while another saw an old woman but no one could see both at the same time. I deliberately used this paradox to draw participants to the view that we may see the reality of a phenomenon in different ways which leads to different perspectives. To link this view to problem solving, the process had an element of brainstorming hence respect of individual views was essential. I observed that participants were impressed by this perspective and consequently respected each other's views throughout problem solving.

I distributed a handout with information on problem solving which I had compiled in advance (see Appendix D8) drawing on Schmuck and Runkel (1994) and took participants through the meaning of concept problem, problem solving (Situation Pathways and Target (STP)) and steps for problem solving process while giving practical examples where possible. I also used a diagram for force field analysis to explain the third step of the problem solving process (see Appendix D9). Participants were very attentive during the presentation.

4.2.2.4.2 The actual problem solving process (STP)

I informed participants that we were going to follow the problem-solving steps in an attempt to solve their problem – ‘poor monitoring of afternoon study’ – which would lead to action planning. This was based on the idea that OD is both an experiential and empowerment process (Brown & Harvey, 2006).

Step 1: Agree on a problem

This step involves the identification of an organizational issue (situation) that requires urgent improvement. This can be identified by asking and finding answers to two main questions, namely:

- 🚧 Where are we now (the situation, S)?
- 🚧 Where do we want to be (target, T)?

In case of this organization, they had already identified the problem during the selection of the organizational aspect for intervention, which was ‘poor monitoring of afternoon study’. The situation (S) was then ‘poor monitoring of afternoon study’ and the target (T) was to have effective study supervision.

Step 2: Generate alternative pathways

This step involves thinking of steps or paths to get from the existing situation (S) to the target (T). Since the target was already identified, participants brainstormed on possible pathways to achieve the target, and identified the following possibilities:

- ✚ Development of a study supervision policy.
- ✚ Proper delegation.
- ✚ Development of a school vision.
- ✚ Implementation of compensatory teaching.

These pathways were in order of preference and according to my observation they corresponded to ideas in the feedback (see Table: 4, page 61).

Step 3: List helping and hindering forces

Participants agreed to analyze one pathway, which was the development of a study supervision policy. In analyzing the forces that work for and against it, they came up with the ideas presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Helping and hindering forces

Helping forces	Hindering forces
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Management has the potential to motivate teachers to supervise study and to develop a list. ✚ There is co-operation among staff members. ✚ The school has some library books which can be used during study. ✚ There is enough time to develop a study supervision list. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Lack of proper delegation. ✚ No study supervision list. ✚ All staff members were not involved in the development of the verbal study supervision policy. ✚ No internal school policy for study supervision.

I asked participants to choose the hindering force/s which they wanted to attack, by considering their practicality and feasibility in solving their problem. Participants wanted to attack only one force and much time was wasted during the selection which prompted voting. They finally selected the last two points: lack of an internal study supervision policy developed by all organization members as they are mutually inclusive. “It is good to attack policy because it will include many things and all people will participate”, one teacher remarked (Observation note, July 5, 2009). Problem-solving steps: 4 (Planning for action), 5 (Taking action) and 6 (Evaluation) correspond to the three last OD phases hence they are discussed under those phases.

4.2.2.5 Phase Five: Planning for action

Participants agreed to develop an internal afternoon study supervision policy as a team whereby all members would be involved and the policy would be accompanied by its study supervision list. It was essential that the study supervision policy was designed and implemented as early as possible since I (researcher) had little time remaining for the research. I communicated this fact to participants and they agreed to implement all actions in September as soon as the school re-opened after the August holiday. The action plan schedule is given in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Action plan schedule

Action	Responsible	Time line	Resources needed	Evaluation criteria	Review date
Develop an internal afternoon study policy for the school with the involvement of all staff members.	All staff members should be involved but the process was to be spearheaded by the HOD and teacher one (T1)	September 8-12, 2009.	Stationery (flip charts, marker pens, pens and papers)	Availability of the policy in the school.	September 10, 2009
Implementation of the policy	As above	From September 15, 2009.	Staff members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ No noise and movement of learners outside classes during study. ✚ Good study attendance by teachers and learners. 	September 19, 2009

After all agreements on action planning were reached the principal stressed the urgency of the policy in these words:

Colleagues, we know our study has been messy all along; we have to make sure the policy is developed in the first week from the holiday so that we can start with the implementation in the following week. This is because we have to start with study as soon as possible as the year is also approaching the end. It is good that we came up with a solution to this problem (Observation notes, August 5, 2009).

I made it clear to participants that I would play no role during the implementation unless they needed my urgent assistance.

In interviewing participants on their experience and perception of the problem-solving process, they stated that the approach was good as it was democratic and involved all organization members in the identification and action planning of the problem. “We are the people who determined our weaknesses, we had planned for actions and the process was democratic. This was a good thing because we finally found a solution to the problem but collectively as a staff,” T2 replied. In affirmation the Principal expressed, “our school has a culture of not being willing to do things. Documenting the policy makes it a law and involving all staff members makes them feel part of the policy and it will be logic for them to respect and commit to the decision. So I think the implementation will be successful”.

4.2.2.6 Phase Six: Action taking (intervention)

During intervention, the client group implements the set of actions designed to correct or reduce the problem identified (French & Bell, 1995, p. 132). According to Perestrelo (2008), “this phase involves undertaking the changes decided upon during action planning” (p. 46). When the school re-opened after the holiday members met to develop the study supervision policy according to the implementation schedule. All actions were successfully implemented despite conflicts and setbacks in some instances.

The committee entrusted with the task designed a draft policy with the input of some staff members who were consulted. The committee briefed the staff on September 9, 2009 on what they came up with and to decide on the date when a full discussion about the policy could be held. No agreement could be reached due to some suggestions in the draft policy which were not welcomed by all, especially the responsibility of the principal to monitor supervisors. The principal refused this role which led to conflict and demoralization of some staff members. The meeting could therefore not reach fruition.

Schmuck and Runkel (1994) advise that OD facilitators should be aware of the reality that conflict is prevalent in OD interventions and helping participants generate creative solutions to

them is essential. I was then invited to mediate in resolving this conflict. I separately heard from both the principal and the responsible committee, and after some deliberation on the matter I realized that the conflict was attributed to a misunderstanding between the two parties. The principal simply wanted to cultivate a sense of autonomy among staff members without compromising his accountability role as the overall supervisor and regarded that chance as the correct leverage point. I also reminded both parties of their roles during OD and stressed the essence and relevance of OD principles and values during the exercise.

The committee decided to meet the principal first after which they met the entire staff to revisit the policy collectively and to clear up the misunderstanding. They met and both meetings were successful. The principal informed me on September 11, 2009 that they had finally agreed on the policy and implementation was due the following week as per the action plan. The internal study supervision policy with its supervision list is given in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Internal study supervision policy

During the implementation of the policy, staff members showed commitment to it and

Internal study supervision policy for Yambuka Primary School.		Developed: September 11, 2009
Procedures:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Every class teacher must be in the classroom during study time. ✓ Teachers without a class e.g. principal may ask permission from the responsible teacher if s/he wants to speak to learners during study. ✓ All teachers should supervise the study. ✓ The HOD should monitor to ensure that study is properly supervised by the responsible teachers. ✓ Time should be divided into two parts e.g. 30 minutes for studying and 30 minutes for learners to do their homework. 		
Supervision list		
Overall supervisor: HOD		
Group A (for Tuesday)	Group B (for Wednesday)	Group C (for Thursday)
1. Mr Simataa	1. Mr Ndjaya	1. Ms Haiyala
2. Ms Haihambo	2. Mrs Tuyeni	2. Mrs Vatumu
3. Ms Heita	3. Mrs Kayala	3. Ms Ndjaba
Where there is a will there is a way, yes we can!!!!!!!		

supervisors for each day performed their duties with utmost autonomy. According to the two days observation that I did, the study session was characterized by order, no movements of learners outside classes, all were inside their classes studying. It was also amazing to observe that teachers were not chased to go and supervise but did it of their own free will (Observation notes, September 15 & 17, 2009). In confirmation the principal stated, “It seems you have brought us a very good thing; it is amazing that teachers are serious with this policy and I hope they are not doing it to impress you. I can see OD had really made a good impact in our lives” (Observation notes, September 15, 2009).

4.2.2.7 Phase 7: Evaluation

It is during this OD phase that the client group assesses the effectiveness of the implemented actions and determines further alternative actions in case of any unsatisfactory implementation outcome (Lurey & Griffin, 2002). On the evaluation day I conducted a focus group interview with a sample of staff members. In responding to the question “What is your comment on the outcome of the implementation process?”, respondents felt that the implementation was a great success: “everything is going on well, the study is being monitored by the responsible teachers and learners now do understand what taking is place. It is really going on well,” the HOD remarked. In addition, the principal’s view was, “the implementation is fine, it is marvelous. We can see change, change for the better”.

By the end of the implementation week it was still premature to tell the extent of sustainability of the actions implemented, however when I phoned the co-facilitators and the principal after a month (October 22, 2009) I was informed that the implementation was still in force as at the beginning of the process and teachers did not revert to their old way of doing things. This denotes that the intervention yielded positive short-term outcomes which could be sustained for an even longer period.

4.3 Perceptions and experiences of the OD process as a whole

4.3.1 General benefits of OD

The OD intervention had both direct and indirect influence on individuals and the organization as a whole. I therefore present those benefits below drawing on participants' experience and perception of the intervention.

Respondents regarded OD as an eye opener in terms of introducing new ideas and insights on decision making to them. T2 confirmed this claim as she stated:

According to my point of view, I was impressed by the ideas presented during the OD workshop. I just thought that only top management has the right to make decisions and we accept either they are good or not, but after the workshop I got an idea of how things should work.

OD further equipped participants with new problem-solving skills and new lenses for seeing organizational problems. T3's remark holds testimony to this view as she argued, "according to my observation we have had a problem in the school but it seems we lacked the best approach to solve them before OD but after getting information that change can be initiated in the school and get implemented it opened our eyes". With regard to understanding of change in organizations, respondents revealed an improvement as T3 commented:

Previously we had no idea of how one should go about change and what it includes but after OD we gained new knowledge. By what I gained we don't have to wait for change to be initiated from top and just implement but one can choose a problem and design ways of improving the situation by our selves.

Apart from OD benefits that focused more on general staff members, respondents perceived specific benefits as more beneficial to the organizational leadership as far as change is concerned. T6 remarked, "OD can also teach our bosses that they are not the only ones to make decisions, but all of us have to work in a team but not in isolation. If anything is decided in a team everyone will support it". While supporting this view, the organization leaders gained specific ideas which are useful in leading their organization. The HOD learned to be accommodative and to tap from the vast experience of subordinates as she remarked:

OD is very important to us, as it is teaching us different skills on how to handle our problems because we had just followed those traditional methods whereby in most cases only top management make decisions without much input from subordinates (they simply agree whether it is good to them or not). At least we have learned something from the OD workshop and it is very important to us.

Similarly the principal stated, “OD gave me another way of approaching problems. The main thing I obtained from the process is to consult, consult with others; together you agree and try to come up with a solution”.

Another finding of this study testified that the intervention led to stronger team spirit among participants. As the HOD asserted, “the particular thing that impressed me was that people need to work together and one hand cannot make work better, people can always cooperate and think about solutions to problems which affect them collectively”. This phenomenon was also evident in the way participants worked with each other during the OD activities, they worked together as teams, debated issues constructively and made democratic decisions (Observation notes, July 14, 2009).

Apart from teams, respondents gave evidence that there was a slight change in their sense of autonomy as T3 claimed, “To me honestly the process of OD is a good one. OD opened our eyes to start doing things in a bottom-up way and now all staff members are fully committed to do our work on our own without being pushed”. In confirmation, the observation notes for the implementation phase have it on record that participants implemented the afternoon study monitoring policy on their own will (Observation notes, September 15 & 17, 2009).

Respondents further testified that their general attitude and perspectives of how organizations work has also been broadened. T6 claimed, “To me the OD workshop changed our lives here. Some of us had different ideas, for example when I was delegated to do something I could say this job is not mine, it is not in my job description, but because of OD I now know that I can do it”. The HOD viewed attitude improvement in terms of initiating change, and remarked, “I can see that learning from OD we have changed our attitudes because we are able to solve our own problems without inviting external people to do it on our behalf. So OD is quite excellent”.

4.3.2 OD compared to other change approaches

Although participants had knowledge of some approaches to change, OD was different and very new to them. As the principal commented, “any organization that experiences difficulty will welcome OD. It is like Jesus coming to solve the problems and to help people”. Sharing similar views T3 stated:

Yes, when Jesus came he came to save people so OD came to open eyes because it is a new thing. People were not aware of the fact that change can be initiated by them in a bottom-up fashion. We were used only to top-down change and we expected all changes to come from top but now we see everyone can initiate change and I hope one can also succeed in bringing even major changes.

Furthermore, the principal felt rescued in terms of how to approach organizational problems as he was still new in the post. It was on that basis that he expressed his gratitude that:

OD is like Jesus and Angels. Being a one year manager one needs experience bad or good in order to lead well. OD came at the right time as a rescue to me especially on a friendly approach of identifying problems, understanding the meaning of problem solving and problem as well as solving the problem itself. All managers need a piece of OD which can be used together with their experience it would make them better managers and that is how we improve.

The OD approach provided staff members with a platform to raise their concerns and also to contribute to the development of their school. This was evident in the principal’s remark that “staff members welcomed and enjoyed OD. They regard it as a platform where their voice can be heard. They felt involved and part of the decision making process”, unlike in the top-down approach to change.

4.3.3 OD values, beliefs and assumptions

The principal initially perceived the gains of democratic participation in his organization differently, as he commented:

Okay, to be honest with you our people are not really into democracy as such, we make rules but they still disobey them despite the fact that they were part of their making. In some cases, democratic process is a matter of majority rules but individuals who are negative disregard the consensus, since they have been negative from the start.

Participants felt happy and valued to be involved in the decision making process. This was evident in these expressions: “We are the people who determined our weaknesses, we had planned for actions and the process was democratic which is very good because we finally found a solution to the problem, but collectively as a staff”, T2 commented. In addition T6 stressed this view that “Decisions were done democratically, we accepted and felt okay to be involved in the decision making process. It is important to us”. The study has it on record that participants’ involvement in decision making motivated them to respect the decisions they made during the intervention. Views raised by T3 serve as evidence for this claim:

According to my observation the process was very good because by looking at where to start in terms of improving the situation and think of possible ways to implement gave us a clear picture of how to approach problem solving rather than waiting for the principal to solve everything and end up being blamed if something went wrong but in this case everyone was involved, made democratic input which could facilitate ownership and concrete solutions as they came from many people and this could also lead to effective problem solving.

Respondents revealed also that OD empowered them with new problem-solving skills and new change perspective. As T3 affirms:

OD has opened our eyes; previously we had no idea of how one should go about change and what it includes but after the introduction of OD in our school we have gained some self-problem-solving skills that we can use now. By what I gained we don’t have to wait for change to be initiated from top and just implement but one can choose a problem and design ways of improving the situation by ourselves.

4.3.4 Perceived challenges for the intervention

Like any other change strategies, an OD intervention has its shortcomings which potentially pose threats to its success. Challenges were no exception during my study, as I present below.

OD being new to participants was a challenging experience as evident in the principal's remark that "the term OD itself is very new to us, its aims and objectives were therefore also not very clear at the beginning. In future with a well understood concept (OD) and its objectives OD will ever be embraced. The challenge is only if it is not well understood at the beginning". The participants' level of understanding was regarded as crucial in terms of creating readiness for OD activities, as the HOD asserted:

According to my observation, the most challenging thing hindering OD is the level of understanding of the people. Some people may feel OD is intervening with their work because I have realized that whenever we invite some colleagues for OD meetings, some may say that they are busy with learners which show poor understanding or commitment to the process.

Another challenge was participants' unavailability during the main OD activities. Respondents pointed out that, "Absenteeism prevents some colleagues to attend OD workshops and if one did not attend they miss a lot about OD", as T2 claimed. In addition T1 elaborated this perspective by saying "if you are not 'workshopped' well you will not see where things are going therefore you need to be well equipped by the workshop to be able to see a clear picture where OD is going and where it leads you to". Observation notes (July 29, 2009) confirm that participants who missed the OD workshop were trailing in terms of the basic assumptions and values which underpin OD practice.

Respondents testified that insufficient time for participants as well as the entire intervention was a serious challenge. As T3 commented, "Time was a challenge because sometimes we had to postpone OD activities due to unavailability of staff members due to other important commitments and the time was not enough according to my views, one and half months are not enough". While sharing the same view the principal argued, "The time we spend doing OD activities was not enough but I think in the case of the actual OD intervention time would not be an issue".

4.3.5 Reflection on OD

The focus group interview shows that participants were positive about the entire process and expected to benefit from it. As evidence of this claim the HOD remarked, "I had a good

experience of OD because as I said previously I have learned something from it. You know if you are experiencing something new the attitude towards that particular thing is to learn more about it". In addition T6 expressed her gratitude in these words, "I want to thank you for what you have done for us and I think we will do better than before."

The participants' positive attitude towards OD was also evident in a high participant turnout and level of interaction during OD activities. In this respect T6 stated, "I think all of us participated: we answered all the questions, we did all activities and there were no problems from our side. We regarded the process as helpful to our school and I think it is important in future after you have left".

Evidence regarding unfreezing revealed that instead of occurring only during feedback participants become more open and free to talk about real organizational issues towards the end of the process than at the start (Observation notes, July, 2009). This claim is further represented in T3's argument:

According to my observation staff members had a wrong impression of the process, they had no clear picture of the process and they were a little hesitant to give concrete reflection of their own situation but now after getting more information about OD they understand and are happy about the process. They even came up to a stage where they started giving the reality of their situation. They realized OD has potential to improve their situation instead of sticking to the old way of doing things which might be wrong.

In so far as commitment and application of skills and ideas acquired during OD is concerned, T3 remarked:

To me honestly the process of OD is a good one. OD opened our eyes to start doing things in a bottom-up way and now all staff members are fully committed to do our work on our own without being pushed. I think it is a good idea and we will continue using this approach to solve other weaknesses one by one because now we have the correct approach.

To add to this view the Principal confirmed, "I must also confirm that I have learned a lot and we will always try to emulate this process in solving our organizational problems". Respondents further felt that since OD is beneficial in organizations it should spread to other educators as the HOD expressed in these words:

One request I want to make to you is to come back and introduce OD to our leaders. You can either make workshops with HODs, principals and community leaders this will help a lot because we realized that we were very behind with many things we were not aware of where to go and which direction to face if we are encountering problems instead of saying do.

4.4 Conclusion

In this section of the chapter I presented an ethnographic account of Yambuka Primary School, a narrative account of the OD phases and participants' experience and perception of the entire intervention. In the next section I discuss the data.

Section B

4.5 Introduction

In this section I discuss the data. The discussion focuses on what was learned from data interpretation and analysis and portrays a holistic picture of participants' experience and perception of the entire OD process. I also attempt to interpret the findings through literature as presented in Chapter 2. The themes that emerged from the data are: readiness to change; benefits of OD; OD compared to other change strategies; OD values, beliefs and assumptions; perceived challenges of the OD intervention, and a reflection on the OD process.

4.6 Readiness to change

One of the factors that contribute to the effectiveness of any change initiative is participants' and organizational readiness to change. According to Smith (2003), readiness to participate in the organization change process refers to the desire, capability, confidence and belief that 'we can make a difference' in the members of the organization (p. 18). Readiness to change is further influenced by other factors, and this is the focus of this section.

4.6.1 Factors influencing readiness

4.6.1.1 Capacity to change

The findings of this study revealed that an organization's leadership capacity to initiate and lead change is crucial for the creation of readiness to change in an organization. In support of this idea, Susanto (2008) argues that management capacity for initiating and leading change efforts is an essential attribute in creating readiness for change through creating supportive policies and practices in the organization (p. 53). Respondents felt that Yambuka Primary School's leadership managed to successfully initiate and lead change, and this achievement exposed organization members to the merits of change success. This could potentially motivate organization members

to become supportive of change initiatives. However, capacity alone may not be sufficient. There must be structures and policies that allow and encourage organization members to engage and embrace change.

The data further established that, apart from personal ability of leaders and suitable policies for effective change, support from staff members in embracing and engage into change efforts is also essential. According to respondents' views, organization members' support for change is also influenced by thirst for change, especially if there is a realization that the current situation is unsatisfactory. On that basis, Yambuka Primary School seemed to have a supportive base in terms of capacity to engage in an OD intervention. As Cummings and Worley (2001) confirm, successful organizational change needs leadership that does not waiver and "in a changing environment the role of leaders is very critical in inspiring people to support and participate in the change initiative" (Susanto, 2008, p. 58).

4.6.1.2 Co-operation and good interpersonal relationship

Interview data reflected that staff members' strong interpersonal relationships and good co-operation in both social and work related spheres facilitated effective change. In affirmation, individual and organizational readiness for change needs to be based on a sound base of mutual trust and interest (Susanto, 2008, p. 52). The data seemed to capture this perspective as the respondents claimed, "Our staff is co-operative, and we discuss matters and find collective solutions". This was also evident from the observation notes that during break time staff members gather in a small office for tea break and chat to each other, and they value other people's ideas.

This view holds the potential for OD intervention as it is a democratic process underpinned by consensus decision making. Susanto (2008) further stresses the essence of participants' trust and respect as an element of readiness: "it is important that a sufficient amount of trust is established to allow staff members to openly express dissenting views and compromise democratically" (p. 52). In the case of this study, the standard of co-operation and interpersonal relationship could potentially provide some degree of readiness for change.

4.6.1.3 Organization challenges

According to Morrison (2002), complexity theory holds that an organization interacts dynamically with its environment (p. 5). In light of this perspective the ethnographic background of Yambuka Primary School confirms that apart from successes the school is faced with challenges of different magnitude and complexity which hamper its smooth functioning. This organizational situation was also mirrored by the data, that every organization has challenges. Respondents singled out the issue of disrespect of procedures for leave application by staff members, despite several explanations as one of the key challenges.

Since the list is long, the challenge stated above may send the signal that Yambuka Primary School has undesirable situations which could prompt the need for OD intervention in the organization. As evident in OD readiness literature, one of the fundamental ‘axioms’ of OD is that people’s readiness for change depends on creating a deep-felt need for change (Cummings & Worley, 2005, p. 157; Susanto, 2008, p. 50).

Furthermore, respondents seemed to have realized their need for change as they expressed, “our general school condition is not really good” and “our school is somehow not like other schools, we are trying our best to improve our school to bring it where other schools are”. These expressions are in line with Schmuck and Runkel’s (1994) argument that productive change in an organization is unlikely to occur unless a significant part of the organization acknowledges a discrepancy between an ideal and actual state of affairs before an OD design (p. 30). Against that background the school’s challenges could also serve as a form of readiness for OD intervention.

4.6.1.4 Resistance to change

It emerged from the data that staff members in Yambuka Primary School overwhelmingly yearn for and support change; however there are those who resist it. As evidence for this finding, the data suggested that despite a large number of staff members who are supportive to change “there are minority two to three members who are afraid of change”. This finding seems to be a common phenomenon during change as James and Connolly (2000) argue that change is an interesting idea, as it is all around us, and it is difficult if not impossible to escape from it, but

any degree of change, they argue, “seems likely the organization’s ‘immune system’ will start to resist the infection from new ideas and practices” (p. 16). Yambuka Primary School was not an exception.

According to Susanto (2008), change involves moving from a known to an unknown state, of ending the usual way of doing things to a new one (p. 55). Respondents attributed resistance to change in their organization to views that change removes people’s comfort zones and demands extra effort from staff members in terms of workload, knowledge and time. Another reason, according to the data, is that “maybe staff members are used to their way of doing things and want to stick to that” due to fear of the new unknown state of affairs. Some of the change initiatives that were resisted or not well embraced, according to the data, were “the National Standard and Performance Indicators policy as well as the regional directive on knocking off at 15h00”.

However, during my study resistance to change was unlikely to pose a threat to readiness as the number of resisters was significantly low. My observation notes established that only one case of a teacher who refused to attend an OD activity was experienced and she was convinced by other organization members to attend. Despite a reasonable level of organizational readiness reflected in the data, Susanto (2008) advises that to reduce resistance, raising change readiness is mandatory. This constitutes the basis for the next section.

4.6.1.5 Raising levels of readiness

4.6.1.5.1 Introduction to OD workshop

Respondents felt that “If OD is well introduced it will be embraced”. According to the data, the OD workshop made a tremendous impact as a means of raising participants’ readiness level. In support of this claim, the data outcome confirmed that at the start of the study, respondents knew nothing about OD and what it entails, while some had mixed feelings about the researcher’s real intentions. However, after attending the OD introductory workshop they gained a new understanding about change which opened up their minds and raised their interest in engaging with OD.

The data further portrayed that the OD introductory workshop had the capacity to convince participants that the OD intervention was possible in their organization and beneficial to them. As research suggests, information about why the change is occurring, how it will benefit the organization, and how people will be involved in the design and implementation of the change are most helpful in increasing readiness (Cummings & Worley, 2005, p. 158; Schmuck & Runkel, 1994, p. 56; Susanto, 2008, p. 54). In addition Susanto (2008) emphasizes that employees are likely to accept change if they are convinced that the change is beneficial to them.

4.6.1.5.2 Survey Data Feedback (SDF)

As the observation notes for this study reflect, the data collection and diagnosis OD phases were characterized by intensive feedback sessions. These included feedback during the selection of the aspect for intervention as well as during the diagnosis of the intervention item (poor monitoring of afternoon study). Feedback had the potential to raise participants' readiness level during the study: as argued by Smith (2003), apart from the OD workshop, Survey Data Feedback (SDF) (the intervention employed during this study) serves as a key readiness-raising intervention.

In terms of Kurt Lewin's three-stage change model (French & Bell, 1999, p. 14) – unfreezing, moving and refreezing – the unfreezing stage seeks to bring issues into the open, enable people to express fears and anxieties, and to become aware of their own contributions to situations, which releases emotional energy.

The findings of this study suggest that some form of unfreezing was prevalent during feedback sessions. During the feedback which preceded the selection for the organizational item for intervention participants started to speak out openly and pointing fingers at each other. They raised real organizational issues. The data bears testimony for unfreezing, as one participant remarked, "I want the issue for intervention to be Continuous Assessment (CASS) because upper primary teachers at this school do not assess learners properly".

The observation notes further provide evidence that during the feedback on the intervention item, participants expressed satisfaction that their views were correctly interpreted. On this basis the

OD introductory workshop and SDF contributed to the raising of participants' readiness level which could lead to successful OD intervention in Yambuka Primary School.

4.7 Participants' perceptions and experience of the OD process

4.7.1 Benefits of OD

OD can be described as a "normative re-educative strategy" for managing change, which is aimed at facilitating development of people and the organization as a whole for the purpose of optimizing human fulfillment and increasing organizational capacity (Davidoff & Lazarus, 2002, p. 42). Thus the OD intervention in the view of the respondents' had both direct and indirect influence over individuals and the organization as a whole. I present those benefits below, drawing from participants' experience and perception of the intervention.

4.7.1.1 'OD is an eye opener'

Respondents revealed that OD benefited them in various ways. According to Hanson and Lubin (1995) the democratic value for OD fosters responsible involvement in decision making about the affairs that concern individuals and organizational work life. In light of this view, respondents contented that they were very behind but OD opened their eyes in terms of introducing new ideas and insights on decision making to them. To add more flesh to this OD merit, respondents emphasized that OD created awareness that managers are not the only ones who are entitled to make decisions at the expense of organization members: an understanding that may encourage organization members to participate in the decision-making process and to be critical of imposed decisions.

Fullan (as cited in Davidoff & Lazarus, 2002) argues that we cannot develop an organization (school) without developing the people who work in the school, thus professional development is a necessary aspect of an organization and one way to achieving it is through OD (p. 41). Thus OD equipped participants with new problem-solving skills and new lenses for seeing organizational improvements. The data reflects that respondents lived with work-related

problems but they lacked the best approach to solve them. However, OD exposed participants to the idea that change can be implemented by organization members themselves and hence they regarded OD as an 'eye opener'.

OD literature further advises that "all members of the organization should have the privilege to propose or initiate necessary change" (Susanto, 2008, p. 53). With regard to initiating change in organizations, respondents revealed that after engaging in OD, they gained a new perspective that they can choose a problem and design ways of improving their situation by themselves instead of waiting for change to be initiated from the top authority: the benefits of OD were not only confined to subordinates.

Respondents further perceived specific benefits as more beneficial to the organizational leadership as far as change is concerned. According to French and Bell (1995) OD helps leaders to address and embrace change from a different perspective to the top-down approach to change and to regard change as an opportunity, not just a threat (p. 3). Respondents shared similar sentiments as reflected in the data. They contended "OD can also teach our bosses that they are not the only ones to make decisions, but all of us have to work in a team but not in isolation". This view may also encourage organization leaders to become more accommodative and to tap on the vast experience of organization members.

Similarly, findings of the study further testified that Yambuka Primary School leaders realized this benefit as they asserted, "OD gave us another way of approaching problems. The main thing we obtained from the process is to consult, consult with others; together you agree and try to come up with a solution". This comment holds the reality that effective solutions to problems are embedded within the social part of the organization and consultation is the main instrument to get them. This idea is in line with Keene's (2000) argument that organization leadership should explore the potential of organization members to become productive co-creators of their organizational reality (p. 16).

4.7.1.2 Impact of OD on teams and individual attitude

Another OD benefit for organizations and their members that emerged from data was the promotion of teamwork. This aspect forms part of the OD foundation. A team, according to Sheard and Kakabadse (2004), is a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable (p. 13). The findings of this study testify that the intervention led to stronger team spirit among participants. Respondents asserted that they were impressed by the idea that people need to work together, cooperate and think about solutions to their organizational problems collectively. This phenomenon was also evident in the way participants worked with each other during the OD activities, they worked together as teams, debated issues constructively and made democratic decisions.

Apart from teams, respondents noticed improvement in their attitudes. They gave evidence that there was a slight change in their sense of autonomy. Data reflected amazing views in this regard, such as “To me honestly the process of OD is a good one, OD opened our eyes to start doing things in a bottom-up way and now all staff members are fully committed to do our work on our own without being pushed”. In confirmation, the observations notes for the implementation phase have it on record that participants implemented the afternoon study monitoring policy on their own will.

Cummings and Worley (2005) argue that an organization’s cultural assumptions direct organization members how to perceive, think and feel about the environment, and about human nature, human activity and human relationships (pp. 483-484). With regard to this idea, respondents testified that in addition to those OD impacts, their general attitude and perspectives of how organizations work have also been shaken a little. This was clear from the data, as one respondent put it: “To me the OD workshop changed our lives here. Some of us had different ideas, for example when I was delegated to do something I could say this job is not mine, it is not in my job description but because of OD I now know that I can do it”.

Despite that, this study’s findings further established that attitude improvement in terms of initiating change was evident. According to respondents, OD changed organization members’ attitude to change based on the view that they can now solve their problems on their own without

relying on external experts. Against this background, OD seemed to have made a tremendous positive impact in the lives of Yambuka Primary School members which could potentially improve their work life.

I next compare OD with other change approaches.

4.7.2 OD versus other change approaches

4.7.2.1 OD is like 'Jesus'

Although participants had knowledge of some approaches to change OD was different, very new to them and they considered it as an alternative to the top-down approach to change. As evident from the data, "any organization that experiences difficulty will welcome OD. It is like Jesus coming to solve the problems and to help people". This stance seems to mean that OD was a learning opportunity to Yambuka Primary School. Senge (1990) argues that for learning organizations to excel, expansion of their capacity and a fundamental mind-shift among their members are required. The capacity expansion and mind shift referred to by Senge in my view includes members' perception and perspective of change approaches.

Respondents revealed that they had no knowledge and thought of a bottom-up organization based approach to change. They were only used to a top-down change strategy and as a result they waited for most of the changes to come from the high authority. However, because of OD they now believe they can also initiate change and develop their organization. On that basis respondents compared OD with Jesus who came to save people since OD came to open their eyes in terms of new change perspectives.

While sharing the same view the principal felt rescued from the burden of ignorance on how to approach organizational problems as he was still new in the post.

On a different note, respondents further embraced the OD approach as it provided them an even platform to raise their concerns and equally contribute to the development of their organization, unlike a top-down approach to change. OD may have transformed participants' perspective of change approaches which was only confined to a top-down driven change and this mind shift

could last longer. This is evident in Senge, Cambron-McCabe, Lucas, Smith, Dutton and Kleiner's (2000) words that if there were not fundamental shifts in how people think and interact, as well as in how they explore new ideas, not all change efforts would last (p. 20).

4.7.3 OD values, beliefs and assumptions

4.7.3.1 OD as 'a democratic and empowerment process'

According to Hanson and Lubin (1995), the OD democratic value fosters responsible involvement in the organization's goal setting, decision making, and problem solving in the affairs that concern individuals and organizational work life (p. 35). This perspective was no exception during my study. Despite the fact that the data to a certain extent underestimated the gains of democratic participation, due to staff members who disobey plans and school policies they have helped develop, it was equally evident that democratic participation is valued during OD.

Respondents felt happy and valued to be involved in the decision-making process. They confirmed that involving them in determining their organization's weaknesses and democratically crafting actions for their organizational problems collectively as staff members was essential. These views were equally valid as French and Bell's (1995) claim that increased involvement and member participation produces better solutions to problems and enhances shared decision-making (French & Bell, 1995, p. 94).

However, research shows that collaborative decision-making leads to ownership and commitment to decisions as Weisbord (1987) asserts: "people will commit to plans they have helped to develop" (p. 285). Similarly, data established that participants' involvement in decision-making motivated them to commit to and respect decisions they made during the intervention. In this respect respondents devalued the top-down approach to change in which principals solve every organizational problem and take the blame if things go wrong. Respondents further felt that involving everyone in a democratic decision-making process

facilitates the generation of concrete solutions to problems as they come from diverse viewpoints.

Participative decision making in the view of French and Bell (1995) promotes empowerment of organization members. They argue that empowerment involves giving individuals the authority to participate, to make decisions, to contribute their ideas, to influence and to be responsible and committed to decisions (French and Bell, 1995). Respondents revealed that since OD is a participatory process they had been empowered with new problem-solving skills and a new change perspective.

4.7.4 Perceived challenges for the intervention

Like any other change strategies, an OD intervention has its shortcomings which potentially pose a threat to its success. Thus, challenges were no exception during my study as I present below.

4.7.4.1 OD being new and poor level of understanding

The first challenge for the intervention in the view of participants was based on the OD philosophy being new to them. The data show that the OD philosophy as a change strategy was new to respondents and as a result its aims and objectives were unclear from the word go. On that basis, respondents considered that stance as a challenge which could be avoided or minimized through the creation of a profound understanding and adoption of the OD theory to change. This may require some time as it involves conceptual and cultural mind shift of participants.

Moreover, participants' level of understanding of OD at the start-up stage is crucial for their commitment to subsequent OD activities. It was evident from the data that some participants perceived OD as interfering with their work, which in the views of respondents could be attributed to poor understanding and commitment to the OD process.

4.7.4.2 Participants' unavailability

This study further revealed that unavailability of participants during key OD activities, namely the OD introductory workshop, constituted a serious setback for OD intervention. Respondents held a common perspective that “if you are not ‘workshopped’ well you will not see where things are going therefore you need to be well equipped by the workshop to be able to see a clear picture where OD is going and where it leads you to”. Observation notes confirmed this argument as participants who missed the OD workshop displayed a lack of basic assumptions and values which underpin the OD practice. Hence, one participant who missed the OD introductory workshop wanted only some of the organization members to participate in the problem-solving exercise, an idea which is deep rooted in top-down change strategies.

4.7.4.3 Insufficient time

As experienced during similar studies conducted by Mitchell (2004), Neshila (2004) and Perestrelo (2008), the time factor was identified as another challenge during this study. Respondents testified that insufficient time was a serious challenge for participants as well as the entire intervention, and this led to postponement of several OD activities.

While sharing similar views, some participants felt that, “in the case of the actual OD intervention time would not be an issue”. This idea is worth considering because during the actual OD intervention adequate time for the project was made available. Furthermore, there was a general understanding that OD change is likely to serve its intended purposes effectively provided its challenges are minimized at all cost, coupled with intensive readiness-raising activities. However, Fullan (cited in Perestrelo, 2008, p. 57) advises that “effective change takes time: two to three years for specific innovations, three to five years for institutional reforms”.

4.7.5 Reflection on OD

Under this topic I reflect on the entire OD intervention in terms of its ups and downs, drawing on my own as well as participants' experience and perception of the process.

4.7.5.1 Participants' attitude towards OD

According to my personal observation I noticed that throughout the study participants had a strong sense of trust and support of OD combined with interest and commitment to the intervention. In other words, participants were positive to the entire process and expected to benefit from it, especially since OD was a new concept to them. There is evidence in the data that participants acquired new insights and ideas about change and tenets of organizational work-life. This aspect encouraged them to yearn for more on the basis that "if you are experiencing something new the attitude towards that particular thing is to learn more about it".

In addition, respondents expressed gratitude for having had OD introduced to them, and promised to employ the theory in improving their organization. This expression holds a view that participants had not dreamed of being exposed to wonderful ideas such as OD; therefore it was a great thing to them. Another testimony of the participants' seriousness with OD was that in some occasions we (the co-facilitator and I) dealt with OD-related duties during weekends, a phenomenon which is unusual.

4.7.5.2 Participation during the OD process

In addition to tremendous support and interest in OD, findings of the study show that there was a high participant turnout and level of interaction during OD activities. According to respondents' experience of the process, they regarded OD as helpful to their school as it could help them solve their organizational problems. On that basis they felt they seriously engaged in the OD activities and saw no problem from their side as far as participation was concerned. This high level of participation could also be attributed to readiness. Participants were ready to gain new knowledge about change and to engage with change, as presented under the readiness topic (see section 4.6). It also came out clearly from the data that most of the OD-related absenteeism cases were not deliberate as members normally requested an update on the covered items.

4.7.5.3 Unfreezing effect during OD process

The notion of unfreezing is a normal phenomenon during feedback, as claimed by Kurt Lewin's theory of change (Cummings & Worley, 2005). However, this study found that instead of occurring only during feedback, the entire OD process seems to be characterized by unfreezing. The data show that participants seemed to have a wrong impression of OD at the start which made them a little hesitant to give a concrete reflection of their organization. However, with a wider exposure to OD and its potential benefits, they gained more insight and courage to talk about real organizational issues. Similarly, observation notes testified that participants become more open and free to talk about authentic organizational issues towards the end of the process than at the start.

4.7.5.4 Conflict

The OD intervention process is not conflict-free but conflict-laden (Schmuck & Runkel, 1994). During the planning stage of this study conflict over decisions arose between organization members which could potentially derail the focus of the entire study if not properly handled. It is therefore crucial that OD practitioners are skilled in handling conflicts, or that organization members are equipped with conflict management skills in advance, something that I failed to do during my study. This view is supported by Schmuck and Runkel (1994): during the OD process training can be necessary, but as a point of departure, it should only be used for staff members who are new to OD (p. 75). Some examples of the OD training activities are communication, problem solving and conflict resolution.

Fullan (1993), however, states that "conflict is essential to any successful change effort" (p. 27). This view denotes that conflict should not only be viewed from a negative perspective as it can potentially contribute to the success of change efforts. As Stacey (cited in Fullan 1993) asserts, "People spark new ideas off each other when they argue and disagree – when they are conflicting, confused, and searching for new meaning – yet remain willing to discuss and listen to each other" (p. 27). Thus the conflict referred to above also had potential for the development of a collective, sound and effective study supervision policy.

4.7.5.5 'OD a life long treasure'

Despite conflict, respondents showed that they were impressed by the OD approach to change and desired to own and constantly apply similar skills in solving their organizational problems because they had been stuck for a long time. As evident in the data, OD opened respondents' eyes to doing things in a bottom-up fashion which increased staff members' level of autonomy. Respondents value this perspective highly and want to preserve and adopt it in such a way that it becomes part of their organizational culture.

This reflection confirms that participants were impressed and felt positive about OD despite the minor challenges as presented above. Hence they called for a wider spreading of the OD philosophy to educators, educational and community leaders as it may help them rethink about and approach problem solving differently.

4.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed the data as presented in section A. The discussion looked at the issue of readiness as it is one of the leverage points during organization improvement, concentrating on factors that influence it. It emerged from data that the organizational readiness was supportive to OD due to internal factors as well as readiness-raising activities.

Despite OD being new to participants, it emerged that they benefited from the process in various ways. Like other change strategies OD has challenges which hamper its effectiveness. These were also explored in this chapter. The discussion further revealed that participants were positive about OD as confirmed by their high level of participation and interest in OD activities as well as their commitment to employ skills they acquired from the intervention in future. However, the paradoxical nature of conflict in terms of its effect on change cannot be underestimated during OD change efforts.

The next chapter concludes the study.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter gives a brief summary of the findings for the study which explored participants' perceptions and experience of an OD intervention in a Namibian rural school in Ohangwena region. The significance of the OD intervention is discussed, followed by recommendations for practice. Limitations of the study are also presented, as well as recommendations for future research drawing on the findings. The last part of the chapter is devoted to closing remarks for the entire study.

5.2 Summary of findings

Throughout the entire study, participants demonstrated a strong sense of trust and support of OD accompanied by high interest and commitment to the intervention. In addition, there was a high attendance and level of interaction during OD activities. This was attributed to participants' perception of OD as being helpful in solving their organizational problems as well as to a high standard of organizational readiness.

The study found that Yambuka Primary School's leadership has a capacity to initiate and lead change which is crucial for the creation of change readiness in the organization. Effective change in the views of respondents was also facilitated by staff members' strong interpersonal relationships, co-operation and support for change.

Readiness for change depends also on creating a deep-felt need for change. Respondents realized their need for change as they confirmed that the general condition of their school was unsatisfactory. This undesirable situation prompted the need for the OD intervention in the organization. The study further found that readiness-raising activities, namely the OD

introductory workshop and SDF, contributed significantly to participants' readiness to change which led to the successful OD intervention in Yambuka Primary School.

OD benefited participants in various ways. One of the benefits, according to the data, was that OD created an awareness among participants that managers were not entitled to make all decisions at the expense of other organization members. OD also equipped participants with new problem-solving skills and new lenses for seeing organizational problems. The data reflect that respondents lived with work-related problems and lacked the best approach to solve them. However, OD came to their rescue by introducing to them the idea that change can be initiated and implemented by organization members themselves, and they regarded this as an 'eye opener'. Furthermore, OD helped Yambuka Primary School leaders address and embrace change from a different perspective to the top-down approach, especially that they have a crucial role to play in determining the direction for organizations in a rapidly changing environment.

Teamwork is another benefit OD can offer organizations and their members. The findings of this study testified that the intervention led to a stronger team spirit among participants. According to respondents, it is a good thing for people to work together, cooperate and think about solutions to their organizational problems collectively. Apart from teams, respondents noticed an improvement in their attitudes. As evident in the data there was a slight change in participants' sense of autonomy as well as their general perspectives on how organizations work and on initiating change. This was based on the grounds that they were now able to initiate change on their own without relying on external experts.

Although respondents had knowledge of the traditional approaches to change, OD was different, very new to them and they considered it as an alternative to a top-down approach. Moreover, respondents regarded OD as a learning opportunity as it has the potential to expand their perception and perspective of change approaches. Unlike a top-down change strategy, a bottom-up organization-based approach to change allows subordinates to initiate change. In the eyes of respondents OD further provides an even platform for them to raise concerns and contribute equally to the development of organization.

While some members were doubtful of the gains of democratic participation, it was evident that democratic participation was valued during OD. Respondents felt happy and valued to be

involved in the decision-making process and to democratically develop actions for their organizational improvement. This motivated them to commit to and respect decisions made during the intervention. Furthermore, it came to the fore that democratic decision making facilitates the generation of concrete solutions to problems as they come from diverse viewpoints. Since OD is a participatory process, it empowered participants with new knowledge and skills.

OD is not free of challenges, and one of the challenges of the intervention, in the view of the participants, was based on the OD philosophy being new to them and it required a new way of thinking for a better understanding which needed some time. The study further revealed that missing key OD activities, namely the OD introductory workshop, constituted a serious setback for the intervention. Participants who missed the OD workshop lacked the basic principles and values which underpin the OD practice. Insufficient time was another serious challenge for participants as well as the entire intervention, however, in the case of the actual OD intervention respondents felt time would not be an issue.

With regard to unfreezing, the study established that instead of occurring only during feedback, the entire OD process is characterized by unfreezing. Participants become more open and free to talk about authentic organizational issues towards the end of the process than at the start. It was also clear from the findings that conflict over decisions can arise among organization members and it has the potential to deviate the focus of the entire study if not properly handled. However, as Fullan (1993) states, “conflict is essential to any successful change effort” (p. 27) as it may lead to effective and authentic solutions to problems.

Participants in the study were impressed by the OD intervention as it yielded a positive short-term outcome in improving their afternoon study supervision. There is also evidence that the organization sustained the implementation, even though this was beyond the scope of this study. Respondents promised to adopt the OD approach and constantly apply similar skills in solving other organizational problems in future. Based on the merits of OD as experienced by respondents, they called for a wider spreading of the OD philosophy to educators, educational and community leaders.

5.3 Significance of the study

A changing world driven by information, technology and innovativeness has brought new challenges to the world of work and the way in which organizations function (Meyer & Botha, 2004, p. 3). The degree of change may differ from one organization to the other but all require adapting to externally or internally generated forces. Because change is occurring at a rapid rate, there is a need for new ways to manage it. This situation is equally applicable to educational institutions.

In such turbulent circumstances schools need to be helped to understand the complexity of change in order to adapt. Organization Development (OD) is playing an increasingly important role in helping organizations change themselves. According to Brown and Harvey (2006), OD has the potential to “make an organization more effective and to enhance the opportunity for the individuals to develop their potential” (p. xix). This evoked my interest in exploring the potential of OD to bring about a mindset that makes it possible for a school to understand the role it could play in bringing about change in a turbulent environment where proactive problem-solving becomes a way of working.

On this basis the study could be of potential significance to educators and educational leaders as they are continuously faced with challenges posed by constant change in education on one hand and circumstances attributed to local organizational contexts on the other. This situation demands organizational ability to adapt to challenges facilitated by contemporary leadership conception and practices. The study may also be of interest to members of any organization that plans to engage in effective change.

5.4 Recommendations for practice

Several aspects pertaining to conducting OD interventions emerged during this study, and I therefore offer the following recommendations for practice to researchers planning to embark on OD studies.

- ✚ It is advisable to have a sound knowledge of OD through studying relevant literature on OD philosophy and methodology before starting with the study. This can also be facilitated by studying previous OD research as it may help to avoid shortcomings experienced by past researchers.
- ✚ The OD workshop plays a major role in creating readiness among participants to engage in OD intervention. It is during this workshop that participants are informed about the potential benefits OD can offer them as individuals and also as organization. It is therefore essential that the workshop is planned well to create a positive and effective understanding among participants.
- ✚ The process of OD is not entirely in the researcher's control; it is dictated and guided by the research site's schedule of activities. Hence it is not always easy to have all staff members present during OD activities. However, being flexible in terms of time for conducting OD activities and in selecting respondents is crucial during this study.
- ✚ Proper selection of respondents with the assistance of those who are on the spot and also from the participants' level of participation and interest in OD activities is important. I further noticed that individual staff members' general level of understanding facilitates their understanding of OD theory and their contribution to OD activities. These people constituted a sizeable number of respondents during my study.
- ✚ Some respondents may withhold information at first but may open up later in the process. It is therefore important to be well versed in conducting interviews, especially in skills for creating a relaxed and conducive atmosphere for the interview as well as probing skills. I had fewer skills in these areas which led to superficial data in some instances.
- ✚ Conflict may arise at any time during OD interventions, thus, if time allows, facilitators should equip participants with skills in conflict resolution, holding effective meetings, decision making etc. before problem solving, as these have the potential to prepare participants for effective organizational transformation process. I failed to do that during my study due to limited time. However, conflict may also lead to effective and authentic solutions to problems.
- ✚ Constant communication about the next OD activity with the leadership is essential for possible adjustment of the school programme in order to accommodate OD activities, especially when all staff members are available. Furthermore, participants may lack a

clear picture of the next activity or OD stage until such time as they reach and engage in that activity or stage. Encouraging them to be patient is helpful.

- ✚ Participants with less interest in the intervention can discourage others from active participation: look out for them and convince them to go with the flow. Avoiding negative remarks during the process may also serve as a motive for a high level of participation.
- ✚ It is essential to be familiar with the cultural ethics and norms of participants in the study and also those of their organization. This helps you as a researcher to go with the flow and to be accepted in the organization. I realized during my study that to be accepted and trusted by participants is essential for smooth progress of the study. Participants may also revert to their old culture, hence it is advisable to constantly remind them about OD values, principles and assumptions. But you can only realize that once you are familiar with the culture of the organization.

5.5 Limitation of the study

My study was a single case study focusing on a school, which is unique as it influences and is influenced by its unique environment. The data collected during this study was therefore confined to respondents' perception and experience of OD based on their unique organizational culture, the nature of the organization's problems and their level of readiness to change. These can be radically different from one organization to another and may require different OD interventions and approaches. Against this background, this study's findings may not be generalized for application in organizations with different contexts from that of this research site.

However, there are cases when this research finding can be generalized. As Stake (1995) argues, "people can learn much that is general from single cases. They do that partly because they are familiar with other cases and they add this one in, thus making a slightly new group from which to generalize" (p. 85). This should be done when "the researcher can provide bases for knowing the validity and relevance of already ready-made generalizations" (Stake, 1995, p. 87). In light of this view the study findings could be generalized on the basis that during this study validity and quality issues were ensured through the use of multiple data collection tools for triangulation as

well as member checking. Furthermore, the findings of the study may be of potential significance to contribute to organization development theory. As Yin (1993) argues, generalizing case studies is also a matter of analytic generalization which involves using a single case to generalize to a theory (p. 79).

5.6 Recommendations for future research

The intervention employed during this study (SDF) is the common intervention for OD projects (Schmuck & Runkel, 1994). SDF is an effective intervention and has the potential to produce educative findings about OD interventions in educational institutions. However, previous OD studies conducted in Namibian schools testify that SDF has been a dominant intervention. There seems to be a need to explore the effectiveness of other OD interventions, such as Future Search Conference (FSC), in Namibian educational institutions as it has only been successfully used in health institutions.

The study showed that that OD has also the potential to benefit community authorities. Conducting an OD intervention in a community governing body would therefore contribute to this claim.

Finally, the outcome of those studies may also add to a broader view of the effectiveness of OD as a change strategy.

5.7 Conclusion

Due to the complex nature of organizational contexts, it is true that organizations, including schools, should keep abreast of new developments and adapt to change. For this to happen, not only are contemporary leadership practices required but also a different perspective and perception of approaches to change. One way to acquire these is through exposure to the OD philosophy, as it adopts a bottom-up, participatory and democratic approach to organizational improvement which capitalizes on the rich potential of organization members. Apart from the case of Yambuka Primary School, there is more evidence that, given a chance, OD has the

capacity to transform organizations and individuals' mindset in so far as continuous and deep change is to be achieved.

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Appendix A 1

Permission letter from Professor Van der Mescht



RHODES UNIVERSITY
Grahamstown • 6140 • South Africa

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Tel: (046) 603 8383/4 • Fax: (046) 622 8028 • e-mail: education@ru.ac.za

18 June 2009

Mr Josia Udjombala
Regional Director of Education
Ohangwena Region

Dear Josia

Permission for Messr Lukas Kashikatu and TK Johannes to conduct research in your region

Greetings! I trust all is well in your part of the world and you are working as hard as ever coordinating education in the Ohangeuna Region.

The purpose of this letter is to obtain you permission for two of my students - Lukas Kashikatu (student number 07k3001) and TK Johannes (student number 09J4050) to conduct research in your region. They are both full-time Masters students of mine and both have successfully completed the coursework section of the programme. They now need to conduct their research and, as you know, we prefer our students to investigate an issue in their own countries.

Lukas wants to conduct an OD intervention in two schools in the region. He has been in touch with the principals of the schools but obviously he needs your permission first. TK wants to investigate principals' leadership role in implementing the NSPI in schools. I am sure their work will be of value to the schools in question and the region as a whole. May I take this opportunity of asking you to support them in any way possible. Doing research is no easy matter – as you know – and our students need all the help they can get.

Thank you very much Josia, and keep well.

Regards

(Prof) Hennie van der Mescht
(Course Coordinitor)

Appendix A2

Request to conduct research

Inquiry: L. Kashikatu
Cell: (00264)812562754/ (0027)769931885

E-mail: kashikatul@yahoo.com

Rhodes University
Grahamstown

South Africa

June 22, 200

To: The Director of Education

Ohangwena Region

Ondangwa

Namibia

Re: A request to conduct research.

My name is Lukas Kashikatu, a school principal for Onengali Primary School as from 2006. I am currently on a study leave, doing a Master Degree in Education Leadership and Management with Rhodes University on full-time basis. In partial fulfillment of my degree's requirement, I am expected to submit a research thesis which is based on Organization Development (OD) action research. OD is an organizational development initiative which aims at equipping organization members with the necessary knowledge and skills on how to approach organizational self-renewal and development in an inclusive manner.

It is based on this background that, I am requesting for permission to conduct my study in one of the schools in Ohangwena education circuit, during the whole month of July and half of September 2009. The schools I have in mind in order of preference are:

1. Yambuka Primary School or alternatively
2. Onekuta Junior Secondary School.

I have already verbally communicated my intentions of conducting my research to the principals concerned and they were positive. This study requires intense interaction with staff members, and consequently has a great potential to disrupt teaching and learning hence, I planned to hold it after classes.

This request is accompanied by a copy of the official letter from my supervisor, Professor Hennie Van Der Mescht which reflects more details about the study. I shall hand in the original letter as well as my proposal up on arrival.

Your humble response will highly be appreciated.

Yours faithfully

Lukas Kashikatu

Appendix A3

Response from the Director of Ohangwena Education Directorate



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION: OHANGWENA EDUCATION DIRECTORATE

Private Bag 2028, Ondangwa. Tel. 264 65 281 903, Fax. 264 65 240 190

Enq: Josia S Udjombala
E-mail: tatemadala@yahoo.com
Ref: SP


Prof Hennie van der Mescht
Education Department
Rhodes University
Fax. 00 27 46 622 8028

June 23, 2009

Dear Prof Van der Mescht

RE: PERMISSION FOR MESSRS LUKAS KASHIKATU AND T K JOHANNES TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN OHANGWENA REGION

1. I write to refer to your letter (through fax) of this morning with regard to the above subject matter.
2. Permission is hereby granted to Messrs Lukas Kashikatu and T K Johannes to conduct research in our region, at schools of their choice. Permission is granted on condition that:
 - participation by individual teachers/learners is voluntary;
 - school academic programmes are in no way to be disrupted;
 - Once completed, a copy of their respective research findings are to be deposited with our regional library, or teachers resource centre.
3. I would like to wish Messrs Kashikatu and Johannes every success in their studies, and look forward to the findings and possible recommendations of their research.

Yours sincerely

JOSIA S UDJOMBALA
DIRECTOR: MoE
OHANGWENA REGION



Appendix A4

Consent letter

Yambuka Primary School

July 14, 2009

Re: Agreement letter

I(name) am hereby agree to willingly participate in the Organization Development research which aims at exploring and investigating the perceptions and experiences of Fortune primary school's members of OD as an initiative to change for the periods of July to early September.

I understand that, information gathered from this study will contribute to the understanding of Fortune primary school's developmental and self-renewal ideas as well as to the completion of a Master's degree for a Rhodes University student.

I agree that, major decisions pertaining to our organization during the study, will be made by participants with the facilitation of the researcher.

I am assured that, information collected during this study will be treated as confidential, exclusively for the purpose of the study and anonymous as pseudonyms will be used.

I further understand that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any point.

Undertaking:

I willingly agree to participate and render assistance required during this research without any form of coercion.

Name:..... Signature:..... Date:.....

Appendix B

Interview questions

Interview 1

1. Briefly tell me what you do and for how long you have been working in this school?
2. With whom does your work in contact most often? Who do you need in doing your work?
3. How much influence do you think you have over goals and activities in your school?
How are goals set?
4. What is currently going well in your school?
5. How would you describe your principal's leadership?
6. How do staff members see/handle/ accept new ideas and change in your school?
7. Do you have anything extra that you want to share with me about your organization?

Interview 2

1. Tell us your new name and one example of change you experienced in your work environment?
2. We have all attended the OD workshop, can you please commend on the ideas presented and discussed during the workshop?
3. Is OD relevant and applicable in your organization? If yes/ No why?
4. How did the workshop influence your understanding of change?
5. Some decisions were made during the workshop (give examples), what is your comment on the way decisions were made? Can this way be used in your school?
6. How would you describe participants' participation and interaction during the workshop?
7. According to your views, how do you see members' participation in the next meeting?
8. What specific things we need to improve for the next meeting?

Interview 3

1. According to your views how did OD influence your understanding of change so far?
2. We have selected an Organizational issue for intervention, collected data on it and fed the data back into the staff. How did you experience this process of SDF?
3. For the whole month of July we have been dealing with OD in your school. How did you experience the whole OD process? How was it like?
4. What do you think are the general feelings of other staff members about the whole OD process?
5. What was the most interesting thing to you about OD?
6. Poor monitoring of study was identified as the key area which needs improvement in your organization. What is your comment about the approach used to plan for actions?
7. What do you think are the challenges facing easy implementation of the OD process to change?
8. How do you think OD would influence the way you do things in your school?
9. If OD is introduced to other schools, how will staff members respond to it in your opinion?
10. Is there anything else that you want to say which we could not address in the questions?

Interview 4

1. For the whole month of July we have been dealing with OD in your school. How did you experience the whole OD process? How was it like?
2. The action for the problem identified was to develop a sound study supervision policy by all. How did you experience the process
3. After the implementation of the actions policy, how would you explain the improvement that took place if any?

Appendix C1

OD introductory workshop agenda

Yambuka Primary School

Introduction to OD workshop agenda

Facilitator: L. Kashikatu

Time	Activities	Responsible person
14h00-14h10	Welcoming and introduction	Principal & facilitator
14h10-14h15	Workshop objectives	Facilitator
14h15-14h20	What is OD and its background	Facilitator
14h20-14h30	OD values and assumptions.	Participants and facilitator
14h30-14h40	OD v/s other changes	Participants and facilitator
14h40-14h50	OD designs and phases	Facilitator
14h50-15h00	OD intervention and its potential benefits	Participants and facilitator
15h00-15h10	Way forward	Participants and facilitator
15h10-15h20	Closure	Participants

NB: two minute intervals are included in the allocated time.

Appendix C2

Problem solving and feedback agenda

Yambuka Primary School

Problem solving workshop

Facilitator: L Kashikatu

Agenda

Welcoming

Data feedback and discussions

Problem solving

- 1.1 Ice breaker (A dual image paradox)
- 1.2 Meaning of concept problem and problem solving
- 1.3 Steps for problem solving
- 1.4 Actual problem solving process
- 1.5 Way forward
- 1.6 Closure

Appendix C3

Study schedule of activities

Activity	What will happen	Data collection method	Responsible person/s	When
Entry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asks the gatekeeper for permission to conduct my study in his /her organization. Briefly Sensitise school management about OD and how it works. 	<i>observation</i>	Researcher	June
Research	Interview 1	one-on-one	Researcher and selected interviewees	June
OD workshop And Contracting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce all organization members to OD to establish readiness; get permission to conduct OD intervention in the organization. Agree on intervention duration, time for conducting OD activities, ethical issues, roles of parties involved and discussion and adoption of the consent letter. Select co- facilitators, tools for collecting data and the source of data. 	Observation	Researcher and participants	July
Research	Interview 2	focus group	Researcher and selected interviewees	July
Framework of understanding and selection of issue for diagnosis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a framework of understanding. Establish the schools' strengths and weaknesses. Allocate strengths and weaknesses into themes from the framework of understanding Select one weakness from the overcrowded theme for intervention purpose. 	Document analysis (charts) Observation and other tools to be determined by participants	Researcher and participants	July

Diagnosis /data collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect data on the selected issue via the use of data collection tools that will be chosen by participants and myself. 	<i>Observation</i>	Researcher and participants	July
Data interpretation and analysis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyse and interpret data about the aspect for intervention. 	<i>Observation</i>	Researcher and participants	July
Feedback and exploration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present emerging issues from the data interpretation to participants for confirmation /denial, select and agree on issues to be intervened (on short term- basis). 	<i>Observation</i>	Researcher and participants	July
<i>Research</i>	<i>Interview 3</i>	<i>focus group</i>	<i>Researcher and selected interviewees</i>	<i>July</i>
Action planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help participants plan actions for intervention. Participants plan actions for intervention. A (training) may be required before that, depends on the nature of the issue for intervention selected. 	<i>Observation</i>	Researcher and participants.	September
Action implementation and evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants implement and evaluate the effectiveness of the actions implemented. 	<i>Observation</i>	Participants.	September
<i>Research</i>	<i>Interview 4</i>	<i>one-on-one</i>	<i>Researcher and selected interviewees</i>	<i>September</i>

Bold and italicised – for research.

Normal font – for the OD process.

Appendix D1

OD values and assumptions

OD assumptions

- People at the site are best placed to make decisions.
- People will commit to plans they have helped to develop
- People are sources of productivity and should therefore be treated with care.
- Most people are capable of asking greater contribution to a organization's effectiveness and development.
- Most people want to be accepted and to interact cooperatively with one or more groups in an organization.

OD values

- Participation and contribution by all organization members.
- OD is optimistic- people are basically good, progress is possible and desirable in human affairs and rationality, reason and goodwill are important for making progress.
- OD is democratic- people have the right to be free from misuse of power, fair and equitable treatment for all and justice through the rule of law.
- Trust and respect for individuals.
- Open communication.
- Decentralized decision making.
- OD is humanistic- values the importance of the individual as a person.
- *Empowerment process- involves teaching people and equipping hem with necessary knowledge and skills of improving their own organization in future.*
- *Readiness is crucial to change.*
- *OD is experiential- organization members should learn by doing and be involved in the process of change.*

Appendix D2

Features of OD versus traditional consultancy.

OD adopts change approaches which are radical to traditional consultancy such as:

- ✓ OD is a planned change initiated by any staff member but needs to be supported by management.
- ✓ It is a holistic or group approach to change.
- ✓ It is normative, re-educative and rational empirical change which targets change of norms and culture for a reason to improving organizations.
- ✓ OD adopts a participative and collective approach as it involves members of the organization in the change process.
- ✓ It works with people who are at the spot as they are best placed to know their situation better based on the assumption that each organization is unique.
- ✓ OD is an empowerment process.
- ✓ It uses facilitator and co-learners role to consultancy.
- ✓ Practitioner acts as a catalyst to learning.
- ✓ The OD consultant is not a problem solver but facilitates the process for the organization members to solve their own problems.
- ✓ OD is a process approach.
- ✓ It is a long term process therefore tends to bring about permanent change.
- ✓ It is action research process that involves data gathering, analysis, action taking and implementation; and evaluation.
- ✓ It is a bottom up approach to change.

Features of a traditional (medical doctor) approach to change

- ✓ The need for change is initiated by top management.
- ✓ The consultant operates at individual level.
- ✓ Data is collected from the managers or target member/ group through interviews and surveys.
- ✓ Organization members are not involved in the data collection and analysis process.
- ✓ After feedback the consultant prescribes solutions to the problem.
- ✓ The client group implements solutions through imposition.
- ✓ The expert is regarded as a problem solver.
- ✓ The change approach is top down.
- ✓ The change process is linear and is characterized by hierarchical command and control.

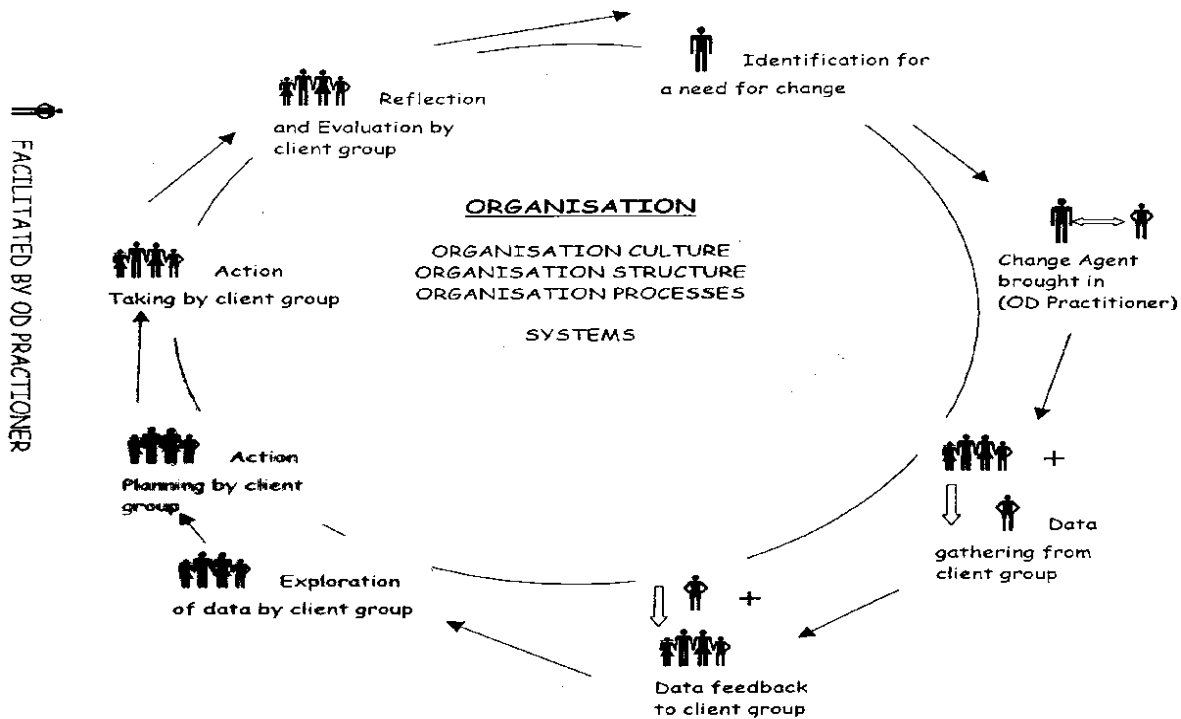
Appendix D3

OD cycle and phases

source: unknown

OHP Slide 1

THE ORGANISATION DEVELOPMENT CYCLE



Phases:

1. Entry
2. Contracting
3. Diagnosis
4. Feedback
5. Planning change
6. Intervention
7. Evaluation

Appendix D4

OD designs

Source: Presentation by Musore. P, 2009.

OD designs

1. **Coaching**
 - Coaching is when an expert works closely with the organizational leader
 - It involves continuous observations and giving feedback on the way activities are done.
 - It is useful because it help individuals address complex problems and attain individual and organizational goals.

2. Appreciative Inquiry

- It is based on the thinking of 'what worked best in the past'.
- It involves thinking of what we want in the future.
- It based on building on what worked best in order to work towards our vision.

3. Total Quality Management

- It developed after WW2.
- It is based on finding out what the customers at the grassroots level wants.
- Products are produced according to the needs of the customers.
- Product of high quality are produced and quality service is delivered.

4. Team Building

- A team is group of people working together towards a common goal.
- It is a process of making the group of people to reach their goals.
- It is aimed at increasing the strength and cooperation of a team or of people.

5. Survey Data feedback

- It involves collecting data
- Analysing of the data
- Feedback is given to all the members of the organisation.
- Members decided on the area they want to improve on.
- It is participant driven.

6. Future Search Conference

- It is Planning meeting
- It brings about 60 to 80 people in one room
- It can last up to three days or more.
- People tell stories about their past, present and the desired future.
- Common ground is achieved through the dialogue.
- Concrete action is taken after wards.
- It focuses on the future.

Appendix D5

Framework for understanding

Source: Davidoff & Lazarus, 2002.

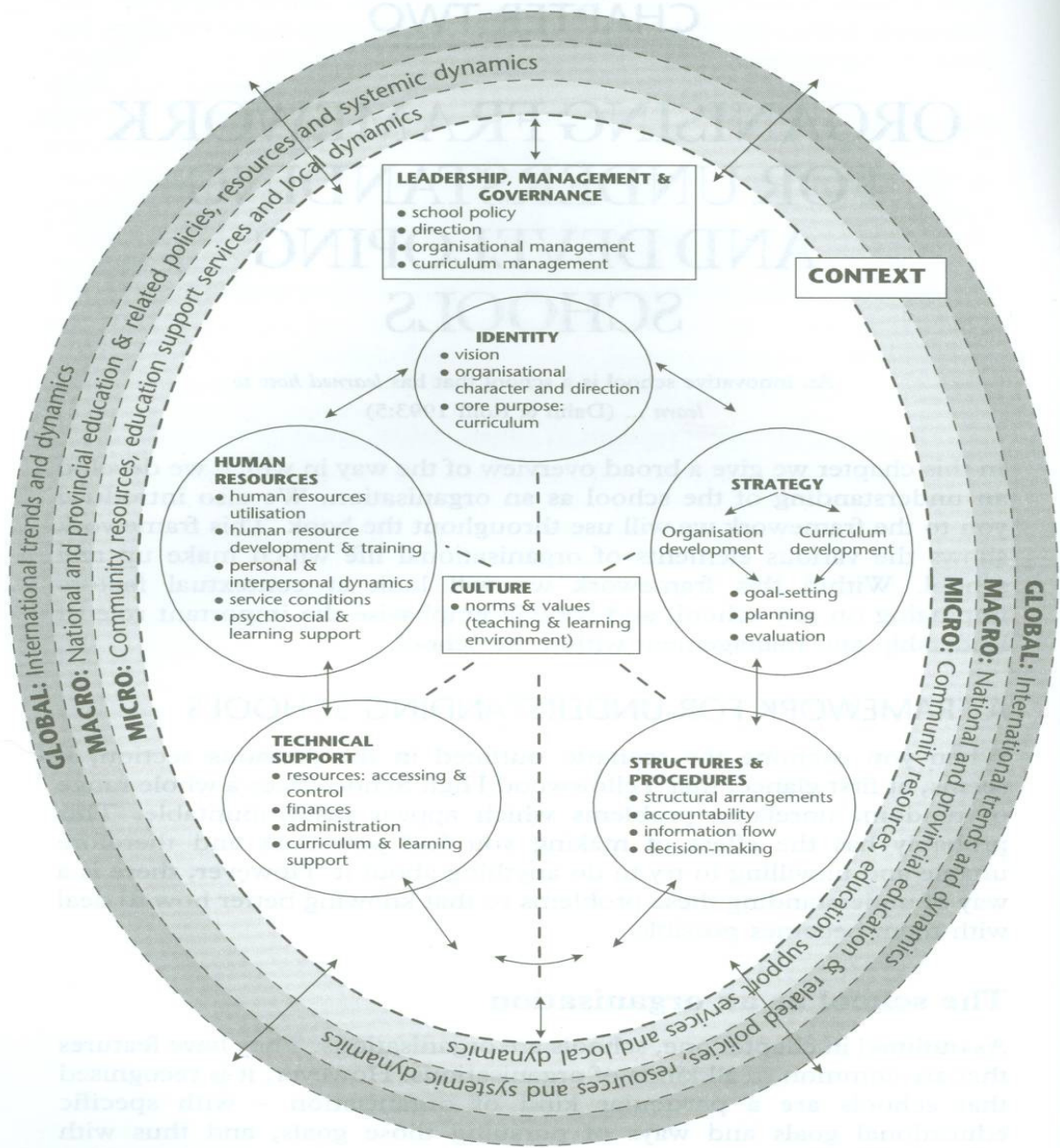


Figure 2.1 Elements of a school as an organisation

Appendix D6

Elements of school as an organization

Group activity outcome

1. Leadership, management and governance

- Absenteeism of both teachers and learners.
- No proper communication channels
- Indiscipline among learners
- Learners' absenteeism on Fridays
- Late coming of learners
- Poor acceptance of policies (attending to private matters).
- Top down management
- Study not properly monitored
- Poor sharing of information (circulars).
- No disciplinary policy

2. Identity

- No school vision, mission and co-values

3. Human resources

- Lack of teacher motivation
- Language problem among learners
- Poor involvement in extramural activities
- Lack of reward or positive encouragement of learners

4. Strategy

- Poor learner performance
- CA not properly done in grades 5-7
- Lack of proper planning

5. Structure and procedures

- No school organogram
- Disorganized committees

6. Technical support

- None

Appendix D7

Dual image paradox

Source: Weisbord, 1987, p. 222.



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Appendix D8

Problem solving guide

Problem solving

A problem in OD refers to the gap between the present unsatisfactory situations (S) and a more wanted situation or target (T). A situation which is more wanted, that one is ready to spend some energy and time to get there.

Problem solving is therefore the process of closing / narrowing the gap between the S and the T, through designing solutions or paths (P) from S to T.

The process of problem solving according to Fred and Wallen is called S-T-P.

STP follows well planned steps such as:

1. Agree on the problem.
 - ✓ Key questions under this stage are: Where are we now (the situation, S)? And where do we want to be (target, T)?
2. Generate alternative ways/ paths.
 - ✓ Choose a target.
 - ✓ Think of ways/ paths to get from the existing situation (S) to the target (T).
 - ✓ Prioritize the ways in terms of their desirability and feasibility.
3. List helping and hindering forces (force field analysis).
 - ✓ Think of the forces that will **work for** and **against** reaching your target by considering the desirability and feasibility of the path ways.
 - ✓ Factors to consider: for helping forces [support, money, time, commitment, cooperation, skills etc]
 - ✓ Factors to consider for hindering forces [history, ministry policies, politics, poor support, lack of knowledge or skills etc].
4. Choose action steps.
 - ✓ Choose the hindering forces which are possible to reduce and think of ways to reduce them.

- ✓ Agree on the force to be attacked first and choose the best way to attack it from the suggested list.
5. Action
- ✓ Assign people who will implement the actions.
 - ✓ Complete the table.
6. Monitor and recycle
- ✓ Schedule a meeting for reviewing the progress made and map out the way forward.
 - ✓ Decide on the criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of the actions implemented.

Appendix D9

Force field analysis

Source: Schmuck & Runkel, 1994.

