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The integration of Pre-Primary education into three mainstream primary schools in the Khomas Region in Namibia: Implications for management and leadership

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Abstract

One of the goals for Namibia's Vision 2030, through ETSIP (2005-2015), is to establish a pre-primary year in primary schools for all children aged 5-6 to be developed first in schools serving the poorest population and OVCs. ECD is widely recognised as having a significant impact on the subsequent learning of children. The high failure and dropout rate in grade 1 made this process an important one. In 2008 the integration of ECD became a reality in five schools in the Khomas region of Namibia. At present there are 29 pilot schools in the Khomas region 29 schools, and 504 in the whole of Namibia. According to the MoE all primary schools should have a pre-primary class as ECD has been recognized as a key contributor to positive outcomes in schools.

This study sought to investigate various stakeholders' experiences and views of the integration of pre-primary into mainstream pre-primary schooling. The goal was to investigate the management and leadership implications of this integration. The study is an interpretive case study of three pilot primary schools. The research design made provision for data collection through semi-structured interviews, focus groups and document analysis.

The main finding was that, despite numerous challenges, principals are positive about the integration of pre-primary. There is a sense of appreciation of the importance of pre-primary. Principals adopt participative and collegial management approaches in leading their schools towards becoming learning organisations. The study also uncovered several significant challenges, such as the need for more training and the provision of infrastructure to make the process more effective.

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To my dear husband Gunther; I can't imagine if this would have been possible without your support, care and great understanding. Thanks for always being there for me: you're the best!

Dedication

This study is dedicated to my beloved daughter in Heaven

Sabrina Busler

Who would now have just completed her pre-primary education.

God bless you, my guardian Angel.

ACRONYMS USED

BETD	Basic Education Teachers Diploma
ECD	Early Child Development
EFA	Education for All
ETSIP	Education Training Sector Improvement Programme
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
IECD	Integrated Early Child Development
LP HOD	Lower Primary Head of Department
MBESC	Ministry of Basic Education, Sports and Culture
MEC	Ministry of Education and Culture
MGECW	Ministry of Gender Equality and Children Welfare
MoE	Ministry of Education
MRLGH	Ministry of Regional, Local Government and Housing
NDP	National Development Plans
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NIED	National Institute for Educational Development
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
SB	School board
SBS	School Based Studies
SDF	School Development Fund
UNAM	University of Namibia
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Motivation for the study.....	1
1.3 Research context.....	2
1.4 Research goal	5
1.5 Methodology.....	6
1.6 Concepts.....	7
1.7 Outline of the thesis.....	8
CHAPTER TWO	10
2.1 Introduction	10
2.2 Education reform in Namibia.....	10
2.3 Historical development of early childhood care in Namibia	10
2.3.1 Early childhood development landscape in Namibia	11
2.3.2 Integrated early childhood development (IECD) policy.....	11
2.4 Integration of pre-primary into the mainstream primary school.....	12
2.4.1 The role of the MoE	13
2.5 Theoretical framework	14
2.5.1 Complexity Theory	14
2.6 Change in an organization	17
2.6.1 Moral purpose	19

2.6.2 Understanding the change process	20
2.6.3 Building Relationships.....	22
2.6.4 Knowledge building.....	24
2.6.5 Coherence making	25
2.7 School as learning organisation	26
2.7.1 Systems thinking	27
2.7.2 Shared vision	28
2.7.3 Team learning for motivation	29
2.8 Collegiality through participative management	30
CHAPTER THREE.....	33
3.1 Introduction	33
3.2 Research paradigm	33
3.3 Research method: Case study.....	34
3.4 Sampling.....	36
3.5 Selection of research participants	36
3.6 Data collection	37
3.6.1 Document analysis.....	37
3.6.2 Interviews.....	38
3.6.3 Focus group interviews.....	39
3.7 Data analysis	40

3.8 Validity	41
3.9 Ethical considerations	41
CHAPTER FOUR.....	44
4.1 Introduction	44
4.2 The research sites	44
4.3 Principals' experiences and roles in the integration of pre-primary into the mainstream primary school	46
4.3.1 Principals' views and experience of the process	46
4.3.2 Principals' role in the integration	50
4.3.3 Principals' leadership style	51
4.4 How the principals handle change.....	52
4.4.1 Accommodating a new class.....	53
4.4.2 Management changes - Implications.....	55
4.4.3 Teamwork	57
4.4.4 Vision.....	58
4.5 Challenges	58
4.5.1 Infrastructure	58
4.5.2 Physical Environment.....	60
4.5.3 Training and how ready schools are to learn	61
4.5.4 Availability of resources.....	65
4.5.5 Enrolment	66

4.5.6 Parental involvement.....	67
4.6 Socio Economic Issues.....	68
4.6.1 Pro-poor	68
4.6.1 School feeding programme.....	70
4.6.2 Health and Safety, HIV/AIDS.....	70
CHAPTER FIVE	73
5.1 Introduction	73
5.2 The integration of pre-primary: “It’s like planning for a new school”	73
5.3 “Self-organising systems”	74
5.4 Principals’ positive attitudes: “Moral purpose”	75
5.5 Principals’ role in leading and managing the integration process.....	76
5.5.1 Principals’ multifaceted roles: More learners, more teachers, increased responsibilities	76
5.5.2 Participative management and collegiality	77
5.5.3 Stronger relationships: “If relationships improve, things get better”	78
5.5.4 Teamwork “I can’t do it alone”	80
5.5.5 Knowledge creation: ‘Change equals learning’	82
5.5.6 Schools’ shared vision for Pre-primary: ‘More classes to prepare learners’	83
5.6 Challenges	85
5.6.1 Parental involvement: “If parents can get involved, it might solve some problems”. ..	85
5.6.2 Training	88

5.6.3 Infrastructure to ensure access	89
5.6.4 Socio economic issues pre-primary are facing	90
CHAPTER SIX	93
6.1 Introduction	93
6.3 Potential value of the study.....	97
6.4 Recommendations for practice	98
6.5 Suggestions for further research	99
6.6 Limitations of the study	100
6.7 Conclusion.....	100
REFERENCES	102
Appendix A: Letter from my Supervisor, Prof H. van der Mescht	107
Appendix B: Letter from Regional Director.....	109
Appendix C: Interview questions: (Semi-structured).....	110
Appendix D: Focus Group questions.....	111

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction

This Chapter introduces my research to the reader. I explain why and how my interest in the integration of pre-primary education into the mainstream primary school in Namibia developed. Furthermore I explain the context, my research goals, methodology as well as some of the key concepts and the layout of the thesis.

1.2 Motivation for the study

My interest in this field springs from my professional involvement where I was a lecturer in Lower Primary and Education Theory and Practice at the former Windhoek College of Education, a teachers' college. The colleges merged with the University of Namibia in 2011, where I am a lecturer in the Early Childhood Development and Lower Primary department. This is a new department at the University of Namibia.

During school-based studies, while at college, I gained access to the primary schools when visiting my student teachers. Many of these schools already had a pre-primary class as part of a pilot project and I was interested in how schools were dealing with the integration of this phase into mainstream primary schools. Many of the schools are also double-shift schools and I became even more interested in the issue as double-schools are generally more complex entities. In informal discussions teachers recognised the benefits of pre-primary but at the same time they had a lot to share about challenges, such as infrastructure and qualified staff. In their sharing they also had strong visions of how this could have been done. Infrastructure and training were major concerns to many of them as colleges and the university had not trained

teachers specifically for this phase. Some envisioned a 'pre-school' to feed all the Grade 1 classes as Grade 1 teachers had difficulty in teaching children with no pre-primary background. Some of them were shocked when we talked about the high failure and drop out rate in Grade 1 as stipulated in the ETSIP document (2005) and started to realise that we have to look at the bigger picture to make a difference. Principals on the other hand were worried as they had no formal ECD training and others were confident and happy that ECD got its place back in education. I came to realise that we as leaders when viewing the ECD situation need to work together to make a difference for the sake of education of the young. The National Education Conference held recently in Windhoek drew attention to many of the key issues and people began to change their views about the integration of ECD into mainstream schools and started seeing the bigger picture of making a difference. This became the interest and focus of this study, which asks how pilot schools are coping with the integration process.

1.3 Research context

ECD is regarded as a key contributor to positive outcomes in schools that can contribute to young children's early learning and future social and academic success. Since the independence of Namibia in 1990 the government has embarked upon a major reform of the Namibian Education system of which ECD was one of the thrusts. After independence, Namibia has demonstrated the political will to promote child-care by way of developing a National Early Childhood Development Policy (1996). In summary, ECD was placed with various ministries and is now with the MGESW. ECD was mainly the responsibility of local communities and NGOs through the government decentralisation initiative. In this way education would be taken to the people.

However, a study done by Haihambo, Hengari and Mushaandja (2005) found that ECD centres were not up to standard in terms of their working conditions, training, monitoring and evaluation, networking and knowledge of working with children with special needs. They

concluded that early childhood care and education was needed and concluded that “This is a major indicator of how the country has developed from a time when IECD was regarded as a luxury, to the present stage when it is perceived as a necessity” (ibid., p. 230).

In October 2006 the Cabinet took a decision that the responsibility for pre-primary education was to be transferred from the MGECW to the MoE. The MoE has developed a 15-year strategic plan (2005/6-2020), namely the Education Training Sector Improvement Programme (ETSIP) toward achieving its objective under Vision 2030. Vision 2030 set a very ambitious target that by 2030 Namibia should join the ranks of high income countries and afford all citizens a quality of life that is comparable to that of the developed world, with the emphasis on enhancing quality. Through ETSIP Namibia has the aim of integrating pre-primary education into the mainstream primary schools in Namibia, to lay the foundation for subsequent learning, to reduce the high repetition rates (18,8%) and high dropout rate (4,2%) in Grade 1 as recorded in 2005 in ETSIP and to establish pre-primary in the most disadvantaged areas (a pro-poor approach).

According to the MoE all primary schools should have a pre-primary class by 2015 as ECD has been recognized as a key contributor to positive outcomes in schools. This notion is promoted by UNESCO (2007) which claims that good quality early childhood care and education programmes are an important foundation for subsequent education. In 2008 the integration of pre-primary became a reality in some primary schools in Namibia. This initiative inspired me to investigate the situation of pre-primary in three primary schools in Windhoek. Although this is still a new and under-researched area the National Education Conference in Namibia (27 June 2011) has given tremendous impetus to ECD which also served to sensitize people to ECD in Namibia and internationally. This study is therefore well timed.

Internationally pre-primary education has long been a serious priority. In South Africa the integration of pre-primary years - called Grade “R” - is linked to reform within Junior Primary (UNESCO Global Report, 2006). Most European countries put a high price on ECD as it is believed to have great and long lasting benefits for society (O’Kane, 2005). It can lead both to improved performance throughout school years (Sylva & Wiltshire, 1993) and to later social

benefits that persist through to adulthood (Kellaghan & Greany, 1993; Schweinhart & Weikart, 1997). In a recent study in Bangladesh evidence has shown that children who attended pre-school achieve better in primary schools than children who did not (Abouda & Hossainc, 2009).

Against this background I investigated the integration of the pre-primary year (ECD) into primary schools in Namibia. My particular interest was in how school management and leadership are dealing with all the challenges as listed in the ETSIP document. Some of these include improving management of delivery systems for quality and access, establishing a management framework for pre-primary education, developing a pre-primary teacher support and material development programme, training and infrastructure. At the recent Education conference ECD was listed as one of the priority areas, and it was suggested to cabinet that school principals should be trained and held accountable. As this is a leadership and management study I was interested in how schools transform themselves to ensure the smooth integration of pre-primary. I was interested in finding out to what extent principals were equipped and prepared for the integration. I also wanted to investigate how schools have accommodated this process and how they manage and lead it. Schools are regarded as complex systems and the addition of another layer in this case the integration of ECD increases complexity and is likely to lead to change.

The theoretical frameworks I draw on for this study are complexity theory and Senge's (1990) learning organisation theory. Complexity theory, as a theory of change, development and evolution through relationships, raises an interesting agenda for the philosophy of education. As Fullan (1989) remarks, "change equals learning", and learning is a central element in both complexity theory and education. All complex phenomena and systems have to learn, adapt and change in order to survive, which requires effective leadership and management that can help change the ECD situation in the country. I also draw on Fullan's leadership Model (2001, p. 4) of change as he suggests that leaders should possess moral purpose, understand the change process and improve relationships. They should also promote knowledge creation and sharing and coherence making.

Senge's (1990, pp. 87, 297, 351) notion of "learning organizations" also provides important insights into how educators can achieve meaningful change. Schools are open systems and need to learn constantly to remain relevant and I draw on three of Senge's five disciplines that I believe are relevant to this study: Team learning, shared vision and systems thinking. Team learning requires the whole school as a team to learn from each other in small groups and shared vision evolves through dynamic interaction of members and leaders of the organization providing a focus for learning. Learning organisations are also likely to exhibit the qualities of collegial management (Bush, 2003). Bush's collegial model (2003, p. 64) emphasizes that power and decision-making should be shared amongst members of the organization who have a shared understanding, in this case the ECD stakeholders. These theories are elaborated on in Chapter 2.

I believe that this study can afford school principals the opportunity to learn from each other's management and leadership experiences. I can also use the outcome of my study in my work at UNAM to prepare my student teachers for the future in terms of dealing with the current situation. As ECD and LP is a new department in the faculty of education at UNAM, the faculty can also benefit from this unique study.

1.4 Research goal

The goal of this study was to investigate the integration of pre-primary education into three selected mainstream primary schools with specific reference to management and leadership.

To achieve this goal attempted to answer the following research questions:

- How are these schools responding to the challenge of integrating ECD into the organisation?
- How are school leadership and management contributing to the (effective) integration of pre-primary into mainstream primary schools?

- How are they dealing with the challenges, such as training, space, infrastructure, resources and facilities?
- How are they dealing with socio-economic issues such as poverty, orphans and vulnerable children and HIV/AIDS?

1.5 Methodology

The research was conducted within the interpretive paradigm as it is concerned with human actions (Adler and Adler cited in Cantrell, 1993, p. 83). Subjectivity plays an important role in the interpretive paradigm; reality is seen as subjective and multiple, seen through the eyes of the participants within the context of their frame of reference. To the interpretive researcher “the only reality is that which is constructed by the individual involved in the research situation and this of course implies that multiple realities exist in a given situation”(Creswell 1994, p. 4). From this it follows that reality and meaning are inter-subjective and contextual.

The research is a small-scale, qualitative case study which according to Yin (2003, p.1) is “the preferred strategy when ‘how or why’ questions are being posed on a contemporary phenomenon within some real life-context” Leading and managing the integration of pre-primary is a contemporary issue, and the case in question is three schools in the Khomas region of Namibia is a real-life context. I purposively selected three schools which started the integration process in different years (2008-2011). One of the schools had already added a second class when this research was conducted.

For the data collection tools I chose to conduct in-depth, open-ended interviews with the principals, which afforded me an opportunity to have a face to face encounter with the principals, a situation that facilitated my understanding of their individual and personal perceptions and experiences regarding the integration of pre-primary. I also conducted a focus group interview for participants to share their ideas and perceptions. As Krueger and Casey (cited in Mertens, 2005, p. 245) put it, “Focus groups, in essence, are group interviews that rely, not on a question-and-answer format of interview, but on the interaction within the group”. I allowed them to speak their mind as they interacted with one another as they had much to say

about the integration. To strengthen and enrich the data collection I used document analysis. According to Van der Mescht (2011, p. 1) making use of three data generating tools helps to strengthen findings in order to build a more convincing case and boost the validity of the findings. It will further lead to trustworthiness (Maree, 2007, p. 38).

In interpreting my data I used coding to come up with themes as described by Maree (2007, p. 104): “coding is the process of reading carefully through your transcribed data and dividing it into meaningful analytic units”. As I was sitting with huge quantities of data the coding process enabled me to quickly retrieve specific pieces of data.

As some of the schools were known to me and ECD is so close to my heart I needed to work hard at distancing myself and allowing the data to speak for itself. I briefed participants on research protocol which grants them the right to voluntarily participate and withdraw from the study at any time (Creswell, 2003, p. 63). I presented them with a letter from my supervisor stating the purpose of my research, as well as a letter of permission from the director. We agreed on confidentiality and pseudonyms were used. My research therefore, was conducted with a thorough and responsible regard for the ethics of methodology (Cohen et al., 2007).

1.6 Concepts

Since this is a study in Namibia some terms used may have particular meanings which need to be explained. The following concepts need an early clarification to prevent misunderstandings.

According to the Department of Education (2001, p14 cited in Meier and Marais 2008, p.3) Early Childhood Development (ECD) can be defined as a comprehensive approach to policy and programmes for children from birth to nine years of age with the active participation of their parents and care givers. Its purpose is to protect the child’s rights to develop his or her full cognitive, emotional, social and physical potential.

The NIECDP (2007, p.8) describes early childhood as the period of a child's life from conception to eight years and the term 'integrated' is defined as the need to view all aspects of children's development holistically and to make sure that health, nutrition, water, sanitation, psychosocial care and protection work together (IECD).

Pre-primary education and early child development (ECD) are at times used interchangeably in the literature and also in this thesis.

In South Africa the 5-6 years are called the Grade R, while in Namibia they are called pre-primary.

The term "double shift" refers to schools which are essentially two schools, one operating in the morning and the other in the afternoon. Double-shift schools are two organizations in one, managed by the same person.

1.7 Outline of the thesis

This thesis is structured as follows. Chapter 1 introduces the reader to the phenomenon of ECD and presents clearly the reason for conducting the study. I explain the context of the study, research goals and its methodology.

Chapter 2 presents an overview of the literature that includes the history of ECD in Namibia and internationally. It further includes complexity theory, change theory linked with Fullan's framework of leadership and Senge's learning organization discipline as well as Bush's collegial model.

In Chapter 3 I present the methodology employed for data collection and analysis.

In Chapter 4 all the raw data generated from the data collection procedures are presented and interpreted in the categories that emerged.

Chapter 5 presents a discussion of findings in the light of the literature.

Chapter 6 is a summary of the main findings, recommendations, suggestions for further research and the limitations of my study.

The next Chapter will address the literature relevant to my research.

CHAPTER TWO

2.1 Introduction

This study aims to explore the integration of pre-primary classes into mainstream primary schools, focusing on management and leadership challenges in particular. This Chapter provides both a historical and education policy background as well as a theoretical framework for the study.

2.2 Education reform in Namibia

Article 20 of the Namibian Constitution stipulates that “All persons shall have the right to education....” (Namibia. MBEC, 1993, p. 3). This Constitutional provision made it possible for Namibians to enjoy the right to education after the country became independent in 1990.

After 1990, Namibia embarked upon a major reform of the education system, as education had been proclaimed a national priority. The Namibian Education reform is guided by the policy document *Towards Education for All* (Namibia. MEC, 1993). According to this document, Namibia had inherited an education system that catered for the elite only (Ibid., p.2). This policy advocates a paradigm shift from education for the elite only to education for all. In readdressing the inequalities of the apartheid era of education for the elite, the Namibian government has made big strides in addressing the pre-independence challenges carried over into an independent Namibia.

2.3 Historical development of early childhood care in Namibia

Shortly after independence in 1990 with the support of development partners and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community based organisations worked in partnership with the Namibian Government to create an enabling environment for Early Childhood Development (ECD). The then Ministry of Basic Education, Sports and Culture (MBESC) abolished pre-primary classes in all Primary Schools shortly after Independence and Early

Childhood Development was placed under the auspices of the Ministry of Regional, Local Government and Housing. A National ECD Policy has been in place since 1996. The ECD Policy of 1996 recommends that ECD be placed in the hands of communities. This situation led to the deterioration of education for young children in the country. In 2000, the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare (MGECW) was established. Since then, Early Childhood Development has been under the management of this Ministry. The MGECW adopted a so-called holistic approach toward ECD and developed an Integrated *Early Childhood Development* (IECD) Policy approved by Cabinet in 2007. The IECD programme has expanded to take into account aspects of health, nutrition, water and hygiene, and protection of rights as well as the child's psychosocial needs for affection, interaction, stimulation, security and learning (Namibia. MGECW, 2007). The Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare faced many challenges with regard to ECD and in 2005 the Education, Training Sector Improvement Plan (ETSIP) was introduced to address some of these challenges faced in the early childhood development sector.

2.3.1 Early childhood development landscape in Namibia

According to ETSIP the profound socio-economic forces of change which have impacted on the Namibian society needed to be addressed. The ETSIP Policy reviewed the process and took into account a number of policies for their positive contributions such as the national development framework known as Vision 2030.

2.3.2 Integrated early childhood development (IECD) policy

Despite all these efforts by the Namibian government and the various stakeholders, various challenges still face early childhood provision in Namibia. Vision 2030 (2004) captures the challenges of ECD as follows:

- Sustainability of the IECD Centers is endangered due to the absence of incentives for the IECD caregivers.
- IECD is not recognized as a profession in Namibia, and as a result IECD caregivers/workers are not motivated.

- A significant number of parents do not feel that IECD is important and, as a result, they are reluctant to send their children to IECD Centers.
- There is no uniform national curriculum for IECD caregivers and children, which leads to inadequate care (p. 98)

Towards the realization of the country's Vision 2030, the Strategic Plan for ETSIP has developed a new vision for pre-primary education (ages 5 to 6 years) which is to provide high quality education to all pre-primary children (aged 5 to 6 years) supported by professionally developed staff at central, regional, cluster and institutional levels in well-resourced centers.

In October 2006 Cabinet took the responsibility for pre-primary education to be transferred from the MGECW to the MoE. Consequently, the Early Childhood phase for 0-4 year-olds would remain with MGECW, while a pre-primary school year for 5/6 year-olds become part of MoE. The National Curriculum for Basic Education (2009, p.3) stipulated that the pre-primary phase will develop communication, motor and social skills, and concept formation, in preparation for formal education.

2.4 Integration of pre-primary into the mainstream primary school

According to ETSIP ECD and pre-primary education are widely recognised as having a significant impact on the subsequent performance of children in basic education programmes. They lay the foundations for acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills, they reduce dropout and repetition rates and, if well managed, they generate a predisposition of the child towards learning and attending school. ETSIP tasked the National Institute for Education Development (NIED) to develop a pre-primary curriculum in cooperation with a task team consisting of members from the 13 political regions of the country. In 2008 the integration of pre-primary into Primary Schools became a reality and the curriculum was piloted in 100 selected schools across the country. According to ETSIP, pre-primary should start first in the socially disadvantaged areas of Namibia (a pro-poor approach). Infrastructural shortages were a major challenge and many schools were built to accommodate pre-primary classes in schools. Where it was not possible the intake of the Grade 1 class was reduced to ensure space. According to

statistics, five schools in the Khomas Region started with pre-primary. Currently, there are 29 classes in the Khomas Region where pre-primary classes were introduced. A total of 504 pre-primary classes were introduced across the country (see Appendix E). According to the MoE, it is envisaged to have pre-primary classes in all primary schools by 2015 across the country. ECD has been recognized as a key contributor to positive outcomes in schools. The role of the MoE, crucial in the success of the integration of pre-primary education in primary schools is discussed below.

2.4.1 The role of the MoE

As outlined in the IECD policy the following roles are significant:

- In collaboration with the MGECW and other IECD stakeholders the MoE will be responsible for the design, development and delivery of all training courses for IECD Educators, development of curriculum guidelines and accreditation of all IECD training, development of National standards for IECD and monitoring through field visits.
- NIED will be responsible for the design of curricula.
- The MoE will take the initiative to develop a career path for IECD. The MoE will develop undergraduate and post graduate degree courses in IECD through government and private tertiary institutions (Namibia, 2008, p. 15).

This short section above is included to give a sense of how seriously the question of ECD is being taken by the MoE. The notion of the integration of pre-primary classes into mainstream primary schools – which is the interest of this study – is one of the ways the ministry hopes to place ECD on a sound professional footing. While some of the other ideals – such as qualified staff and proper career pathing – seem remote at this stage, integration is already a reality and a fascinating one to study.

Next, this Chapter discusses the theoretical framework that underpins this study.

2.5 Theoretical framework

This study draws on organisation and management theory to make sense of schools' integration of pre-primary into mainstream schooling. Organisations such as schools are complex by nature (Bush 2003, p.22) and because they are "complex, surprising, deceptive, and ambiguous, they are formidably difficult to understand and change" (Ibid, p. 24). Integrating pre-primary into a school naturally adds yet another layer of complexity, hence I draw on complexity theory. According to complexity theory organizations use their own capacity to transform themselves to become self-organising systems (McMillan, 2004, p. 29). Complexity theory has the potential to shed light on how schools are coping with the additional layers of complexity added by the addition of pre-primary, and may help to answer the question of whether and how schools transform themselves.

Naturally this process involves change, and it goes without saying that schools which integrate pre-primary into mainstream schooling face far-reaching change prospects and the challenges that this brings. Hence change theory will be important to the study, in particular the role of leadership during change processes, and this study draws on Fullan's leadership framework (1991, p. 4). Senge reminds us that periods of change are accompanied by huge organisational learning and hence his learning organization theory helps to draw attention to the dimensions which characterize learning at this level. It would be important to examine the degree to which members share visions, and how they work together as teams and how systems operate. Finally, to achieve a sense of togetherness principals need to lead and manage in a way which emphasizes cooperation and participation, and here Bush's model (2003, p. 64) of collegiality would be very useful.

I now discuss each of these in turn.

2.5.1 Complexity Theory

Morrison (2008, pp. 1-2) describes complexity theory as

a theory of change, evolution, adaptation and development for survival. It breaks with simple secessionist cause-and-effect models, linear predictability, and a reductionist approach to understanding phenomena, replacing them with organic, non-linear and holistic approaches respectively, in which relations within interconnected networks are the order of the day.

McMillan (2004, p. 25) similarly argues that complexity theory “is concerned with the study of complex adaptive systems which are non-linear and have self-organising attributes and emergent properties”. Four key elements need to be elaborated on: adaptive, non-linear, self-organising and emergent.

‘Adaptive’ refers to the quality of organisations to adapt to circumstances, to change in ways that make it possible to survive even when very unusual events occur (McMillan, 2004, p.30). In the case of this study the interest would be in how mainstream schools adapt to having to take on board one or more pre-primary classes. Non-linearity refers to the notion that organizational life is not as logical and ‘linear’ as we are apt to believe. There is often no cause and effect link between events, and decisions are sometimes made on grounds other than rational thought and careful consideration. ‘Self-organising’ refers to the fact that organisations, in taking on board change and learning to adapt to change, attain self-organising qualities, that is they develop in ways that are required to make change successful without having to be told to do so (McMillan 2004, p. 29). Organisations develop a life of their own. Finally, ‘emergent’ describes the new qualities that emerge, new ways of doing things, new committees that are established, and new ways in which the organization responds to change and is therefore emergent (Morrison 2002, p.22). These characteristics are what one would associate with learning organisations rather than bureaucracies; it is understood that bureaucracies are incapable of adapting, are extremely linear in their operations, cannot develop and change ‘naturally’ and therefore display very few emergent properties.

Hence complexity theory provides us with alternative conceptions of the roles of schools, teachers and leaders. As highlighted by Davis and Sumara (1997; see also Sumara & Davis, 1997a), teachers can present occasions that are rich with learning possibilities in which they

might participate with their students in the unfolding of understandings; however, they cannot prescribe what will be learnt. As Phelps explains

From the perspective of complexity, participating agents play an active role in co-constructing knowledge through interaction over time, emphasising the important role of variance, encountered through this interaction, as both source and product of cognition (p. 41).

Self-organization forms the central pillar of complexity theory and it contains several features: adaptability, open systems, learning, feedback, communication and emergence. As already mentioned, in this sense complexity theory links with the notion of 'learning organisation', a similarity I shall explore later in this Chapter. Fullan (1991, p. 144) makes it clear that "The role of the principal has become dramatically more complex, overloaded, and unclear over the past decade". This is because of the unpredictability of systems. In adapting to change organisations learn how to do things differently through feedback and what emerges are new ways of doing and being. Applying complexity theory in this study will enable me to see how principals are dealing with change and how the organization is responding.

Another element of adaptability is the notion that organisations do not exist in isolation: they are in dynamic interaction with their environment. In order to work as a team school members can shape the environment in which are working and in turn are shaped by that environment. For schools the environment includes parents as well as government structures. Keene (2000, p.16) shares this idea that organizations should accept that they are participants in the creative process of the environment. Keene (2000, p. 16) emphasises the importance of shared vision, values and guiding principles that can be the steering mechanism for the organization. The decisions and actions that occur in an organisation are influenced by values, beliefs and vision of the organisation, another strong link with learning organisation. Many decisions have to be made with regard to infrastructure, training and resources that require innovative and creative ideas from all members.

In a complex zone "systems adapt, learn and grow" (Lewis, 1994, p. 16) to avoid what March (as cited in Bush, 2003, p. 134) describes:

Theories of choice underestimate the confusion and the complexity surrounding actual decision making. Many things are happening at once; technologies are changing and poorly understood; alliances, preferences and perceptions are changing; problems, solutions, opportunities, ideas, people, and outcomes are mixed together in a way that makes the interpretation uncertain and their connections unclear.

Many of the schools which have integrated pre-primary are also double-shift schools, otherwise known as 'platoon' schools. In other words, these are schools which run two sessions every day, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. The problematic nature of the relationship between the decision-making process and the outcomes of the process can only be more complex in a school that has to integrate another phase on top of the double-shifts (Katjaita, 2012). In this case the role of the principal is crucial to communicate issues to staff in a collaborative manner to form strong networks in order to make integrating ECD successful in schools. The study therefore uses complexity theory as a lens to find out how school management and leadership deal with *this process* that will ensure a smooth integration of pre-primary into the mainstream primary schools.

2.6 Change in an organization

The integration of ECD into mainstream schooling signifies a significant change in how primary schools see themselves and how they function. It is thus necessary to consider how change is led and managed and for this I draw on Fullan. According to Fullan (1991, p. 15) the purpose of educational change is to help schools accomplish their goals more effectively by replacing some structures, programmes and or practices with better ones.

Educational change in Namibia is the order of the day at the moment. The recent educational conference held on 27 June 2011 put considerable emphasis on the importance of ECD in Namibia stressing that the benefits of ECD for subsequent learning could not be over emphasized. In the case of ECD if change does not happen the country will not be able to answer to the call of Vision 2030 to have a knowledge-based society.

According to Fullan (as cited in Topnaar, 2004, p. 26) change at the individual level is a process whereby individuals alter their ways of thinking and doing. Change is a process of developing

new skills and finding meaning and satisfaction in new ways of doing things. The following aspects are evident from the four case studies carried out by Fullan (cited in Topnaar, 2004, p.27)

- Change takes place over time.
- The initial stages of any significant change always involve anxiety and uncertainty.
- Ongoing technical assistance and psychological assistance are crucial if the anxiety is to be coped with.
- Change involves learning new skills through practice and feedback; it is incremental and developmental.
- The most fundamental breakthrough occurs when people can cognitively understand the underlying conception and rationale with respect to why this new way works better.
- Successful change involves pressure, but it is pressure through interaction with peers and other technical and administrative leaders.

Hargreaves (1997, p. 1) in his argument on change emphasizes the importance of improving internal interactions and relationships of schools. Hargreaves' idea reflects the spirit of the integration of pre-primary in enhancing quality and improvement of educational management, by promoting interaction and relationships. A central task in creating cultures of educational change is how to develop more collaborative working relationships between principals and teachers, and among teachers themselves and the wider community. As mentioned earlier, it is also imperative that the relationship should extend collaboration beyond the school by involving the community and other stakeholders.

Fullan (1991, p. 1) notes that if you ask people to brainstorm words to describe change, they come up with a mixture of negative and positive terms. "On one side, *fear, anxiety, loss, danger, panic*; on the other side *exhilaration, risk-taking, excitement, improvements, energizing*". He further points out that change arouses emotions, and when emotions intensify, leadership is key. Leadership is needed to bridge the gap between policy and the implementation thereof.

Fullan's Framework of Leadership provides a helpful approach to how an effective principal leads in a culture of change which is the focus of this study in (1991, p. 4):



I look at each of the key ingredients of this model.

2.6.1 Moral purpose

Fullan (2001, p. 13) argues that you do not have to be a “mother Theresa” to have moral purpose; “some people are just deeply passionate about improving and in making a positive

difference in the lives of others and in this case the teachers, learners and parents". He continues that moral purpose plays a large role in transforming and sustaining system change. The implication for school leaders is that they need to have a strong sense of wanting to make a visible difference in the education of the young. Fullan (p.13) continues that within the organization how leaders treat others is a component of moral purpose. Sergiovanni (1999, p17 as cited in Fullan p.14) is in agreement that leaders should display a sense of character that can be trusted to lead schools diligently. At a larger level, moral purpose means acting with the intention of making a positive difference in the (social) environment. For the purposes of this study Fullan's thinking suggests school principals – and other leaders – who are committed to social change and justice, and in this context have ECD at heart and want to make a difference.

Namibia's official position is that it sees the need for ECD. According to ETSIP (2005) pre-primary education is necessary to lay the foundations for basic literacy and numeracy skills and to reduce the high dropout and repetition rates in Grade 1, which in 2005 was higher than any comparable SADC country. For Fullan the goal is system improvement, suggesting that principals have to be almost as concerned about the success of other schools in the district as they are about their own schools to make a difference to the situation Namibia is facing. Leaders with a broader, moral purpose are principals who can inspire, influence and motivate their teams to make a positive contribution to the success of education in Namibia. Fullan concludes that sustained improvement of schools is not possible unless the whole system is moving forward towards the effectiveness and success of organizations.

This study cannot look at change at the level of 'system', but it is hoped that change detected at the level of three organisations may carry indications of change that is more widespread.

2.6.2 Understanding the change process

Fullan (2001, p.31) reveals that leaders need to understand the change process as characterised by "great rapidity and non-linearity on the one side and equally great potential for creative breakthroughs on the other." He warns that the process will not be easy or without challenges,

but leaders who know how to lead in a culture of change will be able to motivate their teams, change their views and adapt to the new situation to make it work for education.

Fullan (2001, p.34) suggests six guidelines for understanding the process of change:

- The goal is not to innovate the most, but rather to innovate selectively with coherence;
- It is not enough to have the best ideas, you must work through a process where others assess and come to find collective meaning and commitment to new ways;
- Appreciate early difficulties of trying something new — what I call the implementation dip. It is important to know, for example, that no matter how much pre-implementation preparation there is, the first six months or so of implementation will be bumpy;
- Redefine resistance as a potential positive force. Naysayers sometimes have good points, and they are crucial concerning the politics of implementation. This doesn't mean that you listen to naysayers endlessly, but that you look for ways to address their concerns;
- Reculturing is the name of the game. Much change is structural, and superficial. The change required is in the culture of what people value and how they work together to accomplish it;
- Never a checklist, always complexity. There is no step-by-step shortcut to transformation; it involves the hard day-to-day work of reculturing.

Fullan (2001) further states that to lead in a culture of change is to unlock the mysteries of living organizations. Complexities can be unlocked and even understood and need dialogue to understand. He continues by stressing the importance of understanding change in order to lead it better: it is about developing a mind-set and action set that are constantly cultivated and refined. He warns that there are no shortcuts.

These comments are strongly relevant to this study. The integration of pre-primary into the primary school is a new phenomenon in Namibia and many changes were made to accommodate it. The themes emerging from literature are that principals and teachers need to be committed and flexible and understand the change and why it is needed. In this way they will even be able to appreciate the ‘implementation dips’ which are likely to occur in light all the challenges e.g. training, infrastructure and qualified teachers. According to Fullan effective leaders need to have the right kinds of sensitivity to implementation and know that change is a process, not an event (2001, p.40). It needs principals that inspire the team and helping them change the way they are doing things to adapt to the new situation and to give feedback to the MoE to ensure a smooth process. Feedback is imperative to enable new ways of behaviour or new structures, enhancing the participants’ ability to reshape and self-organise (McMillan 2004).

Perhaps the biggest challenge Fullan sets is the notion of seeing organisations as flexible, non-linear and unpredictable. This conflicts with the traditional view of organisation which is inclined to be bureaucratic (Jamali et al., 2006) and it is likely that principals and other stakeholders may find it difficult to adopt the mindset Fullan advocates. It is true, however, that this ‘new’ view of organisation is compatible with contemporary leadership theories – such as distributed leadership – and the extent to which principals have become familiar with these may determine their own receptivity to the notion of a ‘learning organisation.’

2.6.3 Building Relationships

Fullan (2001, p. 51) believes that if relationships improve, things get better. He further explains that moral purpose, relationships and organizational success are closely interrelated. In relationships that are built on authenticity and care people tend to be part of the organization in order to make a difference (Ibid, p. 52). This resonates with the thinking of Moyles, an ECD expert, who emphasises that when dealing with children “Relationships are at the heart of effective education and care”, and to enhance children’s development and learning teachers and parents need to respect each other and build positive relationships, and leave the “blame culture” (2009, p.75). She continues that when dealing with small children relationships needs

to be built on trust and care and this can be achieved through honesty, genuine communication and sincere respect (Ibid.).

In a time of change where policies are implemented principals and teachers rely on good interpersonal relationships to communicate complex issues to have a better understanding and to search collectively for workable solutions. To foster good relationship in the integration of pre-primary, Lewin and Regine, (2000, p. 52) remind us to alter our perspective “to pay as much attention to how we treat people - co-workers, subordinates customers - as we now typically pay ... to structures, strategies, and statistics”. They describe a new leadership style that focuses on people and relationship to encourage the emergence of a culture that is more open and caring (Ibid.). In this process leadership needs to be transparent and promote trust. Successful leadership (Goleman, cited in Fullan 2001, p.71) requires emotional intelligence. When dealing with children - especially vulnerable children, or children who are orphaned because of HIV/AIDS - schools and other stakeholders need to provide a caring environment and provide for their emotional needs. If all stakeholders - parents, teachers and learners - feel ‘connected’ good relationships can emerge for the effective integration of pre-primary education in Namibian schools.

This is not easily achieved though. The Hay Management Consultants (2000 cited in Fullan 2002, p. 8) found that developing relationships and team building are among the most difficult skillsets of all for leaders. This is because in a culture of change leaders need to be self-aware by knowing and managing their own internal state, which is the essence of emotional intelligence. Furthermore, Fullan (2002, p. 8) argues that “Leaders must be consummate relationship builders with diverse people and groups”, emphasising the challenge of leading diversity. He argues that in a time of change leaders constantly need to motivate and energize disaffected teachers, and “forging relationships across otherwise disconnected teachers can have a profound multiplying effect on the overall climate of the organization. Building relationships is the resource that keeps on giving” (p. 7).

The challenge here is the leadership has traditionally been viewed as being mostly task-centred – hence the pervasiveness of autocratic leadership approaches – and it is only in recent

leadership research that alternative approaches have come to stress relationships (person-centredness). This, too, is likely to be challenging for Namibian school principals.

2.6.4 Knowledge building

The next element in the model refers to developing knowledge. Fullan (2002, p. 7) stresses that new work on knowledge creation and sharing is central to effective change leadership. He continues that there are several deep insights: one is that information only becomes knowledge through a social process. This is why relationships and professional learning communities are essential. He emphasises that organizations must foster knowledge giving as well as knowledge seeking, that constantly adds to their knowledge base. However, there will be little to add if people are not sharing.

Another view on sharing is that it can become difficult but when people share the same interest - in this case pre-primary - the sharing becomes easy and stories can be told about the phenomenon. Fullan (2002, p. 8) emphasises that sharing one's knowledge with others is the key to continuous growth for all, whereby teachers can be engaged in practising, studying and refining the craft of teaching, through sharing of latest readings on ECD, action research, and inquiry groups. Pre-primary education in primary schools is a relatively new concept in Namibian schools and principals and teachers will certainly need to generate knowledge and be continually learning to have a clear conceptual understanding of the principles of pre-primary. This can be promoted through a willingness to share views and information.

It seems appropriate to look briefly at what has been learned, and what is known. The ETSIP strategic document (2011) indicates that pre-primary teachers have been inducted and that the principals and HODs would receive training at a later stage. This situation is likely to cause significant challenges, since change initiatives are unlikely to succeed if they are not strongly led, and if leadership does not see the need for providing opportunities for in-service learning. Nevertheless, it is through sharing and learning together that coherence emerges.

2.6.5 Coherence making

Fullan states that coherence making is a complex and somewhat elusive concept. Principals who are not attuned to leading in a culture of change make the mistake of seeking external innovations and taking on too many projects. The tendency of complex systems - and today's schools are certainly example of complex systems - is to constantly generate overload and cause fragmentation. Overload and fragmentation are natural tendencies of complex systems but these can be controlled by leadership. Leaders who appreciate the creative potential of diverse ideas strive to focus energy and achieve greater alignment which leads to the coherence needed for successful change implementation.

According to Hanny (1987 cited in Fullan 2002, p. 209)

Effective principals are expected to be effective instructional leaders . . . the principal must be knowledgeable about curriculum development, teacher and instructional effectiveness, clinical supervision, staff development and teacher evaluation.

The implication that school principals need to be informed on the substance of the change initiative – in this case ECD – poses significant challenges. As mentioned above, principals and HODs have at this stage not yet received any training.

Bryce (1983) and Fullan (1991) agree with this holistic view of the principal's role. However, Fullan expands this holistic definition of leadership and management to be:

an active, collaborative form of leadership where the principal works with teachers to shape the school as a workplace in relation to shared goals, teachers collaboration, teacher learning opportunities, teacher certainty, teacher commitment, and student learning (p. 161).

In order to deal with change leaders can use these as opportunities to get all stakeholders involved to learn from each other in a collaborative manner about the phenomenon under investigation.

The notion of the learning organisation was raised above, and I now elaborate on this theory.

2.7 School as learning organisation

As mentioned earlier, complexity theory has strong links to the theory of learning organisation. It is clear that unless schools learn how to integrate pre-primary they are unlikely to succeed. Senge's notion of "learning organizations" provides insight into how educators can achieve meaningful change. Three of Peter Senge's five disciplines are relevant to this study: System thinking, Team learning and Shared vision. I first explain what he means by learning organization and then elaborate on the relevant disciplines.

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

Davidoff and Lazarus (1997, p.49) perceive a learning organization as an organization which has learned how to learn about itself and about the world within which it exists and operates. In this sense the organisation needs to adapt in line with contextual changes and demands, as discussed earlier. Hence schools which are integrating ECD into their 'normal' practice will certainly need to exhibit features of learning organisations.

One of the questions this study asks is whether schools act as learning organizations in this era of rapid change, and how responsive they are to change. As noted earlier, organisation theory traces a paradigm shift from bureaucratic organizations to learning organizations (Jamali, Khoury and Sahyoun, 2006, p. 346); the authors argue that the backdrop of change has invited organizations to revisit their traditional bureaucratic orientation.

Senge (2006, p. 4) believes that learning organisations are possible because not only is it people's nature to learn but people love to learn. Senge (2000, p.22-23) further claims that people are able to learn because leaders in learning organisations are designers, teachers and

stewards who lead every member of the organisation “in managing the tenuous relationship between vision and current reality” (Moloi, 2010, p. 622).

According to Kelly et al. (2008) and Cochrane- Smith and Lytle (cited in Moloi, 2010, p. 622) research about teacher learning in recent years has focused on knowing rather than doing, and exploring the reasons for what teachers do. Moloi (Ibid.) describes the learning organisation as “a valuable tool for facilitating knowledge management to improve teaching and learning in schools” (p.622).

I now turn to three of Senge’s five disciplines that are relevant to this study: Systems thinking, Shared vision and Team learning. These are characteristics of the learning organisation, and if schools hope to make a success of the integration process one would expect traces of these to be present.

2.7.1 Systems thinking

I would like to start with the systems thinking as it integrates the disciplines and links strongly with complexity theory. Senge (1990, p.68) regards it as the “conceptual cornerstone that underlies all other disciplines”. He argues that system thinking is the discipline that allows one to see the whole. In other words system thinking enables us to clearly view the interconnections of an organization. Senge (1990, p.73) further argues that the essence of the system thinking discipline lies in the shift of mind (*metanoia*) for “seeing interrelationship rather than linear cause-effects chains, and seeing processes of change rather than snapshots.” System thinking thus helps us in dealing with dynamic complexity of organizations (Moloi, 2005, p. 71) and to be aware of the interconnectedness and different levels of interdependency of people in structures.

Senge believes that unless a system is changed, it will continue producing the same results. By applying systems thinking discipline to my study I should be able to arrive at a better understanding of how the **whole** school is involved in the integration of pre-primary into mainstream primary schools. The approach encourages one to see an organisation not as a set of separate entities but as different parts in interaction with each other. Thus, for example, how

the principal relates to the HODs, and all of them to the teachers will be of interest. Naturally communication is an essential ingredient of these interrelationships (Jamali et al., p. 340).

2.7.2 Shared vision

According to Senge (1994, p. 298-299) “a true shared vision cannot be dictated; it can only emerge from a coherent process of reflection and conversation”. It emerges from people who truly care about one another and their work, who possess a strong personal vision and who see the collective vision as embracing everyone’s personal vision. Faerman (1996, p. 9) similarly argues that the vision should not be created by the principal, but rather be created by all teachers at the school through dialogue and interaction with one another.

It is clear that the dissemination of a shared vision capitalizes on effective communication, given that, as per (Kotter 1996 cited in Jamali et al p. 344), “...the real power of a shared vision is unleashed only when all the people in the school have a common understanding of its goals and direction”. For Senge the shared vision builds on communication, commitment and trust. Jamali et al. (2006, p. 344) also emphasize trust and commitment as necessary ingredients in the pursuit of the shared vision discipline, by nurturing a sense of belonging and ownership in teachers. A shared vision is very important for a learning organization, because it provides the focus and energy for learning and if the vision belongs to the principal only, then such vision demands compliance, not commitment (Senge, 1990, p. 206).

Senge et al. (1996, p. 298) postulate that a shared vision creates a sense of purpose that binds people together and is “a vehicle for building shared meaning”. Building a shared vision is based on viewing an organization as a set of “overlapping communities” formed around shared meaning for all members to have a collective sense of what is important and why (Senge 1994, p. 300). He continues that this will enable top management to see themselves as serving the

Awareness of the importance of shared vision will enable this study to determine the extent to which the school members share in the vision of having pre-primary in schools and also to explore how it is being articulated. A basic question may well to determine whether such a

vision exists in the first place. This discipline will also enable the study to explore how the leadership roles play out in translating personal visions into shared visions.

2.7.3 Team learning for motivation

Team learning requires the whole team (the school staff in this case) to learn from each other (in small groups) to accomplish a result (Senge et al., 1994, p. 354). The team learning discipline builds on shared visions and personal mastery by emphasizing the need for team members to know how to act as a team in order to accomplish the organizational purpose. Senge puts a lot of emphasis on dialogue in an organization, giving an example of a team that can be a worldwide network of specialists, communicating through electronic mail, telephone and occasional face-to-face meetings (1994, p. 355)

Smith in (Faerman, 1996, p.6) defines a “a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, set of performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable.” She continues that this discipline starts with “dialogue, the capacity of members of a team to suspend assumptions and enter into a genuine thinking together” (1996, p.23). In support of the above, Jamali et al. (2006, p.344) indicate that the team learning discipline is directly linked to effective communication and it is through deep dialogue that individuals learn to suspend their assumptions and judgments and reflect individually and collectively upon emerging ideas and thoughts. Senge (2000, p. 75) emphasises that effective teamwork happens through dialogue:

During the dialogue process people learn how to think, not just in the sense of analyzing a shared problem or creating a piece of shared knowledge, but in the sense of occupying a collective sensibility, in which the thoughts, emotions and resulting actions belong not to one individual, but to all of them together.

Moloi (2002, p. 55) reasons that dialogue does not only mean members exchange words but also explore complex issues. Thus learning as a team will help heads, teacher, learners and parents to come to an understanding of pre-primary as well as to discuss ways of dealing with some of the challenges, such as classrooms, the playground, and some of the social issues such as social grants, contribution to the SDF, and school feeding programmes as many parents

cannot afford to pay. According to ETSIP (2005, p7) poverty is widespread and there are children living in difficult circumstances, especially orphans and vulnerable children. These children also need access to quality pre-primary education. Through dialogue the MoE can be informed of these issues in order to improve the situation for sustainability.

This discipline will further help me to understand how schools learn and work as teams, and how members can inspire each other to become a learning organization in order to deal with some of the challenges and to strengthen good relationships with the whole school community. The Grade 1 teachers have a good understanding of the school readiness programme and in what way a bond can be formed between the pre-primary teacher and the Grade 1 teacher as a team to learn from one another. The recent education conference put emphasis on ECD and how ECD learning materials could be used to sensitize the whole school community. Hurst and Joseph (2003, p. 104) view the coming together of parents and practitioners as “sharing education”. According to Nutbrown (2011, p 104) the more parents know about how children’s learning, the better position they will be in to understand what their children are doing and how they might further enhance learning opportunities for them. Involving the whole school community as a team can help curb some of the socio-economic issues in schools to ensure and provide a solid educational journey for the young learners.

Learning organisations are also likely to exhibit the qualities of collegial management. Bush’s collegial model (2003, p. 64) emphasizes that power and decision-making should be shared amongst members of the organization who have a shared understanding, in this case the ECD stakeholders or indeed the whole school ‘community’.

2.8 Collegiality through participative management

According to Bush (2003, p.78)

Collegial leaders are responsive to the needs and wishes of their professional colleagues, and they acknowledge the expertise and skill of the teacher for the benefit of the learners; collegial heads seek to create formal and informal opportunities for the testing and elaboration of policy initiatives; collegiality models emphasizes the authority of

expertise rather than official authority, where the heads encourage teachers to become co-leaders.

Little (cited in Bush, 2003. P. 71) describes how collegiality operates in primary schools:

- Teachers talk about teaching
- There is shared planning and preparation
- The presence of observers in classroom is common
- There is mutual training development

This model appears to depend on shared professional values that lead to the development of trust and a willingness to give and receive criticism to enhance the practice. With the independence of Namibia the education system has changed from an autocratic to a democratic system, which allows for and encourages participative management and leadership. With policy reform teachers' expertise is given full credit and this model provides for teacher participation in finding solutions through collaboration in their teams.

By allowing participation especially when introducing a new phase, Sergiovanni is of the opinion that it will succeed in 'bonding' staff together and in easing the pressures on school principals (cited in Bush, 2008, p. 14). The burden will be less as the roles and functions are shared (ibid). Coperland (cited in Bush 2003, p.79) makes a similar point in claiming that participative leadership has the potential to "ease the burden on principals and avoid the expectation that the formal leader will be a superhead." In order to deal with change the leaders can use it as opportunities to get all stakeholders involved in learning from each other in a collaborative manner about the phenomenon under investigation.

After independence, Namibia like most postcolonial African countries, made it a priority to transform its education system to promote democracy as mentioned previously. *Towards Education for all: A development brief for education, culture and training* (Namibia. MBEC, 1993 pp. 41-42) sums it up as follows:

In order to teach about democracy, our teachers, and our education system as a whole must practise democracy. A democratic education system is organized around a broad participation in decision-making and the clear accountability of those that are our leaders. That is not to say that every decision in the school must be subjected to a vote or that the role of the youngster will be identical to those of their parents. Rather it is to be clear that Namibians work diligently and consistently to facilitate broad participation in making the major decisions about our education and how to implement them. In schools that are responsive to their community, parents and neighbours are not regarded as unwelcome outsiders. Instead the schools are organized to enable them to be active participants in school governance, active contributors to discussions of school management and administration, and active evaluators of the quality of instructions and learning. In democratic education for democratic society teachers must be active creators and managers of the learning environment and not its masters or caretakers.

In an era of change in this fast growing world, education institutions cannot remain static entities, and this entails new challenges for educational leaders, especially the principal as they work constantly in turbulent, unpredictable conditions. This Chapter has argued for the need to view organisations differently – as complex learning organisations - and to embrace a paradigm shift in leading and managing schools, moving from bureaucracy to collegiality. Policy supports and underpins this shift, as the quotation above illustrates.

In the next chapter I explain and justify the methodological approach used in carrying out this research.

CHAPTER THREE

3.1 Introduction

This Chapter outlines the methodology of my study. I shed light on the research paradigm in which the study was conducted and provide reasons for choosing it. I discuss the research methodology and the strategies used to explore the perceptions of principals' roles in the integration of pre-primary into the mainstream primary schools. I further explain how data was collected and analysed and discuss issues of validity, research ethics and how each of these was addressed.

3.2 Research paradigm

According to Mertens (2005, p. 7) "A paradigm is a way of looking at the world. It is composed of certain philosophical assumptions that guide and direct thinking and action." My research is a qualitative study conducted in the interpretive paradigm, since I was interested in understanding the subjective experiences of three principals and the meaning they attached to the integration of pre-primary into their schools. The ontological assumption underlying this study is that reality is constructed by people, who create their own meanings out of what they experience (van der Mescht, 2009, p. 2). It is believed that people create their own meanings, and that 'reality' consists in how they view and interpret their world (Ibid.). Thus, reality is a fundamentally subjective phenomenon, and differs from person to person. It is for this reason that the interpretive ontology is said to be unstable. The epistemological consequence of this is that reality can only be understood by interacting with people (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, pp. 19-21) by means of techniques such as interviews and focus groups.

By using the interpretive paradigm I had the opportunity to capture the understanding of individual participants' role in the integration of pre-primary into the primary school, in accordance with the views of Cohen et al.:

The interpretive paradigm is characterized by a concern for the individual. The central endeavour in the context of the interpretive paradigm is to understand the subjective world of human experience. To retain the integrity of the phenomena being investigated, efforts are made to get inside the person and understand from within (2007, p. 21).

The interpretive approach seemed appropriate for this study as it helped me to maintain a focus on the “action” of individuals in integrating a new phase into their respective schools, as Cohen et al. (2007, p. 21) point out in their argument for interpretive paradigm:

The interpretive approach, on the other hand, focuses on action. This may be thought of as behavior-with-meaning; it is internal behavior and as such, future orientation. Actions are meaningful to us only in so far as we are able to ascertain the intentions of the actions to share their experiences. A large number of our everyday interactions with one another rely on such shared experiences.

The interpretive approach therefore “begins with the individuals and sets out to understand their interpretations of the world around them” (Ibid). This paradigm further allowed me to give credibility to the subjective meaning the participants have concerning their situation, the principals in this case, and to capture qualitative information and allow for deeper probing of their experiences about the process and their future plans.

3.3 Research method: Case study

This is a case study that investigates the phenomenon as it appears in three schools in the Khomas region in Namibia. According to Mertens (2005, p 237) a case study is

a method for learning about a complex instance, based on a comprehensive understanding of that instance obtained by extensive descriptions and analysis of that instance taken as a whole and in its context.

Stake opined that “the sole criterion for selecting a case study is the opportunity to learn” (1995, p. 4). Hancock & Algozzine (2006, p. 11) are in agreement that “through case study the researcher hope to gain in-depth understanding of situations and meaning for those involved”.

For Creswell (1998, p. 61) case studies involve gathering rich data from many sources:

an exploration of a case over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information. In other words a case study serves the purpose of helping the researcher to gain more knowledge about, and a greater understanding ...

Yin (2003, p13) defines it as

an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident, and in which multiple sources of evidence are used.

These 'definitions' all stress depth of understanding through gathering rich data, while for Yin it is the 'real-life' context that matters. This study looks at a case of the integration of pre-primary into mainstream primary schooling within its real context using a range of data collection tools.

Baker (1999, p.326) says that case studies are most appropriate in educational settings when they use comprehensive strategies in a single social environment to reach theoretical conclusions with widespread implications. Case study methods allow the researcher to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events such as organizational and managerial processes (Merriam, 2002, p. 205; Yin 2003, p. 2). In other words, by using the case study approach the researcher keeps a sense of "reality", that is a sense of what really happened with regard to the phenomenon.

In conclusion, case study strives for a holistic understanding of how participants relate and interact with each other in a specific situation and how they make meaning of the phenomena under study. It further answers "how" and "why" questions and does not only hear the voice of one participant, but also the views of other relevant groups. Using case study brought me to a deeper understanding of the dynamics of the situation (Maree, 2007, p. 75).

I decided that these descriptions match the purpose of my study as case studies allow the researcher to "probe deeply and to analysis intensively the multifarious phenomena that constitute the life cycle of the unit with a view to establishing generalisations about the wider population to which that unit belongs" (Cohen & Manion, 1994, pp. 106-107).

3.4 Sampling

Maxwell (2005, p. 26) defines sampling as “decisions about where to conduct the research and whom to involve, an essential part of the research process.” He continues that it usually involves people and settings, events and processes.

My research was carried out in Windhoek. The three schools were selected because of the years in which they integrated pre-primary, from 2008 till 2011. The sample was thus purposively selected. Each school is unique and there are perceptions that each school has its own challenge as the settings differ from school to school. These differences are mostly caused by the availability of resources, infrastructure, the understanding of ECD, and the complexity of the issues being dealt with and thus provide a richer picture of the phenomenon. Convenience sampling also applied in this case since the schools were accessible to me and I was able to make contact with the schools at any time.

However, before I started visiting these sites to collect data I visited a private pre-primary school and had an informal talk about ECD. The purpose was just to familiarise myself with what was happening in the private schools, not to compare but to have an understanding about what I might expect. This private school caters for children ages 2-5 while the government schools start at age 5 years. In the private schools they have an assistant to the teacher which is not the case in the government schools. In general terms it seems as though private schools are more serious about ECD and have been including it in their planning for much longer. These ideas are not part of the data I intend to use in this study, but they do help to indicate what is happening elsewhere and the visit helped to focus me on my own study.

3.5 Selection of research participants

After I received permission from the Regional director to conduct my research I had the difficult task of doing the selection. I was guided by the different schools’ history of pre-primary. Since this is a leadership and management study of principals’ experiences, I decided to select the

principals for semi-structured interviews. The fact that this is a mini-thesis made it hard to choose other participants as I had many in mind. I discussed it with my supervisor and we agreed on the LP HOD and the pre-primary teacher who were in a position to provide some data relevant to the study. The study also looks at schools as learning organizations and by viewing the challenges I decided to include the Grade 1 teacher as well to see the degree of teamwork and support the pre-primary teacher received and how they operate as a team. As pre-primary learners are of a tender age I was further interested in the support of the parents, but it was difficult to include a parent due to the difficulty in arranging a time slot for the focus group. The principals were very supportive and appointed a teacher to represent the parents. This group of people formed the focus group. Two of the schools are double shift schools and to fit in an appointment was very difficult as the LP HOD teaches in the afternoon shift. During the arrangement for the interview the LP HOD accompanied me to the pre-primary and the Grade 1 teachers' classes to make the appointment for the focus group interview. This afforded me the opportunity to see their classes at the same time and to introduce myself to them.

3.6 Data collection

As Creswell (1998, p. 123) states, "a case study involves the widest array of data collection as the researcher attempts to build an in-depth picture of the case". Hence a variety of data collection strategies were used, namely semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews and document analysis.

3.6.1 Document analysis

Analysing documents seemed an appropriate first stage because information gained from documents informed the subsequent stages of data collection, namely semi-structured interviews with principals and focus group discussions with the Lower Primary Head of Department and other teachers.

Document analysis refers to “analysis of any written material that contains information about the phenomenon that is being researched” (De Vos et al., 2005, p.314). It is imperative to study documents such as minutes and circulars as it may help to understand the philosophy or the logic behind discussions and decisions taken in an organisation. The following documents were analysed:

- Minutes of meetings
- ETSIP Documents
- NIED Circulars
- ECD Circulars

Henning, Van Rensburg and Smith (cited in Musore 2009, p. 41) argue that “any document, whether new or old, whether in printed format, handwritten or in electronic format, and which relates to the research question may be of value”. Thus studying these documents provided me with data, concrete evidence that I used to explore the phenomenon in detail. Yin further states that “documentary information is likely to be relevant to every case study” and the strengths of documentation include being “stable, unobtrusive, and exact ... offering broad coverage” (2003, pp. 86-87).

3.6.2 Interviews

I conducted semi-structured interviews with the principal of each school. This was to explore their perceptions and experiences of the phenomenon in question and how they manage this process and deal with the challenges. Semi-structured interviews involve asking a series of structured questions and then probing more deeply with open-ended questions to obtain additional information on the phenomenon under investigation (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007, p. 246). They further investigate the context of thoughts, feelings and actions of the respondents. Semi-structured interviews help respondents to make explicit things that have been implicit (Arksey & Knight, 1999, p. 33).

Interviews are important because of the richness of communication that is possible (Gillham, 2000, p. 62). The advantage of an interview is that it provides the richest data, because it allows the interviewer to ask follow up questions, to interact with participants and establish relationships of trust. The interview questions are attached as **(Appendix C)**.

The interviews were schedule to fit in after school in order to avoid disruptions.

The interview questions were based on:

- Principals' experiences/views and the roles they played in the integration of pre-primary into the mainstream primary school
- Implications for management (changes to accommodate such a class)
- Challenges, such as resources infrastructure, qualified pre-primary teachers, training
- Socio-economic issues

3.6.3 Focus group interviews

I had a focus group at each of the three schools that consisted of the LP HOD, the pre-primary teacher, a Grade 1 teacher and a teacher who represented the parents. As mentioned before it was difficult to make an appointment at the double shift schools as the LP HOD was teaching in the afternoon shift and the pre-primary and the Grade 1 in the morning shift. All my interviews took place in the afternoon after school.

Kruger & Casey (in Pearson, 2007, p. 244) describe focus group interview as a “carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment.” It is relaxed and enjoyable for participants as they share their ideas, perceptions and feelings that they may not express if interviewed individually. Focus group discussion were particularly important to my study as it encouraged participants to “speak out in their own words” (Cohen et al., 2007, p.376) about the phenomena. New ideas and clearer understanding was reached because, as Kruger and Casey (2000, p. 24) point out, “you want ideas to emerge from the group. A group possesses the capacity to become more than the sum of its parts, to exhibit a synergy that individuals alone don’t possess”. The group

shared their deep feelings and frustrations about the integration process and the way it was brought on them. Throughout the discussion I could see how certain things became clearer to participants.

The focus group discussions were based on:

- How they viewed and experienced the integration of pre-primary
- The challenges and how they dealt with them
- Recommendations

These questions engaged the group in fruitful discussions about the integration as they also created a platform for many to air their views. Many of the participants felt that such discussions as this should have happened long ago as they started to find some solutions to some problems in their sharing in a small group. The data generated here complemented and added to the interview data. The focus group interview at each school was chaired and facilitated by myself and the voice-recorded discussions were transcribed by myself. The focus group interview questions are attached as **(Appendix D)**.

3.7 Data analysis

Qualitative data analysis is a “process involving ‘disassembling’ of research materials, sorting and sifting them to identify sequence, processes, patterns with the intention of reconstructing the data in a comprehensive fashion” (Seidel, cited by Togo, 2009, p. 159). Most of the interviews were transcribed after the interviews were conducted and this provided me with a large amount of data and a rich and colourful picture of people’s understanding of pre-primary. I used induction as a mode of inference in my study. It was significant as I studied people’s perceptions and experiences and developed general themes and sub themes from these. Henning et al. (2004, p. 104) argue, “Human communication is not linear and the interpretation of meaning should not be linear either”. I read all the transcripts carefully before the themes were created. I compared the data from the three instruments and looked for categories and patterns by coding it. According to Maree (2007, p. 104) “coding is the process of reading

carefully through your transcribed data and dividing it into meaningful analytic units". The coding process enabled me to quickly retrieve specific pieces of data.

3.8 Validity

In order to ensure validity I designed my instruments with the assistance of my supervisor and piloted the interviews. According to Maxwell (1992, p. 284) as cited in Maree 2007, p.38) "validity is not an inherent property of a particular method, but pertains to the data, accounts, or conclusions reached by using that method in a particular context for a particular purpose." Careful design and trialling of methods will therefore enhance validity. Reliability refers to how consistent the results are and that will be achieved by triangulating my data. According to Van der Mescht (2011, p.2), "Triangulation is a data analysis and presentation technique that shows how data generated from different sources 'speak to' and complement each other". By engaging multiple methods of data collection, in this case interviews, focus group interviews and document analysis, I hoped to increase the data's trustworthiness (Maree, 2007, p. 38). So I attempted to ensure validity by making use of triangulation as explained above.

One of the threats to validity in this study was the possibility of bias on the side of the researcher. The fact that many of the teachers I worked with had been my students at college might have affected my study, perhaps by affecting the responses I got from my respondents. I tried to remain conscious of this threat throughout the process and guarded against it as best I could.

3.9 Ethical considerations

Two of the schools were known to me as I had gained access to them during a prior assignment by my involvement at the school. During school based studies I visited my Lower Primary students at two of these schools and know many of the staff members. The fact that I know some of the staff members may also have posed a threat to my research project, as mentioned

above. I may well have had preconceived ideas of how these schools were coping with ECD. From the start I distanced myself as much as possible, so that my personal perceptions and beliefs did not interfere with my research. This was achieved by 'bracketing' all my preconceived beliefs, assumptions, personal bias and prejudices to allow the data to speak for themselves. I also relied on my supervisor to alert me to any preconceived notions on my part.

To observe protocol, I first consulted my regional director for permission (**see Appendix B**) to conduct my study at three different primary schools in Windhoek and presented a letter from my supervisor stating the purpose of my research (**see Appendix A**). An appointment before the time was made with the principal to discuss the purpose of my research and get permission from him as well as the head of Lower primary department, the pre-primary teacher and Grade 1 teacher. During this time I had an opportunity to pay a short visit to the pre-primary teachers' classes to explain the purpose of my study and it was well accepted by all of them. I had to answer some of their questions as pre-primary was a real burning issue for them.

I briefed them on research protocol which granted participants the right to voluntary participate and withdraw from the study at any time (Creswell, 2003, p. 63). A good relationship was built with the participants and the schools throughout the research process, as ECD is close to my heart as well as to theirs. Cavan (as cited in Cohen and Manion 2000, p. 56) describes ethics as

a matter of principled sensitivity to the rights of others. Being ethical limits the choices we can make in the pursuit of truth. Ethics say while truth is good, respect for human dignity is better, even if, in the extreme case, the respect of human nature leaves one ignorant of human nature.

These include the right to privacy, anonymity and confidentiality. As a researcher, it is imperative that confidentiality be upheld for those who are willing to allow access to and scrutiny of their thoughts (Cohen et al. 2001). In addition, it needs to be borne in mind that the words of the interviewees are ultimately their own. All individual names used in the report are pseudonyms.

This Chapter has presented a detailed overview of how the research was undertaken, the orientation to the research, the theoretical framework underpinning the study, the methods that were used in generating the data and also the methods of analysis that have been employed. It further provides evidence of how issues of validity and ethical considerations were dealt with.

In the next Chapter (Chapter 4) I present the data. The Chapter will outline the data on the integration of pre-primary into the mainstream primary schools. It is written under different headings generated from reading across all the data.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.1 Introduction

In this Chapter I present the data I collected from interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis. I give a brief overview of the schools to contextualize the study. I present the data in categories that emerged after repeated reading, thinking and analyzing of the data to shed light on the research question.

When this study was conducted many Namibian school principals had just returned from a very insightful Teacher Conference with government officials, private sector and international stakeholders. The issue of ECD in Namibia (0-8) preprimary education received a great deal of attention at the conference, and delegates agreed this matter had been neglected for too long and that it should come back to where it belongs. When I made an appointment with the schools to explain my research many thought that I had been sent to do a follow-up on the current status of ECD in the school. I had to explain that I was involved in my own studies, but that the findings could also help to shed light on the current situation. In this sense, though, my research was perfectly timed.

4.2 The research sites

As mentioned before the study was conducted at three primary schools. The schools were purposively selected and all had introduced pre-primary at different times. One school had added a second pre-primary class and that was also one of the reasons why this school was selected.

The school which integrated pre-primary in 2008 is a new school, still under construction and situated deep down in the informal settlements; the 2009 school is a former black school; and the 2011 schools is a former white school.

For the sake of anonymity and confidentiality the research sites and participants are identified as follows:

Research site 1	Angels Paradise
Research site 2	Queens Paradise
Research site 3	Dolls Paradise
SP1	School Principal 1 of Angels Paradise
SP2	School Principal 2 of Queens Paradise
SP3	School Principal 3 of Dolls Paradise
LP HOD1	Lower Primary Head of Department
LP HOD2	Lower Primary Head of Department
LP HOD3	Lower Primary Head of Department
PPT1	Pre-primary teacher 1
PPT2	Pre-primary teacher 2
PPT3	Pre-primary teacher 3
GT1	Grade 1 teacher 1
GT2	Grade 1 teacher 2
GT3	Grade 1 teacher 3
AT1	Additional teachers 1
AT2	Additional teachers 2
AT3	Additional teachers 3

SP1, SP2 and SP3 were the participants for the semi-structured interviews.

HOD1 to 3, PPT1 to 3, GT 1 to 3 and AT1 to 3 were the participants in the focus group interview.

The following categories were used to order the data:

- Principals' experiences and roles in the integration of pre-primary into the mainstream primary school
- Management changes to accommodate such a class
- How the principals handle change
- Challenges

- Socio-economic Issues

ECD is viewed by many educationalists as a crucial phase that serves as the foundation of learners that can contribute to learners' future performance. As all are striving equally to improve results, the government also realized that Pre-primary should be moved from the MGESW to the MoE through ETSIP, because of the high failure rate and high dropout in Grade 1 as was witnessed over the last couple of years. As this is a crucial phase in the life of the young ones to provide them with a sound educational background, the question at the back of my mind was 'how can the school as a learning organization work as a team to make the integration work effectively?'

4.3 Principals' experiences and roles in the integration of pre-primary into the mainstream primary school

4.3.1 Principals' views and experience of the process

This question was raised to find out how principals experienced the process of integration. The interviews with the principals revealed that all three principals viewed the integration of the pre-primary into the mainstream as something significant, the beginning of a new era. They welcomed the idea of pre-primary at their respective schools, because they realized its value and also referred to the recent educational conference where ECD/Pre-primary was discussed. They did, however, also mention the challenges they had experienced with the process.

SP3 said,

My personal opinion is that the integration of pre-primary is a good thing; you know it adds value to the school. Our Grade 1 intake needs to have a sound educational background as we have a high standard at our school, so it is good to have children with a pre-primary background. I look at it as building strength within the system.

This point was further elaborated on as SP2 referred to learners with no pre-primary background:

It improved the level of our learners' performance and if you compare them with learners with no pre-primary background, you get them raw and it takes the Grade 1 teacher much longer to teach them the basic things, such as greeting and to help them adapt to the school environment.

Although SP3 and SP2 were also happy they had different experiences as SP2 said, "I realized that parents could not afford private pre-schools and have taken in more learners". He also saw it as an added responsibility as he stated "more learners, more teachers more responsibility, that requires more planning." SP1 continued to share his experience of his school as one of the first to start with pre-primary:

My school was the pilot school and we have proof of the learners' performance as we followed [tracked] them and see the difference, but it is not an easy thing especially with the shortage of classrooms for our school with the double shifts.

Principals mentioned various challenges and these challenges are presented later under a separate heading.

SP2 argued that he could rely on the LP HOD since "the LP HOD knows the phase" but this sense of confidence was not commonly shared. The HODs in the focus group indicated that they needed training for the new phase. SP1 felt that "we just need a qualified teacher to teach the learners and see the results".

Although all three principals displayed a very clear picture of the importance of pre-primary and its benefits they admitted that they had had no formal training in pre-primary education. As SP3 cautioned, "When I studied I did not have child development in our curriculum and this is where the MoE should help us and provide training in this new field". Some principals used their own initiative to familiarize themselves with ECD as SP2 claimed, "I had to read up about ECD" and SP3 said, "You know I had to watch a DVD about ECD and realized the importance of hygiene for these small ones".

Principals indicated that they were all confident in leading and managing the process with the assistance of all the stakeholders to make the integration a smooth process. The data further revealed that principals, although strong in stature, regard pre-primary as a special feature of their schools. They referred affectionately to the 'little ones', 'the young ones', and they are 'so klein', which means, they are so small. The principals felt strongly that ECD it was long overdue and they were in support of the idea to have it back in schools especially if the government could just assist them with the classes and a qualified teacher.

SP1 referred to the history of ECD:

Before independence we had the bridging classes and it was very much appreciated, but after independence our politicians abolished these classes; it was the very time politicians formulated the education system.... but as time went by they realized that ECD was with the MGECW and brought it back into the primary mainstream schools, so now we are happy.

The principals were in agreement on the size and complexity of the integration exercise. SP3 stated, "and now we have to start from scratch, and it feels like planning for a new school" while SP2 felt that "ECD has become a 'big business', as we see a lot of ECD centers mushrooming around in Windhoek, not always providing quality".

When principals were questioned if pre-primary was forced or imposed on them all three principals indicated that it was not imposed on them, and stated that ECD was always a burning issue and they had expected government to relook at the situation to find an amicable solution, as they were worried about the status of the Grade 1s. SP3 referred to ETSIP and said, "According to ETSIP sooner or later all schools will have to take in a pre-primary class". Principals and participants shared the fact that, although ECD was assigned to the MGECW it became the responsibility of the community and municipality, and they could not provide the desired quality as that also contributed to the high failure and high dropout rate in Grade 1. They mentioned lack of proper monitoring as another reason and claimed that the trainers were also not fully qualified. This links with an official document dated 19/6/2008 which

informed principals about the aim of the re-instatement of pre-primary education in the MoE is to:

- address the poor literacy and numeracy levels of learners;
- develop perceptual skills within the cognitive, physical and social-emotional domains;
- track learners at the end of grades 1, 4 and 5 to determine the quality;
- monitor and evaluate the programme

Principals should take full responsibility for the management of the pre-primary classes and support the teacher in every way.

The focus group revealed that the HOD and Grade 1 teachers felt that learners admitted to Grade 1 could not perform the basic things, such as greeting, and they struggled to adapt to the new environment. With all these factors in mind when SP1 was called in with a few other principals in 2007 by the previous director to discuss the issue of pre-primary with the possibility to start with a pre-primary class at their schools the next year, SP1 said they immediately agreed and the next year, in 2008, “we started with a pre-primary class at our respective schools”. He further indicated that they were adamant that the class size should not exceed 25 learners per class.

Document analysis of ETSIP shows that the MoE aimed to add at least 100 classes per year from 2008 to all primary schools throughout the country. The documents reveal that the total number of classes at the time of writing stands at 504 classes in the whole of Namibia (see Appendix E).

This section has tried to show the positive attitude to and reception of ECD in primary schools. The educational necessity for a pre-school year is generally grasped and appreciated. In the next session I present what principals perceived as their role in the integration process that contributed to smooth integration.

4.3.2 Principals' role in the integration

When interviewed about their roles the principals felt that to ensure a smooth integration process they needed all teachers to assist: they needed to find the most suitable classroom, to secure all resources, to have a teacher for the duties, to see to training and ensure learners' safety, to monitor the whole process collectively, to motivate and encourage staff to participate and to be positive and accountable.

The principals further stressed that it should be done in a collective manner, as SP3 argued,

To facilitate and ensure good human resources, as my Grade 1s need a sound educational background and to foster good working relationships, as an added responsibility has been put on the whole school. So I expect teachers to assist in the process. We also adjusted the organogram for the fair distribution of duties.

SP2 similarly referred to the additional work involved. Although they were happy, they viewed pre-primary as a new phase and they had to start from scratch. He said, "My teachers are loaded so I asked those who were able to assist us with the integration; we need to be more alert as there are younger ones in the school".

SP1 indicated that his school was under construction, with increased responsibilities as he has to be at the school and at the same time keep an eye on the developments. He further envisioned that the new building would be the area for the pre-primary and Grade 1, as "I want them to be safe and enjoy their classes where there is a big space to play".

Safety and security emerged as an issue. Principals referred to increased bullying and said that they needed to motivate the teachers as well as the senior learners to be more vigilant on playground duties. This was further echoed by PPT3 who explained that they let the pre-primary learners eat in the class before they went out for break to avoid fights about food outside.

The data clearly indicates that the integration process has brought added responsibility and that all parties - parents, teacher, learners, school managers and the community - have to play a role to make it work. SP3 felt strongly that “to ensure effective integration of pre-primary we need a strong team”.

4.3.3 Principals’ leadership style

As principals revealed positive perceptions about their roles so I was interested in finding out what leadership styles they applied to get such an overwhelming support from the teachers.

All three principals felt that they had an open door policy and that they were democratic leaders. SP1 stated, “I allow participation as I can’t do this on my own; we have to work together as a team”. They agreed that they encouraged Grade heads to take the lead and to feel free to consult them. In the end though, all three stressed their ultimate accountability, a link with what was suggested at the education conference referred to earlier which made the undertaking “to train principals and hold them accountable” (document dated 31/8/2011.)

The data revealed that with the new phase of pre-primary the principals had various consultative sessions. According to SP2, “we had to decide about which classes would be in the morning and which in the afternoon, the enrolment, duties, the playground, supervision duties etc, but we couldn’t keep all parties happy.” Sometimes what emerged was a sense of controlled or limited consultation, as SP3 explained: “I have to guide everyone for the final decision”, and “Although I am democratic I will be held accountable in the end”.

All principals indicated that they have two-way communication between principal and staff and that they share information regularly during breaks and in staff meetings. HODs and teachers use their departments as a forum because they meet often and agree on open communication channels. L P HOD3 explained, “We are colleagues and we aim to work at all times as a team, because we learn a lot from each other”.

With regard to changes in management structures teachers were very happy and they wanted to be associated with such proactive ways. All three principals felt safe and confident, and saw the value of the lower primary HOD to whom SP3 referred as “my colleague”: “The HOD can tell you more about.... and ... no, I trust her as she has a better understanding of ECD”. This was witnessed in minutes of Doll’s Paradise meeting dated 3/7/2010 where HOD3 reported back on pre-primary issues. The data reveal that principals went through a lot of changes to make the integration happen at their schools and it further shows how responsive they were towards change. Minutes of meetings reveal that many issues were reported back by LP HODs and that there was discussions on them e.g. the enrollment of pre-primary and deciding on a class to use.

All participants were adamant that they were ready to learn and viewed the school as a learning organization, an institution of learning not only for the learners, but for the whole school community including the parents. They referred to the English proficiency test all teachers and principals had to write as an indication of change and transformation in schools. SP1 cautioned that “We should not take things personally, but rather as opportunities to learn”.

SP2 indicated, “I am serving on the board of a private company and there I have realized that you have to invest in your team, to create in them the love to learn from each other and be involved to make things work.” SP1 expressed similar sentiments: “We are a democratic country and we all should take ownership in making the pre-primary work for the nation, as these children will be the future leaders”.

That brings me to the question of how principals deal with the change brought about by the integration process.

4.4 How the principals handle change

Principals are of the opinion that they cannot run schools as they did 10 years ago, but they have to adapt to change and strive to find solutions to deal with the challenges.

When principals were asked what arrangements they had made to accommodate another phase at their schools they admitted that although they were not trained for ECD, they had to find ways to make the necessary changes to accommodate the new phase. They also indicated that they were civil servants and would take up the added responsibility and hope for an incentive that would motivate them to fulfil their duty more efficiently. They regarded pre-primary as something good and saw it as the foundation to prepare learners to become ready for Grade 1 which will produce good results for the future.

Although all principals viewed it as good, each school had different experiences and feelings about the phenomenon.

4.4.1 Accommodating a new class

Principals emphasized that to establish a pre-primary class you had to make changes and sometimes very difficult ones as not everyone easily accepted and shared their decisions to make the pre-primary integration happen. As each school had its own uniqueness and own challenges, I find it necessary to present the data of each school in turn.

At Queens Primary School SP2 said,

My school catered for the double shifts, due to lack of classrooms. We were in the process of reducing classes to get all teachers and classes gradually into the morning session, but then we had to deal with a new request to take in a pre-primary class. That was not well taken by my teachers as they felt that pre-primary could be moved to the afternoon which was not approved. So I moved the Grade 4's to the afternoon session to accommodate pre-primary and grades 1 and 2 in the morning.

This decision created much unhappiness. The point was echoed in the Queens Paradise focus group when GT2 shared his concern: "We are very unhappy about the afternoon shifts as we have serious difficulty in teaching children in the afternoons; it cannot produce good results".

At Angels Paradise Primary School SP1 stated,

My school is still under construction and we have the double shift, and the teachers are not so keen on it, but because we care for our people we added another class. We have monitored the group since 2008 and have witnessed the difference in learners' performance in all the grades, so pre-primary is a good thing. Next year I want to add another class so we can cater for English learners, as the other two classes are in the mother tongue.

Another view was given at Dolls Primary School, when SP3 stated, "It was difficult to find a class as we had no extra classrooms, so we had to reduce the intake of one Grade 1 class in order to use that classroom for the pre-primary class". He gave reasons such as "I can't wait for the government to build a class, as they always say 'It's in the pipeline' and I don't know how long that pipeline is." He further stated that whether you do it now or later you would have to have a pre-primary class by 2015.

The question of reducing the intake of Grade 1 gave rise to mixed feelings. Although SP3 claimed, "It is a give and take situation" he further stated, "We had mixed feelings amongst all parties, but the issue was discussed with the inspectors and it was approved". The Grade 1 teacher was the HOD and she was released from her class teaching responsibilities, so no one lost a job. The Doll's Paradise focus group approved of the idea of more pre-primary classes in order to feed all the Grade 1 classes. GT 3 remarked, "So we can take ownership of preparing and moulding our own children for Grade 1".

The data further revealed that this phase required principals and the school team to plan thoroughly if they wanted their own pre-primary classes. All participants felt that the pre-primary section should be physically separate or combined with the Grade 1 classes at the school. For the sake of safety and to avoid further bullying the pre-primary section could even be fenced off. The data also indicated that the school saw a future for pre-primary as many claimed to have a pre-primary class to prepare learners for each Grade 1 class. One can conclude that when the attitude and spirit of the schools are positive, the MoE and all other ministries should follow ECD Policy and continue to support them to get this phase working effectively in schools.

4.2.2 Management changes - Implications

According to the principals the integration required them to weigh up all options to find the most suitable solution that suited the needs of each school. They indicated that they had many meetings in which they sat with their strategic plan and looked at the organogram to distribute duties fairly as the integration had many implications for the management at their schools e.g. to have an HOD to oversee the operation of the pre-primary and to be of assistance. Two of the schools had the double shift system and this added to the challenges. They indicated that the changes were approved by their school boards and their inspector.

As SP2 stated “More learners, more teachers, mean greater responsibilities”. Principals overall felt that they had to be proactive, to plan in advance and ensure fair distribution of workload on the organogram of the school, to see all parties happy. They indicated the following management changes they made at their schools:

At Dolls Paradise Primary School SP3 stated,

I have two HODs for LP. The one for pre-primary was released from her Grade 1 class teaching, but is teaching a single subject in Grade 4. She will now have more time available to assist the new pre-primary teacher, and to pay more visits to primary teachers and assist them in their needs.

This change was very well taken by the teachers and GT 3 shared their satisfaction in the focus group as follows: “The HOD is now more available and she assists us immediately and we come now more often as a group together, as in the past we had to wait until the end of the day when she was done with her class”. PT3 was also happy and said “the HOD is always coming to my class at any time and she really assists me as I am also new at the school”

At Angels Paradise Primary School SP1 stated,

I have two Lower Primary HODs. One is responsible for the morning shift to assist the two pre-primary teachers and do class visits, and the other HOD is in the afternoon. This arrangement helped a lot, as we have to deal with the double shifts.

At Queens Paradise Primary School SP2 stated,

I have the double shift with two HODs. They were released from class teaching and now teach single subjects to the Grade 4 in the afternoon. We made the following arrangements: One HOD is administratively assigned to the morning shift for one week and teaches in the afternoon and the next week the other HOD is in charge. The week that the one is in charge in the morning they can do the class visits and provide assistance to the pre-primary and Grade 1, and 2 teachers.

One can witness that Angels SP1 and Queens SP2 had the double shift that is even more complex. These schools experienced more challenges because they had two working groups that needed proper planning in terms of many issues mentioned above. Dolls SP3 had two HODs and reduced the Grade 1 intake as explained earlier. These are all signs that schools are complex and are learning to adapt to find ways to make education work under harsh circumstances and in some case with limited time, limited resources and no external incentive.

The changes to the management structure at the school are a clear indication of how flexible and responsive the schools are towards change. The question of allowing HODs to be released from class teaching raised considerable debate.

In response to that SP1 said,

We as principals took the matter up with regional office and the inspectors had great sympathy with the situation at hand and assured us of their support. You see, one subject advisor even put it in a lighter note when he remarked, "When I was a LP HOD we were 'so abused' we had to teach the full day, fit in class visits and ended up over weekends with teachers' files at our homework to mark". It was agreed that it is up to the principals to rearrange, monitor and support the teacher.

SP1 confirmed that the inspectors gave them the indication to go ahead, and further stated "If we want quality we have to make changes". These changes require a strong united team as SP2 echoed, "One can't do this alone". This leads to the issue of teamwork.

4.4.3 Teamwork

Participants identified teamwork as a way of solving some of the problems and challenges they were facing. The fact that the HODs were now more available to teachers suggests that they would now be able to work more closely together as a team. The Grade teachers appreciated the assistance of the HODs and welcomed the management changes. In the focus groups the participants indicated the importance of teamwork and spoke of the cooperation between the pre-primary teacher and the Grade 1 teachers. This was further stressed by the HOD3 when she stated, “We sit together and discuss issues and try to help one another in the areas you feel the strongest”. The Grade teachers meet regularly to plan as a group and to iron out differences, although they found it difficult to plan with the pre-primary as their themes were different. Furthermore, the Grade 1 teachers also realized the importance of working together with the PPTs as they would benefit from the well prepared product, as was indicated by GT3: “I gave all my readiness material to PPT3”. Another situation was shared when PPT3 referred to two learners with learning difficulties in her class in which she received assistance from the GT 3 and HOD3.

At Angels the two pre-primary teachers reported working closely together and indicated that they got support from the HOD1. At Queens they had to plan thoroughly as the HODs were teaching in the afternoons. Because of the nature of the school it was sometimes difficult to have meetings as scheduled. PT2 indicated that the HODs also needed to get training to understand the needs, especially with regard to the playground. Here they felt the older learners could assist, and that these initiatives could be announced by the principal.

The principals at all schools referred to various fundraising initiatives in which the whole school community participated successfully and this confirmed the importance of teamwork.

4.4.4 Vision

Most of the participants shared in the dream of having more pre-primary classes at their respective schools as they realized the value of this phase. As GT2 remarked, “We need more pre-primary classes to feed the Grade 1 classes, as we need well prepared learners ready for formal learning”. The pre-primary teachers indicated that they want to prepare the learners to be ready for Grade 1 and to ensure a smooth transition. The principals indicated that it was possible if they could help each other. When asked if the whole school shared in this vision some HOD and pre-primary teachers said it was more the lower primary teachers who promoted the pre-primary, but there was a need to get all teachers involved. SP3 stated that his school would soon have a session on ECD to familiarize his teachers with it, as all the departments had to do a SWOT analysis and many indicated ECD was a need. All principals realized the importance of networking with schools that had already started with the second class to learn from them. As SP1 said, “Yes it’s true we should visit one another’s school and learn from each other about pre-primary”.

That led me to another area, the challenges that ETSIP had identified as likely to crop up. Firstly, I questioned principals on what they experienced as challenges and their responses were very similar to what ETSIP had indicated as challenging areas.

4.5 Challenges

4.5.1 Infrastructure

According to all principals, infrastructure was and is still a major problem. The principals were all adamant that government should build more schools. All the participants further expressed their frustration about infrastructure as the shortage of classrooms, buildings not finished, the double shift at some schools due to shortage of classrooms, the maintenance of buildings and shortage of toilet facilities.

According to SP2, “I had serious concerns at my school, as teachers do not want to teach in the afternoon and with the pre-primary I had to make changes to accommodate them and my teachers were not very happy”. This was further echoed by GT 2: “We tried to do away with the double system and now we have to give a class to pre-primary in the morning, so the government do its part and build more schools”. The focus group shared their concern about the fact that some schools gave up a Grade classes and wondered where that group of learners were being accommodated.

SP2 seemed to be very uneasy about the toilet issue and shared his frustration: “If we take in more learners new toilets should also be added”. This point was further elaborated on in the Queens focus group where teachers stated that toilets, water and sanitation were prerequisites for schools to take in pre-primary, and requested additional toilets especially small ones close to the pre-primary classes or in the classrooms. PPT1 and PPT2 felt that the toilets were far from the classroom and it could be unsafe to send a child alone in case of emergency. It was further stated by GT 2: “We need classrooms suitable for the needs of pre-primary with toilets close to the classes”. This point was further stressed by PPT3 when she said, “All new classes for pre-primary should be build to fulfil the need of pre-primary, e.g. when we are doing art work it can become very messy in the class, as some classrooms are not up to standard”. P 1 shared his opinion about the construction at his school: “I am looking forward to the building to be finished, so that the pre-primary can move into the new building, but the process is a bit slow”.

Many of the participants felt that the government should have made provision for infrastructure before this major move. They felt it was now the responsibility of the schools to deal with infrastructure. They even went so far as to ask why government had not negotiated with the established pre-school for their buildings, because now they had to reduce their intake of learners to accommodate a pre-primary class. They felt it was a matter of planning and time management, as some schools had to give up one Grade 1 class to accommodate pre-primary. Respondents were generally concerned about where these Grade 1 learners were now being taught. AT2 indicated that they had the “Education for All” policy and the state should respond to the call of education and build more schools to ensure access. Document analysis revealed

that the matter was receiving some attention from the ministry. Minutes of site visits by the education planner and Regional Coordinator dated 7/7/2009 showed that the ministry was investigating the possibility of community project buildings near certain schools as an option. While not ideal this would certainly go a long way to providing a solution.

4.5.2 Physical Environment

When questioned about the suitability and safety of the physical environment, principals agreed that their physical environment was not up to standard for the pre-primary learners. Some areas were very stony and rough and needed to be filled in with sand to create safe playing areas. In some instances schools took up the initiative as in the case of Dolls Paradise where SP3 obtained sponsorship for a simulation field. Unfortunately this is a very expensive project. HOD3 said that schools should plan the location of the future pre-primary classes carefully. The PPT3 stressed that learners need secured open spaces where they can play freely and do activities to develop all their muscles as they have to teach them holistically. In the focus group some teachers came up with ideas such as a tree planting project for shade and suggested that it could be used as an opportunity to get together as a team. This was further echoed by GT3: "To get different Grade teams and form a little competition to get our environment up to standard." The data revealed that all participants realized the importance of the physical environment and that they could change it as a team.

Another concern was raised by GT 3 when she stated, "When the pre primary learners are on break they are so noisy and disturb the Grade 1 classes because their break is earlier than the schools break". She felt that if the schools had a better place for pre-primary learners to play they wouldn't have been disturbed so much. PPT2 had serious problems with the big ones who were playing on the pre-primary side and bullying the small ones. She said that they were reprimanded, but just continued. She felt that they had to be all over to watch out for the learners and said, "We feel it's our responsibility".

PPT2 continued and said:

The school should just put a fence around the playground, because I tried with tires and still the big ones are coming. We can't even put up the equipment we got from NIED for the pre-primary class. I need a conducive environment for my learners to play outside as I have to assess their skills and abilities while playing outside.

GT2 similarly stressed that their school had tremendous problems with burglary. SP2 indicated that he would like to have a solid brick wall around the school as people made holes in the fence and gained access especially over weekends. GT2 suggested, "We as the school should reach out to the people around and ask them to keep an eye on our school". This point was strongly commended by AT2 who felt the surrounding community needed to be involved. HOD2 wanted to take the matter up with management. It was noticed that this was the only school without a security guard.

According to SP1, he and his team at Dolls Paradise had created a small secluded area for the pre-primary and had given strong warnings to older learners. He said he had not experienced such problems as he said: "...the play ground belongs to the pre-primary". The school is also fortunate as the community around the school helps is supportive and helps with security.

In the focus groups all participants agreed that principals should promote pre-primary as a community project as they also saw the need for getting the community involved to help protect the playgrounds for the learners. Another view of the lower primary group was to fundraise and to make their environment friendly and safe for the small ones. Some teachers at the schools shared the same sentiment as Dolls Paradise and indicated that they already had fundraised to buy more pre-primary equipment, but due to many burglaries in the past they had to wait for the school to first secure the area. They indicated that parents also contributed toys to the pre-primary class.

4.5.3 Training and how ready schools are to learn

The data revealed that training was regarded as a very big challenge which needed urgent attention. The participants felt that it should be done on a continuous basis, and that the whole

school community should be sensitized to ECD. This shows that the schools are ready to learn, to overcome some of the challenges and to have a better understanding of ECD.

All PPTs indicated that they received training by Regional office as evidenced in an invitation letters from regional office to schools dated 20/8/2010. Three training sessions were given per year and PPTs who received training in the previous years were also invited to attend training in order to discuss various issues pertaining to pre-primary. Unfortunately, the post of the pre-primary coordinator at regional office was vacant and was it difficult to get more information on this matter.

The PPTs further indicated that they were satisfied with the training as it helped them to set up their classes as they had a better understanding of the curriculum and the readiness program. It helped them to develop learners physically, socially, emotional and cognitively and to prepare learners to be ready for Grade 1. However, the PPTs are of the opinion that there is still a need for more training as they experienced difficulty in dealing with children with learning difficulties as mentioned before. They are of the opinion that the HODs and principals should also benefit from such training to understand the principles of ECD better in order to make the process more effective and to avoid any confusion.

The PPTs shared their benefits of training as follows. PPT3 said, "The training helped me to interact and to learn from others as I got more ideas, to be creative, and to be prepared and always supportive towards learners." PPT1 indicated that the training helped them to have a better understanding of the readiness programme. She further indicated that the other teacher was on leave as she was busy with her studies to upgrade her qualification, clearly a positive sign.

Another view was shared by PPT2:

I received training, and it helped me a lot to prepare for my learners, but what disturbed me was that my HOD and principal did not understand or take me seriously about e.g. our playground and this makes me unhappy; so **they** really need training to have an understanding of ECD.

PPT1 indicated that she received a class visit previously from the regional coordinator. Analysis of a PPT1 progress report dated 14/7/2008 bears this out.

The data revealed that three out of the four pre-primary teachers were qualified having upgraded their qualifications at different institutions, such as NAMCOL. The fourth teacher was in the process of upgrading her qualification.

The pre-primary teachers are on the whole satisfied and happy to teach at government schools and admitted that although there were a few shortcomings it was definitely better than being at the Educare centres. According to PPT2, "At the government school our salaries are guaranteed and most resources are available which was not the case at the Educare centres" They also said the fact that the learners were at the school would help them to easily adapt to the environment and make the transition to the Grade 1 class smoother.

The Heads of Department felt that, although the ministry provided training to the PPT, which is three sessions per year, they also needed training. This concurs what the PPTs were asking for, since they felt management did not really understand pre-primary. Some indicated that the principals held them responsible for the pre-primary phase, but to perform their duties effectively they would like to have adequate training. They further stressed that although they were Lower Primary HODs they had no pre-primary education training.

One HOD shared her experience when interviewing for the position of pre-primary teacher: "You know, I had to call the principal of a private pre-primary school and ask her what qualities I had to look for in the person and to give me hints on a few interview questions". The HODs are willing to fulfill their task as long as they receive proper training. HOD3 further commented that the way the pre-primary teachers were taught to prepare lessons was totally different from the way they were doing their preparation, but she could learn from the pre-primary teacher. These uncertainties led to a lot of frustration for the LP HODs.

The Principals shared the same sentiment when they claimed that they had not received any training and that they needed training urgently. SP1 mentioned that he was called in at the beginning stage and did not know if he had received training because to him it was not really training, but only “what to expect when having a pre-primary group,” and that NIED would provide books and equipment such as 25 desks and 25 chairs for every child. In a circular letter dated 19/8/2008 the director of NIED gives the ideal teacher: learner ratio as 1:25 and stipulates not more than 30 learners per class. SP1 further stated that the schools should have proper sanitation and water available to have a pre-primary class.

SP1 argued that the training was not sufficient and called for more training as “We need a more in-depth session to address all aspects of child development and also for the teachers and parents”. This point was further emphasized by SP3:

Training is vital important to understand ECD better and to implement it effectively, because without training, I don't think the system will be successful. We must have a collective view and all should understand it.

SP2 further commented that because of the lack of training the staff had no real sense of ECD. He said “We urge the government to give training to the whole staff, to understand it better”. PPTs in the focus groups felt that these issues should formally be discussed in staff meetings because the staff just see their own classrooms are well decorated and everybody thinks everything is going well. They indicated that they also did not want to complain too much as they did not want to give the impression that they were not coping. They were happy for the assistance they got from the HOD and were also thankful. But they felt it could be even better if the HOD can receive training. PPT3 said, “My previous ECD class at Educare can't be compared to what I have, so I am rather thankful for the new setting at a primary school, but we should try to do things from the start in the right way”. When questioned why the trained PPTs could not inform or share their experiences with the whole staff some PPTs admitted that this could happen if training materials could be provided to the schools. They flagged it as an idea for the future as schools needed to be learning institutions.

The availability of qualified pre-primary teachers was discussed at length as all principals indicated that it was hard to find a qualified pre-primary teacher as ECD was never catered for at the previous Teachers' Training Colleges. They were adamant that the University of Namibia should provide more courses on ECD, and further stated that the whole nation should be sensitized to the importance of ECD. SPP2 put it frankly:

You see we were only used to the term 'kindergarten' which means to us just 'to play', but now that its 'pre-primary one see the value of preparing the learners for Grade 1 and because of that I would like to add another class next year as one can see the changes in learners' performance in Grade 1.

The data revealed that the value and benefits of pre-primary speaks for itself, as SP1 stated: "You just need a qualified teacher who can teach the learners properly." All participants stressed the importance of training and professional development not only for the school but parents as well as the AT indicated that there was a need to train parents as well. Some indicated that they needed to do it as a team and work together. SP2 said that at his school parents received training on reading and it was appreciated by the parents. A communication from NIED revealed that schools were expected to encourage parents to attend training in the Family Literacy Programme, especially the pre-primary and Grade 1 parents. This point was further expressed by SP3 when he stated that they should give respect to this phase as this was actually the most important phase in a child's life as was witnessed in the DVD he had been viewing. Principals were clear that they wanted energetic, creative and committed teachers who were comfortable to work with the little ones.

4.5.4 Availability of resources

All principals revealed that NIED provided most of the pre-primary resources in the form of 25 of each item as the intake of learners was fixed at twenty five per class, e.g. 25 desks, chairs, books, toy kits etc., as stipulated in an official document dated 20/8/2010. They indicated that when the school took in more than 25 learners per class, they had to buy resources themselves. SP2 explained that when he took in more learners because of the outcry from parents, the

school had to buy all the additional materials from the SDF. These are issues the schools have to deal as parents have nowhere else to take their children and it ultimately becomes the responsibility of the principal.

During the focus group at Dolls Paradise the Grade 1 teachers claimed that they had to pay for their own teaching aids and that even if they wanted their classrooms to be painted they also had to pay for it themselves. They argued that the school could provide some of the basics. In cases where schools had the problem of burglary they indicated that the schools should find ways to secure their materials, as they had to replace them. Many of the Grade 1 teachers indicated that they shared some teaching aids especially the readiness materials with the pre-primary teacher as they felt that they would also benefit from her as she was preparing their group for the next year.

4.5.5 Enrolment

The interviews revealed that enrolment was a challenge at some schools. LP HOD3 indicated they had received more than one hundred pre-primary applications and could only take in twenty-five learners. They stated that this was an indication that parents were in dire need, and gave the reason that the government pre-primary school SDF was much less than the fees at the private pre-primary schools. The selection process was done by the enrolment committee with the LP HOD in charged. HODs further indicated that learners were selected on the basis of relatives already enrolled at the school as the school first catered for the community around the school. At some schools, due to the limited space available, they worked on a first-come first-served basis and requested learners' previous ECD/crèche reports, birth certificates and water bills that indicate their physical addresses. Participants shared in parents' disappointment when turned down by the school. The principals emphasised that government should look for alternatives such as to reach out to private pre-schools as was indicated in the planning document from government. The language issue was also highlighted as some schools' pre-primary classes are in their vernacular language or in English whereas Grade 1 made provision for both. As SP1 indicated, his next intake would cater for the English group as the other two classes were in the mother tongue.

4.5.6 Parental involvement

It was difficult to interview one of the parents who served on the school board due to the time, but at some schools the teacher who represented the parents on the school board stood in during the focus groups. It was normally a Grade 1 teacher. Principals perceived parental involvement with mixed feelings, as some principals felt that only a few parents gave the school their full support. They would like parents to get more involved, especially the pre-primary parents. SP3 indicated that “parents contributed toys, blankets and other small things for the pre-primary class and ... attended the official opening of the class”. They further referred to the recent Education Conference where parents’ involvement in the education of their child was heavily emphasised and where parents were strongly reminded of their roles in the education of their children. SP3 felt that “Parents sometimes misunderstood certain concepts and so they need training and education”. SP2 further said:

Parental involvement at my school is of great concern; parents are not involved; they do not come to parents meeting, although they are involved in other ways such as to clothe their kids and some pay school fees, ... We want them to be more involved. At the beginning of the year I called on parents to drop off and fetch their children or send an elder as these children could not walk long distances alone.

At some schools they had a waiting class where the children could wait for parents after school, and could watch a movie. In some cases parents would simply forget to pick up the children. They felt that their duty as principals and teachers never stopped: They saw their work as a 24/7 job. Participants further showed understanding of the socio-economic situation parents face but felt that parents should take up their responsibility. SP1 concluded on a positive note when he remarked that some parents turned up for training on reading at his school, and recommended that schools should organise such programmes to attract parents to schools.

4.6 Socio Economic Issues

Document analysis (ETSIP) revealed that poverty / unemployment and inequalities were still prominent features, and because of that pre-primary was design to accommodate the poor as not all people could afford private pre-schools. Participants were questioned on issues of Pro-poor, the government school feeding programme and Health issues such as HIV/AIDS cases in primary schools under this section.

ETSIP (16/1/2007) further revealed that was responsible for the pre-primary curriculum and that the pre-primary coordinator at the MoE was responsible for the training of the pre-primary teachers.

4.6.1 Pro-poor

Principals were questioned about the issue of Pro-poor as pre-primary was designed to accommodate the poor first. Principals welcomed the initiative, but indicated that they had limited space as schools could take in only 25 learners per class. SP1 indicated that at his school he could take in only 50 learners for pre-primary for the two classes. This is the only school in an area faced with severe unemployment and poverty, and the principal stipulated that they could only work on a first-come first-served basis. He stressed that more schools should be erected in that area. Principals felt that they had a policy of 'Education for all' that stipulates that all children have the right to education. They recognized what the Minister of Education was doing, but strongly agreed that government should build more schools, as learner numbers were reduced to accommodate the pre-primary classes.

The issue of SDF was touched on and principals said that parents who could not afford fees or in cases where learners could not pay SDF due to being orphaned would be exempt from the school development fee (SDF); but they strongly claimed, as SP3 put it, "We also do not want the parents to be excused from their parental duties."

Free education had also been debated at the education conference, but principals were concerned about how schools would sustain themselves and whether government would be able to pay for all services. SP2 argued: “The government should make their contribution as we have to take in children and as a school we also need to survive in heavy economical conditions such as paying for services of computers, printers etc. and many others. We use the SDF to pay for this, but if there is no money coming from parents how can we survive?”

The issue of Pro-poor was evident at Angels Paradise Primary School. SP1 pointed out that some parents contributed and some not, and shared that they really did not have any money to pay, but offer their services instead. He further touched on a very heart breaking issue that even if a parent made a contribution of N\$1-00 it was highly valued. Participants felt that unemployment and poverty were taking their toll, and that they as educators tried hard to support where possible, but this was an issue that should be addressed at another level. They further stated that the communities around the school lived in extreme poverty, and that they as teachers and principals had to deal with this. As SP1 remarked, “We are not rich, but we are rich in the sense that the people are here, and we should answer to their education call, as they will be the leaders of tomorrow”. SP1 stated,

I had to encouraged and motivate my teachers to stay on at the school as they can't take the conditions as they are daily confronted with these extreme poverty cases and it has a psychological effect on us all. Since the 5-6 year old learners were moved from MGECW to MoE they should all come on board and tackle this issue collectively as it is very sensitive issue and a tender age group.

HOD1 and Teachers at Angels echoed that the nation needed training and that some areas needed more social workers, as they had severe poverty, unemployment and children who were orphaned because of HIV/AIDS.

Participants felt that although the children's grant was small it should go to the person with whom the child stayed as there were also irregularities. They suggested that the grant could cover learners' school uniform and hygiene. SP1 further stated “We have to train children

holistically as some are seeing toilet facilities for the first time in their lives at the school as well as the use of electricity.” They felt that teaching was becoming more and more challenging as these were issues that needed to be addressed for all to learn. There was a sincere cry amongst the participants for the need for education for these people, to sensitize them more and to help them overcome the burden of the legacy of hardship and poverty. As AT1 concluded,

How can you eat if the little ones have nothing to eat or have a peaceful night’s rest if you know your learners do not have a proper bed or not even a bed, but a blanket to sleep on?

This leads to the related question of the school feeding programme.

4.6.1 School feeding programme

SP1 indicated that the MoE had introduced a feeding scheme and the data revealed that most schools shared in the feeding programme at school, where porridge was provided during breaks to more than half of the learners at some schools. This programme was much appreciated at schools as GT2 claimed, “You can’t teach a child on a hungry stomach.” The arrangement was made by teachers who are serving on this committee.

According to SP1, he involved the parents who could not contribute to the SDF to prepare the porridge for break time. He and his team established a garden from where they got “veggies to supplement the meal”, and a sponsor for soup “to serve learners a nutritious meal”.

SP2 also served porridge and the workers were helping with the preparation of the porridge. SP1 and SP2 drew attention to the complexity of having the double shift schools as porridge was served for both sessions. They claimed that the responsibilities for teachers and principals were continuously increasing.

4.6.2 Health and Safety, HIV/AIDS

Health and safety served as high priorities in ECD. All participants were very happy about the feeding scheme programme as this helped a lot. Some participants shared their experiences with what they had witnessed in the communities and the conditions learners lived in. For

many it was a heartbreaking issue as they shared that some learners were not well taken care of; they come to school with no school uniform, some do not have a proper place to sleep in, some come with a empty stomach and even without a proper bath. SP1 said, “Ai, it’s hard to see it every day, but we have to be positive and assist our children”. Some blame it on poverty and unemployment as many people in that vicinity are unemployed.

When asked about health related issues SP1 had the following to say:

You see, nowadays parents are positive and come forth; as they are in need, they inform the school about the child’s health status, which is very good, and the law is very clear on that ... You cannot discriminate against such a learner. We are happy that parents trust us and so we can support them.

SP1 further explained that they dealt with HIV/AIDS cases at the school, and shared that “we show love and care”. He referred to a case of a learner they could support because they were aware of the child and fed the child and the family. He claimed, “Today the child is super!”

Principals and teachers were of the opinion that it was better to know and to assist, than to suffer in silence. Principals indicated that they encouraged teachers to be on the outlook, and if the child was not well, to notify the office to inform the parents to take the child to the clinic. They further stressed the important role of the life skill teacher in these cases.

With regard to safety all principals felt they were responsible for the children and no strangers were allowed on the premises during school time. At two schools they had security guards and at the other none as mentioned previously. SP2 stated that they were very fortunate as they had no problems of children being “because of Gods protection.”

In conclusion, participants were very happy about the integration of pre-primary at their respective schools, and believed the interview helped them to look at the challenges through new lenses and called on all parties to join hands and make the integration a success.

In this Chapter I presented the findings of the data collected from different sources. As I indicated at the beginning of the Chapter, the data covers the views and experiences of 3

school principals, 3 HODs, 4 Pre-primary teachers, 3 Grade 1 teachers and 3 other teachers as well as focus groups and numerous documents.

In the next chapter I discuss the findings.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I discuss the findings in terms of themes that emerged in the previous chapter. The themes were drawn from data gathered from a range of sources on the integration of pre-primary into the mainstream primary school and the implications this has for the management of the school. I draw on literature from Chapter 2 to support and analyse the findings.

The main issues that captured my attention from the data are discussed under the following broad headings.

- First is the issue of leadership and management. Here I discuss the principals' leadership approaches they applied to make the integration possible. Here I draw mainly on Fullan's leadership framework.
- Second I look at the implications the integration has for the management of the school. The effects of team learning, system thinking and school vision are discussed against the background of Senge's Learning Organisation.
- Third I look at the challenges the schools are facing and how the schools deal with the complexities and turn these into learning opportunities. Here I draw on Morrison's complexity theory.

5.2 The integration of pre-primary: "It's like planning for a new school"

Schools are complex organisations, ambiguous and slow to respond to change (Bush, 2003, p.24). Two of the schools in the study are double-shift schools, with the added complexity that this brings. To add another layer of activity – pre-primary – obviously amounts to higher levels of complexity and calls for more elaborate and careful planning, especially for principals who have had no ECD training. The implications for management and leadership are therefore

considerable, so much so that one principal remarked that it was like “planning for a new school”. Yet the picture that emerges in Chapter 4 is overwhelmingly positive suggesting that, in terms of the theory underpinning this study, the schools are to a large extent working with this complexity and learning a great deal along the way. This Chapter looks at this in more detail as well as some of the challenges schools are facing.

5.3 “Self-organising systems”

There is evidence that suggests that these schools are succeeding in using their own capacity to transform what they were and in the process showing elements of “self-organising systems” (Macmillan, 2004, p.25). Schools were expected to find additional classrooms for pre-primary and where re-arrangement was not possible new classrooms were built. Some schools chose to decrease the number of Grade 1s to create space. Parents had mixed feelings about this development but, as one principal remarked, “it’s a give and take situation” and it was approved. Some schools showed initiative and creativity by appointing two HODs for Lower Primary, reducing their teaching load so that they would be available to assist the new phase. Principals thus played a significant role in the success of the integration, but more importantly, all stakeholders worked together and remained in constant interaction, an indication of the extent to which schools became self-organising systems and learning organisations. As the schools transformed to adapt new structures were formed and new rules of behaviour adopted because of the interaction among the schools, the ministry, and NIED. In this way systems that may have been “loosely coupled” (Weick cited in Bush, 2003, p. 136) have become tight and functional. These inter-connected relationships need to be developed in order for the system to survive.

As mentioned in Chapter 4 the recent Education Conference in Namibia placed great emphasis on pre-primary which has also helped to bring the matter to everyone’s consciousness.

A measure of the success of the integration is the fact that schools are already envisioning new classes – one already has two – as soon as the infrastructure becomes available. All are adamant, though, that double shifting is **not** the way to go.

5.4 Principals' positive attitudes: "Moral purpose"

In spite of significant challenges as listed in Chapter 4 the data suggests that principals are positive about the integration and the way they perceive their roles as principals resonates with the notion of school as a learning organization. They promote democratic, visionary and teamwork practices to make the integration a smooth process. Principals understand the benefits of pre-primary for subsequent learning as stipulated in the UNESCO Report (2007), that "good quality early childhood care and education programmes are an important foundation for subsequent education". This point was reiterated by the Minister of Education at the recent education conference: "If the foundations are weak, the rest of the structure will not stand for long". The fact that principals speak with compassion and see the value of producing good results links with what Fullan termed as a leaders' moral purpose, as he puts it: "...some people are just passionate about improving and making a positive difference in the lives of others and in this case the teachers, learners (especially the pre-primary) and parents" (Fullan, 2001, p. 13).

To have moral purpose requires leaders to inspire and influence the team to make a difference in the performance of Grade 1 learners. Principals have an understanding of the difficulties the Grade 1 teachers experience with learners who have no pre-primary background; some claimed that it takes time to teach learners the basic things such as 'greeting' and to adapt to the 'new environment'. The fact that children are at the school will also ensure a smooth transition to Grade 1. Accepting what the Grade 1 teachers are complaining about is an indication that principals embrace the needs of pre-primary. According to Fullan (as quoted by Cunningham & Cordeiro, 2002, p. 173), "It is only when bottom-up and top-down forces interact and are mediated in purposeful directions that improvement occurs" and this situation is a case in

point. Principals' understanding and positive attitude contributed effectively to the smooth integration of pre-primary at their respective schools.

5.5 Principals' role in leading and managing the integration process

5.5.1 Principals' multifaceted roles: More learners, more teachers, increased responsibilities

The integration was referred to as the beginning of a 'new era of change': *'More learners - More teachers - lead to increased responsibilities'*. In view of what principals perceived as their role in Chapter 4 one can argue that their roles are multi-faceted, a finding similar to Aipinge's in her study of school clustering. She cites Sergiovanni et al., 2003, p. 200 (Aipinge, 2007, p. 79):

today's principals should find better ways to manage the complexity, ambiguity and expansion of their roles, exceeding their traditional instructional leadership and school management skills identified as core elements of their principalship role.

The empirical data from principals revealed that the integration of pre-primary had many significant and challenging implications for the management of the school. Principals listed concerns such as planning for and the enrollment of a new group, getting a classroom ready, recruitment of a qualified teacher, job distribution and finding a support system for the teacher as none of them had any formal training for this phase. Another challenging aspect they had to deal with was the planning of the double shifts as mentioned previously in Chapter 4. Amidst it all principals indicated that by being proactive and through strategic planning they were able to manage the integration well bearing out Sadek's (2004, p. 65) comment that "managers who are proactive (as opposed to reactive) will suffer less personal pain (stress) as a result of change". All principals are of the opinion that they cannot run the schools as they did 10 years ago, a definite sign of a leader who can manage in a culture of change. This resonates with Senge's notion of school as a learning organization. Senge (2006, p. 4) believes that learning organisations are possible because not only is it people's nature to learn but people love to learn. Senge (2000, pp. 22-23) suggests,

that people are able to learn because leaders in learning organisations are designers, teachers and stewards who lead every member of the organisation in managing the tenuous relationship between vision and current reality.

This corresponds with what the principals see as their role as they are regarded as stewards of a system; they show empathy with the HODs for their working load. They manage the 'relationship between vision and reality' through what SP3 referred to it as 'time management' and 'proper planning'. Principals cited examples such as to redesign the roles and responsibilities of management on the organogram to ensure a 'fair' distribution of work, as explained in Chapter 4. This arrangement gives the HOD authority and a sense of ownership.

5.5.2 Participative management and collegiality

For principals to lead in a new era of change and rapid educational reform they draw on what MBEC refers to as participative management. After independence Namibia's education reform adopted a policy of democracy: "In democratic education for democratic society teachers must be active creators and managers of the learning environment." (Namibia. MBEC, 1993, p. 42).

The data revealed that principals follow an open door policy and are accessible when needed. Evidence suggests that they worked hard to create working relationships, especially with ECD teachers. In primary education teachers usually plan together as a team with a Grade head that takes the lead. The team relies on members to make contributions for success, and this creates a sense of belonging and a need to achieve the desired goals. The integration of pre-primary strengthens the bonds that are already there and some of the HODs are doing well in encouraging especially the Grade 1 teacher to assist. These are elements of collegiality.

Bush describes the characteristics of the collegial model (2003, p75-76) as follows:

Principals and heads are responsive to the needs and wishes of their professional colleagues and acknowledge the expertise and skills of the teachers for the benefit of the learners; they create formal and informal opportunities for testing and elaborating of policy initiative; they emphasize the authority of expertise rather than official authority.

An interesting finding that resonates with collegiality is the trust evident when one of the principals deferred to the LP HOD by claiming “she knows the phase” and “I reduced her teaching load to have more time available to guide and support the pre-primary teacher”. The fact that the group also relies on assistance from each other further resonates with Senge’s ideas of a learning organisation as will be discussed later.

In some cases the HODs also indicated that she learnt things about the curriculum from the pre-primary teacher, another sign of collegiality where the expertise and skills of teachers are acknowledged. In participative management all parties are on a horizontal level and develop strong relationship built on trust and respect as will be discussed later. Principals and HODs also encourage teachers to be Grade heads and to become co-leaders and to give advice on some of the challenges experienced. In doing so a cadre of specialists is formed that is able to influence decisions. Teachers in this model appreciate heads and principals who understand and who are open to discussion. This is what is visible in some schools to ensure an effective integration.

Collegiality and participation extend beyond the organisation. There is innovation from the side of schools as one school was given a playground as a donation, and another indicated that it had secured a donation for a school library. Involving the business community can serve as motivation to others.

As said previously, the role of the principal becomes complex and difficult to understand so making use of participative management has the potential to ease the burden of the principal (Copland cited in Bush 2003, p.79). Participative leadership will increase school effectiveness and can develop a cadre of expertise. According to Sergiovanni cited in Bush, 2003, p.78) participation will succeed in “bonding” the staff together.

5.5.3 Stronger relationships: “If relationships improve, things get better”

The literature stresses that in a time of change relationship are of the utmost importance (Fullan, 2001) especially relationships that are built on authentic, mutual care and trust that reinforces participation of members. The data revealed that the integration of pre-primary forced people to work more closely together. In this case the principal relied on the LP HOD and

the pre-primary teacher again on the LP HOD and the Grade 1 teacher. It was evident that the interaction amongst these people helped to ensure organizational success. The respondents further claimed that there was a need that the whole school could get involved in problem solving as pre-primary was a new phenomenon. Fullan believes that if relationships improve, things get better (2001, p. 51).

To have effective integration and to find solutions principals rely on others as has been reported which contributes to developing relationships. Where good relationships exist members are proud to be part of the organisation. One of the principals told of how, when he wanted to show guests the school, he always started with the pre-primary section. According to Lewin and Regine (2000, p 52):

People want to be part of their organization and when the soul is connected to the organization, people become connected to something deeper- the desire to contribute to a larger purpose, to feel they are part of a greater whole, a web of connection.

The soul in this context refers to the care of others and the manner in which members interact with one another in education, the teachers, learners, parents and the ministry. Principals see the benefits of pre-primary for subsequent learning and have the desire to make it work for the teacher in order for her to develop the learner holistically. This is evident when the principal admitted that he did not know the phase and showed trust in the LP HOD and relied on her commitment and initiative for success as indicated in Chapter 4. These relationships are focused on ideas of empowerment.

The study would argue that principals have to encourage teachers to build strong relationships that can contribute to the purpose of pre-primary. In so doing it encourages the emergence of a culture that is more open and caring. As Moyles (2009, p. 76) stated: "To promote and enhance young children's development and learning parents and practitioners must understand, respect and manage a broader range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds". To 'empower' relationships is to ensure that communication, interaction and rapport are successful for those involved in education and the wider community (Chandler cited in Moyles, 2009, p. 75). She continues that interactions with parents and children must be positive and based on honesty, genuine communication and sincere respect. She further reminds us that teachers, parents and learners

need to learn that it is acceptable to make mistakes and these are an integral part of overall learning. Good working relationships are a two-way process that allows for communication and collaboration (Eyles, 2002 cited in Moyles, 2009 p.130).

5.5.4 Teamwork “I can’t do it alone”

The data revealed that there is a degree of teamwork amongst pre-primary and Grade 1 that indicates a sense of collegiality that can help make this long overdue exercise a reality for the sake of education. The Lower Primary teachers indicated that working in small teams gave them a sense of belonging as they could iron out issues they did not understand as this was how they usually planned. This was evident in the focus group when teachers shared their ideas on the readiness programme and the fact that the HOD now had more time to attend to their issues and assist them. It was also evident when one pre-primary teacher referred to two learners with learning difficulties in her class for which she received assistance from the Grade 1 teacher and the HOD, and where the Grade 1 teacher indicated how she shared her readiness material with the pre-primary teacher, as the pre-primary curriculum was about readiness and the Grade 1 teachers were quite knowledgeable in this regard. One can argue that exciting knowledge can be developed in fostering strong working teams. The other factor is the fact that the LP HOD now had more time to coordinate and structure her team and hence could better attend to crucial issues in pre-primary.

Senge (1999, p.236) defines team learning as “the process of aligning and developing the capacity of a team to create the results its members truly desire”. By applying team learning the group can come up with workable solutions and rely on other’s field of expertise to work towards the future of pre-primary. Miller (2008, pp. 37-40) further indicates that the team “must learn to provide solutions for existing problems, learn from past experiences, avoid the repetition of mistakes, and plan for the future”.

The past history of ECD should serve as an eye opener and encourage people to work as a team. It was evident when one of the HODs indicated that she learnt about the lesson plan from the pre-primary teacher as it was different from the Grade 1s’. This is a good sign as learning occurs

on a horizontal level and is not only top-down. According to Fullan (as quoted by Cunningham & Cordeiro, 2002, p. 173), "It is only when bottom-up and top-down forces interact and are mediated in purposeful directions that improvement occurs". The fact that principals show understanding and have a positive attitude contributed effectively to the smooth integration of pre-primary at their respective schools.

Learning as a team can help the entire school to become a learning organization. As Senge (2006, p. 129) summed it up: "Organisations learn only through individuals who learn. Individual learning doesn't guarantee organizational learning, but without it no organizational learning occurs". In the absence of training for the HOD and principals, basic ECD concepts can be learned from the pre-primary teacher as she has usually received her training and this could be witnessed in what the HOD claimed earlier. As some pre-primary teachers showed enthusiasm and had practical ideas of making the integration succeed, the HOD needed to empower and motivate them to come up with these ideas in the small groups and create in the teachers a sense of commitment toward the aims and goals of the group. Team learning is particularly important as the integration of pre-primary is still a new phenomenon. This notion of teamwork and the sharing in the vision of making the integration work amidst all difficulties experienced are elements of a school as a learning organization as it adapts to contextual changes and demands.

According to Senge (2000, p. 75) effective teamwork can happen through dialogue and he describes it as follows:

During the dialogue process, people learn how to think together, not just in the sense of analyzing a shared problem or creating a piece of shared knowledge but in the sense of occupying a collective sensibility, in which the thoughts, emotions and resulting actions belong not to one individual, but to all of them together.

Dialogue does not only mean that members exchange words but also to "explore complex issues" (Moloi, 2002, p.55). Learning as a team will help teachers, learners and parents to create visions, share knowledge, develop skills and share understanding about pre-primary.

According to Joyes (cited in Clarke 2005, p.103), “Teamwork is needed to create a learning community”. Teachers were adamant that the whole staff and all parents should come on board and assist where necessary, especially in the preparation of the pre-primary playground as this was regarded as very important for the pre-primary phase, or to fence off the area for the safety of the small ones. They even shared ideas on how far decentralization could go to involve school parents to assist in the building projects. Principals referred to various fundraising initiatives where the whole school community participated successfully which are also signs of teamwork efforts, as is the teachers who serve in different committees. These groups are formed and built on trust in one another, commitment and teachers’ expertise and can be used to assist and overcome some of the challenges. Joyes (1999 cited in Clark 2005, p. 105) states that for true school improvement to occur schools must become communities, involving parents and local businesses as well. This is evident in what one principal remarked. He spoke of networking with other schools and the business community in order to learn new skills from others and not to repeat the same mistakes, but to appreciate change.

5.5.5 Knowledge creation: ‘Change equals learning’

Fullan (2001, p. 78) suggests that the creation of knowledge is a fundamental activity of organizational development. Information becomes knowledge only if it takes on a “social life” (Brown & Dugout, 2000 cited in Fullan 2001, p. 78). As one LP HOD claimed they need to learn from each other. In this case only the pre-primary teacher received training and it was confirmed when the LP HOD admitted that she had learnt about the lesson plan from the teacher. There were clear signs that stakeholders work collectively in order to ‘create’ knowledge; individually too, principals put in extra effort – like getting hold of DVDs on ECD - to familiarize themselves with pre-primary. In this way knowledge is created to cope with change.

This links with the outcomes of a study done by Johannes (2009, p. 79) on principals’ perceptions of the National Standards in Namibia. He indicates that principals should create a culture for reading to understand the policy better. Reading - especially of policy documents - can help principals to direct and inspire teachers as leaders who have a rich reservoir of

knowledge, are confident and have the ability to become good problem-solvers. Reading is often the first step in the knowledge creation process.

Fullan (2001, p. 84) further claims that people find it hard to share, but the moment they start to share ideas about issues they view as important, the sharing itself creates a learning culture. Though this is to some extent taking place in the pre-primary group there is an urgent need as mentioned before to spread this sharing throughout the school community involved. As previously mentioned the LP HOD needs to encourage and motivate the pre-primary teacher to share what she has learnt in her training.

Another finding was that schools have BETD graduates who completed Action Research projects as part of their course. In the focus groups this was seen as a strength as those teachers were already favourably disposed to learning and sharing opportunities, and were ready to explore possible ways of how schools with the assistance of UNAM can create and share knowledge on topics pertaining ECD. Participants felt that in the absence of training they could get a few approved DVDs and reading material to start to prepare themselves in the meantime as the HOD wanted to have a better picture of what was expected from her. Another view was given when one principal indicated that they should network with schools who already had a second ECD class, to learn from others' experiences and share success stories.

It would not be true to say that these schools had fully embraced the notion of learning through change but there were indications that this was happening.

5.5.6 Schools' shared vision for Pre-primary: 'More classes to prepare learners'

"A shared vision cannot be dictated, but it should emerge from the people through reflection and communication" (Senge, 1994, p.298-299).

The establishment of ECD classes at the schools in this study has led to the development of strongly shared visions. This is evident in the fact that teachers realized the benefits of pre-primary and that they had new ideas for this new phase. As the LP HOD remarked, "We want our pre-primary and Grade 1 in one block alone, so that they can move and play freely, with a

fence around, as the place where they are now is not sufficient.” One principal remarked that pre-primary added value to the school and he wanted learners with a sound educational background for Grade 1.

One could sense a good team spirit amongst the two phases (ECD and Grade 1) as they took ownership to make it work. Principals indicated that it was possible if all stakeholders can take each other’s hand and “walk the extra mile.” However, when asked if the whole school shared in this vision some HODs and pre-primary teachers indicated that it was more the lower primary teachers that shared in the pre-primary vision, but there was a need to get all teachers involved; they listed examples such as helping with closer supervision during break. Another point that came out in the focus group was the high repetition and failure rate in Grade 1 as stipulated in ETSIP (2005) and participants felt that by having more pre-primary classes to feed all Grade 1 classes might help solve the problem, as all Grade 1 teachers want children with a pre-primary background.

It would be fair to say, then, that the vision for pre-primary did not appear to be fully shared by all members of the organisations. If one agrees with Senge et al. (1996, p.298) that “shared vision can be the vehicle for shared meaning” one would need to believe that all members should have a deeper understanding of the purpose to take ownership and to share collectively in the benefits of preprimary education. The pre-primary teacher can be given the opportunity to share with the staff the deeper purpose of this phase which can serve to change people’s mind; after all, all teachers will in the end benefit from the fact that his/her learners went through pre-primary. The main purpose of the integration of pre-primary into the primary school was to make a difference in the learners’ future learning, so this is an opportunity to restore what was neglected, as one participant indicated in Chapter 4.

If this vision can be shared by all through a clearer understanding it can help to build it on commitment, trust and communication that can serve as inspiration to achieve the desired goals for Vision 2030. To articulate the vision requires the teachers to work as a team and to meet regularly as was done with the HOD and her team to support each other in order to make ECD work well in the school to achieve their goals. A shared vision creates a sense of purpose

that binds people together and propels them to fulfill their deepest aspirations (Senge et al., 1996, p. 298).

Senge (1990, p. 231) believes that many leaders have developed vision and mission statements but visions can only become a living force when people truly believe they can shape their future. My argument is if all teachers understood the importance of early childhood development and the benefits of pre-primary and how it can impact on their teaching and learning, teachers **would** get involved to help the school overcome some of the challenges they experience with the integration of this phase.

Despite this limitation, the picture emerging up to this point augurs well for the future of ECD in the schools I looked at, and there is ample evidence to suggest that leadership is indeed engaging in participative approaches, and that the schools are in the process of becoming learning organisations. But of course there are challenges and these were carefully spelt out in Chapter 4. I shall now look at these again through the lenses of my theoretical framework.

5.6 Challenges

5.6.1 Parental involvement: “If parents can get involved, it might solve some problems”

Parental involvement – or usually the lack of parental involvement – lies at the root of many educational problems, and this situation is no exception.

Parental involvement can be defined as a dynamic process whereby educators and parents work together for the ultimate benefit of the learner. The process involves collaborating on educational matters, setting goals, finding solutions, implementing and evaluating shared goals as well as inspiring and maintaining trust between the home and the school (Van Wyk, 2006, p. 132, cited in Meier & Marais, 2007, p.143).

Participants in this study experienced parental involvement with mixed feelings. At some schools where there was a training session on reading especially for the pre-primary parents it

was indicated to be well attended. At one school where they had a formal opening day for the pre-primary class this too was well attended. Perhaps this is not surprising; Maden and Hillman (cited in Clark, 2005, p. 106) found that it is easier to get parents involved at the nursery stage of their children's education than later in their schooling. Despite these 'success stories' the general sense emerging from the study is that parental involvement and support are sorely lacking.

One can argue that courses can be designed by NIED and UNAM to get parents involved; as SP3 said, "Parents have misconceptions about pre-primary and also need training". I believe that through training schools can create the climate for learning and help parents to undertake the educational journey with their children. The main finding of a study on parental involvement (Niitembu, 2006, p. 98) is that "there are differences in understanding between the school and parents, in other words the whole organization (principals, teachers, parents) has not developed a joint understanding and shared vision". This is perhaps what the principal was referring to as 'misconceptions' and I strongly believe that through training many of these misconceptions could be cleared up and a strong bond of partnership can be formed between schools and parents.

Nutbrown (2011, p. 103) sees parental involvement in early settings as follows:

Parents are children's first and most enduring educators. When parents and educators work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development and learning. Therefore, each setting should seek to develop an effective partnership with parents.

One can further argue that schools need to find ways of involving parents in this crucial stage of their children's learning. In terms of Senge's (1990) shared vision, it seems likely that some schools' vision of ECD does not include the parents.

It is not easy to find answers to the questions of why parents continue to be under-involved in their children's education. After independence the Namibian government has moved from an authoritarian approach to a more democratic system allowing and encouraging adequate parent and community participation in education (Namibia. MBESC, 2004, p.1).

Moloi (2010, p. 1) presents a fascinating analysis:

The external environment in which schools have to operate has become increasingly complex, uncertain, marking an ever-increasing pace, density and depth of change. Among these global changes are some context specific challenges marked by increasing levels of poverty among school communities, high levels of illiteracy and unemployment, high parent mortality rates that increase the number of child-headed families and thus exacerbate child poverty. In the midst of all these challenges are some of the most disadvantaged, ill-resourced schools — those that work without libraries, computer or internet facilities, and in some instances without electricity, working alongside some of the well-resourced schools from the previously advantaged communities. For the researcher to understand how one school can or cannot become a learning organisation, the institutional and social contexts within which these schools operate should be considered if we are to make sense of the magnitude of turning schools into learning organizations.

Her finding of the study is that “schools should become learning organizations” but the challenge lies in the school’s history, in the “institutional and social contexts”. While I focus on socio-economic factors a little later, it is worth noting here that during the focus group interview at one school participants complained about burglary and being afraid of the pre-primary playground equipment; just through sharing how this might be solved the participants formed a committee and suggested approaching the parents around the school to help take care of the school. Another example was cited where parents who could not contribute to the SDF come forth to help prepare the food for the food scheme programme or maintain the garden as mentioned in Chapter 4. It is possible to help parents recognize their parental obligation by contributing in kind to the SDF which is a good start. One principal said that the fact that parents could not pay the SDF did not mean they should be excused from their responsibility.

A study conducted by Hurst and Joseph (2003, p. 104) viewed the coming together of parents and practitioners as ‘sharing education’. They argue that parents can be taught how to help learners’ literacy development, how to recognize early milestones in the child’s development, how to interact with the child. Nutbrown (2011, p.104) argues that children also want their parents to spend time with them:

the more parents know about how children's learning developed, the better position they were in to understand what their children were doing and how they might further enhance learning opportunities for them.

As the World Bank has indicated in a published paper (Mustart, 2002 cited in Pugh and Duffy, 2006, p. 36) there is a shift from the development of planning models to one of developing people. As a result they have commissioned a study of provision for children from birth to primary school. These serious elements needs to be articulated to principals, HOD and teachers and in the absence of training videos can be provided to schools to help the teachers and parents understand what it means 'to care' and 'to educate'.

Previous research cites examples such as having conferences with parents and open parents' day to help parents learn how to support their children's learning and to build mutual trust in each other (Pugh and Duffy 2006, p. 158-162). Some schools had the official opening of the pre-primary and parents were introduced to the pre-primary class and plans for the year.

5.6.2 Training

Another challenge is the need for training. With the inception of pre-primary the MoE indicated that NIED would take responsibility for the curriculum and resources and government (through the regional pre-primary coordinator) the training. As mentioned before, pre-primary teachers received their training and principals and HODs were still waiting. In the absence of training some principals took alternative ways to have a better understanding of it. The urgency for training might be even better understood in what SP3 has to say about it:

Training is vital important, to understand ECD better and to implement it effectively, cause without training, I don't think the system will be successful. We must have a collective view and all should understand it.

It was further elaborated in one of the focus groups when some HODs became emotional as they indicated their responsibility of guiding and supporting the teacher while having no training. They seemed frustrated as they had a fundamental understanding of pre-primary but needed training in the conceptual understanding of it. Teachers who received training also insisted on more training through staff development, to reflect on and share their experiences.

These are the complexities schools are dealing with and although they have the capacity to transform themselves, “they do need external support” (McMillan, 2004, p. 29).

Due to the history of pre-primary it was also hard for schools to find qualified ECD teachers, as discussed in Chapter 2. Principals remarked that UNAM should train teachers in this field as there was a great need and it had good benefits. This idea is shared by Pugh and Duffy (2006, p.170) who argue that “there is a great need for a graduate workforce in ECD with a range of qualifications and experiences and with teachers playing a key role in curriculum leadership”. They are of the opinion that it is worth investing in training as it secures good outcomes for children (ibid., p.17). At this stage it is worth mentioning that ETSIP in its strategic planning document (2011) has made provision for training in this field, but schools have had ECD as from 2008 and are in dire need of training.

Clearly, within the context of striving towards being a learning organisation, lack of knowledge in the core business of educating pre-school learners is a serious draw back.

5.6.3 Infrastructure to ensure access

According to all principals, infrastructure was and is still a major problem. The principals were all adamant that government should build more schools to ensure access for all learners, in view of the number of pre-primary learners that still need to be accommodated in schools. As mentioned under vision, schools appreciate pre-primary and want to feed all the Grade 1 classes and hence they need more classes and teachers to develop learners. At the school that has added a second class the principal was clear that his next class would cater for the English group as the other two classes were in the mother tongue. Another issue that supports the need for more schools is the affordability; as one participant remarked, parents cannot afford private pre-primary. The HOD shared her experience with the enrollment and she indicated that parents were desperate for placements in schools for their children. Schools received equipment from NIED and some tried to create a stimulating environment for learners to play although some schools struggle and clearly need support. Children in ECD settings need a stimulating environment conducive to play to develop holistically. At the schools where the

playground was fenced off the teacher indicated that she had better control over the learners and they could play freely, while at the other two schools playground supervision remained a daunting task. Research has shown that high quality ECD care and education services can contribute to young children's' early learning and future social and academic outcomes. On 3 August 2011 Namibia celebrated 'Education for All' week and the Minister of Education in his speech reminded the nation that 11 years ago, Namibia when signing the UN Convention on the Right of the Child, made a commitment to provide quality schooling for all children by 2015 and to expand learning opportunities for the youth, adults and vulnerable children.

5.6.4 Socio economic issues pre-primary are facing

A forth challenge are the socio-economic conditions that prevail in many regions of Namibia. Namibia, like many other African countries, is seriously affected by poverty and unemployment and there is considerable social and educational inequality. As mentioned in Chapter 2 ECD pre-primary education was previously only for the elite as not many could afford it. The reinstatement of pre-primary, made it possible through ETSIP, was meant to address the many inequalities in the system as mentioned in Chapter 2.

To address the socio-economic issues the MoE through the feeding scheme made food available for learners and interesting to note that parents prepared the food. Some schools took the initiative to establish a vegetable garden which is also maintained by parents. Parents who cannot contribute to the SDF offer to prepare the food for break and assist in the vegetable garden. One can argue that some parents take their obligation seriously, which assists complex schools to try to become self-organising system to survive. The MGSW has a social grant for OVCs and vulnerable children and schools help parents to complete the forms. It arose in a focus group that the process needed to be monitored as schools were sitting with children who did not benefit from their own grants. As one teacher remarked, "How can I work if my learner is hungry and how can I have a peaceful night's rest if my learner has nowhere to sleep?" One can see these are people with strong moral purpose, and some even claimed that these concerns had a psychological effect on some of the teachers. Principals at these schools

argue for more schools to reduce the pressure on only one school in such an area and more social workers to attend to poverty and unemployment. This is evident in what (Gore and Smith, 2001,p 95 cited in Clarke 2005, p.95) says that schools located in disadvantage areas suffer a myriad of socio-economic problems, and have to work harder to improve and stay effective. And for these schools, without training, the situation can become an issue of complexity.

My study revealed that all participants are thankful for what the government is doing by providing food for the hungry through the feeding programme.

HIV/AIDS also emerged as a social issue in the context of training for staff and parents in how to deal with these cases. What was striking was one of the principals reporting: “You know parents are coming forth to get some help.” At the pre-primary level HIV/AIDS manifests as a problem with numbers of orphans, or single parent families. In the context of social problems the psychological effects on teachers can be severe, hence the importance of working in teams and supporting each other. In the absence of social workers schools are called upon to act according to their moral purpose (Fullan 2001, p.13) and be informal social workers.

There is considerable support from government. Through the ETSIP initiative government built schools in the most affected areas. Although it was regarded as a major issue, principals feel that the process needs to speed up to ensure access for all children. One of the schools I visited is an oasis in the desert, a school that is administered by a dynamic person who has a great sense of understanding the people there. He is a leader with moral purpose and role models of this caliber can play a big role in curbing the forces of social injustice. At this school the principal is confronted with many urgent social issues, but the school community has managed to turn some challenges into opportunities. The school has an established garden with parents to supplement the porridge received by government. It involves parents to prepare the porridge for break and has secured a donation for soup to provide a tasty and nutritious meal. It has a small playground for pre-primary. The school has also secured a donation for a library through a foreign partnership, and received an academic reward for good performance in the external examinations.

This kind of resilience is perhaps a hallmark of the learning organization and bears out Senge's (2006) assertion that any school that wants to become a learning organisation will depend upon the school principal's ability to create the context and necessary conditions for that kind of learning to take place and thrive. It is this kind of story that resonates with a line of poetry by Antonio Machado: "It is the walking that beats the path. It is not the path that makes the walk" (p. 155).

In the next Chapter I will summarise the main findings of my research, indicate the potential value and make recommendations as it emerge from the research. Finally I will indicate the limitations of the research.

CHAPTER SIX

6.1 Introduction

This study investigated experiences and perceptions of the integration of pre-primary education into three mainstream primary schools focusing on the implications for management. This chapter concludes the study.

In the first part of the chapter I provide a summary of the main findings drawn from my themes discussed in the previous chapter. I highlight the potential value of my study and make some recommendations. Thereafter I suggest areas that are worthy of further research, present the limitations and conclude the thesis.

6.2 Summary of findings

The study revealed that the history of ECD and the high repetition and dropout rates in Grade 1 was of great concern to many and the recent Education Conference in Namibia put tremendous emphasis on ECD. This brought a greater sense of awareness of ECD and to create a positive mindset to ECD in spite of obvious challenges. Although ECD has serious implications for the management of schools the benefits for subsequent learning began to be realized so that the pilot schools which were selected to integrate pre-primary classes took the task with energy and enthusiasm, in one case even making arrangements for a second pre-primary intake. For all that this innovation brought huge challenges and added layers of complexity schools seem to be succeeding in making full use of their capacity to ensure a smooth integration. This study has revealed that schools seem to have clear understanding of the rationale for pre-primary which no doubt helped to being about the required change.

The study revealed that contemporary leadership and management thinking has also influenced the integration of pre-primary education into the mainstream primary schools. The principle of participative management has influenced the process as principals indicated that

there were consultations with the MoE to discuss logistics, especially space for a pre-primary class; and where there was no space classes were built or different plans were made, such as reducing the Grade 1 intake.

The data revealed that the change in management structure at the school level played a significant role as schools added a second LP HOD whose teaching load was reduced making it possible for the LP HODs to be of assistance to the pre-primary teachers.

Furthermore, a strong sense of collegiality was observed amongst participants as they highlighted the importance of pre-primary education and put emphasis on relying on each other's expertise for the benefit of the learner. In the process stronger relationships were built as they depended on each other, and this can be viewed in what one of the principals indicated that he trusted the LP HOD with the pre-primary as she knew the phase. This also meant that the LP HOD in the absence of training could learn from the pre-primary teacher who had been trained. These are elements that strengthen relationships and gave a sense of belonging and the desire to achieve the schools' goals.

Logistically the MoE ensured that schools receive all the resources from NIED and this made the establishment of these classes possible and much easier. Some did, however, have difficulty in finding qualified teachers, and called on the university to train more teachers in the B Ed Pre-primary phase. This is an indication of systems that work together and it has its benefits.

Because of the above factors the integration of pre-primary was generally perceived in a positive spirit as participants realized that the journey with pre-primary was long overdue and called for authorities to provide more training and infrastructure. For some it was the beginning of a new era as pre-primary education was perceived to have multiple benefits; as one principal remarked: "It is building strength into the system and it adds value to the school".

The data further revealed that principals have empathy for the Grade 1 teachers who have tremendous difficulties with learners who have no pre-primary background. Teachers indicated that it took time to teach learners basic concepts such as greeting and to help them to adapt to the new environment. The fact that pre-primary is integrated into the school serves as an

advantage as the child gets gradually used to the environment for the next year and will ensure a smooth transition into Grade 1. In the absence of infrastructure the Grade 1 teachers started to envision having more pre-primary classes to feed all the Grade 1 classes, because of its benefits, and principals undertook to look for possible ways to secure the realization of that. One can see that visionary leadership and teamwork practices are applied. One of the principals also took the initiative to get the business community involved acquiring a simulation field as a donation; another secured a library for his school.

One of the principals indicated that because of its benefits he had already added a second pre-primary class as they had proof of learners' who had attended pre-primary education's improved performance at their schools. They were even more determined to add a third class to cater for the English group as the other two are in the learners' vernacular. This gave them a sense of ownership as they moulded their own learners to be ready for Grade 1.

In the absence of training two of the principal showed initiative by finding alternative ways of learning about ECD, as discussed in the previous chapter. This kind of behaviour resonates with the notion of a learning organization where members 'create' knowledge and also illustrates strategic and visionary leadership. Furthermore, principals also encourage teamwork practices and clearly showed trust in their HODs who in turn built strong relationships with pre-primary teachers. However, there was a strong sense that HODs and other senior staff should also be informed on ECD so that they could lead and supervise more effectively. In spite of this need, the fact that HODs were learning from pre-primary teachers and that pre-primary teachers were benefiting from the experience and knowledge of Grade 1 teachers provides evidence of knowledge being created to face and deal with change. In this way learning as a team can help the entire school become a learning organization.

The findings reveal that there is a need for training of principals, HOD, teachers and parents as they might have a fundamental understanding of pre-primary but they need to have a better conceptual understanding. The study has shown that all stakeholders need to be informed and feel a sense of ownership for the project to work. This is especially so because there already seems to be a strong sense of interest among parents. The study showed that workshops based

on reading for pre-primary were well attended by parents. Principals felt strongly that parents need to take full responsibility of their children.

The study further drew attention to the scarcity of qualified pre-primary teachers and indicated that UNAM was expected to train more B Ed Pre-primary teachers and also run professional development courses in Early Child Development. Schools with recent BETD graduates who had knowledge of action research were at an advantage as action research could be used to explore issues pertaining to ECD in schools. Recent graduates were also more computer literate and could help to create a website with ECD materials as all three schools had computers.

Infrastructure was identified as a major problem as schools wanted to be able to feed all their Grade 1 classes. Schools also felt the need to expand and called on the authorities to speed up the building process to answer the call for quality education. As already reported, schools were receiving far more applicants than they could cope with. There is evidence of movement here; in one of the schools featured in this study work has begun on four additional classrooms to accommodate pre-primary. It also emerged that pre-primary sections needed to be separated and fenced off to prevent bullying.

As pre-primary was implemented to accommodate and make provision for the less advantaged, principals felt that for one school to deal with so many social issues would become a psychological difficulty for some staff members as they would be faced with many social issues. They suggested more, smaller schools in these areas to deal better with these issues. They felt that these areas needed more social workers to help deal with some of the issues, as these people were heavily challenged with poverty and unemployment.

The principals in this study revealed characteristics of strong leaders who can lead in a culture of change. They were equally aware that 'change equals learning'. It was interesting to meet such interest and compassion, such a strongly developed sense of care for "little ones" who are "so small" and "like to play a lot".

The study revealed that pre-primary teachers who has previously worked at Educare centers were thankful for the fact that pre-primary was integrated into the primary school, and felt confident they could make a difference and prepare the learners for Grade 1 holistically.

The study revealed that the arrangements between the LP HOD and the pre-primary teacher at the single shift school were much better than at the double shift schools. This was because the LP HODs were teaching in the afternoon shifts and were on duty every 2nd week in the morning session. It seems clear that the added complexity that pre-primary brings creates severe tensions in double shift schools.

6.3 Potential value of the study

The fact that the integration had been in practice for the last four years only meant that no previous study of this phenomenon exists. This makes this study a potentially rich source of ideas and issues for future researchers. The relatively small scope of this thesis – being a ‘half thesis – meant that many of the important issues that arose could not be followed up. I list these later in the form of recommendations for future research.

The research also has potential value for other principals who still have to integrate pre-primary at their respective schools as they can learn from these principals’ experiences. I also believe the study could provide the MoE and policy makers with guidelines for how pre-primary is perceived in primary schools and how principals’ leadership and management roles play out in dealing with the integration of pre-primary into mainstream schools. The study can serve as a resource for the MoE, NIED and regional pre-primary coordinators in helping them decide on appropriate topics for pre-primary education training and to support principals and teachers in coping with the change as well as in making people aware of pre-primary education in Namibia.

It can serve as a stimulus for rethinking schooling, and point out ways in which schools can be learning organizations. The study also draws attention to leadership during periods of change.

My study has highlighted democratic and visionary leadership practices and participative management, both of which have helped to make these cases success stories. Collegiality has

also emerged as a valued approach to organisational life, especially when something new is being introduced.

I can also use the study in my place of work. I draw on these findings in my own class preparing my students for their future as primary teachers. My colleagues - especially those in leadership and management, ECD and LP will also benefit from what I have learned.

The study can provide guidelines for UNAM and other institutions which prepare pre-primary teachers. The study signals the importance of creating and sharing knowledge in small teams in order to develop the school as a learning organization. Training in ECD is not enough.

6.4 Recommendations for practice

- Principals indicated an urgent training need as one of the priorities for principals, HODs, teachers and parents. Much of this pertains to information – there is general ignorance of the importance of ECD in the cycle of schooling.
- Participants felt that UNAM needed to train more pre-primary teachers in a special B Ed course for pre-primary teachers. HODs suggested a specially designed course in child development for teachers who were already in possession of a diploma or a degree in the teaching profession, a follow up course in pre-primary education or child development.
- Double shift school teachers and principals need special training. There was little acknowledgement of the complexity of double shift schooling and how this impacts on initiatives such as implementing pre-primary.
- Respondents suggested that all training materials as well as papers that were presented at the conference on pre-primary education be put on the NIED website, or to be recorded and provided for school use. Government needs to find creative ways of making materials available, such as a website for ECD.

- HODs indicated the importance of disseminating information e.g. the names of pilot schools as some teachers do not know of schools in their vicinity who have a pre-primary class that will allow for networking and to learn from others.
- Infrastructure needs attention. The MoE needs to speed up the process of providing facilities and resourced to ensure equitable access for pre-primary learners.
- The playground emerged as an issue of great concern. Younger learners needed to be protected from bullying and abuse.
- Principals, HODs, teachers and parents need training in change management and leadership.

6.5 Suggestions for further research

This study has focused on only three of pilot schools in Namibia. A bigger study would be helpful to the MoE since it would provide a richer and more comprehensive picture of pre-primary in the country.

Research that focuses on the help available to primary school principals would be invaluable. Positive relationships schools and Educare centres close to primary schools, for example, could go a long way to ensuring the success of the project.

An organization development study in which the principles of the learning organization are applied and clarified in the context of integrating pre-primary could be a powerful means of showing schools that they have the capacity to bring about profound change.

As most schools have BETD graduates who went through action research projects at college it would be helpful to build on this knowledge and develop it further in the interest of pre-primary in the schools.

Ways need to be found for increased parental involvement of parents. Research that looks specifically at parental involvement could provide many answers.

Research into how business communities could be involved in supporting pre-primary in schools would be useful. This is a largely untapped resource.

6.6 Limitations of the study

The focus of this study was to investigate principals' and other stakeholders' experiences of the integration of pre-primary into mainstream schools. The fact that I could not work directly with parents is a limitation. Teachers speaking on parents' behalf added valuable insights but the voices of parents are notably absent in this study.

It was unfortunate that all three principals in the study were men. The voice of the woman leader is also absent in the study, doubly unfortunate since the study focuses on pre-primary.

I used the case study method, focusing only on three schools in the Khomas region. My findings are therefore not generalisable to a broader population. Nevertheless, the findings provided me with unique insight into the phenomenon in the three schools and will no doubt prove interesting and helpful to interested readers.

6.7 Conclusion

The integration of pre-primary education into mainstream primary schools is a milestone in the history of education in Namibia. Since it is also a relatively recent development, research of this nature is important and could help the process as a whole.

From the perspective of leadership and management, an important finding of this study focuses on the qualities of a leader with moral purpose who cares enough to make the integration a smooth process for the education of our future leaders. Leaders embrace what was neglected during apartheid, claiming it back for Namibian schools. Significant was the fact that all levels in the process aimed in working together on a horizontal level suggesting a collegiality that contributes to success. I believe that if the challenges can be worked on, there is no doubt that

Namibia will be able to reach the national goal of Vision 2030. It is therefore important that all stakeholders devote their time and energy to making it happen.

“Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other”. - John Fitzgerald Kennedy

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Appendix A: Letter from my Supervisor, Prof H. van der Mescht



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Where leaders learn

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

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17 July 2011

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I am writing on behalf of Ms Richardene Poulton-Busler (student number 00P3943) who is conducting research on the integration of pre-primary classes into mainstream schools. She is a registered Masters student at Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa in the field of Educational Leadership and Management. She has now reached the point where she is ready to collect data to conduct her case study.

Ms Poulton-Busler needs to interview several staff members in management positions as well as ordinary teachers. She also needs to conduct focus group interviews and do document analysis. Her research goal is to establish how the integration process is going at three selected pilot schools. These are schools in Khomas Region of Namibia. The purpose of this letter is to obtain your permission for her to conduct research in your region, to interview selected staff members and be allowed access to key documents. The information she gains will be treated with complete confidentiality and be used to answer her research questions only.

Thank you in anticipation for your permission and support. If you have any queries please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hennie van der Mescht', written in a cursive style.

(Prof) Hennie van der Mescht (Supervisor)

Appendix B: Letter from Regional Director



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA
KHOMAS REGIONAL COUNCIL
DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION

Private Bag 13236, Windhoek, Tel. 264 61 2934329/231948, Fax. 264 61 248251

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

Ms Richardene Poulton-Busler
Masters Degree Student (00P3943)
Rhodes University
Grahamstown

August 8, 2011

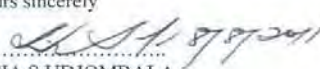
Dear Ms Poulton-Busler

RE: REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS IN THE KHOMAS REGION

I write to acknowledge receipt of a request from your supervisor, Professor Hennie van der Mescht, to allow you to conduct a research in schools of your choice in the Khomas Region. I am happy to inform you that permission has been granted for you to do a research in this region on condition that (a) normal school programmes are not to be disrupted and, (b) participation of subjects is voluntary.

I wish you success in your research and studies.

Yours sincerely


.....
JOSIA S UDJOMBALA
DIRECTOR: EDUCATION
KHOMAS REGION



Appendix C: Interview questions: (Semi-structured)

Principals:

1. What are your views about the integration of pre-primary at your school? Tell me how you deal with it.
2. What are your experiences as principals in leading and managing the integration of pre-primary? Tell me your story
3. What are the challenges you experienced in the process and how do you deal with them-implications on management?
4. What changes have you made to accommodate this phase? Share your experiences.
5. What support did you get from the rest of the staff and the ministry to make it work?
6. What is your view on parental involvement and in what ways do they support this process?
7. How do you as a school/team deal with some of the social economic issues? Poverty, SDF, School feeding program, HIV/AIDS,
8. Do all the staff members share in this idea/vision of pre-primary? Elaborate.
9. What advice or recommendations would you make on the future of pre-primary?

Appendix D: Focus Group questions

1. Share your experience about the integration of pre-primary into the school.
2. What challenges do you experience and how do you deal with it as a team?
3. How do you as a teamwork e.g. pre-primary and grade 1 to make it work?
4. Share your experience with regard to parental involvement in this phase.
5. What support do you receive from the whole school to make this process work?
6. Does the whole school share in this vision?
7. Any recommendations to the integration of pre-primary at your school.

Appendix E: Names of Schools with pre-primary classes

LIST OF SCHOOLS WITH PRE-PRIMARY CLASSES BY 2011

KARAS REGION

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2011	
1	JA Kahuika PS	Michel Durocher PS	Diaz P S x 3	Kronlein P S x 4	Oosterheim J S S	
2	SC Vries PS	Kutenhoas PS	Oosterheim P S	Blouwes P S		# of schools: 29
3	ECS Khoichas PS	Kaitsi !Gubeb PS	Ernst Jager P S	Karasburg S S S		# of classes: 35
4	Mammer PS	Karasburg PS x 2	Nowak P S	St. Joseph P S		
5	D C Frederick PS	Minna Sachs PS x 2	Minna Sachs PS	Scmelenville JSS		
6	JS Herero PS			Adam Steve PS		
7	Geduld PS					

HARDAP REGION

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2011	
1	Daweb JSS x 2	Sonop PS	Oanob P S	Pally Carstens P S		
2	Jakob Soui PS;	Vooruitsig JSS x 2	D.D Guibeb P S	Stampriet P S		# of schools: 27
3	Salmon Boois JPS x 2	St .Joseph's PS x 2	J.T.L.Beukes P S	Matheus Hansen P S		# of classes: 35
4	Kalkrand PS	Ruimte PS x 2	Rehoboth P S	Usib P S		
5	Klein-Aub PS	Origo PS x 2	P.J Tsaitsabi J.S.S	Sonop P S		
6	Schlip PS;	Mariental PS x 2	Sameul Veldskoen	Rehoboth P S		
7	WJD Cloete JSS;	Dr W M Jod PS x 2	Mukurob P S			

OMAHEKE REGION

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2011	
1	Nausanabis PS	Helena PS	Goeie Hoop Ps	Otjiuaneho Ps	Eiseb Ps	
2	Mphe Thuto PS	Drimopis PS	Otjivero Ps	Nossob Ps	Donkerbos Ps	# of schools: 27
3	Nossob PS	Vergenoeg PS	Fisher	Nossob Ps	Naosanabis Ps	# of classes: 35
4	Chief Kutako PS	Blouberg PS	Ben v/d Walt Ps	Rakutuka Ps	Morukutu Ps	
5	Epukiro RC PS	#Khoedawes PS	Nossobville Ps	Rakutuka Ps	Chief H Kutako Ps	
6	C Ngatjizeko PS	Usiel Ndjavera PS	Ggaina Ps	Ben v/d Walt Ps	Motsomi Ps	
7	Omuaturua PS	Motsomi PS	Izak Buys JSS	Trougott Kandoroza Ps	C. Ngatjizeko Ps	

KUNENE REGION

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2011	
1	A Gariseb PS	Musaso PS	Etoto PS	Ehomba PS	Hungua PS	
2	F Frederick PS x 2	Warmquelle PS	Grootberg PS	Oukongo PS	Otjapitjapi PS	# of schools: 34
3	J Basson CS	Orumana CS	Elias Amxab CS	Otjerunda PS	Kephas Muzuma PS	# of classes: 35
4	Kaoko-Otavi PS	Alpha CS	Maarsen PS	Etanga PS	Otjitoko PS	
5	Otjondeka PS	D F Uirab PS	Queen Sophia PS	Ongongo PS	Th.F Gaeb PS x 2	
6	Okanguati CS	E Garoeb PS	Opuwo PS	Otjetjekua PS	Jack Francis PS	
7	Ombombo CS	E Bowe PS		Otjiu PS		

ERONGO REGION

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2011	
1	Omatjete PS	Ebenhaeser PS	Brandberg PS	Ubasen PS	Arandis PS	
2	Otjimbingwe PS	Elifas Goseb PS	Tamariskia PS	Okongwe PS	Festus Gonteb PS x 2	# of schools: 33
3	Elifas Goseb PS	Arandis PS	Namib PS	Otjimbingwe PS	Erongosig PS	# of classes: 35
4	Katora PS (2008)	Tamariskia PS	Ovhitua PS	J P Brand PS	Tutaleri PS x 2	
5	!Oe#Gab PS	Immanuel Ruiters JPS	Otjohorongu PS	Narraville PS	Vrede Rede PS	
6	Brandberg PS	Kamwandi PS	Vrede Rede PS	Waldfrieden PS		
7	Hanganeni PS	Paheye PS	W Borchard PS	Willem Borchard PS		

KHOMAS REGION

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2011	
1	Dordabis PS	Tobias Haiyeko PS	Khomasdal PS	Gammams PS	Namutoni PS	
2	Paulus Gowaseb x 2	Auas PS	Theo Katjimuine PS	Martti Ahtissari PS	Emma Hoogenhout PS	# of schools: 30
3	Bright Hill P S x 2	Berthold Himumuine PS	Namibia PS	Eros PS	Michelle McLean PS	# of classes: 35
4	Havana PS	Groot Aub PS X 2	Peoples P S x 2 classes	St. Barnabas PS	Havana PS	
5	Baumgartbrunn	Hillside PS		Augelkhas PS	Bet-el PS	
6		NISE visually imparied		A. I Steenkamp	Dagbreek PS	
7		NISE hrearing imparied x2		Olof Palme PS		

OTJOZONDJUPA REGION

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2011	
1	Auuns PS	Garr JSS	Mangetti PS	Kalenga PS	Otjozondu PS	
2	Tsumkwe JSS	Tsaraxa Aibes PS	Otjituuo PS	Luiperdsheuwei PS	Okamatapati PS	# of schools: 35
3	Berg Aukas PS	Omulunga Project S	Coblenz PS	St. Isodor PS	Okakarara PS	# of classes: 38
4	Kalengai PS	Okondjatu PS	Rogate PS	M'Kata PS	Ludwig Ndinda PS	
5	Okamatapati PS	Okakarara PS	Kalkfeld PS	Omatako PS	J. K. Kapeua PS	
6	Five Rand Project PS	Roodag PS	Nau Aib PS	Karundu PS	Orwetoveni PS	
7	Kalkfeld PS	Vooruit PS	Okakarara PS	Donatus PS		
8			Osire PS x 4 classes	Uitkoms PS		

OSHANA REGION

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2011	
1	Iviyongo CS	Okatana JPS	Oshihenge CS	Uukwiyuushona CS	Amutanga CS	
2	Ekamba PS	Oikango CS	Afoti CS	Ondiamande CS	Emono PS	# of schools: 40
3	Omusimboti CS	Omagongati CS	Niitembu PS	Elago CS	Joseph Mbangula PS	# of classes: 40
4	Eheke PS	Okaku PS	Akunihole PS	Omaalala PS	Oshikondilongo CS	
5	Ehangano PS	Ounonge JPS	Okashandja CS	Hashiyana CS	Onamutai PS	
6	Ompandakani CS	Olulongo CS	Omukandu CS	Kandjengedhi PS	Panguleni PS	
7	Omashekediva PS	Omeege PS	Onakamwandi CS	International PS	Iidhiya PS	
8	Kanyolo PS		Ediva PS		Oshitayi PS	
9	Olukolo PS				Amunganda CS	

OSHIKOTO REGION

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2011	
1	Tsintsabis CS x2	Onyaanya PS	Mateus Nashandi C.S	Ozizi CS	Niigambo CS	
2	Elambo CS	Engoyi PS	Namutidha P.S	Elombe CS	Helvi Kondombolo CS	# of schools: 41
3	Iihongo CS	Olupale CS	Uuyoka C.S	Onathinghe N. CS	Onashikuvu PS	# of classes: 45
4	Ilmanya CS	Ombili PS	Okalumbu C.S	Onihwa CS	Onamishu CS	
5	Esheshete CS	Oshiyagaya CS	Oshilungi C.S	Oshilulu CS	Okankolo CS	
6	Epandulo CS	Pukulukeni PS	Ontana P.S	Oshalongo PS	Ombahe PS	
7	Onampengu PS	Onyuulaye CS	Hamunyela C.S	Amen CS	Nomtsoub PS	
8	Omuntele PS	Oshinamumwe CS	Huigub P.S	Waapandula PS	King Kauluma Cs	
9				*Francis Galton PS x4		

CAPRIVI REGION

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2011	
1	Ikaba CS	Muyako CS	Bukalo P.S	B. Simbwaye PS	Lusu CS	
2	Isize CS	Schuckmansberg CS	Lusese C.S	G. Matongo PS	Ioma CS	# of schools: 40
3	San Nujoma CS	Batubaja CS	Muketela JPS	Lisele C.S	Kasika PS	# of classes: 40
4	Kongola CS	Lisikili CS	Mukorufu PS	Bito PS	Nakabolelwa CS	
5	Linyanti CS	Mbalasinte CS	IBbu C.S	Sacona PS	Mubiza PS	
6	Malengalenga CS	Ngoma PS	Ioma C.S	Kandunda Kaseta PS	Silumbi CS	
7	Ndoro Memorial PS	Kaliyangile CS	Sibinda P.S	Masokotwani CS	Ikumwe CS	
8		Makanga CS	Singalamwe C.S	Cincimane PS		
9		Kwena CS		Sangwali PS		

KAVANGO REGION

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2011	
1	Kippi George PS	Andara CS	Ncamagoro CS	Kamutjonga P.S	Kaisosi P.S	
2	Martin Ndumba PS	Nyangana CS	Nzinze CS	Mayara C.S	Katjinakatji C.S	# of schools: 45
3	Ndiyona CS	Mupapama CS	Shamangorwa CS	Shinyungwe C.S	Sinzogoro P.S	# of classes: 45
4	Kayengona PS	Nakazaza PS	Mupini PS	Kashira kampendje J.P	Musese C.S	
5	Ndama PS	Karukuvisa JPS	Ncaute PS	Nyondo C.S	Matava P.S	
6	Kasivi PS	Mururani CS	Mabushe PS	Koro P.S	Nkurenkuru J.P	
7	Mangetti PS	Rupara PS	Ngone CS	Muroro J.P	Kaakuwa P.S	
8	Yinsu PS	Tondoro PS	Bunya CS	Uvhungu-vhungu C.S	Simanya C.S	
9	Bravel Mankumpi CS	Mukekete PS	Kahenge CS	Ruuga C.S	Mpungu P.S	

OHANGWENA REGION

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2011	
1	Oshimwaku CS	John Shaetonhodi JPS	Oupili CS	Ekoka CS	Onangwe CS	
2	Enyana CS	Ohehonge PS	Okahenge CS	Oshisho CS	Etomba CS	# of schools: 46
3	Omahahi CS	Amwiimbi PS	Ikelo PS	Onamafia PS	Ohalushu PS	# of classes: 46
4	Omisho PS	Ounyerye PS	Kauluma CS	Oshifitu CS	Oshitambi PS	
5	Omboloka CS	Eputuko CS	Eembaxu CS	Oshikunde CS	St Bathomeus PS	
6	Mwadinomho CS	Onghala PS	Okadia PS	Ohakafiya CS	Ohaingu CS	
7	Penehupifo CS	Onehoni PS	Eexumba CS	Omhandia CS	Onepandaulo CS	
8	Okauva PS	Okatale PS	Omungwelume ps	Onankali North CS	Omundudu CS	
9	Shimbode CS	Okanghudi CS	Onambutu CS	Onduludiya PS		
10		Usko Nghaamwa PS		Oshamono CS		

OMUSATI REGION

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2011	
1	Elondo East PS	Onandjo CS	Omukondo Ps	Nakaheke C.S	Moses Aihalu P.S	
2	Amwaanda P.S x 2	Oshuuli CS	Opawa PS	Eendombe C.S	Ontoko C.S	# of schools: 45
3	Etunda PS	Tjihozu PS	I.K.Tjimuhiva C.S	Oshukwa P.S	Isak Katali C.S	# of classes: 46
4	Omunyele PS	Oshuulagulwa CS	Otamanzi Cs	Etilyasa P.S	Okapya P.S	
5	Dr K Dumeni PS	Amweende PS	Oshipeto Cs	Anamulenge P.S	Etsikilo P.S	
6	Oneheke PS	Onkambadhala PS	Ekundu Cs	Ondetotela P.S	Kampelo C.S	
7	Pyamukuu CS	Onaanda CS	Jerry Ekandjo C.S	Ondeka C.S	Oshaaluwata C.S	
8	Iipandayamiti PS	Omufitu Weelo PS	Ombathi Cs	Ondombe Yohumba P.S	Pendukeni P.S	
9	Uuvudhiya PS	Oshiputu PS	Nuukata Cs	Omindamba P.S	Oikokola C.S	