

**EXPLORING THE PROMOTION OF SAFE  
SCHOOLS IN THE EASTERN CAPE: A WHOLE  
SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT APPROACH**

by

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## **DEDICATION**

To my late grandmother (**Maude Mnyaka**) and my late father (**Gaitus Mnyaka**) for the inspiration to study which they instilled in me.

## **DECLARATION**

Student Number: **3309-071-8**

I declare that **EXPLORING THE PROMOTION OF SAFE SCHOOLS IN THE EASTERN CAPE: A WHOLE SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT APPROACH** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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Signature

(N M Mnyaka)

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Date

## **SUMMARY**

The purpose of this study was to explore the promotion of safe schools in the Eastern Cape according to a Whole School Development Approach. A literature study investigated the factors contributing to violence in schools in the Eastern Cape as well as South Africa, the strategies that can be used to involve all stakeholders in education to combat school violence and the strategies to promote safe schools through Whole School Development Approach. An empirical investigation following a qualitative approach was used to explore the views of learners, educators, principals and teachers of two secondary schools in the Eastern Cape. Data was gathered by observation, interviews, analysis of written documents and analysis was according to qualitative procedures. Findings showed a prevalence of violence in the schools as a result of non-application of the Whole School Development Approach. The implications of the findings of both literature and the empirical investigation are discussed and certain guidelines are provided to assist all stakeholders in education on the promotion of safe schools through the Whole School Development Approach.

## **KEY TERMS**

Safe schools, school violence, Whole School Development, parent development, corporal punishment, drugs, media messages, Imbewu vision, safe- school plans, gang and delinquent subcultures.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

In South Africa, violence has become the issue of the decade. Reports of violent acts perpetrated by children and youth in the home, the school and the community are common including daily media reports about fatal assaults by learners and teachers on school premises. According to Oosthuizen (**Daily Dispatch** 27 February 2004), since 2002 nearly 80% of learners have claimed said they did not feel safe in the vicinity of school gates, toilets or on the school grounds.

When parents send their children to school, they expect that their children will be physically and psychologically safe. Teachers have the responsibility to ensure the emotional and physical safety of learners. This includes protection from all forms of bullying and abuse. However, cases have been reported of teachers accused of abuse, rape and assault of learners. A Medical Research Council survey undertaken in South African schools in 2000 found that more than 30% of female learners had reported being raped at school (**Mail and Guardian** January 9-15, 2004). The report also mentioned incidents of thugs entering school premises wielding guns and demanding money and cell phones from educators and learners.

If these conditions continue in schools, teachers and learners will continue to feel insecure and effective learning cannot take place. For teachers to teach and learners to learn, a safe and inviting educational environment is essential. Moreover, it is the constitutional right of teachers and other employees at schools to be able to work in a safe and healthy environment. Everyone in a school is entitled to a reasonable measure of security with regard to their persons and belongings.

The Department of Education aims to provide a safe environment where all learners can be educated to their full potential. Principals have the responsibility to take care of learners while they are at school. Unfortunately principals and educators frequently lack knowledge about how to deal with student violence and aggression.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

As an educator in a school in the Eastern Cape, the writer has noted the high rate of violence related incidents in schools in the province. Learners may bring guns and dangerous weapons to school and some are drunk during school hours. Learners sometimes lock up teachers or take teachers hostage at gunpoint. Learners challenge the authority of principals and make demands of authorities. Principals and educators have become victims of unruly learners.

The school setting, once a safe haven, is evolving into potentially dangerous place. Schools - urban, suburban or rural - have become war zones. Violence and aggressive behaviour of learners disrupt the running of the school and executing of procedures. Problems, such as juvenile crime and lack of respect for school managers and educators, are serious issues that require urgent attention.

Public concern over escalating school violence prompted the researcher to investigate school violence and the leadership role of the school manager and the whole school community to promote safe schools. Hill and Hill (1994) maintain that a safe school should be viewed as a community issue. The school influences activities throughout the community and should not be regarded as an isolated social structure. Schools form an integral part of a larger community and the principal is an important link in this relationship. Strategies to maintain a safe and orderly environment for learners require complex, comprehensive planning and commitment. The ideal climate for learning cannot be established by a lone leader within a building. Effective, safe schools require wide community care and dedication.

The researcher believes that if the community can re-integrate, unite and support school management teams, the prevalence of school violence can be reduced to a minimum. All stakeholders in education and the wider community should be involved

in promoting safe schools. They should decide on the policies that ensure that the school is a safe, happy and effective learning environment. According to Allen and Martin (1994), education and community are inseparable; there can be no education without community and no community without education. This means that the activities of the community affect the school and the community is affected by the problems found in the school.

This research is considered pertinent to education in the South African context. It aims at providing principals, educators, learners and other stakeholders with information regarding safe schools, school violence and Whole School Development since many are still unfamiliar with these concepts. Moreover, the research suggests strategies to identify causes of violence in schools and ways to prevent it through the Whole School Development Approach.

### **1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The foregoing discussion illustrates the prevalence of violence in schools in South Africa, which hinders their proper running and functioning. School policies and procedures cannot be implemented adequately by management teams if this violence continues. Moreover, school management teams cannot work alone in promoting safe schools. In the light of this, the main research problem and related sub- problems follow: *How can safe schools be promoted in the Eastern Cape according to a Whole School Development approach?*

- What are the factors contributing to violence in schools in the Eastern Cape and other parts of South Africa?
- What effect does school violence have on educators and learners?
- What strategies can be used to involve all stakeholders in education to combat school violence?
- What strategies can be used to promote safe schools through the Whole School Development Approach?

#### **1.4 THE AIM OF THE RESEARCH**

The aim of the study is to describe the way school management teams can promote safe schools according to the Whole School Development Approach.

Currently school safety is a critical concern of parents, learners, educators and the community. Learners cannot concentrate on learning if they are uncertain about their own safety. In order to achieve the main aim, the following objectives are identified.

- To clarify and describe the concept school violence
- To identify the contributing factors of school violence
- To identify the sources of violence in school
- To identify means of involving all the relevant stakeholders in promoting safe schools using the Whole School Development Approach
- To identify government intervention policies that can promote safe schools.

#### **1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN**

The problem is investigated by means of an extensive literature review and an empirical investigation. The latter follows a qualitative approach and data is gathered by individual and focus group interviews. Two secondary schools from the Eastern Cape were purposefully selected and used as research sites for the investigation. Schools where violence is a grave issue and where it is currently being addressed were selected. The researcher carried out a small-scale investigation of the views of learners, teachers, parents and school governing body (SGB) members in these two schools with regard to factors contributing to violence and possible strategies to alleviate school violence through community involvement.

The District Manager's assistance was sought to identify the schools as well as to make arrangements with the relevant principals to accommodate the researcher. An open-ended interview schedule was used to interview one principal, two educators, two SGB members, two parents, two community leaders and twelve learners from both schools. A focus group interview was conducted with learners of both schools to explore the reason for learner violence and to identify their needs. The interviews

were recorded and the content transcribed to form the interview data. The interview data was analysed and grouped into categories. These categories were then grouped together on the basis of similarity to discover emerging patterns. In this inquiry the researcher used triangulation, that is, the use of two or more methods of data collection procedures within a single study (Leedy 1997). The purpose was to cross-validate the collected data to endorse the outcomes of the study.

The results of the research culminated in strategies and recommendations, which could be incorporated in the field of Education Management as well as Whole School Development to resolve issues of school violence.

## **1.6 THE MAIN THEORETICAL VIEW**

The research is framed by the theory of safe schools used in the Eastern Cape Department of Education's Imbewu projects on Whole School Development. According to the Imbewu vision of Whole School Development (Eastern Cape Department of Education), Whole School Development is the complex concept that focuses on the holistic development of all members of the school community, with a view to the improvement and development of all aspects or categories of school life, that is, people, structures, organizations and processes of teaching and learning. The process brings about the learning environment in which the school and community work together to plan for the achievement of their goals. The Whole School Development Approach states that it is the responsibility of the communities, parents, teachers, districts and provinces to assist people to develop a more holistic approach to education than in the past.

## **1.7 DEFINITION OF TERMS**

For the purpose of this study the following terms need clarification:

**VIOLENCE:** Barnhart and Barnhart (1987) define violence as the unlawful use of physical force to injure or damage persons or property.

**BULLYING:** Bullying is defined as a long- term and systematic use of violence, mental or physical, against an individual who is

unable to defend himself/herself in an actual situation. Bullying might be carried out by an individual or a group (O' Moore 1990).

**SAFE SCHOOL:** Stephens (in Van Niekerk, Wynegaard & Stevens 2000:30) define a safe school as a place where learners can learn and teachers can teach in a warm welcome environment, free of intimidation and fear of violence.

**DUE PROCESS:** This refers to the application of rules of natural justice in administrative acts to ensure that they are fair and just. The rules of natural justice consist of the *audi alteram partem* rule (to hear the other side) and the *nemo index in sua causa* rule (no one may be judge in his own case)(Bray 2000a:18).

**CONSTITUTION:** It is a legal document in which the structure and the functioning of organization is regulated. It sets out the legal rules whereby a country is governed. It is the supreme law of the country (Bray 2000b:27).

**SECONDARY SCHOOL:** Secondary education is post primary and pre tertiary education. It succeeds primary education and will, for some successful completers of the secondary course, precede tertiary education. Although the secondary school in general and the senior secondary school in particular are sometimes called the high school in South Africa, we prefer the term secondary education for both the junior and senior phase (Duminy 1991:52). Secondary school learners refer to learners from Grade 8 to 12.

**BILL OF RIGHTS:** It is a bill that sets out the rights of the individual *vis-`a-vis* the state (some times also *vis-`a-vis* other individuals and legal persons) and provides for the enforcement of such rights by the Courts (Bray 2000:10).

**WHOLE SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT:** According to the Imbewu Project (Eastern Cape Education Department 1999), Whole School Development is the vision of a learning community in which the environment is carefully tended to nurture the welfare, learning and development of all. It is an



environment where learning is perceived more as collaborative inquiry and explanation of issues than direct instruction within narrowly defined roles. It encompasses all people of the community and the school becomes part of the community's culture, structures and processes.

## **1.8 CHAPTER DIVISION**

Chapter one deals with the awareness of the problem, aim of research, research design and programme of study.

Chapter two deals with the literature study on the contributing factors and prevalence of school violence internationally, in South Africa and the Eastern Cape. It also concentrates on the strategies to involve all stakeholders in education to combat school violence (Whole School Development Approach). The researcher examines managerial aspects dealing problems surrounding school violence and other factors involved in creating or promoting a safe school.

Chapter three comprises the qualitative research design used in the study.

Chapter four reports on and discusses the analysed data produced by the empirical study of two schools and their communities.

Chapter five presents the following. In the light of the literature reviewed, observations, analysis of documents and interviews, a summary and conclusions are drawn and recommendations made as to how schools can be kept safe from violence.

## **1.9 CONCLUSION**

This chapter has justified the need for the study, given an overview and the background thereof and formulated the problem, aims and research design. In the next chapter, a thorough literature study on the factors contributing to school violence in South Africa and specifically in the Eastern Cape will be presented. The theoretical framework of Whole School Development will also be discussed.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, the contributing factors and prevalence of school violence are investigated internationally, in South Africa and the Eastern Cape. The chapter also explains the concept of Whole School Development. It concentrates on strategies that can be used to involve all stakeholders in education to combat school violence. The chapter examines managerial aspects dealing with the problems surrounding school violence and other factors involved in creating or promoting a safe school.

#### **2.2 PREVALENCE OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE IN SOUTH AFRICA**

Violence has become more pervasive in our schools. Schools violence is reported to be on the rise and is increasing in intensity. Long-term violence in a society can create a culture of violence, which is difficult to eradicate (Harber & Davies 1997:19). Apartheid abolished in 1994 was both a violent system on repression in itself and spawned violent resistance. During the apartheid era political, social and economic policies led to the denial of human rights to black people, such as the rights to education, health and housing. State sponsored violence was a constant feature of the apartheid regime and, for many South African children, schools have long been sites of violence (Sathiparsad, 2003: 99). In the aftermath of the Soweto uprising the police shot and killed some 1 000 learners during 1976/77 and many more were injured and countless more arrested (Christie, 1991:25). According to Christie (1991:25), in 1985 school and university learners became increasingly militant and the South African army was used against its own people. Learners organised widespread boycotts, strikes, rallies and pickets, barricaded streets and waged street battles with the police and army. They burnt property and attacked people they regarded as collaborators. Their slogan was “Liberation now; education later”.

In the current period violence does not only occur at school, communities throughout the whole country are victim to violent acts. According to the Medical Research Council and UNISA's Crime, Violence and Injury Led Programme, firearms were the leading cause of non-natural death recorded by the National Injury Mortality Surveillance System in 2002. This showed a slight increase over the 27, 6 % of gun-related deaths recorded in 2001. Firearms were the leading cause of fatal injury for all ages between 15 and 65 years and 89% of gun-related deaths were due to homicide, only 0.5% were accidental (e-News 2004).

Protests against violence in schools feature prominently at present. These highlight the impact of wider social and economic pressures on schools. A recent study of crime and violence in South Africa showed that children and teenagers are the main victims. They are two and half times more likely to be raped than adults, with rape accounting for 59% of all incidents in which children and teenagers were victims (Wits EPU, 1996).

Some of the most serious violent episodes in schools centered around Kwa-Mashu schools where the deputy principal of J. E Ndlovu High, Mfanufikile Mdabe, was fatally shot during early morning assembly. Since his death, another teacher has been killed in Kwa-Mashu by armed youth and four schools closed as a result of damage caused (Wits EPU, 1996). Observers believe that the conflict began several years ago between returning African National Congress exiles and former United Democratic Front activists. Political differences degenerated into gang warfare fuelled by unemployed youth, scarce resources and demobilized MK soldiers. Responding to the violence, the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) organised a weeklong suspension of teaching which involved 75 schools in the area affecting 80 000 learners (Wits EPU, 1996). On 27 March, 1996 teachers, learners and parents from several schools in Soweto demonstrated outside the office of the Gauteng Department of Education demanding renovations to their school and security fences. Their grievances revolved around robberies and rape suffered by learners and teachers inside the school premises. Similarly, learners from five schools in Ikageng, Potchefstroom, marched to the regional police headquarters on 30 May demanding action against gangsters in the township (Wits EPU 1996).

At Hulwazi High School in Daveyton, East Rand, unlike the previous three instances, the cause of disruption at school sprang from internal school factors. In May, learners set the principal's car alight, smashed windows and vandalized telephones after a list of twelve demands were not given immediate attention. Frustrations were apparently sparked by the state of disrepair of school infrastructure, including the ablution block and alleged sexual abuse and corporal punishment meted out by a teacher to learners (Wits EPU 1996).

Harber and Davies (1997:19) maintain that inequality, poverty, too many weapons in the wrong hands and the willingness to use them are the legacy of apartheid. They state that there is much discussion in South Africa about restoring a culture of learning in schools in the place of the culture of violence that exists particularly in the African townships. They cite a school in Kwa-Mashu, a township just outside Durban, where a reporter and a photographer who were preparing a report on 'Back to school', were attacked and robbed of a camera by youths wielding knives. According to Harber and Davies (1997: 19), 100 Kwa-Mashu learners demonstrated at the African National Congress regional offices in Durban protesting that schools were like a war zone, especially at the time of the year when criminals know that schools are collecting fees. Intimidated by gangsters, many children themselves have begun to carry knives and guns. Some teachers are leaving the profession and others are reluctant to go to school. This is not surprising considering that a teacher at one school was held hostage by learners who were upset at their failure to pass the grade. In Durban, a high school footballer, after an argument with a teacher shot him in the thigh. The boy was arrested and charged with attempted murder and possession of an unlicensed firearm (Daily Dispatch 25 April, 2002). Based on research conducted in the Western Cape, Biestekher and Erlank (2000) reported that the most common crime and violence in secondary schools were vandalism, drugs, fighting, theft and gangsterism. Learners carried weapons, such as knives and guns, and stabbing, bullying, fighting and drug abuse took place in the playgrounds. Some learners felt victimized and powerless; others were afraid of guns and violence. Mutume in (Sathiparsad 2003) reports on a school in Gauteng where teachers have been viciously attacked, learners have been found with guns and young boys and girls were sexually molested.

The Daily Dispatch (27 February 2004) reported that teachers at Kei Road Combined School in the Eastern Cape feared for their lives after a teacher was assaulted in a classroom by a man who is believed to be mentally disturbed. A Grade 10 learner shot a high school principal in King Williamstown in the Eastern Cape three times in the stomach and thigh. The principal apparently reprimanded the boy for coming late to school (Daily Dispatch May 11, 2002). According to the School Register of Needs 2000 Survey, a total of 35,6% of schools nationwide reported criminal incidents in their schools in 1999.

### **2.3 SCHOOL VIOLENCE IN OTHER COUNTRIES**

Estimates of the prevalence of school violence in particular bullying behaviour and violence directed towards teachers have been reported for various countries. In Norway, Olwens (in Day 1997) found that 15% of learners reported that they were involved in bully-victim incidents more than once or twice a term and 7 % identified themselves as bullies. Surveys of teachers in a Canadian province also demonstrated pervasiveness and seriousness of school violence. The survey of 2 286 teachers in Manitoba reported that 47 % had been subjected to abuse (Day & Golench 1997:33).

Recently a teenage youth identified as a student recently expelled from school went on a rampage inside a high school building in the Eastern German city, Erfost killing 18 persons including himself (Daily Dispatch 27 February, 2002). A 22-year old shot the director of a vocational school dead in the town of Tresing, north of Munich in February (Daily Dispatch 27, 2002).

According to Taylor (1996:248), violent incidents are no longer restricted to occasional fistfight in the hallway. Dangerous weapons such as guns and knives appear in schools with alarming frequency. Some learners are victims of sexual harassment by school employees or other learners. O' Moore (1990: 92) asserts that bullying or harassment or mobbing among children is not a new phenomenon, having featured frequently in fiction for centuries. Indeed, it is not uncommon for people to regard bullying as a natural process, part of the inevitable and turbulent process of growing up. The common perception is that by enduring it and perhaps fighting back

boys and girls are toughened up and thus, better prepared for life. Weinhold (2000: 28) concurs with O' Moore, when he states that bullying is the most common form of violence in our society. It is the core of domestic violence, child abuse, workplace violence, hate crimes and rape. Bullying is everywhere and schools are a primary breeding ground. The bullying includes physical aggression, sexual harassment, social isolation, degrading looks (making offensive faces), crude language, spreading rumours and the refusal of someone's requests (De Wet 2005:82).

Reported incidents range from minor discipline problems such as disobedience, teasing and taunting, to obscene gesturing, verbal and physical threats, aggression, bullying, assault (with and without a weapon), vandalism, extortion and gang related activities. Not only does learner violence affect the perpetrator and the victim, but also the entire school body, the staff and the community as whole (Day & Golench 1997: 32).

## **2.4 SOURCES OF VIOLENCE**

Violence is a very complex, multifaceted problem. Although many factors may contribute to why youngsters become violent, no one can say for sure what causes someone to be violent. However, one can pinpoint factors that seem to be related to violent behaviour. Various writers have given different hypotheses on the possible causes of school violence. Some of these are reported in this study.

### **2.4.1 Family factors**

Parents who demonstrate poor self-control and aggressive violent behaviour become role models for their children (Bemak & Keys 2000: 17). According to Hill and Hill (1994: 3) soaring rates of teens giving birth, homeless families, and chemically dependent parents contribute to the desperate plight of children. Unemployment and underpayment escalate tension that fosters abuse, assault and abandonment of children. Teenage mothers with no cultural background to read stories to their children cannot be expected to teach or model healthy ways of controlling anger.

Lysled (in Hill & Hill 1994) states that violence of one family member towards another is an increasing problem. From such unstable beginnings, children learn violent behaviour that is then carried over to school.

Roland (in O' Moore 1990: 110) found that negativism on the part of the mother and father and negative emotions between the parents themselves were strongly related to bullying in children. Guetzloe (2000: 20) states that family factors associated with violent behaviour include inadequate parental management skills, harsh or inconsistent discipline, coercion and non-compliance, limited or nonexistent supervision, parental distance or un-involvement, parental pathology or criminology, and stressful external events (e.g. job loss, imprisonment or separation).

Hill and Hill (1994: 4) assert that a 'second wave' effect of the absence of family structure includes children turning to cults, gangs, drugs or crime for escape, recognition and identity. Because children under 18 years are seldom convicted or are easily paroled in certain legal systems, they are used as perpetrators.

Poor parent involvement in the school and lack of the parental supervision and training are all links in the chain, which leads a learner into violence. Violence in the home can contribute to other problems, which in time alienate the individual from the education system. If violence is practised in the home, the child learns to see violence a means of conflict resolution and may apply it to the classroom or school situation (Bybe in Van der Aardweg 1987: 177). Families may contribute to a student's violent or aggressive behaviour by accepting their child's use of such behaviour as a problem solving strategy (Bemak & Keys 2000: 18).

#### **2.4.2 Community factors**

Isolation, powerlessness and dissatisfaction with the treatment by those in authority were found to be important factors contributing to school violence in a community (Van der Aardweg 1987: 175). Van der Aardweg (1987: 176) further states that prolonged exclusion from a nation's economic and social life is the primary cause of unrest. An exclusion of persons from the mainstream of life is the result of barriers based on a foundation of prejudice.

Certain community and neighbourhood characteristics can programme youngsters proactively for violent behaviour (Bemak & Keys 2000: 19). Poverty is another factor that is linked with violent behaviour. Neighbourhoods with inadequate housing, high unemployment rates, high rates of crime and violence and few or nonexistent community based services such as job training, day care, recreation, and public transport are seen by Bemak and Keys (2000) as contributory factors to violence. According to Friedlander (in Hill & Hill 1994) poverty itself does not generate violent behaviour. It is the combination of poverty plus alienation, the hopeless feeling of despair in an uncaring nation that is the seedbed of hostility, conflict and violence. For disadvantaged children, violence is a way of life and very real and to cope with violence is to survive (Forster in Van der Aardweg 1987). Compelling evidence indicates that parents and communities contribute to the development of problem behaviour by failing to provide the necessary social skills and support by modelling inappropriate behaviour (Van Wyk 2001:196).

### **2.4.3 Availability of guns**

Bemak and Keys (2000: 19) assert that access to firearms is a factor in many youth homicides. The availability of these guns to a youngster who typically employs violent and aggressive encounters may result in a lethal outcome. Increase in gun sales to wider audiences lead to outbreaks of violence. Guns purchased in response to fear are commonly kept at home, fully loaded (Hill & Hill 1994: 8).

### **2.4.4 Drugs**

Researchers agree on a link between alcohol and other drugs and youth violence. Van der Aardweg (1987: 179) maintains that drug abuse and school vandalism and violence go hand in hand. Bemak and Keys (2000: 20) assert that communities where alcohol is easily available to underage youngsters place the youngsters who live in those communities at higher risk for violent encounters. They further state that the use of alcohol makes a person less inhibited and thereby increases the likelihood of violence.



#### **2.4.5 Peer groups**

Peer groups can become a breeding ground for violence. An individual's peer group may place him or her at risk. Van der Aardweg (1987: 179) maintains that the major portion of school learning takes place within the context of the peer group. The peer group commands one's allegiance and individuals find peers are meaningful and necessary to them. He further states that group norms and values are critical to the shaping of perceptions, cognition and action. Coleman and Hendry (1995) indicated that the desire to identify with one's peer group requires adherence to particular norms, behaviour and role performance that impose conformity.

According to Bemak and Keys (2000: 16), the principles of modelling and social learning are at work when youngsters socialise with others who use violence and aggression to achieve desired outcomes. Natalie (in Gable & Manning 1996) states that some learners commit violent acts because they believe their choices in dealing with aggression and violence are limited; learned aggression becomes a viable tool for coping with conflict.

#### **2.4.6 The school**

Schools have been accused of contributing to violent behaviour. Spitznagel (2002) accused American schools of the lack of a spiritual focus. The prohibition against prayer or anything connected to religion in these schools has left the learners without one of the main focal points of his or her life. It creates a void filled by other 'things'. Schools' actual physical space may be conducive to aggressive behaviour (Bemak & Keys 2000). Large numbers of learners in small spaces, a limited capacity to avoid or respond to confrontation, routines and demand for learners' conformity contribute to feelings of anger, resentment and rejection (Gable & Manning 1996: 20).

The quality of school discipline is seen by Van der Aardweg (1987) as an important casual factor, where weak rule enforcement is the practice, disciplinary problems arise. For him, the strict enforcement of rules with a tight classroom control and good coordination among school personnel appear to be important for a safe school. He

further states that if rules are not clear and consistent or are arbitrary, if marks are arbitrarily given and work is obscure, the learners will develop a meaningless view and turn to other values, some of which condone violence.

Bemak and Keys (2000: 18) and Van der Aardweg (1987: 77) postulate that school rules that require rigid and unquestioned conformity may also routinely lead to feelings of anger, resentment and rejection. Gable et al (1996) suggest that problems of aggression and violence often grow more acute when the governance of schools becomes too authoritarian. According to Van der Aardweg (1987: 77) teachers who respond to learners with either authoritarian or coercive behaviours, followed by manipulation and persuasion, reduce the learner's self esteem and often this behaviour results in the persistence of disruptive behaviour. Gable et al (1996) explain that learners' aggressive behaviour often results from flawed educational practices. The school curriculum, whether prescribed by accrediting agencies or more subtle aspects, such as teacher attitudes towards learners, may contribute to or aggravate situations that lead to learner aggression. Alshuler in (Van Wyk 2001:196) concurs with Van de Aardeweg when he argues that the most prevalent forms of violence are discipline conflicts initiated by teachers who oppress, exploit, and fail to recognise learners as persons.

Kuffman in (Goldstein 1997) discussed some ways in which schools may be responsible for some problem behaviours, including insensitivity to individuals, inappropriate expectations, inconsistency in school management policies and procedures, requirements for instruction in non-functional or irrelevant skills, use of destructive contingencies of reinforcement, and/or irrelevant skills, use of destructive contingencies of reinforcement, and/or presentation of undesirable models of conduct.

The principal is also mentioned as a determinant of educator misconduct. In this regard principals who are unable to control staff or who adopt an authoritarian approach lead to resentment. The lack of support of principals by education departments and the power of unions are contributing to ill discipline in schools (Van Wyk 2001:200).

#### **2.4.7 Corporal punishment**

Section 10 of the South African School Act No.84 of 1996 prohibits the use of corporal punishment, but frequently teachers continue to inflict physical violence on learners as they see it as an appropriate tool for discipline. According to Van Wyk (2001:196), the ban on corporal punishment has been met with mixed reactions from both educators and parents. The teachers who used this form of punishment decry the banning of what they perceive to be a handy educational aid and a culturally approved means of discipline.

Cryan (in Maree 2000) expresses the opinion that the administration of corporal punishment conveys the message that is acceptable to express one's feelings of anger by hitting someone else. He further states that children are natural imitators and they learn through modelling, when they experience their parents trying to solve problems by hitting, they do not learn creative ways of solving problems. If their parents beat them, they learn that it is acceptable to hurt others smaller than themselves physically.

#### **2.4.8 Attitudes**

Children are not taught the difference between accepting people as they are and accepting what they believe (Spitznagel 2000: XI). Clinard (in Van der Aardweg 1987: 79) points out that deviant acts occur more frequently in sub-cultures deprived of opportunities. When a person feels unappreciated or misunderstood, or is ignored by others, his or her self-esteem is threatened. This may lead to attacking those who have deprived him or her of self-respect.

#### **2.4.9 The media**

Prevalence of violence in the media is another factor that places youth at risk of violent behaviour. With unsupervised viewing, children annually experience 10 000 hours of television containing five to eight violent acts per hour. Increased cable accessibility increases the presentation of unacceptable behaviour towards women, minorities and the less fortunate in society. Violent messages in movies, videos, advertising, and song lyrics smother children (Hill & Hill 1994:7).

Oravec (2000: 36) concurs with Hill and Hill where she states that the portrayals of violence on the television, in film and in song lyrics have been blamed for adolescent social and emotional difficulties. The Internet, according to Oravec, presents far more than violent imagery, however, it also provides the means for individual to participate in a variety of ways in violent and hate related activities. Without leaving their bedroom, adolescents can join hate groups, write and distribute literature with violent themes, send harassing message, obtain 'how to' information about bombs and guns, as well place orders for weapons. Griffiths (in Oravec 2000: 37) states that computer games provide yet another means through which adolescents can 'act out' various kinds of violent activities. According to Bemak and Keys (2000: 22) some of our most popular and successful movies, television programs and music videos frequently use interpersonal violence as a major theme and typically fail to portray the aftermath of the violence: the loss, grieving, mourning and fear that often accompany a violent episode. Van der Aardweg (1987) maintains that violence is constantly portrayed and little can be done in the school as long as the public permits and condones the output from the media. According to Bemak and Keys (2000: 22), violence is an integral part of the some sporting events with many athletic heroes earning reputations for being tough, no-nonsense people.

Action figures, toys, guns and video games that depict heroes who destroy the enemy are a familiar part of many children's play world. Maree (2000) is of the opinion that learners copy what they see on television, trying to emulate the 'feats' of thugs, criminals and others making easy money.

#### **2.4.10 Judicial system**

In many instances crimes go unreported for a variety of reasons. Hill and Hill (1994: 9) state that dealing with only the most severe cases is an issue of survival for some school administrators and justice systems.

Spitznagel (2000: xiv) states that discipline has been taken away from the teachers. The fear of being sued is on the minds of many teachers. Their fear of being reprimanded for inappropriate behaviour has allowed learners to take charge of the

classroom. He further states the teachers have not been trained to recognise ‘problem’ children. However, even if they were, they might be afraid to identify them because of the possibility of lawsuits or offending other associated rights.

The Bill of Rights in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act No. 108 of 1996 enshrines the rights of all people and affirms the democratic values of human dignity (S10), equality (S9) and freedom (S12). The school must protect, promote and fulfil the right identified in the Bill of Rights.

Political pressure is often placed on principals to maintain low rates of violent behaviour. Learners and sometimes teachers fail to report crimes for fear of retribution. Intimidation and threats effectively subvert due exposure (Hill & Hill 1994: 10). Section 4.3 of the South African Act, No 84 of 1996 states that every learner has the right not to have his or her persons or property searched or his or her possession seized. This makes it difficult for the teachers to take drastic measures in enforcing discipline in schools.

#### **2.4.11 Other factors**

Van Niekerk et al (2000: 29) maintain that secondary schools are predominantly occupied by young people who are at critical development points in their lives where identity formation may be positively influenced. For them the school environment provides an infrastructure and sets of resources to aid and contain interventions with this captive audience.

According to Guetzloe (2000: 21), factors contributing to school violence in society are reporting of violence in the media, availability of weapons, family and cultural influences, drugs trafficking, racial conflict, gang/cut/group influences, failure of the juvenile justice system and inadequacy of the school structure. Conditions that exacerbate violence include crowding, irritating noise, boredom, poorly socialised learners, rewards for aggression, and staff who are either too few, unskilled, or easily intimidated.

## **2.5 FORMS OF VIOLENCE**

Richard Van Acker (in Daniel 1998: 574) states that school violence can be derived into four sub strata: situational violence, relationship violence, predatory violence and psychopathological violence.

### **2.5.1 Situational violence**

Situational violence results from circumstances or environmental conditions such as being forced to conform on a daily basis. Here learners engage in disagreements that warrant punishment no greater than a suspension. Such violence accounts for over 40% of the reported cases (Richard Van Acker in Daniel 1998: 575).

### **2.5.2 Relationship violence**

Relationship violence arises from interpersonal disputes between persons with ongoing relationships. Within the school setting disagreement between friends and acquaintances constitute over 25 % of the disputes and fights reported in school (Daniel 1998: 575).

### **2.5.3 Predatory violence**

Predatory violence is perpetrated intentionally as part of pattern of criminal activity and generally results in personal gain. This type of violence, focusing on gang assaults, coercion or smugglings in and around the school, counts for only 5 to 8 % of violent acts reported under the aegis of the Association of American Schools (Daniel 1998: 574).

### **2.5.4 Psychopathological violence**

Psychopathological violence is the rarest type and yet the most observed. This type of violence results from the use of deadly weapons, which generates a great deal of

media coverage and yet accounts for less than half of 1 % of the reported school violence cases (Daniel 1998: 575).

## **2.6 DEALING WITH SCHOOL VIOLENCE**

### **2.6.1 Whole School Development Approach**

According to Stephens (1994), safe schools do not happen automatically. They require the collaboration and support of learners, staff, parents and the community, and they require sound policies. Stephens (in Van Niekerk et al 2000: 30) suggests that the most appropriate way of dealing with school violence is to design, with all the relevant stakeholders, a safe school plan. These role players include those located in the school and the surrounding community, educators, parents, law enforcement professionals, mental health professionals, health workers, decision makers, business and community leaders and youth serving professionals.

Stephen's view of dealing with school violence is in line with the Department of Education's Imbewu vision of School Development. The Imbewu Vision of a Whole School is more than a collection of learners, educators and managers in classrooms and other buildings situated on a piece of land. It is a vision of a learning community in which the environment is carefully tended to nurture the welfare, the learning and the development of all. It is an environment where learning is perceived more as collaborative inquiry and exploration of issues than direct instruction within and the school becomes part of the community culture, structures and processes. In this way the school and the community are seen as two sides of the same coin or as mutual extensions of one another (Eastern Cape Department of Education 1999).

The Whole School Development as a means for transformation involves all stakeholders in aspects of school development as it takes a global view of the school. It includes all the essential elements of activities undertaken by the school to nurture an environment that is conducive to growth and development. It is built on structures, practices and processes that promote collaboration, communication, self-reliance and collective leadership. It focuses on whole schools and whole communities (Eastern Cape Department of Education 1999).

The Whole School Development concept shows that the development of the school is much more than simply improving buildings or material resources, important as these are, it focuses on the holistic (whole) development of all the members of the school community. It focuses on the improvement and development of all aspects or categories of school life, that is, people, structures, organizations and the process of teaching and learning. It brings about a learning environment in which school and community work together to plan for the achievement of their dreams (Eastern Cape Department of Education 1999).



## **2.6.2 School governance**

### **2.6.2.1 The principal**

Effective leadership and governance are vital in turning a school from a centre of violence and disruption to a place of safety and learning. The key is in firm, fair and consistent discipline. The most often stated answer for the uprising in school violence is the decline or abuse of school discipline. It is said that the school encourages violent reactions in learners by denying them power and rights and by disciplining them in a harsh manner (Van der Aardweg 1987: 177).

Research suggests that problems of aggression and violence often grow more acute when the governance of schools becomes too authoritarian (Gable & Manning 1996). The principal should often be visible to the learners and available to both learners and staff. He or she must be able to initiate and maintain a structure of order in the school. All must be aware that rules exist and that there are consequences for breaking them, that exceptions to rule are few and far between and rewards and punishment are fairly distributed (Brybee in Van der Aardweg 1987).

Bemak and Keys (2000) are of the opinion that it is important for the principal to spend time to get to know the broader community surrounding the school and the people who are respected within that community. The principal must look for community strengths that might be contributing to the problem. In the researcher's view this will help the principal to solve the problems surrounding school violence with ease.

Overcrowding in classes has been cited as another cause of school violence. Gable and Manning (1996) assert that to combat school aggression and violence, officials should seek ways to reduce school enrolment and class size for 'high risk' learners. Care should be given to maintain the physical appearance of the grounds, buildings and classrooms. How to do this in South African schools in general is a challenge.

Gable and Manning (1996) suggest that changing intervention strategies from punitive to more human or preventative measures can result in the school creating opportunities for gang members to transfer their allegiance to more acceptable groups and to involvement in extracurricular activities which provide success beyond the classroom, such as sports activities (e.g., soccer matches).

#### **2.6.2.2 The duties of school governing bodies with regard to the safety of learners**

Learners have the constitutional right to receive education in a safe school environment and the school government bodies have a major responsibility and legal duty to ensure that this right is realised (Squelch 2001: 40). A primary role of school governing bodies is to develop school policy, which includes policies dealing with safety and school discipline. Section 20(1)(d) and Section 8(1) of the South African Schools Act require school governing bodies to adopt a code of conduct for learners after consultation with learners, parents and teachers of the school. According to Squelch (2001: 141) the failure or omission by the governing body to adopt a code of conduct may in law render the public school, its governing body liable for any damage or loss that may arise from such a failure or omission.

With regards to discipline, the school governing body also has a duty to ensure that the code of conduct includes appropriate policies and procedures for dealing with matters such as drug peddling, sexual harassment and other forms of abuse, bullying and possession of dangerous weapons and that these policies should be implemented and revised on an ongoing basis (Squelch 2001: 142). She further states that sexual abuse of learners and inappropriate relationships between teachers and learners are a major concern and it is not only up to the principal and staff to deal with these matters. In the case of criminal acts and acts of misconduct school governing bodies have an obligation to ensure that the rights of learners and teachers are protected and that appropriate action is taken.

#### **2.6.3 Teacher involvement**

Goldstein (1997) asserts that effective teaching is a crucial preventive variable. Possible precipitants of aggressive behaviour for a given learners may include difficult in learning, misunderstanding or no understanding of task directions, instruction that does not match the learners current level of functioning and instruction that is paced too rapidly for the individual. Application of effective teaching skills may prevent feelings of frustration with learning, fear of failure and other possible academically related antecedents to aggression and violence. Effective teaching is likely to lead to greater academic enjoyment.

According to Gable and Manning (1996) several curricular modifications can contribute to a reduction in learners' aggressive behaviour. Strategies of proven classroom effectiveness include the use of advance organizers that highlight the relevant and practical aspects of daily instruction frequent opportunities to review instructions, routine teacher performance feedback, predicated on the principle that being almost right is very different than being all wrong. With regard to curriculum, teachers should strive to eliminate any so-called 'prohibitive prerequisites', academic demands that frustrate student participation, but which can be circumvented without compromising the integrity of instruction. The hidden curriculum is the strongest curriculum for counteracting aggression and violence. The undocumented reactions and actions of the adults in the school environment are influential. Through their daily example, teachers and staff demonstrate acceptance of diversity, respect for each student, strategies to handle frustration and pressure, improvement orientation, and general attitudes towards life (Hill & Hill 1994: 50).

Room arrangements can help to prevent aggressive behaviour. High traffic areas need to be free of congestion, thus reducing potential conflict. Seats must be arranged so that learners can easily see instruction presentation to reduce the opportunity for off-task behaviour (Goldstein 1997).

Quinones (in Guetzloe 2000) argues that teachers and administrators need to develop strategies that take into account the social and cultural backgrounds of their learners and effectively address learners' needs. Misbehaviour is an expression of frustration, anger, or self-blame by learners who feel ignored in school. De Wet (2005:88) states that every child has the right to education in a bully-free school milieu. The first step

in combating bullying is to establish an anti-bullying programme which should involve the entire school community rather than focus on the perpetrators and victims alone.

According to Guetzloe (2000: 24), teachers who work with aggressive and violent adolescent should have (in addition to the normal specific education training in management of learners with emotional behavioural disorders) specific training in conflict resolution, verbal de-escalation, and aggression control (including safe techniques for physical restraint). The training should also include teacher's legal rights and responsibilities.

Sathiparsad (2003: 99) concurs with Guetzloe when she postulates that the goal of the school is to socialise its learners, to teach in a whole range of attitudes, values and assumptions, which prepare people for life within the wider society. Schools are viewed as important and convenient sites for the implementation of programmes aimed at educating learners in non-violent problem solving and conflict management.

#### **2.6.4 Student involvement**

To achieve good discipline, every school must have a written code of conduct. The purpose of the code of conduct is to create a well organized and good school so that effective learning and teaching can take place; promote self discipline encourage good behaviour and regulate conduct.

Hill and Hill (1994: 48) suggest that conduct codes must be established and uniformly distributed to ensure student awareness, address legal ramifications and demonstrate the effort to maintain a safe environment. Review of the code should be sent home to each parent or guardian with sign-off forms complete to verify that the code was received. They further state that class officers, learners' councils and other traditional processes allow learners to have voice in school governance.

According to Van Niekerk et al (2002: 30), a code of conduct for learners and educators serves as an important stepping stone towards fostering a culture of teaching and learning, mutual respect, accountability, tolerance, cooperation and personal development within school and the surrounding environments. They further

assert that these conduct codes may not reduce the incidence of violence and injury, but together with other environmental educative and structural intervention, they create a context in which behaviour expectations are clearly communicated, consistently enforced and fairly applied.

According to Harber and Davies (1997: 157), the involvement of learners in school governance reduces the workload on teachers as they are helped in their non-teaching functions by the learners and discipline problems are reduced as it provides quite a number of learners with experience of leadership and increases confidence and discussion skills generally. Goldstein (1997) assert, that the involvement of learners in the establishment of rules is likely to increase rule following, since learners will be more invested in what they themselves have designed.

Bemak and Keys (2000) stress the importance of schools to provide opportunities for learners to satisfy their need for belonging and self-worth through activities that connect them with other peers and caring adults. Creating more opportunities for learners to achieve success in school both academically and non-academically can enhance a learner's feeling of being connected to the school and community. Receiving recognition for accomplishments for school staff, peers and family members empowers learners in a positive way. It is important that learners be actively involved in organised extra curricular activities. If they are not, their desire for adventure may lead them to embark on destructive adventures which bring them into conflict with the community and later with the law (Catalano in De Wet 2005: 151).

### **2.6.5 Community and parent involvement**

There is an evidence of the relationship between school violence and violence within the community. This is a chicken and egg affair. It is important that the relationship between schools and their communities should be enhanced. Studies of school excellence emphasise good schools with long traditions of working co-operatively with their community. Parents can also make a significant impact in reducing school violence. Safe schools require making communities and families safe. Although schools can be loci of school crime and violence, the origins of the problems driving

such behaviour are not in schools, but in the communities and families from which schools draw their learners (Hernandez 1999).

Bemak and Keys (2000:25) suggest ways in which violence can be dealt with. Some of their suggestions are:

- ❖ Creating new opportunities for parental involvement beyond the traditional parent- teacher conferences.
- ❖ Planning and developing partnership with community service, for example, school-based services and enhance communication and collaboration between school-based and community-based service providers.

Guetzloe (2000: 22) emphasizes the importance of working co-operatively with parents, community agencies and treatment providers in preventing violence in school. Hill and Hill (1994:64) stress that establishing cultural programmes and celebrations not only enriches the curriculum, but also extends global understandings for learners involving community members from diverse cultures in school activities and humanises the differences in our society.

According to Van Niekerk et al (2000:31), parents should be encouraged to participate in the educational process. Possible activities include helping supervise hallways, playgrounds, toilets or other trouble spots, classroom visitation and participation in special events (e.g., sport and recreational activities, fundraising efforts) is also to be encouraged. According to the authors, school violence and injury tend to decline when responsible adult supervision is consistently present.

Hill and Hill (1994:64) assert that when parent's attitudes toward school improve, children's views of school are enhanced. Regardless of cultural and economic background, children whose parents become involved with the school make great achievement gains.

## **2.7 CONCLUSION**

This chapter involved a literature study focusing on the prevalence of school violence in Eastern Cape, South Africa and other countries; the factors that contribute to school

violence and the strategies for the prevention of school violence according to the Whole School Development Approach. The concept Whole School Development Approach has been discussed in relation to dealing with school violence. It is evident that violence increasingly prevails in schools and that the roots of violence are complex. Violent acts among learners are related to several factors, including dysfunctional families, substance abuse, extreme poverty, exposure to violence in the media, certain educational practices, prevalence of weapons and ineffective legal systems.

It is also clear that fighting school violence is not the task of the principal alone; it involves all stakeholders in education. Learners may not be able to exercise an interest in a school filled with violence. The school should provide an environment, which is safe and conducive to learning. School should operate in a violence-free atmosphere. Learners need to feel safe and secure from all forms of abuse and physical danger if they are to develop to their full potential.

In chapter three the research design for a small-scale case study consisting of two schools situated in the Eastern Cape, is described.

# **CHAPTER THREE**

## **RESEARCH DESIGN**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, the qualitative research design used in the empirical investigation is described briefly. Its role will be discussed and its importance will be indicated within the context of this study.

### **3.2 A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH**

Leedy (1997:155) defines qualitative research as follows:

Qualitative research is a broad term that encompasses a variety of approaches to interpretive research. Yet, each approach can be distinguished from the others by its unique focus, research methods, strategies for data collections and analysis, as well as specific ways of communicating results.

According to McMillan and Schumacher (1993:37), qualitative research is distinguished from quantitative design by using *inter alia* a case study in which a single case is studied in-depth. This could be an individual, one group of learners, a school, a program or a concept. Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit (2004: 3) concur with McMillan and Schumacher when they say that the distinction between the qualitative paradigm and the better-known quantitative paradigm lies in the quest for understanding and for in-depth inquiry.

A qualitative research design involves only a small sample for an in-depth investigation with the aim of understanding and description. Instead of using statistics, words are used in the analysis and interpretation of results. Glesne and



Peshkin (1992:6) maintain that qualitative methods are generally supported by the interpretive paradigm which portrays a world in which reality is socially constructed, complex and ever-changing. Qualitative research seeks answers to questions by examining various social settings and the individuals who inhabit these settings. According to Henning et al (2004:3), qualitative studies usually aim for depth of understanding rather than quantity. Studies are bound by the theme of the inquiry and cannot usually be extensive unless there is a large team of investigators. Qualitative researchers focus on individual social actions, beliefs, thoughts and perceptions. Data are collected in interacting with research participants in their natural settings.

In the case of this research, two schools were selected and participants chosen. The format of the case consisting of two schools is in the following paragraph.

### **3.3 IMPORTANCE OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH**

Qualitative research has been considered appropriate for this study because it enabled the researcher to gain understanding and insight into the causes of school violence in Eastern Cape and how this can be addressed to promote safe schooling. The researcher employed data collection methods, which involved both individual and focus group interviews with stakeholders from both schools, such as learners, educators, parents, community leaders, school governing body members, the principals and an Education Development Officer. The researcher wrote field notes while doing interviews to document participants' responses or any other observations which were made while conducting interviews.

The study fits the qualitative mode in the following ways:

- ❖ It occurred in real life situations with regard to schools in the Eastern Cape.
- ❖ It aimed at understanding reality using an interview guide to guide interviews with stakeholders to discover the meaning that they attached to this particular problem. The researcher used individual and focus group interviews to interact with the participants.

### **3.4 SELECTION AND SAMPLING**

There are various strategies of enquiry that are used by qualitative researchers which differ, depending on the purpose of the study, the nature of the research and the skills and resources available to the researcher. Qualitative researchers seek out groups and settings where the process to be studied is most likely to occur. Sampling and selection of a site is to a large extent influenced by the strategy of enquiry used by the researcher. In this study, the researcher used criterion-based selection and purposeful sampling.

#### **3.4.1 Criterion-based selection**

Patton (1990:176) maintains that criterion-based selection requires cases for study that meet some predetermined criterion of importance. For the purpose of this study, a small-scale study consisting of two secondary schools from the Libode district of the Eastern Cape was conducted. These secondary schools from the Eastern Cape were purposefully selected and used as research sites where the investigation took place. These were schools where violence is a grave issue and where it is being successfully addressed. The researcher consulted the District Office to help in the selection of the schools.

#### **3.4.2 Purposive sampling**

In purposive sampling, researchers handpick the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgement of typicality. In this way, they build up a sample that is satisfactory to their specific needs (Hoberg 1999:169). For the purpose of this study, stratified purposeful sampling was used where the population was divided into strata, principal, educators, learners, community leaders, school governing bodies, parents and Education Development Officer.

Participants were selectively chosen in order to obtain candidates who would be able to provide necessary and rich information regarding the objectives of the study.

Taking into account the principles of criterion-based selection and stratified purposeful sampling, the participants were chosen from the following secondary schools:

School A: School A is a secondary school which previously showed a strong prevalence of violence. This has since been prevented or curbed by employing *inter alia* the Whole School Development Approach. The principal in this school involved all the stakeholders in education to combat violence. The community around the school is involved in school matters and there is a sound culture of teaching and learning. Learners are well behaved.

School B: School B is a secondary school where school violence has not been successfully prevented and the school has not implemented the Whole School Development Approach for various reasons. The principal has not been successful in involving stakeholders fully in school matters.

Participants comprised:

- 12 learners in both schools A and B respectively (24 in total)
- 2 educators in both schools A and B respectively (4 in total)
- 2 SGB members in both schools A and B respectively (4 in total)
- 1 principal in both schools A and B respectively (2 in total)
- 2 parents in both schools A and B respectively (4 parents in all)
- 2 community leaders from both schools A and B respectively (4 in total)
- An Education Development Officer of the circuit in which schools are situated.

In total approximately forty-one participants were interviewed by using individual and focus group interviews.

### **3.5 DATA COLLECTION**

The main data sources in this research essay were both individual and focus group interviews and document analysis of school policies. The following forms of interviews have been used: the in-depth individual interview and the focus group interview. The research interview, according to Cohen and Manion (1994:271), has been defined as a “two-person” conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information. It is a specific method in that it involves gathering of data through direct verbal interaction between individuals, with whom successful rapport and trust have been established to ensure that data gathered is trustworthy.

Two schools were used as research sites where interviewing took place. A is a school where school violence was rife but this has since been prevented through the Whole School Development Approach, whereas school B is characterized by school violence and its prevention has not been successful. In school A, a clear School Development Plan (SDP) is the key to gaining ownership by the entire school community in curbing violence (Du Plooy and Westraad 2004:35).

Access to the schools was not a problem as the researcher is an educator at a school in the area. The researcher negotiated to the schools verbally. A letter asking permission from the District Office was written. The researcher explained to the informants that she was a student researcher and was looking for information on the research topic. The importance of the research and of their contribution was stressed.

The researcher explained the purpose of the research to the principals. Participants were informed that their responses would be used for research purposes only, all the information would be kept confidential and anonymity of informants would be strictly maintained. The researcher assured the participants that the research reports or findings would be made available to them for scrutiny to check that no false information had been added which might implicate them negatively. In each school the researcher approached the educators and learners and explained the purpose of the research and how the participants had been selected. The main method of selecting participants was purposeful sampling as the schools were also purposefully selected. According to Patton (1990: 169), the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study. Information-rich cases are those from

which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance. The learners' names were chosen by the teachers from class registers of Grades 10 and 11. They selected those learners whom they knew would give comprehensive responses and provide rich data for the study.

Prior to interviewing the participants, the researcher visited the two schools chosen for the research and spent two weeks at each of those schools, observing the human interaction and physical environment and talked to the principals and educators. This was done to put the schools in the research context. Arrangements were made with identified schools, parents, learners, educators and principals. Some of the preparatory work included locating and enlisting the co-operation of the participants, motivating participants and convincing them of the importance of the research and clarifying any concerns or confusion that might arise that the researcher might not have anticipated.

### **3.5.1 Interviews**

In this study, individual interviews were conducted by means of semi-structured questions, where the participants could give their own comments and arguments while responding to questions.

Both principals were asked to fill in a biographical questionnaire (cf Appendix B) Interviewing was done by using a structured open-ended interview schedule with different sets of focus questions for principals, educators and learners. Focus group interviews were conducted with the learners. The selected participants were called to one classroom during lunchtime where the researcher explained the data collection process. The researcher explained to the participants that she would conduct a face-to-face interview with each of the participants and appealed for honest responses to the questions. She told the learners not to be afraid of the audio recording of their responses as this would help the researcher to gather information accurately. The same procedure was applied to the educators and principals. Participants were encouraged to express themselves freely while responding to open ended questions asked by the researcher (cf Appendix C).

### 3.5.2 Observation

Marshall and Rossman (1995) describe observation as a systematic noting and recording of events, behaviour and artefacts in the social setting chosen for study. In this study the researcher also carried out observation to gather data. The literature reviewed has already indicated that contributing factors to school violence may be linked to the conditions of school buildings, the layout of school grounds and a lack of security measures on the grounds and the surrounding environment. Thus, it was considered necessary for the researcher to visit and observe the environment for at least two weeks in each school. Observation provided knowledge of the context as well as specific behaviours and incidents which could be used as reference points for the interviews. Observations also presented raw evidence of what is happening in the schools regarding school violence.

In the context of the study, observation entailed evaluating the physical setting where the research was conducted as well as the surroundings within and outside the school grounds. The researcher's observations included dress codes, walking routes of learners, entry and exit points, locked and unlocked gates, security, safety, possible hiding places, flow patterns of learners outside the buildings, fencing, traffic flow patterns around the school, safety of learners flow to buses, taxis and cars, playgrounds, parking bays and student behaviour (cf Appendix A). In order to make meaningful observation notes the researcher drew up an observation schedule as follows:

- ❖ Entry points and exit points
- ❖ School grounds: fencing, parking bays
- ❖ Buildings: classrooms, offices, staff rooms
- ❖ Dress code and student behaviour

Substantive field notes were made and reviewed at the end of each observation session and interview. These notes were recorded as soon as possible after observation to improve detailed recalling and recording of what has taken place

during observation. The format used for the field notes allowed the researcher to find information easily.

### **3.5.3 Analysis of documents**

According to Glesne and Peshkin (1992:52), documents corroborate one's observations and interviews and thus render one's findings trustworthier. In this research, the researcher asked the principals of the two schools for documents such as school policy, school code of conduct for learners and educators if they are available and documents on school safety and how the School Management Teams and teachers deal with school violence. Documents that were analysed included school policy, school code of conduct and management tools such as time book and log book.

## **3.6 DATA ANALYSIS**

Data collected from the interviews, observations, and documents were transcribed. Glesne and Peshkin (1992: 127) maintain that data analysis involves organizing what one has seen, heard and read so that one can make sense of what one has learned. Working with the data, one creates explanations, poses hypotheses and develops theories by linking the stories of the participants with one another and detecting certain recurring patterns. Henning et al (2004: 6) assert that, in analysing data one does not count how many times something happened, but tries to find a pattern in and a reason for the way in which something happened.

Patton (1990: 36) refers to data analysis as the process of bringing order, by organising what is there in patterns, categories and descriptive units. In analysing data, one works through the data to arrive at a conclusion in which one tries to answer the initial research questions and achieve the purpose of the study (Henning et al 2004: 6).

### **3.7 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF RESEARCH**

In order to ensure validity and reliability in this study, the researcher used a triangulation of data methods. This refers to the use of two or more methods of data collection. The use of multi-data collection methods, according to Glesne and Peshkin (1992: 26) and Patton (1990: 187) contributes to the trustworthiness of data. In this study the researcher used two types of interviews and document analysis. Furthermore, she crosschecked her raw data with participants.

A strong chain of evidence among research questions, methodology, raw data and findings strengthens the validity of a study. The researcher also reflected on her own role, with regards to factors which could influence the research, such as, class, status, gender and language.

#### **3.7.1 The role of the researcher**

Regarding status, the researcher is a lecturer at the Eastern Cape Technikon and was previously a deputy principal in a neighbouring school. Thus, she experienced no problems in gaining access to the schools. However, certain participants particularly the principal of School B was not entirely comfortable with the two-week observation at the school. She was also reluctant to allow access to policy documents, but later agreed to the researcher's requests. Some parent participants were concerned that the researcher was a policewoman looking for drugs or weapons. They had mixed feelings about her visit to their homes and were fearful of talking about their learners' expulsion and suspension from the school. They were initially afraid that the researcher had come to arrest the children or to investigate the crimes committed by them.

Regarding language issues, the researcher invited the School Governing Body members, parents and learners to use their mother tongue, Xhosa. The interview guide was translated into Xhosa. In terms of gender, some male respondents did not like to talk to a female who was a stranger about their problems. Possibly false information



was given in response to questions about the availability of guns and drugs in their area. Gender was a disadvantage in this regard.

However, the following researcher characteristics reduced any possible bias. The researcher is a local educator who is also a member of the same broader community as the participants and she is proficient in the vernacular spoken by participants.

### **3.8 CONCLUSION**

This chapter looked at the research design and methods. It included research design, qualitative data collection methods, selection and sampling, data analysis, reliability and validity in research. Interpretive and qualitative methods have been explained, viz. observation, interviewing and analysis of written documents. The next chapter will concentrate on the discussion of data.

# **CHAPTER FOUR**

## **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

Chapter three of the study described the research design. This chapter focuses on the context of the schools investigated and presents the findings of the analysis of written documents and observational and interview data. The researcher used three qualitative data-collection methods which are participant observation, interviewing and analysis of written documents.

### **4.2 DATA ANALYSIS**

#### **4.2.1 Observational data: Description of schools and their environment**

The following observations were noted in the schools visited:

School A is situated in a rural area, which is not far from the town of Libode. The school can be placed in the middle socio-economic income bracket. Most youth have a higher level of literacy than learners in other schools and most parents in this area are generally employed and able to sustain the lifestyle of a lower middle class community. Parents who are not employed are involved in community projects. There are a number of recreational activities available. There is a community hall and a stadium. The school has well built structures with science and biology laboratories, and a computer room with fifteen computers. The school grounds are well maintained and properly fenced. There are two gates: a large gate for cars and a small gate for people on foot. All these are locked. A security guard is hired to guard the gates and the school property. The administration block is not far from the gates and the classrooms. As you enter the gate, you pass the administration block which houses the principal's office, the deputy principal's office, the clerk's office and the staff room. Flush toilets are provided and are about ten meters away from the classrooms. The

school is attended by 600 learners and 25 educators including the school management team. The school offers Grade 10 to Grade 12. There are ten classrooms. Learners wear school uniform and are neat. Teachers dress smartly and males wear ties everyday, except for Wednesday, which is designated a sports day. Learners and teachers are always punctual for school. There is no roaming about during teaching time. During break, learners are not allowed to leave the school premises and the school has a small tuck shop. Taxis that transport learners are not allowed merely to drop off them; taxi drivers must make sure that learners are inside the school premises. Taxis and cars are not allowed to hoot nor play loud music near the gates. The atmosphere at the school is conducive to good learning and teaching. Safety measures are in place such as the hire of security guards and tight security on the school premises.

School Governing Body members regularly visit the school to check the smooth running of the school. They help with school activities by organising fund-raising concerts. The school offers five types of sports: rugby, soccer, volleyball, netball and softball. There is a big, well-maintained playground. Recreational facilities are available though not entirely adequate.

School B is situated in a rural area far away from the town of Libode. The community is characterised by poverty, low levels of literacy and few educated people. The school can be placed in a poor socio-economic group. Most people in this community do neither work nor pay school fees for their children. Many learners do not attend school because they do not have a school uniform and transport is limited. The school has 700 learners with 22 teachers, including the school management team. The school offers Grade 8 to 12. There is no biology and science laboratory, no computer room and a poorly stocked library - some shelves are quite empty.

The school is not properly fenced; an old fence lies on the ground. There are two entrances, one from the west and one from the east of the school. Gates are not locked, therefore outsiders can trespass easily. The school has no security guard at the gates. The principal's office and the staff room are not far from the classrooms and the main gate. No safety measures are in place in this school and the school property is not safe.

The school buildings are not conducive to learning and the safety of the learners. Some classrooms have broken windows and doors. A tavern or shebeen is close to the school. It was reported that some teachers and learners disappear from the school to visit the tavern. There are no proper playgrounds; learners use the open veldt nearby the school. Only three types of sports are offered: soccer, netball and softball. The toilets are far from the classrooms and are dilapidated. The School Governing Body members seldom visit the school. They only come to the school when there are meetings and their role is not clear.

The above descriptions of both schools are tabulated in table 4.1.

**Table 4.1: Observations**

	<b>SCHOOL A</b>	<b>SCHOOL B</b>
Physical Environment	Well built structures Administration Block Staff Room Grounds well maintained and properly fenced School garden is available Electricity and piped water	Most of the classrooms dilapidated Broken windowpanes and doors. No adequate playgrounds Grounds not well kept Small flat is used as a staff room. HOD's do not have offices - use staff room Schoolyard not properly fenced No school garden
Physical Resources	Science, biology laboratories available but not sufficiently equipped. Library available. Still trying to establish a media centre Computer lab with fifteen computers.	No laboratories Library is available but few books. One computer in principal's office
Human Resources	600 learners 25 educators	700 learners 22 educators
Uniform	Learners always in full uniform Very neat	Learners wear uniform, but some wear torn jerseys and skirts
Learner Behaviour	Obedient Attend school regularly Always punctual for classes Co-operative in class	Ill-disciplined Very noisy Disobedient Some smoke in the toilets during break Some boys leave classroom while the teacher is teaching Poor attendance

		Playful and troublesome.
Classroom Situation	Classrooms sufficient. No over crowding	Classrooms overcrowded
Teacher Behaviour	Always punctual for school and class Strict but friendly to learners	Most punctual but others chronically late for school Some do not observe periods - not punctual for classroom duties Two male educators often disappear during school hours.
Teacher Dress Code	Smartly dressed	Some are smartly dressed; others wear jeans and running shoes
Morning assembly	Morning prayers conducted by the School Management Team Learners late for assembly are punished	Morning prayers conducted by any educator who arrives early and feels like doing so No punishment for learners who come late for assembly

#### 4.2.2 Written documents

The following documents were analysed: school policy with schools vision and mission statement, school code of conduct, log books and time books.

##### 4.2.2.1 School policy, vision and mission statement

In both school A and B policy documents which included vision and mission statements were available but were not comprehensive. The mission statements did not use language that reflects the context in which the school and the Department of Education wish learning to take place. The mission statements were restricted. They expressed long-term goals and did not state short-term goals clearly. There are no clearly defined goals that guide ongoing school improvement activities. Both schools lacked a school admission policy and school religious policy.

In school B, important regulations such as procedures to be followed when parents wanted to speak to educators, disciplinary measures for educators and learners who absent them from school were not included in the document. Management tools like the time book and logbook were not signed. There was no visitor's book. Procedures to be followed by educators who wish to take leave wish to lodge complaints were not written down. Records of achievements and excellence, suspensions, expulsions and punishments and minutes of parents and staff meetings were not available.

School A has a school safety plan which is a written document developed by staff members with input from school governing body members and some parents. The school has established specific screening procedure to monitor visitors and potential intruders. Every visitor is required to sign in at the gate, stating his or her specific business. Visitors who claim to be learners' parents or guardians are screened to ensure that they are genuine. Learners are not allowed to carry weapons to school. Any learner found carrying weapons or any unfavourable item is subject to disciplinary inquiry.

#### **4.2.2.2 Code of conduct**

Copies of the code of conduct for learners were available in both schools but they did not include rules that deal with school safety and security and the consequences for breaching safety and security. Provisions for school safety should include safety rules and procedures that deal with matters such as school outings, criminal acts such as vandalism and assault and procedures for conducting searches and seizures. These documents did not specify what constitutes serious misconduct of a learner, procedures to be followed in the case of a disciplinary hearing, procedures to be followed in the case of suspension as a correctional measure, procedures to be followed in the case of suspension with the view to expulsion, due process to be followed in a hearing nor the role of the principal, the investigator, the disciplinary committee and the school governing body.

#### **4.2.3 Interview data**

Data from interviews was collected from school principals, educators, learners, school governing body members, parents, community members and an Education Development Officer. Table 4.2 depicts the seven groups of participants.

**Table 4.2: Participants**

PARTICIPANTS	SEX		TOTAL
	MALE	FEMALE	
Principals	1	1	2
Educators	2	2	4
Learners	12	12	24
SGB members	2	2	4
Parents	2	2	4
Community members	2	2	4
Official	0	1	1

#### **4.2.3.1 Unitising interview data**

This procedure involves placing conceptual labels on discrete happenings, events, and other instances of the phenomenon. Each unit or concept should be the smallest piece of information about something that can stand by itself and still be meaningful without any information being added to it. Each unit could be a phrase, sentence or paragraph (Strauss & Corbin 1990: 61).

The researcher used copies of the data to do the unitising. The purpose was to find recurring words, phrases and topics in the data, which could be refined into categories in order to explore the relationship between them as well as any emerging patterns and to obtain understanding of the causes of violence and strategies for violence prevention in schools according to Whole School Development Approach.

To unitise the data the chunks or units of meaning in the data were identified by carefully reading through transcribed interviews and observation notes (Maykut & Morehouse 1994: 128-129). In order to be useful for analysis, a unit must be understandable without additional information, except for knowledge of the researcher's focus of inquiry (Lincoln & Guba in Maykut & Morehouse 1994:128). Each unit of meaning was compared to all other units and subsequently grouped with similar units of meaning. These groups of similar units formed initial categories that



were refined by writing a rule for inclusion in each category (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994: 134-138).

#### **4.2.3.2 Categorising interview data**

Categorisation refers to the grouping of similar concepts as well as separating unlike concepts (Strauss & Corbin 1990: 65). For the purposes of this study, the researcher looked for recurring regularities in the units of data and grouped them into categories. The units of data from the interviews with principals, educators, learners, parents, school governing body and community members were grouped on the basis of similarity.

#### **4.2.3.3 Patterning interview data**

Patterns refer to repeated relationships between properties and dimensions of categories (Strauss & Corbin 1990:130). Patterns that comprise similar categories are grouped together with regard to the presence of violence in schools, factors that contribute to school violence and the strategies that can be employed to curb violence in schools.

#### **4.2.3.4 Analysis of key themes**

The following key themes evolved from the responses of the participants and are clustered according to the themes. These were derived from the interviews with the participants from school A and school B. Responses are given without any editing.

##### **a. Presence of violent acts in the school and community**

All the participants said that there are violent acts in the school and the community. Violence in the community affects the school. This is illustrated by the responses from the participants in school B where school violence is rife. The principal in school B said:

There are regular reports from the educators and other staff members  
Including the neighbouring community around the school premises

Violence in society also spills over to school. Certain community and neighbourhood characteristics can enhance youngsters' proclivity for violent behaviour (Bemak & Keys 2000:19). This point is highlighted by a parent in school B who said:

There are fights here, at night we always hear gun shots.

Our houses are burgled during day and night.

A learner from school A said:

Members of gangsters used to threaten us with knives on our way to school.

They would chase us and shout at us and call us by names.

Educators from school A where violence used to prevail and has been curbed agree with the learner, stating:

We used to experience acts of violence like rape and the use of weapons is very common in this school.

Sometimes boys from outside used to carry guns and knives around the school and go around demanding money from learners.

When the educators from school A were asked about the presence of gangs in and around the school, one said:

No, not at present, but we used to see gangs around the school who were preventing learners from attending classes. They used to play around the school, smoking dagga, playing cards and dices near the school gates and shouting the learners.

When asked about the prevalence of violence in her school, the principal of school B commented:

Innumerable violence in this school, vandalism, bullying, stabbing, rapes around school premises.

Educators from school B were also alarmed by the presence of violence in their school. One remarked:

Yes, there are violent acts in this school. Learners are stabbed by others inside and outside the school premises, more especially when there are activities in the school.

Another educator added:

They come to threaten our learners. They sometimes threaten teachers with knives. If it's month end they will wait for us there in the gates. One time they entered staffroom and searched our purses and stole money and cell phones.

The above responses clearly indicate that the presence of violence in schools. According to these responses, the most common crimes in these schools are vandalism, drugs, fighting, rape, theft and gang membership, carrying weapons such as knives and guns by learners, bullying and victimisation of learners. The School Register of Needs Survey (2000) reports that criminal incidents include burglaries, assault, stabbing, rape and other serious crimes. The report further states that a total of 35.6% of schools nationwide reported criminal incidents in their schools in 1999 (Department of Education 2000: 77).

#### **b. Factors contributing to violence**

Guetzloe (2000: 21) maintains that the factors contributing to school violence include violence in society, the reporting of violence in the media, availability of weapons, family and cultural influences, drugs trafficking, racial conflict, gang/cult/group influences, failure of the juvenile justice, and inadequacy of the school structures. Conditions that exacerbate violence include crowding, irritating noise, boredom, poorly socialised, learners, rewards for aggression, and staff who are either too few, unskilled or easily intimidated.

When the participants were asked about the possible causes of violence, they explicated many factors. Some of these follow:

##### *i. Non-involvement of parents in school matters*

The responses from the participants indicate that parents do not want to get involved in school matters that affect their children's education. The principal from school B had this to say:

I'm trying to organise a meeting with parents, SGB and community members but it seems as if I'm not succeeding. Much as they are expected to be involved in each and every school activity they deliberately not concern themselves much about our activities because they claim that it is the teachers only responsibility to look at the welfare of the activities of the learners. So they are not interested, they say that they pay school fees so that the teacher can take good care of everything that is happening in the school.

ii. *Lack of co-operation between community and school*

The educators interviewed in school B expressed concern about the community members who do not co-operate with the staff. They stated that whenever they are called for any reason or when there are problems about their children, they do not come to school. An educator said:

Some do not see the need to come to school; maybe they think that we will make them pay for those offences, for instance, if the learner has broken a window, or has stolen money from a colleague the parent will not come at all. Even when they are invited to attend meetings they do not bother themselves.

Another added:

The attendance is very poor, parents do not attend these meetings, they say they are too busy.

In contrast, a school governing body member said that the teachers do not want to be involved in matters regarding formulation of school policies. He explained:

We're not involved as such, we're called only when there are problems or teachers want us, SGB to tell the community about the money that is needed at school.

Parents can make a significant impact in reducing school violence. The mere presence of adult figures in school can translate into improved student behaviour. An important model is presented to learners when they see parents interested enough in education to volunteer their time (Hill & Hill 1994:65). According to the researcher, educators cannot be expected to act alone to reduce the prevalence of violence and its future occurrence. Thus, partnerships between schools and community should be developed for concerted, sustained and comprehensive prevention efforts to occur. Guetzloe (2000:22) emphasises the importance of working cooperatively with parents, community agencies in preventing violence in schools.

*iii. Gangs and delinquent subcultures, drug and alcohol abuse and availability of weapons in the community*

Increase in gun sales to wider society, substance abuse and gangsterism lead to outbreaks of violence in schools and the community. Bemak and Keys (2000: 20) assert that a community where alcohol is easily available to underage youngsters places the youngsters who live in those communities at higher risk for violent encounters. They further state that the use of alcohol makes a person less inhibited and thereby increases the likelihood for violence.

Most participants had observed an emergence of gangsterism and delinquent subcultures in rural communities. The availability of guns and alcohol abuse has taken its toll. In the words of one parent:

There are an increasing number of gangs and thieves recently in this community. There was a time not so long in which an incident that involved a group of young men who went to a shebeen wearing masks, took out knives and guns and started shooting and demanding money from the customers.

Educators in school B explained that boys in this school smoke tobacco and dagga. One remarked:

Oh, definitely. Boys here smoke hectically, some smoke in the toilets, you find that even girls join them.

According to the respondents, boys who have left school pose a threat to learners and community members. A parent said:

No, these 'tsotsis' hit our children; they demand money and shoes from them. These thugs come from this area, madam, they are our children, they are born here, it's those who dropped out of school.

Safe schools require making communities and families safe. Although schools can be loci of school crime and violence, the origins of the problems driving such behaviour are not in schools, but in the communities and families from which schools draw their learners (Hernandez 1999). Thus, youth participating in violence in their community do not limit such behaviour to outside the school.

*iv. Lack of jobs and poverty*

The researched schools are situated in poverty stricken areas and the majority of people are not working. People are in dire poverty which is linked with violent behaviour. Communities with inadequate housing, high unemployment rates, high rates of crime and violence are contributing factors to violence. Friedlander (in Hill & Hill 1994) asserts that poverty itself does not generate violent behaviour; it is the combination of poverty plus alienation, the hopeless feeling of despair in an uncaring nation that is the seedbed of hostility, conflict and violence.

Participants indicated that a lack of jobs and poverty contribute to violence in the community and school. An educator in school B explained:

Most parents are not working so I think their children are seeking means of survival. They want to get money for buying food. Another problem it's the scarcity of jobs, people have nothing to do. There's too much poverty here, of which I think causes this violence.

Chisholm (2005:207) agrees with the above when she mentions the interrelated sets of hardships imposed on poor rural communities by poverty, unemployment, inadequate access to basic services such as water, good roads and electricity and lack of education skills.

v. *Lack of security*

As indicated earlier, school B is not properly fenced, there are no safety measures in place, buildings are dilapidated and some classrooms have broken windows. As a result educators felt that they are no longer safe in the school. An educator explained:

Part of our fence has been taken away by vandals and we're not safe at all. We do not have security guards because the government is reluctant to pay for such services.

Participants stated that if the buildings can be improved and the school fenced, violence can be prevented. An educator maintained:

The school buildings need to be improved so that thugs do not hide in the dark corners of the buildings. Security should be tight; we need to start by fencing the school yard. Poorly fenced schools and neglected buildings attract thugs to schools.

vi. *Non-application of the Whole School Development Approach*

As indicated in chapter 2, safe schools do not happen automatically. They require the collaboration and support of learners, staff, parents and the community and sound policies. According to Imbewu Vision of Whole School Development (Eastern Cape Department of Education), Whole School Development is the concept that focuses on the holistic (whole) development of all the members of the school community and the improvement and development of all aspects or categories of school life, that is, people, structures, organisations and processes of teaching and learning. It is a process that brings about a learning environment in which school and community work together to plan for the achievement of their dreams. The Whole School Development Approach states that it is the responsibility of the communities, parents, teachers, districts and provinces to assist people to develop a more holistic approach to education than in the past.

The responses from the participants in school B suggested that the Whole School Development Approach is not working. The principal has this to say:

They are taking everything negatively. When I call them for instance to come and sort out problems we are experiencing with their children, they come and fight with the teachers.

She continued:

We established a disciplinary committee here comprised of the principal, HOD, SGB, SMT and some of the community members and it seems as if it is not working because we are not speaking the same language.

Parents in this school agreed that they do not work well with the school. One of them commented:

When teachers called me I did not go there! I was afraid of the teachers.

But a community member was of the opinion that they need to work together with teachers to stop violence. He said:

No person can stop violence alone, violence is a community problem not a school problem, violence emanates from the communities and spilt over to schools. We as community members have to fight violence if we want a violent free society. We should confiscate guns used by our children and report every crime to the police.

Another one advised:

Violence will never stop here unless we, communities work with the teachers at school, we need to avail ourselves to school whenever there is a need, and also attend meetings but most community members show no interest.

In school B the application of the whole school development approach has failed. The principal calls parents to school only when there are problems. There are no open days where parents and community members and the district office can be invited to be addressed about the developments in the school.

vii. *School safety and the application of the Whole School Development Approach*



School A is a school where violence prevailed in the past. Yet violence has been curbed through the application of the Whole School Development Approach. The principal involved all the stakeholders in the management of the school. Whenever there are problems he makes use of the parents. He explained:

I met with my SMT, then we called in the SGB and called in the parents of the disruptive learners. The meeting was very much productive, the problems were resolved and came to the conclusion that children with such behaviours would undergo therapy from time to time, including the advice of the highest psychological practitioners.

The principal continued:

It was also suggested in the meeting that in order to curb violence, the community in the vicinity of the school should help me by reporting any occurrence of violence that has any connection with the school, they should also not hesitate to inform the police.

When the researcher asked the educators what did they did to alleviate school violence, one answered:

We tried to inform the community and the police as well. We worked with the community, SGB together with the police. We made work easy by involving the whole community.

The educators stressed the importance of involving learners in school governance. One explained:

Learners should be involved in school activities and by all means avoid the violence.

Harber and Davies (1997:157) concur with the educators when they say that the involvement of learners in school governance reduces the workload on teachers as they are helped, especially in their non-teaching functions by the learners. Moreover, discipline problems are reduced as this provides quite a number of learners with experience of leadership and increases confidence and discussion skills generally. Goldstein (1997) assert that the involvement of learners in the establishment of rules is likely to increase rule following, since learners have a greater investment in what they themselves have designed. WSD planning ensures that everyone in the school

will know the SDP to assist in developing a common understanding of the school safety policy (Du Plooy and Westraad 2004:35).

In terms of security of the school the educators described what the school has done. They explained:

We fenced the school for security reasons, there is one entrance now, we hired a security guard, installed an alarm system in the office.

A school governing body member assured the researcher that working together as a team can stop violence. He remarked:

We are working with the principal, teachers and parents to stop this violence, we deeply involve ourselves in the fight against violence in this school.

When asked what other actions or measures should be taken to work with the school in fighting violence, another school governing body member suggested:

We could hire proper security guards to be on the alert 24/7 here in the school. We should also fence the school, we also need phones and alarm systems. A tuckshop is needed so that learners will not go outside the school during break time.

When community members were asked about their role in the fight against violence, they said:

We have organised a Community Policy Forum in this location. The aim is to uproot any form of violence. We take turns to guard the school property against vandalism.

Furthermore, community members were asked about the importance of working together in uprooting violence. One commented:

Yes, the teachers there at school need to be assisted in disciplining learners. Those learners are our children we cannot blame the teachers for their misbehaviour. If we do not discipline our children the teachers will be unable to teach them effectively. We need to support the teachers by all means.

From both the observations and the interviews, it strongly emerged that the application of the Whole School Development Approach is a vital tool in creating safe schools in the Eastern Cape. School A is trying its best to be in line with the Imbewu Vision of Whole School Development, which states that Whole School Development as a means for transformation involves all stakeholders in all aspects of school development. It takes a global view of the school and includes all the essential elements of activities undertaken by the school to nurture an environment that is conducive to growth and development. It is built on structures, practices and processes that promote collaboration, communication, self-reliance and collective leadership. It focuses on whole people, whole learners, whole educators, whole managers, whole schools and whole communities (Eastern Cape Department of Education 2003).

#### **4.5 CONCLUSION**

This chapter dealt with the discussion of the data with the focus on the context of the schools researched, data gathered and analysis. The findings discussed emerged from the analysis of written documents and observational and interview data.

The next chapter presents the key research findings and highlights certain implications in relation to those findings. Based on the findings of this research, recommendations are made.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

# **DISCUSSION OF KEY FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

As stated in chapter one, the research problem addressed in this study was as follows: “How can safe schools be promoted in the Eastern Cape according to the Whole School Development Approach?” The final chapter summarises the research and presents key findings and their implications in relation to the research problem. Finally, recommendations for the promotion of safe schools are made. The recommendations are based on the suggestions noted in the literature review, the needs of the participants who were identified during the interviews, observations done in schools as well as the viewpoints of the researcher.

### **5.2 SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS**

In chapter one, an exposition of the nature of the problem which the researcher identified was given. The aim of the study, research design and programme of the study were also outlined in this chapter. The main focus of this study was stated as follows: *How can safe schools be promoted in the Eastern Cape according to a Whole School Development Approach?*

- What are the factors contributing to violence in schools in the Eastern Cape and other parts of South Africa?
- What effect does school violence have on educators and learners?
- What strategies can be used to involve all stakeholders in education to combat school violence?

- What strategies can be used to promote safe schools through the Whole School Development Approach?

Chapter two involved a literature study focusing on the prevalence of school violence internationally, in South Africa and in the Eastern Cape; the factors that contribute to school violence and the strategies for the prevention of school violence according to the Whole School Development Approach. The concept of the Whole School Development Approach was discussed in relation to strategies to cope with school violence. The Whole School Development concept shows that the development of the school is much more than simply improving buildings or material resources, important those these are. It focuses on the holistic (whole) development of all the members of the school community and the improvement and development of all aspects or categories of school life, that is, people, structures, organizations and the process of teaching and learning. It brings about a learning environment in which school and community work together to plan for the achievement of their dreams (Eastern Cape Department of Education 2003).

Chapter three involved an exposition of the empirical design and the research methods used in the study. The design involved qualitative research methods such as focus group interviews, observation and analysis of written documents.

In chapter four analysis and discussion of the research data were given. Data from the observation, analysis of documents and interviews were unitised; thereafter units were put into categories and these categories were grouped together to reveal emerging patterns. The emerging patterns formed the basis of the research findings highlighted in this chapter.

### **5.3 KEY FINDINGS**

From the literature study and the data collected through observations, interviews and the analysis of written documents, the following can be regarded as the major findings.

### **5.3.1 Lack of family and community involvement**

A social condition that causes violence is poverty. Most of the communities in the Eastern Cape are impoverished. Impoverishment brings about the absence of authority figures and lack of parental supervision as parents are constantly away from home looking for jobs. The absence of family structure leads children to delinquency. Stealing becomes a means of survival for children. If the child comes home with stolen goods, the parent does not question where the child obtained the goods. This point was highlighted by an educator of School B:

Parents do not report their children when they have done wrong things, for instance, if a child comes home with new clothes or cell phones they do not ask him where he got those clothes.

The presence of guns and dangerous weapons contributes to school violence. Learners carry these dangerous weapons to school to assault other learners. Access to a weapon for most children is simple as parents do not lock their guns in safe places. Handmade guns are easily accessible to the learners. Another problem is the emergence of delinquent subcultures that terrorise other learners in the school, demanding money and cell phones. Some learners join gangs believing that they provide status, safety, belonging and opportunities for income to their members and families.

### **5.3.2 Lack of security in the school**

School B is not properly fenced, the fence and poles are on the ground and the premises are not taken care of. There are many exit points to the school grounds and gates are not locked. As a result outsiders can trespass the school. Animals graze in the schoolyard during the day. In most classrooms the doors off their hinges and cannot be locked. Frequently goats sleep in the empty classrooms at night. Learners have to sweep the floors before they can start lessons. The school is easily accessible. Visitors are not screened. There are no security guards in the gates. In School A contrary conditions prevail.

### **5.3.4 Physical appearance of the school**

The physical appearance of the school is very important in the creation of a safe school. School B has dilapidated buildings; doors and windows are broken. The building and grounds are not maintained. In School A buildings and grounds are well kept. Shrubs have been planted although they need to be pruned so that thugs are unable to hide in them. The buildings have been renovated and painted with bright colours.

### **5.3.5 Ill defined school policies**

From the documents analysed, the researcher noted that in neither schools are there clear policies established, reflecting commitment to the safety and security of learners, staff members and school property. Incidents of violence in both schools were not recorded properly; they were just vaguely narrated.

Kuffman (in Goldstein 1997) discussed some ways in which schools may be responsible for learners' problem behaviour, including insensitivity to individuals, inappropriate expectations, inconsistency in management policies and procedures, requirements for instruction in non-functional or irrelevant skills, use of destructive contingencies of reinforcement and/or irrelevant skills, use of destructive contingencies of reinforcement and/or presentation of undesirable models of conduct.

### **5.3.6 Learner grievances**

Interviews with the learners revealed that principals are afraid to confront and take action against the educators and learners who commit serious offences. Learners blamed the principal for not taking action against educators who come to school drunk, those who leave early and those who are chronically absent. They also complained that they are not involved in decision-making and formulation of school policies and the school rules are not communicated effectively to them. Learners are always punished for breaking rules which are not clear to them. According to Van der Aardweg (1987: 77), teachers who respond to learners with either authoritarian or coercive behaviour, followed by manipulation and persuasion, reduce the learner's

self esteem and often this behaviour results in the persistence of disruptive behaviour. Gable and Manning (1996) explain that learners' aggressive behaviour often results from flawed educational practices. The school curriculum, whether prescribed by accrediting agencies or the more subtle aspects such as teacher attitudes towards learners, may contribute to or aggravate situations that lead to learner aggression.

### **5.3.7 Lack of resources and overcrowded classrooms**

Inadequate resources hinder the proper functioning of the schools and hence give rise to high levels of frustration which exacerbate violent behaviour. Libraries in both schools did not have enough books and many books were old and unsuitable for the new curriculum. There are few textbooks; learners share the books. There are no photocopying machines to help educators produce more materials for the learners. If educators want to make copies for tests or any other stimulus material, they have to travel to Mthatha for those services. Computer, science and biology laboratories are not available. Extra curricular activities are minimal, there are few sports and grounds are not properly laid out.

In both schools classrooms are overcrowded. In school B there were ninety-five learners in one classroom. Hence the teacher struggled to maintain discipline and could not move between the rows to check learners' work. Learners seated at the back hit each other while the teacher was teaching.

### **5.3.8 Corporal punishment as an act of violence**

In both schools corporal punishment is still administered although it was abolished by South African Schools Act 84 of 1996. Educators use a variety of objects such as sticks, canes, belts and dusters to hit learners. Sometimes learners are slapped and hit with the fists. Learners also complained that they are sexually harassed by other learners and educators. Sexual harassment is a disciplinary problem because it creates a hostile learning environment in which victims may become fearful, anxious, withdrawn or angry or suffer severe loss of self-esteem. Cyran (in Maree 2000) expresses the opinion that the administration of corporal punishment conveys the message that it is acceptable to express one's feelings of anger by hitting someone



else. According to Van Wyk (2001:195), corporal punishment and the use of other punitive measures are often regarded as synonymous with 'good discipline'. In spite of prohibitive legislation, such measures are still being used in schools in South Africa.

### **5.3.9 Educators' fear of learners and litigation by parents**

Educators expressed a fear of maintaining strict discipline in schools. They said that they are afraid of being sued by parents if they punish learners and they have a fear of infringing learners' rights. They cannot seize weapons from learners as they are prohibited to do so by section 43 of the South African Schools Act. Fear of retribution, intimidation and threats lead to their failure to report crimes committed by learners at school. Spitznagel (2000:xiv) states that discipline has been taken away from the teachers. The fear of being sued is on the minds of many teachers.

### **5.3.10 Lack of support by Department of Education**

Both schools blamed the Department of Education for not assisting them in curbing violence and improving the quality of teaching and learning. According to them, the Department is slow in improving conditions at schools. They cited aspects such as improving the teacher-learner ratio, building classrooms to avoid overcrowding which makes it difficult for educators to maintain class discipline and the non-replacement of educators who have died or retired. Chisholm (2005: 212) states that the quality of teachers and the teacher-learner ratio in classrooms are amongst the most critical components which impact teaching and learning in schools. The new government inherited large disparities between teachers on the basis of their qualifications, class sizes and teacher-learner ratios. The extent of the problem is illustrated by the School Register of Needs Survey, which states that 3,4% of schools in the Eastern Cape needed additional classrooms, whereas 0,5% require more than 15 classrooms. (Department of Education 2000: 67). The teachers further complained about the lack of counselling services in rural schools, the lack of trained educators to deal with violent learners, lack of provision of recreational facilities and the poor budget allocated by the department for the disadvantaged schools.



### **5.3.11 Non-application of Whole School Development Approach**

School B has failed to involve stakeholders in preventing school violence. The principal and educators complained about the parents who did not want to involve themselves in school matters and the education of their children. The principal of school B stated:

Much as they are expected to be involved in each and every school activity they deliberately not concern themselves much about our activities because they claim that it's the teachers only responsibility to look at the welfare of the activities of the learners. So they are not interested, they say that they pay school fees so that the teachers can take good care of everything that is happening in the school.

## **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

From the findings of this research, certain implications have emerged. These implications should be seen as an opportunity for creating safe schools through the application of the Whole School Development Approach. These research findings imply that the problem of violence is too complex for any principal or school to deal with alone. Certain recommendations based on these findings are suggested which could assist the stakeholders in education. The recommendations are as follows:

### **□ Drafting of code of conduct and related policies**

The school should draw up a set of written school codes and rules. These rules should be compiled co-operatively by teachers, parents, the school governing bodies as representatives of the community, experts from the field of education law and learners themselves.

A code of conduct based on human rights principles contains school rules, regulations, sanctions and disciplinary procedures. This should include rules dealing with school safety and security, and the consequences for breaching safety and security. For example, safety rules and procedures that deal with matters such as school outings, the after-hours use of school facilities, late coming, criminal acts (e.g.,

vandalism and assault) and conducting searches and seizures (Squelch 2001: 137). These codes should include appropriate policies and procedures for dealing with matters such as drug peddling, sexual harassment and other forms of abuse, bullying and possession of dangerous weapons. Moreover, the policies should be implemented and revised on an ongoing basis.

The codes should be visible and communicated to learners and parents on admission and during parent meetings.

□ **Crafting of individual safe-school plans**

Every school should have a comprehensive safety plan that addresses its own educational, social and cultural needs. The school should bring in local police, health officials, religious leaders, youth leaders and other community members to help school management teams and school governing bodies to develop a safety plan that fits the individual needs of each school. Written behaviour codes should be distributed to learners and staff members. Expectations should be clearly communicated, consistently enforced and fairly applied. Rules and the entire safe-school plan should be reviewed and updated regularly.

□ **Developing of written agreements with youth organisations**

The school governing body and the school management teams should create alliances with law enforcement officials, social, health and welfare departments to develop written agreements that stipulate how the school and youth organisations can work together to help youth in need.

□ **Establishment of crisis management policies that include staff training**

The school needs to have a workable crisis-management plan that involves school personnel, learners, parents, community members and law enforcement officials. They should develop and publicise written policies and instructions for staff, learners and parents to follow during emergencies. These procedures should include plans for communication within the school as well as with police about such matters as

notification of parents, dismissal of learners and counselling necessary because of a crisis.

❑ **Conducting of annual school-safety site assessments**

Unpleasant appearance of the school invites trouble and increases chances of violence. With that in mind, the school should repair broken windows and doors, prune shrubs, clean the grounds, clear any maintenance hazards and stop vandalism that compromises school safety. The school should have a systematic crime-reporting process that includes maintaining and analysing written records about school crime and violent incidents

❑ **Sharing of information among all stakeholders about dangerous conditions and people**

The community should notify the school principal and staff about dangerous people in and around the school. For example, if there is a known rapist or a convicted child molester who lives near the school, it should be brought to the attention of the police. The school should also be informed about learners with histories of disciplinary problems before they enrol them in their schools.

❑ **Establishing networks within the school to identify at-risk learners**

The school should compile lists of names of learners who exhibit violent and dangerous behaviour signs as well as the symptoms of conduct disorder. Teachers should be encouraged to share information with learners and to promote the idea that learners can help improve school safety by informing concerned parents when they observe danger signs in their peers' behaviour.

❑ **Avoiding corporal punishment**

Schools should avoid using corporal punishment as it is a complex strategy with many possible unwanted and unintended outcomes. It suppresses behaviours but will not eliminate unwanted behaviours. Learners can be given menial tasks such as working

in the garden and scrubbing floors instead of corporal punishment. When it is necessary to use punishment to suppress specific behaviours, it should be used as part of teaching or eliciting incompatible desired behaviours and followed by high levels of reinforcement.

Van Wyk (2001: 200) asserts that if South Africans are to have a positive culture of learning and teaching in their schools, the learning environment must be safe, orderly and conducive to learning. In order to achieve this, educators need to be taught proactive and constructive alternatives to the use of corporal punishment in schools. She further states that educators need to realise that a classroom climate based on mutual respect with which learners feel safe and affirmed will decrease the need for disciplinary action and develop learners' abilities to practise self-discipline. According to her, this approach, however, implies that educators prepare for lessons, exercise discipline, have extension work available, ensure that teaching and learning happen consistently, ensure that learners are stimulated, establish class rules with the learners and build positive relationships with them.

□ **Developing alternatives to suspensions and expulsions.**

Suspensions and expulsions are sometimes applied unfairly, inconsistently or inappropriately. The school should introduce a concept of in-school suspension: simple isolation, counselling and academic remediation. If this is applied properly, it can be a much more productive form of discipline.

□ **Developing better teaching strategies and classroom management techniques**

Educators and principals need to develop strategies that take into account the social and cultural background of their learners and effectively address learners' needs. Sometimes misbehaviour is an expression of frustration, anger, or self-blame by learners who feel ignored in school.

□ **Developing anti-crime initiatives**

The Department of Education should develop anti-crime initiatives which will concentrate on capacity building programmes for learners, educators and parents. These security measures should involve infrastructure including burglar bars, safety gates, strong fences, security guards and getting parents and other community members to check the school's premises regularly.

□ **Developing welfare sections**

The Department of Education should set up welfare sections for learners where they can report cases of abuse by educators and teachers who come to school intoxicated. It should also set up a teacher welfare section to help teachers resolve some of their problems. Support structures which will help teachers to make functional reactions to stress need to be provided, such as counselling services, student welfare and discipline policies.

□ **Including extra programmes**

The Department of Education should help schools include conflict-resolution and peer mediation programmes in their curricula. The schools should develop drug free, gun free and fight free policies and these should warn learners that violence is both unacceptable and has serious consequences.

□ **Reducing overcrowded classrooms**

The Department of Education should build enough classrooms. An overcrowded classroom makes it difficult for a teacher to maintain discipline and teach effectively.

## **5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY**

Having explored the promotion of safe schools through the application of the Whole School Development Approach, a further investigation on the promotion of safe schools by means of policy development is recommended. In such a study, the researcher could examine the formulation, implementation and effectiveness of these policies in promoting safe schools throughout the whole country.

## **5.6 CONCLUSION**

The findings of this study indicate that the promotion of safe schools in the Eastern Cape cannot be successful without the application of the Whole School Development Approach. The researcher has made the certain recommendations which are a synthesis of guidelines in the literature review and findings of the document analysis, observations, interview data and the researcher's informed opinion. It is hoped that the comments and suggestions made in this research will prove useful for the promotion and creation of safe schools in the Eastern Cape and South Africa as a whole; through the application of the Whole School Development Approach and that it will also encourage further research in this field.



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## Appendix A Observational Schedule

### **School A**

Entry points and Exit for staff and learners



Gates with security guards



Admin. Block (principal and clerks office)



Staffroom



Classrooms



Playgrounds



Toilets

### **School B**

Entry and Exit points same for school personnel and cars



Unlocked gate (broken) – no security guard



Admin Block



Staffroom



Playground (principal and clerk office)



Toilets

## Appendix B Biographical questionnaire for principals

Note: Information supplied will be kept anonymous and confidential.

	SCHOOL A	SCHOOL B
Total number of years in the teaching profession	15	27
Total number of years in the service as a principal	10	15
Qualifications	STD, B.ED, PGDE, EDUC. MGT. BSC	JSTC, B.ED BA
Professional		
Academic		
Other		
Present roll at your school	600	700
Number of years at the present school	10	15
Number of teachers at your school	25	22
Number of sporting codes at your school	5	3
Any major violent incidents at the school in the past years	YES	YES
Any major violent incidents at the school at present	NO	YES
Number of suspensions and expulsions last year	2	4
Number of suspensions and expulsions this year	0	2
Number of offences reported to the police for the past three years	1	3
Thank you for your cooperation		



## **Appendix C Interview schedules**

### **Principal Interview Schedule**

1. Are there any violent acts in this school?
2. What happened?
3. What did you do about it?
4. Do you think it was effective?
5. Does your mission statement include a school safety plan?
6. Do you have crisis management policy plan that involves school personnel, parents and law enforcement officials?
7. Do you have any violence prevention strategy in place?
8. Are conflict resolution skills taught here in school?
9. Does the staff receive crime prevention awareness training?
10. Does the staff receive conflict mediation training?
11. Are the parents and the community involved in school activities?
12. Are both students and parents aware of expectations and school discipline codes and are these in writing?
13. Is your truancy rate increasing?
14. Are your suspension and expulsion rates increasing?
15. Is there any presence of weapons in the school?
16. Tell me more about violence. What causes it?
17. What do you think can be done to stop violence in schools?

### **Educator Interview Schedule**

1. Have you ever experienced violence in this school?
2. What did you do about it?
3. Is there any presence of gangs around the school?
4. Is there any policy for dealing with violence and vandalism in your school?
5. In your own opinion what do you think can be done to alleviate violence in schools?
6. Do you attend workshops on violence prevention and crisis management?

### **Learner Interview Schedule**

1. Do you experience any violent incidents in this school?
2. What happened?
3. How did you feel?
4. Are there any areas of the school you avoid?
5. Are there any invitation rites for new students in this school?
6. Are there any students who are using drugs?
7. Are there any students who are carrying dangerous weapons at school?
8. Do you report incidents of violence to your parents?
9. Are you allowed to take part in decision- making in this school?
10. Tell me more about violence. What causes violence?
11. What do you think should be done to stop violence in school?

### **Parent Interview Schedule**

1. Are there any violent acts in the communities around the school?
2. What do you think causes the violence in our community?
3. Is this violence not affecting your children who are at school?
4. Have you ever taken any measures to stop this violence from spreading to school?
5. Are you involved in school activities?
6. Do you think working together can stop violence in schools?
7. What other contributions are you making in the school?
8. Can you suggest what the parents should do to stop violence in schools?

### **Community Members Interview Schedule**

1. How often do you experience violence in your community?
2. How does this violence affect school children and the community?
3. Can you give examples of your own experiences about this violence?
4. Are you ever involved in school activities?
5. How often do you visit the school?
6. What role are you playing to stop violence in the school and in the community?

7. Do you not think that working together as a community can stop school violence?

**Education Development Officer Interview Schedule**

1. Are there any violent acts in the schools under your jurisdiction?
2. What do you do about it?
3. Is there any safety plan in place to curb violence in schools?
4. Do you think the application of the Whole School Development Approach is working in curbing violence in schools?
5. In your own opinion what do you think can be done to make the application of the Whole School Development Approach successful?