COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN CURRICULUM

IMPLEMENTATION IN ZIMBABWEAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

by

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DECLARATION

STUDENT NUMBER: 50790692

I, **Tafara Mufanechiya,** declare that this thesis entitled *Community participation in curriculum implementation in Zimbabwean primary schools*, submitted in the fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in Curriculum Studies, is my original work which has never been produced or submitted at any other institution before, and that all the sources that I have consulted, used or quoted, have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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Tafara Mufanechiya   **Date**

AUGUST 2015

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I am really proud of my husband, Albert, for the love and emotional and physical support he rendered during the data-collection period of my studies, and for proof-reading my work. Thank you also for those lighter moments that refreshed my mind when the going was getting tough. Albert is truly a wonderful husband, friend, study mate and research partner.

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DEDICATION

I gratefully dedicate this thesis to my beloved husband, Albert, and our two children, Tatenda Hope and Tinashe Arnold, for your unwavering support, encouragement and patience during the demanding and trying period of my studies. Everything you did for me and mean to me is greatly appreciated. Indeed you are my pillar of strength.

ABSTRACT

Allowing communities to become integral players in curriculum implementation conversation has not been taken seriously by academics and the educational leaders. Generally, there is a growing realisation in academic circles that knowledge and skills in primary school education cannot be solely owned by school heads and teachers for effective curriculum implementation to be realised. School heads and teachers need pedagogical support from members of the community around their primary schools who have the knowledge and skills that teachers can make use of in teaching and learning. Current curriculum implementation practices have seen community members as peripheral players whose knowledge and skills are of diminished value.

The purpose of this study was to explore how community members' knowledge and skills could be harnessed in curriculum implementation at primary school level in Zimbabwe's Chivi district of Masvingo. The notion was to grow a partnership between community members, school heads and teachers. The study was informed by the Social Capital Theory, a theory devoted to the establishment of social networks, links and social relations among individuals and groups for the realisation of new ways of co-operation.

The qualitative case study design was employed, where individual interviews, focus group discussions and open-ended questionnaires were the data-collection instruments. Four rural primary schools with their respective school heads, were randomly selected to participate in the study. Twenty teachers, two traditional leaders, two church leaders, two business people and eight parents comprised the purposefully selected participants.

The study findings indicated that community members and the school community have not meaningfully engaged each other in curriculum implementation. The barriers to a successful relationship included: the language of education, feelings of inadequacy, time constraints, and the polarised political environment. Evaluated against the social capital theory, participants appreciated the need for partnerships in curriculum implementation for shared resources, knowledge and skills for the benefit of the learners. The study recommends a rethink by school heads, teachers and community members, aided by government policy to create space for community contribution in curriculum implementation.

KEY TERMS:

Community members; Community participation; Curriculum implementation; Primary school; Stakeholder; Social Capital Theory; Language of education; Attitudes; Perceptions.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS / ACRONYMS

ATR ……………………… African Traditional Religion

BEAM…………………… Basic Education Assistance Module

CDU………………….….. Curriculum Development Unit

DEO …………………… District Education Officer

DPED …………………… Deputy Provincial Education Director

DVR ……………………… Digital Voice Recorder

GoZ …………………… Government of Zimbabwe

IDRA …………………… Intercultural Development Research Association

MDC ………………….. Movement for Democratic Change

MoEASC………………… Ministry of Education, Art, Sport and Culture

MoPSE…………………… Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education

NGO ………………….... Non-governmental Organisation

PED   ………………….. Provincial Education Director

PFMA …………………… Public Finance Management Act

PI   ………………….. Parental Involvement

RME ………………….. Religious and Moral Education

SDC   …………………… School Development Committee

SI   ………………….. Statutory Instrument

SPA   …………………… School Parents Assembly

TARSC …………………… Training and Research Support Centre

TI   …………….................   Treasury Instructions

TP …………………………... Teaching Practice

UNESCO……………........   United Nations Educational, Scientific and Culture Organization

ZANU (PF)……………….. Zimbabwe African National Union (Patriotic Front)

ZIMSEC ………………….   Zimbabwe Schools Examination Council

ZINTEC ………………….   Zimbabwe National Teacher Education Course

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CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Understanding the responsibilities of the community in educational matters has become vital, yet explicitly more problematic (Magstadt 2009:379). Most educational institutions have erected walls that have protected the schools from being accessed by communities, as if they are an island. Yet, according to De Katele and Cherif (1994:61), community participation in educational matters, a grassroots-approach emphasising collective rather than individual abilities, adds value to the child's development processes, and is sustainable. The provision of education should be a shared responsibility among various interested stakeholders, taking on board those who are traditionally excluded from classroom decision-making (Caro-Bruce, Flessner, Klehr & Zeichner 2007:287; Naidu, Joubert, Mestry, Mosoge & Ngcobo 2012:130). There exists a need to use all the available human and material resources to provide the pupils with the best foundation they can have to face the world ahead of them (Magazine for Alumni and Friends Connected 2010:26). Taking into account the power dynamics between the schools and the communities greatly assists in terms of collective decisions, and of becoming responsive to local needs (Rose 2003b:48). All the more local and soluble problems in the classroom, such as classroom discipline, assistance with homework and some cultural/ethnic topics which some members of the community might have knowledge about, require the intervention of the local communities.

Historically, community participation in education has been limited to everything outside the classroom. Community participation may come in the following ways, according to Rose (2003a: 2) and Aref (2010:1- 4):

- the contribution of teaching and learning resources;
- attendance of meetings;
- the construction of buildings and maintenance; and
- coming to school on consultation days to enter into a dialogue with the teachers on their children's performance.

This is what Rose (2003a:3) calls *pseudo participation,* as it does not include critical decision-making about teaching and learning methods and curriculum-modification issues, and checking on capacity-utilisation of the resources that have been mobilised (Wilson, Ruch, Lymbery & Cooper, 2008:391). Studies by Naidu et al. (2012:130) and Aref (2010:1-4) indicated great community interest in the educational development of the children when they were called upon. However, these studies have not taken into account the contribution of these communities into the classroom decision-making processes. Also, the communities have been quick in criticising the teachers and the school authorities, especially when producing poor results.

Communities have always demanded accountability to a process that they have never contributed to in respect of its efficiency and effectiveness (Swift-Morgan 2006:354; Rose 2003a:1; Lee & Smith 1996:104). To most communities, monitoring and contributing to curriculum implementation is a preserve of the supervisory authorities of which they are not part. Community engagement entails the bottom-up approach to curriculum implementation. It has merits in that it results in the community taking ownership of some of the school processes, from curriculum-planning through curriculum implementation to evaluation. By marginalising the communities, primary schools lose the opportunities for community contact in ways which integrate and complement curriculum implementation (Magazine for Alumni and Friends Connected 2010:26). Community participation is the recognition that teaching and learning is not done in a vacuum, independent of the historical, political and cultural circumstances of the students (Miller 1995:5). The need to understand this in education is sustainable and developmental.

A community is not a homogenous group of people with a common voice and shared set of views (Rose 2003b:50). It is categorised in a variety of ways, for example geographic, ethnic, racial, religious, school development committees, and many others. Community contribution in curriculum implementation can widen the horizon of the pupils and also give impetus to the process. Members of a community bring something new, different and interesting to the classroom situation, thereby further improving the pupils' experiences (Magazine for Alumni and Friends Connected 2010:16). When communities are engaged and valued, they tend to be part of the molding process of the pupils. This results in greater chances of communities accepting responsibility of the product from the school, with less of the blame game that has characterised the relationship between the teachers and the communities for so long. In molding the best primary school graduate by both the school and community, a number of areas are

positively influenced, especially the fact that the pupils learn to interact with the real world in an interesting manner alongside their academic learning (Magstadt 2009:579).

The roles of the community can come in different forms. As role models, reservoirs and repositories of important "village wisdom" which has become useful in today's learning, pupils can be referred to some members of the community for specific and specialised knowledge, thereby enhancing and managing the flow of information between the teachers and the community members (www.community.scoop.co.nz/2013). This additional support from the community provides academic growth for the pupils. The pupils can spend time together with these community members as they do research, and thereby exploiting the information gaps, thus getting information critical to their academic life (www.wisegeek.com). This kind of partnership or interaction is seen as an answer or solution to some deeply-rooted problems of education (Laurence 2010:159). Thus the teacher, aware of the important role that the communities can play, can design a community-wise, family-wise and pupil-wise plan of action (Laurence 2010:182), taking into account this social setting. Furthermore, Laurence (2010:188) notes that many educational innovations of recent years are based on the strong foundation of community support and participation, and is consequently both a process and a product approach. These interactive moments the pupils have with members of the community have the biggest impact on the pupils' lives, both inside and outside the classrooms.

The kind of interest the communities generate in the pupils' learning by means of offering skills, knowledge and talents help the pupils to develop their potential, as the successes of the community contributions are registered. The urge to see their initiatives and contributions, either through delegated responsibilities or voluntary service succeed, has a positive behavior-molding effect on the pupils' learning and achievement levels (www.wisegeek.com). The teachers, however, do not abjurgate their duty, but teaching and learning becomes a communal affair with teachers being aware of the resources, talents, skills and knowledge available in the community. On the other hand, the communities are aware that they are in the teachers' fall back-on position. This symbiotic relationship ensures a higher completion rate in primary school graduates.

 The school-community partnership ensures that no school child 'falls through the cracks', as it were. The absence of such a partnership is an enemy of progress, as the teachers fail to tap into and build on indigenous use and knowledge bases in the community (Prah 2008:21). The fundamental questions are, namely: "How can communities' energy be harnessed in curriculum

implementation? When can they be involved? What would be their defined contribution in this involvement process, and who should define these roles?" These questions reflect on the real problems of how to involve the communities at classroom level, considering that the teachers often retreat to the safety of 'how we have always done it' (Patterson 2000:5). The current position is poisoned, with the communities taking on an on-looker's approach and the teachers erecting 'an iron curtain' around their classrooms. There exists a dire need to repair, install and properly maintain the schools' links with the communities. The idea is to move the stale mindset premised on the negative attitudes when the communities are engaged in curriculum implementation.

It is against this backdrop that the study sought to understand how the community, as an integral part of the school system, can be involved in curriculum implementation. The study sought to chart a way forward, not built on the debris of previously broken promises of genuine community-involvement practices but on the determination to rethink the relationships with the communities by injecting energy into this situation.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The communities view issues of curriculum implementation as professional in nature, outside their jurisdiction. They require very little, if any, of their input, hence a preserve of the teachers who are trained in these matters (Swift-Morgan 2006:355). Yet, in Zimbabwe there is evidence pointing to a declining sense of duty in the classroom among the teaching population (Magstadt 2009:366) and the use of dominant models of teaching (Caro-Bruce et al. 2007:268). There are some intersectional issues which the teachers and the communities can share. Marking those boundaries has not helped either of the parties, given the fact that separating them breeds suspicion, and it is then the children who suffer. If the communities think they have a stake in curriculum implementation, they, however, do not know how they can access that opportunity and how far they should go if it avails itself. Discussions with the parents and other community leaders revealed that the teachers do not have a secure and unchallenged knowledge-base and skills (Wilson et al. 2008:393).

As a Primary Teachers' College lecturer, I supervised primary school student teachers during Teaching Practice (TP) in various districts Chivi included. During these visits, I learnt that most primary schools were not forthcoming to engage community members in curriculum implementation issues, e.g. inviting resource persons from the community to teach or present on certain concepts in subjects like ChiShona, Social Studies, and Religious and Moral

Education, etc. It was evident that most student teachers and their mentors were not conversant with issues like 'kurova guva' (appeasing the spirits), 'mhande' (a traditional dance), history of the Chimurenga war, etc. These are issues which some community members could explain to the learners in a more understandable manner than the teachers. The payment of school fees, the construction of classrooms, attending School Development Committee (SDC) meetings, among other duties, were what teachers and school heads considered to be community involvement in education. The student teachers' schemes of work and lesson plans clearly indicated that the teaching and learning process was a no-go area for members of the communities. Nowhere in the TP documents was it indicated or written that a resource person from the community would be invited to deliver something to the learners or that the learners would be taken to the local community to learn something.

Further, as a University lecturer in the Faculty of Education, Department of Teacher Development, one of my key duties is to supervise Bachelor of Education Pre-Service primary student teachers on TP. During these TP visits, I observed that there seemed to be a big difference between the teachers and the community members when it comes to issues concerning curriculum implementation. The two parties (the schools and the communities) never genuinely engaged each other. Therefore, how the community members could be effectively engaged in curriculum implementation became a fertile area for research.

Communities would cherish making a contribution to curriculum implementation in whatever way when called upon, but do not know which avenues are available for them. This has resulted in them becoming by-standers, and merely making noise from a distance, specifically when their children fail the public examinations. Thus, community complaints have been from an uninformed viewpoint, namely that it is because the teachers are not efficient, yet they are crying for a role in this process.

The modern agenda and discourse in education have been that classroom problems cannot be effectively addressed by individuals acting in isolation from one another (Wilson et al. 2008:388). Further, the classroom problems in Zimbabwe have become multiple and complex and teachers may not easily navigate without a strong relationship with community members impacting on the quality and relevance of teaching and learning. Communities can become potential and potent political forces that can help transform classroom practices (Magstadt 2009:379). The study thus, underscores the mutuality of the dialogue between teachers and community members for role sharing in the classroom. Zimbabwe is a compelling situation to

explore community participation in curriculum implementation as teachers feel that the contribution of the communities would provide vital integrative function (Wilson et al. 2008:393) and could help to produce well-groomed and integrated citizens. Yet, it might be a source of conflict, given their different value positions. At the same time there is the syllabus and examinations to contend with, and striking a balance may not be easy. More so, the teachers may not have any control over what these community members would have to say in the classrooms, and correcting misconceptions may not be easy. The teachers have to establish and maintain a productive and constructive relationship with the communities, balancing competing demands and priorities (Wilson et al. 2008:393). Today educational narrative in Zimbabwe has been in the context of teacher knowledge, skills and resources, with community members out of the picture. From these observations, it may be seen that the two parties have never genuinely engaged each other, but what is important about this study is the nurturing of an enduring relationship.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.3.1 The main research question

In the light of the statement of the problem, the main research question for this study is

- How can the members of the communities participate in curriculum implementation in the Zimbabwean primary schools?

1.3.2 Sub-questions

Emanating from the main research question are the following sub-questions:

- What role can members of the communities play in curriculum implementation in the Zimbabwean primary schools?
- What knowledge, attitudes and perceptions are held by stakeholders towards community participation in curriculum implementation?
- What are the barriers to effective community participation in curriculum implementation?
- How can the challenges to forge meaningful school-community partnerships be minimised?

1.4 THE AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study was to understand how members of the communities can participate in making meaningful contributions in curriculum implementation in Zimbabwean primary schools.

1.4.1 Research Objectives

In line with the main aim, the study has the following objectives:

- To establish the role members of the communities can play in curriculum implementation in the Zimbabwean primary schools.
- To determine the stakeholders' attitudes and perceptions on their participation in curriculum implementation.
- To establish barriers to effective community participation in curriculum implementation.
- To establish how the challenges to forge meaningful school-community partnerships can be minimised.

1.5 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

Much research has been done in Zimbabwe on parental involvement in education (Chindanya 2011; Ngwenya 2010), on consultation days (Chinamasa 2008), and on school governance (Chikoko 2007),   but excluding facets on community participation in curriculum implementation. The study adds a different refreshing dimension of community participation specifically taking community contribution to the curriculum implementation level. The idea is not to view communities from a distance as evidenced by other researches, but to find meaningful ways to engage them, and to work together with the teachers for the realisation of the classroom goals. According to Bamberger (2006:283), the idea of community participation has not died in most schools neither has it merely spread geographically, but now includes a realisation of how communities can intervene in the activities of the classroom.

In this study the incentive for community participation is to grow teacher-community partnerships, and to integrate communities into mainstream education in a very accommodative and flexible way by creating multiple layers of information and knowledge for the learners (Laurence 2010). This brings about greater possibilities for classroom efficiency and effectiveness, cost recovery, social responsibility and acceptability as well as sustainability

(www.labspace.open.ac.uk) as a result of the two-way information and intercommunity coordination. The assumption is that when communities are involved and participate in curriculum implementation, they develop a sense of ownership and responsibility. This helps to sustain classroom initiatives, activities and programmes (www.labspace.open.ac.uk). The study appreciates the fact that engaging communities in curriculum implementation as an emerging phenomenon unlocks all available human and material resources meant to provide the learners with the best foundation they can have (Magazine for Alumini and Friends 2010:26). Also, it aims at opening various avenues for community contact useful for effective curriculum implementation. Thus, the study takes community participation beyond the peripheral issues to actual teaching and learning. Community participation complement the teachers' efforts by plugging those knowledge gaps the teachers may have. It is from this angle that the study significantly attempts to involve the communities in respect of their responsibilities in curriculum implementation, mainly by looking at sustainable ways of connecting the communities and the classroom activities.

The study is important to the Zimbabwean government through the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) in that the research results will inform policy formulation in the Zimbabwean education system. To date it has remained top-down. Yet, ideally the bottom-up approach connects all the educational stakeholders in a friendly and sustainable way. Why some school heads and teachers have not implemented certain policies indicates a lack of confidence in them. They have even found it difficult to implement some useful ideas that do not have policy back-up. The study results could also assist educational leaders to create greater educational possibilities for the learners by initiating policies that allow problem-solving and decision-making to be decentralised in joint consultation with the communities.

 Another significant contribution of the study is in respect of modalities to inform, persuade and engage community members to appreciate that they have an important contribution to make to the education of their children. This includes a genuine partnership with the school heads and teachers. Making them realise the value they can add to the classroom experience would make them proactive by availing knowledge, skills and resources critical for curriculum implementation, thus, increasing the achievement of collective educational objectives.

Thus, the study is significant in that it is meant to create simple community engagement mechanisms through triangulated teaching in which community members have a role to play.

1.6 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study was situated in Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe, in Chivi district. The district is about thirty (30) kilometres from Masvingo City which is the provincial capital. The district lies within ecological region five which is drought prone. Rural schools in Zimbabwe are placed in and around communities who have the obligation to support the schools given that their children go to those schools. This situation compels schools and communities to work for the common good. The study was also limited to community participation in curriculum implementation aware that communities can also make a contribution in other curriculum development processes. Zeroing in on this concept was to allow rigour and depth in appreciating community responsibilities in one aspect of curriculum development. The study population consisted of primary school heads, teachers, parents, church leaders, business people and traditional leaders in Chivi district.

1.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Dealing with human beings always poses some challenges. The beauty of it all is, however, that they are surmountable. Respecting appointed times was one challenge I encountered, especially when some of the appointments were cancelled on my arrival, hence stretching the expected time for data-collection. 'Patience' and 'tolerance' were the catch words so as to gain access to the sources of data. Furthermore, especially in focus-group discussions, the tendency existed to digress, to talk about issues outside the topic under discussion. It was, therefore, my responsibility to constantly and skillfully remind the participants of the demands and the focus of the discussion at hand without necessarily telling them that they were off the mark.

The focus of the study, in terms of geographical space, was limited by resources and time constraints. The choice of the four primary schools, though, represented a wide spectrum of environments and situations obtaining in most Zimbabwean rural primary schools. The schools are situated in the midst of communities who are critical stakeholders in their wellbeing and functioning. In this study the limited number of primary schools allowed for completeness of depth and breadth in data-collection, giving the research authenticity and credibility.

1.8 DEFINITION AND EXPLANATION OF THE CONCEPTS

The following are the concepts that are used quite often throughout the study. These terms may assume other meanings outside the context of this study but in this study, they will be used as defined below:

1.8.1 Community: A social group of whom the members live in a certain locality and share a historical or cultural heritage. They demonstrate goodwill and cooperation towards a similar goal (www.ask.com). In other words, a community is a self-organised network of people with a common agenda, cause or interest, who collaborate by sharing ideas, information and resources.

1.8.2 Community participation: Is a term often used synonymously with *community engagement* and *community involvement*. *Community participation* is a concept referring to attempts to bring different stakeholders together for problem-solving and decision-making (Aref 2010:1). In this study it refers to people's engagement in activities within the educational system. It is realised as one of the mechanisms to empower people to take part in educational development (Aref 2010:1). www.businessdictionary.com adds that where there is participation there is joint consultation in decision-making, goal-setting, teamwork and other such measures by means of which a school attempts to increase the achievement of its collective objectives.

1.8.3 Community engagement: It is a process of involving, at various levels of participation, empowerment and capacity, groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity and/or special interest and/or similar situations to address issues affecting the well-being of those people. The process is based on interpersonal communication, respect and trust, and a common understanding and purpose (Manitoba Family Services and Housing 2008:35). As used in this study, the term will mean a genuine partnership of community members and teachers working together and making decisions together within the teaching and learning process and that will have a lasting impact on the future of the learners (Rodriguez 2009).

1.8.4 Community involvement: Implies including community members as necessary part of the education system (Manitoba Family Services and Housing 2008:36). Adams (2012) understands participation and involvement as often used interchangeably but sees involvement as the entire continuum of taking part, from one-off consultation through equal partnership of taking control. In its broadest context, community involvement implies shared responsibility for the child's education pocess.

N.B. Therefore, in this study the terms **community engagement, community participation** and **community involvement** will be used interchangeably.

Carnwell and Carson (2008:17) gives a continuum of **involvement,** as indicated in the following figure:
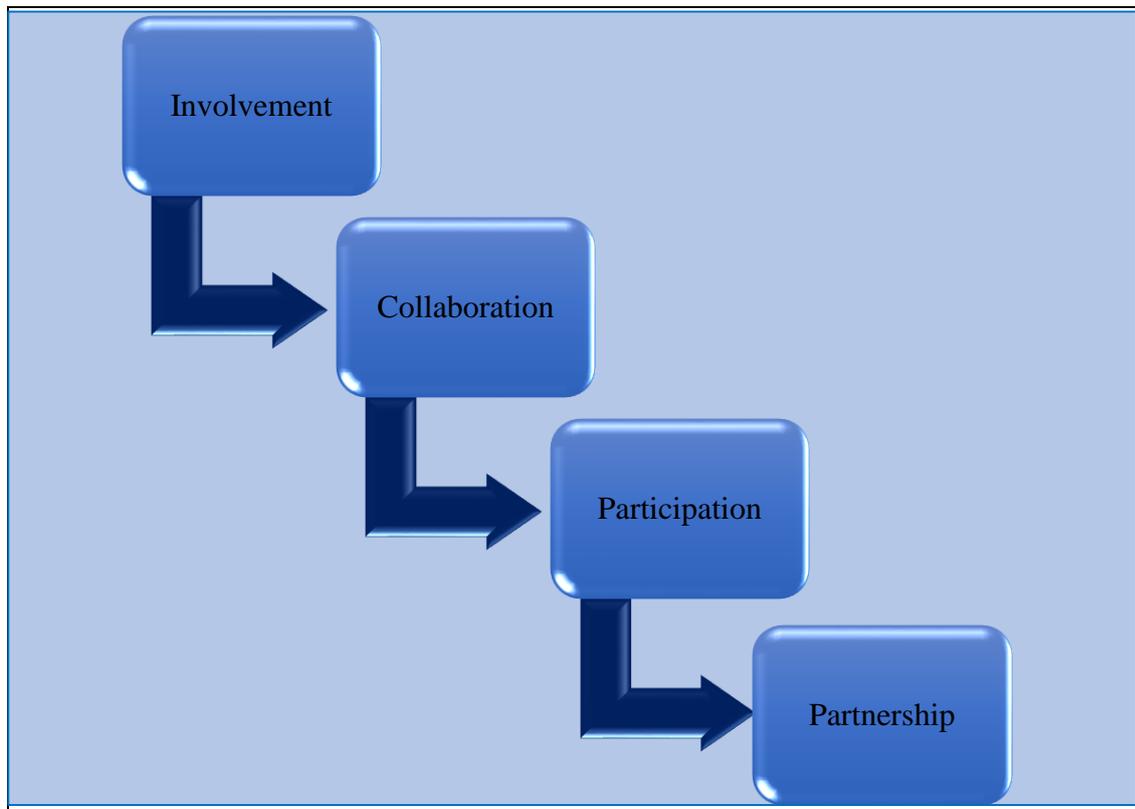
 Figure 1.1 A continuum of involvement (Adapted from: Carnwell and Carson (2008)).

As used in the study, it shows that as people become more involved in curriculum implementation, they begin to collaborate with each other, and through this process of collaboration, a greater sense of involvement transpires. This sense of involvement ultimately results in sufficient trust, respect and willingness on the part of the different parties for partnerships to develop (Carnwell & Carson 2008:17), and hence effective curriculum implementation is realised.

1.8.5 Stakeholders: This term refers to persons who have a stake in the issue at hand. Stakeholders include but are not limited to providers, clients, organisations, communities, expert advisors, government departments and politicians. They also include partners who collaborate to reach a mutually accepted goal (Manitoba Family Services and Housing 2008:37). In respect of this study, the term means a party that has an interest in the school. The primary stakeholders in a school are the teachers, school heads, and the pupils. The secondary

stakeholders are the community, the government, trade unions, etc. (www.businessdictionary.com). All these are individuals or groups of persons who have a right to comment on, and have an input to make in the school programme (Marsh 2009:205).

1.8.6 Curriculum implementation: To put a curriculum into use through practical processes. It is the process of the school facilitating the interaction between the learner and the curriculum (Ndawi & Maravanyika 2011:68). It is also the integration of instructional content, the arrangement, interventions, management and monitoring in the classroom (Lim 2007).

1.8.7 Primary school: In this study, it means grades 1 to 7 of an institution which is not a correspondence college, and whose responsibility is to provide formal education for children of the school-going age of 6 to 12 years. This institution in Zimbabwe has to be the responsibility of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE).

1.8.8 School head: This is the person who manages a school and who is responsible for the day-to-day running of the school. In certain countries this person may be known as the principal, head teacher or headmaster/mistress. This person is responsible for the general functioning of the school in areas such as the time table, the implementation of the curriculum, decisions about what is to be taught, and the materials and methods to be used as well as the management of the members of staff (http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/).

1.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to O'Leary (2010:29), research in respect of the humanities deals with human beings. Therefore, the need to respect participants' rights cannot be overemphasised. In this research, permission was first of all sought from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education to gain access to the research sites (the schools). Borrowing Denzin's and Lincoln's (2005:715, as cited in Ngwenya 2010:28) as well as Gilbert's (2011:150) advice, informed consent was also sought from the school heads, the teachers and the community members after carefully and truthfully informing them about the value of the study. Assurance was given to the participants that their responses would be treated with the confidentiality they deserve and would be used for no other purposes than for this study. Pseudonyms were also used to hide and protect the identities of the participants. In line with the suggestion by De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delport (2012:115), this was meant to ensure that research would not bring harm to the participants. In this study participation was voluntary and no one was coerced to remain part of the study against his or her will.

1.10 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

The following is an outline of the chapters in this study:

Chapter One: The chapter underlines how the researcher became aware of the problem, and places the problem into context. The chapter also highlights the statement of the problem, the main research question, the sub-problems and the research aims. The rationale or significance of the study is also indicated. Key concepts /terms in the study are defined.

Chapter Two: The chapter gives a literature review of the research study in order to place the problem into context. The researcher demarcates the problem and reflects on the feasibility of the study. The literature review provides and integrates the research into a broader framework of the relevant theory. The review of the literature, therefore, covers critical issues of the study such as:

- The background to community participation.
- The role of the communities in curriculum implementation.
- The attitudes and perceptions of the stakeholders towards community participation in curriculum implementation.
- Barriers to effective community participation in curriculum implementation.
- Mitigation to challenges of community participation in curriculum implementation.
- The Social Capital Theory and community participation in curriculum implementation.

Chapter Three: The chapter explains and justifies the research methodology outlining the research design employed in the study, the population, the sample and sampling procedures. The chapter also outlines and discusses the data-collection strategies (the instruments used), the validity and reliability of the instruments, pilot testing, and the analysis and interpretation of the data. Ethical considerations in line with the study are also clarified.

Chapter Four: In this chapter the findings are presented, analysed and interpreted. The findings/ results of the study on community participation in curriculum implementation in Zimbabwean primary schools are presented using themes and sub-themes or categories in relation to the research sub-problems, the aims of the study, and to the literature as well as the theoretical framework.

Chapter Five: The chapter summarises and discusses the research findings. Conclusions are drawn from the presentation and analysis of the data. Recommendations are presented for school heads, teachers, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, the government and members of the communities. Areas for further research are suggested.

1.11 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The introductory chapter outlined the background of the research problem and its setting. This placed the study in the correct Zimbabwean context. The motivation for the study was clearly discussed and the research questions and the aims of study were outlined. The need to bring the schools and communities together for effective curriculum implementation was justified.

In the next chapter, I review the literature related to this study.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The intention of this study was to understand how members of the community can be involved in curriculum implementation. The previous chapter outlined the introduction and background of the study. The statement of the problem, research questions, motivation and limitation of the study were outlined.

This chapter, namely a review of related literature, deliberates on the concept *community participation* as it relates to curriculum implementation at primary school level. Letting curriculum implementation and community participation face and better still, meet is crucial for both the development of the child and for creating a wider knowledge base for primary school teachers. The review is organised according to themes, indicating how the communities and classroom life in the primary school can interface and leave a permanent footprint in education today.

2.2 DEFINITION OF *COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION*

Community participation with its synonyms, *community engagement* and *community involvement,* is understood in this study as a social construct. It is viewed like an organism where human interaction and behaviour have meaning and give rise to expectations (Bartle 2003:1). *Community participation* goes beyond the geographical, ethnic, religious, totemic and linguistic terms (Russell, Polen & Betts 2012:1; Bartle 2003:1; Munt 2002:4). It also includes a broader ecological concept (Ashford & LeCroy 2010:133) which takes into account the inclusiveness of all by celebrating community diversity in terms of knowledge, abilities and skills in a commitment to develop, accept and respect openness and oneness in the name of managing life-long and life-giving organisations for the social good (Altrichter & Elliot 2009:62). From these views *community participation* is seen as a process that evolves and changes, and is context-dependent.

From a broader context, community *engagement,* according to Bull (2011:2), refers to all the stakeholders, and the involvement of the general public in problem-solving and decision-making in developmental issues. In educational terms, *community involvement* has historically and narrowly been conceived to mean contribution by those members of the community with

a direct link with the school because they have children enrolled in the school (Gorinski & Fraser 2006:8). In this study there is opportunity for looking at the macro and micro politics of community participation in the classroom, not only of those with children enrolled at the schools, but of all members in the community who can add value to building teacher content-knowledge, teaching strategies (methods) and lesson evaluation which scaffold the teachers' teaching and the pupils' learning (Lambert 2008; Gorinski & Fraser 2006:21). Looking at community participation in curriculum implementation from this viewpoint is not only productive but sustainable as, according to McLean (2008:64), it gives the teachers a range of tools by means of which to convey meaning.

2.3 DEFINITION OF *CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION*

With community participation articulated, the need to understand *curriculum implementation* cannot be overemphasised. According to Burgess, Robertson and Patterson (2010:58), curriculum implementation begins with multiple decision-making points when the individual teacher decides to put a curriculum into use through the practical processes. *Curriculum implementation* suggests a high investment of time and effort in important decisions on topics and concepts or content deemed necessary, and on methods, and monitoring and evaluating the teachers' and students' performance (Alonsabe 2009; Verspoor 2006:2; Lauridsen 2003:6). Ndawi and Maravanyika (2011:68) view *curriculum implementation* as the process of the school facilitating the interaction between the learner and the curriculum. The most fundamental agent of this interaction is the teacher. Ornstein and Hunkins (2013:218) say that *curriculum implementation* is the understanding of the relationship between curricula and the social-institutional contexts into which they are to be introduced. Furthermore, Lim (2007) sees *curriculum implementation* as the integration of instructional content, arrangement, interventions, management and monitoring in the classroom.

As indicated in researches by Swift-Morgan (2006:354) and Nyoni and Mufanechiya (2012) in Ethiopia and Zimbabwe respectively, curriculum implementation, as is the case with the above definitions, does not pronounce community participation in the contentious and sensitive areas of lesson planning and instruction, classroom management, the creation of a conducive learning environment and lesson evaluation. These are said to be the preserve of the teachers. The critical issues identified here are the availability of minimal literature in Zimbabwe that takes communities into the domains of teaching, teacher evaluation and classroom management, pointing to the fact that it is a critical area that needs investigation.

The research and general literature cited above have underpinned and dedicated time to the supportive role of the communities and the importance of quality school-community relationships as critical to child-development. Critically important, though, is what Sternberg (2000:39) calls the quality of the total experiences to which pupils are exposed in the classroom. The classroom must prepare the learners to play significant roles in life by exercising their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities. The teachers may not, however, necessarily have the capacity to effectively attend to all these domains. Miller (1995:5) adds credence to this by saying:

> *The diversity of our society and our student body forces us to rethink how*
>
> *and by whom curricula are implemented. We need to contemplate multiplicity*
>
> *of voices, multiplicity of cultural and ethnic experiences and envision education*
>
> *as something which is more diverse than we have thought in the past.*

Curriculum implementation practices in South Africa, as observed by Ramparsad (2001:287), are effectively controlled from within a small locus and with hidden processes of decision-making, despite the rhetoric of decentralisation. This is also akin to the Zimbabwean situation. Solely depending on the teacher in terms of knowledge and skills has seen most schools' curriculum practices being unresponsive to the students' and the community's needs (Sternberg 2000:32).

Voices are increasingly being raised towards opening up the classroom life to a pool of players who have the knowledge, experiences and expertise (Caro-Bruce et al. 2007:287; Lee & Smith 1996:106). While teachers seek professional independence in the classroom and want to manage all the classroom activities, community involvement reduces a heavy burden on them by promoting curriculum access from different implementation sites (Elliot 2006:61). This study seeks to take community involvement to another level in the Zimbabwean primary school context. It can be achieved by strengthening the existing partnerships and challenging the status quo of standardised classroom teaching and learning by realizing that the local communities are valued academic assets to both the teachers and the learners. The plan is to widen, enrich and energise the learners' learning experiences, and has become an educational imperative (Wilson et al. 2008:388). The study appreciates that creating this state of readiness by preparing

the minds of both the teachers and the members of the communities to meet in curriculum implementation can be a tall order.

In discussing how the two can work together, Social Capital theory becomes an important tool in helping narrow the gap between schools and communities in curriculum implementation.

2.4 THE SOCIAL CAPITAL THEORY AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION

Given the need to construct bridges between the teachers and the communities in curriculum implementation, the Social Capital Theory, an 'emergent excitement' (Agneessens 2006:5), is the linchpin for this study.

The roots of the sociological theory, social capital, remain debatable. One school of thought (Putnam 2000) says the term was in occasional use from about 1890. It only became widely used in the late 1990s. Other researchers trace it back to the classical writings of Karl Marx, a German philosopher and sociologist in the 19th century, who saw it as a neo-capitalist theory (Lin 1999:28; Smith 2000-2009; Putnam 2000). Smith (2000-2009) assigns the emergence of social capital to Lydia Judson Hanifan's (1916:130) discussions of rural school community centres.

Putnum (2000) used the term *social capital* to describe those substances that count most in the daily lives of people, namely goodwill, fellowship, sympathy and social intercourse (Hanifan 1916:130, in Smith 2000-2009). Smith (2000-2009) underscored the need for social cohesion, how neighbours can work together to oversee schools, and personal investment in the community. In the early 1960s, Jane Jacobs (1961)   referred to the term 'social capital' when she indicated the value of networks. Robert Salisbury advanced the term as a critical component of interest group-formation in his 1969 article 'An Exchange Theory of Interest Groups (Jacobs 1961:138).

While the term *social capital* has been around for decades, it was from the works of Jane Jacobs (1961), Pierre Bourdieu (1983), James Coleman (1988) and given impetus by Robert Putnam (1993, 2000) in his published book *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community,* that it gained interest and popularity from both politicians and development agencies. In this book, Putnam (2000) noted the decline of community networks, informal ties, tolerance and trust that once led the Americans to 'bowl together' representing a loss of social capital (Smith 2001, 2007; Smith 2000-2009), a concern he thought needed redress.

The works of the three authorities (Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam) originate from almost the same thinking about social capital. Pierre Bourdieu(1983) looks at *social capital* as the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to the possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition (Smith 2000-2009). Furthermore, Smith (2000-2009) notes that Coleman (1988) views *social capital* as a variety of entities with two elements in common. Firstly, they all consist of some aspects of social structure, and secondly, they facilitate certain actions of actors within the structure. On the other hand, Putnam (2000) understands *social capital* to be the collective value of all social networks, and the inclinations that arise from these networks to do things for each other. He (Putnam) believes that social capital can be measured by the amount of trust and reciprocity in a community or between individuals. It is Putnam's conception of social capital which informs this study. These authorities (Putnam, Coleman & Bourdieu) converge on the central concepts of trust, norms, reciprocity and values (Papa, Singhal & Papa 2006:217; Agneessens 2006:3; Narayan & Cassidy 2001:59; Smith 2000-2009; Haralambos & Holborn 2008:863-864).

2.4.1 Definitional issues of *social capital*

A number of authorities have proffered some definitions of the concept *social capital,* understanding it from different angles as well as different contexts. Smith (2001, 2007) defines *social capital* in terms of connections among individuals, and those social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them. *Social capital* is also viewed as networks, together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate co-operation within or among groups (Smith 2001, 2007). The World Bank (1999) understands *social capital* to be the institutions, relationships and norms that shape the quality and quantity of a society's social interactions. According to The World Bank (1999), *social capital* is not just the total institutions which underpin a society. Rather, it is the glue that holds them together. Lin (1999) offers three definitions: firstly *social capital* is seen as a combination of network size, the relationship strength and the resources possessed by those in the network (Lin 1999:36). Secondly, Lin (1999) says that *social capital* is an investment in social relations by individuals through which they gain access to embedded resources to enhance expected returns of instrumental or expressive actions. Thirdly, *social capital* can also be defined as resources embedded in a social structure which are accessed and/or mobilised in purposive action (Lin 1999:35).

Critically important from these definitions is the debate suggesting the functions of social capital to the well-being of communities. The concept is rooted in the establishment of social networks and social relations, and the fact that these have important value (Putnam 2000).

The catch-phrases which are important in this discussion are social networks, community connections, civic engagement, social virtue and social interactions, which are closely knit together to explain *social capital* as a concept rooted in community life. Some aspects central to these definitions are embedded resources, accessibility to those resources and their mobilisation for use for the good of communities. These seemingly distinct terms are not exclusive of one another, but give clarity to the concept *social capital*. Social virtues underline that when people come together, those substances that are important in the daily lives of people such as goodwill, moral excellence, righteousness, fellowship, empathy, sympathy and social intercourse. (Narayan & Cassidy 2001:59; Woolcock & Narayan 2000:228). It is these patterns of social interrelationships that enable people to coordinate action to achieve the desired goals (Putnam 1993; Narayan & Cassidy 2001:59). Social capital thus thrives on the basis of mutual relationships and coordinated effort among heterogeneous groups.

Additionally, civic engagement, an attribute of social capital is borrowed from the politics of democracy where there is a need for extensive outward consultation by involving people and organisations across different social divides. Arefi (2003) identifies *consensus-building* as an important indicator of social capital, where consensus implies shared interest and agreement among various actors and stakeholders to induce collective action (Papa et al. 2006:218). Civic engagement becomes a way of mobilising solidarity and reciprocity through informal, loosely structured associations. In addition, Claridge (2004b) sees *community connections* as the interactions which enable people to build communities, to commit themselves to each other, and to knit the social fabric. Connections between individuals become trust between strangers, leading to trust of a broad fabric of social institutions, ultimately becoming a shared set of values, virtues and expectations. Smith (2000-2009) says that without these connections, trust decays, and this decay manifests itself in serious social problems.

The establishment of social networks is another critical aspect of social capital. It is a way of identifying those important links and resources which can be used for the common good. According to Smith (2000-2009), *social network* is a way of building a sense of belonging, identifying skills and talents, and of establishing productive relationships of trust and tolerance to bring great benefits to the people. Where social networks flourish, individuals, firms,

neighbourhoods, institutions and schools prosper economically and materially, as networks are used for strategic advantage and the advancement of interests. A thread running through these terms is that the strength of the community can be significant if well-handled for the good of the schools in these communities.

2.4.2 Social capital and community participation in curriculum implementation

In the light of these definitions it is essentially crucial to understand the interrelatedness and application of social capital in community participation in curriculum implementation as it relates to this study. The reflection of Arshad, Forbes and Catts (www.aers.ac.uk), namely that if social capital is to become an effective lever within the educational and social framework, then the key features of social capital, namely trust, building social networks with shared norms, values and understanding, needs to be understood by key players within the education community. Community participation in curriculum implementation can be realised when the teachers appreciate the community members as collective assets (Lin 1999:32). They can engage them to resolve the day-to-day classroom problems. According to Tedin and Weiher (2011:609-629), schools and their classrooms become more effective centres of learning when the parents and the local communities are closely and actively involved. Schools and their teachers should appreciate the major tenets of social capital that social networks, co-operation and trust serve as conduits for the flow of helpful information that facilitate achieving school and classroom goals (Smith 2000-2009). Communities are important reservoirs of knowledge and skills, and by excluding them, by not forging partnerships and networks, teachers and learners lose a lot from this social asset.

In this study Social Capital Theory can be a useful instrument and a useful lens for analysing lifelong learning (Kilpatrick, Johns & Mulford 2010:113-119). This also includes managing and understanding trust, the capture of embedded resources, network connections, a sustainable culture of co-operation and tolerance (Claridge 2004b) between teachers and communities for teacher support in curriculum implementation. However, heroic, creative and innovative the teacher may be in the classroom, he or she cannot make it alone in the curriculum implementation process. There is need for assistance from concerned interest groups and stakeholders as support pillars of teacher effort for curriculum implementation to be realised in full (Mufanechiya & Mufanechiya 2011b:88). Therefore, social capital is particularly important in terms of education (Kilpatrick et al. 2010).

Teachers cannot organise and understand curriculum issues among themselves without regularly engaging the communities around them (Smith 2000-2009). This is the case when circumstances dictate that these contacts serve as facilitating environments for many positive educational outcomes (Ashford & LeCroy 2010:181; Putnam (1993); Narayan & Cassidy 2001:59). Social capital would thrive when teachers and communities forge tighter links and when teachers rely on advice from and collaboration with the wider community (Agneessens 2006:3), including the advantage of teacher efficacy in teaching and learning situations.

Given that social capital is a collaborative mental disposition close to the spirit of oneness (www.en.citizendium.org), as the teachers implement the curriculum they can make use of the three types of social capital namely, bonding, bridging and linking (Smith 2000-2009). In bonding social capital, the teacher takes advantage of proximity to communities. It makes use of family situations and ties, the neighbours and other close friends to get ideas, resources and information on some aspects to be taught. Bridging social capital require from the teacher to transcend the narrow confines of family and neighbourhood to link with the 'external' assets (Smith 2000-2009; Putnam 2000) such as colleagues and associates. Thus providing an opportunity to co-operate, innovate and exchange ideas which find expression in the classroom. Finally, the teacher can also take advantage of linking social capital. It is both vertical and horizontal, up and down the social ladder to reach out to socially heterogeneous groups in dissimilar situations in order to get ideas and information useful for successful curriculum implementation (Putnam 2000). This all-embracing engagement practice of the social environment, an attribute of social capital, avails to the teacher important sources of information for curriculum implementation by affirming that the school is an integral part of the community. The World Bank (1999) argues that schools will be more effective when the parents and the local community members are actively involved. The teachers will be more committed and students' performance will be high when the parents and other community members take an active interest in the children's educational well-being.

Creating this symbiotic relationship and having these synergies with communities through social capital have some added advantage, primarily of teacher confidence and a wider knowledge-base, among others. The community members are not reduced to spectators and onlookers, but become more committed to the education of the children. Putnam (2000:296-306) made the following observation about the advantage of social capital:

Child development is powerfully shaped by social capital. Trust, networks and norms of reciprocity within a child's family, school, peer group and larger community have far-reaching effects on their opportunities and choices, educational achievement and hence on their behaviour and development……. The presence of social capital has been linked to various positive outcomes, particularly in education.

This underlines the notion that the pillars of social capital, such as trust, reciprocity, social networks and co-operation with community members have value in curriculum implementation. A teacher with adequate information is creative and innovative, promoting the pupils' success, and making classroom life sustainable and easy to manage.

The study looks at this theory and how it can be a viable vehicle for managing and understanding these network connections between the teachers and the communities. Teacher support in curriculum implementation can be build by a sustainable culture of cooperation, trust and tolerance (Claridge 2004a). These social contacts would be a strength for the teachers. They would also significantly influence their access to resources associated with their capacity for being productive in the classroom (Ashford & LeCroy 2010:181).

The Social Capital Theory has the advantage of being multi-dimensional and multi-disciplinary. It is flexible enough in its application to different concepts and contexts (Claridge 2004b). According to Narayan and Cassidy (2001:59) it has gained wide acceptability as an important theoretical perspective for understanding and predicting social relations among heterogeneous groups. The tendency between the school and the wider community has been to see each other in exclusive terms. The relationship, however, holds significant implications for curriculum implementation. Social capital is enacted through patterns of constructive engagement, trust and mutual obligation (Papa et al. 2006:218). It has the potential of creating and strengthening supportive connections, the flow of information, and cooperative actions that keep schools and communities healthy (Myers 2008:434). Schulle et al. (2000:34-35, in Agneessens 2006:5-6) believe that if the tenets of social capital concerning the relationship between teachers and the community were to be taken seriously, they would signal a view of the world where conflict is denied or suppressed.

With this in mind, the blame-game between the teachers and the communities when the learners experience learning difficulties in the classroom, will be greatly minimised. In fact, the impact of social capital on the relationship between the teachers and the communities when they are

connected with one another is that trust grows, improving productivity in classrooms (Papa et al. 2006:218). The idea is to embrace Hillary Clinton's famous reflection that, "It takes a village to raise a child" and is based on collective connectedness (Ashford & LeCroy 2010:340). The teacher's success in the classroom, thus, cannot be anchored on individualism.

The Social Capital Theory, with its pillars, underpins and shapes the quantity and quality of the learning experiences of the pupils in the classroom.

2.5 COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN RETROSPECT

The history of community participation has its roots in the creation of democratic space for collective action by all the citizens for the good and benefit of all (Ranson 1994:72; Bull 2011:5; www.infed.org). For a long time community participation the world over has been synonymous with development literature thus becoming communities' entry point (Mataire 2014:10) in decision-making processes and the evaluation of projects that directly affect them (Swift-Morgan 2006:340; Gboku & Lekoko 2007:147). It became, what seemed to be the magic bullet for harnessing collective thinking and effort, taking advantage of proximity for successful community development projects (Claridge 2004a; Leel 2007, in Ternieden 2009:1 ; Marsland 2006:66- 67).

In the Western world and the Americas the concept *community participation* was mainly associated with broad issues of social development and in the creation of opportunities for the involvement of people in the political, economic and social life of a nation (www.infed.org). In Africa, generally, during the preliterate epoch, community participation included communally working together and inculcating social values, attitudes and norms to the young (Ornstein, Levine & Gutek 2011:53). It was at the centre of the people's existence. The people took advantage of so many knowledgeable and skilled people, namely historians, teachers, philosophers, doctors and engineers (Sharma 2009:60; Mataire 2014:10) who always came together to conquer adversity and celebrate success. According to Adeyemi and Adeyinka (2002:223), before the introduction of Western civilisation into Africa, education was purely indigenous, societal-oriented and societal-based. The study therefore saw benefits in placing those skills, knowledge and ideas from the community into formal education. The education of the young must include both schools and communities as it affects all (Barrow & White 1993:55).

One notable African contributor to community participation was Julius Nyerere with his concept of African socialism rooted in self-reliance (kujitegemea). This is when citizens were collectively obliged to contribute their labour and resources in a community effort to build the nation (kujenga taifa) (Marsland 2006:66). Nyerere's (1968b, in Major& Mulvihill 2009:16) view was that by tradition and nature, Africans were and are people who work together for the benefit of all the members of the society. African societies acknowledged public goods and services were collective goods; provided for one they were necessarily provided for all (Ranson 1994:72).

Soon after the independence of Zimbabwe in 1980, the ZANU (PF) government, with its thrust on the scientific socialism ideology, popularised cooperatives (mishandirapamwe). The government saw it as a viable socio-economic problem-solving mechanisms to the challenges of community development, especially in agriculture and in the provision of urban accommodation (Develtere, Pollet & Wanyama 2008). Chamisa (2013:16) adds that community participation was better defined by the community confluence and conference on those important issues that affected the society. Furthermore, every adult member of the society had a responsibility to carefully guide and develop young children into the culture of the society (Adeyemi & Adeyinka 2002:224), a cooperative affair (mushandirapamwe).

Turning to education, years of colonialism which ushered in formal education, have depersonalised and defamiliarised communities with their children's education (Mataire 2014:10). History has it that the school compounds and its environs were out of bounds for the general public unless they were admitted by invitation (Puna 1976:37). Today a parent would feel threatened by being invited to school. In most cases it would have something to do with disciplinary problems with the child or the non-payment of fees and other levies. The Cooks Island realised and recognised the importance of communities in the provision of education. Their 1966 Education Act made provision for the establishment of a School Association. Its major thrust was to represent the community in school affairs of a general nature, and to assist in the effective maintenance of the school grounds, the buildings, the equipment and amenities (Puna 1976:37).

In Zimbabwe the 1987 Education Act, which was the post-colonial instrument to guide education, glaringly did not indicate any role for communities in educational matters. It was the amended 2006 Education Act section 36 of Cap 25:04 (2006:26) which provided for parent/guardian involvement in education through the School Parents Assembly (SPA). The

School Development Committee (SDC) shows how close communities are involved in education, and reads in part:

(1) Parents or guardians with children at any school shall constitute a School Parents Assembly.

(2) The responsible authority of any registered school shall cause the School Parents Assembly to establish a School Development Committee.

This Act was reinforced by the 1992 and 1998 regulations for government and non-governmental schools respectively. The two instruments, namely Act 5/87:631 & 2542; and the Statutory Instrument 379 of 1998, have the same objectives with regards to the involvement of the School Development Committee, a body representing parents/guardians. These are

(a) to promote, improve and encourage the development and maintenance of the school;

(b) to assist in the advancement of the moral, cultural, physical, spiritual and intellectual welfare of pupils at the school; and

(c) to promote and encourage programmes of interest, both educational and social, for the benefit of the pupils and their parents and teachers.

One interesting function of the School Development Committee, according to the Statutory Instrument 379 of 1998: 2542(a) is to:

assist in the organisation and administration of secular and non-academic activities   of the school in consultation with the headmaster.

The role of the communities, according to these instruments guiding education in Zimbabwe, remain a pipe-dream and remain limited to those with children at the school. It appears that both the political and educational leaders in Zimbabwe have not yet realised the importance of the communities in curriculum implementation and continue to side-line them.

Not so pronounced in these efforts was how the implementation of the curriculum would profit from this dialogue with the community, thus isolating it to the fringes of the community's concerns. This study thus aimed at looking at the challenge of how to adapt to new ideas and how to still maintain the community-classroom link (Ornstein et al. 2011:55).

The term *education* has its roots in the Latin word 'educare', with its synonyms: educo (to bring up), educavi (to guide) and educatum (to direct) (Adeyemi & Adeyinka 2002:226). From this Latin origin, and by implication, the education process assumes that educating the young,

the future leaders, was not left to chance (Lambert 2008). It was a preserve of the adult members of the family or society who picked out those activities which were judged to be worthwhile (Barrow & White 1993:49; Ornstein et al. 2011:53). In the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial societies in Africa, educating the young has always been a collective community responsibility, not only of the parents or guardians (Lambert 2008; Adeyemi & Adeyinka 2002:223; Matsika 2000), with the truism, 'It takes a village to raise a child' (Major & Mulvihill 2009:15; Ashford & LeCroy 2010:340). Thus, learning was and is the individual's interaction with the social environment (Kyriacou 1997:25).

The coming on-board of formal Western education, where missionaries regarded education as an essential element of their missionary work (Zvobgo 1994:14), changed the whole educational landscape for Africans. There was a paradigm shift from networked African communal life to where education became for the privileged few. There was also the introduction of Western values and traditions of capitalism that were in direct conflict with African values and traditions (Major & Mulvihill 2009:17). This saw the isolation of communities from actively and directly participating in the education of their children. The result was the maiming of the community psyche that they cannot contribute to the educational process without the generosity and benevolence of the school authorities (Mataire 2014:10). Individualism at the expense of the community reared its ugly head as communities became fragmented, motivated by selfishness and greed. Schools and communities became two separate entities in the scheme of things, reducing community members to only being capable of producing labour (Mataire 2014:10) when an on-going relationship was ideal. What this conservative approach (Gorinski & Fraser 2006:21) achieved was to create a sense of loss, hopelessness and dejection as communities saw the umbilical cord of the origin of their children cut by the schools (Mataire 2014:10). Reclaiming that position for communities has and will never be an easy process. The need for teachers to learn more about what works to generate better outcomes (Leadbeater 2011) has become imperative.

Today's learners and the fluidity on the information highly demands that teachers and communities celebrate diversity together, building educational profit out of their differences, hence providing an educational menu with a lot of variety (Chamisa 2013:6). The study hopes to bury and repair the ugly past of exclusion, suspicion and historical distortion. This could be realised by ushering in the birth of a new participatory era, creating a greater teacher-community bond (www.wisegeek.com), thus channelling learners through the right educational paths.

2.6 THE ROLE OF COMMUNITIES IN CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION

Education is multifaceted. The dimensions boarder on which decisions must be made (Barnhardt 2006:1) especially on whom to consult, when and how during teaching and learning. To look at the teacher from a holier-than-thou position (Barnhardt 2006:26) as the sole gatekeeper of knowledge and approaches, and with the notion that learning occurs within the walls of an educational premise (Burkill & Eaton 2011:4) is to demean and steal the value communities and other stakeholders are capable of adding to the complex and fluid curriculum implementation. Community participation has been loosely conceived, defined and implemented. It remains vague especially in educational terms, to mean monetary contribution, the support of the construction of the school, and anything outside the classroom (Chindanya 2011:11; Aref 2010:2; Bull 2011:2; Laurence 2010:188, Swift-Morgan 2006:348; Rose 2003b:3). This establishment and support of schools by communities, according to Rose (2003b:3), has always been evident in many African countries. It is often seen as a response to the failure of the government's provision.

Communities have played a relatively passive and isolated supporting role, especially in curriculum implementation matters. The school and its teachers were seen as experts (Barnhardt 2006:5; Swift-Morgan 2006:354; Ciaccio 1999:65). Many educational innovations today are anchored on the strong foundation that communities are part of an existing learning landscape (Burkill & Eaton 2011:5; Laurence 2010:188). The effect of the educational systems in most Third World countries today for most children, Zimbabwe included, tend to mean breaking with their communities rather than the connection and integration into it (De Katele & Cherif 1994:62). These seemingly smallest moments of connection and collaboration with their communities, teachers and their schools should appreciate, can have the biggest impact on a child's educational life by restoring the stripped sense of community and identity (Mataire 2014:10).

 Many initiatives to involve the communities have not transcended the widely-held values of limiting community participation to defined areas outside the classroom. However, the need to get into these classrooms where the transaction between the teacher and the learners take place, cannot be overemphasised. The proposed study articulates curriculum implementation as an intervention area where communities can make significant contributions for its success. Furthermore, research (Chindanya 2011; Ngwenya 2010) has underlined parental involvement but the bigger picture is to see the whole community as a multi-layered system capable of

reforming and transforming classroom practice (Ngwenya 2010:1). Strengthening the capacity of communities to participate in curriculum implementation activities would be ways in which the schools can actively enhance the learning opportunities provided to the pupils. It is also a way of energising the community's responsibilities towards the child's academic and social development (Bull 2011:3-4). Involving communities in classroom activities would mean putting to good use human resources locally available (Magazine for Alumni and Friends Connected 2010:26), hence discovering new forms of partnerships that might not have existed before. Agneessens (2006:3) and Wilson et al. (2008:390) assert that it is becoming increasingly difficult for a teacher to possess all the necessary knowledge and competencies in the classroom at all times. The need for increased division of expertise, skills and information cannot be overemphasised.

Schools do not exist in vacuums, independent of influences beyond the teaching-learning context (Burkill & Eaton 2011:4), be they political, social, cultural or economic (Lauridsen 2003:11; Miller 1995:5). The involvement of communities in the classrooms needs to be boosted through carefully crafted engagement practices (De Katele & Cherif 1994:62). There is need to exploit interactive aspects of learning which sit alongside traditional didactic methods (Burkill & Eaton 2011:5) which have established classroom monotony with little pedagogical renewal (Ciaccio 1994:65; ADEA 2005:17). The need for increased emphasis on communities to participate in general school activities, and more specifically in curriculum implementation through pedagogy and classroom support (Swift-Morgan 2006:347), indicates the need for consensus on how, when and what to contribute. There is need to create alliances premised on the realisation that expertise does not solely reside in the school and its teachers (Russell et al. 2012:1; Marsh 2009:205; Mathbor 2008:90) but also in its environs. The building of dialogue with communities, developing partnerships and getting them on board (Burkill & Eaton 2011:7) in curriculum implementation enriches the primary school curriculum.

Engaging communities is not about creating a revolution in the nature of teaching and learning (Laurence 2010:190). It is not a 'handover' of the responsibilities of teaching and learning to the communities (Burkill & Eaton 2011:162). When schools engage communities they unlock the richness of the community's potential. Further, it expands the pupils' horizons and evolving connections with existing learning to develop new learning (Burkill & Eaton 2011:165; De Katele & Cherif 1994:60) and using the best of both worlds (Barnhardt 2006:2). With communities engaged, what is learnt in the classroom derives its meaning from the community

context. Sources of knowledge, skills and values should be seamless. Limiting it contributes to the dearth of knowledge and ideas in the classroom (Wilson et al. 2008:388).

The top-down approach (Burkill & Eaton 2011:3) currently reflected in the Zimbabwean primary classrooms is drawn from the classical Western tradition of rigid categories of knowledge represented by the major disciplines (Barnhardt 2006:6). The Zimbabwean primary school teacher teaches eleven subjects using the teacher-led approach. The primary school curriculum, thus, is content-heavy, making it easy for teachers to teach knowledge in a methodical way without consideration of the wider aspects that impact on learning (Johnston, Chater & Bell 2010:4). The questions raised include, namely

'To what extent can the Zimbabwean primary school teacher be an expert in all the eleven subjects?' 'How effective and rewarding have the pupils' experiences at school been?'

Rural primary schools, according to Naidu et al. (2012:130), are fortunately situated in the middle of abundant potential resource persons. These can be used in efforts to improve classroom learning and general academic achievements of learners. Sadly, communities remain idle assets. Yet the teachers struggle to 'make ends face' in the four walls of the classroom in the midst of plenty (Wilson et al. 2008:388).

While it should be appreciated that most members of the community may have the least training and education (Kerry 2001:176) they can make significant contribution to curriculum implementation in many and varied ways. With well-defined specific classroom roles given by the relevant teacher(s), communities can be assigned the following possible roles, as outlined by Kerry (2001:190):

- special-needs support;
- ICT support and specialist instructions;
- subject-specific support and specialist instruction;
- being a visiting speaker/expert;
- conducting story time;
- supervising games; and
- sports coaching.

In addition, Bull (2011:4) noted the role of communities as:

- facilitating home-school alignment;

- building relationships between teachers and families, and organisations;

- giving their input in the relevant teaching contexts for their children;

- improving the learners' academic and social contexts; and

- being a resource.

Furthermore, there are some syllabus topics with which knowledgeable community members can enrich the curriculum implementation process. Some good examples include, Social Studies (the liberation struggle), where some members of the community have first-hand experiences and some are war veterans; Shona issues, like traditional ceremonies; Religious Studies (Christianity and tradition). The list is endless. In the process, the communities can build the teachers' and pupils' knowledge base rather than having a 'tokenistic' way (Gorinski & Fraser 2006:21) of engaging community members in general school activities.

As noted by Ranson (1994:70), the classroom is different from a market which allows many buyers and sellers to exchange goods and services through voluntary transactions uncoordinated by any planning authority. The role of communities in sophisticated classroom life is usually systematically controlled. There is pre-planning management of communities' delegated involvement mediated by teachers and putting in place security checks and vetting procedures (Barrow & White 1993:53; Kerry 2001:183; Wilson et al. 2008:359). The pleasure community members derive from the chance to contribute meaningfully in curriculum implementation is the development of a number of important social, cultural and academic skills (Stielau 2012:458), which experiences are cumulative for the pupils (Barnhardt 2006:1).

When communities have a visible presence in the classroom, the pupils will more likely see a meaningful connection between their studies and their eventual success in the community (Howley & Maynard 2003). Thus, the role of the community is to support the schools materially and financially, but more specifically, collaborate with the teachers to produce new knowledge and ideas (Bull 2011:4) and further cement existing partnerships.

2.7 THE ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS OF THE STAKEHOLDERS TOWARDS COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION

The success of any attempt to involve the communities in curriculum implementation heavily depends on the attitudes and perceptions of both the teachers and the community members (Swift-Morgan 2006:359). The diversity of situational and professional conditions prevailing between the teachers and the communities have created high levels of suspicion and a lack of

respect for each other. This leads to dysfunction and a failure to pursue avenues of interest (Barnhardt 2006:26) by both parties. To engage communities in productive educational interaction, teachers think, is to 'sell their profession' to 'non-believers'. They would rather survive alone in the classroom 'wilderness' (Hargreaves 1996:71; Barnhardt 2006:29).

Community participation in the 'sacred area' of curriculum implementation, a minefield, is heavily contested, as Swift-Morgan's (2006:354) research in Ethiopia indicated:

> *There is no viable role for communities in the classroom, said one teacher. Because parents are not educated, voiced another group of teachers, they have nothing to contribute to the teaching and learning process. Community involvement in the classroom would provide no advantage.*

Given these feelings and attitudes by the teachers regarding the community's role in the classroom, a mindset change to embrace classroom support systems from the community might be a pipe-dream. Communities, on the other hand, see the classroom as a teacher professional area preferring to evaluate teachers' performance through examination results (Swift-Morgan 2006:355).

However, communities may previously have had these feelings, but today there is a growing desire to make an imprint on teaching and learning rather than to being relegated to the fringes of effective involvement. Elliot (2006:61) laments that today's classroom teaching and learning has become a straight-jacket rather than a flexible situation permitting other players to make a contribution. The challenge is to harness inherent community strength, skills, knowledge and abilities by means of engagement strategies (Manitoba Community Engagement Framework 2008:12). This has a bearing on communities' involvement in educational matters. This raises many questions in respect of the nature of their involvement. Munt's (2002:3) questions become relevant, namely

- Who are the people to be involved?
- In what capacity can they be involved?
- What is the best way to open up dialogue?
- At what point can communities be involved?
- What processes need to be established to include the communities?

These questions are pertinent, as they touch on the nerve of community participation in curriculum implementation. They raise issues which need resolution for strengthening and maintaining teacher-community partnership in the classroom. The idea is to ensure that the teachers are not to be isolated in the self-contained classrooms (Ornstein et al. 2011:198). Community members need to generate the capacity to create new learning opportunities (Lambert 2008) for the teachers and the pupils, allowing practice to cross the boundaries of classrooms.

There are many factors shaping teacher-community attitudes and perceptions towards engagement practices. These include the teachers' beliefs about their profession, guarding their territories, fear of being 'exposed', their classroom experiences, their expectations about success and failure (MacLean 2003:40). According to Hargreaves (1996: ix), the quality, range and flexibility of teachers to accommodate others in their classroom work is tied to their beliefs and values about the teaching profession with the questions: 'Can the classroom be opened to all?' 'Do the teachers believe that all members of the community should be held to the same standards?' and 'Are communities willing and able partners?' (Swift-Morgan 2006:347; McDiamid 1995; Preedy 1993:210). Many teachers, however, feel threatened by the involvement of communities in educational matters (Humphreys 1993:169; Hargreaves 1996:150). They fear that engaging community members in curriculum implementation, the teachers may experience a loss of boundaries and influence with little distinction between themselves and the community members (Hargreaves 1996:71). This has created attitudes and perceptions that engaging the communities can obliterate real academic classroom discourse and reflection (Hargreaves 1996:71). In this regard teachers continue to find ways to protect their classroom territories.

Teachers believe that engaging the community members in curriculum implementation, who may use any language in the classroom which is not English, may create what Rose (2000:52) calls 'instructional dead time'. This is where there is little or no learning. With this belief the teachers 'close' their classrooms (Preedy 1993:211). Yet, communities are fully aware of their potential. The challenge they face is knowing how the information they posess is relevant to teaching and learning (Training and Research Support Centre (TARSC) 2006:38). Communities are usually omitted from curriculum implementation (Holcomb 2009:73) because, according to Swift-Morgan (2006:355) the educated cannot be assisted and evaluated by the uneducated. They do not have the technical capacity, yet there are very few classroom problems that can be solved without the involvement of communities. It is this history of

mistrust that makes it difficult to generate authentic participation in education in general and in curriculum implementation in particular from most communities (Holcomb 2009:75, 150). Swift-Morgan's (2006:359). Research shows that the teachers' attitudes have a significant influence on the communities' perception of whether participation is possible or worthwhile.

Researches on parental involvement (Chindanya 2011; Ngwenya 2010) and community involvement (Swift-Morgan 2006) have converged on the understanding that involving these stakeholders in educational matters has the advantage of enabling the teachers to use an eclectic approach. Educational experiences do not remain within the narrow confines of the school, more specifically the classroom (Barnhardt 2006:2). It is what the teachers think, what the teachers believe and what the teachers do (Hargreaves 1996: ix) which can make or break the working with communities in pursuit of common classroom goals. It becomes incumbent upon both parties (teachers and communities) to heal the pain from previous non engagement practices (Holcomb 2009:75). Both parties need to hear the whole story, see the full picture, know the main worries, knowledge and strengths (Davis, Day & Bidmead 2002:ix) and to build a long-lasting effective relationship. A sound relationship is impossible if the communities and teachers dislike or distrust each other.

Furthermore, the teacher-community relationship in classroom issues is shaped by how they value each other. Community participation is often limited to certain people. It is generally the parents/guardians of the children enrolled in school, or those persons with more education and other enlightened members of the community (Swift-Morgan 2006:356). Regrettably, though, the poorer community members who cannot easily leave their fields and other wage-earning jobs are less likely to be involved in the curriculum implementation process (Swift-Morgan 2006:356). The involvement process should look beyond attitudes such as race, ethnicity, gender, language or dialect, social class and disabilities. Instead focus should be on their potential to provide useful information that can scaffold the teachers' teaching and the pupils' learning. Swift-Morgan (2006: 358) has this to say:

> *Although communities may be very poor, they won't retreat and refuse to participate.*
> *They see education as sunshine. It is light.*

Thus, the involvement can take on board members of the community, such as chiefs, headmen, religious leaders, elders, local association members, health workers and significant others. They can enter the exclusive territory of the teacher (Swift-Morgan 2006:358) the classroom, as a converging point in enriching the pupils' learning (Bull 2011:3).

The process of community engagement in curriculum implementation is heavily dependent upon good communication. Communication influences and is influenced by the nature of the community-teacher relationship (Davis et al. 2002:35). Communication entails making essential impressions about each member/group in the community as being understood, trusted, helpful or useful in a number of ways. Literature (Davis et al. 2002; Bull 2011; Munt 2002; Burkhill & Eaton 2011) has shown that the communities are always ready to be engaged in curriculum implementation issues. It can be achieved as long as they are respected, are shown care and consideration, and if the teachers are also free to disclose and discuss intimate aspects of their classroom lives (Davis et al. 2002:35). This may seem novel, especially to teachers, but this potentially supportive relationship can help the teachers get information, advice, possible strategies and the necessary resources. It becomes a vehicle by which curriculum implementation can be delivered more effectively.

With a change in attitude the communities can be accorded the importance they deserve in curriculum implementation, given the kind of help and support they provide. Appreciating that primary school teachers cannot be all-knowing and all-competent (Davis et al 2002: xii) in the eleven subjects they are required to teach is important.

2.8 BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION

The process of working together a mutually beneficial engagement between teachers and community members starts off with establishing a sound partnership with a common understanding based on effective communication. The journey to get to know each other and come to a working agreement (Davis et al. 2002:35) is never easy. Usually it is fraught with differences and conflicts (Holcomb 2009:149). It is the failure by both the teachers and the community members to manage and cope with differences and conflicts that has kept them apart. Gorinski and Fraser (2006:21) note barriers to effective community participation as including, firstly, the inferiority complex of community members premised on the fact that teachers have the qualifications and hold the responsibility to educate their children. Secondly, the communities feel that it is interference to contribute to curriculum implementation. Finally, the language of education has excluded communities to effectively participate in curriculum implementation. Therefore, among a plethora of problems of effective community participation in curriculum implementation are, namely the language of education, feelings of inadequacy, time constraints given the content-heavy primary school curriculum, among others.

2.8.1 The language of education

Language is at the centre of the whole curriculum implementation process. It should be a language that all the stakeholders, the teachers, the pupils and the members of the community can comprehend - a community-friendly language (Gorinski & Fraser 2006:28). Sadly, Africa remains the only continent where children receive their schooling in a language other than their home language (Mutasa 2006:60; Prah 2008:21; Miti 2008:70). The selection of English as the medium of instruction has marginalised the majority of the population to participate in educational matters (Mufanechiya & Mufanechiya 2011b:115-116). This places them in a decided disadvantage. In addition, Miti (2008:70) asserts that this colonial language has precluded most Africans from effectively participating in educational matters. In Zimbabwe, as is the case in most African countries, the majority of the populations are second language speakers of English. Seventy percent reside in the rural areas. Classroom sharing with communities, according to Gorinski & Fraser (2006:21), has not generated the desired extended and expanded dialogue between the teachers and the community members (Ternieden 2009:1). The use of English which is in favour of the minority, threatens the interests and survival of the communities (Mufanechiya & Mufanechiya 2011b:116-117). On the language of instruction as an exclusion instrument, Miti (2008:68) has this to say:

> *A lot of the communities have remained excluded from classroom activities because language policies in most African countries favour the development and use of ex-colonial languages of Europe as mediums of instruction…………*

The Zimbabwean 1987 Education Act (Section 55 paragraphs 2 and 3:255) addresses the language of instruction from infant level upwards as follows:

> (2) Prior to the fourth grade, either of the languages (Shona, Ndebele and English) referred to in paragraph (a) or (b) of subsection (1) may be used as the medium of instruction, depending upon which language is more commonly spoken and better understood by the pupils.

> (3) From the fourth grade, English shall be the medium of instruction.

A departure from the above was noted in the 2006 amended Education Act (Section 62 paragraph 4:28) which reads in part:

Prior to form one, any one of the languages referred to in subsection (1) and (2) (Shona, Ndebele and English) may be used as the medium of instruction, depending upon which language is more commonly spoken and better understood by the pupils.

The education leaders and policymakers, in crafting this 2006 policy document, may have realised the need for a language at primary school level that is understood by the most of the pupils and the community members. May be to facilitate teacher-community engagement. Community members can be involved in curriculum implementation when they are active in providing time for children to study at home and assist them when necessary. The community members also monitor academic work at home (Swift-Morgan 2006:357, Gorinski & Fraser 2006:25) thereby reinforcing concepts taught at school. Community members may even come to school to talk on selected topics. If community members are engaged in this way, they feel useful and experience a sense of self-esteem (Ciaccio 1999:63). They, therefore, become aware of the positive contribution they can make to curriculum implementation. This can, however, materialise when the language of education is within their realm of understanding. English only has, however, not made this possible.

The use of English has stripped most members of the community of the means of verbal expression (Chimhundu 1988). It has left most community members in a mentally disadvantaged position. The professional jargon used by teachers seems designed to frustrate, isolate and disempower the communities (Gorinski & Fraser 2006:26). Robinson (1996:67) observed that the mother tongue, which is the language most used in the communities, cannot be used during the teaching and learning process. It has been relegated to oral usage, individual/community usage, emotional attachment, village solidarity and personal loyalties. Community members have been reduced, by the language of education, to mere onlookers denying the pupils the opportunity of experiencing a sense of community in the classroom. This is the case in respect of both the teachers and the community members exchanging and sharing experiences (ADEA 2005:18). The use of English as the medium of instruction in Zimbabwean schools has destroyed the community's confidence in its ability to effectively contribute to the curriculum implementation process.

2.8.2 Feelings of inadequacy

Participating in activities one has doubt in can be stressful and can destroy one's dignity, belief and self-esteem. Academic work is held with very high esteem, full of rigour and order.

Community members often feel they do not know much about the school's culture and think that they do not have funds of knowledge (DeCastro-Ambrosetti & Cho 2005:2). They feel intimidated by the school and classroom procedures and expectations (Howley & Maynard 2003). Members of most rural communities often have a low level of education and socio-economic status creating a fragile situation (Marsh 2009:210; Hargreaves 1996:71). They think that if invited to contribute to teaching and learning, they may not be able to teach pupils anything meaningful.

Humphreys (1993:171) says that community members are not experts in classroom matters and do not see themselves as sources of help and support. Community members view teachers as 'experts'. They consequently tend to disengage themselves from the educational experiences of their children (Gorinski & Fraser 2006:24). This feeling of inadequacy among community members may arise from the members' own unsuccessful or negative school experiences. This, then, creates a barrier to their involvement. Often community members doubt their own expertise and competence regarding classroom work. They often see it as a preserve of those who were trained to do so (teachers). Swift-Morgan's (2006:355) research attests to that, where one parent said:

We should not be involved in the technical part of teaching. That's not our job.

Therefore, feelings of inadequacy and the teachers' attitudes (Ornstein et al. 2011:205) have kept communities and classroom teaching apart. With this kind of feeling, communities have not seen themselves as relevant in curriculum implementation matters.

On the other hand, some teachers feel discomforted in involving the communities. They have been accustomed to functioning without communities being central to their work (Preedy 1993:201). They often view communities as incapable or incompetent in relation to knowledgeable participation (Gorinski & Fraser 2006:25). Teachers have denied communities access to essential core classroom activities, skills and practices. Partnership-building between teachers and communities in the classroom is negated by teachers who feel threatened and exposed for their inadequacies in terms of their expertise and abilities. They erect an 'interference wall' by regarding communities in curriculum implementation as counterproductive to children's learning (Gorinski & Fraser 2006:23; Zimmerman 2006:240; Preedy 1993:203). Preedy (1993:201) indicates that some teachers possess professional uncertainty, lacking knowledge and skills in some content areas. They, thus, have 'closed' their

classrooms. They declared teacher autonomy in order to protect 'threats to their power' (Zimmerman 2006:240).

2.8.3 The time factor

The daily Zimbabwean primary school programme is packed from start to finish. The primary and secondary school curriculum has largely remained academic (Mufanechiya & Mufanechiya 2011b:101). Much emphasis is placed on implementing the eleven academic subjects, thereby making primary schooling a labour-intensive industry (Preedy 1993:200). In their research Burgess et al. (2010:53) found that time was an issue for teachers in the classroom. It was a consistent concern across all educational settings. Attempting to find time to slot in community members and 'disrupting teachers' well established routine' (Zimmerman 2006:240) has never been easy. According to Preedy (1993:202), with this pressure for time in a content-heavy curriculum, community engagement receives a low priority. Preedy (1993:202) further adds that teachers' hours of work were not drawn up to include educational partnerships with the communities. The teachers often reflect this stance as given by their employers.

Unless teachers understand and appreciate the need to create time to involve communities in their classrooms, their interest in maintaining the status quo will undoubtedly take precedence over their willingness to accept a new dispensation (Zimmerman 2006:239). Teachers may have a well-intended desire to alter a lot of practices in the classroom by engaging community members, but the lack of time remains an ongoing challenge. The pressure for time has been necessitated by what Singh (2010) says is the desire on the part of the teacher for good results in externally and internally set examinations, combined with the pressure of covering the syllabus on time. This results in what Burgess et al. (2010:53) term 'superficial curriculum implementation'. Mufanechiya (2012:655) laments this situation when she says that it is now common practise in Zimbabwean schools that the examinations dictate the curriculum instead of following it. The greatest casualty being quality education. Sadly, the examinations test skills that are far removed from the pupils' actual life experiences (Barnhardt 2006:29).

The pressure on time as a result of the professional workload of the primary school teacher has seen teachers dipping into the curriculum bucket and picking the content to meet their expertise and knowledge (Burgess et al. 2010:57). As a result, teachers do not consult community members on curriculum issues. The knowledge and meaningful value-addition of community

members to the development of the whole child, lost given time constraints, remain 'a stone that we often leave unturned' (Lambert 2003:11, in Zimmerman 2006:242).

2.9 MITIGATION TO CHALLENGES OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION

There are many educational profits to be derived from engaging the communities in curriculum implementation, despite the challenges faced by stakeholders in implementing these classroom reforms. There are no problems that are insurmountable as long as there is a will.

For the rural teachers to be successful in combating their classroom problems, they have to capitalise on their ties with the community (Howley & Maynard 2003). Soliciting community participation involves moving everyday life into the classroom and moving the classroom out into everyday life (Barnhardt 2006:23). This requires careful and considered planning by the teacher. Transcending the narrow boundaries of the protected school and classroom into the realm of environmental eclecticism requires the building of capacities of both the teacher and the communities (Manitoba Community Engagement Framework 2008:22). This constructive partnership goes beyond unproductive blaming (Howley & Maynard 2003). It should be underpinned by joint exploration of the real-life opportunities available in the surrounding natural, physical and social environment (Barnhardt 2006:26). The success of any meaningful partnership between the teachers and the communities in curriculum implementation depends on the kind of orientation given to the persons involved (Barnhardt 2006:26).

Sustainable community engagement in curriculum implementation can be achieved by means of a number of community-friendly ways. For example, Gboku and Lekoko (2007:147) and the Manitoba Community Engagement Framework (2008:22) indicate that information-sharing between communities and teachers is essentially the most basic element. It helps the communities to understand what goes on in the classroom, putting them on the right path for involvement. Furthermore, the Manitoba Community Engagement Framework (2008:18) indicates that the information - sharing should be accurate, timely, relevant and within the community's realm of understanding. Wilcox (1999) gives a ladder of participation, where information is deemed top priority, showing the kind of partnership that can be developed between the schools and the communities. The following figure, adapted from Wilcox (1999), shows the kind of relationship that should be developed and eventually exist between the teachers and the community members.
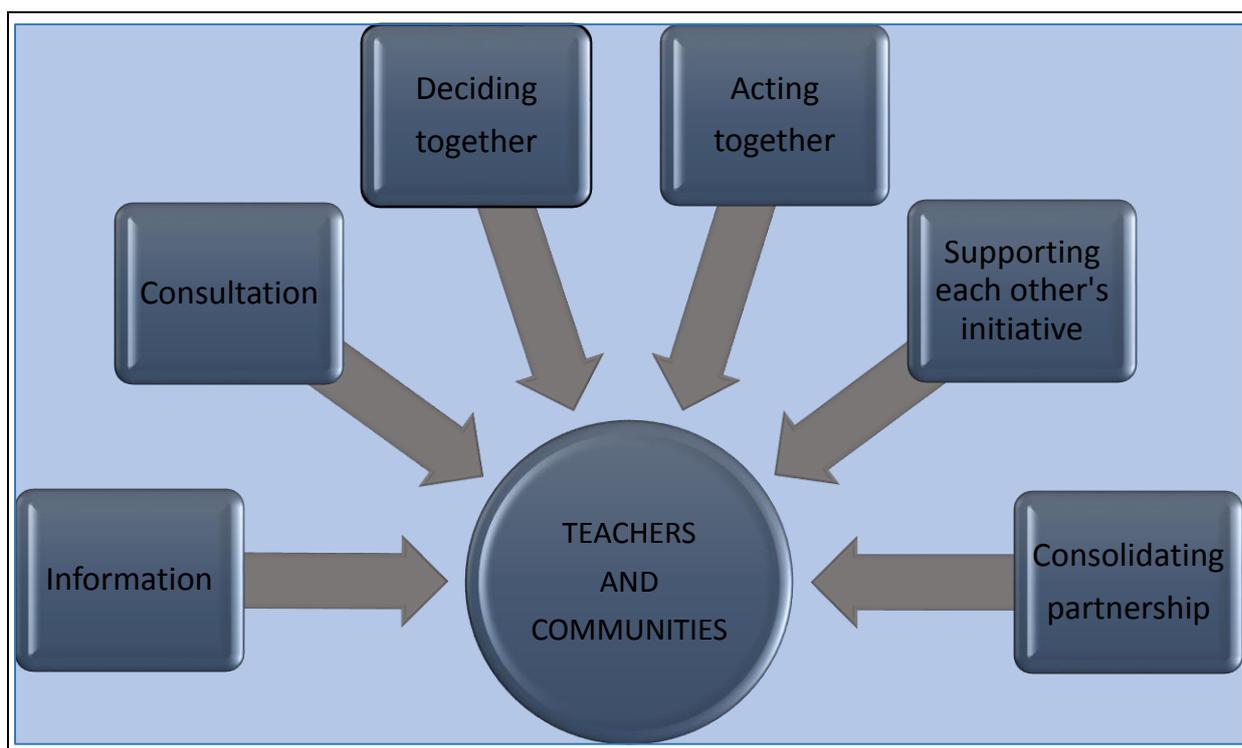
Figure 2.1: Partnership between teachers and community members

TARSC (2006:27) adds that a community that is well-informed about existing classroom activities stands a better chance of raising its voice, debating and demanding inclusion and participation. Information is power.

Before the engagement process can begin, the teacher has to do what TARSC (2006:20) calls a 'transect walk'. This is a systematic walk across the community, allowing the teacher to see a range of features and possibilities, resources (human and material) and conditions in the community. This can be achieved through interviewing, observing and discussing with the community members. This stakeholder mapping (TARSC 2006:60) is designed to interface with the local environment, tapping into knowledge, skills and resources in the community available to the teacher (Manitoba Community Engagement Framework 2008:22). The stakeholder mapping allows for the development of a logical and productive engagement framework between the teacher and the community members. Community members often have an idea of what happens in the schools and the classroom. They chat with their children at different informal platforms, through national education information systems and other unorthodox surveillance systems. This is an indication of their interest in curriculum

implementation, despite their limitations on technical teaching strategies (Swift-Morgan 2006:358). Members in their communities can provide answers to contemporary educational problems in the classrooms (CAG Consultants 2009). The teachers should find it easy to open up to and welcome community members to participate. They should value the contributions of different community members in curriculum implementation.

In trying to narrow the gap between the communities and the teachers in curriculum implementation, The Manitoba Community Engagement Framework (2008:20) has viewed a number of avenues. They include but are not limited to the following, namely:

- stakeholder meetings;
- assigning special tasks to community members or groups;
- seminars or workshops with community members;
- creating advisory committees and/or taskforces;
- strategic alliances or formal agreements; and
- informal discussions.

Gorinski and Fraser (2006:29) say the following teacher-community engagement practices can be employed, namely:

- providing a schedule of all classroom activities and programmes, including syllabuses, time tables, sports diaries, etc. to the communities;
- teachers thinking about communities when planning these classroom activities;
- incorporating communities in the planning and management of classroom activities, and also accepting and listening to community voices whenever and wherever possible; and
- teachers can advocate for a curriculum that reflects the culture, interest, experiences and concerns of the communities.

Gboku and Lekoko (2007:148-150) suggest two important features of community engagement which include incorporating community members' ideas in the planning process and acting together. According to Gorinski and Fraser (2006:28) this will make both the teachers and the communities accountable.

While it is impossible to work with everyone in the community when implementing the curriculum, there are ways of continuously keeping community members alert about what is

going on in the classroom. Feedback can be given about the impact of their contribution on children's learning, and what resources are needed. To keep communities informed about curriculum implementation issues, TARSC (2006:27) advocate for teacher-communities meetings and announcements, especially during communal gatherings, the teacher's research trip to have an awareness of whom to involve, what to include in the curriculum plan and when to consult communities. By means of this stakeholder analysis, assessment, roles and influences (TARSC 2006:60), the teacher can put some aspects of education into the hands of communities thus opening up opportunities for meaningful learning (Barnhardt 2006:25) to the learners.

2.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, the views and the research findings from the literature and related articles on issues pertaining to community participation in curriculum implementation, and its implication pertaining to this study are explored. The literature review was done in areas which would clearly outline how communities and classroom life in the primary school can interface. This was done with special reference to the definition of community participation and curriculum implementation, the history of community engagement, the role of community members in curriculum implementation, the attitudes and perceptions of stakeholders towards community participation in curriculum implementation, the barriers to effective community engagement in curriculum implementation, and the mitigation of such barriers. I also explored Putnam's conception of the Social Capital Theory as the theoretical framework that informed this study. It was revealed from this theory that community participation in curriculum implementation can be realised when the teachers appreciate and engage community members to work together in solving problems in the classroom.

In the next chapter I will present the research methodology employed in this study in order to answer the major research question, as well as to achieve the objectives of the study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter focused on literature review on how members of the community can be involved in curriculum implementation. The review of literature was done according to themes that helped to explain how communities and primary schools can meaningfully come together in curriculum implementation.

In this chapter I present the research design and methodology that underpin the study. The chapter provides an overview of the interpretive philosophy to this research. The chapter also discusses the qualitative methodology, data-collection instruments used, the data analysis techniques and ethical considerations.

The following table presents an overview of the research design and methodology employed in this study.

Table 3.1: **Overview of the research design and methodology**

THE RESEARCH DESIGN

- The interpretivist approach
- The qualitative design
- Descriptive design
- Contextual design
- Case study

DATA-COLLECTION STRATEGIES

- The open-ended questionnaire

- In-depth unstructured interviews
- Focus-group discussions
- Ethical considerartions

THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

- School heads
- Teachers
- Members of the communities
    1. Parents
    2. Church leaders
    3. Business people
    4. Traditional leaders

PILOT TESTING

- The pilot testing of the research instruments was done at one primary school.

TRANSCRIPTIONS AND MEMBER-CHECKING

- Researcher and participants involved

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA
• Codes
• Themes
• Categories and sub-categories

3.2 THE INTERPRETIVIST APPROACH

In planning and organising this study, the interpretivist approach was used. The study used an interpretivist approach as postulated by Dworkin (Hunter 2005:78), a critic of the deductive, abstract explanation of the positivist school of reasoning. He claims that interpretivists are sensitive to human values (Hunter 2005:78) and that reality is subjective, multiple and a human construct (Tuli 2010:99-100). The interpretivist approach is also credited to the works of the German sociologist Weber and another German philosopher Dilthey. It is a sympathetic and empathetic interpretive understanding of the everyday lived experiences of the people in specific historical settings (Neuman 2003:75). This view assisted me to understand different views, opinions, experiences and perceptions from primary school heads, teachers and community members regarding community participation in curriculum implementation.

With the interpretive approach, as postulated by Babbie (2010) I managed to observe aspects of the participants' social world and discovered patterns that could be used to explain the participation of community members in curriculum implementation. Lehman (2007) and Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009:36) agree that the beauty of the interpretive approach is that it allows the researcher to appreciate reality as multi - faceted. Reality is based on an individual's perceptions and experiences. It offers a prospect to develop more convincing and robust explanations to people's experiences. This I experienced through interacting with primary school heads, teachers, parents, business people, church and traditional leaders, obtaining their views and experiences regarding community involvement in curriculum implementation issues.

The ontological assumption here is that there are multiple realities that make measurement of reality difficult. One can only seek to understand real-world phenomena by studying them in detail within the context in which they occur (Lehman 2007). Reality is seen as a construction relative to its context (McKenna 2003:215). The focus with the interpretivist approach has shifted from the positivist's prediction and generalization to interpretation, meaning-making and understanding of specific contexts (McKenna 2003:218). This study aimed at understanding the educational context of curriculum implementation and how members of the communities can effectively be involved.

In the study, I chose to work with primary school heads, teachers and community members like parents, traditional leaders, churches and business people as participants. The choice was in line with Gray's (2011:167); De Vos et al.'s (2012:308) as well as Corbin and Strauss' (2008:12) observations that interpretivist research appreciates reality as complex. It is concerned with understanding and interpretations from multiple views of those being studied rather than an explanation of reality from the participants' experiences. In line with Creswell (2010:212) and Silverman's (2010:14) views, the idea here was to enable the participants to be heard and not to be silenced regarding their views and attitudes towards community participation in curriculum implementation.

The interpretivist approach maintains that all human beings are engaged in the process of making sense of their worlds and continuously interpret, create, give meaning to, define, justify and rationalize their daily actions (De Vos et al. 2012:8). Thus, social research cannot be shaped and defined according to the same principles as the natural sciences. The framework of natural sciences is that reliable knowledge is deductive logic based on direct observation or manipulation of the natural phenomena through empirical, often experimental means to discover and confirm a set of probabilistic causal laws (Tuli 2010:99 & 100). Bryman and Bell (2007:17) state that interpretivists support the following view:

> *The subject matter of the social sciences – people and their institutions – is fundamentally different from that of the natural sciences. The study of the social world therefore requires a different logic of research procedure.*

Therefore, in line with Tuli's (2010:100) view, the interpretivist framework as a theory construction allowed me to be non-manipulative, unobtrusive and non-controlling. It allowed me to analyse various interpretations by primary school heads, teachers, traditional and church leaders, business people and the parents of their experiences of community participation in

curriculum implementation. Post-positivist philosophers thus believe that no research is objective and value-free. It stresses the importance of discovering the meanings which research participants give to their activities (McKenna 2003:218).

The interpretivist approach adopted in this study enabled me as a researcher to come up with a holistic understanding of community participation in curriculum implementation.

3.3 THE RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Maree (2012:70), a *research design* is a plan or strategy used by the researcher for collecting, analysing and interpreting the data in order to answer the research questions. De Vos et al. (2012:307) add that a *design* refers to all those decisions a researcher makes in planning the study. This means that good research cannot be done haphazardly. It has to be done systematically. Therefore, there is need for proper and careful planning. Creswell (2010:3) points out that *research designs* are plans and procedures that span the decisions in research, from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data-collection and analysis.

This study takes into account three interrelated designs namely; qualitative, descriptive and context.

3.3.1 The qualitative design

In line with the interpretivist ontological and epistemological theoretical position explained above, the qualitative design, as stated by Gray (2011:166), Corbin and Strauss (2008:16), Hancock and Algozzine (2006:8), was seen as one that best provided insight to gain perspectives of participants regarding community participation in curriculum implementation in the Zimbabwean primary schools. By using the qualitative paradigm, I was interested in understanding how participants interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds and what meaning they attribute to their experiences regarding participation in curriculum implementation. Thus, in line with Merrian's (2009:5-6) understanding, the participants' views and experiences assisted me in giving voice to the points of view of community members who were marginalised in curriculum implementation issues. Based on Creswell's (2010:41) opinion, the adopted qualitative approach presented a different view to quantitative research with the recognition that as researchers there is need to listen to the views of participants, as the data were collected in places where people lived and worked (i.e. the community homesteads and the schools). By doing that, I was able to access the school heads, teachers as

well as community members' life worlds which are their worlds of experience (Creswell 2010). According to Patton and Cochran (2002:7), this type of research meets the following three qualitative design criteria, namely:

- understanding the perspectives of the participants;
- exploring the meaning they give to phenomena; and
- observing a process in depth

Based on De Vos et al.'s (2012:320) as well as Corbin and Strauss' (2008) views, the qualitative design was also used in this study because it did not detach me from my participants. Rather the qualiatative research brought me closer to the participants and gave me the opportunity to connect with them at a human level. I was able to obtain an intimate familiarity with the research participants. In addition, I went into the natural settings of the communities around the four selected primary schools. I literally went to the community members' homesteads to discuss their knowledge and views about their involvement in curriculum implementation. From my supervision and observations during teaching practice, I noted that curriculum implementation is an issue which has been regarded seriously by many schools. From the community members' views and contributions, I was able to gather rich data on how these community members can be effectively involved and contribute to curriculum implementation. In addition to the above, Merrian (2009:14) adds that qualitative researchers are interested in how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds and what meaning they attribute to their experiences.

The aim of this qualitative research study was to answer the questions about what, how or why of the phenomenon under investigation rather than how many or how much which are answered by quantitative methods (Patton and Cochran 2002:2). The study also aimed at discovering rather than testing variables (Corbin & Strauss 2008:12). Hence, Luborsky and Rubinstein (2011) purport that the qualitative paradigm is not about the propensity that quantitative researchers have that many is better and smaller is inferior. Thus, this qualitative research study was not carried out in an experimental (test - retest) situation (Maree 2012:79) where the sample size is a big resource.

As Tuli (2010:102), Hancock and Algozzine (2006:8), Merrian (2009:14) and Silverman (2010:6) suggest one of the advantages of using the qualitative design is that it allowed me to have an insider's view and an emic perspective. I got the authenticity of the participants'

experiences, resulting in gaining a deeper understanding of community participation in curriculum implementation. With this qualitative research, I relied mainly on the views of the participants whom I asked broad general questions. From the same participants I was able to collect data consisting largely of words. I finally organised the data into themes (Cresswell 2010). The product of this research is therefore an in- depth description of the phenomenon under study (De Vos et al. 2012:320).

Adopting the qualitative research paradigm in this study was quite useful to me. I was able to gather rich information through in-depth data collection methods like interviews, open-ended questionnaires and focus-group discussions, from multiple data sources (Gilbert 2011:133). I was, therefore, able to present data from the research participants' point of view. Eventually I came up with thick descriptions of the partnership between communities and teachers in curriculum implementation matters.

Luborsky and Rubinstein (2011) conclude that it is important to represent a wide range of different types of people and experiences in order to represent the similarities and diversity in human experiences, beliefs and conditions. The selection of the qualitative research allowed me to be creative, flexible and true to the data obtained from the participants (Corbin & Strauss 2008:16). I was able to share and learn from participants'views regarding their participation in curriculum implementation. I also made sure that I was sensitive to the participants, actively collaborating with them and respecting their dignity (Creswell 2005:43). My task was, therefore, made easier because the participants felt relaxed and free to contribute during interviews and focus group discussions.

Primary schools in the Chivi district of the Masvingo province, primary school heads, teachers and community members in the vicinity became multiple sources of data. They helped me uncover the relationship between teachers and members of the communities in curriculum implementation. The Chivi Rural District was chosen for this research study for two reasons. Firstly, after doing a research for my Master in Education degree in Masvingo urban schools, I discovered that Masvingo urban and Masvingo district have been oversubscribed in terms of research studies. Most researchers favour the urban schools. I decided to shift my research study to the rural schools. Secondly, Chivi district was chosen because of its accessibility and proximity to the researcher. The Chivi district is among the many districts where student teachers go for their TP attachment. The district is near Masvingo urban, hence easily accessible by supervisors from the Universities and Teachers' Colleges. I, therefore, felt that

choosing Chivi district as an area of study would help me to establish and understand how members of the communities can be effectively engaged in order to make meaningful contributions for the implementation of the curriculum in Zimbabwean primary schools.

The fact that the study focused on just four schools allowed me as a researcher to probe beneath the surface, the experiences of the participants on the involvement of community members in curriculum implementation. The qualitative study enabled me to appreciate community participation in curriculum implementation completely. This was done not by controlling variables and using numerical analysis (Cohen et al. (2011:289)   but rather by observing all the variables and important areas of significance and their interacting relationships (Dooley 2002:335).

I collected data through open-ended questionnaires, focus-group discussions and in-depth individual interviews. The three data collection instruments were used in order to obtain rich and thick data on how members of the communities can contribute and be engaged in curriculum implementation at primary school level.

However, Gray (2011:247) warns that qualitative researchers should guard against being overwhelmed by data, by ensuring that the sources of data are focused in some way. In this study, my data sources were focused on primary school heads and teachers, who through their experience in education and the field of teaching had the capacity to provide rich and detailed descriptions of their experiences. Another focus was on community members like parents, church leaders, business people and traditional leaders who, because of their different roles in the community also had the potential to provide thick descriptive information of their lived experiences. The community members also had the potential to outline their perceptions with regard to how they can work together with teachers in teaching and learning situations.

Qualitative studies recognise and accept that there are many variables that require in-depth and multi-faceted understanding especially of real people in real life situations (Cohen et al. 2011:289; Dooley 2002:337; Crowe et al. 2011:1). In order to account for the variables in this study, it was therefore, justifiable to have more than one tool for data-collection and to have many sources of evidence. During the investigation process I also identified emerging themes, trends and categories of events rather than proving relationship (Silverman 2010:12; Gray 2011:166-167).

3.3.2 The descriptive design

The descriptive design refers to a more intensive examination of phenomena and their deeper meanings thus leading to a thicker description (De Vos et al 2012:96). In addition, De Vaus (2012:2) notes that competent description can challenge accepted assumptions about the way things are and can provoke action. In this study, the descriptive design allowed me to get a clearer understanding and knowledge on community involvement in curriculum implementation and challenge the current practices. The design helped me present details on the situation and the relationship between communities and rural primary schools in curriculum implementation by focusing on 'how' and 'why' questions (De Vos et al 2012:96).

The goal of this research study was to describe the nature and contents of cultural, social and personal values and experiences within specific conditions or circumstances, rather than determining incidence and prevalence (Luborsky & Rubinstein 2011). In line with Merrian's (2009:15) view, words rather than numbers were used to convey what I and participants learnt about the participation of community members in curriculum implementation. To get the descriptive data, the flexibility of the qualitative design was quite useful as it allowed me to collect data systematically by penetrating into the lives of participants through interacting, interviewing and recording their life experiences. In line with Merrian's (2009:2) opinion, the focus was to discover, gain insight and understanding from the perspectives of those being studied. It was also to make a difference in their lives where schools and communities would come together, collaborate and realise successful curriculum implementation in primary schools.

The study enabled me to investigate and report rich and vivid descriptions of dynamic and unfolding interactions of events. I was also able to describe patterns or trends through participants' lives, words and actions unlikely to be captured by statistics (Cohen et al. 2011:289; Hancock & Algozzine 2006:5; De Vos et al. 2012:320; O'Leary 2010:29). All this was done with the aim of exploring how community energy, knowledge and abilities can be used in curriculum implementation practices in the Zimbabwean primary schools. In doing so, I was able to tap information from the participants regarding their perceptions about community involvement in curriculum implementation.

Given the above impression, as richly descriptive and grounded in deep and varied sources of information, the study allowed me to employ quotes of key participants, anecdotes and prose

from interviews. This created mental images that brought life to the complexity of the many variables inherent in the phenomenon studied (Hancock & Algozzine 2006:9; Gray 2011:247). For Denscombe (2010:54) one of the strengths of using this descriptive approach is that of enabling and encouraging the researcher to use multiple sources of data and multiple data-collection methods typically in a naturalistic setting.

3.3.3 The contextual design

The context of this study was the natural setting of the school heads, the teachers and the community members. This full and contextualised situation allowed me to get a more rounded picture of the causal processes (De Vaus 2012:235) surrounding the relationship among the school heads, teachers and communities in curriculum implementation issues. The use of the contextual design entailed telling a plausible, convincing and logically acceptable story (De Vaus 2012:235) of how the school heads, teachers and members of the communities have related in curriculum implementation at primary school level. This was done without removing the context in which the relationships occurred. The idea was not to strip the meaning embedded in the context as behaviour takes place within a context.

By doing this, I was able to collect and gain data that are socially-situated, context-related, context-dependent and context-rich (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2011:219; De Vos et al. 2012:220). The investigation was done with the aim to understand the participants' experiences, achieving what Denzin and Lincoln (2000, in Cresswell (2005:43) call a *civic responsibility*, moral dialogue and a means of bringing needed change to our society. The basic building blocks of qualitative research are meanings and contexts. Meaning making and remaking is about personal history as one interprets, experiences and manages diversity (Luborsky & Rubinstein 2011; Gray 2011:247).

The issue of community participation in curriculum implementation was the current phenomenon. The study also enabled me to gather data directly from individuals and community groups for the purposes of studying interactions, attitudes or characteristics of these individuals and groups (Leedy 2010). It was, therefore, possible for me to organize social data for the purpose of reflecting real life situations (Dooley 2002:337). The use of the case study became appropriate and relevant as it provided "an in-depth account of events, relationships, experiences or processes occurring in that particular context" (Denscombe 2010:52).

3.3.4 Case study

A case study is a systematic intensive inquiry and description of a single unit, system or event bound by space and time involving multiple sources of information (De Vos et al 2012:321; Cohen et al 2011:289; Hancock & Algozzine 2006:9). Maree (2012:75); Gray (2011:247) and Dooley (2002:337) further describe a case study as an investigation of a contemporary phenomenon with a multidimensional representation of the context, participants and reality of the situation. Yin (2009) in Cohen et al (2011:289) say a case study is about real people in real situations with the central tenet being the need to explore phenomenon in depth. Thus, case studies, according to Maree (2012:76) are consistent with qualitative designs as data collected is largely qualitative.

Appreciating that Masvingo Province has seven education districts, the pre-defined boundary of this case study was one district (Chivi) with the geographical area of interest being four primary schools which were studied as a 'case in context and as an instance in action' (Cohen et al 2011:289). Selecting this case had its own merits namely: it was a rural setting and there was access to community groups and individuals. I had genuine interest in the case given a wide range of responsibilities schools demanded of communities and how they managed a school-community partnership.

3.4 POPULATION AND SAMPLING

3.4.1 The population

The delineation of the target population is a realisation for the need to zero in and clearly demarcate important boundaries where the research data would be collected. The population in this study was the target group from which I was interested in gaining information and drawing conclusions (Tuckman 2012) in relation to the issue of how members of the communities can be engaged in curriculum implementation in primary schools. The population, with its demographic meaning of an entire group of people, is usually defined in geographical terms. In selecting the population for the study, I used Banerjee and Chaudhury's (2010:62) assertion that the research question or the purpose of the study suggests a suitable definition of the population to be studied in terms of location and restriction. It became incumbent upon me as a researcher to fully define the population and to clarify those that are included and those who are excluded. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), two types of populations exist, namely the target population and the accessible population.

The general population was the school heads, the teachers and the community members in the Chivi district of Masvingo in Zimbabwe who are stakeholders in curriculum implementation at primary school level. The target population of this study comprised primary school heads, the teachers and community members namely parents, traditional and church leaders and business people from the selected four primary schools. The target population is a wider network of prospective and non prospective participants (McMillan & Schumacher 2010). In this study the accessible population was the four primary school heads, teachers teaching at these schools and community members within the vicinity of each of the primary schools. I obtained information from the heads of the selected primary schools about those teachers, parents, traditional leaders, business people and church leaders who could add valuable ideas on the relationship between schools and community members in curriculum implementation.

Four primary schools in the Chivi district and the respective heads were randomly chosen thus each school in the district theoretically having an equal chance of being selected (Cohen et al 2011: 153). This method involved selecting at random the four schools required for the study from which I gathered the data. School heads were quite valuable to this study for they were on the shopfloor of education and they were responsible for the actual implementation of the curriculum. Their contribution was thus, greatly valued in this study. The school heads are the managers, supervisors and gatekeepers of what goes on inside the classroom. Hence, they were seen as credible sources of data based on their leadership and administrative roles in curriculum implementation issues.

The primary school teachers were chosen because they are important classroom managers. They make crucial decisions about how to teach, who to involve and who not to engage during the teaching and learning process. The question of their level of understanding of the concept of community engagement in curriculum implementation became important in this research. The primary school teachers were selected mainly to solicit their understanding and level of preparedness to engage members of the communities in curriculum implementation issues. The success or failure to bring in members of the communities to participate in curriculum implementation heavily depended on them as the actual implementers of the curriculum. Therefore, targeting the teachers and the school heads provided collaborative data about how the schools can meaningfully involve the community members in curriculum implementation for successful teaching and learning to be realised.

During my initial community mapping, I realised that the well-being of primary schools have been built around interactions they have created with members of the communities around them. I noted that these critical stakeholders (community members) had shared, contributed to schools, materially, financially and in knowledge form, thus breathing life in most of the activities at the schools. The schools have always counted on these community members when the need arises especially in terms of student discipline and infrastructural development. With the help of the school heads, the teachers as well as some community members, four categories of community members emerged, which had become primary schools' 'community well' namely: parents, traditional leaders, business people and churches leaders. To school heads and teachers, these community members represented the different village life and activities.

The choice of parents to be part of the sample was motivated by two factors. Firstly, the information from school heads and teachers about their involvement and commitment to school activities. Secondly, how long they have been living near the primary schools and what contribution they have made to the schools. This information from heads and teachers allowed me to work with those parents who had knowledge of the primary schools thus providing historical antecedents and understanding of current school practices regarding their involvement in curriculum implementation. The choice of the parents was of those who had children at the schools.

The primary schools which formed part of the study are situated in villages. According to the local government structures, each village is run by a Headman (Sabhuku) who is the custodian of the cultural values and presides over the village matters. The recently added responsibility has been to liaise with the school heads to enforce payment of school fees and levies by parents/ guardians. Traditional leaders have become very powerful in their communities. Their orders are usually carried out. The schools were situated close to one another and they shared some of the traditional leaders. The traditional leaders' knowledge about traditional values, the history of the primary schools and the authority vested in them by the Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ), attracted my interest for their potential to add value and to contribute to curriculum implementation issues. In their responses in the questionnaires and the focus-group discussions the school heads and teachers respectively indicated that these traditional leaders are useful allies. They have become a common feature in most primary schools'activities (e.g enforcing payment of school fees by parents) hence the need for them to participate in this study.

I also realised that church leaders command a lot of respect and have always been called to the schools to conduct devotions, or to talk about some important Biblical moral issues. The teachers and the pupils also belong to some denomination. The influence of these churches in the community and the school cannot be underestimated. It was upon this understanding that I noted that the church leaders' ideas regarding community participation in curriculum implementation would add an important voice and dimension to this study.

There has always existed a relationship between the schools and the business community especially in some outside classroom activities when the business people forward donations to the schools. During my initial community mapping, the school heads and teachers talked glowingly about the valuable contribution of business people in developing the schools' infrastructure, in the provision of teaching-learning materials and equipment for sporting activities. Besides these contributions, I regarded the business people as having a big stake in curriculum implementation. Given that they deal with issues of buying and selling which when introduced to the classroom e.g. in mathematics, would aid the pupils' understanding of concepts, hence the need to have them participate in this study.

Therefore, all these community members were invited to give their views and perceptions on the different roles they can play in order to work together with teachers in the classroom for the benefit of the learners.

3.4.2 The sample and sampling procedures

The quality of any research not only stands or falls by the appropriateness of methodology but also by the suitability of the sampling strategy that has been adopted (Cohen et al. 2011:142). In general, a sample is any part of the defined population (Banerjee & Chaudhury 2010:63). It is premised on the fact that a small set can give an idea of what can be expected in the total population (De Vos et al. 2012:222). According to Luborsky and Rubinstein (2011), the decision of a *sample* is motivated by the following question:

> *What are the components of the system or universe that must be included to provide a valid representation of it?*

Two important sampling strategies namely; purposive and random, were used in this study.

3.4.2.1 Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling, a feature of the qualitative research and non-probability sampling technique (Cohen et al. is2011:156; Silverman 2010:141; Gilbert 2011:511; De Vos et al. 2012:222) was one of the techniques used. It enabled me to gain insight and an understanding, by hearing from representatives of the larger population (Gilbert 2011:512) about the involvement of communities in curriculum implementation. The choice of purposive sampling, with its element of discretion on the part of the researcher, was motivated by issues of expediency rather than by strict adherence to principles of random selection (Denscombe 2010:25). It was mainly dictated by what the problem was all about and particular characteristics being sought (Cohen et al 2011: 156). The explanatory sample, drawing from those representing 'the voice of the people' (Luborsky & Rubinstein 2011) from primary school teachers, the church and traditional leaders, the business people and the parents from Chivi rural district of Masvingo succeeded in obtaining a true cross section of the population.

Purposive sampling was used to select potentially information rich sites with respect to the specific needs and purposes of the qualitative study. Purposive sampling was my strategy to choose small groups that were knowledgeable and informative about the issue under discussion. On the other hand researchers who are not familiar with this sampling-for-meaning approach voice concern over aspects of size and adequacy. As Luborsky and Rubinstein (2011) note, the purpose of sampling is to ensure that responses have context and carry referential meaning. Generally speaking, purposive sampling is used as a practice where the participants are intentionally selected to represent some explicit predefined traits or conditions. The goal is to enable the exploration and description of the conditions and meanings occurring within each of the study conditions (Luborsky & Rubinstein 2011). The important aim of using this sampling approach was to ensure the collection of relevant individuals from whom the nature of experience of the phenomenon under investigation could be elicited (Gilbert 2011:25).

The purposive sampling technique allowed me to bring together the teachers and community members who were likely to produce relevant data on issues of community participation in curriculum implementation. This discretionary method was meant to deliberately select only those cases that were likely to produce the most valuable data (Denscombe 2010:156) to the specific issue of community involvement in curriculum implementation.

3.4.2.2 Random sampling

The primary schools were randomly selected. According to De Vos et al (2012: 228) random sampling is one in which each person in the population has the same known probability to be representatively selected. Further Cohen et al (2011: 153) state that the probability of a member in the population being selected is unaffected by the selection of other members of the population, that is each selection is entirely independent of the next. The randomly selected primary schools provided the school heads, the teachers and members of the community who participated in the study.

3.4.2.3 Selection of the sample

According to Connolly (1998) in Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007:240), qualitative researchers do not make external statistical generalisations because their goal usually is not to make inferences about the underlying population. They attempt to obtain insight into particular educational, social, and familial processes and practices that exist within a specific location and context. Sampling is an important aspect in this qualitative research process.

While there exists a plethora of sampling schemes, in this study I made use of non-probabilistic and probabilistic schemes. Firstly, by using non-probabilistic schemes, the sample size was not statistically motivated. The sample was deliberately selected on the basis of the participants' knowledge about the problem at hand, accessibility and experience and to gain insight into how communities can participate in curriculum implementation issues at primary school level. By purposively selecting individuals, groups and settings (Onwuegbuzie & Leech 2004:242) the researcher succeeded in obtaining a true cross-section of the population (Gray 2011:152). Qualitative investigations use small samples as numbers are unimportant in the sampling strategy (Onwuegbuzie & Leech 2004:242). Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2004:242) have this to say:

> *In general, sample sizes in qualitative research should not be too large that it is difficult to extract thick, rich data. At the same time, the sample should not be too small to achieve data saturation or informational redundancy.*

Four primary schools were randomly selected from the defined participating schools of Chivi district in Masvingo province. . In this study, each primary school in the district was assigned a number and during a district heads' meeting, heads were asked to pick numbers and the four

that had 'yes' were chosen for the study. The sampled schools were coded schools 1, 2, 3 and 4, for the purposes of confidentiality and anonymity. The school heads of the randomly selected primary schools automatically became participants by virtue of being curriculum supervisors of these schools and vested with the authority to select who makes a contribution in curriculum implementation. The size of this sample was determined by the researcher exercising prudence and ensuring that the sample represented wider features of the population with minimum number of cases (Cohen et al 2011:145).   This made these school heads information rich about curriculum implementation issues. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) thus, indicate that for credible and rich data to be obtained, the participants should have experience in the field or the subject matter.

Teachers were purposively sampled with the assistance of the school heads. The selection of the teachers who participated in the focus group discussions took into consideration the following attributes: how long they have been at the school and the most experienced as a primary school teacher. The sampling of teachers, thus, was not motivated by gender but by whether they met the attributes and were willing to participate in the study. Five teachers per school comprised the focus group discussion. School heads were not part of the focus group primarily because they had their own open-ended questionnaire to contend with. It was also meant to allow teachers to freely express their ideas.

Community members were purposively sampled taking into account the proximity to the primary school, their involvement in school activities, a parent and or guardian with a child at the school, a village head, a church leader and a business person. The identification of these stakeholders was done during initial visit to research sites and assisted by the school heads who had better knowledge about the community members and their relationship with the school.

The sample's credibility was, therefore, ensured by covering the main groups in the community participation in curriculum implementation equation through, what Patton and Cochran (2002:9) call, the *maximum variation sample,* by selecting key demographic variables that are likely to have an impact on the participants' view of the topic. The choice of the sample was also based on feasibility. The total coverage of all the school heads, the teachers and the community members in the Chivi district was not possible (De Vos et al. 2012:224). In selecting the participants for this study, the gathering of comprehensive and rich data was the basis, and not representativeness. At each of the four primary schools, five teachers were

involved in focus-group discussions, the school heads responded to open-ended questionnaires, and I also carried out individual interviews with the community members.

Therefore, four primary school heads, twenty teachers (five from each school), two business people (one per two schools), two traditional leaders (one per two schools) and two church leaders (one per two schools), were selected for this study. These were on the ground and were likely to generate useful data (Patton & Cochran 2002:9). Furthermore, eight parents (two from around each of the participating schools) were deliberately chosen after initial village mapping. The idea was to incorporate those parents who lived near the schools, were committed to the school activities and who were also knowledgeable about the history of the school. Thus, the total number of participants in the study were thirty eight, regardless of gender given that teachers and community members were purposively selected. All the paticipants in the study were beyond eighteen years old, the legal age of majority in Zimbabwe. They were capable of making informed independent decision to participate or not.

The following table shows the category of the participants, the sample and sampling technique as well as the data-collection methods used.

Table 3.2: **Sample grid showing the demographic variables and data-collection methods**

Category	Sample size	Sampling Technique	Data collection method
Primary schools and heads	4	Simple random	Open ended questionnaire
Primary school teachers	20	Purposive	Focus group discussions
Business people	2	Purposive	Unstructured interviews
Church leaders	2	Purposive	Unstructured interviews
Traditional leaders	2	Purposive	Unstructured interviews
Parents	8	Purposive	Unstructured interviews
Total	**38**		

Thus, thirty eight (38) participants made up the study sample, as further summarised in Figure 3.1.
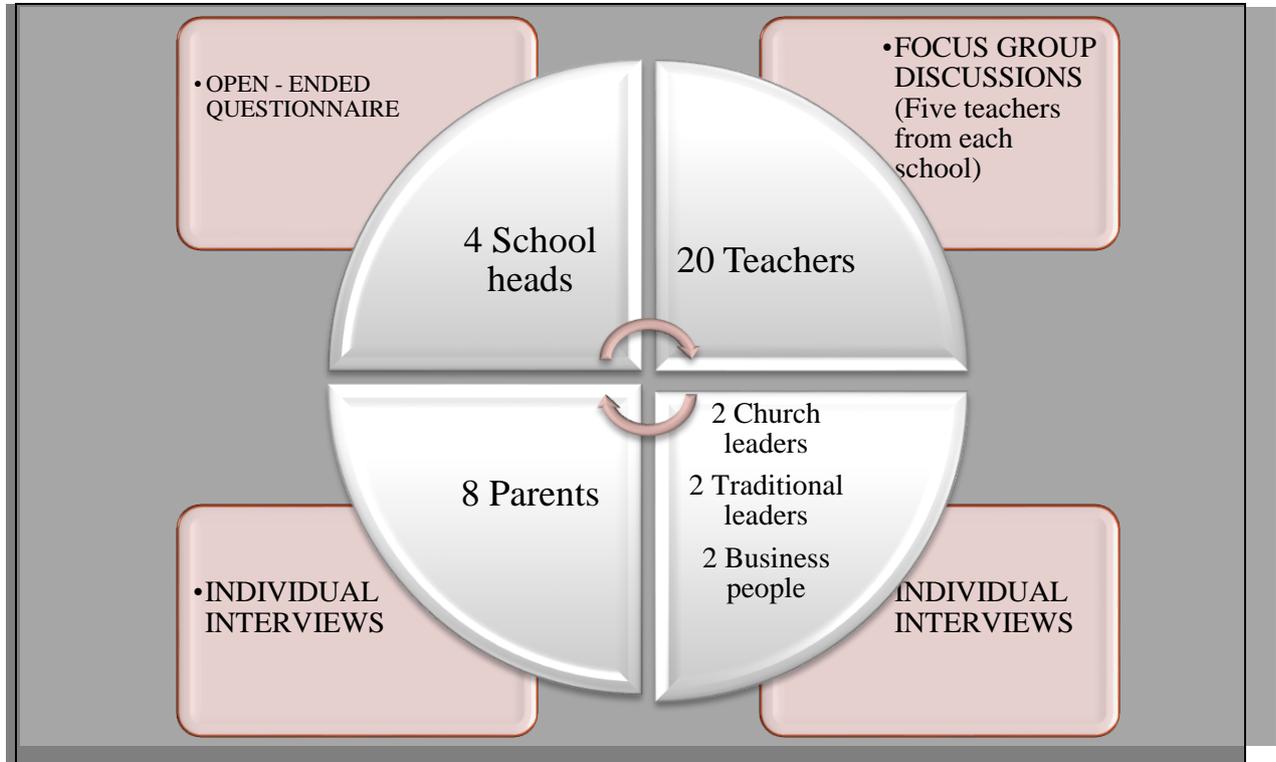
Figure 3.1: The study sample

This qualitative study took into account additional attributes and variables such as occupation, religion and cultural aspects, apart from just the geographical location of the participants. Of the selected schools, there were business centres in the vicinity. The business people's contributions and perceptions on curriculum implementation became pertinent. With this in mind I managed to draw and circle the boundaries of the study.

3.5 DATA-COLLECTION

According to De Vos et al. (2012:335), "The gathering of data boils down to the actual observation and taking of field notes." *Data* can be described as valid information that can assist the researcher in answering his or her research questions (O'Leary 2010; Walliman 2011). Therefore, data-collection is a way of gathering information that help or assist the researcher in answering the research questions. Crowe, Creswell, Robertson, Huby, Avery &

Sheikh 2011:6) state that a qualitative study usually involves the collection of multiple sources of evidence using a range of techniques. In this study, I collected the data with the help of a research assistant. I personally went to the research sites interviewing and discussing with the participants.

3.5.1 THE PILOT STUDY

De Vos et al. (2012:383) state that pilot study is a process whereby the instruments are implemented and used on a trial basis. The tools are developmentally tested for adequacy, refined and redesigned where necessary. A pilot study was done in this study to ensure that the instruments match the research objectives and produce converging evidence. The pilot test was implemented in settings convenient for the researcher and analogous to those where the research was carried out. De Vos et al.'s (2012:484) suggestion for the need to standardize instruments helped me to determine their effectiveness by identifying elements of the prototype that needed revising. All the three instruments were pre-tested on a small scale (De Vos et al. 2012:237) at one primary school in the Masvingo district (not part of the sample) to discover whether the line of questioning was appropriate and whether the instruments captured the essentials information related to the research questions. This 'test drive' was meant to identify possible problems in the data-collection instruments and to set the stage for actual research (Teddlie & Tashakkori 2009:203). After the pilot study in the Masvingo district, I noted the need for a ChiShona version of the interview guide for community members (see Appendix 10b) because most of the community members were more comfortable responding in the Shona language. The feedback I got from the pilot test assisted me in fine-tuning the instruments so that they would capture the accurate data.

3.5.2 Triangulation of methods

Triangulation with its synonyms *integrating*, *combining* and *mixing,* and sometimes called the *multi-method approach* is the use of two or more methods of data-collection in a study (Cohen et al. 2011:195). Furthermore, *triangulation* is the potential for knowing more and generating complementarity about a phenomenon through the use of different research methods in one empirical research. This entails comparing findings from two or more research methods, thereby concluding whether the phenomenon has been accurately measured (Moran-Ellis, Alexander, Cronin, Dickinson, Fielding, Sleney & Thomas 2006:45). The advantage of using triangulation in this qualitative research study was that it provided a bigger picture of the

complexity of human behavior and situations in which human beings interact. Exclusive reliance on one method may bias or distort the researcher's picture of the particular slice of reality one is investigating (Cohen et al. 2011:195).

 In this study I made use of place (space) triangulation by going beyond the cultural boundaries of the selected Chivi primary schools to   obtain the views of the parents, the traditional and church leaders, and the business persons in the community. In addition, the research took into account *methodological triangulation* where different data-collection methods were used to elicit divergent views from different participants on the same object of study (Cohen et al. 2011:196). The researcher made use of the following data-collection methods, namely unstructured interviews with four groups of community members, namely the parents, business people, and church and traditional leaders; open-ended questionnaires with the school heads; and focus-group discussions with the primary school teachers from the selected schools. The study therefore achieved triangulation of methods and sources, thus ensuring worthiness and validity (Creswell 2010:129; Maree 2012:39)**.**

Figure 3.2 gives an indication of the triangulation of the data-collection methods employed in the study as discussed above.
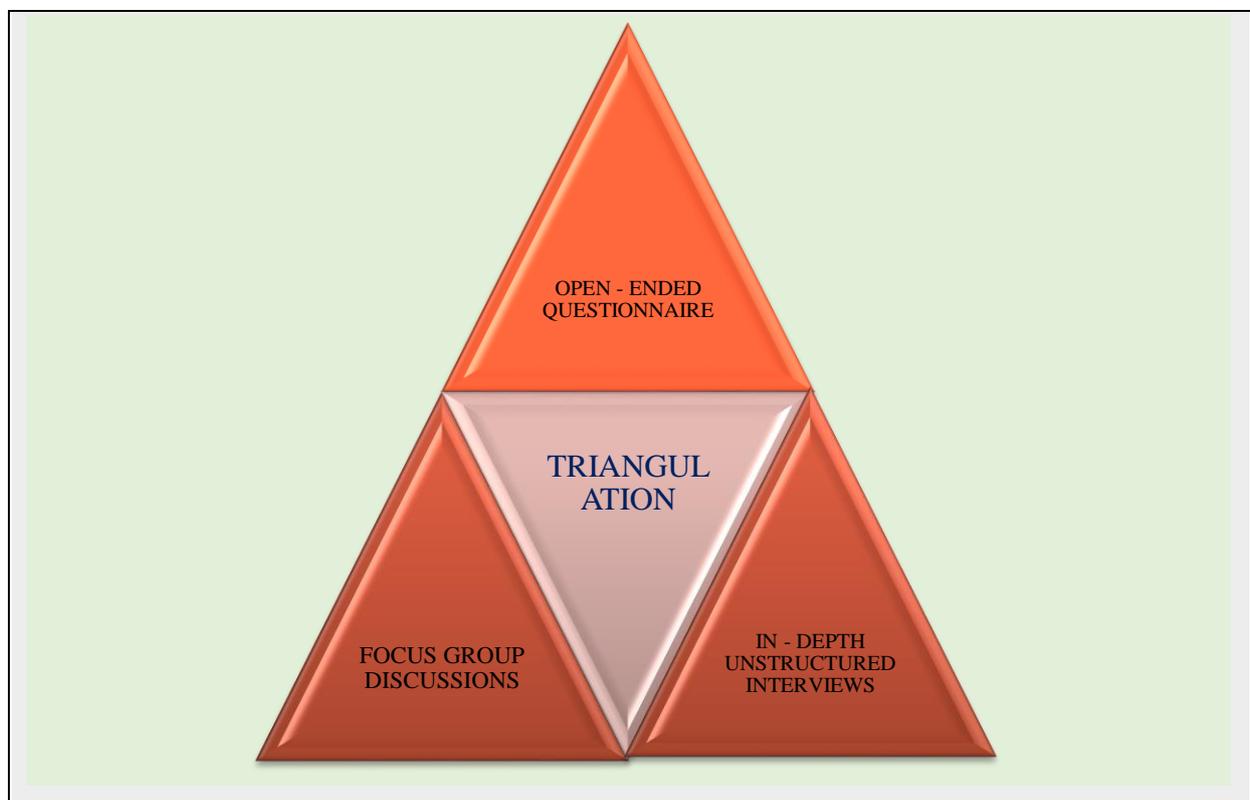
Figure 3.2: **The triangulation of the data-collection methods**

Triangulation was used to cross-check the consistencies and inconsistencies of the information given by the participants.

Below is a comprehensive analysis of each of the data-collection tools used in this study.

3.5.2.1 Focus group discussion

Focus group discussions are group interviews. They are a means of understanding how people feel and think, and issues or services as participants respond in a collective manner on phenomena impacting and affecting those (De Vos et al. 2012:360). In these discussions the participants share perceptions, point of views, experiences, and wishes without forcing consensus. Thus, by definition, according to De Vos et al. (2012:360), a *focus group discussion* is a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive non-threatening environment. Bell (2012) asserts that a *focus group guide* is a series of questions and prompts for the facilitator to use.

The researcher employed focus-group discussions for collecting data from the teachers on how the communities can be involved in curriculum implementation issues. The focus group discussion was chosen primarily because of the following reasons, as stated by Morgan (2010):

- it is a self-contained method;
- it is used as a supplementary source of data; and
- it is used in multi-method studies that combine two or more means of gathering data.

My major aim during the focus-group discussions was firstly, to hold and sustain a productive discussion with the teachers. Secondly, it was to capture as much data as possible that was useful in understanding how communities can be engaged in curriculum implementation issues at primary school level.

In line with De Vos et al.'s (2012:361) and Babbie's (2011) views, this important self-contained data-collection method solicited multiple viewpoints, responses, attitudes, perceptions and feelings systematically and simultaneously from four groups of teachers. I assumed that these teachers shared and experienced the same views and opinions. These focus-group discussions created a fuller, deeper understanding of the phenomenon studied. The teachers stimulated spontaneous exchanges of ideas, thoughts, experiences and attitudes in the security of being in a crowd (Nyamathi & Shuler 1990, in De Vos et al. 2012:374; Maree 2012:91). The focus group discussion also allowed the participants to build on each other's

ideas and comments to provide an in-depth view not attainable from individual interviews (Maree 2012:89). At the same time the teachers gauged the extent to which there are shared views (Denscombe 2010:177) among them in relation to community participation in curriculum implementation. In implementing De Vos et al.'s (2012:372) suggestions, all the members' contributions were valued, and the expression of ideas was done without fear of criticism or reprimand. The participants were told at the beginning of each discussion that there were no wrong answers. The goal of using focus groups was to hear the participants' general perspectives and allowing them to actively debate issues (Maree 2012: 91).

Consistent with case studies, focus-group discussions were purposefully used as they promoted self-disclosure among participants. This became a powerful means of social interaction in generating detailed and reflective qualitative data, by exposing reality and investigating complex behaviour and motivation, something difficult to achieve with other research methods (Hancock & Algozzine 2006:11; De Vos et al. 2012:361, 374; Boateng 2012:54; Maree 2012:89). The teachers, given their work background and relationship with the communities around them were in a position to give in-depth understanding of the context and the level of interaction with the community members (Patton & Cochran 2002:16) regarding their participation in curriculum implementation issues at primary school level. One important target was to generate and sustain interest in the discussion among the teachers. This was achieved through my initial visits to the schools before the data-collection began. During the visits, I explained the purpose of the research to all the participants, familiarised the participants with the topic, and outlined the possible benefits that would accrue from the study. This was when I made appointments and arrangements with the teachers for the focus group discussions.

In order to focus the discussion, I designed a focus-group discussion protocol/guide to ensure that all aspects pertaining to community participation in curriculum implementation were covered. This group-think discussion-based interview collecting group data was meant to ensure that the process of sharing, collaborating, complementing and comparing information was achieved (Chilisa & Preece 2005:155). De Vos et al. (2012:374). Maree (2012:91) warn that there is the danger that only the active and outspoken participants may be voiced and that it might be difficult to assess the viewpoints of less assertive participants. I mitigated this weakness by encouraging the participation and discussion by all. In trying to overcome these pitfalls, I also took heed of Maree's (2012:92) advice by establishing a good rapport with the focus-group members thereby encouraging them to express themselves fully and honestly. The flexibility of the open-ended questions also allowed me to ask follow-up questions to probe the

teachers regarding how they view community involvement in the curriculum implementation process. The open-ended questions allowed participants to answer questions using as much detail as they could give.

For convenience purposes, the focus group discussions took place in a pre-selected quiet, comfortable, relaxed, friendly and controlled school environment (Patton & Cochran 2002:18; De Vos et al. 2012:371). The actual discussions were held in the classrooms (in the absence of the learners) either during the school's break or after school in order to avoid disturbing the teaching and learning process. The discussions lasted for one to one and a half hours. The focus group discussions were recorded using a Digital Voice Recorder (DVR) and also by means of detailed handwritten notes by a research assistant. By means of the discussions I was able to gather the ideas and opinions of a number of teachers at the same time. In order to establish the group norms and to make the discussion focused, I gave the following ground rules at the beginning of each discussion:

- there is no right or wrong answer; hence the need to respect each other's views;
- remain focused on the topic under discussion;
- only one person may talk at a time;
- everyone is encouraged to participate;
- the information discussed remains known only to the members of the group and should never be discussed at any time after the discussion has ended.

The enforcement of ground rules (in a diplomatic and polite manner) was done in order to control the discussions, and to avoid disruptions especially where irrelevant aspects were brought up. Throughout the four focus group discussions, I followed Morgan's (2010) suggestion of demonstrating that I was a good and interested listener, by paying special attention to what the participants were sharing but always staying neutral and impartial.

Maree (2012: 91) argues that at the end of each session and for the purposes of verifying ideas generated during the discussion, salient points that emerge from the discussion and any corrections and adjustments should be made in the presence of the participants. I did this so that I would leave the research site satisfied that the correct data have been collected and authenticated by those who contributed in generating it. Therefore, this process was ethically plausible and met with the qualitative data-collection best practices. Soon after the completion of all the focus group discussions as well as the interviews, the information was transcribed

and the data were returned to the participants for verification on whether their responses were correctly captured.

Limitations from the focus group discussion were taken care of by means of triangulating the data from the discussions with data gathered by means of open-ended questionnaires for the school heads and the interviews with the community members.

The following table gives a summary of how the focus group discussions with the primary school teachers were conducted.

Table 3.3: Summary of the focus group discussion

Item	Description
Group size	Each of the groups consisted of five (5) teachers drawn from each of the participating four primary schools.
Participants	A homogeneous group of primary school teachers. The researcher sought open and abroad range of ideas on community participation in curriculum implementation issues.
Moderator	The researcher, Mrs. Tafara Mufanechiya
Setting	Formal, a spacious, pre-arranged free and interactive environment agreed upon by the participants, and pre-arranged time with each session lasting between one to one and a half hours.
Data collected	Rich quality qualitative groupthink descriptive data socially and collectively constructed by the participants and directed by the researcher by means of a pre-determined questioning route.
Data entry	Digital voice recorder as well as detailed field notes by the research assistant and the researcher. All the information was transcribed verbatim, with the data in the form of words, not numbers.

Data analysis	The use of codes and themes, vignettes, and thick vivid description of situations.

Adapted from: O'Cathain & Thomas (2004).

3.5.2.2 Open-ended questionnaire

According to Cohen et al. (2011:377), an *open-ended questionnaire* is a document containing questions and/or other types of items designed to solicit information appropriate to the research problem. The object of a questionnaire is to obtain facts and opinions about a phenomenon from the participants who are informed in respect of a particular issue. Open-ended questionnaires are where respondents answer the questions asked in their own words (Gray 2011). They were therefore, useful in collecting data for this qualitative research study. In this study the open-ended questionnaire generated written information supplied by the primary school heads. It allowed primary school heads to reveal their thoughts, decide on the wording, the length, the kind of matters to be raised in the answer and also provided the reasons for their responses (Denscombe 2010:156,165). The questionnaires were self-administered. I received maximum cooperation from the school heads, achieving a one hundred percent (100%) return-rate of the completed questionnaires.

This data-collection tool enabled the primary school heads to answer as much as they wished (Gilbert 2011:193). This resulted in responses which reflected the full richness and complexity of the views held by them on the community's participation in curriculum implementation issues at primary school level. The data were not bound by premeditated and tailor-made choices by providing options, as is the case with closed-type questionnaires. It was characterised by the freedom of the respondents to provide information without limitations.

The use of open-ended questionnaires in this study was also necessitated by Maree's (2012:161) idea that they are easy to complete if they are well-structured to reveal respondent's thinking process. The data collected by means of the open-ended questionnaire method enabled me to use the thematic analysis and to compare responses. According to Reja, Manfreda, Hlebec and Vehovar (2003:160), open-ended questionnaires serve two purposes, firstly, it is to discover the responses that the individuals give spontaneously, and secondly, to avoid bias that may result from suggesting responses to the individuals. As indicated by De Vos et al. (2012:348) and O'Cathain & Thomas (2004) the idea in this study was to understand the

experiences of the school heads, the meaning they made and their 'handwritten stories' concerning community involvement in curriculum implementation matters. The use of the open – ended questionnaires resulted in diversified set of answers (Reja et al. 2003:169). To a large extent the questionnaires helped to show the holistic nature of community participation in curriculum implementation delivery system as experienced by the heads. While the responses may be ambiguous and wide ranging through this word-based approach (Gilbert 2011:193; Gray 2011:382) they added to the richness of data as respondents identified new issues which may not have been captured if the closed-type of questionnaires were used. Foddy (1993, in Reja et al. 2003:161) has this to say:

> *Closed-ended questionnaires limit the respondents to a set of alternatives being offered, while open-ended questionnaires allow the respondents to express an opinion without being influenced by the researcher.*

The open-ended questionnaire method has the advantage of an increased response rate and the quick inflow of data, of anonymity and the lack of bias (Gray 2011:338; O'Cathain & Thomas 2004). This strategic use of the open-ended questionnaires as a data-collection method in this study, ensured that free text format information was provided and that all the relevant issues were captured (O'Cathain & Thomas 2004).

By asking questions that encouraged the participants to openly give information, helped to provide completeness of responses (Reja et al. 2003:171). This non- manipulated and non-directional data-collection process (Nenty 2009:26) brought in important conceptual richness, a critical aspect of qualitative approaches, with the output being words rather than numbers (O'Cathain & Thomas 2004). The method also allowed me to gain access to data where the participants were not conceived as passive vessels of answers. They served as authentic reports about their own experiences (Rapley 2001:30) concerning the community-teacher relationship in curriculum implementation. Shiner and Newburn (1997) in Rapley 2001:306) have this to say about open-ended questionnaires:

> *……..minimised the extent to which respondents had to express themselves in terms defined by the researcher and raise issues that were important to them. It's suited to attempt to discover respondents' own meanings and interpretations.*

These handwritten stories and discovery-oriented data-collection method (Merrian 2009:7; O'Cathain & Thomas 2004) presented the holistic nature of the community participation in curriculum implementation as experienced, understood and expressed by the primary school heads. They identified any concerns and suggestions in their own words. The contextualised written stories helped me to engage the participants in issues that concern them (Rapley 2001:303). The information from open-ended questionnaires was corroborated with data from other sources to achieve triangulation increasing the data quality.

3.5.2.3 In-depth unstructured interviews

According to Maree (2012:87), an *unstructured interview* is a two way conversation where the interviewer asks the participants questions to collect data. It is also to learn about the ideas, beliefs, views, opinions and behaviors of the participants. DePoy and Gilson (2008:108) say that an *unstructured interview* is a process of obtaining direct exchange with an individual who is known or expected to possess the knowledge they seek. These qualitative interviews are an attempt to understand from the participants' point of view and to unfold the meaning of participants' experiences. (De Vos et al. 2012: 342; Maree 2012:87).

In line with De Vos et al.'s (2012:342), Gilbert's (2011:247) and Gray's (2011:370) views, in this study I made use of unstructured one-to-one interviews as a valuable naturalistic strategy for discovery of powerful rich data. The one-to-one verbal interaction interviews were carried out at the community members' homes on a day and time that suited them. They were a follow up on the appointments made during the initial village/community mapping. Each interview session lasted about an hour. Taking heed of Patton's (2002, in Gray 2011:384) advice that:

> ....*no matter what kind of interviewing style is used and no matter how carefully interview questions are worded, all is wasted unless the words of the interviewee are captured accurately.*

The in-depth unstructured interview as a data-collection method allowed me to select issues that I wanted the participants to talk about. At the same time it gave me the freedom to phrase the questions as I wished, and also asking these questions in any order (Gilbert 2011:247). In this regard Smith (1995, in Rapley 2001:316) indicates that:

> *Questions should be neutral rather than value-laden or leading……. A strategy often employed …. is to try to encourage a person to speak about a topic with*

as little prompting from the interviewer as possible……..thus getting as close as possible to what the respondents think about the topic without being too much led by the questioning.

While I had the freedom to phrase the questions as I wished, the members of the community, as Denscombe (2010:176) points out, also had the flexibility to think out aloud as they used their own words and developed their own thoughts in a non-leading way. This was a better way of discovering things about complex curriculum implementation issues. Rapley (2001:310) posits that the only rule the interviewer follows is one which is characterised by 'let the subject talk' with the focus on the actual lived practices of the participants. This helped me explain Chilisa's and Preece's (2005:148) concerns about whose knowledge is constructed during the interview, using whose language and whose vocabulary. The data obtained was highly dependent on and emerged from the specific local interactional context produced through discussion between myself and the participants (Rapley 2001:317). The respondents had time and opportunity to develop their own answers. Interviews were held in order to complement the questionnaires and the focus group discussions. The interview was chosen as a complementing data collection tool because it allowed me a two way communication with the interviewees. As pointed out by Gray (2011:375), the interview also allowed for the clarification of ideas, views and opinions, thus making responses more authentic and comprehensive.

De Vos et al. (2012:342) as well as Chilisa and Preece's (2005:147) suggestion that the use of an interview guide, delineating the central focus, was used to ensure that the same type of data was collected from all the selected community members on their views regarding community involvement in curriculum implementation issues at primary school level in Zimbabwe. The flexible interview allowed me to listen to the participants' responses and pose new questions on why these community members (Chilisa & Preece 2005:147; Gilbert 2011:248) participated or not in curriculum implementation.

According to Rapley (2001:315), the methodological logic of in-depth open-ended interviews are that they are cooperative self-disclosure. This allowed me to unpack the talk and allowed a number of multiple issues or 'mentionables' that the interviewees raised to be developed, thus, making it a comprehensive and detailed talk (Rapley 2001:315). Sewell (2001:1, as cited in De Vos et al. 2012:342) has this to say about qualitative interviews:

---------attempts to understand the world from the participants' point of view, to unfold the meanings of people's experiences and to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations.

The idea was to get meaning regarding how the communities, heads and teachers could find common ground in curriculum-implementation matters. The use of in-depth unstructured interviews as a data collection tool in this study was justified given that I needed to access and gain insight into the participants' feelings, opinions, emotions and experiences (Denscombe 2010:173). It was also an advantage to use the unstructured interview in this study because it allowed me the opportunity to probe for views and opinions from the interviewees and also to ask for the clarification of responses. The use of interviews also enabled me to attain highly personalised, rich and thick data from community members thus increasing the validity of my research. According to De Vos et al. (2012:360), one major weakness of an interview as a data-collection method is that there is a risk that the responses from the participants may be untruthful. However, this weakness was addressed by triangulating the data with similar questions from other data sources, that is, open – ended questionnaires and focus group discussions.

3.6 DATA MANAGEMENT AND ANALYSIS

Qualitative data sources in this study included unstructured interviews, open-ended questionnaires and focus-group discussions which potentially generated volumes of data.

For focus group discussions and unstructured interviews, I used a Digital Voice Recorder and a research assistant who captured information to complement the DVR. After the recorded interviews and focus group discussions, I transcribed the data. The process of transcribing the interview and focus group discussion data was quite lengthy and demanding but it helped me to come up with data that was easier to analyse and organise than the original audio recorded data (See Transcription Sample 1 and 3 under Appendices). Information written by the school heads on the open-ended questionnaires was also transcribed to come up with one data sheet with responses from all the four school heads (see Transcription 2).

For data authenticity, the need for data saturation was taken care of. According to Cohen et al (2011:601) saturation is reached when no new insights, properties, dimensions, relationships, codes or categories are produced even when new data are added. Data saturation is also achieved when all of the data are accounted for in the core categories and sub categories. In

this study, I ensured that I left field when I was convinced that there was no new data emerging from the questioning as well as from the discussions. I allowed respondents to exhaust all they had about community involvement in curriculum implementation. Comprehensive data treatment was done where the gathered data were open to repeated inspection (Silverman 2010:280-281). Where information was insufficient or not clear, verification with participants was done achieving data saturation.

With community members, most of whom could not understand English, there was the ChiShona version of the questions. I allowed these community members to use a language of their choice to ensure that these important data sources express themselves in a language that would best reveal their thoughts and feelings. The Shona language also took into account their level of appreciation of the issues under discussion together with their level of education. Thus, as someone who is competent and fluent in both languages, I had to translate into ChiShona, the interview guide for community members that was initially formulated in English. I also translated into English, the data that emerged from the ChiShona version of the interview guide. To check on translation accuracy and validation, two collegues at Great Zimbabwe University from the Faculty of Arts, Department of African Languages, helped in the translation verification. Their input and suggestions were valuable in standardising the questions and responses.

The data collected through questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions, did not 'speak for themselves'. The data needed a process of categorisation which aimed at making sense of the messages in the data (Bonilha 2012). The categorisation allowed me to condense textual data into meaningful format (Thomas 2006:237) and transforming data into findings (Patton 2002, in De Vos et al. 2012:307). Taking into consideration Maree's (2012:99) suggestion, this was achieved through a process of inductive analysis of the data. The main purpose was to allow research findings to emerge from the frequent, dominant or significant themes inherent in raw data.

The process of breaking down data sets into small units to reveal their characteristic elements and gaining insight (Gray 2011:499) was done using codes and themes that emerged from the collected data. The focus in this study was on individuals and groups of significant players, namely the primary school heads, teachers and community members, using vignettes in the final account (Cohen et al. 2011:539). The emphasis was on the meaning participants made of the spoken and the written word as well as the reason why it was the way it was (Maree

2012:103). In this study the analysis involved reducing the volume of raw data, sifting the important data from the less important, identifying significant patterns, and constructing a framework for communicating the essence of what the data revealed (De Vos et al. 2012:397; Bonilha 2012). Aware of Maree's (2012:99) view that qualitative data analysis is an ongoing and iterative process generating large amounts of data, analysis was done simultaneously with data collection. This was done to avoid the misery of sifting through volumes of data after collection had been completed.

In this study the reduction of the data and the analysis of raw field notes were done by developing codes involving reviewing, selecting, interpreting and summarising the gathered information without distorting it (Gray 2011:455; Walliman 2011:133). These codes were useful in distinguishing different meanings, relationships and settings as understood by the participants as they became involved in curriculum implementation issues. The study took into account pattern coding, a method of pulling together the coded information into more compact and meaningful groupings (Walliman 2011:135). This helped me in developing a more integrated appreciation of the situation.Pattern coding allowed me to test the initial answers to the research questions by showing people's roles and their relationships in formal and informal situations (Walliman 2011:137). Using codes also helped me to show whether the school heads, the teachers and community members had unified or divergent views regarding their participation in curriculum implementation.

3.7 ISSUES OF TRUSTWORTHINESS

Qualitative researches have been accused of the lack of accuracy and comprehensiveness of coverage (Cohen et al. 2011:202). In this study, I strived for validity through the triangulation of both the methods and the data (Silverman 2010:277). Viewing phenomena from more than one perspective, that is methodological triangulation and use of different sources of data, that collaborate and complement each other as well as comparing data from different methods and participants (Denscombe 2010:346) was important in this study. The question items were carefully constructed taking into account acceptable definitions, concepts and terms (Cohen et al. 2011:295). In this study, Lincoln and Guba's (1985) trustworthiness frameworks for ensuring rigour were taken into account. Credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability were the four constructs the research also strived to address.

3.7.1 Credibility

The research study was, thus, subjected to the following credibility questions by O'Leary (2010:30):

- Have subjectivities been acknowledged and managed?
- Has the true essence been captured?
- Are the methods approached with consistency?
- Are the arguments relevant and appropriate?
- Can the data be verified?

These questions acted as a framework for evaluating issues of credibility in this study. The major issue was to address Merriam's in Shenton (2004:64) credibility question, 'how congruent are the findings with reality?' In response to this question related to accuracy of data collected, I considered the development of an early familiarity with the culture of participating schools and individuals, random sampling, triangulation, debriefing sessions, member checkings and thick description as key to credibility of the study.

Before collecting data from the participants, I had a transect walk and did community mapping as preliminary visits to gain an adequate understanding and establish relationships with school heads, teachers and community members. The idea was to establish a relationship of trust (Shenton 2004:65) without necessarily becoming immersed in their day to day activities. Further, for the participating primary schools and their heads, instead of purposive sampling, a random sampling approach was used as it helped to ensure that unknown influences were evenly distributed within the sample (Shenton 2004). This selection method made me feel confident that the selected primary schools and heads represented what could be obtaining in the generality of the primary schools in Chivi district.

The practice of viewing phenomena from more than one perspective through methodological triangulation (in-depth interviews, open-ended questionnaires and focus group discussions) and different sources of data (school heads, teachers, parents, business people, church and traditional leaders) was one way of achieving credibility in this study. Individual viewpoints and group experiences were verified against others constructing a rich picture on the contributions of a range of participants and methods (Shenton 2004:66).

Checking on correctness of data was done on the spot as during interviews and focus group discussions. I read to the participants what my assistant had captured and also replayed the audio-recorder to check whether what they said was what they intended. This verification gave me confidence about the accuracy of the captured data. After collecting the data, I gave a detailed description of how communities could be invoved in curriculum implementation at primary school level. I also used similar questions for all the participants to ascertain the different levels of understanding of the participants regarding community participation in curriculum implementation.

3.7.2 Confirmability

The issue of confirmability, with objectivity as its equivalent was critical to this study. To ensure that the study's findings are a result of the experiences and ideas of the participants (Shenton 2004:72) and not the researcher's biases, I gave a detailed account of the methods used. I also admitted the strengths and weaknesses of the methods used explaining the steps taken, what Shenton (2004:72) calls audit trial. Gray (2009:194) calls it the audit, showing connections between data and researcher's interpretations. In this study, I audio-taped interviews and focus group discussions and the interpretations included actual words by the school heads, teachers and community members.

3.7.3 Transferability

The concern here was the extent to which the findings of this study could be applied to other situations (Gray 2009:194; Shenton 2004:69). While transferring the results to a bigger population cannot be ruled out even with a small sample, but the random sampling done for schools means that findings can relate to schools in similar situations. In this study, detailed contextual information was provided regarding community involvement in curriculum implementation. This enabled findings to be transferred to other comparable rural schools in similar positions. With this in mind, results in this study can be applied to other rural districts in Zimbabwe.

3.7.4 Dependability

Borrowing from positivists, dependability is about the possibility of repeating the work in the same context and same methods and obtaining similar results. Lincoln and Guba in Cohen et al (2011) use dependability than reliability. In this qualitative study, dependability of the results

were achieved through the use of 'overlapping methods' (Shenton 2004:71). Teachers were involved in focus group discussions, community members were individually interviewed and primary school heads responded to open-ended questionnaires. The data from these instruments were reported in greater depth and detail allowing the reader to appreciate the rigour of the research practices.

3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study dealt with human beings. The need to respect the participants' rights cannot be overemphasised (O'Leary 2010:29). According to De Vos et al. (2012:115), of importance to every researcher are the ethical principles. They should always guide the interaction and the relationship with the participants, decision-making and the humane and sensitive treatment of the participants. Aware of the fact that trampling on the participants was unethical, the study was thus premised on mutual trust, acceptance, cooperation and respect in order to avert any adverse effects on the participants involved (De Vos et al. 2012:113). Before the collection of the data, I applied for ethical clearance from the UNISA College of Education Research Ethics Committee. This was granted through a Research Ethics Clearance Certificate (see Appendix 12).

While there are a plethora of ethically important principles, the research took cognisance of the following ethical aspects as relevant to this study, namely gaining access to the research sites, informed consent, confidentiality and beneficence.

3.8.1 Gaining access to the research sites

In this research permission was first sought from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE), using the correct channels of communication to gain access to the research sites (the schools) (see Appendix 1). Schools are public institutions and are under the supervision of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. In respecting that line of authority in order to gain access to the schools is important, and was not seen as a right of the researcher. I took heed of Bell's (1991, in Cohen et al. 2011:81) advice that there is a need to gain access early, with fully-informed consent gained, indicating to the relevant Ministry the possible benefits of the research. The official permission from the Masvingo Provincial Education offices to undertake the research in the targeted Chivi district primary schools was done in writing and in person (see Appendix 2). The regional offices sent a letter of recommendation to the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education's Permanent Secretary

to endorse the recommendation. I took the letter of consent to Harare. Based on the letter from the Permanent Secretary (see Appendix 3), I also received the approval of the Provincial Education Director (PED), Masvingo region, granting me permission to visit the selected Chivi district primary schools (see Appendix 4). With the letter from the PED, I received the approval of the District Education Officer (DEO), Chivi district, granting me permission to visit the research sites (see Appendix 4).

With these letters of approval, I then proceeded to familiarize myself with these sites. I also identified significant figures that were responsible for assisting in the organisation and administration of the research (Cohen et al. 2011:81). These were the primary school heads and teachers, the traditional and church leaders, the parents and the business people. Cresswell's (2005:12) and Cohen et al.'s (2011:82) advice that preparing this groundwork was important because of the following reasons:

- to avoid the potential of being seen as an intruder;
- to avoid disturbing the site during the study;
- to create amicable working relationships with the research participants; and
- to make sure that every stage and level of the education system was aware of the existence of the study.

The idea was to address and acquaint the participants with the following issues raised by Cohen et al. (2011:82) pertaining to collecting data for the research after gaining access to the sites:

- the aims of the research;
- its practical applications;
- the methods and procedures to be used;
- the nature and size of the samples;
- the activities to be done;
- the time involved;
- the degree of disruption envisaged; and
- the assistance needed in the organisation and administration of the data-collection process

This planning and visits were to prepare me, the schools and the communities on the expectations likely to be made on them by the research and the researcher, taking advantage to foresee and determine potential problems.

3.8.2 Autonomy/Informed consent

Critically important to this research was the need to make available adequate information on the goal of the study, the expected duration of the participants' involvement, possible advantages and the anticipated risks (Royse 2004, in De Vos et al. 2012:117) in order for participants to make informed choices about their participation or refusal. Informed consent was sought after carefully and truthfully informing participants about the value of the study (Denzin & Lincoln 2005:715; Gilbert 2011:150). The right to respect the rights of individuals to exert control over the decisions they make gave this study the important ethical quality and credibility (De Vos et al. 2012:117; Cohen et al. 2011:77). This was achieved by taking heed of the stipulations of the following United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Institutional Guide to DHEW Policy (1971 in Cohen et al. 2011:78):

- a fair explanation of the procedures to be followed and their purposes;
- a description of the attendant discomforts and risks reasonably to be expected;
- a description of the benefits reasonably expected;
- an offer to answer any enquiries concerning the procedures;and
- an instruction that the participant is free to withdraw consent and to discontinue participation in the study at any time without prejudice to the participant.

To achieve this, I followed De Vos et al.'s (2012:117 - 118) suggestion and designed a consent letter for each group of participants. The emphasis was on accurate and complete information for them to fully comprehend the details of the study, premised on four key ethical considerations namely:

- competence, where the participants are to be responsible and mature enough to make informed decisions given the relevant information,
- voluntarism, which is mainly that the participants are free to choose to take part in the study,
- full information, where the consent was fully informed and
- comprehension, where it is expected from the participants to fully understand the nature of the study.

It should be noted that all the participants in this study were adults above the age of eighteen years, which is the legal age of majority in Zimbabwe. The participants were capable and competent enough to make independent decisions and competent psychological consent (De

Vos et al. 2012:117). The consent form was not a license to coerce the participants but merely an instrument to get their approval. Participation, however, always remained voluntary, as informed consent implies informed refusal (Cohen et al. 2011:78). (For full details of the consent letters, see Appendices 5, 6 and 7.) The consent of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE), the custodian of all the schools in Zimbabwe, was sought after full disclosure of the nature of the study.

3.8.3 Confidentiality/Anonymity and privacy

The study appreciated that every individual has the right to privacy. It is his/her right to decide when, where, to whom and to what extent his/her attitudes, beliefs and behaviour will be revealed (De Vos et al. 2012:119). Privacy, a primordial value, a basic human right and its corollaries, anonymity, confidentiality (Cohen et al. 2011:91) were seriously taken into account in this study. The interviewee and focus group discussion participants' names remained anonymous. Taking heed of Gray's (2011) advice, during the actual data-collection I assured all the participants of their anonymity and confidentiality, both of their names and the information they provided. This important safeguard was taken to ensure that the unethical practice of identifying the names of participants was guarded against, unless participants acceded to it. The assurance was also given to participants that the responses they give would be treated with confidentiality and be used for no other purposes than for this study. To hide and protect the identities of participants, I used pseudo names. I was motivated to do this to ensure that the research did not bring harm to the participants (De Vos et al. 2012:115). Issues of confidentiality were taken seriously by not hiding any apparatus such as audio tape used. A Digital Voice Recorder (DVR) was used in the research with the prior consent of the participants. I made sure that the information generated and recorded was protected from leakages. I was convinced by De Vos et al.'s (2012:121) assertion that issues of confidentiality should be negotiated with participants and their cooperation respectfully requested.

3.8.4 Beneficence

The utilitarian value of any study to participants as well as to the general the education system was established from the onset. In the spirit of trying to motivate the participants to participate in this research, I had to explain and make it clear to them that the research was going to bring personal, educational and social benefits to them.Such benefits included the improvement in resource mobilization for curriculum implementation, widening knowledge base for both the

teachers and the communities, increasing the locus of educational provision, refreshing teaching and learning approaches, and an increased excitement for the community members to be involved in curriculum implementation issues. My idea was not to leave the research sites impoverished but enriched and enhanced in their capacity to implement the curriculum together with communities. This active decision was seen to be in the best interests of the participants (Taylor 2006). In this study I worked to maximize the benefits and minimize the risks to participants (Taylor 2006) by building the participants' capacities to engage each other as assets in the curriculum implementation process. Mending a suspiciously poisoned relationship between the classroom teachers and the communities, through this study would contribute to life-altering relationship (Heiskell 2010).

3.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, I gave an appreciation of the research design and its necessary accompaniments in terms of the population and the sample, the data -ollection instruments, the analysis of the data and ethical considerations.

In the next chapter, I present and analyse the collected qualitative data.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to understand how the communities can be meaningfully engaged in curriculum implementation at primary school level in Zimbabwe. In chapter three, I gave a detailed account of the design and methodology used in data collection.

In this chapter, I give a detailed presentation and analysis of the findings from the primary school heads, the teachers, the parents, the traditional leaders, the business people and the church leaders. The presentation and analysis was in respect of their thoughts, aspirations and vision in as far as they can network and build relationships in curriculum implementation at primary school level in Zimbabwe.

In this qualitative research, data were collected from thirty eight participants comprising four primary school heads, twenty teachers and forteen community members. The selection of the participants was regardless of gender and what was important was not who gave information but how that data contributed to the understanding of how communities could be engaged in curriculum implementation. Each of the four school heads responded to an open-ended questionnaire. I conducted individual interviews on each of the selected community members. Focus group discussions were carried out at each of the four primary schools with five teachers at each school. Data were transcribed using audio recordings and notes written during the discussions. The schools and the participants were coded to hide the identity of participants. From the gathered data, I saw important emerging threads culminating in five broad themes and several sub-themes or categories which I used to organise the data.

The following table shows the themes and sub-themes emanating from the data collected from the selected school heads, teachers, parents, traditional leaders, business people and church leaders.

Table 4.1: Emerging themes and sub-themes/categories

THEMES	SUB-THEMES/CATEGORIES
Theme 1: Understanding the key terms.	- School heads and teachers' understanding of the concept *curriculum implementation*. - Stakeholders' views on what *community participation* entails. - Identification of community members to participate in curriculum implementation
Theme 2: Partnership between schools and communities in curriculum implementation: Stakeholders' attitudes and perceptions.	- Importance of community engagement in curriculum implementation. - Community members and their contribution in curriculum implementation. - Benefits of engaging the community members in curriculum implementation. - The most active members of the community in curriculum implementation. - Accountability issues in the schools-community partnership in curriculum implementation.
Theme 3: Challenges to effective community participation in curriculum implementation and possible remedies.	- The language of education. - The closed-door policy of the teachers and the school heads.

	• Government policy that no child should be sent home for not paying fees. • Learners' preparedness and attitudes towards community members' participation in curriculum implementation. • Unavailability of dialogical spac. • The polarised political environment. • Remuneration issues/Incentives. • Possible remedies to these barriers.
Theme 4: Policy issues.	• Circulars and policy guidelines. • Policy formulation: -the bottom-up approach.
Theme 5: Stakeholders' wish list/ Recommendations.	• The school heads' recommendations. • The teachers' recommendations. • The community members' recommendations.

To protect the identity of the participants and their schools, and for ethical reasons, I used pseudo codes as shown in the following tables:

Table 4.2: Codes for the schools and the school heads

SCHOOL		SCHOOL HEADS	
CODE	MEANING	CODE	MEANING
1	School number 1	SH1	School Head for School number 1
2	School number 2	SH2	School Head for School number 2
3	School number 3	SH3	School Head for School number 3
4	School number 4	SH4	School Head for School number 4

Table 4.3: Codes for focus-group discussions with the teachers

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS WITH THE TEACHERS	
CODE	EXPLANATION
FGD1	Focus-group discussion at school number 1
FGD2	Focus-group discussion at school number 2
FGD3	Focus-group discussion at school number 3
FGD4	Focus-group discussion at school number 4

To identify the members of the community, I used codes together with the code of the primary school in their vicinity, as indicated in the following tables:

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Table 4.4: Codes for the traditional and church leaders

SCHOOL	TRADITIONAL LEADERS		CHURCH LEADERS	
	CODE	EXPLANATION	CODE	EXPLANATION
1	TL2		CL1	Church leader within the vicinity of school no. 1 **and** also representing school no. 2. **Therefore, CL1 represents schools 1 & 2.**
2	TL2	Traditional leader within the vicinity of school no. 2 **and** also representing school no.1.**Therefore, TL2 represents schools 1 & 2.**	CL1	
3	TL4		CL3	Church leader within the vicinity of school no. 3 **and** also representing school no. 4. **Therefore, CL3 represents schools 3 & 4.**
4	TL4	Traditional leader within the vicinity of school no. 4 **and** also representing school no.3.**Therefore, TL4 represents schools 3 & 4.**	CL3	

Table 4.5: Codes for the business people and the parents

SCHOOL	BUSINESS PEOPLE		PARENTS	
	CODE	EXPLANATION	CODE	EXPLANATION *Two parents at each school
1	BP2		P1a	Referring to the first interviewed parent at school no. 1
			P1b	Referring to the second interviewed parent at school no. 1
2	BP2	Business person within the vicinity of school no. 2 **and** also representing school no. 1. **Therefore, BP2 represents schools 1 & 2**	P2a	The first interviewed parent at school no. 2
			P2b	Second interviewed parent at school no. 2
3	BP4		P3a	First interviewed parent at school no. 3
			P3b	Second interviewed parent at school no. 3
4	BP4	Business person within the vicinity of school no. 4 **and** also representing school no. 3. **Therefore, BP4 represents schools 3 & 4**	P4a	First interviewed parent at school no. 4
			P4b	Second interviewed parent at school no. 4

4.2 DESCRIPTION OF FINDINGS

It is from the aforesaid participants that the data collected are presented in the form of themes and categories as identified in Table 4.1.

4.2.1 THEME 1: UNDERSTANDING THE KEY TERMS

To lay the foundation for the discussions it was necessary for me and the participants to first of all read from the same page by ascertaining whether these curriculum implementation stakeholders knew the key terms. Under this theme emerged three issues for discussion, namely the school heads and teachers' understanding of the concept *curriculum implementation*; the stakeholders' views on what *community participation* entails and the identification of the stakeholders in the community who can be engaged in curriculum implementation. The following figure presents a summary of the sub-themes that emerged under Theme 1.
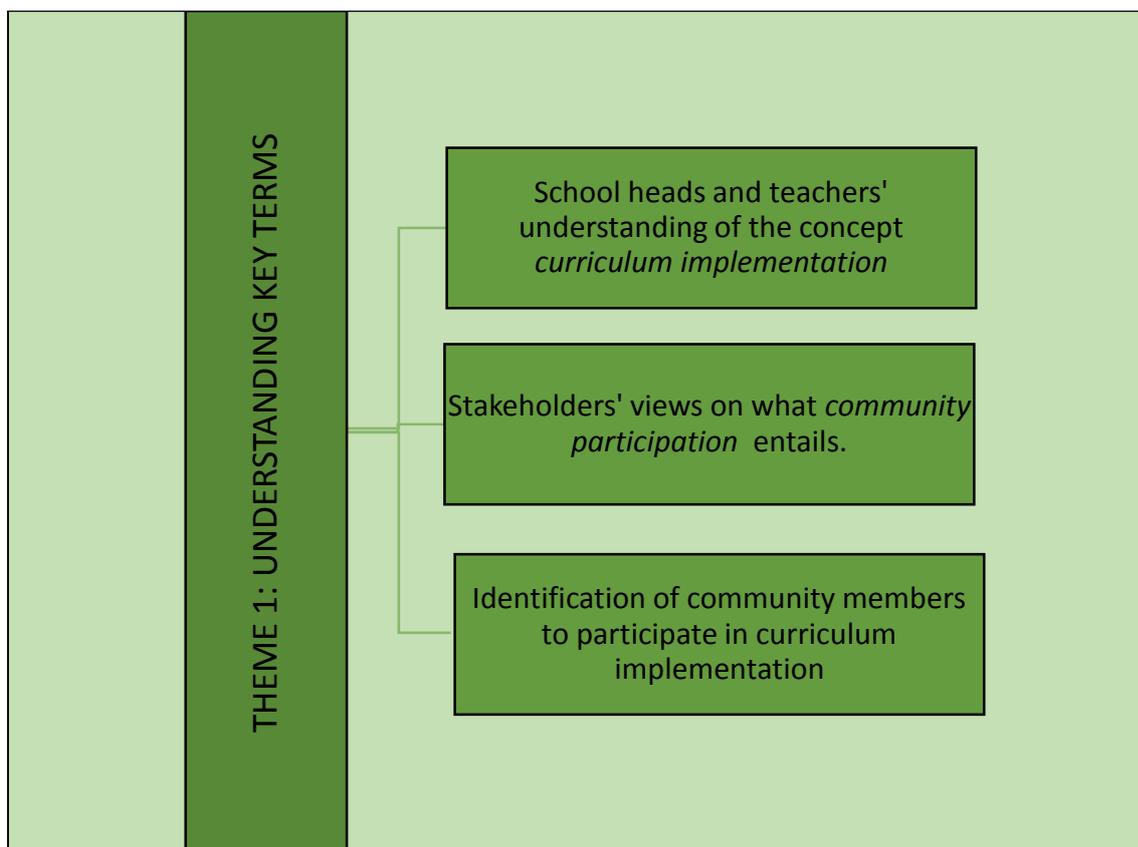
Figure 4.1: Sub-themes emerging from Theme 1.

4.2.1.1 The school heads and teachers' understanding of the concept *curriculum implementation*

In terms of the meaning and definition of the key terms, I noted that the teachers were generally knowledgeable, especially about curriculum implementation, as indicated by one teacher in FDG1 who said in Shona (verbatim):

> *Hurongwa hwezvinodzidzwa nevana takatarisana navana ava.*
> **Translation:** Organisation of learnt material with the learners in mind.

Another response emerged from FGD2, as follows:

> *Curriculum implementation is the application of the learnt material either learnt from school or at home. It is how the subject matter is reaching the children, how we are giving the ideas to the children.*

Furthermore, in FGD3 and FGD4, the teachers had a common understanding of *curriculum implementation*. Their responses were summarised by two teachers who said:

> *Curriculum implementation is actual classroom teaching of content by teachers whereby we translate the official syllabus from government into teachable units. [FGD3]*

> *It is the imparting of knowledge from the official designed syllabuses as we (teachers) scheme and plan. [FGD4]*

From the above responses, I interpreted that the teachers knew what *curriculum implementation* is. From their responses it transpired that they were aware that they use the official syllabus which they break down to transact content to learners in the classroom situation. Implied from the teachers' statements is the fact that actual curriculum implementation is done by the teachers as they interact with the learners during the learning process.

In the same vein, the school heads indicated a high level of understanding what *curriculum implementation* means when they wrote in the open-ended questionnaire that *curriculum implementation* is:

- *The process of teaching and learning in the classroom. [SH1]*
- *Teachers putting into practice in the classroom the recommended curriculum from the Curriculum Development Unit (CDU). [SH2]*
- *Teachers practising in totality the designed educational programmes. [SH3]*
- *Teachers implementing government policies, for example implementing subjects as they are given by the government through syllabuses. It is the translating of syllabuses, teaching methods, plans and intentions into reality. [SH4]*

The interpretation derived from the heads' questionnaire responses show that curriculum implementation is a classroom-based activity by the teachers when they interpret the syllabuses from the curriculum planners in classroom situations for teaching and learning to take place.

In line with understanding what curriculum implementation means, it was also prudent to ascertain what the stakeholders understood by *community participation* in curriculum implementation.

4.2.1.2 The stakeholders' views on what *community participation* entails

The community members, the school heads and the teachers were asked to give their own ideas about what community participation in curriculum implementation entailed. The following are statements by the teachers representing their understanding of community participation in curriculum implementation:

> *Community participation in general can be viewed as involving all the members of the community in all the activities that take place at the school…… But more specifically in matters of infrastructural development, paying school fees and levies, supporting school activities like sports, traditional dances and many others. The other level is to involve these community members in some selected topics in the process of teaching and learning. It is the teacher who should decide to include them, when and how, otherwise basa ringakanyika (our job will be soiled). [FGD1]*

> *Community participation in curriculum implementation is the involvement of community members in teaching and learning. Community members participate*

as required and as invited. Community members also participate through approval and disapproval of what is happening at schools and as role models in their own right, community members shape behaviour of children, instil correct language registers and culture among other things thereby complementing curriculum implementation by teachers. [FGD2]

From the above statements, it is quite clear that the teachers in FGD1 and FGD2 took community participation in curriculum implementation from two levels namely, the involvement of the community members in infrastructural development and other support services, as well as inculcating the correct values of the society. All this is community participation outside the classroom, but also seen as creating an environment conducive to successful curriculum implementation. The second level is when the teachers can use their discretion to invite the community members to teach on selected topics which the teachers may feel they can add value.

Focus group discussions 3 and 4 indicated almost the same ideas about community participation in curriculum implementation, but were slightly different from FGD1 and FGD2. To them (FGD3 and 4) *community participation* was seen when the parents enrol their children at the school, agree to pay the fees and levies, provide learning materials for their children, like exercise books, pens, buy uniforms, etc. The teachers in FGD3 and 4 emphasised that the community members participate in curriculum implementation when they make the process of curriculum implementation happen by providing the schools with children to teach. Thus, summarising these teachers' views, one teacher in FGD 3 remarked:

Community members send their children to school and it is when we have these children that curriculum implementation can take place. The rest is left to the teachers to use their knowledge and skills to teach these children.

To these teachers, the fact that these communities have availed their children to school is their contribution to curriculum implementation. Actual teaching is done by teachers who have the knowledge and skills. In short, according to the teachers in FGD3 and FGD4, community members have no role to play in the classroom.

Likewise, the primary school heads, through their open-ended questionnaire responses, forwarded explanations that were quite similar to those of the teachers, although in different expressions. For the school heads *community participation* meant the following:

- *The involvement of the people in a particular area in educational matters of their children. [SH1]*

- *It is the involvement of community members into the programmes designed by government. It is support given by the community to any programme undertaken by sponsors. In the school set up, it is the realisation that we are not an island and there are knowledgeable members in the community who can help teachers and children with a wealth of knowledge they have on specific aspects. [SH2]*

- *Involving the locality in the educational processes. [SH3]*

- *Community participation/engagement is the active involvement and contribution by parents in order to achieve planned educational objectives. [SH4]*

What is evident from the primary school heads' statements is that the community members in the vicinity of the schools should be involved in the school programmes. SH1, SH3 and SH4 did not specify the nature and extent of community involvement in curriculum implementation, while SH2 hinted that members of the community have knowledge that they can share with the teachers on certain topics. Of interest to note also was SH4's statement which implies that a community is made up of parents only.

On the whole, the findings indicate that the teachers and the school heads generally agreed on taking on board members of the community in school development matters as well as in the children's learning. However, the data given by the teachers and the school heads respectively, show that the teachers were more specific and clear on how the communities can participate in curriculum implementation. The school heads, on the other hand, were non-committal on how and when community members should be involved in curriculum implementation. The school heads preferred to merely state that community members should be involved in the educational processes.

Juxtaposed with the school was the community outside the school. It was also important to solicit their understanding of what a community is in relation to curriculum implementation.

Similar thoughts from these community members were grouped to avoid repetition. The following are the views forwarded by various community members:

> *Vanhu vanogara munharaunda yakakomberedza chikoro vanoshanda pamwe nechikoro kuti chikoro chibudirire uye kuti vana vawane zvose zvinoita kuti zvidzidzo zvavo zviendeke. [P1b, P4a, TL4, CL3]*
>
> **Translation:** It is those people who are in the school's vicinity who work together with the school for its development as well as the educational welfare of the learners.

> *Hukama hwavabereki nechikoro hwakanaka. Pane kunzwisisana uye kushandira pamwe. [P1a, P2b, P3a, P4b, BP2]*
>
> **Translation:** A good relationship between parents and schools as well as understanding each other and working together.

> *Vanhu vanogara munzvimbo imwe chete vanogona kusiyana apo nepapo asi kugara pamwe uku kunovaita kuti vave nehukama uye vashandire pamwe nechikoro chinodzidza vana. [TL2, P2a, P3b, BP4, CL1]*
>
> **Translation:** Community is a group of people who live in the same area, could be of different persuasions but have something in common thus having a relationship as well as working together with the school where our children are enrolled.

What can be deduced from the community members' responses is that their understanding of a community is all the people who live within the vicinity of the school. They have an obligation to have a good relationship with the schools so that the educational welfare of their children can be improved. Cutting through their statements, community members emphasised the need for the schools and the communities to work together for the good of both the schools and the children. What does not come out clearly, though, from the community members' responses is 'how' they are supposed to work together with the schools.

Both the traditional leaders (TL2 and TL4) also said that they have a good relationship with the schools. As traditional leaders they will always support school activities. The government, through the SDC, gave the traditional leaders greater say in school matters when the parents default on the payment of fees and levies and those who do not participate in school projects

like moulding bricks, fetching water etc. are referred to the traditional leaders who often force compliance. Sometimes they even fine them. The following statements from the traditional leaders validate this view:

> *Isu vanhu vemunharaunda tinodyidzana zvakanaka nezvikoro zvedu nokuti ndipo panodzidza vana vedu. Tikasasapota chikoro chedu chingazosapotwa nani uye tinenge tauraya vana vedu. [TL2]*
>
> **Translation:** We have a good working relationship with our schools as this is where our children learn. If we don't support the schools who will then support them? If we don't, then we destroy our children's educational prospects.

> *Isu sevatungamiri vevanhu munharaunda tinokurudzira vanhu vedu kuti vashande zvakanaka nezvikoro zvedu. Zvikoro zvinounza kwatiri vabereki vasingade kubhadhara fees, vasingade kukanya zvidhina kana kuchera mvura isu toti vabhadhare fine. Saka izvi zvaita kuti hukama hwedu nezvikoro huende panhanho yepamusoro. [TL4]*
>
> **Translation:** As traditional leaders, we have always encouraged members of the community to have a good working relationship with the schools around them. Those who default in paying fees and levies, those who do not participate in brick moulding and other activities called by the school are referred to us and we fine them. Because of this, our relationship with schools has been taken to a higher level.

The parents and the church leaders also unanimously agreed that a good working relationship exists between the communities and the schools. This has helped the children in receiving a good education. These views were emphatically stated in the following statements:

> *Isu vemachechi uyezve tiri vabereki tinofanira kuve nehukama hwakanaka nezvikoro zvedu nokuti tikasadaro vana vedu havawane dzidzo yakanaka. [P1a, CL3]*
>
> **Translation:** As church leaders as well as parents, we are obliged to have a good working relationship with our schools, failure to do so may result in our children not receiving good education.

Furthermore, all the parents applauded the fact that they are often called to the school, especially when their children have problems. The teachers often find time to explain the problem, and always worked with the parents for solutions. It is this relationship that parents heralded as healthy. The following statement from one parent confirms the above observation, and it summarises the views of the other parents:

> *Tinofara sevabereki kana tichishanda pamwe chete nezvikoro zvedu nokuti maticha anotishevedza kana vana vaita misikanzwa kana kunetseka nechikoro, saka tinogadzirisa matambudziko aya pamwe chete. [P2b]*
>
> **Translation:** As parents we are happy that we are called by teachers when our children have both social and academic problems and we often solve them together.

However, it was the business community (BP2 & BP4) who felt that their relationship with the primary schools, while good, was only pronounced when the schools were seeking donations for various school activities like prize-giving ceremonies, the construction of school buildings, etc. In-between there was only the seller-customer relationship. This view was summarised by one business person who said:

> *Hukama hwedu nezvikoro hwakanaka ndizvowo asi tinonyanya kuvaona kana vachida madonations pane zvavanenge vachiita kuchikoro sepamaprize giving, vachivaka nezvimwewo. [BP4]*
>
> **Translation:** Our relationship with schools is relatively good but we often see them when they seek donations for prize-giving ceremonies, the construction of buildings and other things. Besides that, we do not see them.

After the participants had outlined their views on what curriculum implementation is, as well as defining community participation, it was also vital for them to identify the community members who can participate in curriculum implementation. They also had to outline the role these community members can play in curriculum implementation.

4.2.1.3 Identification of the community members to participate in the implementation of the curriculum

The following table outlines the lists of people whom various participants identified as community members who can be engaged in curriculum implementation.

Table 4.6: The stakeholders' list of community members who can assist in curriculum implementation.

THE SCHOOLS' LIST (Teachers and school heads)	THE COMMUNITY MEMBERS' LIST (parents, business people, church and traditional leaders)
- parents, guardians, business people - education inspectors - interest groups, e.g. NGOs - religious organisations - traditional leaders - examination boards, e.g. ZIMSEC	- farmers, carpenters - business people - church elders - politicians and war veterans - headman/chief, traditional healers - councillors - retired people in the community, e.g. police officers, teachers, nurses, engineers, etc. - Non – Governmental Organisations (NGOs) - sports persons

From the list of community members who can help in the curriculum implementation process, the schools (heads and teachers) had a small list indicating that they are not keen on casting their nets wide to include other players in the curriculum implementation process. On the other hand, the community members seem to have an impressive, comprehensive and inclusive list of those whom they thought could assist the process. The community members' list, I noted, showed that they know the people in their midst, and seem to be more open-minded in terms

of who should participate and add value to the curriculum implementation process, given their prior and current expertise in their fields. Revealing from these two lists is that the two (school and community) have not engaged each other and have not shared ideas about how the local human resources can be harnessed for the good of the teaching and learning of children. From the findings, the schools and the communities seem not to be in total agreement on who of those in the community can be useful in curriculum implementation at primary school level.

4.2.2 THEME 2: THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE SCHOOLS AND THE COMMUNITIES IN CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION: THE STAKEHOLDERS' ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS

In my discussion with the stakeholders (the school heads, the teachers, the parents, the business people, and the church and traditional leaders), I realised that they all appreciated the need to forge meaningful partnerships, based on trust and respect. From these discussions there emerged several sub-themes, as presented in the following figure.

THEME 2: PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES IN CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION

- Importance of community engagement in curriculum implementation
- Community members and their contribution in curriculum implementation
- Benefits of engaging community members in curriculum implementation
- Most active members of the community in curriculum implementation
- Accountability issues in the schools - community partnership in curriculum implementation

Figure 4.2: Sub-themes emerging from theme 2.

4.2.2.1 The importance of community engagement in curriculum implementation

The school heads, the teachers and the community members unanimously agreed that engaging communities in curriculum implementation is healthy and sustainable. These people are always available. For members of the community, being associated and involved with the school developments and achievements, is always a source of pride and satisfaction as noted in the following excerpts from some of the community members:

> *Chikoro ndechedu uye vana ndevedu uye tinongovepo nguva dzose saka zvakakosha kuti tishande pamwe nematicha kuti chikoro chiwane zita rakanaka. Nesuwo tinogutsikana pamwe nekudada nazvo. Naiwo maticha anowanawo simba rekuita basa vachiziva kuti tinovatsigira pane zvose zvavanenge vachiita. Ukama hwakadai hunounza kukura uye kubudirira kwezvikoro pamwechete nenharaunda.* [P3a, TL4, CL3]
>
> **Translation:** It is important to work together with teachers because both the school and the pupils belong to us. We should work together to build a good reputation for the school and this will give us pride and satisfaction as a community. If there is a healthy partnership, teachers will have the confidence to execute their duties professionally. This kind of partnership brings about growth and sustainable development in both schools and communities.

> *Ukama hwakanaka pakati penharaunda nechikoro hunobatsira kuti vana vachengetedzeke panyaya yeunhu nokuti kumba nekuchikoro vanenge vachitaura nyaya imwe chete. Vana vakava neunhu nekuzvibata chero muchikoro vanobudirira, kana nesuwo senharaunda zvinobva zvatipa manyawi uye kuvimba nevarairidzi vedu.* [TL2, P1b, P2a, P4a, CL1]
>
> **Translation:** A good relationship between the community and schools helps on the discipline of children and this usually leads to their educational achievement and eventually giving the community pride and satisfaction.

The other parents [P1a, P2b, P3b, and P4b] also underlined the importance of the relationship, but blamed some teachers who do not want to accept ideas from the community members

whom they regard as less knowledgeable. Such views were summarised by one parent who noted that:

> *Ukama nechikoro hwakakosha chose nokuti kana patinodeedzwa kuchikoro pamusoro pematambudziko evana, tinobatsirana nematicha kugadzirisa. Asi pane mamwe maticha anofunga kuti isu hatingavape zivo nemazano panyaya yekudzidzisa nokuti vanotiona setisina njere. Zvinoita sekuti vanongotishevedza kuzotiudza zvokuita uye misangano mizhinji ingori yekuwedzera mari yechikoro pasina kana kutaura nezvekudzidziswa kwevana. [P1a]*
>
> **Translation:** The school-community relationship is very important especially when our children have problems, we can always work together with teachers to solve them. However, in some instances, some teachers have the mistaken notion that we do not have knowledge and ideas about education hence they often dictate to us what to do. Meetings are mainly about increasing fees and not to do with teaching and learning of children.

The community understood the school-community partnership and its importance. They did not go further to appreciate the importance of the community members in the classroom. It appears that the value of the community members has been appreciated outside the classroom, given the fact that they were conversant with issues outside the classroom, such as infrastructural development, the paying of school fees, donating sporting equipment, etc.

The school heads and the teachers also underscored the utilitarian value of community engagement in all facets of the school life. This finding is supported by the following statements by primary school heads in the questionnaire responses:

- *Community engagement is important because it is an integral part in curriculum implementation. Without the community it might be difficult to implement. [SH1]*
- *It is important because any programme or project undertaken by the school is doomed to fail if not supported by the community. [SH2]*

- *It is extremely important because communities provide the core input (pupils), they pay fees, they provide material support e.g. uniforms, pens etc. and assist in educating the pupils. [SH3]*

- *Community involvement is definitely important. The school cannot develop if it is isolated from the community. The school and the community should develop together. [SH4]*

The teachers in the focus-group discussions saw the importance of community engagement from the point of providing material resources like food, pens, exercise and textbooks, as well as assisting with homework. These teachers also emphasised the need for community members to come to open days, to help in traditional dances and to make sure there are sufficient classrooms at the school. One teacher in FGD1 remarked:

> *While engaging communities in curriculum implementation is important, it should be done with some moderation because if it is just done anyhow it may disturb and confuse the teaching and learning process. For example, community members should only be involved in their children's education through attending open days and providing material resources to build classrooms for their children. Some community members can also be invited to teach children some traditional dances.*

Asked on how this could be managed and what role they felt the communities could play in curriculum implementation, the teachers (as the curriculum implementers) in all the four focus-group discussions (FGD1, FGD2, FGD3 & FGD4) pointed to various roles as outlined in the following section.

4.2.2.2 Community members and their contribution in curriculum implementation

From the interactions I had with the participants, it was evident that the two groups (the schools and the communities) are trying to find each other in a seemingly dark room. While they all understand and realise the importance of engaging each other, the question of how this can be done remains elusive. The school heads and the teachers, representing the school, seemed sceptical about community engagement in curriculum implementation. They seemed to have drawn some boundaries, and even erected some 'iron curtains' for the community members.

The following table presents the teachers' views on how community members can assist in curriculum implementation.

Table 4.7: The contribution of community members in curriculum implementation: The teachers' views

COMMUNITY MEMBER (S)	AREA OF ENGAGEMENT IN CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION
PARENTS	- paying fees and levies - buying books (text &exercise books) - paying for educational trips - moulding bricks and fetching water for the construction of classrooms - donating in cash and kind - a source for resources, e.g. machinery - assisting children with their homework
TRADITIONAL LEADERS	- traditional dances, e.g. mhande,mbende - some topics on culture in the ChiShona subject area - African Traditional Religion(ATR) - taboos, sacred areas [tsika nemagariro (African traditional life)]
CHURCH LEADERS	- some topics in Religious and Moral Education (RME) - preaching at assemblies (upon invitation)
	providing financial assistance through the donation of chairs,

BUSINESS PEOPLE	tables, textbooks, prizes during open days
	• making sure the teaching and learning material is readily available in their shops for the teachers, learners and parents to buy
	• the teacher may also take the pupils to the shops to see how things are done, e.g. buying, selling and pricing.

From the above table it appears that the teachers have a number of areas where they felt the community members can make a contribution during curriculum implementation. The subject areas identified by the teachers include ChiShona, Religious and Moral Education and Social Studies. There are some topics and not all the topics from these subjects, which teachers felt community members can be engaged.

Overall, the teachers' views, as indicated in the above table clearly show that most intervention areas assigned to the communities have been peripheral, and on the fringes of curriculum implementation, like attending open days, moulding bricks, paying fees and levies, among others. The engagement, therefore, seems superficial, cosmetic, hence lacking genuineness and seriousness.

On the other hand, the members of the communities seem content with the status quo, only availing themselves when invited. This finding is supported by the following remarks from one parent, which also summarises other community members' views:

> *Isu nyangwe tichida chose kubatsira vana asi hatingazvipinze mukirasika kuzodzidzisa vana tisina kudanwa naivo varairidzi. Kana tisina kukokwa tingagodii nazvo, tinongogara zveduka, toziva basa redu rekubhadharira vana mafees nekuvatengera mabhuku nemayunifomu. Hatingatsamwiri kuti hatina kukokwa kuzodzidzisa vana. Ko tingadiiko? [P3a]*

Translation: We are more than willing to assist teachers as well as children but we cannot force ourselves into the classrooms if the teachers do not invite us. If they do not invite us, we will not be angry with them. We will continue to play our usual role of paying fees, buying uniforms and books for our children. What else can we do?

The above reaction, taken from the interviews with the community members, clearly indicates that as much as these community members are prepared and forthcoming to partner with the teachers in curriculum implementation. They can only do that upon invitation from the teachers. Without this invitation they cannot do anything except sending their children to school with fees, uniforms and books. So, according to these community members, the teachers should open up the partnership and assign the community members specific roles in the teaching and learning process. Therefore, from these interpretations it can be summarised that the members of the community stand ready and are willing to contribute to curriculum implementation. They (the community members) are waiting for the invitation card, and whether they know what to do in the classroom, they stand guided and directed by the teachers.

The focus group discussions with the teachers indicated that there are some subjects that teachers declared 'no-go areas' (the guarded subjects) for community members to be engaged in. These included Mathematics, English and Science. To the teachers, these are specialist technical areas that cannot be tampered with, or left to anyone to make an input. In support of this declaration, and representing the views of other teachers, one teacher in FGD4 proclaimed:

> *Even if we want these community members to teach the children, strictly speaking we might only allow them to teach very few aspects in subjects like Shona, RME and History. But we cannot and will never allow them to teach anything to do with Mathematics, English, Science and computers. These are technical areas which require specialist teachers. We cannot afford to let these community members spoil things for us in such subjects.*

The above remark clearly demonstrates the lack of trust by the teachers to let the community members handle certain subject areas. I interpreted the teachers' views to imply that the teaching and learning process should not be left to chance. These teachers were comfortable

with a situation where only the trained personnel (the teachers themselves) should handle matters to do with curriculum implementation.

The school heads also contributed through their questionnaire responses by listing the roles of the parents, the business people, and the church and traditional leaders in curriculum implementation in the following manner:

The parents:

- *Work together with the teachers and help the pupils at home with homework. [SH1]*
- *Provide the pupils with money to buy materials to be used at school, e.g. textbooks, and exercise books, and support the school in any curricular programme. [SH2, SH3]*
- *Pay the fees and levies that go a long way in acquiring resources that facilitate curriculum implementation. [SH4]*

The business people:

- *Provide the necessary resources required by the school and the pupils. [SH1]*
- *Donate equipment and financial resources to purchase items needed by the schools. [SH2]*
- *Stocking and selling goods linked to curriculum implementation, e.g. textbooks, exercise books etc. Finance school programmes. [SH3]*
- *Donate textbooks and technical equipment to keep the pupils up-to-date. [SH4]*

The churches:

- *Run programmes that promote teaching and learning, both at church and home. [SH1]*
- *Support all the programmes and subjects taught at school. [SH2]*
- *Cultivate moral support and discipline necessary for effective curriculum implementation. [SH3]*
- *Form scripture unions in schools in order to impart moral values to the children. [SH4]*

The traditional leaders:

- *Participate in some activities and programmes that promote cultural and traditional education e.g. traditional dances, sacred places, taboos, ethnic history. [SH1]*

- *Enforce the paying of tuition fees and other levies. [SH2]*

- *Mobilise resources and encourage a positive partnership between the schools and the communities. [SH3]*

- *Community mobilisation for school projects like classroom construction, brick moulding etc. [SH4]*

Interesting to note from the above findings is the fact that the responses forwarded by school heads pertaining to the role that community members could play in curriculum implementation were to a greater extent consistent with the views forwarded by the teachers in Table 4.7.1. Therefore, I interpreted the school heads' and the teachers' views to mean that the schools seem to have collaborated and agreed in drawing boundaries for the community members. They seem not to be genuinely willing to engage these community members in the actual teaching and learning process.

4.2.2.3 The benefits of engaging the members of the community in curriculum implementation

The school heads, teachers and community members concurred that there are enormous benefits that accrue as a result of engaging each other in curriculum implementation. The greatest beneficiary being the learner. The school heads' views on the benefits of engaging community members in curriculum implementation were noted when they stated the importance of community engagement in curriculum implementation. They stated that the schools cannot develop in isolation from the community, hence the need for the schools and the communities to develop together (see 4.2.2.1). During focus-group discussions the teachers indicated that if the curriculum implementation is well managed, the learner would be at a decided advantage. The following statements summarise, and represent the general feelings and views of the teachers from each of the four focus-group discussion groups, regarding the benefits of engaging community members in curriculum implementation:

- *It bridges the gap between home and school - It reduces culture shock.*

- *It allows the preservation of culture, especially with threats from globalisation.*

- *When the community members are engaged, it arouses interest and the motivational levels of the learners and are kept attentive throughout.*
- *It breaks the monotony of having children to be taught by the same teacher everyday. Hence having community members to come in also brings in different knowledge, skills and understanding.*
- *It creates trust and respect between teachers and community members.*
- *It fills in some knowledge gaps the teachers might have, e.g. traditional.*
- *It improves teaching and learning and content mastery, and the schools excel academically, thus, improving the school's visibility.*
- *The members of the community will really appreciate what the teachers do.*
- *It improves the relationship between the teachers and the members of the community.*
- *Using human resources in the community is cheap and sustainable –members of the community are always available when required, and they take great pride in contributing to the education of their children.*

The above list of benefits indicate that the teachers value the wealth of experience, knowledge, skills and values that community members can bring to the classroom if they are meaningfully engaged. If the teachers really meant what they said about these benefits then engaging the community members in curriculum implementation should be seriously prioritised. This would enable the effectiveness of teaching and learning to be realised sooner than later.

4.2.2.4 The most active members of the community in curriculum implementation

From the discussions I had with the teachers and the community members during this study, as well as from the questionnaire responses from the school heads, it emerged that not all the members of the community are interested or are actively involved in curriculum implementation issues. All the four school heads declared that the pupils' parents or guardians are the most active and interested members in curriculum implementation. Maybe the parents or guardians' wish is to see their children succeed in their education and to achieve higher grades. These parents/guardians are also the key figures in the provision of the basic requirements in the learning of the pupils. They are always seen to be most active in providing their children with anything needed at school and also in rendering any services needed by the

schools. The following statement represents all the four school heads' views on the most active and interested community members in curriculum implementation:

> *The parents or guardians, because they provide all the necessities for pupils e.g. payment of school fees, provision of basic requirements like books, pens, uniforms, food etc. They also contribute in labour, and assist with children's homework.*

Interesting to note from the above statement is that the school heads were consistent in stating that community members' involvement should remain outside the classroom. From what the school heads stated, it clearly indicates that the parents and guardians are not active during the actual teaching and learning process. They are only active in providing the required materials to facilitate the teaching and learning process.

On the other hand, in the focus-group discussions the teachers indicated that there is no group in the community that is more active than the other in curriculum implementation "…..*given that it is us teachers who should invite them (be it individual or group) to teach concepts we think they can add value to what we already know" [FGD1].* In all the four focus-group discussions the teachers listed the parents and the traditional leaders as some of the members they work with at certain levels. For example, in respect of the children's home work. The teachers said that their working relationships with the parents and the traditional leaders was basically concerned with those topics which the teachers felt they do not have adequate knowledge about, considering that some of these teachers are young, and are not aware of some of the historical and traditional issues. Some of the popular topics where the teachers said they needed the assistance of the community included, namely *kurova guva* (appeasing the spirits), some Shona rituals like *mukweerera* (rain-making ceremonies), *nzvimbo dzinoera* (sacred places). The teachers indicated that they usually give the children such topics as homework so that the children could be assisted at home or by anyone knowledgeable from the community, e.g. the traditional leaders. It is interesting to note here that the teachers made sure that the areas they were not well conversant with, they gave the children as homework so that they could be assisted at home. The teachers avoided inviting knowledgeable community members to the classroom to teach or to talk to the pupils. They believed that the classroom should be guarded jealously by the teachers, and that everyone or anyone should not be allowed into the classroom. Thus, the teachers cautiously suggested that,

We will always give children homework in those areas we need assistance from parents or any other community member, we cannot invite them to the classroom. The classroom is a restricted area and need to be treated carefully lest we create unnecessary chaos and panic. [FGD3]

On the other hand, the interviewed community members concurred that the chances of being invited to the classroom to be actively involved in curriculum implementation are far and few. The sentiments of these community members are summarised by what one parent said, namely

*Vemunharaunda vanoenda kunobatsira maticha vashoma chose, ndokunge varipo. Asi handirangarire chero ani zvake achiti ndaenda kundobatsirana nematicha kudzidzisa vana. Asi kuda aya ma*organisations *anobatsira aya ndiwo atinonzwa kuti vanga vari kudzidzisa zvakati nezvakati. Isu tinobatsira chete vana kana vauya nebasa rechikoro ravanenge vanzi vanobatsirwa kumba. [P3b]*

Translation: There are very few members of the community, if any, that work with teachers in the classroom. I do not remember anyone saying that he or she has been asked to assist in teaching any concept. What we have heard are NGOs who come to schools to teach or talk about different concepts. As for us, we only assist our children when they come with homework.

Some community members were even unaware and shocked that some of them could be asked to participate in the teaching and learning process. The following sentiments were expressed by another parent:

Yuwi! Kuti vavingwe nebofuwo zvaro rakaita seni rabva zvaro kumunda haangave mashura iwawo? Panodiwa vakafundaka apa. [P1a]

Translation: An illiterate person like me to be in the classroom would be a miracle. Only the educated can make a contribution in the classroom.

In support of the above views, one traditional leader also remarked:

Pakudzidziswa chaiko chaiko hatikokwe, isu tinongoti regai vaite ndivo vakadzidzira basa racho. [TL4]

Translation: We have never been invited to teach and we are not worried. Let the teachers teach because they are the ones trained for the job.

Another parent noted with nostalgia, reminiscent of the past, when she lamented:

*Makare kare maticha aiuya nekirasi yavo kuno kudzimba kwedu vaine zvavaida kuti tidzidzise vana. Taimati ma*visiting class. *Zvainakidza chose. Kwete ikozvino, chikoro chava kungoda mari chete kuvabereki kwete kudzidza kwevana. [P4b]*

Translation: Long back teachers used to bring their classes to our homes for us to explain and teach some concepts. We used to call them visiting classes. It was really interesting. Not these days, schools are now preoccupied with getting money from parents and not the education of children.

The business people also mentioned that they interact with the schools only when the schools seek donations from the business people and when they in turn are advertising educational materials to the schools. Otherwise, in-between, there is no relationship. Business Person No. 2's observation was indicative of this relationship, and represented the business community when he mentioned:

That has never happened and I have never been invited. I don't know anyone of the business community who has been invited to school to teach an aspect or topic. It should be a new development. [BP2]

Findings from the church leaders also revealed that the churches were not even seen anywhere near the classrooms in terms of assisting during the actual teaching and learning process. This view is evident in the following statements by one church leader:

Hapana vemachechi vatakambonzwa kuti vadanwa kuzodzidzisa vana mukirasi. Dzimwe nguva vakuru vemachechi vanongodanwa kuzoparidzira shoko kuvana pamaassembly chete. Asi izvi zvokutoparidza zvacho zvinotoitwazve nenguva iri kure. Zvekupinda mukirasi kunodzidzisa hazvisati zvamboitika asi kana tikapiwa mukana tingazvida zvikuru. Zvingatobatsirawo vana vedu ava kunyanya pakuumbiridza tsika neunhu. [CL3]

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Translation: We have never heard of any church member who have been called to assist with the teaching of children in the classroom. What we have heard of is when some church leaders are called upon to preach the gospel at assemblies but again this is not always done. About getting into the classroom to teach, it's a taboo but we really like it and we are ready to do that if given the chance because this will assist much in imparting moral values in our children.

It is thus evident from the findings that the churches have a very small role to play in curriculum implementation, despite their willingness to be engaged.

Therefore, from the above sentiments from the parents, the traditional leaders, the business people and the church leaders, it is quite evident that trying to get the most active members of the community in curriculum implementation opened a 'can of worms' and showed the gulf between the schools and the communities. While the teachers said that they engaged the communities in some areas which they did not have the expertise on, the community members, on the other hand, professed the non-existence of such partnership. I sensed that the teachers are paying lip service to the issue of community engagement, only expressing it in words, and never in practice. It appears, therefore, that the absence of a group from the community that can be regarded as the most active is primarily because of their non-involvement rather than a lack of interest.

However, the school heads and the teachers also acknowledged the fact that the communities play an important role. They create a conducive home environment and provide the material and financial resources that go with successful curriculum implementation. The teachers from each of the four schools voiced the following sentiments as some of the reasons why they (the teachers) are hesitant to involve other stakeholders in curriculum implementation:

> *When supervision authorities come (i.e school heads, inspectors etc.) they want to see how the teacher is implementing the curriculum as well as monitoring pass rates at schools. Usually they do not even know or bother about community participation in this process. [FGD1]*
> *If you invite community members to teach a concept and if things go wrong, it is you the teacher who would be in problems with the educational authorities. [FGD4]*

Issues of Examinations have taken a centre stage and inviting communities to teach certain concepts would be a waste of valuable teaching time more so given that you might have to correct some issues and the fact that they may confuse learners is another problem. [FGD2]

Involving them zvakanyanya (too much) *might be interpreted by these community members that you are not knowledgeable. [FGD3]*

My interpretation of the above sentiments is that the teachers felt that they would be held responsible for whatever happens in the classroom. Inviting the community members to teach certain aspects would mean that the teachers would have to face the blame if anything goes wrong. According to these teachers, the education system in Zimbabwe is examination-oriented, and that bringing in community members would be wasting of valuable time where learners are supposed to be prepared for examinations. Therefore, by not inviting the community members to teach the teachers were also trying to avoid situations where these outsiders could possibly confuse the learners. Moreover, the teachers did not want the community members to misinterpret the invitation to imply that the teachers themselves were not knowledgeable.

4.2.2.5 Accountability issues in the schools-community partnership in curriculum implementation

All the stakeholders in this study agreed that accountability in respect of the curriculum implementation process rests with the teachers. The involvement of the community members is just meant to supplement and enrich the curriculum implementation process. Some of the community members (P1b, P2a, P2b, P3a, TL2, CL3, BP2 and BP4) shared the following comments:

Kana vana vakafoira mhosva ndeyematicha nokuti ndivo vari kubhadharirwa basa iroro. Isu tikabatsira vana kuno kumba kana vauya nebasa rechikoro, tinenge tichitoitira kuti vana vedu vawedzere ruzivo uye tinenge tichitobatsirawo maticha acho nokuti maticha amazuva ano vanongoti chero vawana mari yavo kupera kwemwedzi zvekudzidza kwevana havachabatikani nazvo. [P4a]

Translation: If children fail, the blame is squarely on teachers because they are the ones being paid for that job. When we assist children with homework we will be enriching the knowledge of our children as well as assisting the teachers because nowadays most of these teachers are content in getting their salaries at the end of the month and are no longer worried about whether the pupils are learning or not.

I interpret such responses to imply that the community members assist the children with their homework. Theirs is to enhance children's understanding, as well as enriching the knowledge of the pupils. In other words, when the community members help the children at home they will also be assisting the teachers. But when these pupils fail, these community members blame teachers because they believe that the teachers are paid for their job, but they are not committed to their work. According to the observations from the community members, instead of concentrating on teaching the pupils, the teachers are more worried about receiving their salaries. Therefore, what this implies is that to a larger extent, the teachers should take the blame that they are the ones trained and paid to do the job. The community entrust the schools (the heads and the teachers) with their children so they should educate the children. It it is their (schools) responsibility to do so.

However, other community members (P1a, P3b, P4b, TL4 and CL1) had different ideas, as they regarded the passing or failing of pupils as a collective effort. Both the community and the school are accountable. This view is evident in the following remark from one of the community members:

> *Kana vana vakafoira haasi maticha oga ane mhosva nokuti mukirasi imomo mune vanopasa. Vamwe vana havashande nesimba uye havateerere maticha avo, uyewo vamwe vana havana kupiwa njere. Vamwezve vana vanonyanyisa kurovha chikoro, saka vanosarira shure pakudzidza mhedziso yacho kufoira. Vamwewo vabereki havapi vana vavo zvikwanisiro zvokuenda nazvo kuchikoro semabhuku, zvokunyoresa uye vanenge vane nzara, saka vangapasa sei? Saka panyaya yekufoira kwemwana mhosva ndeyedu tose. Tinofanira kutarisa zvikonzero kumativi ose. [TL4]*
> **Translation:** When children fail, the blame is not only on teachers as some children in the same class pass. At the same time there are other problem children who do not listen as teachers teach while others are not gifted. Some

children are always absent from school and this results in them being behind and not knowledgeable about what others learnt during their absence. We cannot expect such children to pass in the end. Parents also have a part to play because some do not provide their children with basic materials like exercise books and pens and how would you expect that child to pass? So when children fail we are all to blame and we also need to analyse and understand all the contributory factors (i.e. the learner, school and home).

In line with the above views, there was also a general agreement by all the school heads, as indicated in the questionnaire responses, that the teachers and the community members were accountable for the curriculum implementation process. When the pupils fail, the school heads argued that:

- *Pupils, teachers and parents should all be blamed because failure shows disunity among the three. They should always work together. [SH1]*
- *Both, teachers and the community are blamed because all these are stakeholders, they play a pivotal role in the performance of pupils. [SH2]*
- *Teachers and parents equally contribute towards the learning of the child either positively or negatively. So when the child fails, these two are both to blame. [SH3]*
- *Teachers and parents should be blamed. The teachers may be incompetent and the community may fail to provide necessary resources. [SH4]*

The above statements from the school heads clearly indicate that for curriculum implementation to be realised and for the pupils to be successful in their education, the schools and the community members should work together and come up with a unity of purpose. A true and fruitful partnership will only be the solution unlike this blame-game. From these questionnaire responses, I also observed that the school heads were placing the blame entirely on the teachers and the parents, leaving their own hands clean. But, where teachers are to blame the school heads are also to blame because they are the managers and supervisors of the curriculum implementation process.

On who to blame when pupils fail, the teachers on the other hand blamed the pupils and the school heads. The collective sentiments by teachers in thefocus group discussions were summarised as follows:

As teachers all educational stakeholders blame us. What they do not really understand is that we do not work in isolation. No matter how much effort you put in when pupils are not cooperative and receptive, all efforts go to waste. [FGD 1]

Further, school heads at times do not provide the necessary resources like text books, manila to make charts, funds for excursions etc. and creating conducive working environments. [FGD2]

The home environment has a bearing too, a supportive home environment can complement teachers' efforts. So you can see that it's not only the teachers to blame. [FGD 3 & 4]

The above sentiments indicate that while teachers believed that all the educational stakeholders blamed them for the failure of pupils, they thought that everyone had a role to play. The education of pupils should not be just the teachers' responsibility. If the teachers, the school heads and the community members play their part, there are high chances of pupils passing and less of blaming each other.

4.2.3 THEME 3: CHALLENGES TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION, AND POSSIBLE REMEDIES

The findings from the study revealed several challenges to community participation in curriculum implementation. Possible remedies were also stated by the various participants. This theme yielded a number of sub-themes as presented in the following figure.
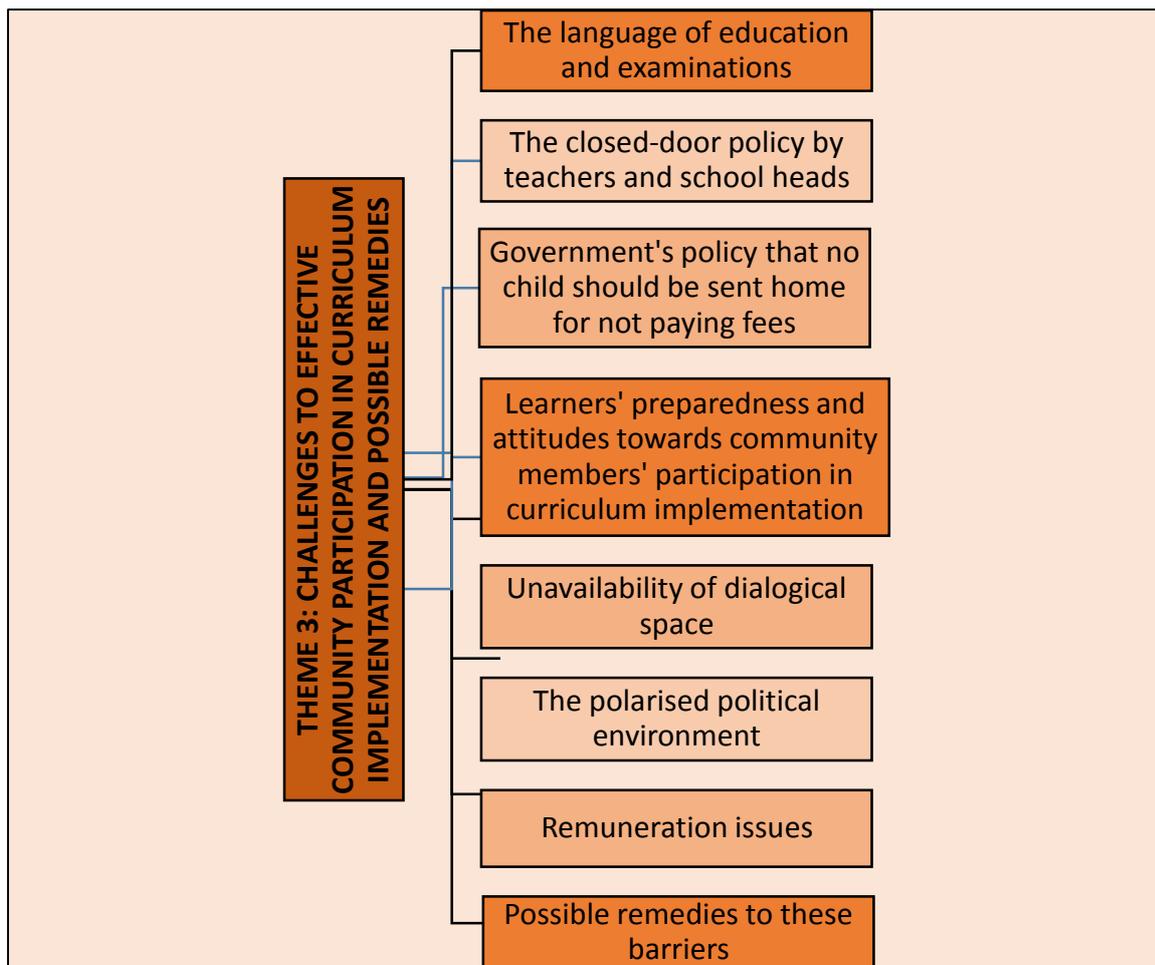
Figure 4.3: Sub-themes emerging from theme 3.

4.2.3.1 The language of education and examinations

The language of education in Zimbabwean primary school classrooms is predominantly English, except for the ChiShona and IsiNdebele subjects. During the focus-group discussions the teachers indicated that another reason why they are hesitant to engage the community members is that most of the community members are not educated enough to use the English language if ever they are to be invited to teach any aspect. One teacher in FGD4 pointed out that:

> *While at times members of the community may have knowledge or ideas in some*
> *concepts, they may not have the English language to use when teaching. What*
> *pupils write in public examinations is a result of a process that starts off at*

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grade one. Therefore, children should be exposed to the language of examination early.

The other teachers in FGD1 and FGD3 further agreed to the following view by one teacher in FGD1:

> *Bringing in community members may be a noble idea but the fear is that if they distort concepts it may be difficult to correct them. If they teach using their mother tongue, it means I will also have to teach the concept again using English which is the language of examinations. The time to do that may not be there especially given that the syllabus has to be covered.*

Another teacher in FGD2 remarked:

> *Ivo pachavo (*community members*) vane mentality yokuti they have nothing to offer. Havana language yacho inodiwa kudzidzisa vana.*
>
> **Translation:** Their own (community members') mentality is that they have nothing to offer. They also do not have the language for teaching and learning.

In support of the above views, all the four school heads indicated as follows in their questionnaire responses:

- *Most community members do not have English language which is the language of education and examinations.* [SH1]
- *The use of community members takes a lot of time to plan and their language may not suit our educational needs so it may be better for the teacher to get the information he or she needs from them and can then teach using the appropriate language in order to cater for the needs of learners.* [SH2]
- *Poor communication by community members due to lack of the language of education. [SH3]*
- *Ignorance and lack of knowledge on the part of community members especially when it comes to teaching using the English language. [SH4]*

Therefore, from the above responses from the teachers and the school heads it appears that it borders on teacher attitude. They believe that community knowledge is regarded as too pedestrian to constitute academic knowledge worthy listening to and wasting time on. According to these teachers and the school heads, the community members are not conversant with the language of education. This becomes a major barrier to community engagement in curriculum implementation.

From the community members' perceptions, the question of language was not an issue. Their concern was on the knowledge they could impart which could contribute to the development of the whole child. Parents 1a, 3b, and 4a concurred on the following view forwarded by parent 2a:

> *Sevabereki pane zvatinozivawo zvatinogona kupakurira vana. Maticha amazuvano vana vaduku chose uye vanotaridza kuti pane zvakawanda zvavasingazive. Zvokuti tazvitaura nemutauro upi haisi nyaya, nyaya ndeyekuti vana vawana ruzivo here. Vana vanotonzwisisa zvavanoudzwa neChiShona kupfuura chirungu chavo chavanoda ichocho. Mutauro wedu unodzidzisa vana hunhu. [P2a]*
>
> **Translation:** As parents we have some knowledge forms that we can help impart to children. Our teachers today are too young and show a lot of knowledge gaps that we can fill in. The question of language is not the real issue here, the issue is whether learners get correct information. Moreover, children understand better when taught using mother tongue than English. There is need to use our own language (mother tongue) to inculcate correct values in our children.

In corroboration with the above view, the traditional and the church leaders, as well as the business persons thought that for the teachers to overemphasise the question of language is to hide behind a finger. The argument forwarded was that it is important for the children to receive the correct information in whatever language. The knowledge that the community members possess will enrich the learners. Therefore, from the discussions with the community members, it became clear that they felt that the language and examinations should not be a stumbling block to their contribution to curriculum implementation. This language issue has, therefore, resulted in a closed-door policy for the communities by the teachers and the school heads.

4.2.3.2 The closed-door policy by the teachers and the school heads

The findings revealed that the teachers' and the school heads' negative attitudes and perceptions are an indication that the community members can only assist the children's learning by doing anything outside and around the school. They cannot come into the classroom to teach. Thus the classroom door is closed to the community members when it comes to issues to do with curriculum implementation. Interesting to note is that the teachers and the school heads were playing the blame-game. On one hand, the teachers accusing the school heads of creating barriers to community engagement in curriculum implementation and on the other, the school heads accusing the teachers likewise. The school heads indicated that the teachers are guilty of hindering community participation in curriculum implementation in the following ways:

- *By not giving the pupils work to do at home with the help of the people they live with. [SH1]*
- *The teachers do not associate with the community members and they don't even communicate with the community members through their children. [SH2]*
- *The teachers have a misconception that the community members lack the knowledge and expertise in issues to do with the teaching and learning of children. [SH3]*
- *The teachers have a deliberate disregard for the roles community members can play at all the implementation levels. [SH4]*

It is quite interesting to note that the school heads contradicted themselves. They indicated at one time that the teachers do not associate with the community members. Earlier on the same school heads concurred with the teachers' views that the schools (the teachers and the school heads) associate with the community members, especially the parents and the guardians on speech and prize-giving days and on consultation days when they discuss issues to do with the performance of the child.

On the other hand, in the focus-group discussions the teachers indicated that the school heads create barriers to community participation in curriculum implementation through their attitudes, actions and behavior, such as:

- *Doing things on their own and in their own way.*

- *The non-involvement of the community members.*
- *Giving little or no respect to the members of the community.*

[FGD1]

- *No school open days for the community to see what is happening in the school.*
- *No newsletter to the community members.*

[FGD2]

- *Failure to plan for community engagement programmes.*
- *Disregarding policies.*
- *Not bothering to know or visit the homesteads of important people in the community (e.g. traditional leaders, SDC members etc.).*

[FGD3]

- *Negative attitudes towards working with community members.*
- *If the head does not involve the community in acquiring for example special equipment and machinery to be used in the school.*

[FGD4]

From the teachers' views, the school heads as the managers and supervisors of curriculum implementation, were supposed to be the key people to open the doors for the community members and to allow or instruct the teachers to engage these members in the teaching and learning process. Until this happens, teachers' hands may remain tied.

All the interviewed community members concurred that the people from the community are forever willing to participate in curriculum implementation. The problem is that schools (the teachers and the school heads) do not want to involve them. Translated and summarised responses from the community members indicated that:

- *Some teachers do not want to take ideas from parents. [P1a, P2b, P4a, P4b]*
- *The issue of communication should improve between schools and communities. The major stumbling block is negative attitudes from teachers. Hence the need for attitude change cannot be overemphasised. [CL3, P1b, P2a, P3b, BP4]*
- *Animosity between schools (especially teachers) and communities has ever been there but this has to come to an end if the partnership is to materialise. [TL2, P3a, CL1]*
- *The community members are ready to be engaged in curriculum implementation but the schools do not want to involve them. The school heads and teachers are not willing*

to involve people from the community and their classrooms seem closely guarded. [BP2, TL4]

These findings indicate that both the teachers and the school heads have established a closed-door policy. They are guilty of hindering community participation in curriculum implementation.

Closely linked to the closed-door policy by the teachers and the school heads is the policy of the government that no child should be sent home for not paying school fees. This policy has also become a barrier to community participation in curriculum implementation. Whilst the schools are not in support of the policy, the community members are quite happy about it, thus bringing conflict between the two. This conflict goes on to hinder the partnership between the schools and the communities.

4.2.3.3 The Government policy that no child should be sent home for not paying school fees

The Zimbabwean government, through the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE), has decreed that no child should be sent home for not paying school fees. The notion is premised on the fact that when a child is admitted at a school, the contract is between the parent/guardian and the school, and not between the child and the school. When the fees are not paid, the school should engage the parent/guardian, and not use the child as a shield. During the interview discussions, the parents, the traditional leaders, the business people and the church leaders were all supportive of the government policy that no child should be sent home for not paying school fees. The teachers in focus-group discussions, however, were against the idea, thus creating a relationship gulf between the communities and the schools. One parent's contribution represented the community members' sentiments that:

> *Kare vana vaidzingwa saka pakanga pasina ukama hwakanaka nezvikoro nokuti isu senharaunda taisafara nazvo. Ikozvino tinotarisira kuti ukama husimbaradzwe nokuti vana havachadzingwa chikoro pamusaka pokusabhadhara fees. Dambudziko manje nderekuti nyangwe zvazvo isu tichifara nazvo asi vezvikoro havasi kuzvifarira saka hapanazve kunyatsowirirana. Izvi zvinobva zvaitazve kuti maticha asaita hanya nokutikokawo kuzvikoro kuzobatsira vana pazvidzidzo zvavo. [P4b]*

Translation: The relationship was not good between schools and communities when children were sent away for not paying fees because as community members we were not in agreement with that policy. But now thanks to Government policy that children are no longer sent home for failing to pay fees. As a community we now expect to have a good relationship with the schools but the problem is that teachers are not happy with the new policy and therefore the conflict between teachers and communities still exist. Because of this policy, the teachers are therefore not willing to engage the community members in curriculum implementation.

From the above remarks it is clear that the community members claim that the conflict that existed between the schools and the community members was caused by the teachers and the school heads who used to send the children back home for not paying fees. The communities were not happy with that situation. With the introduction of the government policy that no child should be sent home for not paying school fees, the community members are now happy. They also expected to have a good partnership with the schools because the policy is in their favour. Much to the surprise of these community members, the teachers are not in favour of this policy. It has even become a barrier to community engagement in curriculum implementation because teachers have continued to keep their classroom doors closed to the community members.

On the other hand, in the focus-group discussions (FGD 1, 2, 3, 4) the teachers also indicated that this policy has grossly affected curriculum implementation. The schools are finding it difficult to raise critical curriculum implementation resources such as chalk, textbooks, equipment for practical subjects etc. One teacher proclaimed:

> *This is a populist political view, misguided as it affects the very learners that we want to help. They will not get quality teaching in the absence of basic teaching- learning materials. How then are we expected to invite community members to assist us when these same people do not want to provide the necessary resources through paying school fees for their children? [FGD4]*

While the community members celebrated the policy, the schools are failing to cope and to run smoothly. The new dimension is that the schools should report defaulting parents to the traditional leaders who can enforce payment. The teachers' views indicate that this policy does not help the child in any way because there is no way teachers can teach effectively in the

absence of the basic teaching and learning materials. These are supposed to be availed through the school fees paid by the parents and guardians. According to the teachers, this government policy has created conflict between the schools and the communities, thus hindering community engagement in curriculum implementation. The teachers indicated that they cannot open their classroom doors to people who are in support of a policy that hinders the schools from having adequate teaching and learning resources.

The findings from school heads' questionnaire responses, as well as the teachers' focus-group discussions indicated that the situation is also exacerbated by the fact that most of the children in the drought-stricken Chivi district are on the government's Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM). The monies come very late, or sometimes do not come at all. It is not clear, therefore, how the government expects effective curriculum implementation in the absence of resources. It seems the 'us-them' dichotomy is very pronounced.

4.2.3.4 The learners' preparedness and attitudes towards the community members' participation in curriculum implementation

Generally speaking, the learners have little choice in issues to do with curriculum implementation. They have to obey their teachers' instructions. The reports from all the four focus-group discussions showed that the learners always trust their teachers' decisions. However, with some resource persons, the teachers may experience problems with the learners, as noted by one teacher in FGD2:

> *As learners are never consulted on who should teach them, they have no choice on the resource person that may be invited. However, while it might be refreshing for the learners to get information from a different source, at times they may not take these resource persons seriously. It depends on the position and respectability of the person in society.*

This position was also corroborated by members of the community whose views were summarised by one traditional leader who remarked that:

> *Vana havana dambudziko pakudzidziswa nemunhu wemunharaunda asi kuti munhu iyeye anofanira kuva nechimiro chakanaka uye chiremerera munharaunda nokuti vana havangateerere munhu wavanoziva kuti haana hunhu hunoyemurika. Nyangwe isu venharaunda hatingadi kunzwa kuti vana*

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vedu vanga vachidzidziswa nemunhuwo zvake asina chiremerera munharaunda. Chero vana vacho havangaoni kukosha kwezvidzidzo zvakadaro. Tine vanhu munharaunda vakaita semanesi, maticha, maengineer nevamwewo vakaritaya mumabasa avo, ivavo ndovanofanira kukokwa kuzobatsira maticha. [TL4]

Translation: Our children do not have problems in being taught by anyone from the community but that person has to be someone respectable and of good character. This is because children will not value or take seriously what they are taught by someone who is not respected in the community. Even us as community members we will not take it lightly when we learn that our children were being taught by someone who does not have a good reputation in the community. We have retired people in the community like nurses, teachers, engineers etc. and these are the rightful people to be invited as resource persons in our schools.

From the above remarks, it is clear that members of the community are in agreement that for the learners to listen to a resource person, that person should be of high integrity and be knowledgeable. Thus, the community members suggested that those who retired from their professions, such as nurses, teachers, engineers, etc. should receive the preference of being invited to teach the pupils. TL4 was in agreement with the teachers' views when he also indicated that some members of the community may not take it lightly that some less respectable member(s) of the community have been teaching their children. Some children may not even see the value of the lesson.

One school head (SH4) mentioned "*the learners' negative attitude to schoolwork*" as a barrier to effective community participation in curriculum implementation. However, the school head did not explain how the negative attitude can hinder community involvement in curriculum implementation.

Overall, the data gathered from the teachers and the members of the community show that the learners themselves do not have any problem with those who might be invited as resource persons. What the teachers and community members forwarded are their own views and not what they had been told by the learners. Therefore, if the learners had any misgivings, it was not expressed openly.

4.2.3.5 The unavailability of dialogical space

The teachers and the communities do not have a well-defined platform where they can discuss freely areas they can collaborate on in relation to curriculum implementation issues. The only meaningful engagement available is during consultation days and speech and prize-giving days, planned and organised by the schools. On such days there is no dialogical space to discuss the engagement of community members in curriculum implementation. This concern was raised in most of the interview discussions with the community members. One parent remarked:

> *Dai taiwanawo mukana wokugara pasi tichikurukura nematicha edu vachitiudza zvinonyanyovanetsa pakudzidzisa kwavo, uye tichivaudzawo zvatinogonawo kuti tibatsirane navo. Mukana iwowo tingauda zvikuru. [P4a]*
> **Translation:** We would be grateful if the opportunity to discuss with our teachers is availed so that they tell us areas which present them with problems and how we can chip in to assist them. That opportunity would be grabbed with both hands.

Most of the community members (P1a, P2a, TL2, CL1, and BP4) echoed the sentiments of parent 1b who said:

> *Isu tinoda chaizvo kukurukurirana namaticha asi maticha acho havadi, zvino mukana wacho unobva kupi? Maticha anotiona sevanhu vasina zvavanoziva, havadi pfungwa dzedu. Saka vanongotishevedza kuzotiudza pamusoro pekugona kana kusagona kwevana patinenge tichiona mabhuku evana. [P1b]*
> **Translation:** As parents we are always available to dialogue with teachers but it is the teachers who do not want to create that opportunity. They still have the old belief that we have nothing to offer to the teaching and learning process. They only call us to tell us about our children's performance during consultation days.

The above comments clearly indicate that the community members are concerned about the unavailability of dialogical space for them to discuss with teachers issues to do with the actual teaching and learning process. The teachers have to be clear on how the community members can assist them during this process. The community members' remarks confirm that they are

willing to be engaged in dialogue. The problem lies with the teachers who do not seem to be prepared to have such dialogue. From the community members' perceptions, it was clear that the teachers regard the community members as people who are not knowledgeable. They cannot be engaged in the teaching and learning process. The teachers' mentality is that the only dialogue between the teachers and the community members comes once in a while. This can be during consultation days when the teachers invite the parents/guardians to tell them about the performance of their children, however, without discussing how the community members can be engaged in the actual teaching of the children.

On the other hand, some of the community members also noted that as much as they would like to assist the teachers in the teaching and learning process, they cannot avail themselves because their fellow community members are always discouraging the idea. The following expression from a parent is a representation of many other statements from the community members (P3a, P2b, P4b, TL4, BP2 and CL3) who were faced with discouragement, despite their willingness to participate in curriculum implementation:

> *Dzimwe nguva tinotadza kunobatsira maticha pamusana pokushorana pachedu muno munharaunda. Unozonzwa vamwe vokubvunza kuti, 'munongomirizika kuchikoro munoziveiwo imi, mava kuda kuita maheadmaster here? [P3b]*
> **Translation:** Sometimes we are not able to assist our teachers because of discouragements from fellow community members. Some would even go to the extent of asking 'you are always seen at the school. What is it that you know? Do you now want to be the headmaster'?

What is evident from the above remarks is that the community members themselves do not trust one another. They are even jealous of one another when seeing some of them being invited to do something at the school. Those community members who might be willing to be engaged in curriculum implementation, face discouragement and criticism from their fellow community members.

The teachers in FGD 1, 2, 3, and 4 indicated that even if they wanted to create a platform for dialogue with the communities on curriculum implementation issues, they had serious problems with time. These indications from the teachers are summarised in the following comments from teachers in FGD1:

Creating that space is not really possible given how packed the primary school day is like. You start off in the morning at 7:30 and the day ends at 4:00pm. After the day's work, one is tired and more so there are books to be marked and the next day's work to prepare. It is really taxing to be a primary school teacher. Creating such space would be a waste of time.

All four the school heads, on the other hand, also cited the unavailability of time as the major reason why the schools fail to invite the community members for discussions with the teachers. In their questionnaire responses the school heads concurred with the teachers in the focus-group discussions, namely that because of limited time communication with the community members is restricted.

From the information from the community members during the interviews, from the school heads' responses in the questionnaires, and from the teachers' remarks during focus-group discussions, it was evident that the teachers, as well as school heads, did not consider the community's contribution as a priority. They have not created fertile ground for the cross-pollination of ideas. Rather than seeing the contributions of the community as an opportunity to lighten their burden, the teachers and the school heads saw it as a waste of valuable teaching time. It appeared that some teachers had a total disregard for creating a space for dialogue with the community members, relegating them to the fringe of effectiveness. On the other hand, the community members showed great enthusiasm in respect of how they value education. They showed their preparedness to invest in time and resources for the education of their children.

4.2.3.6 The polarised political environment

The focus-group discussions with the teachers and the interviews with the community members indicated that the two main competing political parties in Zimbabwe, namely the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and the Zimbabwe National African Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) have created a heavily polarised environment. The schools have to be careful whom they invite lest they are deemed to be muddling in opposition politics. There were stray sentiments by some respondents about this issue of politics, as indicated by the following statement by a traditional leader:

………Politics, politics, politics, ha-a-a dzauraya ukama hwedu. Vanhu vanokokwa kuchikoro vanofanira kuva vasiri veopposition kunyangwe vari ivo vane ruzivo. [TL2]

Translation: …….Politics, politics, politics, it has killed our relationships. Those who are invited to the school should not be members of the opposition party even if they are the ones who are knowledgeable.

In the same vein, in the focus-group discussions all the teachers unanimously agreed that depoliticising the situation would be productive. The people in the community would be engaged regardless of their political affiliations. On the politics of community engagement, a teacher in FGD 2 emotionally said:

Engaging community members can be dangerous because you don't know which party they support. I am a victim of this politically divided environment. During the 2000 election I was beaten and left for dead, accused of being an MDC supporter. Today I bear these scars (showing them) and it was those people in the community (I won't name them) who were responsible. It's better that we do our work and avoid them altogether.

Another teacher, in FGD 3, added as follows in appealing to the political leaders to depoliticise educational issues:

I don't know what can be done, this political infection has destroyed our relationship with the communities and the need to clean the whole system and remove it from politics would make life easier for the teacher. Honestly if you invite someone deemed to be politically incorrect the whole school will be labelled and the consequences are great.

From the questionnaire responses, only one school head (SH3) indicated politics to be one of the barriers to effective community participation in curriculum implementation, but did not explain further. The other three school heads never mentioned the issue of politics.

It appears from the discussion with the teachers that the political environment is poisoned, with a big political divide between the main political parties in Zimbabwe. The rivalry seems to have affected all facets of life, education included, resulting in the teachers' withdrawal in

engaging communities in curriculum implementation. As far as the community members were concerned, apart from TL2, the issue of politics did not feature prominently. In my own assessment of the political landscape in Zimbabwe, I discovered that the teachers' fears are founded. The atmosphere is pregnant with fear and suspicion. The teachers have been the prime target. The political situation has clouded some good engagement ideas, as the schools cannot work with anyone in the community without fear of reprisal. It is no wonder that the teachers called on the politicians not to be selfish and to think only about their political survival, but also about the children who are the future of the nation.

4.2.3.7 Remuneration issues

The Chivi district is one of the poorest of Masvingo's six districts. Most of the people depend on rain-fed drought-resistant crops such as sorghum, millet and rapoko. The people also depend on the generosity of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and other sympathetic institutions. The inhabitants would grab any opportunity that may ensure that they get something to make ends face. The district is deprived of any meaningful economic activity. The schools are seen as sources of income, especially when someone is asked to carry out any task. Given this scenario, the community members' mentality has been that anything they are called upon to be done at school should be paid for. The general trend with all the community members who were interviewed was in line with the following statement from one parent:

> *Kana vachida kuti tivabatsire vanofanirawo kutibhadhara. Kunyangwe ndine ruzivo uye ndichida kubatsira maticha, kana pasina chandinopiwa ndinofirei? Handingasiye kurima munda wangu kana kushanda mugarden nokuti ndinoda kubatsira maticha asina chaanondipa. Ivo vakashanda vanobhadharwa wani. Zvokungovabatsira pasina mubhadharo hazviunze chikafu kumba kwanguka. [P1a]*
>
> **Translation:** We should be paid if we are to assist teachers. Without any benefit there is no need for me to assist in curriculum implementation, even if Iam knowledgeable. There is no way I can leave my productive work in the fields and garden to help a system that does not pay me. Teachers themselves are being paid for their work, so why can't they pay me when I do something for them? At the end of the day I need food on the table for my family.

The teachers and the school heads also noted that the issue of remuneration was another area that has stalled the communities from engaging in curriculum implementation. There existed a high expectation from the community members to get paid for any services rendered to the school. School head 3 noted:

> *Everyone is looking for a dollar and when you invite community members to present information to the children, they expect the school to pay. It is difficult for the schools to budget for such informal invitations. Therefore, the best way is not to invite them. [SH3]*

This was also the sentiments of the teachers in all the focus-group discussions. The teachers' observations were summarised by one teacher in FGD1 who indicated that:

> *The major problem with these community members is that their mentality is that whenever they do something for the school they should be paid. Worse still if they are those community members with specialist skills like carpentry, building etc., they feel that nothing is done for free. When these people are not paid or told that they will not be paid because the school does not have any allocation for that, they will not believe this and their suspicion or mentality is that whatever is supposed to be given to them is taken by teachers or school heads. …..These people will move around the community spreading rumours that the teachers and the school heads are abusing school funds and this widens the gap between schools and communities.*

In summarising their thoughts, the teachers felt that inviting community members always evokes the feeling that they receive some financial benefit. This, according to the teachers, is motivated by the fact that those members in the community with special skills like building or carpentry should be paid when they are invited to perform tasks. Thus, if the members involved in curriculum implementation are not paid, the suspicion from these community members is that what was due to them would be abused by the school heads and the teachers. This further creates a gap between the school and the communities, whereas the effort is to bridge that gap.

On the whole, the issue of remuneration is a very contentious one. It seems that the need to educate the communities on their involvement and on the conditions of involvement cannot be

over-emphasised. The communities need to be educated that the time spent educating children is not time wasted but time invested, the results of which they would reap later.

4.2.3.8 Possible remedies to the challenges

The three groups, namely the school heads, the teachers and the community members, all had very interesting ideas about how the identified problems that militate against community engagement in curriculum implementation, can be ameliorated. All the participants indicated that these problems can be resolved. On how the barriers could be overcome, the school heads, acting as the bridge between the schools and the communities, offered the following suggestions:

- *Smooth communication between the school and the community i.e. conscientisation of the community by knowledgeable people. All that takes place in the school should be made known to the community members without leaving them to 'imagine' what's taking place. [SH1]*
- *Adult education must be promoted to help develop the literacy rate which will cascade to schools. Schools and communities should therefore plan together on how they should work together for successful curriculum implementation. [SH2]*
- *Marketing programmes at various stages before implementation. Continuous dialogue between and among all stakeholders, designing ownership principles among communities. [SH3]*
- *Establishing staff development programmes at all levels and soliciting support from the community. Negotiating ways around political and socio-economic constrains. [SH4]*

I noted that the school heads' suggestions were general in nature, from their own circumstances.

The teachers and the community members also made some suggestions as to how the barriers to community involvement in curriculum implementation can be overcome. The following table shows the teachers' and the community members' suggestions.

Table 4.8: The teachers' and community members' suggestions of possible remedies to the challenges to effective community participation in curriculum implementation

THE COMMUNITY'S SUGGESTIONS	THE TEACHERS' SUGGESTIONS
• Influence the school heads and teachers to see the benefits of involving the communities in curriculum implementation. • The school heads and the teachers should invite, mobilise and encourage the parents and the general community to discuss engagement modalities/guidelines. Opportunities should be availed to the school heads to call on the community members and spell out how they can be involved. • Meetings should be more on productive educational issues than just about increasing fees. • Allow the teachers and the community members to interact in an environment where each group may express its fears, hopes, strengths and weaknesses. • The need to create neutral organisation(s) that should be tasked with the responsibility of bringing the teachers and the communities together in curriculum implementation issues.	• The teachers need to be educated about community engagement in curriculum implementation and the benefits attached to it. • The teachers should swallow their pride and accept that there are many solutions in the community to their knowledge gaps in some content areas. • There is a need to depoliticise the educational environment by the political leaders allowing the teachers to engage anyone regardless of his/her political affiliation. • Create an enabling environment for members of the community to participate freely in the classroom. • There exists a need for awareness campaigns where the community members are acknowledged as important stakeholders in curriculum implementation. • Policy clarity and direction on how to engage communities – the policies should have a grassroots appeal allowing the communities to be involved with confidence.

• Give the children homework that is within their level of understanding. • Corporal punishment should be applied to children to ensure discipline. • A hide-and-seek situation among teachers should not exist.	• The need by policy makers to involve the communities in the planning process to the implementation stage, and clearly drawing areas of involvement. • Schools should go back to the Zimbabwe National Teacher Education Course (ZINTEC) programme era where the teachers were supposed to work on a project with the community – this would build a better working relationship. • Excite interest of the community members by mentioning the names of those who would be involved in curriculum implementation during consultation and prize-giving days. • Organise workshops with the communities with the emphasis on community responsibility in curriculum implementation and education in general. • Do a community skills identification exercise. The schools should keep a record of such skills in the community and call upon the community members when need arises. • The schools should educate the learners on the need and importance of bringing in resource persons to the classroom.

From the discussions and ideas raised by both the teachers and the community members, they have the interest to engage each other in curriculum implementation. What is really needed is for both parties to be proactive and to implement these ideas. I am sure this will have the potential of transforming teaching and learning practices in Zimbabwean primary schools.

4.2.4 THEME 4: POLICY ISSUES

All the schools in Zimbabwe are guided by and fall under the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) and report through hierarchical structures from:

School $\longrightarrow$ District $\longrightarrow$ Province $\longrightarrow$ Head office. These structures should be followed because the government, through the Ministry, is responsible for the teachers' remuneration (salaries). However, some schools have responsible authorities like churches and councils who complement the government's efforts by means of other responsibilities, like infrastructural development. The fact that the Zimbabwean education system is centrally managed means that everything that the teachers do are a product of the Ministry, through instruments such as Policy Circulars, Statutory Instruments, and Education Acts, among a plethora of statements issued by the Ministry. The school heads and the teachers do not have the authority to question the use or otherwise of the instruments. They have to implement them as authoritative directives or as prescriptions. Given this scenario, the school heads and teachers, in the absence of policy guidelines regarding community involvement in curriculum implementation, feel duty-bound not to take the engagement of communities seriously. From the focus-group discussions, as well as the questionnaire responses, two issues emerged regarding policy matters with regard to community involvement in curriculum implementation. The two are: The availability of circulars and policy guidelines, and that the formulation of educational policy should adopt a bottom-up approach. The following figure presents the sub-themes that emerged from Theme 4.
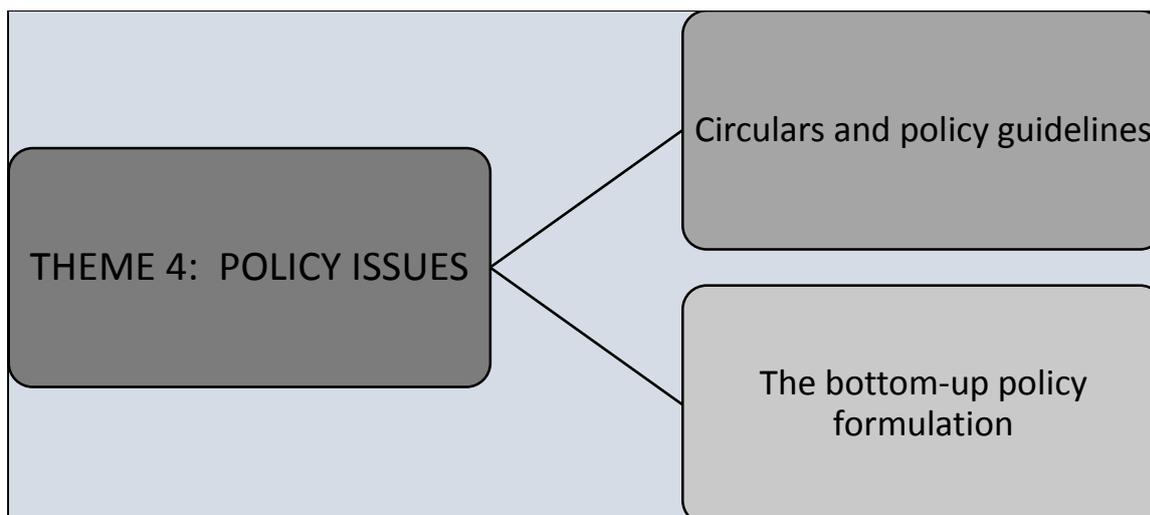
Figure 4.4: Sub-themes emerging from theme 4.

4.2.4.1 Circulars and policy guidelines

The findings revealed that there are no circulars or policy guidelines to help the school heads and the teachers to engage the community members in curriculum implementation.

The only policies that the school heads referred to were two-fold, namely those related to the establishment of School Development Committees (SDC), and the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA). According to these Policy Circulars, each school is compelled to have a SDC where the elected parents, the school head and the deputy sit together to chart the developmental path of the school. The PFMA also compels the schools to have a finance committee which transparently oversees the utilisation of school resources. The composition of and signatories to the school account are the head, the deputy head, the SDC chairperson and its deputy. Their terms of reference are clearly stated in the Policy Circulars.

On community engagement in curriculum implementation, the Ministry (through the Policy Circulars) remains silent. One teacher observed:

> *To use community members in curriculum implementation is our own choice as teachers otherwise its being mischievous as there is no policy provision for their engagement. [FGD 3]*

Furthermore, the school heads were non-committal and could not say whether there existed a policy to support community involvement in curriculum implementation or not. Three of the school heads (SH1, SH2 SH4) just mentioned the establishment of SDCs without clearly stating whether the SDC will work with teachers during curriculum implementation. One school head saw some faint provision in some of the instruments, and hence made the following observation:

> *While there is no one single policy statement to talk about community engagement in curriculum implementation, as schools we can take a clue from the Education Act and its amendments, Statutory Instruments (SI) as Public Finance Act, Treasury Instructions (TI), Circular P6 of 1994,, P70 of 1987, P19 of 2000, P14 of 2009 on Public Finance Management Act as government's gesture to ensure that communities are engaged in whatever happens at school, especially where some of these policies emphasise on multi-cultural education..*
> *[SH3]*

The above statements indicate that there are no clearly defined policy guidelines to mandate the school heads and the teachers to engage community members in curriculum implementation. The schools only take a guess, or have a clue when they think community engagement may be implied in the Ministry's pronouncements about multi-cultural education, where the thrust has been that all cultures should be appreciated in the classroom. By implication, it can only happen if the members of the communities are invited and involved.

However, the call by both the teachers and the school heads was that for this engagement to come to fruition and to be legitimate there is a need for government to legislate clearly defined policy and policy guidelines for the involvement of communities in curriculum implementation. Without these circulars and policy guidelines it became difficult for the teachers to go out of their way to engage the community members, and if problems arose they did not have a policy to protect them.

4.2.4.2 The bottom-up policy formulation

As already alluded to, educational policies in Zimbabwe take the top-down approach. The policies are centrally designed and are only taken to schools for implementation. It seems that there is very little consultation, especially with the teachers who are supposed to be the

implementers. Below are the sentiments by the school heads, and what they said needs to be done:

> *Policy formulation is excessively in the hands of government and a lot of policy makers have left practice long ago and are not in touch with what is currently happening on the ground. They live in the past. They should consult us who are on the ground. [SH1]*

> *For sound policy formulation there is need for these reality definers to come down to the grassroots constantly and get our input as heads and teachers, we will come up with policies that address some of these problems. [SH2]*

> *Some problems are solvable merely by consulting us the heads and teachers who are on the shop floor of implementing policies. [SH3]*

> *The Government need to consult us school heads as well as teachers during the formulation of policies because we are the implementers. [SH4]*

My interpretation of the above sentiments is that the teachers and the school heads are never consulted when it comes to policy formulation. What they are only expected to do is to implement what would have been formulated by the policy-makers who are not quite knowledgeable about what is happening in the schools. Some of the policies usually do not address the needs of the schools. So what the school heads and teachers are lamenting for is for them to be consulted and to have an input in policy formulation. This helps when it comes to the implementation of such policies as no problems will be encountered.

Two school heads went further to indicate that in order to motivate the community members to be involved in curriculum implementation the following should be done:

- *Communities should be consulted in early stages of the formulation of policies. [SH2]*
- *Communities should be consulted before certain policies are implemented. [SH4]*

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What these school heads are suggesting is that the community members should also be part of the policy formulation by simply consulting them on what they think should be included in such policies. Community members' views and suggestions should also be catered for in these policies.

The teachers also lamented the lack of consultation from the educational policy-makers. The following sentiments from some teachers summarises the teachers' perceptions about lack of consultation and respect for teachers:

> *To them (policy makers) we (teachers) do not exist. We only exist when they want policies implemented and when they lay charges against us when things go wrong. [FGD4]*
> *These policy makers see us as people who cannot contribute to policy formulation, an indication that they do not value us but we are the actual implementers. [FGD1]*
> *We are so used to getting orders through these circulars and policies which sadly are never explained to us. Each teacher interprets and implements them according to how he understands them. [FGD 2 & FGD 3]*

Through the questionnaire responses and focus-group discussions, the school heads and teachers respectively showed their desire to meaningfully contribute to policy-formulation. This would result in suggestions from the grassroots which can add value to curriculum implementation. The top-down policy formulation currently prevailing has left the school heads and teachers disillusioned in ever changing the status quo to bring and breathe new ideas into curriculum implementation.

4.2.5 THEME 5: THE STAKEHOLDERS' RECOMMENDATIONS

All the participants were unanimous in their belief that community engagement should be seriously and deliberately debated for the good and development of the learner. There seems to be a realisation that the prevailing situation is not serving the interests of anyone. Instead it is to the disadvantage of the learner whom we all purport to be assisting. In short, the situation is short-changing the learner. Below are consolidated lists of the recommendations by the participants (in their respective categories) about what can be done to change the situation for the better.

The school heads' recommendations:

- *Community participation in curriculum implementation is critical and topical, and as such needs a Deliberate Plan, Programme and Process (DPPP) that gives the community members the mandate of participation, activated by incentives, thus empowering the communities through policies.*

- *Design and fund programmes and workshops by the Ministry for the school heads, teachers and community members on how they can engage each other, and define the roles that the communities can play in curriculum implementation.*

- *Pay allowances for SDC/SDA in line with village funding.*

- *Eliminate political and socio-economic constraints.*

- *Build child-friendly schools.*

- *The parents and the schools should be allowed to and given the opportunity to take part in designing and developing curriculum packages so that their peculiar needs and interests will be catered for. They should not be overwhelmed by irrelevant policies.*

- *The Ministry should consult the schools and communities during the formulation of policies.*

The teachers' recommendations:

- *The school heads should encourage the teachers to involve the community members in curriculum implementation.*

- *There is a need for policy clarity and direction. The schools should be allowed to use resource persons from the community. The policies need to clarify how it should be done.*

- *There exists a need for teacher restoration in terms of pride, attitudes, values, etc.*

- *There is no continuity in the policies when the ministers change constantly. Sometimes it is recommended to have the Minister of Education for a longer period for the sake of continuity and consistency.*

- *The need to depoliticise educational issues cannot be over-emphasised. This is in order to give room and freedom to all the community members to participate in curriculum implementation.*

The community members' recommendations:

- *The Ministry of Education should make sure that the results of research studies like this one, are made available to all stakeholders, and should be implemented in order to help the child, the schools and the communities. Such research should not be left on shelves to gather dust.*

- *The schools should educate community members on what they should do to assist the teachers in the classroom, i.e. the schools and the communities should plan and work together for the benefit of the child.*

- *The teachers should desist from looking down upon community members and should also change their negative attitudes if a meaningful partnership is to be formed.*

From the findings it appears that the participants (the school heads, the teachers and the community members) know what they want to see happening in the schools. They want a greater say in the activities of their schools and they want to help change the status quo.

4.3 Chapter summary

In the first theme, Understanding the key terms, I found that the stakeholders have a good understanding of the key concepts *curriculum implementation* and *community participation,* as well as in identifying the stakeholders in the community who could participate in curriculum implementation. Understanding these concepts, to me, was important to anchor subsequent discussions. It was the identification of the stakeholders in the community which showed a big gap between the teachers and the community members. For the community members it was as if everyone could participate and for teachers, they were selective and restrictive. On the whole, what really impressed me was that they both understood that in the community there are members who can make meaningful contribution to curriculum implementation.

The partnership between the schools and the communities in curriculum implementation constituted theme 2. Discussing this theme with the stakeholders, I found that in theory they valued and identified the benefits that accrue as a result of the said partnership. It was the implementation modalities of the partnership that created problems. Fear existed among the teachers that they had the contractual obligation to oversee the curriculum implementation,

with the community members coming at their pleasure. To the teachers, it was a sure way of maintaining that relationship.

Theme 3 was concerned with the barriers to community participation in curriculum implementation, and possible solutions. During the gathering of the data, I observed that there were so many militating factors which create a big wall between the schools and the communities, paramount among them being the language of education and the polarised political situation existing in most rural areas. Encouraging though, was the fact that both communities (the schools and outside) thought creating dialogue and levelling the educational and political field were the most sustainable ways of overcoming the barriers.

The absence of policy guidelines was also noted. This was discussed in theme 4. The school heads and the teachers indicated the need to have policies in place which would guide and protect them in any eventuality in this relationship with the communities. Importantly, the school heads and the teachers underlined the need for a shift in policy-formulation. The idea is to embrace the bottom-up horizontal approach to reach out to implementers and other important stakeholders of curriculum implementation.

Finally, theme 5 consisted of the stakeholders' recommendations to the schools, the Ministry and the government. The stakeholders raised interesting suggestions to change the classrooms. If they came to fruition would do two things, namely change the face of curriculum implementation, and strengthen the relationship between the schools and the communities in Zimbabwe.

In the next chapter I present a summary and discussion of the findings, conclusions, recommendations, and areas that need further research.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS,

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter I presented and interpreted the research results as obtained from the school heads, the teachers and the community members. The major thrust was how these stakeholders understood community participation in curriculum implementation, concentrating on the missing dimension in the process. The aim was to establish how the community members can effectively and meaningfully participate in curriculum implementation in Zimbabwean primary schools.

The study was guided by the main research question, 'How can members of the communities participate in curriculum implementation in the Zimbabwean primary schools?' The study aimed at achieving the following objecctives:

- to establish the role of communities in curriculum implementation in the Zimbabwean primary schools,
- to investigate the stakeholders' attitudes and perceptions on their participation in curriculum implementation,
- to establish barriers to community participation in curriculum implementation and
- to establish how the challenges to forge meaningful school-community partnership can be minimised.

From the study, the main findings were that school and community members have not meaningfully engaged each other in curriculum implementation at primary school level. Further, there are many contributing factors that impede this useful partnership. The need for a policy framework to guide the engagement process cannot be overemphasised.

This chapter concludes the study by presenting a summary and discussion of the research findings. In addition, the chapter focuses on the conclusions, as well as recommendations and areas for further research.

5.2 DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The theoretical framework that informed this study was Social Capital. Its emphasis was on the establishment of social networks, shared norms and values, and understanding that facilitate cooperation within or among groups, as well as the investment in social relations by individuals through which they gain access to embedded resources (Smith 2000, 2007; Lin 1999). The idea was to see how established teachers' social relationships and networks with community members could avail human resources to teaching and learning at primary school level in Zimbabwe. During my interaction with both the school (the teachers and the school heads) and the wider community (the parents, the traditional leaders, the business people and the church leaders), I learnt and observed that weak networks and social relations existed between the two sections. There was little consensus and agreement between them on how the teachers and the community members could work together in curriculum implementation. Because of this weak link, the primary schools have failed to effectively tap and mobilise the human resources in the community to the advantage of curriculum implementation. I was, therefore, motivated to use the Social Capital Theory upon realising how the classroom has remained isolated from the community's human and material resources that could edify and energise classroom practice.

By means of the Social Capital Theory, I also observed that the primary schools were not stand-alone institutions. They had strong relationships with the communities around them from whom they could derive great benefits. The literature also supports this observation. Smith (2000-2009) states that the schools and their classrooms become more effective centres of learning when the parents and the local communities are closely and actively involved. The primary schools seem to have found it difficult to fit the communities into their teaching and learning programmes. With the Social Capital Theory in mind, coupled with the data from the research field, I gave a detailed discussion on how community participation in curriculum implementation has been managed. The view was of seeing how a sustainable culture of cooperation and tolerance can be enhanced (Claridge 2004b). To organise the findings, five themes formed the basis of the discussion. These themes emerged from the data presented in chapter four. The themes range from 1 to 5, as indicated in the following figure.
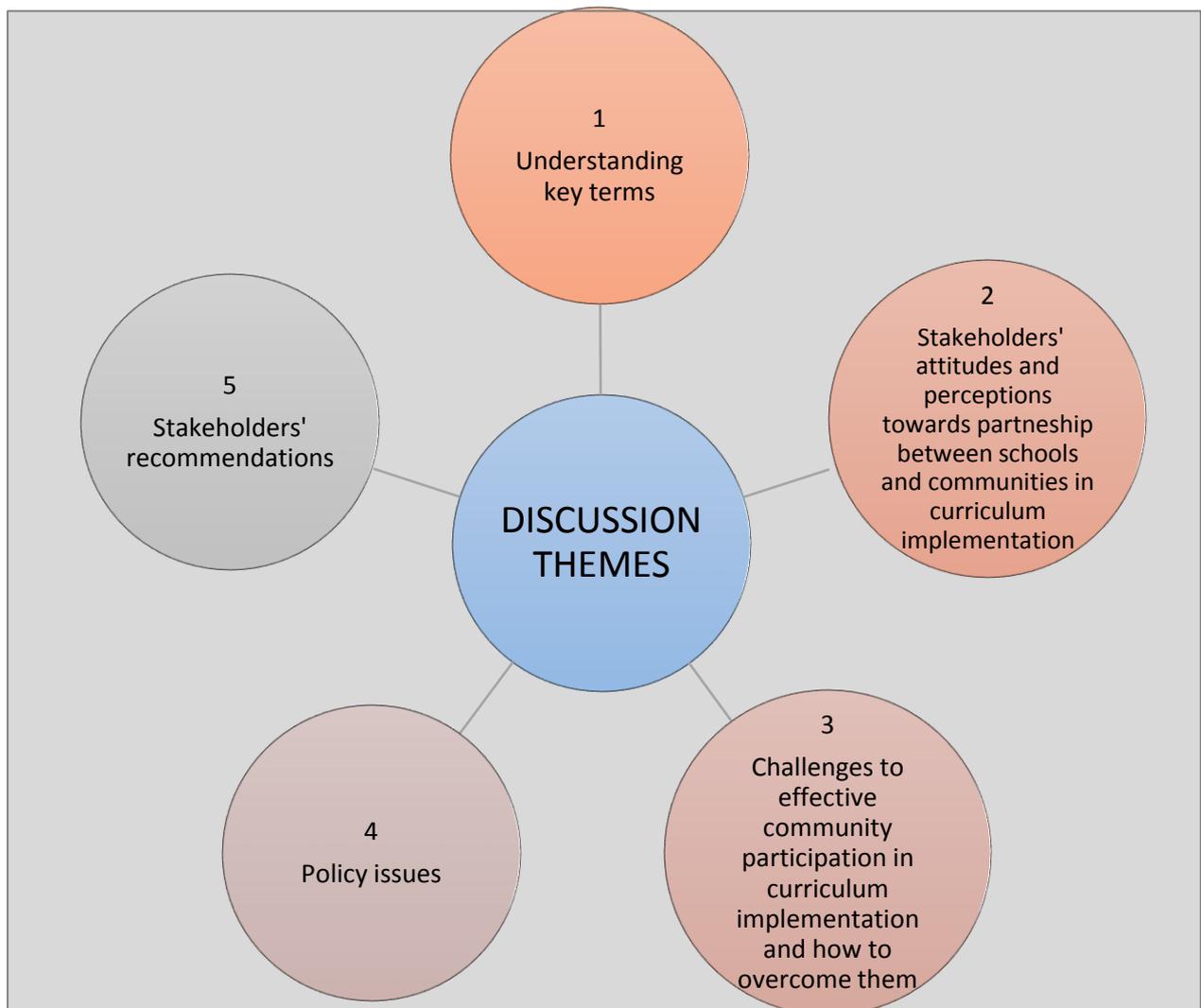
Figure 5.1: Themes that informed the discussion of the findings

These themes provided a broader framework for discussing the relationships of the primary schools and the communities in curriculum implementation. I also took into consideration what other existing researchers found, and how this information compares with the findings in this study.

5.2.1 Understanding the key terms

Regarding the understanding of the key terms, *curriculum implementation* and *community participation/engagement,* the research findings indicated that the stakeholders had clear theoretical definitions of these terms. The study found that the school heads, the teachers and the community members clearly articulated important tenets of curriculum implementation and

community participation. As a result, the initial impression that I got was that community participation in curriculum implementation had been embraced by all. One possible explanation could be that Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) have been very active in the Chivi district because of it being drought-prone. These NGOs mobilised communities in a number of income generating projects as well as supplementary feeding schemes. Furthermore, the schools have also mobilized the communities in respect of infrastructural development, traditional dance sessions, and in other areas not related to teaching and learning. These findings are quite consistent with literature. Chindanya (2011), Aref (2010), Bull (2011), Laurence (2010) & Swift-Morgan (2006) concur that community engagement has been loosely conceived, defined and implemented and remains vague especially in educational terms to mean monetary contribution, support of school construction and anything outside the classroom. It appears that both parties saw the community's abilities, knowledge and skills in all other areas, except the classroom.

The other observation in the study was that the school heads and the teachers were quite clear when they defined *curriculum implementation*. This process was the teachers' sole responsibility. The teachers and the school heads emphasised that their training, as well as the employment contract with the government through Public Service Commission (PSC) and Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) gave them the authority and control over the teaching and learning of children. The issue of involving the communities in curriculum implementation, seemed new and outside the norm to some teachers and community members. In other instances community engagement was at the discretion of teachers and school heads. Community participation, thus, remained outside the classroom, while curriculum implementation was classroom-based. It appeared that the school heads and teachers were guided by, what Ndawi and Maravanyika (2011), Burgess et al. (2010) and Lim (2007) say, namely that curriculum implementation is by definition the interaction between teachers and learners in the classroom to achieve educational goals. The authorities (from literature) are silent in respect of the place of the communities in the curriculum implementation process.

Deduced from the school heads' and the teachers' understanding of curriculum implementation, there appears to be a lack of conviction to open up the classrooms to what Caro-Bruce et al. (2007) calls a 'pool of players', which includes community members. The teachers saw the need to guard their professional territory, the classroom. Yet the community members, in their understanding of curriculum implementation, felt they could relate, interact,

share and discuss curriculum implementation issues with the teachers. As evidenced in Table 4.6, the research witnessed an impressive list of people from the community (e.g., traditional leaders, farmers, church leaders, and business people) whom community members felt could make a contribution in various knowledge areas during curriculum implementation. On the other hand, the school heads and the teachers had a short list (Table 4.6) based on a selection of the people in the community who may have skills that the teachers did not have. This idea of acknowledging the community members who can make a contribution in curriculum implementation, is in line with studies by Caro-Bruce et al. (2007) and Lee & Smith (1996). They advocated for opening-up the classroom environment to various people who have the knowledge, life experiences and expertise. In support of the same view, Elliot (2006) adds that promoting curriculum access from different implementation sites (i.e. community involvement), reduces a heavy burden on the teachers.

Therefore, there is a dividing line between schools and community members. Their difference was on the conception of the key terms as well as identification of the community members who could add value to curriculum implementation, thus entertaining a faint hope for meaningful engagement. The findings indicate a glaring mismatch between theory and practice. It is one thing to theoretically define concepts and another to operationalise them. Just going through school heads, teachers and community members' definitions of these key terms, one would get the impression that putting these ideas into practice would be easy.

5.2.2 The stakeholders' attitudes and perceptions towards the partnership between the schools and the communities in curriculum implementation

The findings clearly indicated that the school heads, the teachers and the community members valued the need to engage each other in curriculum implementation issues. They all spoke glowingly about the benefits for the learners that accrue from a well-planned and managed engagement process. It appeared that both parties realised that the classrooms cannot be independent from external societal forces. This dimension was evident in the study where rural primary schools are located in the midst of communities. They could not afford to ignore the political, social, cultural and economic life that surround them. These situations have a bearing on the learners as well as the teachers. Burkill and Eaton (2011) and Lauridsen (2003) believe that schools do not exist in vacuums, independent of influences beyond the teaching-learning context, be they political, social, cultural or economic. Agreeing with the same view, Mataire

(2014) asserts that the teachers and their school heads should also appreciate that these seemingly smallest moments of connection and collaboration with their communities can have the biggest positive impact on a child's educational life.

The findings also indicated that there have been a lot of ideas and items 'borrowed' by teachers from their local community during teaching and learning. However, the indications from the findings were that the 'borrowing' was done informally between teachers and community members. For example, by giving the children homework, or asking the children to bring certain items from home which could be used during the lessons. The absence of a clear cut formal route meant that the teachers used their discretion to engage community members. Agneesens (2006) and Wilson et al. (2008) also noticed that it is becoming increasingly difficult for a teacher to possess all necessary knowledge and competencies in the classroom at all times, and thus the need for increased division of expertise, skills and information.

Furthermore, the study revealed that both parties, namely the schools and the community members saw the benefits of engaging each other through various consultation processes. What this implies is that as the teachers consult the community members, it is an admission of the vast skills and knowledge base in the community which should be made use of and valued in the classroom for the educational development of the child. This idea is consistent with Elliot's (2006) findings that opening the classroom doors to various community members with the requisite skills and expertise, lessens the teachers' heavy loads thereby enabling the learners to gain meaningful knowledge from different people.

The lessons learnt from the findings are that the classroom teachers and the community members are important allies. Both have ideas about how they can scaffold the children's learning in the classroom. Important to note is that the primary school teachers may not have the required knowledge of all the eleven subjects they have to teach at primary school level. They may gain knowledge from members of the community who might possess the required information. The learner becomes the biggest winner in this engagement practice. It was this attitude or spirit of preparedness of the community members and teachers to engage each other that was really encouraging. However, the missing link was how these community members could contribute significantly to decision-making in the classroom in order to achieve what Burkill and Eaton (2011), Barnhardt (2006) and De Katele and Cherif (1994) call (respectively) 'unlocking the richness of community potential, expanding the pupils' horizon and using the best of both worlds'. Adams (2012:184) emphasises that, "participation is not just getting people to take part and voice their opinions, it is about taking those views forward to action".

The research results also indicated that the teachers seem to find it difficult to deroll. Going down from their ivory tower to the level of the community members with their little knowledge about classroom processes and procedures was not going to be easy. Yet they possess vast raw knowledge and experiences that could energise teaching and learning. This is in line with Barnhardt's (2006) observation that the diversity of situational and professional conditions prevailing between the teachers and the communities have created high levels of suspicion and lack of respect for each other. This leads to a dysfunctional engagement system and failure to pursue avenues of interest. What was evident from the findings was that while the momentum to engage the community members in curriculum implementation was high, progress to the realisation of this appeared rather low. Putnam's (2000) observation in his book, *Bowling Alone: The collapse and revival of American community*, matches well with the findings, where he noted the decline of community networks, informal ties, tolerance and trust that once led the Americans to 'bowl' together. This represented a loss of social capital. It was a concern which Putnam thought needed restoration just like the concern of this study was for schools to take on board the community members so that they may 'bowl' together for effective teaching and learning to be realised.

What was explicit from the findings was that the issue of accountability in curriculum implementation rests with the school heads and the teachers. *Accountability* does not mean possession, but means that the school heads and the teachers have the responsibility to drive, monitor and evaluate the curriculum implementation process. With this seemingly heavy responsibility to push curriculum implementation forward, it appeared the road to effective community participation was not easy as teachers planned lessons without communities in mind. The study findings indicated the need for the teachers and the community members to plan together, draw parameters, resolve language issues and discuss successes and challenges as they prepare for the engagement process. This idea matches with the Social Capital Theory which is understood as the collective value of all social networks and the feelings that arise from these networks, to do things for each other (Putnam 2000). The teachers as the custodians of the curriculum implementation process have not given much room to community members. The perception is that these community members cannot add value to teaching and learning. What the teachers do not understand is that involving community members in teaching and learning situations does not mean that the teachers are leaving their duty. Teachers remain in control as trained professionals.

Therefore, from the research findings it was evident that community participation in curriculum implementation can grow and become part of a new and emerging commitment by all the stakeholders to enhance children's learning. Study findings revealed that if the issue of community participation in curriculum implementation is properly managed and becomes a government policy in which teachers are liberated to engage communities, classroom life can be taken to a new interesting level. Adams (2012:183) confirms this idea when he asserts that research on community participation "….has continued to grow and there is now clear evidence of such research feeding into and becoming part of new and emerging government policy"

5.2.3 Challenges to effective community participation in curriculum implementation, and possible remedies

The general finding was that community participation in curriculum implementation in its multifaceted form has not been easy to build and develop a more proactive culture of community participation. The philosophy of developing the capacity of community participation has not been evidenced by what was observed on the ground with a number of restrictive issues at play. These include the language of education, the unavailability of dialogical space, the polarised political situation, the closed-door policy by the teachers and the school heads, among others. Some of the problems could be addressed at local level while others require lobbying and government intervention to solve them.

The research findings indicated that the reality of community participation in curriculum implementation was hampered by the use of English as the language of education in Zimbabwe. Despite the provisions of the Education Amendment Act of 2006 that prior to form one, English, Shona or Ndebele may be used as the medium of instruction, the teachers used English at all the primary school levels. This, the research found, has remained a major challenge to effective participation by community members. Contributions by Mutasa (2006), Prah (2008) and Miti (2008) also lamented the situation where Africa has remained the only continent where the children go to school and are taught in a language other than their own. Gorinski and Fraser (2006) also observed that the language of education should be a language that all the stakeholders (teachers, school heads and community members) can comprehend, that is, a community-friendly language. From the research findings, generally the teachers and the school heads said that when the community members are to be invited to make a presentation in the classroom, obviously, they would be more comfortable with the mother tongue which is

the most used language of communities, thus preventing their prospects of being invited by teachers. The onus of their participation tended to lie with teachers who valued English as a medium of instruction than mother tongue. The teachers seem to be guided by Rose's (2000) thinking that the use of any other language which is not English creates instructional dead time where there is little or no learning taking place. It appears the problem is not on teachers' shoulders alone but the government is to blame as well. It has failed to enforce the provisions of the 2006 Education Amendment Act.

The research findings also pointed to problems related to teacher priority area, which is for the pupils to pass examinations. It appears that anything that militate against that mission was dismissed. Singh (2010) indicated that community participation in curriculum implementation is hindered by the teachers' desire for good results in examinations, and the pressure to cover the syllabus on time. What this might mean is that the teachers and the school heads need to shift from their fixed position of narrowly seeing curriculum implementation from an examination point of view. Furthermore, the research findings also revealed a mismatch between the language provision of the 2006 Education Amendment Act and the language of the examinations. All the internal and external examinations except Shona and Ndebele, are set in English. Therefore, if the teachers were to engage the community members, it meant that the teachers would have to repeat the lesson using English in order to fully prepare the learners for the examinations. According to ADEA (2005) the community members have been reduced by the language of education to onlookers. This situation has denied the pupils the opportunity of experiencing a sense of community in the classroom by the teachers and the community members exchanging and sharing experiences. It appears the language of instruction has not motivated and promoted the teachers to involve the community members in curriculum implementation matters. The teachers' hands appeared tied as grade seven external examinations take into account all the primary school work. Generally, teachers were worried about the examinations which, in Zimbabwe, presently have a very high premium. This is in line with research findings by Mufanechiya and Mufanechiya (2011b) that the selection of English language as the medium of instruction has side-lined the majority of the people to take part in educational issues.

What this means is that government intervention is needed to look at the language of instruction – examination dichotomy and establish some congruency between the two as a key driver to community participation in curriculum implementation. For the teachers, involving the community members who use the mother tongue in the classroom becomes time wasted rather

than knowledge gained. Therefore, it means that examinations and the language of instruction have conspired to exclude the community members' active participation in curriculum implementation. What should happen is that the agenda and the policies of the government regarding curriculum access should be enforced and user-friendly.

The results from this study also indicated that apart from the language of instruction and examinations, the school heads and the teachers are also the other stumbling blocks to community participation in curriculum implementation. The professional teacher-rural peasant divide was pronounced as the teachers looked down upon the community members in terms of their meaningful contribution to the process of curriculum implementation. It appeared that the school heads and the teachers saw the community members as unprofessional and ignorant. Their contribution was mostly relevant and restricted to anything outside the classroom. Hargreaves (1996) and Barnhardt (2006) attest to this attitude where they say that for the teachers to engage the communities in productive educational experience and interaction, they (teachers) believe, would be selling their profession to non-believers. They would rather survive alone in the classroom wilderness. It is because of this attitude that the teachers remained sceptical and reluctant to engage the community members into their plan of teaching. It appeared that the teachers feared that including the community members in curriculum implementation would dilute their professional power and control over the process of curriculum implementation.

The findings also indicated that the primary school teachers jealously guarded their classrooms (the closed-door policy). This was premised on the fear that their pupils would be 'poisoned' and correcting the damage might not be easy. For the teachers, the safe position was to shut their classroom doors to the community members. If the teachers required any information from the community members, it was better they got it themselves (i.e. as teachers). They knew how to present it to the pupils. Studies by Zimmerman (2006) and by Gorinski and Fraser (2006) confirm that the teachers have closed their classrooms and have declared teacher autonomy to protect themselves from those who may want to threaten their power. Another explanation why teachers have closed their classroom doors, would be that the teachers felt their inadequacies could be exposed by the community members. They erected an interference wall by regarding community participation in curriculum implementation as counterproductive to children's learning. In this vein, Humphreys (1993) and Hargreaves (1996) found out that many teachers felt threatened by the involvement of the communities in educational matters. They feared that by engaging the community members in curriculum

implementation, the teachers may experience a loss of boundaries of self and influence with little distinction between themselves and the community members.

The contradiction, however, is that the teachers often gave the pupils homework so that they may be assisted at home. The teachers marked the work, pointing to the capabilities of the community members to contribute to curriculum implementation. Without the belief that the community members know about certain academic issues, the teachers would not have given the pupils homework. The teachers should, therefore, not underestimate the enormous amount of learning children may receive from the community members, both formally and informally. While the school curriculum is much more expanded, ironically, it includes so many things that the children learn at home. Barnhardt (2006) shares the same sentiments, namely that engaging the communities would enable the teachers to expand the locus of knowledge and to use an eclectic approach with educational experiences not remaining within the narrow confines of the classroom.

The other important finding from the study was that the teachers understood that the learners fail to see the value of knowledge coming from other sources than their teachers. One possible explanation was that the teachers and the learners looked at the person's status in society and the historical background in order to take their information seriously. Another explanation was that the practice of engaging members of the communities in curriculum implementation was not common. There was very little belief that community members could capture well the complexity of classroom processes. Furthermore, the teachers felt that the learners may fail to separate community members' newly found role and their role in the community. What was unclear however, was the teachers and learners' mental preparedness to accept the community members as genuine and critical partners in curriculum implementation. On the other hand, in support of the theory that guided this study, Putnam (2000) acknowledges that social capital can be measured by the amount of trust and reciprocity between individuals.

The study also ascertained that the community members have not helped matters either. Most of them felt they did not have the expertise to contribute to curriculum implementation. It was this feeling that drove these community members away from the classrooms, thus making the classrooms the exclusive domain of the teachers. Swift-Morgan (2006) concurs with the finding when he propounds that usually the community members doubt their own expertise, competence and literacy. As such regarded the work in the classroom as the preserve of those who were trained to do so.

The study also indicated that the primary school teachers did not have time to plan and prepare for the issue of community participation given their heavy teaching loads. Preedy (1993) attested to this observation when he says that with this pressure for time in a content-heavy curriculum, community engagement receives a low priority. The engagement process, it appeared, required concrete practical steps by the teachers to make inroads and contacts with community members, thus creating the much needed dialogical space between teachers and community members. From the study, I realised that all this did not happen. The absence of a dialogical space was a recipe for failure and ineffective participation practices by the community members in curriculum implementation. The communication between the community members and the school community, which was supposed to influence the nature and quality of the engagement, was not exploited to full effect. It appeared that because of limited time on the teachers' side, what had not happened was the process of getting to know each other. The need to come to some agreement of how the teachers and the community members could work together was important.

This finding is in agreement with research findings by Burgess et al. (2010) who asserted that time was an issue for the teachers in the classroom, and will remain a consistent concern across all educational settings. In the same vein, Zimmerman (2006) observed that attempting to find time to slot in community members and disrupting the teachers' well-established routine has never been easy. Lambert (2008) concluded that the knowledge and meaningful value-addition by the community members to the development of the whole child, lost given time constraints, remain a stone that we often leave unturned.

 The relationship between the community members, the school heads and the teachers had not evolved and developed to a trusting level, especially with regards to community participation in curriculum implementation. It appeared that all the parties thought the engagement process would grow automatically without any of them taking the first step. The situation left the community members disappointed in respect of the lack of opportunities to participate in curriculum implementation. Adams (2012) and Zimmerman (2006) conclude that the schools should have time to build relationships with the communities. Eventually this would also bring about community participation in curriculum implementation. The above views go along with the recommendations forwarded by the community members during the interviews where they suggested that the schools and the communities should plan and work together for the benefit of the child. But the community members insisted that the teachers and the school heads should

find the time to educate community members on what they should do to assist the teachers in the classroom.

The communication between schools and communities, the study revealed, was one-sided. The teachers indirectly approached community members through children's homework, and to contribute on those aspects where they felt they needed help. On the other hand, the community members would not approach the school with the knowledge and skills they could offer. The school heads and the teachers were seen to be in powerful professional positions with a superiority tag. They were viewed as authority figures by the community members, resulting in a skewed communication relationship. The skewness did not augur well for effective and productive community participation in curriculum implementation. This is contrary to the theory which guided this study, the Social Capital Theory which discourages individualism and places its emphasis and encouragement on social networks, community connections, civic engagement, social virtue and social interactions (Smith 2000-2009, Putnam 2000, Arefi 2003, Papa et al. 2006, Claridge 2004a). These phrases are closely interwoven to explain social capital as a concept rooted in community life. Therefore, for community participation in curriculum implementation to come to fruition, the mechanisms have to be put in place to create the space for communication and discussion, in order that the school heads, the teachers and the community members may read from the same page. This could be aided by embracing Preedy's (1993) idea that the teachers' hours of work should include educational partnerships with communities. The study found that in the absence of this space and communication, the 'us-them' scenario would prevail, making it difficult for the parties to meaningfully integrate their ideas for an enhanced curriculum implementation practice.

The results indicated that the political environment in the rural areas was heavily pregnant with partisan party politics maintaining boundaries between and among community members. The ruling party-opposition divide is very pronounced, as the school heads and the teachers are wary of whom to invite to general school activities, let alone curriculum implementation. This was confirmed in discussions with the teachers and the community members. From the school heads' reports, the schools were not at liberty to engage anybody in the community. In order for the schools to engage any member of the community, they have to do so in close consultation with the local political leadership so that vetting could be done. What this means is that engaging community members known to belong to the opposition would place the whole school and its leaders at risk. In Zimbabwe, the civil service should be a-political, and for any institution to show some opposition political inclination, one would pay a heavy price.

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Therefore, any member of the community from the opposition parties with the skills and knowledge in certain areas that could profit curriculum implementation was unlikely to be invited. Thus, the school heads and the teachers had to make use of their own knowledge and skills, rather than engaging community members who were likely to put their schools at risk. However, the Social CapitalTtheory criticises all these political divisions and a polarised school environment. According to Putnam (2000), Narayan and Cassidy (2001) and Papa et al. (2006) social capital succeeds on the basis of goodwill, joint relationships and coordinated effort among the mixed groups of people. Furthermore, the same literature indicates that civic engagement, an aspect of social capital, is borrowed from the politics of democracy. There is a need for wide external consultation by involving different people, despite their different backgrounds.

Therefore, the need to separate education from party politics cannot be overemphasised. The school heads and the teachers should consult whoever they would like to in the community, regardless of their political affiliation. The government, through the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, has a mandate to depoliticise all educational institutions, allowing a free environment in which everyone with educational ideas can freely contribute to curriculum implementation. Furthermore, the traditional leaders who are supposed to be apolitical, should lead the way by bringing their subjects together and creating a family situation for the good of education. Solving the political dilemma would give room for all the members of the community to willingly make a contribution to curriculum implementation when called upon by primary school heads and teachers, a situation not happening at the moment. What was revealed by the study was that correcting this problem might not be soon given the high political temperature currently prevailing in Zimbabwe. The various stakeholders in the study recommended that educational issues should be depoliticised and all political constraints eliminated in order to pave way for free and effective community participation in curriculum implementation.

From the study it also emerged that the community members expected to be remunerated for their services when called to participate in curriculum implementation. The possible explanation was that the Chivi district is drought-prone and many NGOs operate in the area and always engage the community members in activities that directly benefited them, either in cash or kind. The mentality inculcated in the community members was that they had to be paid for any service rendered. The other reason why community members expected to be remunerated could be that the rural communities generally were finding it hard to survive under

the dollarized Zimbabwean economy where it was difficult to raise the United States dollar to sustain the family. Any invitation would, therefore, be received with the hope and expectation to get something to fend for the family. On the other hand, it is difficult for the school heads to dispense money on activities that were not provided for in any of the policy documents. For accountability purposes, the school heads cannot authorise the payment of community members who participated in curriculum implementation, or even offer a token of appreciation. The only appreciation would be a verbal 'thank you'. It appeared that most of the community members, thus, found it very difficult to leave any of their activities at home that generated income, to come to school to offer a free service. The school heads, teachers, traditional and church leaders, parents and business people should be educated on the complementary role they should play in curriculum implementation as a service to the pupils and their community. The issue of remuneration should be openly discussed so that the community members may appreciate the primary schools' concerns and constraints. Every community member should be seized by ways of improving and providing education to the pupils without necessarily holding the school to ransom with remuneration issues.

From the research findings, I noted the willingness and desire by both the schools and the community members to overcome the barriers that had hindered community participation in curriculum implementation. The suggestions given by the teachers and the school heads, as well as the community members, showed that if seriously followed up and implemented, the face of curriculum implementation in Zimbabwean primary schools could change for the better. The ideas were to see free mix of classroom and community life, from which cross pollination of ideas would see curriculum implementation richer. Such ideas are in agreement with Barnhardt's (2006) thinking that successful community participation in curriculum implementation should involve moving everyday life into the classroom and moving the classroom out into everyday life. It appeared that the solution to these problems were generally in the school heads and teachers' hands. They need to accept TARSC's (2006) idea that the teachers need to walk across communities allowing them to interface with the local environment and thus seeing a range of features and possibilities, knowledge, skills, resources (human and material) and conditions they could exploit in curriculum implementation. This would eventually develop a logical and productive engagement framework between the teacher and the community members. This is also in agreement with the Social Capital Theory which holds an important aspect of the establishment of social networks which is also a way of identifying those important links and resources which can be harnessed for the common good.

Thus, social capital is a way of building a sense of belonging, identifying skills, talents and establishing productive relationships of trust and tolerance to bring great benefits to the people (Smith 2000-2009). Therefore, community participation in curriculum implementation can be realised when teachers appreciate community members as collective assets (Lin 1999) and engage them to resolve classroom problems. This is based on collective connectedness (Ashford & LeCroy 2010:340). Therefore, effective teaching in the classroom cannot depend on individualism.

From the focus-group sessions as well as interview discussions, the participants revealed that the teachers and the community members did not know each other's capabilities hence they did not involve each other in the teaching and learning situations. TARSC (2006) established that information is power and thus, a community that is well-informed about existing classroom activities stands a better chance of raising their voice, debating and demanding inclusion and participation. This is in agreement with Agneessens (2006) who states that Social Capital would thrive when the teachers and the communities forge tighter links and when the teachers rely on advice from and collaboration with the wider community. The ideas by the community members and the teachers suggested that joint ownership and accountability of the curriculum implementation process would go a long way in mitigating some of the barriers to community participation. From the study findings it was noted that both parties (schools and communities) had useful practical suggestions that would make community participation in curriculum implementation possible. Barnhardt (2006) thus, concludes that the success of any meaningful partnership between the teachers and the communities in curriculum implementation depends highly on the kind of orientation given to the persons involved with a realisation that any situation, person or event is a potential learning source.

In support of the above views, TARSC (2006), and Barnhardt (2006), advocated for teacher-community meetings, special announcements especially during communal gatherings, stakeholder analysis and assessment, where the teacher can put some aspects of education into the hands of communities. Such meetings open up opportunities for meaningful learning to the broader sector of the community, for the benefit of learners. When all this is done, the communities would develop trust in schools and help to break down the barriers between them and the schools (Adams 2012). By doing all this, the schools and the teachers would appreciate the major tenets of social capital that social networks, co-operation and trust serve as channels for the flow of helpful information that facilitate achieving both school and classroom goals (Smith 2000-2009). According to Papa et al. (2006) the impact of social capital on the

relationship between the teachers and the communities, when they are connected with one another, is that trust grows thereby improving productivity in the classrooms. Therefore, in support of the Social Capital Theory, Adams (2012) posits that trust is vital to any active participation/engagement and this exercise of trust also helps to highlight difficult relationships, and to explore solutions to rebuilding those relationships. The research findings revealed that the stakeholders also aimed and wished to realise positive partnerships between the schools and the communities. This was clearly spelt out when the teachers, the school heads and the community members recommended that there is need for teacher restoration in terms of pride, attitudes and values if a meaningful partnership is to be achieved.

5.2.4 Policy issues

Through this study I discovered the non-existence of any policies to regulate community engagement in curriculum implementation at primary school level in Zimbabwe. What the researcher found was that in all the sampled primary schools, community engagement in curriculum implementation was perceived and handled differently. It was at the discretion of the primary school heads and teachers. This pointed to the absence of a legal framework that would guide and direct community participation in the curriculum implementation process. Without this legal instrument, community participation in curriculum implementation was to remain dysfunctional and uncoordinated. It was important to note that the government was struggling to fund education in terms of material, and even human resources, with some classes being taken by temporary teachers. Making use of community resources was going to alleviate some of these problems albeit almost at no cost. Rose (2003a) noted that the establishment and support of the schools by the communities have always been evident in many African countries, often a response to the failure of government provision. Having a policy in place on community participation is sustainable, given that community members are always available.

The school heads' and the teachers' fears of engaging community members in curriculum implementation in the absence of a policy document to protect them are genuine. If anything goes wrong during the engagement process, the school heads and the teachers remain very vulnerable. The Government of Zimbabwe, through the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education should, therefore, be motivated to revise their policies and guidelines regarding the provision of education at primary school level. With such policies and guidelines, the school heads, the teachers and the community members would work together in the interest of the pupils in the teaching and learning situations.

The fndings also indicated that even the presence of policy guidelines were likely not to be realised given the fact that policy formulation in education has remained heavily top-down. This explains why even some of the policies currently in place have never been genuinely implemented because of little or no consultation with the teachers who are the implementers. What was learnt from the study through the discussions with the teachers was that the policies were usually formulated by those who would have left classroom practice long back, coupled with little research in their enactment. That teachers did not believe in the policies was another reason why the policies had remained irrelevant pieces of legislation finding very little time and space in the classroom. Further, these policies had not managed to chat a straight path to follow. Therefore, with the need to come up with a policy to guide community participation in curriculum implementation, the government should consider a number of issues. Important issues such as policy clarity, research and consultation with teachers are necessary strategies for user friendly policies. The government should move away from policy directives to policy discussion and consultation with teachers as the key implementation partners.

Also noted from the study was that all the stakeholders (the school heads, teachers and community members) noted with concern a lack of continuity of educational policies. With the appointment of new education ministers, they often bring in new ideas before the existing ones have been fully understood. This created a lot of confusion among the school heads and the teachers who are the chief curriculum implementers. The possible explanation could be that each Minister would want to leave some footprints and are often quick to make changes before the end of their term of office.The above clearly outlined that the school heads, teachers and community members underlined the value of community participation in curriculum implementation, noting a number of benefits that accrue from the participation and relationship. The biggest challenge, though, was how to operationalise the participation of the community members with the many challenges threatening to derail the communities from participating in curriculum implementation.

5.3 THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY TO KNOWLEDGE, PRACTICE AND POLICY

From the discussion of findings, it can be concluded that the study made significant contribution to curriculum implementation with regards to knowledge, practice and policy, as explained below.

The study has set in motion a decentralised curriculum implementation reform agenda in Zimbabwean primary schools. The broader education concept should not be limited and confined to the schools but extended to all rich information sites that can edify teaching and learning. This study, thus has the potential to feed into and becoming part of new and emerging government policy on education.

The study's contribution to knowledge has been to challenge the traditional thinking that communities can not play a role inside the classroom. This study adds a new dimension that community participation can go to curriculum implementation level. The advantage would be to unlock all available human and material resources in the community thereby connecting teaching and learning with real life situations. The study attempts to tie communities to a responsibility in curriculum implementation by looking at sustainable ways of connecting communities and classroom activities. The thinking in this study is that communities can avail knowledge, skills and resources for effective curriculum implementation.

The other dimension of this study in terms of practice is to nurture a teacher-community relationship by integrating communities in the main stream education. The realisation is that teachers need assistance as they execute their classroom duty. Classroom teaching can be shared between teachers and community members thus opening teaching and learning to a large pool of players.

Education policy formulation in Zimbabwe has largely been top-down. The study looks at a bottom-up approach as a sustainable way of connecting all stakeholders in educational matters. Decentralising problem solving and decision making to schools gives confidence to school heads and teachers to use human resources that are available in their locality without fear of any consequences.

In the following sections I will present the conclusions and recommendations.

5.4 SYNTHESIS OF THE FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

This synthesis of the research findings is an establishment or conclusion that the research problem was addressed and that the research findings answered the main research question, as well as the sub-questions, which guided this study (as outlined in Chapter One, 1.3.1 & 1.3.2). The synthesis of the findings is therefore, done as per research questions that guided this study. The conclusions were drawn from the qualitative data presented in chapter four.

5.4.1 What role could members of the communities play in curriculum implementation in the Zimbabwean primary schools?

To some of the teachers as well as the community members, the issue of involving the community members in curriculum implementation appeared new and outside the norm. The data analysis indicated that the school heads, the teachers and the community members valued and spoke well of the need to engage each other in curriculum implementation issues. Thus, both parties had a conceptual understanding of participation. What was absent were the practical modalities of realising the partnership. On the ground, community participation and curriculum implementation were considered as two separate entities where community participation remained outside the classroom and curriculum implementation was classroom-based.

It emerged from the study that some teachers felt that the community members' major contribution to curriculum implementation was when they send their children to school and the actual teaching (i.e. implementation) is then done by the teachers who are trained to do the job (see 4.2.1.2). What these teachers implied was that the community members have no role inside the classroom. Therefore, although the teachers knew, and were aware of the value and benefits of incorporating the community members to assist during the teaching and learning process, the teachers themselves were not prepared to engage the community members in the classroom.

The school heads and the teachers indicated that the role of the community members was to provide material resources like food, pens books, uniforms, to pay school fees and levies, to attend open days, mould bricks, and the infrastructural development of the school (see Table 4.7). This was a clear indication that the school heads and the teachers were not genuine and serious when it came to community involvement in curriculum implementation, and were thus running away from opening their classroom doors to the community members. It appeared, therefore, that the community members' role (i.e. community participation) has been valued and appreciated outside the classroom. The school heads and teachers were hesitant about involving the community members in actual curriculum implementation. They drew boundaries and erected walls for community members not to enter the classrooms.

It also emerged from the study that the community members themselves understood and realised the importance of working together with the teachers, but how this could be done was

not clear from these community members. It was not that the community members did not want to participate in curriculum implementation but rather, they were not involved. The study results, therefore, established that despite their willingness to be engaged, the community members have a very minimal role to play in curriculum implementation. Therefore, if the community members are guided and made aware of what they can do in the classroom and how they can do it, they are more than willing to offer their expertise and skills for the benefit and development of the child.

5.4.2 What knowledge, attitudes and perceptions are held by stakeholders towards community participation in curriculum implementation?

The results of this study indicated that it was only in theory that the school heads, teachers and community members valued and realised the benefits of the schools and the communities being in partnership. The biggest challenges were realised in the implementation phase where the views were never taken forward for action and thus the partnership was never realised. At present the curriculum implementation conversation seems to be present mainly in one group, the school heads and teachers. The community members remain peripheral, with their knowledge seen as of diminished value and incompatible with the classroom discourse. However, the hope is that both parties (the schools and the communities) may continue to cherish and support each other, and thus find each other in curriculum implementation matters in the foreseeable future.

The study also revealed that the teachers and school heads showed a negative attitude towards community members. They were not willing to cast their nets wide to include other players in the process of curriculum implementation. The teachers regarded the community members as less knowledgeable and hence did not want to have ideas from them. On the other hand, I observed in this study that the community members were quite ready and willing to contribute in curriculum implementation. According to the community members, they were waiting for the teachers to open up this partnership as well as to allocate specific roles to them during the teaching and learning process. The research results showed that the teachers guarded jealously their classrooms and could not trust the community members to handle the teaching and learning process. According to the teachers they were the ones who were trained to teach, and as such they would be happy and comfortable when curriculum implementation matters were left to no one else except the teachers themselves. The schools (the teachers and school heads)

have not given much room to community members, perceiving that the members of the communities could not add anything meaningful to the actual teaching and learning process.

The teachers also indicated that they teach for examinations because of the Zimbabwean education system which is examination-driven. According to the teachers, inviting community members under such circumstances was not possible because of time constraints. What this meant was that the learners were deprived of gaining valuable knowledge and skills from outside, at the excuse of being prepared for examinations.

What emerged from the findings, therefore, was that the only solution to this blame-game would be an establishment of a common ground, developing collaborations/partnerships and managing the relationship to its conclusive end. The study also established that the government could also alleviate the problem by bringing in a clear legislative framework that could enhance free community contribution in curriculum implementation.

5.4.3 What are the barriers to effective community participation in curriculum implementation?

This study revealed that there are many challenges or barriers to community participation in curriculum implementation. The language of education and the examinations, the polarised political environment and the closed-door policy of the schools, resulting in the lack of dialogue/communication between the schools and the communities, emerged as the major barriers to community participation in curriculum implementation (see Figure 4.3).

The study results indicated the language of education and the examinations as the major reasons why the schools could not engage the community members in curriculum implementation. The language of education and examinations in Zimbabwe is English, with the exception of the ChiShona and Ndebele subject areas. The teachers indicated that they were hesitant to engage the community members in curriculum implementation because the majority of the community members were not educated enough to be able to handle the teaching and learning process, using English language as the medium of instruction. This, therefore, resulted in the teachers seeing the engagement of community members in curriculum implementation as a waste of valuable teaching time. The teachers would have to reteach the lesson using English language in order to fully prepare the learners for the examinations which are set in English. This has

also resulted in the issue of language remaining a major challenge to effective community participation in curriculum implementation.

The community members, on the other hand, argued that the question of language was not an issue. What was important and valued was for the children to acquire important knowledge, skills and information in whatever language used. However, the blame did not lie completely with the teachers alone, but with the government as well. The government has failed to administer the implementation of the 2006 Education Amendment Act which gives the provision of the use of mother tongue to be used as the medium of instruction at primary school level in Zimbabwe. What this means is that the language of education needs to be a user-friendly language which should take into consideration community participation in curriculum implementation. Failure to enforce the implementation of a user-friendly language policy resulted in the schools failing to bring in the community members to participate in curriculum implementation.

It also emerged from the findings that the school heads' and the teachers' negative attitudes, actions and behaviour hindered the community members to participate in the teaching and learning of children. The schools closed their classroom doors to the community members, thereby hindering community participation in curriculum implementation. The established closed-door policy by the teachers and the school heads, also resulted in the lack of communication, or the unavailability of the dialogical space. The teachers and the community members could not discuss openly and freely how they can work together in respect of issues related to the teaching and learning of children. Therefore, what was evident was that the schools did not seriously consider community participation in curriculum implementation as important. This resulted in the teachers and the school heads not creating a platform where the teachers and the community members can exchange ideas. Rather than seeing community contributions as an enrichment of the children's education, the teachers and school heads viewed it as a waste of teaching time.

Another major barrier to community participation in curriculum implementation was the polarised political situation. The schools had to be very careful as to whom they invited to assist the children, lest they were labelled to be involved in opposition politics. It was, therefore, a big risk for the school and its leaders to engage the community members who belonged to the opposition party even if they had the required knowledge and skills. As a result the teachers disassociated themselves from engaging the community members in curriculum

implementation. What this meant was that the politicians were selfish to only think about themselves and their political survival without considering the future of the children.

The government's policy that no child should be sent home for not paying school fees emerged as another barrier to community participation in curriculum implementation. Due to this policy most rural primary schools found it difficult to raise essential curriculum implementation resources because the parents and guardians did not pay the school fees on time. They knew that their children would not be sent back home (they were protected by the government policy). This, therefore, resulted in the schools finding it difficult to engage the community members in curriculum implementation when the same community members were not providing the critical teaching and learning resources by the payment of the school fees.

Another important finding from the study was that having resource persons in the classroom, the learners did not have a choice but always trusted their teachers' decisions and choices. This resulted in the community members suggesting that when the teachers look for resource persons from the community, they should make sure that these are people who are knowledgeable and of respectable character so that the children would acknowledge the value of their contributions.

The findings also indicated that the issue of remuneration was another barrier to community participation in curriculum implementation. The members of the communities expected the schools to pay them if they were to offer their services during the teaching and learning process. On the other hand, the schools found it difficult to pay for community services because such services were not catered for in the existing policies which guided the daily activities of the primary schools in Zimbabwe. Thus, as policy, the schools could not offer any payment to the community members. Due to the lack of remuneration most community members, therefore, found it difficult to offer free services in curriculum implementation, after leaving some income-generating activities in the community.

5.4.4 How can the challenges to forge meaningful school-community partnership be minimised?

The research results show that the school heads, teachers and community members were quite forthcoming and prepared to overcome the barriers that had hindered community participation in curriculum implementation. Both parties (schools and communities) indicated the need to

open up dialogue and to level the educational and political field as the viable way of overcoming the barriers. The need for communication between the schools and communities was also forwarded and emphasised. It was also a way of making the community members aware of what will be taking place in schools, and discussing how the two parties can meaningfully work together in issues to do with curriculum implementation.

Therefore, a collaborative ownership and responsibility for the process of curriculum implementation was seen as a solution to the barriers to community participation during the teaching and learning process. The study findings also indicated the need for policy guidelines that may assist and guide the school heads and the teachers on how they can engage the community members in curriculum implementation. The absence of such policies, guidelines or instruments may have resulted in the teachers and school heads having their reservations. This has resulted in school heads and teachers not taking the issue of partnering with community members in curriculum implementation seriously. It also emerged from the study results that when the school heads, teachers and community members are side-lined and never consulted during the formulations of policies, then curriculum implementation suffers.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations and suggestions emanating from the research findings and conclusions, are forwarded for consideration by the various stakeholders in order to mitigate factors that hinder community participation in curriculum implementation. The idea is that the community members can be meaningfully engaged in the classroom for effective teaching and learning to be realised. The recommendations would assist the Zimbabwean government, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, the school heads, the teachers, the community members as well as other interested stakeholders, to come up with informed decisions when dealing with issues to do with community participation in curriculum implementation. Therefore, in the context of the above conclusions (5.3) which were drawn from the research findings, I present the following recommendations in terms of practice, knowledge and policy.

❖ Curriculum decision-making in Zimbabwe should be democratised to ensure that the school heads, the teachers and the community members take part in the designing and development of the curriculum, taking into account their views, needs and interests. The current practice (a centrally-designed curriculum) allows for irrelevant policies to

find their way into the schools. This, therefore, calls for the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education to make consultations with the schools as well as the community members during the formulation of policies. The government should, thus, move away from policy directives to policy discussions and consultations with the teachers, the school heads and the community members in order to enhance effective community participation in curriculum implementation.

❖ There is need for the school heads, the teachers and the communities to shift from viewing community engagement/participation as something strictly attached to infrastructural development or the provision of material resources, to also seeing community participation as bringing community members into the teaching and learning process for the benefit of the learner.

❖ The community members need to be educated on the complementary role they should play in curriculum-implementation as a service to the pupils' education and not for remuneration. The schools and the community members should openly discuss the issue of incentives/remuneration so that the community members may understand and value the primary schools' concerns and constrains. The community members need to be concerned with improving and providing quality education to their children and not trouble schools with remuneration issues.

❖ There is need for the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, through the Provincial and District Education offices, to design, organise and fund teacher-community workshops, discussion forums and awareness campaigns which clearly spell out the importance of the engagement practices and how the schools and the community members can meaningfully engage each other. In these workshops the community members should be educated on the role they can play in curriculum implementation as a service to the pupils and their education. The schools and the community members should therefore, open up dialogue and create a space for communication and discussion. The school heads, the teachers and the community members should share ideas and also come to an agreement on an engagement framework. The idea is to open curriculum implementation to all.

❖ There is need for attitude and behaviour changes from the teachers. The teachers need to change their negative attitudes, swallow their pride and desist from looking down upon community members if a meaningful and effective partnership is to be realised. Thus, the teachers should create synergies with communities and tap into the vast

knowledge forms that the community members have that would assist the children in the teaching and learning process.

❖ There is need for the schools and the communities to have clearly defined guidelines which will assist the schools in selecting the best resource persons from the community, that is, people who are not only of high integrity but who also possess the knowledge and expertise that would benefit the learner.

❖ The Zimbabwean government through the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education should be motivated to revise their policies and guidelines regarding the provision of education at primary school level, and put in place a legal instrument that would guide and direct community participation in curriculum implementation. Such policy and/or guidelines would give the school heads, the teachers and the community members a mandate to collaborate on curriculum implementation issues for the benefit of the pupils in the teaching and learning process. In line with this, the government should also consider giving the Minister of Education a longer tenure to see through his or her policy initiatives. The constant changing of Ministers of Education has resulted in policy inconsistency. Each Minister who is appointed always wants to rebrand and change, thereby affecting the momentum set by his or her predecessor(s). This has resulted in confusion in the education system.

❖ The government, through the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, should ensure the enforcement and implementation of the 2006 Education Amendment Act in all primary schools in Zimbabwe. This should be done in order to pave the way for the primary schools to allow members of the community to share their valuable knowledge, expertise and skills with the learners using the language they are comfortable with (that is, their mother tongue). The teachers and school heads, therefore, also need to shift from their fixed position of narrowly seeing curriculum implementation from an examination point of view. They should view and understand curriculum implementation as a process of imparting valuable knowledge and lifelong skills that would benefit the learners for the rest of their lives.

❖ Political leaders and the government have a mandate to depoliticise educational issues. All community members, regardless of their political affiliation, should feel free to make a contribution in the curriculum implementation process. Thus, the schools should not be political playgrounds but should be seen and taken as places where minds meet. There is great need, therefore, to separate education from party politics. The traditional leaders should also help in this matter by bringing community members (that

is, their subjects) together and creating a family environment for the good of the education of their children.

❖ In line with the policy that no child should be sent home for not paying school fees, there is therefore a need for the government to increase per capita grants to assist the primary schools to operate and function well. Without the much needed teaching and learning resources, effective curriculum-implementation cannot be realised.

❖ The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education should make sure that the research findings from this study are disseminated and implemented in order to help the child, the primary schools and the communities, rather than being left to gather dust on office shelves.

5.6 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Based on the research findings, areas that need further research are recommended as follows:

❖ The education authorities at District, Provincial and Head Office as participants of a research study to assess their views and perceptions with regard to community participation in curriculum implementation.

❖ The involvement of the learners to solicit their views juxtaposed with those of the teachers as to how prepared they are to have community members come into the classroom to teach them certain concepts.

❖ The Colleges' and Universities' position with regard to community participation in curriculum implementation.

❖ Since my study was based on primary schools, it would be interesting to examine community participation in curriculum implementation at secondary school level.

5.7 CONCLUSION OF THE CHAPTER

In this chapter, I gave a discussion of the research findings as well as the summary of the study on community participation in curriculum implementation in Zimbabwean primary schools. A synthesis of the findings and conclusions were provided in line with the research questions that guided the study. The study established that primary schools have erected walls around them that have prevented the schools from being accessed by community members whose

knowledge and skills would add value to the teaching and learning of children. The study therefore, advocated for the opening up of classroom doors to a pool of players who have the expertise, knowledge and experience of educational issues. Community participation in curriculum implementation depends heavily on the positive attitudes and perceptions of all the stakeholders, namely the teachers, the school heads and the community members. The language of education and the examinations, the closed-door policy of the teachers and the school heads, the unavailability of dialogical space, the polarised political situation, and remuneration issues were identified as the major barriers to the community's participation in the implementation of the curriculum. Therefore, opening up dialogue between the schools and the communities and depoliticising educational matters were established as sustainable ways of mitigating the challenges to community participation in curriculum implementation.

It is, therefore, my desire that the recommendations suggested in this study would help in bridging the gap between the schools and the communities so that effective community participation in curriculum implementation could be realised in Zimbabwean primary schools.

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LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX   1

LETTER TO THE PERMANENT SECRETARY - MINISTRY OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

Great Zimbabwe University
Faculty of Education
Teacher Development Department
Box 1235
Masvingo

2 APRIL 2014

The Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education
Ambassador House, Kwame Nkuruma Avenue.
P. O. Box CY 121 Causeway, Harare. Zimbabwe.

Dear Sir/Madam

APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH IN CHIVI DISTRICT PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN MASVINGO.

I am a D.Ed. student at the University of South Africa (UNISA). I kindly seek your permission to undertake research for my doctoral studies, in four (4) primary schools in Chivi district, Masvingo. My research topic is: **"Community participation in curriculum implementation in Zimbabwean primary schools."** The study will involve focus group discussions with selected primary school teachers; responding to an open-ended questionnaire by school heads and individual interviews with members of the communities namely: parents, business people, traditional leaders and church leaders. The information obtained will be treated with **utmost confidentiality.** I also undertake to observe stipulated ethical considerations pertaining to researching with human subjects. Before data collection begins, I will first go to each of the schools and the community homesteads, to explain the nature of the research and the role of participants.

A detailed report of the findings will be submitted to the Ministry and I hope that the research findings will assist in identifying ways in which the teaching and learning of primary school children can be meaningfully enhanced through engaging members of the communities in curriculum implementation

Yours sincerely

Mrs Tafara Mufanechiya

D.Ed. student (UNISA)
Student No. 50790692   Email: tafaramufanechiya76@gmail.com
Contact cell number: +263 773 582 152   **or**   +263 715 199 630
SUPERVISOR: Prof. M. J. Taole (+27 124 293 541)

APPENDIX 2

<div style="border: 1px solid; background: #a3c76d; padding: 10px;">

LETTER TO THE PROVINCIAL EDUCATION DIRECTOR

</div>

Faculty of Education
Department of Teacher Development
Box 1235, Masvingo, Zimbabwe.

2 April 2014

The Provincial Education Director
Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education
Masvingo Regional Office
P.O.BOX 89
Masvingo, Zimbabwe.

Dear Sir/Madam

APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH IN CHIVI DISTRICT PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN MASVINGO.

I am a D.Ed. student at the University of South Africa (UNISA). I kindly seek your permission to undertake research in 4 primary schools in Chivi District. My research topic is: **Community participation in curriculum implementation in Zimbabwean primary schools.** Data collection will involve completing of an open- ended questionnaire by school heads; focus group discussions with selected teachers and individual interviews with selected members of the community. The information obtained will be treated with confidentiality and will be used solely for the purpose of this research. I also undertake to observe stipulated ethical considerations pertaining to researching with human subjects.

Before data collection begins, I will first go to each of the schools and community homesteads to explain the nature of the research and outline the participants' roles. Participants have the right to withdraw from the research activities any time. A report of the research findings will be submitted to your office and I hope that the information obtained from this research will benefit the schools, ministry and entire community in understanding and identifying ways in which communities can be meaningfully engaged inorder to make meaningful contributions for successful curriculum implementation in Zimbabwean primary schools.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Tafara Mufanechiya
D. Ed. Student (UNISA)
Student No.   50790692
Email: tafaramufanechiya76@gmail.com
Contact cell No.   +263 773 582 152   **Or**   +263 715 199 630
SUPERVISOR: Prof. M. J. Taole (+27 124 293 541)

APPENDIX 3

REFERENCE: C/

Ministry of Primary
Secondary Educatio
P.O Box CY 121
Causeway
HARARE

10 April 2014

Mrs T. Mufanechiya
Faculty of Education
Teacher Development Department
Box 1235
MASVINGO

Re: **PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH IN CHIVI DISTRICT
PRIMARY SCHOOLS CHIVI DISTRICT: MASVINGO PROVINCE**

Reference is made to your application to carry out research in **Chivi District
Primary Schools** Masvingo Province, on The Title:

**"COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION
IN ZIMBABWEAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS"**

Permission is hereby granted. However, you are required to liaise with the
Provincial Education Director, Masvingo, who is responsible for the schools
which you want to involve in your research.

You are also required to provide a copy of your final report to the Secretary
for Primary and Secondary Education by 30 September 2015.

P. Muzawazi
Director: Policy, Planning, Research and Development
For: **SECRETARY FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**

ALL communications should be addressed to
"The Provincial Education Director for Education
Sport and Culture"
Telephone: 263585/264331
Fax: 039-263261

ZIMBABWE

Ministry of Primary and Secondary
P. O Box 89
MASVINGO

17 April 2014

To Whom It May Concern

RE: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH IN CHIVI DISTRICT PRIMARY SCHOOLS: CHIVI DISTRICT: MASVINGO PROVINCE

The above matter refers.

Permission is given to Mrs T Mufanechiya of the Great Zimbabwe University to carry out research on;

"Community Participation In Curriculum Implementation In Zimbabwean Primary School".

Please give her the necessary assistance.

F. R. JIRIVENGWA
ACTING PE: MASVINGO
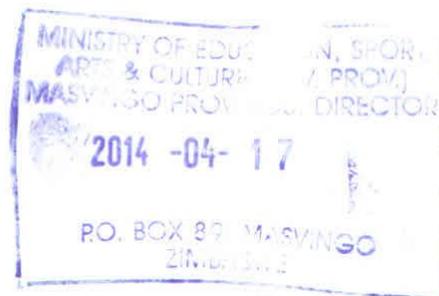
APPENDIX   5

Great Zimbabwe University
Faculty of Education
Teacher Development Department
Box 1235
Masvingo, Zimbabwe.

02 April 2014

The School Head
Xxx Primary School
Chivi, Masvingo, Zimbabwe.

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH STUDY

I am a lecturer at Great Zimbabwe University and D.Ed. student at the University of South Africa (UNISA). I am seeking permission to conduct my research in your school. My research topic is: **Community participation in curriculum implementation in Zimbabwean primary schools.** Permission to carry out the research has been granted by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education.

The study aims at finding out how members of the communities can meaningfully be engaged in curriculum implementation in Zimbabwean primary schools. The idea is not to see communities from a distance, but to find meaningful ways to engage them and work together with teachers for the realisation of classroom goals.

I therefore ask your permission to allow me have focus group discussions with four teachers from your school during their free periods or after lessons because I do not intend to disturb the teaching and learning process. I will also need your assistance in the selection of these teachers. Iam also inviting you as an individual to participate in this research by responding to an open- ended questionnaire which I will explain and present to you in person. About an hour of your time is required to complete the questionnaire. I will also have individual interviews with members of the communities namely; 2 parents, 1 business person, 1 church leader and 1 traditional leader. These interviews will be carried out in their respective homesteads. I also need your assistance in selecting a sample of these community members. The sample is selected on the basis of the participants' knowledge about the problem at hand, accessibility and experience. Iam therefore hoping to obtain the most valuable data to the specific issue of community engagement in curriculum implementation.

Before data collection begins, I will first come to your school as well as visit the community homesteads to explain the research and outline the roles of participants as well as arrange appointments for interviews and focus group discussions. Interviews and focus group discussions will last for one to one and a half hours.

Participants are free to ask questions as well as seek clarifications if something may be unclear as we work together. Participants will be protected from harm by adhering to strict confidentiality. In order to protect your identity, no names will be used anywhere in this research. Only codes and or pseudo names shall be used. No risks or discomforts are anticipated during and after the research process. There are no financial benefits attached to participation in this study. Participation remains voluntary and you are free to deny participation or to withdraw from the study any time, without penalty.

The research findings will be made available to you in keeping with research ethics.

Thank you in advance for your assistance in this research.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Tafara Mufanechiya

D.Ed. student – UNISA
Student No. – 50790692
Email: tafaramufanechiya76@gmail.com
Cell No. - +263 773 582 152 **Or** +263 715 199 630

SUPERVISOR: Prof. M.J. Taole (+27 124 293 541)

<u>DECLARATION OF CONSENT:</u>

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign this letter as a declaration of your consent. By signing this consent letter, you will be indicating your understanding of this agreement and your willingness to participate in the study. However, if you do not wish to participate, you can return the letter unsigned.
You are assured that the identity of open – ended questionnaire participants will be kept in confidence. You will also be given a copy of the consent.

PARTICIPANT'S SIGNATURE: …………………………………………….. **DATE:** ……………………………………………..

RESEARCHER'S SIGNATURE: ………………………………………… **DATE:** ……………………………………………..

APPENDIX 6

Great Zimbabwe University
Faculty of Education
Teacher Development Department
Box 1235, Masvingo. Zimbabwe.

02 April 2014

Teacher xxx
Xxx Primary School
Chivi, Masvingo. Zimbabwe.

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH STUDY

I am a lecturer at Great Zimbabwe University and currently doing D.Ed. studies with the University of South Africa (UNISA). My research topic is: **Community participation in curriculum implementation in Zimbabwean primary schools.** The purpose of the study is to understand how communities can be meaningfully engaged in order to make meaningful contributions for successful curriculum implementation in Zimbabwean primary schools.

I am therefore kindly requesting you to take part in the study by participating in a focus group discussion which will include four teachers from your school. Your knowledge, experience and expertise will greatly assist me in obtaining the most valuable data to the specific issue of community engagement in curriculum implementation.

Before data collection begins, I will first come to your school to explain the research, outline the roles of the participants and make the appointment for the focus group discussion. The focus group discussion will last for one to one and a half hours and this will be carried out during your free periods or after lessons, to avoid disturbing the teaching and learning process. You are free to ask questions or seek clarifications as we work together.

Participation is voluntary and there are no monetary benefits attached. You have the right to deny participation and to withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty. All information given and collected from this discussion will be treated with great care and utmost confidentiality and anonymity. Only codes and pseudo names shall be used in order to protect your identity. Research findings will be made available to you after the study.

Thank you in anticipation for assisting me in this research. It is my hope that the findings obtained from the study will be of benefit to you in identifying ways in which the teaching and learning of primary school children can be meaningfully enhanced through engaging members of the communities in curriculum implementation.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Tafara Mufanechiya
D.Ed. Student – UNISA
Student No. – 50790692
Email: tafaramufanechiya76@gmail.com
Cell No. +263 582 152 **or** +263 715 199 630

SUPERVISOR: Prof. M.J. Taole (+27 124 293 541)

<u>DECLARATION OF CONSENT:</u>

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign this letter as a declaration of your consent. By signing this consent letter, you will be indicating your understanding of this agreement and your willingness to participate in the study. This will also be an agreement to ensure that information shared in the focus group discussion will be kept confidential and will not be discussed with any individual once the focus group disbands.
 However, if you do not wish to participate, you can return the letter unsigned.
You will also ensure and be assured that the identity of focus group discussion participants will be kept in confidence. You will also be given a copy of the consent.

PARTICIPANT'S SIGNATURE: …………………………………………….. **DATE:** …………………………………………..

RESEARCHER'S SIGNATURE: ……………………………………………. **DATE:** …………………………………………..

APPENDIX 7

PARTICIPATION REQUEST AND CONSENT LETTER TO COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Great Zimbabwe University
Faculty of Education
Teacher Development Department
Box 1235
Masvingo, Zimbabwe.

02 April 2014

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH STUDY

I am a lecturer at Great Zimbabwe University and currently doing D.Ed. studies with the University of South Africa (UNISA). My research topic is: **Community participation in curriculum implementation in Zimbabwean primary schools.** The purpose of the study is to understand how communities can be meaningfully engaged in order to make meaningful contributions for successful curriculum implementation in Zimbabwean primary schools. The idea is not to see communities from a distance, but to find meaningful ways to engage them and work together with teachers for the realisation of classroom goals.

I am therefore kindly requesting you to take part in the study by participating in an interview discussion with the researcher. The interview will last for about an hour (1 hour) and I will come to your homestead to carry out the interviews on your convenient day and time (between 8.00 a.m. and 4 p.m.)

Before the interviews take place, I will first come to your homesteads to explain the research and outline the roles of participants as well as make appointments as to the date and time we will meet for the actual interview. Feel free to ask questions and seek clarifications as we work together.

Participation is voluntary and there are no financial benefits attached to participation in this study. You are free to deny participation or to withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty. Information given and gathered from this interview discussion will be kept strictly confidential. In order to protect your identity, no names will be used or written anywhere in this study. Only codes and pseudo names shall be used.

Research findings will also be made available to you after completing the study.

Thank you in advance.

Yours sincerely
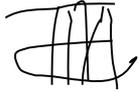
Mrs Tafara Mufanechiya

D.Ed. Student – UNISA
Student No. – 50790692
Email: tafaramufanechiya76@gmail.com
Cell No. +263 582 152 **or +**263 715 199 630

SUPERVISOR: Prof. M.J. Taole (+27 124 293 541)

DECLARATION OF CONSENT:

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign this letter as a declaration of your consent. By signing this consent letter, you will be indicating your understanding of this agreement and your willingness to participate in the study. This will also indicate your agreement to ensure that information shared in the interview discussion will be kept confidential and will not be discussed with any individual once the interview is over.
 However, if you do not wish to participate, you can return the letter unsigned.
You will also ensure and be assured that the identity of interview discussion participants will be kept in confidence. You will also be given a copy of the consent.

PARTICIPANT'S SIGNATURE: …………………………………………….. DATE: ……………………………………………..

RESEARCHER'S SIGNATURE: ………………………………………………… DATE: ……………………………………………..

APPENDIX   8

OPEN – ENDED QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL HEADS

<u>INTRODUCTION:</u>

I am Mrs Tafara Mufanechiya, a Curriculum Theory Lecturer at Great Zimbabwe University and doing D.Ed. studies with the University of South Africa (UNISA). Iam kindly asking for your assistance in my research work by completing this questionnaire. The information given in the questionnaire shall be strictly used mainly for academic research purposes with the University of South Africa (UNISA) and your responses will be treated with **utmost confidentiality**. Do not write your name on the questionnaire. The purpose of this study is to understand how communities can be meaningfully engaged in order to make meaningful contributions for successful curriculum implementation in Zimbabwean primary schools. You are, therefore, kindly requested to respond to all questions as fully and honestly as possible. Remember this is not an examination or test and therefore there is no right or wrong answer. Your opinion is what is needed. Participation is voluntary. If you are agreeable to participate in this study, please first read and sign the attached consent letter.

Thank you in advance, for your cooperation and voluntary participation.

<u>QUESTIONS:</u>

1. What is your understanding of curriculum implementation?

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2. What do you understand by the concept community engagement/participation in curriculum implementation?

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3. Which stakeholders/community members can participate in curriculum implementation?

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4. Do you think community engagement/involvement in schools is important? Why?

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5. What role should the following stakeholders have in curriculum implementation?

(a) Parents

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(b) Business people

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(c) Churches

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(d) Traditional leaders

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6. Which of the community members are more interested and active in the learning of pupils? Why?

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7. Who should be blamed when pupils fail and why?

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8. What are the possible barriers to effective community participation in curriculum implementation?

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9. In what ways can you say teachers create barriers to community participation in curriculum implementation?

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10. Are schools ready/prepared to engage and dialogue with members of the community in curriculum implementation issues?

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11. Which problems do you face in trying to bring in different stakeholders to participate in the learning of pupils in the classroom?

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12. How can barriers to community participation in curriculum implementation be overcome?

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13. As the head of the school are you aware of or is there in place any Policy or Statutory Instrument that mandates you to work with members of the community in curriculum implementation? If so, what does it say?

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14. What can government do to enhance community participation in primary schools?

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15. What is your recommendation to the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, the Government etc with regard to engaging community members in curriculum implementation?

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16. Any other comment you consider important on community participation in curriculum implementation.

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THANK YOU VERY MUCH!!!!

APPENDIX   9

INTRODUCTION:

You are all welcome to this discussion meeting. Iam Mrs Tafara Mufanechiya, a Curriculum Theory Lecturer at Great Zimbabwe University and currently enrolled with the University of South Africa (UNISA) as a D.Ed. student. May you kindly assist in my research work by participating fully and freely during this discussion on **How communities can be meaningfully engaged in order to make meaningful contributions for successful curriculum implementation in Zimbabwean primary schools.** My research assistant will write some notes as the discussion unfolds. I will also be writing brief notes during the discussion. Please you need to express your opinions freely, openly and honestly. All the information given and collected from this discussion will be treated with great care and **utmost confidentiality.** Participation is voluntary. If you are, therefore, agreeable to participate in the discussion, kindly read and sign the attached consent letter.

Topic for discussion: How can members of the communities participate in curriculum implementation in the Zimbabwean primary schools?

Thank you in advance for your co-operation and voluntary participation.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What is your understanding of the term curriculum implementation?

2. How can you define community engagement/participation in curriculum implementation?

3. Which community members do you think can participate in curriculum implementation?

4. Do you think it's a wise move to bring in community members (parents, business people, churches and traditional leaders) to assist during the teaching and learning process? Why?

5. In your own opinion, what role can various community members play during the teaching and learning of children?

6. From the classroom teacher's perspective, what are the benefits of having members of the community to be involved in curriculum implementation?

7. Which of the community members are most active in curriculum implementation and why?

8. Are you ready as teachers to work with community members in curriculum implementation issues?

9. Who should be blamed when pupils fail and why?

10. What are the possible barriers/challenges to effective community participation in curriculum implementation?

11. In what ways are school heads to blame for creating barriers to community participation in curriculum implementation?

12. What conditions need to be put in place/addressed (by the government, schools etc.) to lay the foundation for community participation in curriculum implementation?

13. Are learners themselves prepared/ready to have community members assist them during the teaching and learning process?

14. What is the current position in primary schools with regards to bringing in or inviting community members to assist in the classroom?

15. What is your own view/comment with regards to engaging community members in curriculum implementation?

16. What can be done to overcome barriers to community participation in curriculum implementation?

17. Is there any policy guideline or Instrument from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education that guides you as teachers on how to work with community members in curriculum implementation? If so, what does it say?

18. Are you consulted or involved as teachers during policy formulations by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education?

19. What recommendation can you give to the school, Ministry, Government, etc. with regards to engaging members of the communities in curriculum implementation at primary school level in Zimbabwe?

20. Do you have any other comment on community participation in curriculum implementation?

Thank you very much for participating in this discussion as well as sharing your views and ideas on this topic. May God Bless you all.

APPENDIX   10a

INTRODUCTION:

I am Mrs Tafara Mufanechiya, a Curriculum Theory Lecturer at Great Zimbabwe University. Iam doing D.Ed. studies with the University of South Africa (UNISA). Kindly assist me in my research work by responding freely and as truthfully as possible to the interview questions. The interview is carried out in order to understand how communities can be meaningfully engaged in order to make meaningful contributions for successful curriculum implementation in Zimbabwean primary schools. Participation is voluntary and there are no monetary benefits attached. All the information/answers you provide in this interview will be **kept strictly confidential** and will only be used strictly for academic research purposes. If you agree to participate in this interview, kindly read and sign the attached consent letter.

Feel free to ask questions or seek clarity on any question or unclear issues as we discuss. You can respond either in English or Shona Languages, which ever best expresses your opinion.

Thank you in advance for your co-operation and voluntary participation.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

1. What is your understanding of a community?

2. What kind of relationship exist between you as-------------- (parents; churches; business people; traditional leaders) and the nearest school(s)?

3. Are you sometimes called to the schools to discuss the children's performance or anything to do with school business? Elaborate.

4. Which members of the communities can assist with the teaching and learning of pupils in primary schools and what is it that they can assist with?

5. Do you think it is important to work together with teachers and involve yourself with the development of the teaching and learning process?

6. Given the opportunity, are you willing to assist teachers in the classroom and in what ways?

7. Do you think schools (teachers and school heads) are prepared to invite or involve you as members of the communities in the teaching and learning of pupils? Why?

8. When pupils fail, whom do you blame and why?

9. What problems/challenges do you think can be faced or are being experienced in trying to bring you (as members of the communities) and teachers together?

10. What do you think about the Government policy that children should not be sent home for not paying school fees?

11. Do you think learners will have trust and confidence to have you (as community members) come and assist them with their education?

12. How do you rate the communication between teachers and communities?

13. What do you think should be done to motivate members of the communities to participate in the teaching and learning of primary school pupils?

14. What can be done to overcome the problems/challenges which are faced in trying to bring teachers and communities together?

15. Do you have any comment, recommendation or anything to say in relation to what we have discussed?

Thank you very much for participating in this interview. May God Bless you.

APPENDIX   10b

NHANGANYAYA:

Zita rangu ndiMai Tafara Mufanechiya. Ndiri mudzidzisi paYunivhesiti yeGreat Zimbabwe uye ndiri kuitawo zvidzidzo zvekuzova Chiremba weDzidzo (Muzvinadzidzo) paYunivhesiti yeSouth Africa (UNISA). Ndiri kukumbirawo kuita hurukuro nemi kuti mugoburitsawo zvamunofunga patsvagurudzo yandiri kuita iri pamusoro pekuti: Hukama pakati pezvikoro zvepuraimari nevanhu venharaunda hungasimbaradzwa sei zvikuru pakudzidza nekudzidziswa kwevana muzvidzidzo zvavo? Hapana muripo uchapiwa pakupindura mibvunzo iyi uye hamumanikidzwi kupindura mibvunzo yacho, makasunzunguka kutaura kuti hamukwanisi kuita hurukuro neni. Zvichakurukurwa zviri pakati pangu nemi chete, hapana mumwe anofanira kuzviziva. Saka ivai zvenyu makasununguka kutaura zviri pamwoyo penyu. Kana muchibvuma kuita hurukuro iyi munokumbirwa kuti muverenge pamwe nekusaina fomu reBvumirano ramuchapiwa.

Sunungukai kubvunza mibvunzo kana kukumbira tsanangudzo izere pane zvose zvamunenge musina kunzwisisa. Makasununguka kushandisa chirungu kana chishona muhurukuro iyi.

Ndinokutendai nekunzwisisa kwenyu uye kubvuma zviri pachena kutora chinzvimbo pahurukuro iyi.

MIBVUNZO YEHURUKURO:

1. Sekunzwisisa kwenyu chii chinonzi nharaunda?

2. Hukama hwenyu (sevabereki; semachechi; semadzishe; sevemabhizimusi) nechikoro hwakamira sei?

3. Munombodanwawo here kuchikoro kunokurukura pamusoro pekudzidza kwevana kana pamusoro pezvimwewo zvine chekuita nechikoro? Mungajekesa mhinduro yenyu.

4. Ndevapi vanhu vamunoona munharaunda vangabatsira pakudzidza nekudzidziswa kwevana muzvikoro zvepuraimari uye vangabatsira sei?

5. Munofunga kuti zvakakosha here kuti imi mushande pamwechete nevadzidzisi uye kuti muve nechekuita pahurongwa hwekudzidzisa nekudzidza kwevana?

6. Mukapiwa mukana imi mungada here kushanda nevadzidzisi kana kuvabatsira pakudzidziswa kwevana uye mungavabatsira nenzira dzipi?

7. Sekuona kwenyu vakuru vezvikoro nevadzidzisi vanoda here kushanda nemi vanhu venharaunda pakudzidza nekudzidzisa vana? Sei muchidaro?

8. Kana vana vakafoira ndiani wamunopa mhosva uye nemhaka yei?

9. Pangava nematambudziko here amungatarisira kana kuti amuri kutosangana nawo pakuedza kushanda pamwechete nevadzidzisi pakudzidzisa vana?

10. Sekufunga kwenyu munoti kudii nemutemo wehurumende wekuti vana havafaniri kudzingwa kana kudzoswa kumba pamusaka pekuti havana kubhadhara mari yechikoro?

11. Munofunga kuti vana vechikoro vangagutsikana here uye kuvimba nemi kuti muzovabatsira pazvidzidzo zvavo?

12. Pane kutaurirana here pakati pevadzidzsi nevanhu venharaunda pamusoro pedzidzo yevana?

13. Chii chingaitwa kukurudzira nharaunda kuti ive nechekuita pakudzidza nekudzidziswa kwavana padanho repuraimari?

14. Chii chingaitwa kupedza matambudziko ari kusanganikwa nawo pakuedza kuti vadzidzisi nevanhu venharaunda vashande pamwechetete?

15. Mune zvimwe here zvamungafunga kuti zvasiirirwa muhurukuro iyi zvamungada kuwedzera kana kukurudzira kuti zviitwe?

Ndinokutendai zvikuru nemazano uye pfungwa dzamaburitsa pahurukuro iyi. Mwari akukomborerei zvikuru

APPENDIX 11

SAMPLES OF TRANSCRIPTIONS

TRANSCRIPT 1

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION WITH TEACHERS AT SCHOOL NO. 1: **FGD1**

1. What is your understanding of the term curriculum implementation?

- Organisation of learnt material with the learners in mind.
- Teaching and learning be it at school or at home.
- How subject content and ideas are delivered to the learners.
- How the matter is reaching the children.

2. How can you define community engagement/participation in curriculum implementation?

- Community participation in general can be viewed as involving all the members of the community in all the activities that take place at the school.
- Yes, I agree, but more specifically in matters of infrastructural development, paying school fees and levies, supporting school activities like sports, traditional dances and many others.
- The other level is to involve these community members in some selected topics in the process of teaching and learning.
- It is the teacher who should decide to include them, when and how, otherwise basa ringakanyika.

3. Which community members do you think can participate in curriculum implementation?

- Parents or guardians
- Business people and religious leaders
- Traditional leaders as well as examination boards e.g. ZIMSEC

4. Do you think it's a wise move to bring in community members (parents, business people, churches and traditional leaders) to assist during the teaching and learning process? Why?

- While engaging communities in curriculum implementation is important, it should be done with some moderation because if it is just done anyhow it may disturb and confuse the teaching and learning process.
- For example, community members should only be involved in their children's education through attending open days and providing material resources to build classrooms for their children.

- Some community members can also be invited to teach children some traditional dances.

5. In your own opinion, what role can various community members play during the teaching and learning of children?

- Parents' role is that of paying fees, levies; buying ex. Books and text books; assisting children with their home work; moulding bricks for construction of classrooms.
- Traditional leaders can assist teachers in teaching areas like traditional dances (e.g. mhande, mbende etc.); shona culture as well as taboos.
- Church leaders can help in some Religious and Moral Education (RME) topics.
  -They can also be invited to preach at school assemblies i.e. morning devotions.
- Business people can provide financial assistance through donating chairs, tables, text books etc.
  -Teachers can also take pupils to see how the pricing, selling and buying of goods are done.

6. From the classroom teacher's perspective, what are the benefits of having members of the community to be involved in curriculum implementation?

- Involving community members help in bridging the gap between home and school i.e. it reduces culture shock.
- It breaks the monotony of having children to be taught by the same teacher every day.
- It also creates trust and respect between teachers and community members.
- And it also improves the relationship between the teachers and the members of the community.

7. Which of the community members are most active in curriculum implementation and why?

- No particular group can be regarded as more active than the other given that it is us teachers who should invite them (i.e. any group or individual) to teach concepts we think can add value to what we already know.
- Generally parents as well as traditional leaders assist children with their homework i.e. at home and not in the classroom.
- We, especially young teachers, usually give children home work on those topics we feel we do not have adequate knowledge on e.g. kurova guva; nzvimbo dzinoyera etc.

8. Are you ready as teachers to work with community members in curriculum implementation issues?

- No, because community members play an important role only in assisting children with homework and providing financial resources.
- When it comes to involving them during the teaching and learning of children, we are not prepared because when supervision authorities come (i.e. school heads, Inspectors

et.) they want to see how the teacher is implementing the curriculum as well as monitoring pass rates at school.

- Usually they do not even know or bother about community participation in this process.
- The teacher is responsible if anything goes wrong in the classroom. So we cannot invite these community members to mess things for us.

9. Who should be blamed when pupils fail and why?

- As teachers all educational stakeholders blame us.
- But what they do not really understand is that we do not work in isolation
- No matter how much effort you put in, when pupils are not cooperative and receptive all efforts go to waste.
- The blame should not be on teachers alone but parents and school heads as well.

10. What are the possible barriers/challenges to effective community participation in curriculum implementation?

- Most members of the communities are not educated and cannot use English language to teach.
- Bringing community members may be a noble idea but the fear is that if they distort concepts it may be difficult to correct them.
- If they teach using their mother tongue, it means I will also have to teach the concept again using English which is the language of examinations. The time to do that may not be there especially given that the syllabus has to be covered.
- The major problem with these community members is that their mentality is whenever they do something for the school they should be paid. Worse still if they are those community members with specialist skills like carpentry, building etc., they feel that nothing is done for free. When these people are not paid or told that they will not be paid because the school does not have any allocation for that, they will not believe this and their suspicion or mentality is that whatever is supposed to be given to them is taken by teachers or school heads.
- That's very true. To make matters worse, these people will move around the community spreading rumours that teachers and school heads are abusing school funds and this widens the gap between schools and communities.

11. In what ways are school heads to blame for creating barriers to community participation in curriculum implementation?

- By doing things on their own and their own way.
- Non-involvement of the community members.
- Giving little or no respect to members of the community

12. What conditions need to be put in place/addressed (by the government, schools etc.) to lay the foundation for community participation in curriculum implementation?

- The Government should remove the policy that no child should be sent home for not paying school fees.
- I support that view because that policy is not assisting the learners at all because without the teaching resources (e.g. text books, chalks etc.) we cannot talk of quality teaching.
- If that policy is not removed we will not invite community members to the classroom because these community members are in favour of the policy and are not bothered whether schools have enough resources to teach or not.

13. Are learners themselves prepared/ready to have community members assist them during the teaching and learning process?

- Learners do not have any choice. It's the teacher's choice.
- Learners always respect, trust and follow what the teacher says or does.
- Actually we do not consult them on whom we want to invite to the classroom.
- What we know as teachers is that if we are to invite any one from the community it should be a person who is respected in society because if the person is not of good character the learners may not value the information coming from such sources.

14. What is the current position in primary schools with regards to bringing in or inviting community members to assist in the classroom?

- Creating that space is not really possible given how packed the primary school day is like.
- You start off in the morning at 7:30 and the day ends at 4:00pm.
- After the day's work, one is tired and more so there are books to be marked and the next day's work to prepare.
- It is really taxing to be a primary school teacher. Creating such space would be a waste of time.

15. What is your own view/comment with regards to engaging communities in curriculum implementation?

- Even if we are willing to engage them but the political situation around does not us.
- What my colleague is trying to put across is that it is really dangerous to engage community members especially when you are not aware of the party they support.
- It's those from the opposition who are not supposed to be engaged but it's difficult for us to tell who belongs to which party. So the safest thing is to avoid this engagement issue. We don't want to be beaten.
- The issue of politics has destroyed good relationships between schools and communities and something has to be done as a matter of urgency.
- The best situation is to avoid each other i.e. for us teachers to stay in our classrooms and community members to stay in their communities.

16. What can be done to overcome barriers to community participation in curriculum implementation?

- Teachers need to be seriously educated about community engagement in curriculum implementation and the benefits attached to that.
- There is need to depoliticise the educational environment by political fathers allowing teachers to engage anyone regardless of their political affiliation.
- As teachers we should swallow our pride and accept that there are things we do not know and can be assisted by community members.
- Organise workshops with communities with emphasis on community responsibility in curriculum implementation on particular and education in general.
- Create an enabling environment for members of the community to participate freely in the classroom.

17. Is there any policy guideline or Instrument from the Ministry that guides you as teachers on how to work with members of the community in curriculum implementation? If so, what does it say?
- No policy at all
- We are not aware of any such policy
- Maybe the school head might know but as for us teachers we are not aware
- So we cannot do something which is not provided for by policy.

18. Are you consulted or involved as teachers during policy formulations by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education?

- Teachers are never consulted
- We are not important to them hence they do not see the need to involve us in these policy formulations
- These policy makers see us as people who cannot contribute to policy formulation, an indication that they do not value us but we are the actual implementers.
- What they are good at is to give orders and impose things on us.
- What they only want is to see their policies implemented by us teachers and nothing else.

19. What recommendation can you give to the school, Ministry, Government, etc. with regards to engaging members of the communities in curriculum implementation at primary school level in Zimbabwe?

- There is need for policy clarity and direction.
- Schools should be allowed to use resource persons from the community and the policies need to clarify how it should be done.
- Teachers should swallow their pride and change their negative attitudes towards members of the communities.
- Politics and education should be separated.
- Every member of the community despite their political affiliation should be allowed to participate and give their views towards the teaching and learning of children.

20. Do you have any other comment on community participation in curriculum implementation?

No comments.

Thank you very much for participating in this discussion as well as sharing your views and ideas on this topic. May God Bless you all.

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES FROM PRIMARY SCHOOL HEADS: SH1; SH2; SH3; SH4

1. What is your understanding of curriculum implementation?

- The process of teaching and learning in the classroom. [SH1]
- Teachers putting into practice in the classroom the recommended curriculum from the Curriculum Development Unit (CDU). [SH2]
- Teachers practicing in totality the designed educational programmes. [SH3]
- Teachers implementing government policies, for example implementing subjects as they are given by government through syllabuses. It is the translating of syllabuses, teaching methods, plans and intentions into reality. [SH4]

2. What do you understand by the concept community engagement/participation in curriculum implementation?

- Involvement of the people in a particular area in educational matters of their children. [SH1]
- It is the involvement of community members into the programmes designed by government. It is support given by the community to any programme undertaken by sponsors. In the school set up, it is the realisation that we are not an island and there are knowledgeable members in the community who can help teachers and children with a wealth of knowledge they have on specific aspects. [SH2]
- Involving the locality in the educational processes. [SH3]
- Community participation/engagement is the active involvement and contribution by parents in order to achieve planned educational objectives. [SH4]

3. Which stakeholders/community members can participate in curriculum implementation?

- Parents and business people [SH1]
- Religious organisations and business people [SH2]
- Parents, guardians, business people and Traditional leaders [SH3]
- Religious organisations, parents, business people, Education Inspectors, Interest groups e.g. NGOs [SH4]

4. Do you think community engagement/involvement in schools is important? Why?

- Community engagement is important because it is an integral part in curriculum implementation. Without the community it might be difficult to implement. [SH1]

- It is important because any programme or project undertaken by the school is doomed to fail if not supported by the community. [SH2]
- It is extremely important because communities provide the core input (pupils), they pay fees, they provide material support e.g. uniforms, pens etc. and assist in educating the pupils. [SH3]
- Community involvement is definitely important. The school cannot develop if it is isolated from the community. The school and the community should develop together. [SH4]

5. What role should the following stakeholders have in curriculum implementation?

(a) Parents

- Work together with teachers and help pupils at home with homework. [SH1]
- Provide pupils with money to buy materials to be used at school e.g. textbooks, exercise books and support the school in any curricular programme. [SH2]
- Purchase of textbooks & Ex. Books. Support for any curriculum programme [SH3]
- Paying fees and levies that go a long way in acquiring resources that facilitate curriculum implementation. [SH4]

(b) Business people

- Provide necessary resources required by the school and pupils. [SH1]
- Donate equipment and financial resources to purchase items needed by schools. [SH2]
- Make orders linked to curriculum implementation e.g. textbooks, exercise books etc. Finance school programmes. [SH3]
- Donating textbooks and technical equipment to keep pupils up to date. [SH4]

(c) Churches

- Run programmes that promote teaching and learning both at church and home. [SH1]
- Support all the programmes and subjects taught at school. [SH2]
- Cultivate moral support and discipline necessary for effective curriculum implementation. [SH3]
- Forming scripture unions in schools in order to impart moral values to the children. [SH4]

(d) Traditional leaders

- Participate in some activities and programmes that promote cultural and traditional education e.g. traditional dances, sacred places, taboos, ethnic history. [SH1]
- Enforcing the paying of tuition fees and other levies. [SH2]
- Resource mobilisation and encouraging positive partnership between schools and communities. [SH3]
- Community mobilisation for school projects like classroom construction, brick moulding etc. [SH4]

6. Which of the community members are more interested and active in the learning of pupils? Why?

- The parents or guardians because they are the key figures in the provision of the basic requirements in the learning of the pupils [SH1]
- The children's parents because they contribute in labour and assist with children's homework [SH2]
- Parents of school going age children because their learning is obligatory [SH3]
- Parents or guardians because they provide all the necessities for pupils e.g. payment of school fees, provision of basic requirements like books, pens, uniforms, food etc. [SH4]

7. Who should be blamed when pupils fail and why?

- Pupils, teachers and parents should all be blamed because failure shows disunity among the three. They should always work together. [SH1]
- Both, teachers and the community are blamed because all these are stakeholders, they play a pivotal role in the performance of pupils. [SH2]
- Teachers and parents equally contribute towards the learning of the child either positively or negatively. So when the child fails, these two are both to blame. [SH3]
- Teachers and parents should be blamed. Teachers may be incompetent and the community may fail to provide necessary resources. [SH4]

8. What are the possible barriers to effective community participation in curriculum implementation?

- -Most community members do not have English language which is the language of education and examinations.
  -Lack of knowledge on the subject which they might be expected to contribute.
  - Inadequate instructional supervision. [SH1]
- -The use of community members takes a lot of time to plan and their language may not suit our educational needs so it may be better for the teacher to get the information he or she needs from them and can then teach using the appropriate language in order to cater for the needs of learners.
  -Hostile political school environment.
  -Inadequate instructional resource materials and facilities. [SH2]
- -Poor communication by community members due to lack of the language of education.
  –politics is a major barrier to community participation in curriculum implementation.
  -Limited resources and awareness campaigns. [SH3]
- -Ignorance and lack of knowledge on the part of community members especially when it comes to teaching using the English language.
  -Scarcity of time and restricted communication.
  -Learners' negative attitude to school work. [SH4]

9. In what ways can you say teachers create barriers to community participation in curriculum implementation?

- By not giving pupils work to do at home with the help of the people they live with. [SH1]
- Teachers do not associate with the community members and they don't even communicate with the community members through their children. [SH2]
- Teachers have a misconception that community members lack knowledge and expertise in issues to do with the teaching and learning of children. [SH3]
- Teachers have a deliberate disregard of the roles community members can play in all implementation levels. [SH4]

10. Are schools ready/prepared to engage and dialogue with members of the community in curriculum implementation issues?

- Schools may be prepared but teachers' programmes are packed up such that they can't find time to slot in community members. [SH1]
- I do not think they are ready because of unavailability of time to dialogue with the community members. [SH2]
- Schools are ready/prepared though with some reservations e.g. scarcity of time and restricted communication. [SH3]
- They are prepared but they are hindered by shortage of time. [SH4]

11. Which problems do you face in trying to bring in different stakeholders to participate in the learning of pupils in the classroom?

- -Language of communication. Most community members are comfortable using the mother tongue.
  -Community members expect to be remunerated of which schools cannot afford. [SH1]
- -Time – It's difficult to bring in stakeholders together.
  - Resources to motivate stakeholders
  - Lack of marketing and awareness campaigns due to diversity of community interests. [SH2]

- Everyone is looking for a dollar and when you invite community members to present information to the children, they expect the school to pay. It is difficult for schools to budget for such informal invitations. Therefore, the best way is not to invite them.
  -Issue of politics is another big problem. [SH3]
- Divergent views from the stakeholders and lack of resources to facilitate learning. [SH4]

12. How can barriers to community participation in curriculum implementation be overcome?

- Smooth communication between the school and the community i.e. conscientisation of the community by knowledgeable people. All that takes place in the school should be made known to the community members without leaving them to 'imagine' what's taking place. [SH1]

- Adult education must be promoted to help develop literacy rate which will cascade to schools. Schools and communities should therefore plan together on how they should work together for successful curriculum implementation. [SH2]
- Marketing programmes at various stages before implementation. Continuous dialogue between and among all stakeholders, designing ownership principles among communities. [SH3]
- Establishing staff development programmes at all levels and soliciting support from the community. Negotiating ways around political and socio-economic constrains. [SH4]

13. As the head of the school are you aware of or is there in place any Policy or Statutory Instrument that mandates you to work with members of the community in curriculum implementation? If so, what does it say?
- Establishment of SDCs. [SH1]
- Formation of SDC in schools. Each school shall have a School Development Committee (SDC). [SH2]
- While there is no one single policy statement to talk about community engagement in curriculum implementation, as schools we can take a clue from the Education Act and its amendments, Statutory Instruments (SI) as Public Finance Act, Treasury Instructions (TI), Circular P6 of 1994,, P70 of 1987, P19 of 2000, P14 of 2009 on Public Finance Management Act as government's gesture to ensure that communities are engaged in whatever happens at school, especially where some of these policies emphasize on multi-cultural education.. [SH3]
- The policy on the establishment of School Development Committees. [SH4]

14. What can government do to enhance community participation in primary schools?

- Policy formulation is excessively in the hands of government and a lot of policy makers have left practice long ago and are not in touch with what is currently happening on the ground. They live in the past. They should consult us who are on the ground. [SH1]
- -For sound policy formulation there is need for these reality definers to come down to the grassroots constantly and get our input as heads and teachers, we will come up with policies that address some of these problems.
  - Communities should be consulted in early stages of the formulation of policies. [SH2]
- Some problems are solvable merely by consulting us the heads and teachers who are on the shop floor of implementing policies. [SH3]
- -The Government need to consult us school heads as well as teachers during the formulation of policies because we are the implementers.
  - Communities should be consulted before certain policies are implemented. [SH4]

15. What is your recommendation to the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, the Government etc. with regard to engaging community members in curriculum implementation?

- Community participation in curriculum implementation is critical and Topical and as such needs a Deliberate Plan, Programme and Process (DPPP) that gives community members mandate of participation, activated by incentives. Thus empowering communities through policies. [SH1]

- Designing and funding programmes and workshops by the Ministry, for school heads, teachers and community members on how they can engage each other and defining the roles that communities can play in curriculum implementation. [SH2]
- -Eliminating political and socio-economic constraints.
  -Building child friendly schools. [SH3]
- Paying allowances for SDC/SDA in line with village funding. [SH4]

16. Any other comment you consider important on community participation in curriculum implementation.

- Parents and schools should be allowed and given the opportunity to take part in designing and developing curriculum packages so that their peculiar needs and interests will be catered for and shouldn't be overwhelmed by irrelevant policies. [SH1]
- The Ministry should consult the schools and communities during the formulation of policies. [SH2]
- Politics and the education of children should never be mixed. [SH3]
- The Ministry should increase the number of pupils being assisted through BEAM since the majority are impoverished due to the persistent drought in Chivi district. [SH4]

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!!!!!

INTERVIEW RESPONSES FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITIES: P1a; TL2; CL3; BP4

1. Sekunzwisisa kwenyu chii chinonzi nharaunda?

- Hukama hwevabereki nezvikoro uye kunzwisisana nekushandira pamwe. [P1a]
- Vanhu vanogara munzvimbo imwechete vachishandira pamwe nechikoro chinodzidza vana vavo. [TL2]
- Vanhu vanogara munharaunda yakakomberedza chikoro vachibatsirana nechikoro kuti vana vawane zvose zvinoita kuti zvidzidzo zvavo zviendeke. [CL3]
- Vanhu vanogara munzvimbo imwechete vachigona havo kusiyana apo nepapo asi vaine hukama hwakasimba. [BP4]

2. Hukama hwenyu (sevabereki; semachechi; semadzishe; sevemabhizimusi) nechikoro hwakamira sei?

- Hukama hwavabereki nechikoro hwakanaka pane kunzwisisana uye kushandira pamwe. [P1a]

- Isu vanhu vemunharaunda tinodyidzana zvakanaka nezvikoro zvedu nokuti ndipo panodzidza vana vedu. Tikasasapota chikoro chedu chingazosapotwa nani uye tinenge tauraya vana vedu. [TL2]
- Isu vemachechi uyezve tiri vabereki tinofanira kuve nehukama hwakanaka nezvikoro zvedu nokuti tikasadaro vana vedu havawane dzidzo yakanaka. [CL3]
- Hukama hwedu nezvikoro hwakanaka ndizvowo asi tinonyanya kuvaona kana vachida madonations pane zvavanenge vachiita kuchikoro sepamaprize giving, vachivaka nezvimwewo. [BP4]

3. Munombodanwawo here kuchikoro kunokurukura pamusoro pekudzidza kwevana kana pamusoro pezvimwewo zvine chekuita nechikoro? Mungajekesa mhinduro yenyu.

- Tinoshevedzwa kana vana vaita misikanzwa uye kunoonawo basa revana ravanonyora. [P1a]
- Tinodanwa, haa tinodanwa. [TL2]
- Vanodanwa ndevaye vane vana vari kuzvikoro ikoko kuti vaone mabhuku evana. [CL3]
- Hongu isu tine vana ikoko tinodanwa kana paine hurongwa hwekuona mabhuku kana rimwewo dambudziko remwana. [BP4]

4. Ndevapi vanhu vamunoona munharaunda vangabatsira pakudzidza nekudzidziswa kwevana muzvikoro zvepuraimari uye vangabatsira sei?

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- Varimi, vemabhizimisi, vemachechi nemawar veterans. [P1a]
- Vepolitics, n'anga nemacouncillors. [TL2]
- Mapolitician, vemachechi, nevaya vane makosi avo kare asi vakaritaya vakaita semanesi, mapurisa, maticha, maengineer nevamwewo. [CL3]
- VemaNGO, makapenda, isuwo vemabhizimisi nemawar veterans. [BP4]

5. Munofunga kuti zvakakosha here kuti imi mushande pamwechete nevadzidzisi uye kuti muve nechekuita pahurongwa hwekudzidzisa nekudzidza kwevana?

- Ukama nechikoro hwakakosha chose nokuti kana patinodeedzwa kuchikoro pamusoro pematambudziko evana, tinobatsirana nematicha kugadzirisa. Asi pane mamwe maticha anofunga kuti isu hatingavape zivo nemazano panyaya yekudzidzisa nokuti vanotiona setisina njere. Zvinoita sekuti vanongotishevedza kuzotiudza zvokuita uye misangano mizhinji ingori yekuwedzera mari yechikoro pasina kana kutaura nezvekudzidziswa kwevana. [P1a]
- Ukama hwakanaka pakati penharaunda nechikoro hunobatsira kuti vana vachengetedzeke panyaya yeunhu nokuti kumba nekuchikoro vanenge vachitaura nyaya imwe chete. [TL2]
- Zvakakoshesa chose nokuti ukama hwakadai hunounza kukura uye kubudirira kwezvikoro pamwechete nenharaunda. [CL3]
- Hukama hwedu nezvikoro haunyatsotifadzi nekuti vezvikoro vanotida chete kana vachida madonations. Pamwe pose havana hanya nesu. [BP4]

6. Mukapiwa mukana imi mungada here kushanda nevadzidzisi kana kuvabatsira pakudzidziswa kwevana uye mungavabatsira nenzira dzipi?

- Tinoda chaizvo asi zvinotoda ivo maticha acho atidana. [P1a]
- Mukana ndopasina. Kana tisina kukokwa nematicha hatigoni kungonopinda mukirasi toga. [TL2]
- Zvokunobatsirana nematicha zvinotoda ivo vatikoka. Nyangwe tichida asi kana tisina kudanwa hatingagumbuki zvedu nokuti harisi basa reduka iri. [CL3]
- Isu tinoda chose asi maticha havadi uye havatipi mukana wacho. [BP4]

7. Sekuona kwenyu vakuru vezvikoro nevadzidzisi vanoda here kushanda nemi vanhu venharaunda pakudzidza nekudzidzisa vana? Sei muchidaro?

- Yuwi! Kuti vavingwe nebofuwo zvaro rakaita seni rabva zvaro kumunda (laughter) haangave mashura iwawo? Panodiwa vakafundaka apa. [P1a]
- Zvokukokwa kunomira mukirasi kudzidzisa tinganyeperane hatikokwi. Saka zvinoratidza kuti havadi. [TL2]
- Hapana vemachechi vatakambonzwa kuti vadanwa kuzodzidzisa vana mukirasi. Dzimwe nguva vakuru vemachechi vanongodanwa kuzoparidzira shoko kuvana pamaassembly chete. Asi izvi zvokutoparidza zvacho zvinotoitwazve nenguva iri kure. Zvekupinda mukirasi kunodzidzisa hazvisati zvamboitika asi kana tikapiwa mukana tingazvida zvikuru. Zvingatobatsirawo vana vedu ava kunyanya pakuumbiridza tsika neunhu. [CL3]
- A-a-a havadi kushanda nesu ava. Havadi kutiona mumaclass avo asi mari dzedu ndodzavanoda. [BP4]

8. Kana vana vakafoira ndiani wamunopa mhosva uye nemhaka yei?

- Kana vana vakafoira haasi maticha oga ane mhosva nokuti mukirasi imomo mune vanopasa. Vamwe vana havashande nesimba uye havateerere maticha avo, uyewo vamwe vana havana kupiwa njere. [P1a]
- Kana vana vakafoira mhosva ndeyematicha nokuti ndivo vari kubhadharirwa basa iroro. [TL2]
- Kubatsira kwatinoita vana isu kana vauya nebasa rechikoro kumba, tinenge tichitobatsirawo naticha vacho. Basa harizi redu iri nderematicha saka mhosva ndeyavo kana vana vafoira. [CL3]
- Vadzidzisi vemazuvano vazhinji vavo havasisina hanya nekudzidza kwevana, chavanongoda imari chete, kudzidzisa chaiko kwava kushoma. Saka panofoira vana mhosva iri kuchikoro. [BP4]

9. Pangava nematambudziko here amungatarisira kana kuti amuri kutosangana nawo pakuedza kushanda pamwechete nevadzidzisi pakudzidzisa vana?

- Dambudziko riripo nderekuti ivo maticha anoti hatigoni chirungu ndosaka vasingatidani kunopakurira vana ruzivo as zvomutauro izvi hazvina basa chakakosha ndechekuti vana vawane ruzivo. Ko chidzidzo cheshona chinodawo chirungu here nhai veduwe? [P1a]
- Dambudziko guru riripo nderumvengo. Kunyanya maticha haawirirani nevanhu venharaunda. Izvi zvinofanira kupera kuitira kuti zvekuti tibatane zvacho zvibudirire. [TL2]
- Hapana kutaurirana kwakanaka pakati pezvikoro nevanhu venharaunda. Nharaunda haitozivi zvakawanda zvinoitika kuchikoro. [CL3]
- Maproblems makuru ari kubva kumaticha nekuti vane negative attitude yakanyanya kuvanhu venharaunda. Kana vakarega izvozvo ndokuti zvinhu zvifambe zvakanaka. [BP4]

10. Sekufunga kwenyu munoti kudii nemutemo wehurumende wekuti vana havafaniri kudzingwa kana kudzoswa kumba pamusaka pekuti havana kubhadhara mari yechikoro?

- Kare taisafara chose vana vachidzingwa asi ikozvino havadzingwi and isu zvinotifadza sevabereki. [P1a]
- Isu tinozvifarira nokuti zvokudzinga vana zvinovakanganisa pakudzidza. Mari inenge ichitsvagwa ichizongobhadharwa. Asi nyangwe tichifara hedu asi vezvikoro havafari saka zvinobva zvakanganisazve ukama hwedu navo. [TL2]
- Hapana mubereki asingafari kana mwana asingadzingwi kuchikoro. Nyangwe tichifara zvedu maticha haafari saka vanobva vatoshaya hanya yekukoka venharaunda kuzobatsirana navo pakudzidza kwevana. [CL3]
- Apa pane nyaya inonakidza nokuti nharaunda inofara nazvo asi vezvikoro havafari zvachose. Saka hapana ukama hwakanaka hunovakika kana pakadai. [BP4]

11. Munofunga kuti vana vechikoro vangagutsikana here uye kuvimba nemi kuti muzovabatsira pazvidzidzo zvavo?

- Vana vanogutsikana chose nokuti vanotiziva kubva kumba. [P1a]
- Dambudziko hapana zvachose asi kuti munhu wacho anofanira kuremekedzwa nenharaunda kuitira kuti vana vagozomuremekedzawo. [TL2]
- Vana vanovimba nesu kana isu wacho tiri vanhu vane chiremera munharaunda. Hapanawo munhu wenharaunda angada kunzwa kuti vadzidzisi vari kudana munhu ane hunhu hunoshoreka munharaunda kuti anobatsira vana kuchikoro. [CL3]
- Hapana dambudziko asi panofanira kuiswa mutemo wokuti vanoenda kunobatsira vana kuchikoro ndevaya vakaritaya kumabasa avo avaiita, sekuti maretired nurses, teachers, carpenters nevamwewo. [BP4]

12. Pane kutaurirana here pakati pevadzidzsi nevanhu venharaunda pamusoro pedzidzo yevana?

- Sezvandambotaura isu tinoda kukurukura nematicha asi ivo havadi saka mukana wacho havatipi. Kutaurirana kuripo chete kana vabereki vadanwa kuzoona mabhuku evana ka kuudzwa zvekusagona uye misikanzwa yemwana. [P1a]
- Kutaurirana kunoti netsei kana takatarisana nezviri munyika. .. Politics, politics, politics, ha-a-a dzauraya ukama hwedu. Vanhu vanokokwa kuchikoro vanofanira kuva vasiri veopposition kunyangwe vari ivo vane ruzivo. [TL2]
- Munharaunda macho mune dambudziko rekuti vanhu vacho tinoshorana futi. Chero mumwe achida kunobatsirana nevekuchikoro anotorega achitya kutaura kwevanhu. [CL3]
- Kutaurirana hakupo nekuti maticha anotiona sevanhu vasingazivi chinhu. Saka havatodi pfungwa dzedu

13. Chii chingaitwa kukurudzira nharaunda kuti ive nechekuita pakudzidza nekudzidziswa kwavana padanho repuraimari?

- Vanenge vabatsira kuchikoro ngavabhadharwe. Kunyangwe ndine ruzivo uye ndichida kubatsira maticha, kana pasina chandinopiwa ndinofirei? Handingasiye kurima munda wangu kana kushanda mugarden nokuti ndinoda kubatsira maticha asina chaanondipa. Ivo vakashanda vanobhadharwa wani. Zvokungovabatsira pasina mubhadharo hazviunze chikafu kumba kwanguka. [P1a]
- Dunhu redu rino reChivi inzvimbo isingatipi kukohwa kwakanaka muminda saka vazhinji vanototsvaga zvinovararamisa. Saka tinotarisirawo kuti kana vechikoro vachida rubatsiro rwedu vanofanira kutibhadhararo kuitira kuti tirarame kwete kushandira mahara. Vanhu vanenge vasiya mabasa avoka mudzimba umu. [TL2]
- Kana vanhu venharaunda vakabhadharwawo pane batsiro yavanenge vapa kuvadzidzisi zvingabatsira chose kukurudzira vamwe vose kuti vadewo kubatsira pakudzidza kwevana. [CL3]
- Mukore uno especially nekuoma kuri kuita upenyu hapana anoda kushandira mahara. Saka vezvikoro kana vachida kuti nharaunda ivabatsire pazvidzidzo zvevana ngavabhadhare vanhu ivavo. [BP4]

14. Chii chingaitwa kupedza matambudziko ari kusanganikwa nawo pakuedza kuti vadzidzisi nevanhu venharaunda vashande pamwechetete?

- Vezvikoro vanofanira kutidanawo sevabereki vachitiudza uye kutidzidzisa zvatinotarisirwa kuita pakubatsirana navo padzidzo yevana. [P1a]
- Ivo vadzidzisi nemaheadmaster vanofanira kudzidziswawo kuti vaone kukosha kwevanhu venharaunda pakudzidza kwevana. Uyewo misangano yevanodanira vabereki ngairede kungova yekukwidza mafees chete chete asi ngavawanewo nguva yekukurukura nevemunharaunda zviri maererano nebudiriro yevana pakudzidza kwavo. [TL2]
- Vana ngavapiwe homework inogonekwavo nevari kumba kwete kungopa vana homework ingozha everytime. Dzimwe nguva unoti ichiri yevana here kana kuti yava kutotsvaga ini semubereki? [CL3]
- Pakugadzirisa ukama hwechikoro nenharaunda panotoda maorganisations ari neutral nekuti kutaurirana pachedu hakuna chakunobatsira. Sezvakatoita imi dai matotibatsira kuti zvamauya nazvo izvi zvichitoitika muzvikoro macho. [BP4]

15. Mune zvimwe here zvamungafunga kuti zvasiirirwa muhurukuro iyi zvamungada kuwedzera kana kukurudzira kuti zviitwe?

- Maticha ngaarege kutitarisirawo pasi uye kutiona semadofo. Tinotozivawo zvizhinji zvisingazivikanwi nevamwe vavo. [P1a]
- Ini ndafarira chirongwa chamauya nacho ichi. Zvamuchabuda nazvo patsvagurudzo yenyu iyi veMinistry yeEducation vanofanira kuzvishambadza muzvikoro zvose nenharaunda dzose kuti zvibatsire vana pamwechete nesu tose. Musarege zvamatsvaga izvi zvichingoorera mumahofisi. [TL2]
- A-a-a handina hangu zvekuwedzera. Tinenge takurukura uye kubata zvose zvakakosha. [CL3]
- Tinofara chose nezvamaita zvekutivhurawo njere kuti tizive kuti tinogona kutonobatsiranawo nematicha muzvikoro umu. Asi zvochingoda kuti ivo vezvikoro vacho vazvigamuchire. [BP4]

Ndinokutendai zvikuru nemazano uye pfungwa dzamaburitsa pahurukuro iyi. Mwari akukomborerei.

APPENDIX 12

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Research Ethics Clearance Certificate

This is to certify that the application for ethical clearance submitted by

Tafara Mufanechiya [50790692]

for a D Ed study entitled

Community participation in curriculum implementation in Zimbabwean primary schools

has met the ethical requirements as specified by the University of South Africa College of Education Research Ethics Committee. This certificate is valid for two years from the date of issue.

Prof KP Dzvimbo
Executive Dean : CEDU
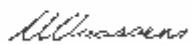
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APPENDIX 13

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31 May 2015

DECLARATION

I herewith declare that the thesis by

Tafara Mufanechiya

'Community participation in curriculum implementation in Zimbabwean primary schools'

was edited by me.

I cannot, however, accept the resposibility for any changes and corrections that were made in the document after it was edited by me.

Prof. Keren le Roux