

**EXPLORATION OF EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF
HEALTHY SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS IN THE GERT
SIBANDE DISTRICT**

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this study is my own original work, and that all the sources used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.



PETER M. MOKOENA

DATE: 28 MAY 2012

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IF I HAVE SEEN FURTHER THAN OTHERS, IT IS BY STANDING ON SHOULDERS OF GIANTS (Isaac Newton)

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my late mother Ms Aletta Tsoetsi, who laid a firm foundation, with her minimal education. Single handedly and with the meager salary she got as a domestic worker, her only wish was for us to go to school.

May her soul, rest in peace.

ABSTRACT

Key words: healthy school environment, first aid kit, learner involvement, teacher involvement, communicable diseases, nutrition programme, vulnerable learners, physical education, community involvement, school management teams, garden project, eco schools programme.

The main aim of this study was to investigate how effective School Management Teams were in the management of healthy school environments in the Gert Sibande District. This was a qualitative study which employed two data collection strategies: face to face interviews and photographs.

A literature review on this study revealed vital aspects, that a healthy school environment: can directly improve children's health and effective learning; the school is strategically positioned to reach large numbers of the population to teach them to understand the importance of investing in health. Literature indicated collaboration and synergy as essential aspects, and policies as cornerstones that underpin the health promotion initiatives.

Selection of sites was purposefully done as three of the four schools in this study were part of the Eco Schools programme. The study revealed that there was disconnect between the SMTs and committees that were involved in health promotion: in coordinating plans; and monitoring and evaluating the implementation of programmes. This therefore, means that there was no support for the committees from the SMT. It was also found that there were committees that: did not have plans; did not sit for meetings and the reluctance of the SMT to address these challenges compounded the situation and contributed to some committees being dysfunctional. The failure of the SMT to guide and provide leadership in their engagement with community members who provided assistance in terms of basic needs to learners indicated a need for the development of a cadre of leaders that are capable of working beyond the

borders of schools. In all the committees that were interviewed, the Environmental Committee came up to be more effective and organized than others in three schools. The health committee was lacking in the area of training especially in the prevention of communicable diseases. The study provided recommendations to assist the SMT in their endeavours to promote healthy environments in their schools.

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