

# **EFFECTIVITY AND PRODUCTIVITY IN EDUCATION: AN UBUNTU PERSPECTIVE**

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## SUMMARY

Key words: effectivity, productivity, education, Ubuntu, perspective.

This study investigated the possibility of how Ubuntu can restore effectivity and productivity in education by focusing on:

- ◆ The essential elements of the Ubuntu principle
- ◆ Education from an Ubuntu perspective
- ◆ The role of Ubuntu in restoring effectivity and productivity in education
- ◆ “Motho ke motho” contours towards introducing Ubuntu in education.

To achieve these objectives, a literature study was undertaken through which primary as well as secondary sources were consulted. The essential elements of the Ubuntu principle that were discovered, include concepts like “*enhlonipho*”(respect), fellowship, caring, being sensitive to the plight of others, sharing and human dignity. It was discovered that these Ubuntu values could be used to resolve problems of discipline and non-caring attitude that disrupts effective and productive education in South Afrca.

From the review of literature, it was discovered that education from Ubuntu perspective, could teach people collective solidarity values through the promotion of respect for norms and values, commitment to work and its potential to promote a sense of belonging, discipline, community involvement and instilling self-reliance.

Ubuntu philosophy, with its social structures such as, “*letsema*”, in Setswana, or “*nhimbe*” in Shona, which means a work-party wherein an individual would invite fellow villagers to help him/her to perform a particular task, traditional beer and food were prepared for people. The leadership for managing work of the day was shared among people with specific talent.

The extended families institution, believed in the understanding that implies that ordinary people and not only the government, could do things on their own using the traditional institutions.

It was also discovered that the philosophy of Ubuntu, with its principle of “We are and therefore I am”, can encourage a way of thinking that reminds people to think with regard to the plight of others sharing with them, regarding them as brothers/sisters and involving them in collective actions.

The possibility of providing contours that could help in introducing Ubuntu in education was exploited and concepts such as, imbizo, collaboration and collective responsibility were discovered.

Finally, certain recommendations are made on the basis of the findings and conclusions of the previous chapters. These include: Educators, as the most important role players, should be trained in Ubuntu education, parents should revive the traditional institutions that can be relevant to the modern demands, and Ubuntu should be integrated into the school curriculum.

## OPSOMMING

Sleutelwoorde: effektiwiteit, produktiwiteit, onderwys, Ubuntu, perspektief.

Hierdie navorsing het die moontlikheid ondersoek in terme waarvan Ubuntu kan meehelp om effektiwiteit en produktiwiteit in die onderwys/opvoeding te bewerkstellig deur te fokus op:

- ◆ Die essensiële elemente van die Ubuntu beginsel
- ◆ Opvoeding vanuit 'n Ubuntu perspektief te beskou
- ◆ Die rol van Ubuntu in die herstel van effektiwiteit en produktiwiteit in die onderwys/opvoeding
- ◆ “Motho ke Motho” kontoere te verskaf waarvolgens Ubuntu in die onderwys en opvoeding ingelei kan word.

Om bogenoemde doelstellings te verwesenlik is 'n literatuurstudie onderneem waarin primêre en sekondêre bronne geraadpleeg is. Die essensiële elemente van die Ubuntu beginsel wat blootgelê is, sluit onder andere konsepte soos die volgende in: “*enhlonipho*” (respek), gemeenskap, sorgsaamheid, sensitiwiteit vir die belang van andere, mededeelsaamheid en menswaardigheid. Daar is tot die gevolgtrekking gekom dat hierdie Ubuntu waardes kan meehelp om die vraagstukke rondom dissipline en die nie-omgee-vir-ander-houding, wat effektiwiteit en produktiwiteit van die onderwys en opvoeding negatief beïnvloed, die hoof te bied.

Uit die literatuurondersoek is dit duidelik dat onderwys en opvoeding vanuit 'n Ubuntu perspektief, mense kan onderrig ten opsigte van kollektiewe solidariteitswaardes by wyse van die bevordering van norme en waardes, verbintenis tot werk en die potensiaal om 'n sin van behoort, dissipline, gemeenskapsbetrokkenheid en selfvertroue te bewerkstellig.

Die Ubuntu filosofie met sosiale strukture wat insluit “*letsema*” in Setswana, of “*nhimbe*” in Shona, wat beteken 'n werkgeselskap waar 'n individu mede gemeenskapslede uitnooi om hom/haar te help om 'n spesifieke taak te verrig.

Tradisionle bier en voedsel is ook voorberei vir die mense. Die leierskap vir die bestuur van die werk van die dag is ook gedeel tussen die mense met spesifieke talente.

Die uitgebreide gesin as instelling, wat veronderstel dat gewone mense en nie slegs die regering nie, kan ook take verrig op hulle eie deur die tradisionele instellings te gebruik.

Daar is verder vasgestel dat die Ubuntu filosofie, wat funksioneer op die beginsel van "Ons is, en daarom is ek", kan die denkrioting ondersteun wat mense daaraan herinner om só op te tree dat die belang van andere bevorder word, onder andere om mededeelsaam te wees, om mense te beskou as broers/susters en om hulle te betrek in kollektiewe handeling.

Die moontlikheid om kontoere te verskaf wat kan meehelp om Ubuntu deel te maak van onderwys en opvoeding is ondersoek en konsepte soos "*imbizo*", samewerking en kollektiewe verantwoordelikheid is verken.

In die laaste plek is sekere aanbevelings gemaak op basis van die bevindinge en die gevolgtrekkings. Dit sluit in: opvoeders as die belangrikste rolspelers behoort opgelei te word in Ubuntu onderwys en opvoeding; ouers behoort die tradisionele instellings te laat herleef as relevant vir moderne vereistes, en Ubuntu behoort geïntegreer te word in die skoolkurrikulum.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION, PROBLEM STATEMENT, AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

### 1.1 Introduction and statement of the research problem

South Africa faces an unprecedented educational challenge to restore effectivity and productivity in schools, predominately, in the previously black schools (Muendane, 1995:56).

Broodryk (1998c:1) believes that the philosophy of *Ubuntu*, as African way of management, should replace the old military management style inherited during the apartheid rule.

To resolve this issue, basically, South Africans should know who they are and what they want to become. This understanding can help them to acknowledge the philosophy of their forefathers, *Ubuntu*, as a vehicle to restore effectivity and productivity in schools.

Makgoba (1996:42-45) points out that world nations such as the Americans, Japanese and Australians have propelled themselves into recognizing their cultural initiatives through an exercise of soul searching.

It is only Africans who are still contending with the problem of reconciling civilization, culture and education.

Mbigi (1997:4) argues that the apartheid laws dehumanized large populations of blacks by destroying their social structures such as "*letsema*" (Tswana), "*nhimbe*" (Shona); where a family would call for help from other villagers and provide beer and food, and share elected leadership in managing the day.

The "*kgotla*" (traditional court) and the basic role of the extended family in African society, where bringing up the child was a corporate responsibility belonging to all and not just to the parents of the child, every parent in the

village was the educator, following the African collective solidarity principle of *Ubuntu*.

Van der Merwe (1996:1) confirms that one cannot claim to help someone by indirectly destroying his/her humanity. *Ubuntu* warrants unconditional respect for individuality, historicity and particularity. People must keep dialogue alive irrespective of differences.

This viewpoint is also shared by Samkange & Samkange (1980:74) who further capture the importance of the extended family, by showing the need of the built-in psychiatric and psychological systems within every black family embodied within the *Ubuntu* concept which is necessary for educational and social development. Whenever anyone had a problem, there was always a member of the family to solve that problem, for example a "sekuru" or aunt was to tackle that problem. To Africans, the following words sound very familiar: "*Ga se botho joo*," "*Kabusibo Ubuntu lobo*," ("That cannot be the behaviour of a person, a human being") as a form of caution for any wrong doing from the elders.

Khoza (1994a:4-7) promotes social harmony as practiced by traditional African communities, whereby he explains that the West individualism is characterized by competition and individual interest over group faith. People are encouraged to accumulate more material for future use. The individual is used as a tool or means towards the achievement of wealth. The humanity of a person is reduced and his/her value is reduced to that of a property.

There is a broad social agreement among Africans that these built-in systems and the basic role of the extended family, serve as preventative measures. The present education system is lacking in providing these effective support structures which are naturally embodied within *Ubuntu*. Hence, the high rate of crime, failure rate in matric, gangsters in schools, schools being vandalized, prostitution, demoralized teachers, learners, parents, principals

and educational authorities which results in schools being ineffective and unproductive .

Despite the constraints and disadvantages incurred by the blacks, Mbigi and Maree (1995a:13) believe that South Africans, predominantly blacks, have to show the determination to survive and succeed and stop hankering on the past. In the same spirit of reconciliation, Samkange & Samkange (1980:11), who are regarded as one of the pioneers of *Ubuntu* by Mbigi and Maree (People dynamics, 1995b:40), believes that, "Our problem, indeed the problem of human race, stems from our inability to accept the brotherhood of man regardless of colour, creed or race. The destruction of the psychological, legal and all artificial barriers that divide us, as human beings, into antagonistic blacks, white and brown, must be a first priority ... Our aim must be to build a single nation of free men and women: black, white and brown."

Van der Merwe (1996:1) further notes that civilized nations should be able to recognize their differences positively. The individual should be respected for what he/she is, a person "*umuntu*". There must be an acknowledgment of the diversity of languages, histories, values, and customs, all of which constitute a bigger whole. People should not look down upon other people. This is like denying your own existence.

In a bid to improve effectivity and productivity in schools and rallying support for nation building, Broodryk (1997:8) argues that there should be a radical shift from the "old military system" inherited from the apartheid rule to the African way of management like the "Four teats of a cow management style" with much emphasis on the human development, characterized by what he calls: "Fun productivity", instead of organisational structure. In this regard, Shutte (1993:46ff) explains that individuals exist only in their relationships with others and these relationships are dynamic.

According to Broodryk (1997:8), the school governing body and the educational manager, are expected to create a space conducive for both the

learner and educator to experience teaching and learning as fun. Both the educators and learners should be encouraged to reflect the collective solidarity values of *Ubuntu* in their day to day experiences, greeting heartily and friendly, co-operating, exercise humanitarian care, and loving and sharing should be of cardinal importance in the classroom. Everybody will feel part of the team and no one will wish to let the team down.

Mbigi (1997:4) tends to agree with Broodryk when he states that South Africa needs to renew the culture of teaching and learning introduced by the Christian missionaries which was systematically destroyed by the apartheid government. The principles that the missionaries used, like love for fellow-man, justice, equality, peace, human dignity as stated in the Bible, should be followed. These Christian values reflect a great deal of similarities with the *Ubuntu* values, when one thinks of what Samkange & Samkange (1980:39) expresses as, attention one human being gives to another; the kindness, courtesy, consideration and friendliness in relationship between people embodied in *Ubuntu*.

To be relevant to the nature of the greatest part of South African population, Mbigi and Maree (1995a:111) believe that learning should take a form of collective social process as *Ubuntu* dictates that: "*Umntu Ngumuntu Ngabantu*", characterized by elements such as solidarity, respect, dignity, compassion and survival. In this sense, it can be used to augment the constitution of the country. *Ubuntu*, emphasizes respect for particularity and, in a way, it promotes multiculturalism.

Teffo (1994a:5), states that in the traditional communities, the existence of man was understood in the context of socialization. Man could only exist in concert with others. It promoted the thinking that: "human being is human being through other human beings".

This understanding of "community mutualism", is expressed through group solidarity of the "collective finger theory", which pronounces: "A man is a man

only through others". "I am" because "we are". One has to encounter the "we" before discovering the "I". The rituals of ceremonies such as the announcement of results at the end of the year, should be organized, where role models, parents, educators, learners, community leaders and educational authorities are invited.

These ceremonies and rituals, should culminate into the slaying of a cow, presentation of gifts for high-achievers, singing and dancing. It is on such occasions that *Ubuntu* will present an excellent opportunity to give the school a focus of unity based on shared and collective vision, mission and eventually a national purpose which will serve to improve effectivity and productivity in education. In broader context for the country, Van der Merwe (1996:1) notes that Ubuntu has potential to nurture the newly found democracy and intensify various ethnic and socio-cultural formations.

Originally Africans were forced by circumstances to believe together and work communally for their livelihood. This way of understanding still affects their effectivity and productivity in the classrooms. Hence, Mbigi and Maree (1995a:75) emphasize the conceptualisation of any management practise either from the east or west, to suite the greater part of the South African population. This is necessary if South Africa is to resume her place as a competitive partner in the global market and the same trend should be followed when making a choice of effective method of teaching and learning.

Additionally, efforts should be taken to trace those foreign concepts through what Mbigi and Maree (1995:75) call "*Nhorowondo*" (in Shona), meaning to trace an evolutionary history of the concept or method. Ubuntu respect for the uniqueness of others affiliates well with the belief that the individual can only be human through the individuality of others. But, Broodryk (1998b:9) observes, the individuality that Ubuntu respects is not the "western individual", that encourages competition for wealth at all cost, with little interest in the faith of "others". Excerpt augmenting efforts of promoting effectivity and productivity

from an *Ubuntu* perspective in education, the research will make provision for national unity through values that are embedded within elements of *Ubuntu* such as passion, solidarity, mutual respect, human dignity and survival which are recognized world-wide.

Wiredu (1995:98), points out that Ubuntu emphasizes different beliefs and practices, that are also supported by the present social dispensation through social justice based on the belief that;” *motho ke motho ka batho*”.

Against the above mentioned, the following questions can be asked:

- What is the essence of the Ubuntu principle?
- What does education entail from an Ubuntu perspective?
- What is the possible role of Ubuntu in restoring effectivity and productivity in education?
- What could be possible contours for the introduction of Ubuntu in education?

## **1.2 Aims of the study**

The aims of this research are to

- establish the essence of the Ubuntu principle;
- describe education from an Ubuntu perspective;
- indicate the possible role of Ubuntu in restoring effectivity and productivity in education; and
- describe possible contours for the introduction of Ubuntu in education.

## **1.3 Methodology**

### **1.3.1 Literature study**

In a view of literature, a thorough study of secondary and primary sources was made with a view of gathering information on Ubuntu aspects, strategies on improving effectivity and productivity in schools.

### **1.3.2 Unstructured interviews**

Unstructured interviews were conducted. The aim of these interviews was to gather information on how effectivity and productivity can be improved in education. The following groups were interviewed: traditional chiefs, community leaders, educators, principals and well known authors of Ubuntu.

### **1.3.3 Conceptual analysis**

The method of conceptual analysis was used in order to grasp the conceptual meaning of the concept "Ubuntu". Conceptual analysis leads to the "unpacking" and "explicating" of the concept "Ubuntu" (Barrow:1981:9).

### **1.3.4 Phenomenon analysis**

Phenomenon analysis is not a method derived from Phenomenology, but is the ontological analysis of the educational phenomenon (Van der Walt, 1980:76; 1982:33). The ontological question which was answered in this research was focused on the phenomenon "Ubuntu".

### **1.3.5 Fundamental reflection on basic principles**

Fundamental reflection on basic principles is a method by means of which educational philosophers come to certain convictions during their reconstruction and evaluation of a specific problem ( Van der Walt, 1982:37-38; Viljoen, 1994:14). This method was applied, for example, in order to find the true principle foundation of the Ubuntu phenomenon.

## **1.4 Scope and delimitation of research**

This is a study in Educational Management. It was therefore concentrating on fundamental questions regarding Ubuntu within the context of education. Special reference was made to effectivity and productivity.

The study was conducted in parts of the North-West and Gauteng provinces in South Africa.

### **1.5 Structure of this report**

**Chapter 1:** Introduction, problem statement, aims, methodology

**Chapter 2:** The essential elements of the Ubuntu principle

**Chapter 3:** Education from Ubuntu perspective

**Chapter 4:** The role of Ubuntu in restoring effectivity and productivity in education

**Chapter 5:** “Motho ke motho” contours towards introducing Ubuntu in education

**Chapter 6:** Findings, conclusions and recommendations

### **1.6 Close**

The aim of this chapter was to give an outline of the statement of the research problem, the aims and the methodology. In the next chapter attention will be given to the essential elements of the Ubuntu principle.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE UBUNTU PRINCIPLE**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter aims at analyzing the essential elements of Ubuntu principle. The role of the learner, educator and parent will be exposed by way of aims, content, methodology and Ubuntu and its contextualized meaning.

#### **2.2 The aim of Ubuntu**

Mbigi (1997:137) states that the purpose of the African traditional education was preparation of people for life. In the traditional African culture, families encouraged and emphasized development of the hunter's spirit amongst the children. The children were taught at an early stage to venture into the unknown world with courage, commitment, dedication and motivation. These efforts were undertaken to achieve personal and communal enrichments.

The success achieved from hunting expeditions would earn someone respect and status within the community structures. The philosophy of Ubuntu is aimed at keeping the society in a coherent structure: promoting peace, equality and justice for all. Added to Mbigi's notion of Group solidarity, is Khoza's (1994a:1) belief that Ubuntu expects Africans to express the distinctive collective consciousness in their behaviour, expression, and spiritual self-fulfilment, reflecting values such as brotherhood for Africans, sharing, and treating and respecting other people as human beings.

Munnik and Swanepoel (1990:13) indicate that co-operation is a prerequisite for successful learning and that it can be achieved through positive attitude. Pillay (1995:22) also points out that positive attitude is important for

succeeding in carrying out the learning activities. This positive attitude can be developed through the spirit of trust and confidence, showing appreciation for the children's work.

Munnik and Swanepoel (1990:13) and Pillay (1995:1), point out that positive attitude is the basis of effective learning but this spirit of positiveness is achieved within the atmosphere of individualism. The community consists of individuals, but to sustain its existence, emphasis should be placed on the group and not on individuals.

Van Binsbergen's (2001a:1) highlights the fact that traditional communities relied on principle of humanness for caring, sharing and being in harmony with all creation. The tendency towards being selfish or self-centered was discouraged. The communities encouraged cooperation between cultures, individuals, and nations.

According to Mbigi & Maree (1995b:1), Ubuntu, through its principles such as sharing, loving, trust, commitment, authority, discipline and respect creates a conducive atmosphere for people to relate well and promote group solidarity, which are essential to the survival of the communities or societies. In the traditional communities, there was an urge within individuals to belong and identify with a certain group of their origin. Individuals were defined and defined themselves in the context of the group.

Setiloane as cited in (Bhengu,1996:4) emphasizes the fact that there was no African person without the sense of belonging and this stemmed from the philosophy of Ubuntu-botho, harbouring the values and norms passed to them during their childhood. "Becoming" and "growing", as aspects of human development, were explained in terms of belonging. One needed to belong to a particular family, group, community, and society in order to grow and become. It was the type of humanism that found its expression in the communal way. This notion of doing things in concert with others is supported

by Bhengu (1996:3) who believes that a person cannot exist of himself, by himself, for himself: he comes from a social order. This social order serves to nurture him/her into realizing the promise of being human and the glory of being a self-defining value.

Busia (1967:26) states that in the African democracy an individual was recognized in the context of wholeness in the form of family or the wider form of the community. It was within the framework of family or communal relations that the individual experiences itself and is experienced by the community. This way of life, was the cultural basis for the interdependence between individual and community and the principle of sharing, mutual care and compassion for one another.

Teffo (1996:98) states that people are social beings and should learn to reach out to others work towards a common goal and embrace each other in a loving, caring, and sharing attitude in their daily lives. There should be no child who is denied the opportunity to become somebody in the community. The traditional societies acted as the reservoir of knowledge, courage, dedication, tolerance and commitment.

Vilakazi (1994:5) observes that communities that practise Ubuntu value people's interest more than the economic and political ones. The school that operates in such communities will be expected to serve the learners and not to aim at profit as the priority of the institution. The school cannot accomplish its objectives without the support of learners and should therefore promote peace, equality and justice for all.

The society identified issues of common interest and applied collective efforts in securing the survival and sustenance of the group. The sought for knowledge was the highest value in the society practising Ubuntu. Education was not confined to particular areas like the school; it could be informal in the

home, forests, playgrounds or "*kgotla*", in Setswana, which means, traditional court

In that regard, Samkange & Samkange (1980:8) observes the role-played by ordinary community members, particularly, members of extended family, in the education of children. They played a prominent role in the upbringing of children; rendered supporting services for families in times of happiness or bad moments; they motivated, supported, guided and empowered children on their way to adulthood.

The word, Ubuntu, is used in different contexts by different societies to reflect on the same purpose for different communities.

### **2.3 Ubuntu and its contextualized meaning**

Diomo (1991:51) states that Ubuntu's strength is the fact that it is an indigenous, purely African, philosophy of life. It is not imported from Eastern or Western Europe: it is something out of Africa and all African languages throughout the continent do have a word that defines the person, "*umuntu*".

According to Busia (1967:12), the word "*umuntu*" , is specific and refers to the being who is dynamic and gives value to the general concept, "*Ubuntu*". The word, "*Ubuntu*", consists of prefix, *ubu-* that may be regarded as being, and the stem, *-ntu*, the foundation at which being assumes concrete mode of being. Samkange & Samkange (1980:34) refers to "*Ubuntu*", as "*hunhu*", in the Shona language of Zimbabwe. In this context, *hu-* and *-nhu*, has the same logic as *ubu-* and *-ntu*.

Mbennah (1998:1) states that the word Ubuntu comes from the root word, "*mtu*," a person. According to him, "*mtu*", is said to be the creator of human beings or persons. Therefore, the individual persons are expected to make a contribution to the whole community.

Bhengu (1996:1) refers to the concept "*umuntu ngumuntu*" in Zulu. The word, ngu-, acts as confirmation of the act or being. In this regard, Bhengu confirms that the human being is a self-defining value. The person portrays himself/herself in the interaction with others; through his/her thoughts, modes of behaviour and deeds or talks to his/her family, neighbours, society and the world.

The Tswana version of this Zulu/Xhosa axiom; "*umuntu ngumuntu*", is, "*Moremogolo go petlwa wa taola, wa motho wa ipetla*". This latter axiom serves to re-emphasize the freedom the individual has in the philosophy Ubuntu, in terms of promoting socialization, in the context of the community.

Mbigi (1992:24) indicates that in Shona, "*munhu munhu*", entails that a person remains a person, despite his or her status in the community and deserves unconditional respect.

"*Buhnu*," in Tsonga, and in Venda, "*vhuthu*," "*broederskap*", Afrikaans, which means, (my broer; my ma se kind) or "*brotherhood*" in English, refers to the humanness; inherent spirit of tolerance, compassion in and forgiveness (Broodryk, 1998b:1).

This gives the idea that Ubuntu was and can be widely practised in different ways, depending on the context and the motive under which it is being used.

## **2.4 Content of education**

Education, as a human phenomenon, was aimed at the development and growth of an individual within the context of the group. It was approached holistically by the whole community and not only by the immediate or extended family members (Samkange & Samkange, 1980:77). As a result,

the whole community participated in determining the kind of material that was to be transmitted to children.

The child was regarded as an integral part of the society and was to be brought up in such a way that he or she might not be estranged to his/her environment or his/her people. Hence, the learning content was drawn from the child's immediate environment. Education was matched with the economic needs and aspirations of the community.

The knowledge of nature was of greater importance to the African traditional societies. The children were also exposed to environmental study; they learned about the names of trees, birds, animals, rivers and mountains. They were taught about the mutual interdependence between nature and man. The children were taught to respect certain trees and animals.

These trees and animals were to be conserved for the benefit of the whole society; the children were taught not to chop certain wild fruit trees for firewood or roofing huts because of their importance. The fruits from these trees could be used as food during starvation or war times (Samkange & Samkange, 1980:23).

The community or society promoted the sense of respect for leadership, tolerance and loyalty among other values, aimed at achieving what Mbigi & Maree (1995a:1) refers to as, group solidarity. The children learned to obey the instructions of their superiors, "*ingwele*", in Ndebele, without questions and to fight without delay, whoever were picked by their superiors were to carry out the instructions.

Grobler and Moller (1991:35) state that authority and discipline should not be imposed on learners but must be developed through intensive interaction between the educators and learners in the atmosphere of mutual trust, respect and understanding. The learners come to accept and respect the

authority through the norms and values displayed by the adult. It is these values that come to represent the frame of reference and a mirror through which children view life.

The authority should understand the culture and tradition of the majority of student population. Busia (1967:90) states that one form of education in the traditional/present community's was/is starting communication with one's deceased ancestors, a lump of mute, speechless soil. It will be difficult for most educators to believe that one can involve himself/herself with a speechless grave and they might dismiss this as nonsense.

Mbigi (1997:138) states that in the traditional African educational systems, religious instruction was an integral aspect of children's life world. Young people received instruction through religious rituals and ceremonies that became part of their lives. The most significant rituals were initiation, burial rituals, as well as marriage ceremonies. It was through the initiation and marriage ceremonies that young people attained adulthood identities and were prepared to appreciate and experience the human existence.

It was during these ceremonies that the elderly people transmitted education that was to serve as the basis of their interactions. Sebidi (1988a:57) states that education in the traditional African society was based on life experiences emanating from African history (touching on the ancient kingdoms of pre-colonial Africa, wars fought, and beyond), African art (folklore music, the profound ethos that initiates this music and art, painting and artefacts), storytelling (as an oral and literacy genre, the art that was so expertly handled by ancient African raconteurs), astronomy, sociology, criminology, administration.

The whole community's members played a prominent role in educating children.

## **2.5 The role of partnerships in education**

### **2.5.1 Introduction**

In the African society, education, as an aspect of human development and growth, was not a purposive act. It was an automatic process that occurred anywhere where an adult interacted with a non-adult or a child; there was always that warm love, characterized by a high degree of trust and respect.

Hence, every adult was regarded as a parent. Every parent in the village was the educator of the child irrespective of being a biological parent of the child and the child accepted his/her authority without any questions (Samkange & Samkange, 1980:78).

### **2.5.2 The learner**

The children belonged to the whole society and it was the responsibility of the villagers to educate them along their value systems. If the children were caught misbehaving or playing while the goats or cattle were eating crops in the field, the passing adult would call them and sometimes punish or reprimand them depending on the damage caused in the field.

The visitor would then pass via the village to report what happened and the way he solved the problem. The visitor would be welcomed and thanked for the task he did on behalf of that family, if not for the whole community (Samkange & Samkange, 1980:74).

Teffo (1994a: 3), like, Samkange & Samkange (1980:77) believes that the children were brought up by the whole society and were cared for with love and kindness. The community, as the most precious ownership held the children in high esteem. This is reflected by the willingness of the “*ndebele*”, one of the major tribes in Zimbabwe, court to impose corporal punishment on Matutu’s son with the intention of taking the beast out of him (Samkange & Samkange, 1980:95).

The children's education belonged to the whole society. Any elderly person was the child's parent and was addressed by the child as "father" or "mother". This is confirmed by the son of Matutu, who after being punished, promised the court never to do it again: "I do, my fathers, I do, I do", (Samkange & Samkange, 1980:94). The education of the child was therefore, by the community for the community.

The individual was expected to adhere to community aspirations and needs. He/She was to take care of the community and in return the community took care of him/her, as long as he/she was respecting community values and norms. The learner became what he/she was because of the society from which he/she was coming. The society reorganized knowledge from the environment of the learner in order to shape his/her personality.

The ability to adhere to the societal norms and execute certain cultural activities with high level of respect for human dignity, love, sharing, caring, tolerance and work with others, displaying high discipline and commitment, was a yard-stick to success.

The philosophy of Ubuntu can instill discipline in people's lives. Lemmer and Squelch (1993:46) believe that healthy discipline is important for the good results in school. There is a higher failure rate because of lack of discipline amongst school children. Ubuntu, through its principles, like respect for other people, emphasizes that one cannot become, unless, one conforms to the communities values and norms (Mbiti, 1990:3).

According to Teffo (1996:100), the African should be understood in terms of a value system emanating from a frame of reference that consists of the societal norms. The African person is an integral part of society and thus as an individual, can only exist corporately, and the view that an individual should take precedence over the community, is discouraged. The community is therefore, entitled to do everything in its power to promote solidarity.

The learner should be made aware that he/she is what he/she is because of the society from which he/she derives and not because of the role played by his or her family only. The society reorganizes knowledge from the environment of the learner in order to shape his/her personality. As the learner interacts with living and non-living things in the environment, he/she grasps the reality and gains control of the environment, refined through assistance of stakeholders, like educators.

### **2.5.3 The educator**

The African educators drew their information from the environment of the learner. The educator became the bearer and a reflector of the cultural heritage. Such knowledge and experience was accumulated through generations of human existence in that particular group or society.

This information, as well as the accompanying attitude, was aimed at securing the society. It was displayed by the urge to conform to group survival issues and not individual self-reliance (Mbigi & Maree, 1995a:1).

Hence, the whole parent troop in the village had a responsibility that goes beyond that of an observer: they were supposed to consciously initiate the learning activities, which allowed the children to participate collectively in promoting cultural unity in the society. The educator had a great task of presenting information refined from the child's environment with the purpose of creating an opportunity for the children to discover the reality for themselves through the material presented before them.

Van Wyk (1996:65) points out that if educators want to be successful in their endeavour to educate learners, they must know what the parents' co-responsibility in regard to education involves. There are situations where the educator should act in loco parentis . He or she should know how the

parents exercise their say in issues of decision making at home. Parent decision making should be sought on certain school activities.

It is difficult to achieve what Van Wyk (1996:65) suggests in the modern education, because of the nature of the children's upbringing and development in terms of the school tasks and the home role in children's education.

Samkange & Samkange (1980:78) point out that education in the African traditional societies, was controlled by the whole parent community, it was not only the responsibility of biological parents, it was education by the society for society. This intensive social network enabled the children to acquire knowledge in the broader perspective and assimilate the norms and values of the community successfully. Kruger (1996:59), states that children need supportive, innovative and creative parents and educators who instill a relaxed but productive atmosphere in the school situation in order to produce learners who are educated with regard to community aspirations and needs.

In the word of Akinpelu (1989:178), in the African culture, there is no clear-cut explanation of an "educated man", but education is a life-long process which entails the whole social living, and reflects an ideal man culturally; *"who combines expertise in some economic skills with soundness of character and wisdom in judgment, is equipped to handle successfully the problems of living in his immediate and extended family; is well- versed in the folk-lores and genealogies of his ancestors; has some skills to handle some minor health problems and where to obtain advice and help in major ones; stands well with ancestral spirits of his family and knows how to observe their worship; has the ability to discharge his social and political duties; is wise and shrewd in judgment; expresses himself not in too many words but rather in proverbs and analogies leaving his hearers to unravel his thoughts; is self-controlled under provocation, dignified in sorrow and restrained in success; and finally and*

*most importantly, is of excellent character. He is in no sense an educated man if he has all other qualities and dispositions but lacks good character: Good character is of the utmost importance a man without it, however otherwise distinguished, is only a carved wooden doll, as the Yoruba people say."*

The traditional African societies made no clear distinction between the educator and the parent. The educator was any adult of the same age with the child's parents; headman, king, chief, or any other community leaders who had the welfare of the society at heart.

#### **2.5.4 Parents**

The education of the children was not the task of biological parents only, it was a corporate responsibility of the whole village; every adult member of the society was a parent, educator and motivator of every child in the village and was supposed to lead by example (Samkange & Samkange, 1980:78 ).

There was less possibility of both the parents and educators committing horrible cases; like, abuse of children and other cases of crimes, like it is witnessed in schools and homes today. A report by statistics in South Africa last year estimates that 13% of all reported rapes involve educators or principals.

In this regard, Unisa study of 1999, Grey and Naidu (1998:3), reveals that the most dangerous place in the country for children is the home where 65% of rape cases take place. The parent and educators are supposed to create a safe place and large parenthood for children, thereby, limiting the possibility of misbehaving and promoting children's welfare in general.

In expressing the vital role that parents and other members of extended family play, Kaunda (as cited by Broodryk, 1998c:73), states that; "we cannot do enough to repay them for all they have done for us." They are a living symbol of Africa's continuity with the past, reflecting embodied wisdom.

There was an extensive social network that assisted children in their becoming and belonging. This intensive social network was and is still regarded by large population of Africans as having expertise to support and provide children with knowledge, experience and wisdom.

The parent was expected to be an expert in knowledge of his or her environment and the child was supposed to acquire the first experience about the environment from the parent; family tree, historical background of the tribe, nation, culture and tradition of the society.

Teffo (1994b:9) notes that in African tradition, the parents are expected to educate children about a bond between man and ancestors, who include the past heroes and heroines. This implies a deep sense of respect for religious beliefs and practices. The children need to know where they come from, and who they are, this knowledge, will allow them to venture into the unknown with confidence.

This viewpoint is also supported by Mbigi & Maree (1995b:55), who believe that in Afro-centric religion, in order to know what you can achieve, the past background is of vital importance. It is the idea of moving from the known to the unknown, which is recognized by most schools of thought.

## **2.6 Activities and Ubuntu**

The children were taught activities which unlocked their environment and molded their characters and personalities. Boys were taught to look after the cattle and the art of fighting with sticks, carrying a spear (or '*thobane*' in Setswana, which means a traditional fighting, stick, by groups like the Xhosa, Zulus and Basotho and many others). The carrying of '*thobane*' became a sense of manhood. A man who went about "carrying only his hands" was not a man but a woman (Samkange & Samkange, 1980:23).

The younger boys learned to look after goats under the supervision of older boys. They learned the responsibilities of herd boys; the importance of not driving the goats too fast when on trek; the necessity of constantly counting them to make certain that none has strayed; the need to know one's goats so that one can recognize and identify them individually and, above all, the duty and responsibility of protecting one's goats and the satisfaction of being able to defend them from '*dibata*', Setswana word, (which means, wild animals, such as, jackals), (Samkange & Samkange,1980:23).

This stage of looking after cattle, was without doubt, a stage of transition from '*ingwele*' (a boy who looks after the goats) to '*majaha*',( Ndebele word which means, young men whose main duty was hunting and fighting). It was at this stage, that these boys could now marry and start organizing the economic activities of their families, settle disputes, and communicate with their ancestors like their fathers did (Sparks,1994:16).

Smith (1996:18) points out that every human being has an inborn urge to become somebody. This sense of becoming gives an individual security and order. An orderly environment creates a secure atmosphere in which children can grow in a healthy manner. The child is in need of guidance and supervision. The adult is expected to play a role of disciplining the child with love and care in order to guide him to reach a state of responsible adulthood.

These young men could now observe the operation of *indaba* or *inkundla*, in Zulu or *lekgotla*, in Setswana, (council in which cases were discussed and judgment given). They were also considered when the regiment was sent to invade (*hlasela*, Zulu word which means to invade) the enemies. The choice into this regiment was regarded as success towards achieving manhood, social responsibility and an opportunity to display great spirit and courage in the fighting skills (Samkange & Samkange,1980:24).

According to Sparks (1994:14), the traditional African societies divided activities along sex and age. The women and girls worked in the field and did the cooking and housework. The men and boys were a symbol of the world of adventure: they performed the task of making the families and communities self-sufficient through hunting and gathering expeditions.

## **2.7 Methodology and Ubuntu**

The concept of partnership in education emphasized inclusivity as a value of Ubuntu and also an essence of democracy. Sindane (1994b:9) argues that democracy is not foreign to Africa. The elderly people would sit under the tree and share ideas and talk until they agreed.

This form of democracy promoted social responsibility, harmony, tolerance, and common commitment within the members of the society. The society was kept in a coherent shape and operated like a team of winners.

It is also supported by Mandela (1994:20), who speaks of how purest democracy was applied in the traditional African society. Everyone who wanted to speak did so. The people spoke without interruption and the meeting lasted for many hours. They spoke until they reached a consensus and everyone was heard.

Mandela (1994:21) further also gives an account of what he calls a bottom-up method of leadership. He explains shepherd leadership as the type of leadership whereby a shepherd would stay behind the flock, letting the most nimble to go on ahead, whereupon the others follow, not realizing that all along they were directed from behind. This approach has the potential of becoming an exciting leadership style in educational management.

The same principle of bottom-up approach can be followed in educating children starting from what the children know to the unknown; the simple, known facts to the complex. The children can be taught life experiences and

skills through the tribal folklores. They could learn, play leadership role games and enjoy at the same time.

Van der Westhuizen (1991:348) points out that children should be afforded opportunities that will reveal real life situations to them and empower them in skills, expertise and knowledge through planned activities.

Mbigi (1997:139) states that the traditional African education was a social and intellectual journey, story telling, entertainment, humour, singing, and dancing were all part and parcel of instructional methodology of traditional education. The participation and group work were central in the management of the child developing along the values reflected in Ubuntu.

Education was basically transmitted through oral presentation and characterized by a high level of respect. Broodryk (1998c:67) mentions the fact that people who could not read and write depended on verbal education and folklore to learn community values and norms.

The main agents of transmitting education were the parents and elderly people. They taught children rules and regulations that revealed Ubuntu to children for generations and generations.

## **2.8 The role of the community**

Mbiti (1990:2) mentions the fact that in the African traditional communities Ubuntu acted as the revelation of the African philosophies, traditional religions, and supported individuals in realizing their potentials.

The entire communal life, in its diversity, displayed the characteristics of African religion. It was the task of the individual to discern and conform to beliefs, ceremonies, rituals and festivals of the community in order to achieve the highest goal, the art of being human through belonging and adhering to the values of the community.

Mbigi (1995:7) seems to support Mbiti (1990:2), with regard to the idea of group solidarity: African communities had to stick together as a result of their deprivation and untold poverty. The group members were expected to show the highest degree of loyalty and conformity in order to achieve rewards. The community promoted self-reliance and self-content for the purpose of sustaining group survival and not individual material gains.

The individuals were expected to assimilate diverse beliefs, rituals, practices and religious ideas held or discerned from the family and community at large. This general state of doing things resulted from the kind of thinking patterned from the Setswana/Pedi expression, "*motho ke motho ka batho*", which means, "a person is a person through other persons".

Tutu (as cited in Valpy, 2001:2) notes that in the traditional communities, the group held precedence over an individual. The individual's identity derived from his/her membership, responsibility and obligations within the group. The individual's humanity was conditional to the respect he/she reflected to the rest of the community members.

It was in concert with other members of the community that a person could learn, accept and respect the beliefs and practices that formed the basic part of African philosophy. Mbiti (1990:3) believes that traditional religion occupies the whole person and his life and manifests itself not on paper but in terms of oral history, in people's hearts, minds and rituals. The religious leaders, like, priests, rainmakers, officiating elders and kings are regarded as symbols that represent this religion.

Van der Westhuizen (1991:410) sees the principal's role as that of promoting good relationships between the school and the home by participating in community activities and he/she can clarify the weaknesses and strengths of the school. The school needs to understand the nature of the community in which it operates.

The community is entrusted with exposition of values and norms to children. The Africans believe that everyone who has Ubuntu understands the value of life. The philosophy of Ubuntu teaches children to love themselves, love others and their belongings, and helping the community achieve what it has set out to achieve (Africa Today, 2001:3).

Mbiti (1990:3) explains that wherever an African is, there is his/her religion: in the field sowing seeds or harvesting, beer party, and funeral ceremony, writing examinations or at a university; if he/she is a politician, he/she takes it into parliament. The social institution serving the African communities should take this way of living into consideration.

## **2.9 The essence of Ubuntu**

### **2.9.1 “Enhlonipho”:** (Zulu word for respect)

According to Mdluli (1987:67), the concept of respect manifests itself in relationships between elders and young people, parents and children, leaders and the followers, men and women, and emphasizes respect not only to people one knows but even to strangers.

Mdluli believes that respect, forms the most basic essence of the philosophy of Ubuntu. One can share and show empathy to others but if you fail to show respect, the whole exercise becomes futile. The philosophy of Ubuntu has no compromise when it comes to respect; it is taken as the basis of human interactions.

There is no really meaningful education that can take place in the situation where there is no reciprocal relationship. The educator must have respect for the learners and the learners will respond positively to him/her and reciprocate this respect. The educator and the learner are interwoven in a complex dialectic relationship, where they must show mutual respect. There are traces of the child in the adult and those of the adult in the child.

In the traditional Ubuntu families the adult is expected to hold up to the child images of adulthood towards which the child is advancing. Bhengu (1996:3) confirms this notion through the understanding of; "*umuntu ngumuntu*", (in Zulu, which means, a person is a self-defining value). A person confirms to his family, neighbours, society, the world and the cosmic order what kind of person he is in everything he does, his thoughts, behaviour and actions.

Respect should be the cardinal point in the operation of the school. The management team should inculcate a culture of respect for all teaching and learning activities to be successful. Van der Westhuizen (1991:44) regards educational leadership as integral to the human-relations side of leadership in general. The management staff can act as a symbol of respect and avoid imposing strict measures that might erode good relationships at school.

### **2.9.2 Fellowship: caring, being sensitive to the plight of others.**

A person is considered to be operating on level of Ubuntu values, if that person is always working towards the creation of a conducive environment that promotes peace rather than contributes towards hostile situations or heat in any social interactions.

Koka (1997:23) believes that human beings were created to live together peacefully and to promote a good atmosphere where the spirit of caring and loving should prevail. People should be welcoming to others. They must display a sense of acceptance to others without conditions attached.

Mandela (1994:22) states how the fellowship, '*abantu*', (Xhosa word for friendship) among the African people, which allowed them to live in relative peace, was shattered by the coming of the white people who came with symbols of disturbing peace, fire-breathing weapons. The white men came with new laws that drove Africans from their land and caused them to be dependent on them for survival.

Despite the shattering of "abantu", fellowship, which took place throughout the continent of Africa, intentionally or unintentionally, Samkange & Samkange (1980:78) states that there is no Shona person who could proclaim that he or she was without "*hukama*" Shona word, meaning, family relationship.

This network of relationships was always there to assist in terms of hardships or happiness; there was always a "*sekuru*" (Shona) meaning (uncle); "*malome*" (Setswana) or "*tete*" (Shona, meaning aunt) who were ready to assist at all times.

In safeguarding its environment, the society has to conform to certain principles that regulate the members' behaviour, derived from their societal value system or frame of reference. As a frame of reference the African traditional societies followed the philosophy of Ubuntu which provided essences that determined behaviour and were central to the survival of their societies.

The sense of unity and brotherhood in these communities was indicated by concepts such as "*Umfowetu*," (in Zulu, which means brotherhood or son of the soil) (Mbigi and Maree, 1995:1).

Mbigi and Maree (1995b:1) further refer to the "fellowship" amongst Africans as group solidarity that was good not only for brotherly group care, but much more, for group survival. The notion of Group Solidarity, highlighted the basic belief of Ubuntu; "*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*", which means, "man can only be a man through others".

The Africans were expected to display brotherhood through their community institutions that regulated their day to day activities like, '*ilima*', (Zulu word for a work party), "*letsema*", (in Setswana), "*ukuzila*", (Zulu word, meaning mourning, if a member of neighbours family has passed; away, It was an

African tradition to share the sorrow with the bereaved family (Bhengu,1996:7).

This spirit of brotherhood should prevail in school-community relationships. The parents should be treated with respect and love at school. They should feel welcome. The school should operate as integral part of the society. English & English (1997:62) argue that parents have the potential to improve the decisions made in education of children. The parents have full knowledge of the learners due to their direct, ongoing interaction with the children on daily basis.

### **2.9.3 Sharing**

Maphisa (1994:15) states that in the traditional African communities, there was no person who lived in poverty. The people were ready to extend a helping hand to those who were in dire need.

The notion of sharing is an important element of Ubuntu. The idea of or believe that; " A person is a person through others", it also involves the ancestors. Therefore, not only the living must share with and care for each other, but there must be mutual co-existence between the death and the living (Ndaba, 1994:13-14; Van Niekerk, 1994:2).

Hence during the traditional ceremonies, African beer is poured on the ground to let the ancestors share with the people in the ceremony.

Sharing was an important feature of the traditional African communities. It is expressed well in the Setswana idiom, "*Bana ba motho ba kgaogana tlhogo ya tsie*" (children of the same family share even a locust head). Sisulu (1986:38) maintains that if a person had cattle, it was part of the community in which he/she lived. The person owned the cattle but the milk of the cow was theirs. The cow, an asset, remained the property of the owner.

This idea is supported by Tutu (as cited in Allen, 1995:116) states that the characteristics of the early churches, which operated like the Ubuntu families, were their extra-ordinary willingness to share. The early churches went as far as to have its members selling their properties. There was an understanding within the church that the whole was much more important than the individual. They believed that when one part suffered, the whole suffered with it, and when the whole prospered, then the whole prospered with it.

Sithole (2001:9) states that Ubuntu encouraged winners to compensate the losers and the rich to share with the poor in the traditional African villages. Njongonkulu (1998:6) mentions that a new faith for new South Africa embodies all that people do. Each day, people are faced with challenges of performing little act of kindness for a bigger cause. They are contributing for the welfare of everybody in the society, sharing of wealth, ideas and other vital resources.

The traditional communities displayed a high element of collective unity. Mbigi & Maree (1995a:7) believes that Ubuntu was important for survival of the group or community. The traditional social communities had to stick together, show positive sense of sacrifice, suffer, and demonstrate a spirit of service that reflected a high degree of selflessness.

Tutu (as cited in Africa Today, 2000:2) describes the spirit of sharing that was embodied in the philosophy of Ubuntu. It embraced hospitality, caring about others, being able to go extra mile for the sake of others. The people believed that their humanity was caught up, bound up, inextricably with those of others.

In that regard Van Binsbergen (2001b:1) refers to Ubuntu philosophy as a shared and recognized humanity that brings people together in harmony. The people are inclined to share any available resources that exist for the benefit of common existence.

Lukhele (1990:1) mentions that black people had a tradition of assisting one another. At ploughing time, members of one family would offer their services to their neighbour who would in turn lend them oxen with which to plough their mealie fields.

These systems eventually gave birth to socio-economic formations like "*mogodisano*" or "*stokvels*", that are emerging as economic reality of the new dispensation, where participants become involved in the collective enterprises, based on a tradition of co-operation, communalism and sharing.

Van der Westhuizen (1991:410) points out that the principal finds himself on daily basis in situations wherein he must make dynamic decisions. He can learn from the lessons presented by "*stokvel*" or "*mogodisano*", where participants work co-operatively, communally and above all, share for the well-being of the whole, social club.

Dlomo (as cited in Broodryk,1998a:8) believes that in traditional families practising Ubuntu, if a man possessed two cows with enough milk and the neighbour did not possess a cow, Ubuntu expected the man to donate the milk of the second cow and not the cow itself, the cow remained the owner's properties.

Sharing was of cardinal importance in societies that adopted Ubuntu as a way of life. It was not limited to the people you know and even strangers were to be welcomed, and share with them whatever there was, despite ethnicity, race and sex. Mandela (1994:22) shows the natural sense of sharing displayed by the African societies when they shared their land with whites like they share air and water; land was not for individual man to possess.

He is supported by Moodie (1960:431) in terms of intensive level of sharing which the survivors of the 1686, Dutch Ship, Stavenisse that was wrecked off

the Natal coast, observed amongst the Xhosas. They spent three years living among the Xhosa people and were given a piece of land, cattle and food.

They reflected their appreciation of high sense of sharing that they observed amongst the Xhosa people by saying: *"It would be impossible to buy any slaves there, for they would not part with their children, or any of their connections for anything in the world, loving one another with a most remarkable strength of affection...In their intercourse with each other, they are very civil, polite and talkative, saluting each other, whether male or female, young or old, whenever they meet; asking whence they come, and whither they are going, what their news...One may travel two hundred Miles through the country, without any fear from men...Neither need one be in any apprehension about meat and drink, as they have in every village or kraal a house of entertainment for travellers, where these are not only lodged, but fed also"*.

Van der Merwe (1996:1) states that to be human is to affirm one's humanity by acknowledging the humanity of others in its infinite variety of content and form. This implies that people should be sensitive to the general conditions that affect your neighbours and community, including, sharing the little resources that one possesses with them.

Sharing was of cardinal importance and the community was encouraged to live their lives with dignity.

#### **2.9.4 Human dignity**

Broodryk (1997:15;1997:63) describes that Ubuntu affiliates to respect for individuality, particularity, and historicity which is important for the human dignity and the country as a whole. This viewpoint is emphasized by Wiredu (1995:9), who states that respect for particularities of belief and practices of

others is a confirmation of the famous axiom; "*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*", which means, "a human being is a human being through other human beings."

Despite the emphasis on particularity and individuality in the context of community, Teffo (1994:7) states that individualism is not practised at the expense of the community. Traditional communities stick to the basis of their thinking, "I am because we are."

Vilakazi (1994:7) states that in the communities practising ubuntu as a way of life, human values are placed before the economical, political and financial interests.

Man, and not material aspects of life, is regarded as the central point in the African traditional society. Therefore, man was to be given the highest dignity despite his social status, the number of cattle he owned, wealth, and ethnicity. The African traditional societies were characterized by the unconditional respect for human dignity. They recognized that a person's self-worth as a human being can only be expressed fully through interaction with others.

Mbigi & Maree (1995a:88) support him in terms of the social systems that prevailed in the African tribal village community. It was basically based on Ubuntu philosophy. In these villages, "*a man was a man*", and therefore, was entitled to unconditional respect and dignity.

Human dignity acts as the foundation of sound discipline in the pedagogic situation. The management team can maintain sound discipline through respecting the dignity of learners and educators respectively. Dignity is not subscribed to the level of education, status, age and sex. The principal and his management team or educators, cannot claim more human dignity because of the position they hold.

Kilian and Viljoen (1990:169) believe that respect for human dignity can result from mutual candidness between educators and learners in order to promote

co-operation. This kind of behaviour leads to a high educator-learner morale that is vital for the achievement of educative teaching. Respect for human dignity remains the central feature of determining humanness or Ubuntu. The respect for human dignity results in important elements of human relationship, such as, integrity, passion and harmony.

Van der Westhuizen, Basson & Niemann (1991:295) say real professional satisfaction is associated with a healthy and harmonious spirit among staff that can lead to a conducive culture of teaching and learning. The educator must respect the dignity of the child, despite his stage of adulthood and the child should respect the dignity of the educator.

Tutu, as cited in Allen (1995:126) explains that human being's distinctiveness derives from the fact that they are created in the image of God and are therefore of infinite worth. As a result, a human being deserves dignity from birth to death. Nothing could take human dignity from him or her.

There were cases of witchcraft among the community members of traditional societies. The culprits were not burned or killed, but would be expelled from the village. Despite having committed crime, they would still be treated with dignity; they were helped by the villagers to load their belongings and bid farewell.

Respect for human dignity was practised across the colour, tribe, and status. Sparks (1994:9) states how the victors would drive off the enemy's cattle and capture their women and children. The defeated tribe was neither killed nor expelled and its productive resources were not destroyed. It was a trend that the victorious tribe would return some of the captured cattle in accordance with the principle that "we must not let even our enemies die with hunger."

Chinkanda (1990:2) notes with serious concern that it does not matter how rich, educated or popular one could be, if one was labeled as not having

Ubuntu, one was likely to be rejected. A good breed was based on the behaviour of the family, individual or group and not on wealth or a high status or education. In other words, human dignity was not in anyway linked with wealth, education, or properties owned, but was linked to the person's humanness or Ubuntu.

Mokgoro (1997:9) highlights the necessity of collective efforts to enhance human dignity through the famous saying; "*A human being can only be a human being through other human beings,*" and "*People live through the help of others.*" The philosophy of Ubuntu requires the equal and dignified treatment of all people despite their conditions.

Mbigi and Maree (1995a:2) confirm that the central belief of Ubuntu is that a man can only be a man through others and should therefore, work collectively with others for the survival of the society. This notion is supported by Sindane (1994a:10), who regards Ubuntu as a vehicle to restore people's self-respect and human dignity, by implementing participation and cooperation, that develop and reconstruct the community.

## **2.10 Conclusion**

After analysing the essential elements of Ubuntu principles, the following conclusion are made:

- ◆ The aim of Ubuntu was to prepare people for life. The children were encouraged to venture into the unknown at an early age. The traditional communities believed that success achieved from a hunting expedition, would earn someone status and respect within the community.
- ◆ Africans are expected to maintain distinctive collective consciousness in their behaviour, expression, and spiritual self-fulfilment, reflecting values like sharing.

- ◆ Ubuntu principles contribute towards effective learning. The community is kept in a cohesive structure. The communities operate through certain philosophical frameworks that organize them into a particular form of life.
- ◆ There was no person without a sense of belonging. People wanted to conform in their way of life.
- ◆ The human interest came before those of economic and political interests.
- ◆ People are social beings by nature and should reach out to each other's way of life in order to understand one another.
- ◆ The extended family played a prominent role in the development and growth of children. The extended families empowered children and motivated them to become someone.
- ◆ Every language in Southern Africa has a word that defines, "*umuntu*", a person. The word defines specificity of being that is not static but is an ongoing process.
- ◆ The "*umuntu*", is expressed in a variety of manners and form, but it refers to a person.
- ◆ A person is a self-defining being. A human being writes history about himself/herself through interactions.
- ◆ A person deserves unconditional respect. A person is created in the image of God, hence God has, as a result of this, imbued a person human dignity.
- ◆ Children were taught practical knowledge emanating from their environment. The children could identify easily with the knowledge from their environment.
- ◆ The children were regarded as the integral part of the society. Education of the children was matched with the child's immediate surroundings.

- ◆ Knowledge of tradition was of greater importance to the society. There were trees and animals that were important and not supposed to be destroyed. For example, wild fruit trees.
- ◆ People were taught traditional folk stories. Children were taught, mostly, about oral history and many other legends.
- ◆ The community promoted a sense of respect. The children were expected to respect each other from an early age.
- ◆ The children belonged to the whole community and it was the responsibility of the villagers to educate them along their value systems. If the child was caught misbehaving, the nearest adult was to mete punishment equal to the damage or reprimand them.
- ◆ The children were cared for with love and kindness.
- ◆ The individual was expected to adhere to the community aspirations and needs. Hence, the children were to be educated in their traditional aspects of life.
- ◆ Philosophy of Ubuntu can instill discipline in people's lives.
- ◆ The African person is an integral part of the society. The people were expected to display societal norms and values.
- ◆ The educators drew the information from the children's environment. The children feel excited when the information from their surroundings is presented to them. They can easily identify with that type of knowledge.
- ◆ The societies sustained themselves through group solidarity and not individual self-reliance.

- ◆ The whole community-parent body had to promote collective cultural unity in the society.
- ◆ The education of the youth was by the society for the society. The parents worked collectively in planning for the education of the youth. It was a corporate responsibility of the whole village.
- ◆ Every adult member of the community was parent, educator and motivator of every child in the village.
- ◆ There were fewer cases of child abuse in the society. The parents took a joint responsibility to look after the children.
- ◆ The children were taught activities that unlocked their environment and molded their characters and personalities. Their education was practical in many ways.
- ◆ The communities practised democracy that was relevant to the context of their environment. For example, in a meeting, all people were allowed to speak. The main purpose was to reach consensus. The right of the minority was protected.
- ◆ The chiefs followed shepherd leadership style as a way of managing their village. They gave villagers opportunity to raise their concerns., The chief directed the discussion from behind, he/she was not imposing her/his decisions on them.
- ◆ Ubuntu was transmitted verbally from one generation to another. There was no written material.
- ◆ The “being”, depended on the belonging and adhering to the values of the community. A person was expected to belong to a particular framework in

order to become. This understanding fulfilled the idea of *“motho ke motho ka batho”*.

- ◆ Respect forms the basis of human interaction in communities practising Ubuntu. A person was expected to respect others in order to be respected. It was the Humanism that found expression in concert with others.
- ◆ No real effective education can take place in the situation where there is no reciprocal relationship. The educator must have respect for his/her learners and the learners should also respect their educators.
- ◆ The spirit of “fellowship” allowed traditional communities to live in relative peace.
- ◆ Sharing was the cardinal feature of traditional communities. They believed in sharing as a way of surviving and keeping the society in tact.
- ◆ In the African village systems, “a man was a man”, was therefore, entitled to unconditional human dignity and respect. A human being was respected for what he/she was, a person, and not for status or wealth he/she possessed.
- ◆ Even enemies were respected by the villagers or even the people who committed crime of different sorts, they still deserved to be respected.

### **2.10 Close**

In this chapter, an effort was made to analyse the essential elements of the Ubuntu principle. In Chapter 3, education will be looked at from the Ubuntu perspective.

# CHAPTER 3

## EDUCATION FROM AN UBUNTU PERSPECTIVE

### 3.1 Introduction

In this chapter the supervision of children, discipline, respect for norms and values, play as an educational activity, promoting a sense of commitment to work, promoting a sense of belonging, instilling self-reliance, parental role and community involvement will be presented from an Ubuntu perspective.

### 3.2 Supervision of the child

In the traditional African societies, according to Samkange & Samkange (1980:78), education of the youth was by the society for the society, for example, when a stranger found children playing or some delinquent boys playing while the goats grazed in the cornfield, he drove them off the field.

Depending on the damage caused, he would give them only a scolding for neglecting their duty or a sound thrashing with a supple "*mutowa*" switch, Shona word for a stick. The stranger would then proceed with his journey: there was nothing wrong. The children were regarded as an asset of the whole community. Hence, all adults were expected to exercise joint social responsibility in the children's upbringing.

In the traditional African societies the whole parent body supervised the children's growth and development. The parent was any adult of your biological parents' age and they needed to be treated with respect and dignity. Education, as a human phenomenon, was not confined to a particular place. Education took place in any place where the adult and the child interacted.

Van der Westhuizen (1991:348) regards the school as the practice field for the child's later adult life. The school is seen as a platform making provision for preparing learners as fully as possible by revealing aspects of reality to

them during their school career. While Van Schalkwyk (1988:14) defines the school as

- an institution for teaching and learning
- where pupils receive a unique kind of pedagogic counselling
- under the leadership of professional educators so that subjects' content may be conveyed to them effectively.

Van der Westhuizen, et al., (1995:602) regard the school as an organization where members are entrusted with tasks, the division of work is specified, and lines of authority and responsibility spelled out.

It is apparent from the above descriptions of the school given by Van der Westhuizen, Van Schalkwyk and Basson et al., that the children's education, unlike, in the traditional societies, is mostly confined to the school as a social institution supervised by professional educators.

Kruger and Van Schalkwyk (1993:17) indicate that the children are vulnerable by nature. The children depend on the teachers and adults to provide an environment that is conducive for them to feel safe and secure. They (children) are ready to learn from the teachers and parents in order to be independent. For effective educative teaching to take place, teachers must know the nature and characteristics of their pupils.

Mbigi and Maree (1995b:16) state that the modern socio-economic systems and their ideology such as "apartheid", have destroyed the social institutions that played a major role in the children's upbringing. To the extreme, this move, by the apartheid government, stripped the Africans of their human dignity. The parents as primary teachers of children experience socio-economic pressure and have little time to play their role of educating children. The role is left to teachers who do not have enough knowledge about the nature and characteristics of the children.

Hence, education is engulfed by so many social problems, such as problems of discipline and abuse. There is no way the school can succeed in educating the children effectively alone without the full support of the parents.

### **3.3 Play as an educational activity**

The norms, values, beliefs and traditions of the society were portrayed to the children through traditional activities that took a form of play or story telling. These traditional activities were organized informally (Haley, 1979:15) The children identified with the education transmitted to them by the old grandmothers and grandfathers.

The education was a natural, relevant and simple act. It took place anywhere, not only at school under the professional eye of the educator, and had no restrictions placed on it. The children enjoyed sitting in a friendly way surrounding the old grandmothers and grandfathers and some sitting on their legs. Love and trust characterized this interaction.

Kruger and Van Schalkwyk (1993:17) remind the teachers that the children experience the teaching-learning situation in their total capacity as human beings. Therefore, they need to be treated with love, care and respect. The educators need to take into consideration the time allocated for activities and response of the children.

This seems to limit the freedom of children. The philosophy of Ubuntu values human interest more than any other thing (cf. Chapter 2, Par. 2.5.8). The children need enough time to play and become involved in activities that provide joy to them as they develop skills and acquire knowledge.

Mbigi and Maree (1995b:11) state that one of the basic reasons why South Africa is not competitive is that the majority of its people have not been developed in terms of skills and knowledge. In the traditional African societies children were taught life skills and the contents exposed to children while

playing. Through play they confirmed their identity because the type of playing activities they were involved in reflected the culture to which they belonged.

Jefferson (2000:10) confirms that children grow through learning and they do not know discrimination of any form. The philosophy of Ubuntu values men for what they are and not what they have or can do. Ubuntu urge parents to expose children to their natural environment.

Samkange (1980:23) explains how Mzilikazi, former Amandebele king, was taught to fight using sticks during playing traditional games and later as a herd boy. Mzilikazi, was taught about names of mountains, rivers, trees, importance of not driving the goats too fast when on trek, the necessity of constantly counting them to make sure that none has strayed, the need to know one's goats so that one could recognize and identify them individually. He was also taught to take instructions and obey the orders of superiors.

Landman, as cited in Van der Westhuizen (1991:364), expresses the purpose of education as empowering the learner to think independently and become a responsible adult within the context of the community. The role that the influential members of the community played in the traditional African societies can be rekindled in terms of exposing learners to the real world, developing and preparing them to respect values that are essential for the well-being of the whole society in South Africa.

### **3.4 Respect for norms and values**

Mbiti (1990:2) states that to be human is to belong to the whole community and its religion. This implies that an individual must associate him or herself with the community culture. This involves participating, respecting its values, norms, and so forth.

Sogolo (1993:200) points out that it is important for Africans to replace the colonial values with pre-colonial African value systems to achieve the spirit goodwill. In the traditional African societies norms and values of the

community regulated people's behaviour. There is no way effective education can take place without respect for societal norms. Education is a normed act and the community needs to organize education of children in such a way that it reveals the norms and value system of that community.

Mokgoba (1996:44) points out the fact that the present educational management systems are not geared to serve African needs and aspirations. They were initiated to serve the colonial motherland's interests in a rather initiative fashion. The emphasis is placed on accumulating wealth or profit and not on promoting human respect.

Mandela (1994:11) states that rituals, custom and taboo shaped the life of African children. This served to keep the communities in shape and order. The children in the traditional communities were taught not to challenge the authority of their parents, it was taboo.

The modern school gives the child the freedom to learn through questioning, unlike in the traditional communities. The parents feel that the school drives a serious wedge between the community and their children. The products that are produced by the schools do not fit well into the society.

Van der Westhuizen et al., (1991:410) explain that the school principal is faced with a situation where he/she must take decisions that affect the school and school community on daily basis. The school should develop its value system, emanating from that of the community it serves. The school should reflect all the facets of community motives.

The school is the centre where the community's norms and values are conceptualized. None of the two, neither the school nor the community can succeed in carrying their tasks successfully without the support of the other. There must be a healthy relationship between the school and the community that reflects their commitment to work for the success of the whole community.

### **3.5 Commitment to work**

The traditional African societies believed that children were a gift from the departed and they were to be provided with the necessary support for growth and development (Mbiti, 1990:105). They (departed) were believed to be cementing and binding together the whole family. It was also believed that if the departed were offended, it was often said that they punished the offender and demanded a rectification.

The community members conformed to these beliefs not because of fear of being punished but they realised that it was important to stick together for the benefit of the whole community. This belief kept the communities committed to work hard for the well being of all families and the community as a whole.

This sense of promoting a work-orientated spirit was spread to the children at an early age. Ngubane as cited in Bhengu (1996:9) states that Ubuntu encourages people to become the best that they can be in all the facets of their lives. The traditional African societies had an intensive sense of commitment to work.

Samkange & Samkange (1980:80) explains that Africans had systems such as, "*nhimbe*", in Shona, "*ilima*", in Ndebele, or "*letsema*", in Setswana, wherein, an individual brewed beer and invited his neighbours to assist him in performing a particular task. The supervision of the work was shared among them. They also had systems, like, "*Majangano*", in Shona, when smaller group of villagers worked at one another' fields.

The people sung, joked and danced as they worked. To them work was a symbol of collective enjoyment. They could also joke with superiors like the chief or the king during the occasions, really experiencing moments of commitment and enjoyment. This gives an indication that Africans are by nature hard workers and it is the task of management of the school to revive those traditional institutions that made work exciting and enjoyable to Africans.

Govender (1994:23) states that the school need to create a culture of understanding and co-operation between the major stakeholders in education. The idea of improving the condition of child upbringing, is not a new concept.

The traditional communities worked collectively to educate children in values and norms emanating from their environment. The school and the community need to work collectively in the spirit of Ubuntu to lead children to responsible stages of adulthood. The biggest challenge facing management in schools, particularly, in former model C and independent schools, is to protect the decline of standard in education and not integration of learners from diverse cultures to be committed to a common goal, non-racial, sexist society.

Vilakazi (1994:7) maintains that the highest respect should be placed on the human beings in all daily interactions. The communities should show a high level of unity, if not co-operation in order to work in harmony with the school for the benefit of the whole country. The management of the schools need the support of all communities to succeed in their endeavour, educative teaching, aimed at nation building.

### **3.6 Promoting a sense of belonging**

In the traditional African society there is no person without a network of social relationship "*hukuma*", in Shona, which means, relationship. The extended family was the cornerstone of the Africa social order. There was a chain of human relationship, including important personalities such as "*vatete*", (which means aunt,) "*sekuru*" (uncle) "*ambuya*" (grandmother), vazekuru (nephews and nieces).

Setiloane (1987:10) emphasizes the fact that there is no person without belonging in traditional societies. Belonging was a value that people strove for. They would do everything to conform in order to belong to a particular community. Through belonging a person could become.

This idea of belonging, which was a central point of existence, is supported by Mbiti (1990:2) in terms of being human, growing and developing. A person could only be human, grow and develop into a responsible and effective person through belonging. Belonging was a form of prerequisite for becoming.

It is apparent from the above contributions by Mbiti and Setiloane that the school principals and their management teams can promote the spirit of togetherness amongst South Africans through following traditional strategies. Learners should be taught to work collectively for the benefit of the whole community.

Mbigi and Maree (1995a:12) advise that there is a need to expand the perspectives of people working in African organizations to enable them to cope with the challenges facing their organizations. The community management should encourage the transmission of education in such a way that it prepares learners to go back to their community and fulfil their cultural obligation as expected by their respective communities. For the community to stick together, it must display a high level of discipline.

### **3.7 Discipline**

The traditional African societies displayed a high level of discipline that kept the society in order. Mbigi (1997:1) mentions how families worked collectively in performing cultural activities such as "*jakwara*", in Shona, which means, thrashing grain collectively and "*Mazoro*", the villagers took turns in looking after cattle, goats and sheep. The relationship was based on the spirit of mutual trust and a high level of discipline.

There was no individual who did not want to conform to what the community was doing. Failure to conform could result in one being regarded as a social-outcast. People's way of thinking was characterized by the understanding that; "*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*". Hence, villagers worked collectively in performing tasks that involved issues of survival.

The school alone cannot maintain a good discipline. Kruger (1996:11) states that discipline is an important element of school and classroom management and it ensures good results, so according to him, sound discipline is associated with effective informative education.

Traditionally, discipline of children was not confined to the schoolyard and what is happening in the classroom only, the whole parent community took part in disciplining the children (Samkange & Samkange, 1980:78). Hence, even a stranger could punish delinquent boys if they left cattle to trample the ploughing fields.

In modern education the process is left to the school and the school also further leaves it to individual educators in the classroom. This seems to have many disadvantages for the school and the community morally, compared to the education that took place in the traditional societies. There are numbers of cases of abuse and crime that are reported on weekly basis that are committed by teachers and pupils.

In the traditional societies there were social institutions that regulated the behaviour of people in the community. There was no community member who wanted to be regarded as a social-outcast. Any person who failed to conform to societal rules was ordered to appear in the “*dare*”, in Shona, which means, traditional court. For example, if he/she was found guilty, he/she could be fined a goat that was slaughtered and shared by everybody, including the culprit.

The action was a corrective measure aimed at a change in behaviour but not revenge. A high level of discipline was expected from an individual. During the feasting jokes were exchanged and even the victim or culprit shared the occasion with everybody.

Van der Westhuizen (1991:223) categorizes discipline into negative discipline that involves inflicting punishment while positive discipline aims at influencing the person differently. In terms of the spirit of Ubuntu, negative discipline is

discouraged and promotion of a change in behaviour is regarded as a symbol of meaningful and effective learning.

Disciplinary measures at school should be mainly directed at a change in behaviour but not revenge. Squelch and Lemmer as cited by Kruger (1996:40), mention that the violence, abuse of drugs, alcohol, family disintegration and poverty, that impact negatively on education, come as a result of a lack of discipline.

The traditional social institutions can help to restore discipline in schools to promote law and order. The school cannot expect to handle and stop above social problems effectively without the intensive involvement of the community.

### **3.8 Community involvement**

In expressing the idea of community involvement, Khoza, as cited in Broodryk (1998:142), states in Shangaan; “*rintiho rinwe a ri nusi hove*” which means, one finger cannot pick up a grain`.

The Shona expression; “Chara chimwe hachitswane inda”, with the same meaning to the above Tsonga version, is used by Mbigi and Maree (1995b:109) to emphasize the community’s collective actions.

They are supported by Busia (1967:42), who describes that to be human, is conditional to recognizing the humanity of others and establish human relations with them, thereby affirming the belief “*umuntu ngumuntu ngabanye abantu*”, (in Zulu/Xhosa, a person is a person through other persons).

The notion of community involvement in the schools is not a new idea. Sparks (2001:5), describes the impacts of Ubuntu on community as celebrated love, and passion of living, and spiritual craft in eliminating people in a quick harsh way in order to protect the group. Samkange & Samkange (1980:78) supports this idea of community involvement in terms of the education of the youth that was controlled by the society for the society in the traditional societies. The

community had a frame of reference through which children were educated and people were expected to conform to that. This helped to regulate the conduct of the community members and kept the whole community in order.

This implies that it is not healthy for the school to operate in isolation from other community educational structures and marginalize itself from the community it serves. The school needs to create a conducive atmosphere that will allow the community to feel at home. The community harbours the morals, values, beliefs, tradition, culture and other important elements that nurture the child's growth and development.

Van der Westhuizen (1991:411) states that the school-community relations generate trust and interest in the community for the school to ensure the community's support of and participation in school activities that are important for the welfare of the child. He further describes the principal's role as that of a determining figure of future school-community relationships.

This idea of Van der Westhuizen, is not a new notion, it has been emphasized by Cambray (2000:9) who describes the community involvement as the prerequisite of any development in the village.

The community involvement in the school should be thoroughly planned to avoid discouraging the technical core of the school or educators from performing their professional tasks as expected by the community and their authorities. The principal and management team can create space for the community in the following category of management areas:

### **3.8.1 Decision-making**

Decision-making is one of the central concepts that are used to determine the nature of the operation of an institution: to judge whether it follows an autocratic, democratic or a participatory approach in fulfilling its task.

Sindane (1994a:9) points out that in the African tradition, elders sit under a tree and talk until they agree and they will then go out to work hard with the

intention of fulfilling their commitments. Mandela (1994:20) supports him in terms of how pure democracy was practised in Africa. He explains that everyone who wanted to speak did so without interruption and meetings lasted for hours. The main purpose was to reach a consensus and if they failed they would agree to meet again to resolve the issue.

The central point was to reach consensus and to respect minority rights in decision making. The majority rule idea was unknown to them. The king or chief spoke at the end of the meeting. His task was to sum up what had been said and form some consensus among diverse opinions. Praises, dances and the singing of cultural songs to keep the spirit of people together characterized the end of the meeting.

With the issue of parental community being on the increase in the general management of the school, the principals should learn from the old saying that two heads are better than one. This old saying is relevant in the application of educational management in modern schools for the promotion of a spirit of partnership in education and that of the spirit of the constitution of the country.

It is not the unilateral function of the principal to make decisions, his or her task is to monitor the decision-making process to create enough space for the technical core of the school, teachers and community. It is important that the principal must remember that people need space to prove their worth.

### **3.8.2 Problem solving**

Mbigi & Maree (1995a:38) explains how he transformed the company from an absolute economic institution based on exclusive relationships into an enterprising community with inclusive approaches characterized by trust and a close bond of African village. The traditional problem-solving structures were introduced and achieved maximum results for the company.

He further states that he did not destroy the formal structures but kept them for maintaining form and control in the institution. The organization was turned into villages with semi-autonomous powers and formed a network of informal relationships across formal structures and relationships to add value implementation and promote integration of the company and the community.

Mbigi's & Maree (1995a:38) idea of reinventing African informal problem-solving structures can be applicable in solving problems that confront the school and community. The structures like the "*kgotla*", which means, African traditional court, wherein every person who was present in the sitting was allowed to say something and was heard, should be introduced in the school by way of participatory democracy.

The task of problem solving should not be the task of the principal and his management team only. Educators and parents should be allowed to take part and they will develop confidence and feel that their contribution is highly valued. The "*kgotla*", which means, traditional court, in Setswana, can be used as a vehicle of problem-solving to give the school and community shape.

Bagin, Gallagher & Kindred (1994:129) think that the value of the community's involvement in the school is to promote informative education. The parent brings with him the warmth and support of the home to school. As a result, the learners can learn better if their parents take part in their education.

Kruger (1996:34) explains that community involvement in problem-solving processes can serve to restore trust between the school and community. During the apartheid era, schools became centres of the struggle between the government and learners. The teachers were caught up between the government, that they had to serve and the communities to which they belonged. They were called names like, sell-outs and lost the creditability in the eyes of the students and their communities.

These two components could not work together in problem solving. The community perceived teachers as part of the problem that obstructed their

children from getting real education. This spirit of negativism, spread even to children and protest marches were held against the system, symbolized by the teachers on the ground or principal. The community saw the school as the agent of government, acculturation and detribalization.

The parent should be allowed to play a major role in these problem-solving structures. The principal and his management staff should learn to respect the parent viewpoint and not to regard them as children. The educational management staff should avoid imposing solutions for problems on parents.

### **3.3.8 Policy making**

In the traditional societies there were social institutions entrusted with the matters of policy making. Samkange & Samkange (1980:77) states that the Shona people of Zimbabwe would meet in "*dare*", which means, traditional council, to design policies. It is this group of men, headmen, elderly people and other important people in the community, who played a major role in drafting guiding principles and shaped the direction and community life.

In the traditional Xhosa communities the issues of policy making, was also addressed in the traditional councils, for example, the king was assisted by his "*amaphakathi*", (a group of councillors of high rank who functioned as parliament and judiciary). They were well informed about the tribal history and custom. The villagers and the king respected their opinions and contribution.

The central point of their operation was the respect for people's minority rights and tolerance. Everybody was equal before his or her eyes and even the king could be criticized. Therefore, there was no way that the king could impose his will on the people. There were intensive debates before a consensus could be reached.

In most modern schools issues of policy making are the major source of conflicts. Van der Westhuizen (1991:411) points out that policy making follows immediately after determining goals and is a more precise reflection of the

goals. The policies portray goals in regard to their relevancy to all members of school-community relationships. It is a tendency of modern people, to make people follow what they say and they want to dominate in any dialogue.

This can be the case in most schools where principals or teachers want to dictate school policies to parents. Mbiti (1990:3), observes the fact that African communities have their value system that reflects their way of life. The school policies should be drafted in terms of these value systems. Traditionally, the individuals were expected to assimilate whatever religious ideas, beliefs and practices were held or observed by their families and communities.

In accordance with the present constitution of the country, the community members will have opportunities to discuss these value systems and come up with a new value system that is to be followed. There must be some guiding principles that dictate people's conduct and behaviour. In cases of controversies, there should always be urgent collective "*indaba*", in Zulu, which means, a council, to iron out any controversial issue emanating from the community.

The "*indaba*", must operate in the form of a participatory democracy; anyone presents, should be allowed to talk without disturbances and his/her contribution should be highly valued.

These Ubuntu guiding principles can be integrated in the school system to help resolve conflicts in schools. For example, the principles of "impartiality and inclusiveness", that form part of what Van der Westhuizen (1991:315), calls a system of "process consultation" is not new, they are embedded within the Ubuntu management strategies that are aimed at preventing and resolving conflicts in the school.

The principal and his management team should realize that the issue of policy-making should be the task of the whole staff and community, not simply of the head or the senior staff. The legislative function is not exercised by

senior staff but by all the teachers who are also seen as being managers in classroom context. The principal should initiate the process of policy making. He/She must use the authority vested in his/her hands to make sure that there is a policy in place for the effective functioning of the school.

This move will promote a sense of ownership and respect on the side of the parents and educators. The parent and educators will support the school principal in the conceptualization of the school policy. If the space is not created for parents and educators, they will wish and pray for the failure of school policy.

#### **3.8.4 Building and renovating schools**

Samkange & Samkange (1980:80) states that Africans had organized labour systems such as “*zunde*”, amongst the Shona people, wherein the whole community participated in doing a particular job without any form of payment. People were imbued with the sense of doing things for themselves without waiting for anybody to do them on their behalf.

This spirit of self-empowerment, emanating from traditional ways of doing things, can be inculcated in the present parent communities for the benefit of children. In most cases parents of today complain of the government that is dragging its feet in erecting schools for their children. The government alone, cannot succeed in fulfilling all the community's needs and demands.

The present communities do not feel obliged to contribute something towards the building of schools. Presently there is a cry by the people for more classrooms for their children particularly in the black areas. And the government is expected to provide the necessary classrooms.

If the communities are involved in the building and renovating of schools. Parents may take the responsibility of looking after the school buildings. They may become voluntary watchmen to prevent the school from being

vandalized. The learners will also limit damaging classrooms and writing on building walls.

### **3.9 Parental role**

In the traditional communities there was no distinction between the educator and the parent. The parent was also regarded as the primary educator of the children (Samkange & Samkange, 1980:77). The parent as the figure that epitomized respect, discipline and good morals, had full knowledge about his/her children and could therefore help in the smooth transmission of effective informative education.

The parental institution is a facet that is under-utilized in the context of South African education, particularly, in former black schools. Mbigi and Maree (1995b:8) explain that South Africa needs to harness the collective spirit of ubuntu for the benefit of all South Africans. The employers need to identify themselves with the need of their workers, creating opportunities for them to attend parent meetings or allow them to visit schools when they are called to attend to children education.

Parenthood is facing its demise slowly but surely due to socio-economic reasons. The issue of parenthood is more than just biological parent in the societies that practise Ubuntu. Mbiti (1990:105) regards the parenthood as the responsibility given to parents by those who departed (ancestors). He explains further that parents and those community adult members are charged with bringing up children for life. They have no option but to take joint responsibility in raising children under good community values.

Cawood & Gibbon (1981:65) defines the parent's role under supervision of the principal as a way of discovering parents' strengths, potentialities and talents to use them for the benefit of the partnership in education parents, family and the school.

Squelch and Lemmer (1994:93) describe the parent's role as an active and willing participation of parents in a variety of school-based and home-based activities, which may be educational or non-educational.

The definitions of Squelch and Lemmer emphasize the importance of parents in education of their children. This stresses the fact that parent involvement is a prerequisite for effective and meaningful education. The negative thinking that parents are illiterate and cannot play a vital role in the education of their children seems to be unacceptable and cannot be justified.

This thinking is supported by Buckley and Styan (1988:20) who confirm that parent want to contribute positively in the education of their children but they don't get the necessary support at schools.

Broodryk (1998:67) describes the role of parents as being that of supervising, guiding and motivating children to achieve but the present education environment lack the necessary support that Ubuntu embraces like caring attitude, love and co-operation that is unconditional.

### **3.9.1 Homework**

The school, in consultation with the parents, should design a clear written policy on homework. Homework helps in augmenting and reinforces work done in class; gives learners opportunity for wider reading and study in depth.

The school should design the homework in such a way that even a parent who is semi-illiterate can assist children, particularly children in lower grades. The work should reflect more of symbols of goodwill and they must be allowed to come to school and ask about things they don't understand.

### **3.9.2 Fund raising**

Parents should be allowed to be innovative and display initiative. Mazrui (1993:560) states that the Africans should be allowed to use their traditional ways of improving their lives. The Africans had systems like stock-vel to augment family position. The school can use such schemes to raise funds for

the school construction for example, there are parents who can contribute some of the good articles at home for the school to organize a raffle. A parent may donate a sheep for the school to organize a raffle.

### **3.9.3 Parent evenings**

Mbigi & Maree (1995a:114-115) suggests that occasions such as parents' evenings should be characterized by short speeches, choir music, dance, refreshments and entertainment. The communication by the school principal or management staff must not be factual but must make extensive use of symbols and story telling.

The parents must then be given an opportunity to meet teachers of their children to discuss problems or progress of their children. This opportunity of parents and teachers meeting will strengthen the relationships between the home and the school. The teachers will get first hand information about the children they teach in class and parents also will get first hand information about their children's performance in class.

### **3.9.4 Organizing functions at school**

The parents are prepared to assist in performing certain caring functions. For example, parents can be called to help in preparing a farewell function or award presentation day at school. Parents can be asked to cook and prepare dishes for the children. The parents can also make contributions in the form of assisting by asking for donations at different work places on behalf of their children.

### **3.9.5 Taking part in school governing body**

The parents can serve as the mouthpiece of the parent body in the school's governing body. They can be used in decision making, policy making, problem solving, building and maintaining furniture and equipment.

The parents as the major stakeholders, must know how their money is used and what happens with the education of their children. Hence, they must have

an interest in becoming involved in the running of the school. The school governing body's meeting should be organized in an informal way. The rules of the meeting should not be so strict. For example, people should be allowed to talk until they reach consensus. Time should not be an obstacle in giving people enough room to express their viewpoints.

The school governing body should work like the traditional African village (Mbigi & Maree, 1995b:37), wherein every community member was called whenever there was a problem to attend self-governing committees, "*Kgotla*", (in Setswana, which means, gathering). This should be done during holidays or evenings to allow the educational management team to perform their daily activities without disturbances.

During these sittings room should be created for illiterate parents to participate effectively. If space is created for them they will realize the importance of their contribution and feel that their contribution is highly valued.

The educated parents, educators, principal, non-government organizations, headmen, must be used to educate parents who are handicapped intellectually. This educated sector should be used to conceptualize the views, aspirations, of the illiterate parents into vision and mission statements of the school.

The full participation of parents in the school governing body will win support for the school from the community. If the educational management decides to isolate or marginalize the community, the community will develop negative attitudes towards the school. The parents and learners might end up regarding the school as an enemy, organizing strikes and protest marches against the school.

These acts might end up disturbing children's education and the ultimate aim of the societal obligation, i.e. producing adults who are self-reliant.

### **3.10 Instilling self-reliance**

Mbigi & Maree (1995a:11) emphasizes that South Africa is lacking in competitiveness, in the international market because the majority of its citizens have not been developed in terms of skills and knowledge.

There is a need that South Africans should discover their collective identity through a collaborative spirit. The type of education transmitted to learners in schools should promote a shared will to survive collectively and not as individual only.

Akinpelu (1989:167) states that the traditional societies promoted self-reliance among their children through creating opportunities for the children to discover themselves through the material presented before them by the environment from which they came. The successful discovery of knowledge by the learner through the effective supervision of the educator created great pleasure on the part of the learner, parents, community, as this knowledge was used for survival and further discoveries or solving further challenges or demands presented before the society by the environment.

In describing self-reliance, Nyerere, as cited in Sutherland & Meyer (2000:77), explains in terms of the principle of "*ujamaa*", (Swahili word, which means, doing things on your own, for yourself,) believes that Africans must use their existing framework to advance development and growth for the purpose of satisfying their demands.

Nyerere, like Mbigi & Maree (1995b:2), outlines that Africans should use their value systems, perceptions, attitudes, mind-sets as basis to integrate the successful strategies from elsewhere, but most importantly, the knowledge imparted to children should be drawn from their environment and be relevant to it.

### **3.11 Conclusion**

The following are conclusions drawn from presenting education from an Ubuntu perspective:

- ◆ The education of the child was by the society for the society. The issue of child upbringing was done through joint responsibility. The child belonged to the whole community, and it was therefore, the responsibility of the community to keep the child safe and to educate him/her.
- ◆ Education was not confined to a particular place. It took place where the child and the adult interacted.
- ◆ Storytelling and other traditional activities were used to transmit values, norms, beliefs and traditions of the society. There were people who used oral tradition to impart the value systems of the communities.
- ◆ Education was natural, relevant and simple. The knowledge that was exposed to children was drawn from their surroundings. The children were familiar with the knowledge.
- ◆ Education was characterized by an atmosphere of love and trust. The children trusted their educators.
- ◆ The children acquired knowledge and skills. The children were involved in practical activities.
- ◆ Humanity implied being loyal to the community values and norms, and respecting other people's humanity. People earned their humanity through respecting the humanity of other people. Humanity was expressed in concert with others.
- ◆ There was no effective education that could take place without respect for norms and values. Norms and values regulated people's behaviour.
- ◆ Customs, rituals and taboo shaped people's lives. There were certain cultural activities that were regarded as taboo, for example, children were not permitted to argue with parents.

- ◆ People became committed for the well being of the whole community. The person's way of thinking was influenced by institutions like "*majagano*", (in Shona, which means, commitment of people to work in one another's field).
- ◆ Work was a symbol of collective enjoyment. The people understood that work was something that aroused excitement and enjoyment. They sang, joked and danced as they worked.
- ◆ There was no person without a sense of belonging. In every community there was an intense network of social relationships. These networks of relationships kept the society together.
- ◆ Conformity was an element of discipline. There was no person who wanted to be regarded as a social outcast. Hence, villagers worked collectively.
- ◆ Discipline of the child was not confined to a classroom. The whole parent community took part in the discipline of the child.
- ◆ Decision making was aimed at reaching consensus and respected the right of the minority. People talked for hours without interruptions. They were all allowed to raise their opinions and they were given a hearing in intensive debates.
- ◆ Approaches that were characterized by trust and a close bond of African village love.
- ◆ Indaba was held in the form of participatory democracy. People came from all walks of life to discuss an issue at the request of the king. They were all allowed to speak until decision was reached.
- ◆ There were organized labour systems that were used for large constructions. The people derived pleasure in doing things for themselves and they responded positively whenever they were called on to perform a task.

- ◆ Parents were figures of respect, discipline and morals. The parents were the primary educators of the child and they were to be good ambassadors of the child.
- ◆ At present the majority of South Africans have not yet been trained in terms of skills and knowledge.
- ◆ There is a need for South Africans to discover their collective identity for the process of development and growth.
- ◆ Africans used their traditional framework to advance development and growth.
- ◆ People saw themselves through the eyes of their communities. The people were taught and trained in their community's philosophical framework.
- ◆ The learners were taught the ethic of goodwill; not keeping everything for yourself which is not what life is about. This Ubuntu educational management encourages the transmission of education that teaches learners to share with others and to realize the importance of belonging, that is, becoming. Through a sense of belonging an individual becomes. This understanding emanates from the philosophy of ubuntu, that emphasizes "*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu abanye*", (which means, a person is a person through other people).
- ◆ The children's self-confidence was boosted and the community also benefited because the type of learners will be able to serve those communities effectively because the knowledge transmitted to them was drawn from the community they came from. The learners produced by schools that applied this management style will fit well into their communities, like gloves on a hand.

### **3.12 Close**

This chapter dealt with education from Ubuntu perspective. The proceeding Chapter 4 will focus on the role of Ubuntu in restoring effectivity and productivity in education.

# CHAPTER 4

## THE ROLE OF UBUNTU IN RESTORING EFFECTIVITY AND PRODUCTIVITY IN SCHOOLS

### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter attention will be given to the role of Ubuntu in restoring effectivity and productivity in terms of re-establishing the culture of teaching. Special focus will be given to the following concepts like "soul searching", "*Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*", "sharing", "respecting and treating others as human beings", "brotherhood and collective consciousness."

### 4.2 Restoring the culture of teaching

#### 4.2.1 Soul searching

Makgoba (1996:42-45) points out that world nations such as the Americans, Japanese and Australians have propelled themselves into recognized world powers through an exercise of soul searching and their cultural initiatives. It is only Africans who are still contenting with the problem of reconciling civilization, culture and education.

Over decades colonialism has left an indelible mark in the lives of Africans. The Africans swallowed everything that came their way from the foreigners. They did not choose those elements that suited their aspirations and cultural background. No wonder that Africans are lagging behind to almost every world nation today. The Africans need to take a step back and look into the foot print of their forefathers and integrate the new inventions into these traditional frameworks (Sparks, 1994:19).

Mbigi and Maree (1995a:5) believe that the assimilation of western culture has not been successful and Africa needs to consider her own roots as the point of departure if she is to meet the challenges of development and

reconstruction. She needs to integrate new methods into her social framework to create wealth at every level in the organization.

Makgoba (1996:174) states that the present educational institutions, like their predecessors, do not and did not serve the needs and aspirations of the African learners. They were not adapted and integrated for serving under African conditions. They are replicas of a colonial motherland. This gives an impression that products produced by these institutions, do not fit well into their societies: these learners become alienated and isolated to their own societies and fail to carry their societal obligations.

Ncube (1995:10) describes the role that traditional institutions played in epitomising the presence of Ubuntu in villages and valued characteristics of African frame of references were transferred from generations to generations.

Mbiti (1990:2) also feels that Africans are frustrated by the process through which education increasingly detaches them from their traditional environment. The Africans are left in a vacuum, torn between the life of their forefathers, which has historical roots and firm traditions, and the life of the technological age that, as yet, for many Africans has no concrete form of depth.

This seems to suggest that the Africans are the only group that was persuaded or forced to leave their culture with the hope of gaining technology and have not succeeded so far in achieving that. They are torn between the world of tradition, which increasingly moving in the direction of a dying stage, and that of technology.

Broodryk (1998c:67) states that Ubuntu is a valid method suitable to Africa to teach rules and regulations. It is difficult from western perspective to understand the condition of illiteracy. The majority of Africans, particularly elderly people, rely on verbal education and folklore to learn the rules pertaining to norms and values of the community or society.

Mbigi and Maree (1995b:6) regard the discovery of collective self-identity as a prerequisite of development and this should lead to the celebration of “personhood”, referred to as, Ubuntu.

#### **4.2.2 “Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu”: an African axiom**

According to Shutte (1993:46), Ubuntu is embraced in the Zulu, axiom, “*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*”, (which means, a person is a person through other persons). The central theme to the application of this axiom, is the fact that human interactions are driven by respect and people need to be sensitive to the needs of others. The person is expected to think in terms of “being with others.”

Odera (1994:45) mentions that the concept of embracing each other in Ubuntu is known by different words but the human characteristics appeared to be similar. This idea was transferred verbally to give order to African communities.

Logan (2000:12) and Archbishop of Canterbury (2000:1) believe that Africa has a profound concept of nation building that state that people are human only through the humanity of other human beings. This notion permeates all aspects of human life in Africa.

Prinsloo (1995:4) indicates different interpretations between the Western Humanism and African Humanism (a person is a person through other persons) due to different philosophical frameworks. To Western Humanism, the description has no religious connotation, while in the African Humanism, the person can only fulfil his/her humanity through respecting others’ humanity.

According to Dlomo (1991:51), every African language has a word that defines a person (umuntu). In the traditional communities a human was given the central position in all interactions. It is apparent that in all African interactions the emphasis lies on humanity.

Despite his/her central role in the social structure, man is only a man, in concert with other human beings. Makhudu (1993:41) mentions the fact that individual gains are measured in terms of the improvement of social conditions in one's community.

Makhudu (1993:40) states that every facet of African life is shaped to embrace Ubuntu, as a way of life and philosophy which reflects the African heritage, traditions, culture, customs, beliefs, value systems and the extended family structures.

The philosophy of Ubuntu regards discipline and respect as the basis of human relationships. It clearly stipulates the relationships between the parent and child, chief and his subject, man and wife (cf. Chapter 2, Par.2.9.1). It dictates relationships between people in positions of authority and their subjects. Morality is not sacrificed with rights, everybody plays according to a particular social framework.

In the community that practises Ubuntu the educator is not only regarded as a worker, but he/she is also a parent and an adult. Ubuntu presents a framework on how the teacher should relate in his/her social interactions with learners. Chikanda (1994:4) explains that Ubuntu expects people to be sensitive to the needs of others, being sympathetic, caring, considerate, patient and kind.

According to Kruger and Van Schalkwyk (1993:46), the school should establish certain standards which it can expect from the pupils, according to which it will evaluate their behaviour and work. Contrary to Van Schalkwyk's utterances, Ubuntu, operates through collective actions. In the context of Ubuntu, it is not only the school, that must determine standard, it must be the inclusive and joint actions of the community as a whole (cf. Chapter1, Par. 1).

Kruger and Van Schalkwyk (1993:46) seem to limit the maintenance of discipline to the professional expert of the school only. The school and the community's

tasks remain intertwined and they should therefore work jointly in educating the child.

Van der Westhuizen (1991:348) elaborates the importance of school in the community, as the institution aimed at the preparation of the children for later adult life by exposing them to many aspects of reality. The children should enjoy participating in activities that expand their knowledge, skills, expertise and attitudes to make them responsible adults.

The issue about what Van der Westhuizen is saying, is how is the school going to succeed in preparing children for later adult life if it is not driven by aspirations and needs of the community in which it operates?

The school can only identify and confirm the skills, knowledge and attitudes that children should be trained in from the community. Mbigi and Maree (1995b:1), regard group solidarity, where collective actions are central for the survival of African communities and not individual self-reliance, as being important. In the Ubuntu context, intentional/purposive marginalization of people suggests disrespect or what Maphisa (1994:8) refers to as, "*ubulwane*", (in Zulu, which means, animal-like behaviour).

The African people regard the issue of disrespect and "*ubulwane*" in serious light. Chikanda (1990:2) notes that wealth, education or popularity does not determine respect. If a person is labelled as not having Ubuntu, he/she is likely to be rejected. The sons are known to have been advised to marry within families that practise Ubuntu rather than for wealth or a high status or education.

The South Africans are slowly rediscovering their humanity. Apartheid laws dehumanized the South Africans. Both blacks and whites, at one stage, found themselves using "*ubulwane*", (in Zulu: which means, an animal-like behaviour), as a means to an end, for example, police repressions and ruthless measures like a system of neck-lace (putting a tire around a person's neck and pouring petrol to burn him/her).

The philosophy of Ubuntu, with its forgiving and forgetting potential capacity, places a focus on the reframing of people's minds and issues of restructuring of societies and institutions (Mbigi and Maree, 1995a:10). The process can lead to the renewal of spirit and moral of the people, re-activation of practices and processes. This move can help in promoting effectivity and productivity in education.

The transformation of education structures from apartheid institutions into democratic structures seems to suggest the rediscovery of Ubuntu in education. For example, the abolishment of all inhuman handling of learners in education confirms this fact.

Dlomo (1991:51) mentions that Ubuntu's greatest strength is the fact that it is an indigenous, purely African, philosophy of life. It is not a way of life from either Western or Eastern Europe: it something out of Africa and all African languages throughout the continent do have a word that defines the person (umuntu). In the African culture, the person, "*umuntu*", in Zulu/Xhosa, is a multi-faceted individual.

Despite the advantages that Ubuntu have, by virtue of being an Africa product, flowing in the blood of most African people, if our educators fail to believe in it as a way of life or to embrace it, there won't be effective and productive changes in education. There need to be personal transformation before the educators can effect the changes expected.

The educators are operating in the atmosphere of uncertainty due to the period of transformation and changes. Most of the values and norms that they were brought up with are no longer applicable in most school situations. The educators and learners have more rights that can be used negatively by either students or educators. According to Khoza (1994:1) states that Ubuntu is manifested through a person's behaviour and expression. The school and school community have the opportunity of utilizing Ubuntu in school to curb and shape the behaviour of learners in order to get rid of social evils like

gangsterism and prostitution in schools. The philosophy of Ubuntu emphasizes human dignity in all interactions and this implies that man deserves respect despite his/her status, sex or age (cf. Chapter 2, Par.2.9.4).

The human resource sector is the prerequisite of achieving effectivity and productivity in any institution. Mbigi and Maree (1995b:55) believe that for any organization to perform effectively and productively, in Afro-centric religion, it must consist of leaders who acknowledge their cultural background and these acknowledgements will make it possible for them to know who they are and what they can become.

Ubuntu believes that people should make introspection and embark on the process of personal transformation because the success of any process rests on the quality of people who drive it. Ubuntu believes in the personification of Leadership, but this leader, should be approachable, honest, direct, and appropriate. He should be a leader of good pedigree and earn respect among his people that will influence people to behave well for the benefit of the whole community (Mbigi & Maree, 1995a:73).

The educators should lead the transformation in education. There must be a paradigm shift that will result in a change of perceptions and mindset in terms of what educators have been doing in their day to day activities in class. Competition among pupils took place all the time. The philosophy of Ubuntu encourages co-operation amongst pupils rather than competition. People are discouraged from being selfish and are expected to show a high sense of warmth and empathy to minimize social problems like poverty (cf. Chapter 2, Par. 2.9.3).

The traditional communities of Africa had their own social institutions that were used to keep the community in a coherent structure and fight problems like lack of facilities. For example, Mbigi and Maree (1995b:1) make mention of cultural activities such as, "*jakwara*", (in Shona, which means, thrashing of grain collectively), "*janganu*", where two or more families come to work in

others' fields based on mutual trust (cf. Chapter 3, Par.3.6). They seem to be supported by Samkange & Samkange (1980:80) who states that for large construction works, the Shona tribe of Zimbabwe had a system called "zunde". Kilgour (2001:1) emphasizes the importance of learning from these African social institutions like the family. These institutions can help promote human, social and economic development in a collaborative manner.

The situation in South Africa (Africa), is characterized by the culture of entitlement. The people complain of the governments' failure to deliver. In schools, parents expect the government to build schools for their children. The traditional communities used the above social institutions to do things for themselves. The pupils, teachers and parents should be encouraged to resort to these traditional instruments to develop and reconstruct their schools. These Ubuntu tools of social development, can be used to alleviate the government from the pressure it is facing from people who do not think in terms of what they can do for themselves but what the government should do for them.

Ubuntu can instil in people the culture of work ethics. Many countries in Africa and elsewhere in the world are facing economic demise because of lack of commitment of citizens to their work. Traditionally work was something to be enjoyed in Africa. The form or shape that the whole process was taking made people enjoy it. They sang, joked and danced during the whole process. Samkange & Samkange (1980:80) explains that people really enjoyed what they were doing. Most teachers and pupils do not enjoy what they are doing at school, hence, the negative results that most schools experience. The principles of Ubuntu can help to promote work ethics amongst educators and pupils in schools to encourage and motivate them to enjoy what they are doing.

#### **4.2.3 Sharing**

The notion of sharing is one of the cardinal features of Ubuntu. The children were taught to share at an early age as a way of life.

Dlomo (1991:1) points out how traditional communities shared in terms of material possessions. He states that if man possesses two cows with plenty of milk and his brother does not possess a cow, the spirit of Ubuntu states that he must donate the milk of the second cow to his brother but not the asset of the cow itself; the cow remains the owner's property.

He is supported by Mandela (1994:9) who explains that he does not remember playing alone at his home. He was always in company of children who were friends and relatives. His parents would tell them stories of historic battles, heroic Xhosa warriors and enchant them with Xhosa legends and fables that had come down from numberless generations. The stories stimulated their childish imagination and contained some moral lessons. This personal experience can be used to revitalize the declining sense of sharing in schools.

The education that is received should be relevant to the demands of today. Ubuntu can help to teach learners to be reciprocating, caring and alms-giving. In the class situation, Keith & Girling (1991:26-27), observe that a perception should be created wherein everyone is regarded as a source of creative ideas, making a contribution to problem solving, decision making, policy making, and ensuring that an organization achieves its goals.

Tutu, as cited in Allen (1995:116), explains intensive sense of sharing through stating the characteristics of the early churches, which operated like the Ubuntu families. They displayed extra-ordinary willingness to share. The early churches went as far as to have its members selling their properties for making a contribution in the community.

The most disadvantaged members of the community would get more from sharing. There was an understanding within the church that the whole was much more important than the individual. They believed that when one part suffered, the whole suffered with it, and when one part prospered, then the whole prospered with it.

The fears that people have to lose their properties or fail to enjoy what they own, should be reconciled with the support that Ubuntu gives to the individual who operates in the context of the group. These individuals are given the highest honour they deserve and in times of hardship, the community is always there to extend a helping hand.

Samkange & Samkange (1980:62) state that material element served as a symbol of status. A man was responsible for the number of cattle he possessed; cattle was regarded as money; one could get power, prestige and influence from the cattle as a source of wealth.

The philosophy of Ubuntu can teach learners that despite the importance of wealth in granting people status and respect in the community, people come before products, profits and productivity. Vilakazi (1994:67) regards the respect for human being as the highest priority before other considerations like, economical, financial and political factors.

Lukhele (1990:1) mentions that black people had a tradition of assisting one another. At ploughing time members of one family would offer their service to their neighbour who would in turn lend them oxen with which to plough their mealie fields. There was no family that was left to sleep hungry. There were institutions that were put in place to assist each other and those who were disadvantaged naturally, like, the king possessed cattle on behalf of the tribe and were to feed the orphans, widows and other people who were handicapped in one way or the other (Sparks, 1994:14).

This understanding of helping one another gave birth to the modern socio-economic version, like, "*stokvel*", in Afrikaans or "*mogodisano*", (in Setswana, which means, clubs).

Participants became involved in the collective enterprises, based on a traditional co-operation, communalism and sharing. The "*mogodisano*" system can be used to accumulate money for the school projects, particularly, in the present socio-economic conditions.

Mbiti (1990:2) elaborates that humanity in the context of Africa involves being part of the whole community. People are expected to comply; participating in the beliefs, ceremonies, rituals and festivals of that community. The learners can be taught by Ubuntu to acknowledge that they are an integral part of their community. They are expected to share whatever wealth, ideas or property they possess with the other members of the community.

Lichtenstein, as cited in Sparks (1994:15) states that he was impressed by special accommodation for strangers and general spirit of sharing; “whenever any one kills an ox he must invite all his neighbours to take part, and they remain his guests until the whole is eaten.” Ubuntu can play a prominent role in the forging of a new nation in South Africa based on common ideals. At the moment education is experiencing some racial problems, Ubuntu is inclusive in its approach. Any person, irrespective of race, has the potential to be human, only needs the environment that allows him/her to practise these potentials.

Kruger & Van Schalkwyk (1993:86) express the importance of creating space for pupils in the classroom in order for them to self-actualize. The learners need conditions that are sincere, warm and friendly, wherein everyone will be relaxed and experience a healthy atmosphere conducive to learning. The learners will feel their true selves and be prepared to open up and become involved in the teaching-learning situation.

The learners do not need an atmosphere that is rigid and cold. Such an environment will produce students who are tense and who fail to fit into the community. The philosophy of Ubuntu, according to Broodryk (1998a: 78), is a method or approach that suits Africa, because it can provide an informal way of achieving educative teaching without disruptions.

#### **4.2.4 Teacher and pupil conduct**

The concept of conduct, with special reference to respect, is the most central element of determining one’s humanity in the traditional African societies. It is

manifested in the context of the famous Zulu/Xhosa axiom; “ *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*.”

During interactions a human being confirms his/her personality to others through behaviour. It is during the interactions that other members of the community disapprove of his/her behaviour or approve his/her conduct and grant the necessary respect.

Khoza (1994a:89) sees “managing the Ubuntu way”, as respecting people for what they are and not for what they have or can do in life, as a positive step towards recognizing people’s humanity, as a positive influence on achieving effectivity and productivity in education. His humanity is judged in accordance with a person’s interaction with the rest of the community members. He refers to this humanism as distinctive collective consciousness that is reflected through an intensive caring, loving, sharing and being positive to others at all times.

The people see themselves through the way they grow up in the perspective that is based on the fact that they are acknowledged and respected for what they are. The learners must be educated to respect the school roles and regulation, and behave according to the Ubuntu principles that regulated behaviour such as, respect, sympathy, and treating other people as adults.

Thereby reflecting humanism that finds expression in concert with other people. The learners must be educated to respect the school rules and regulations, and behave according to the Ubuntu principles that regulate behaviour such as respect, sympathy, and treating other people as human beings.

#### **4.2.5 Respecting and treating others as human beings**

Tutu (2000:1) notes that Africans are embedded with a force called Ubuntu. This force compel them to embraces other human beings with a caring and hospitable spirit. It emphasizes the believe that “*motho ke motho ka batho*”,

(in Setswana, which is the version of, "*umuntu ugumuntu ngabanye abantu*" a Xhosa/Zulu axiom), emphasizes the sense of respect among the community members.

West & Ainscow (1991: 82) observe that a culture should be created in which people's shared values objectives and individual creativity on the school challenges and problems are respected.

In the western context the culture that West & Ainscow, is talking about, is created in terms of bureaucratic ways, formal bodies, with representation, characterized by short professional debates or voting systems where the majority decision is respected.

Sindane (1994b:10) points out that it is better allow people to, whether as individuals or groups, to voice their views or articulate their interests, than to suppress them. The creation of a participatory platform for people is important. The traditional communities allowed as many people as possible to attend meetings. The meetings were open and all inputs were welcomed and encouraged. These contributions were discussed at length by all people present and this could be understood as democracy in the Ubuntu context.

Squelch & Lemmer (1994:1) point out that the will of parents to participate in their children's education is discouraged by lack of respect and support on the part of teachers. This increases confrontation between the school and parents. This confrontation is likely to have a negative impact on the school's effectivity and productivity.

In the communities practising Ubuntu, as a way of life and philosophy, formulations of ideas and the thinking processes, are done in terms of ; "*motho ke motho ka batho*",(a person is a person through other people). The emphasis is the sense of tolerance, co-operation and being compassionate about other people's interests.

Swanepoel (1992:41) maintains that respect for all cultures is to be taken into consideration. The idea of "unity in diversity", should be promoted in the community. He states that for decade's westerner thought that non-westerners' perceptions and activities were primitive and stupid. It is only now that some have started to accept that those perceptions and practices are realistic and supported by wisdom.

Mbigi and Maree (1995b:12) note that it is difficult for people in Africa to shift their perception and mindset in the transformation process. But change being the essence of human existence, people need to acclimatize to changes for the betterment of every South African.

There is a common understanding amongst Africans that their faith or destiny is bound together. The survival of your neighbour is a precondition for your survival. His poverty is your poverty (Bhengu,1996:8-9). It is supported by Ubuntu statements like; "*simunye*", (a Zulu word which means we are one: togetherness) and " an injury to one is an injury to all".

#### **4.2.6 Brotherhood and collective consciousness**

Mbigi and Maree (1995a:88) state that "*munhu munhu*",(Shona, which means a person is a person) deserves unconditional respect.

Tutu (as cited in Allen, 1995:40) explains that man is created in the image of God. Therefore, man has been blessed in the spirit of brotherhood; caring and loving each other.

Tutu further explains that only by interdependence can man develop as an individual and community. Man is expected above all to depend on God and neighbour, including both blacks and whites to achieve true identity that will allow him/her to prosper in the context God and community.

Oakley-Smith (1991:33) states that the spirit of brotherhood and caring in the Ubuntu worldview is the most important consideration. People are regarded as equals and no one should suffer while others are enjoying.

Tutu (as cited in Allen, 1997:40) explains that man is created in the image of God. Therefore, man has been blessed in the spirit of brotherhood; caring and loving each other.

Tutu further explains that only by interdependence can man develop as an individual and community. Man is expected above all to depend on God and neighbour, including both blacks and whites, to achieve true identity that will allow him/her to prosper in the context of God and community.

The principles of Ubuntu, like the ten commandments, do not compromise in their operations. The central point in the Ubuntu operation is the fact that man can only be man through other men. It is the kind of humanity that finds its life in the context of a group.

The idea of the importance of "other" and "man" reemphasizes the fact that, despite possessing status or wealth in the community, a human being remains a human being and deserves human dignity. This is expressed in terms of the Zulu concept; "*umuntu akalahlwa*", which means that a person cannot be thrown away like thrash. The importance of the above Ubuntu expression is the spirit of forgiveness, compassion and tolerance (Bhengu, 1996:5).

Khoza (as cited in Prinsloo,1994a:16) states that Ubuntu is guided and regulated by principles that direct human activities. These principles order the society in a particular way of interacting in a coherent way. He regards these as the distinctive collective consciousness of Africans that manifests itself in expression and spiritual fulfilment, embracing values such as universal brotherhood for Africans, sharing, and being sensitive to the needs of others.

West & Ainscow (1991:83) mention that a successful school is likely to be the one in which relationships and interactions are instituted and co-ordinated in order that those involved work harmoniously and feel that they are involved in a common mission. This implies that all people should be treated with respect and their contribution should be taken seriously.

Sparks (1994:9) observes that the philosophy of Ubuntu operates above the level of tribalism, racism and status. He explains how blacks would drive off the enemy's cattle and capture their women and children. The defeated tribe was neither killed nor expelled and productive resources were not destroyed. It was a trend that the victorious tribe would return some of the captured cattle in accordance with the principle that " we must not let even our enemies die with hunger."

Morris (2001:1) states that Africans by nature displays a relationship connect people on a spiritual level. The people are always reflecting an abundance of love, caring and the spirit of extending a helping hand to one another.

Bhengu (1996:5), who also believes in "umuntu akalahlwa" supports the idea of importance of man, (in Zulu, which means the person cannot be thrown away like thrash). It indicates a high spirit of forgiveness, compassion and tolerance in societies that practise Ubuntu.

Mbiti (1990:107) states that human beings deserve dignity from birth to death. Nothing should take human dignity away from the human. There were cases of witchcraft among the members of traditional societies. The culprits were not burned or killed, but would be expelled from the village. Despite having committed crime, they would still be treated with dignity; they were helped by villagers to load their belongings and bid farewell.

Fouche (1991:85) observes that the principal's responsibility is to create an effective environment between the school and home. The education of the child is the responsibility of the home as well as the school. Both the school and the home must work together towards common objectives. The principal should therefore treat all parents with the same amount of brotherhood.

The traditional African societies believed that you were what you were through other people. Even your enemy remained part of you. He/she deserved respect and brotherhood spirit until death. Mokgoro (1997:1) agrees with the above idea in terms of the necessity of collective efforts to human respect

through famous saying; “ A human being can only be a human being through other human beings,” and “people live through the help of others.” The philosophy of Ubuntu requires people to be sensitive to the needs of others within the context of the community.

### **4.3 Social responsibility**

Chinkanda (1994:3) describes a person with Ubuntu as someone who is concerned with his fellow beings, he wants less for himself and more for them. A person who is individualistic in interacting with others, is regarded as a social outcast. To be considered as not having Ubuntu is a very serious issue in societies practising Ubuntu.

DiGuilo (1995:37) states that teachers need to be filled with the social welfare of the learners under their guidance. They should exercise a high level of hospitality in dealing with the learners and their parents. The teachers should make the school a place of safety, use visual aids and use their imagination to catch the ambitions of the learners.

Currently the schools operate like a separate entity, independent from the other community structures. There is a missing link between the school and the home. There is a cloud of fear that is hovering over the school, it does not want to work collectively with the parent community. The philosophy of Ubuntu expects of people to look after each other and sustain their communities. Mokiti (1988:36) mentions that community members are under obligation to help one another. Ubuntu does not allow any person to die of hunger, e.g. if he/she is ill or has run out of supplies.

Tambane (1991:68) believes that Ubuntu urged the traditional communities displayed a way of life that was based on sympathy, loving and caring, being considerate and respectful to others, patient and sensitive to the needs and wants of others. The central point in promoting social responsibility was to help the less fortunate in the community. The less fortunate, in the community, got more than other people in terms of communal assistance.

Setiloane (1987:10) states that there is no person who does not belong: belonging is the root and essence of being, and ordering the society is based on this world-view. The community in turn, assists when there is a need. Seepe (1997:9) gives an example of a Senegalese who noticed people sleeping on the pavement. He thought that they were in a protest of some sort, he approached them and inquired about their protest.

Teffo (1994:23) emphasizes the fact that man acquires his humanity in his socialization in the society. This idea is confirmed by Koka (1996:12) in terms of the nature of Ubuntu that compels people share even a locust head, (*"Bana ba motho ba kgaogana tlhogo ya tsie"*).

These efforts were made to fight poverty and deprivation through an intensive way of working together.

#### **4.4 Co-operation and open communication**

According to Makhudu (1993:9), the idea of open communication involves the establishment of a fearless, direct, open and honest line of communication in order to get in touch with ourselves our bias and prejudices about other people's cultures and ethnicity.

The philosophy of Ubuntu expects of people to share their culture with others with the purpose of achieving common understanding. The concept of sharing and communalism are closely linked to the concept of co-operation. The point that emerges from this is that co-operation is a form of socialized action that promotes the spirit of being tolerant, empathetic, caring, sharing, respectable, democratic and loving.

Mandela (1994:22) explains how the "fellowship", *"abantu"* (in Zulu/Xhosa, word for friendship,) among African people, which allowed them to live in relative peace was shattered by the coming of the white people. The white people came with their fire-breathing weapons, guns, a symbol of disturbing peace in the context of Ubuntu by then.

Despite the shattering of "*abantu*", "fellowship", intentionally or unintentionally, Samkange & Samkange (1980:69) states that there is no Shona person who can proclaim that he/she is without "*hukama*", (Shona word, meaning, family relationship). This network of relationships, is always there to assist in terms of hardships or happiness and promote co-operation amongst Shona people. There is always a "*sekuru*", (Shona meaning, uncle; "*Oom*", in Afrikaans, Setswana, "*malome*" or "*tete*" Shona, meaning, "aunt",) who are ready to assist at all times.

Mbigi & Maree (1995b:1) describes this notion of brotherhood and co-operation in the African communities through the concept of; "*umfoweto*", (in Zulu, in Shona, "*nwana wevu*",) and Thorpe (1996:52), expresses this idea as; "*nwana mai*", which is also a Shona word, which logically means, brotherhood, son of the soil, my mother's child. The idea is to promote social co-operation and the spirit of openness and transparency.

The concept of "*nwana mai*", is used amongst Shona people to refer to any person who is close to you and not literary to your biological brother or sister. It is a pledge that you will do for that person, what you would do for your real brother or sister. This commitment operates across colour of the skin, ethnic affiliation or class. The family bond is extended beyond the borders of visible family to include the neighbours, the departed (ancestors) and those who are still to be born. This sense of togetherness and social obligations of Shona family, extended to the village and ward divisions.

Mbigi & Maree (1995b:1) refers to this "fellowship" amongst Africans as group solidarity, which is good not only for brotherly group care, but much more, for the survival of the African communities. The notion of group solidarity highlights the basic belief of Ubuntu; 'man can only be man through others'.

Broodryk (1997:16) states that both black and white learners should be able to find each other by visiting each other's homes. They both need to experience how they respond to different community occasions such as a wedding, funeral and so forth. In the education situation teachers should

create conditions that make the teaching process entertaining and exciting. The learners should reach out to one another and experience education as 'fun', leading to the process of 'fun productivity'.

It is during occasions such as wedding and funeral ceremonies, that Ubuntu manifests itself. People can witness a high level of humanity during these events. The people are expected to extend a helping hand to others. The people are taught that humanity is not demanded but commanded through one's deeds. In Tsonga, they say; "imitiro ya bulabula", which means, deeds talk for themselves. Traditional communities fulfilled this promise of this axiom by communal co-operation.

The principle of helping one another was a measure of humanity and maturity. Chikanda (1994:4) explains that the Africans believed in the communal systems of caring, loving, being sympathetic, empathetic, kind and patient, respectful of others. The collective strategies promoted the idea of group solidarity, which he believes was vital for the survival of the group.

#### **4.5 CONCLUSION**

The chapter dealt with the role of Ubuntu in restoring effectivity and productivity in education and the following conclusions were made:

- ◆ Africans are still contending with the problem of reconciling civilization, culture and education. The type of education that is transmitted to pupils is not relevant to their cultural background. Most of the time the children become separated from their communities.
- ◆ The communities develop a negative attitude towards education, particularly in remote areas. The people feel that education takes their children away from them or isolate their children from them. They feel education is a white man thing because it does not address their aspirations and needs.

- ◆ Ubuntu measures individual integrity in terms of social contribution. Man as a social being, is expected to work with others in promoting their common environment.
- ◆ Ubuntu is a purely African philosophy. The concept Ubuntu is found in most languages spoken in Southern Africa and can be used to effectivity and productivity in education.
- ◆ Ubuntu is manifested through a person's behaviour and expression. The philosophy of Ubuntu is used in the day to day activities of people at work, home and school. It is reflected through many aspects of human life, for example, in the church.
- ◆ Effective leaders acknowledge people's cultural background. The leader should respect the culture of people in which he/she works. Through culture people express their being in the world. For people to succeed, they must know who they are and what they can do in life.
- ◆ The traditional communities practised an intensive sharing. The people believed in the saying; "*umuntu ngumuntu ngabanye abantu*". There was no way, they could leave any person to suffer. They were encouraged by Ubuntu to share even the little resources that they possessed, (even a locust head).
- ◆ People who practised Ubuntu as a way of life, had a tradition of assisting one another. This system is continued even in the modern township and rural communities in order to survive through the present socio- economic problems.
- ◆ The traditional individual community members aimed at becoming; "munhu chaiye", a real person. It was the aim of every person to become an ideal community member who respected community values, shared with others, were kind, humble and considerate of the needs of the community.

- ◆ A person deserves an unconditional respect. The fact that man was born in the image of God, deserves to be respected. Man is imbued with those good elements in him/her, no secondary elements should be regarded as a condition to respect him/her.
- ◆ Ubuntu places man at the centre of every aspect of human interactions. All things exist because of man, therefore, human dignity should be upheld. People should not put material interest before man.
- ◆ A person is never thrown away like thrash; "*umuntu akalahwa*". The people who practised Ubuntu, as way of life, believed that man remained dignified despite what he/she did. Even if a person was found guilty of say, witchcraft, he/she was never killed or burned. The villagers would rather help that person to move to another area.
- ◆ A person who is a champion of Ubuntu, is someone who wants less for himself/herself and more for others. In his/her thinking such a person formulates ideas in terms of the belief that a human being is a human being through others.
- ◆ There were no destitute people in the communities practising Ubuntu. People were living for each other. They were not selfish but were selfless.
- ◆ "Fellowship" allowed traditional families to live in relative peace. People were held together by certain cultural institutions and they lived in harmony.
- ◆ "*Nwana mai*", in Shona, was used to promote social co-operation, openness and transparency. People lived like brothers and sisters. The concept of family relationship was not limited to the immediate members of your family only.
- ◆ The process of westernization, left an indelible mark on the people of Africa. Africans are no longer at ease. They had to lose their culture in

order to receive the benefits of Western technology but still they are yet to master it.

- ◆ Education has failed to meet the needs and aspirations of Africans. The former colonial masters have left the replicas of their education systems in Africa. The children are taught according to foreign values and norms and attitudes.

#### **4.6 Close**

This chapter described the role of Ubuntu in restoring effectivity and productivity in education. Chapter 5 will concentrate on drawing possible contours towards introducing Ubuntu in education.

## CHAPTER 5

### “MOTHO KE MOTHO”<sup>1</sup> – CONTOURS TOWARDS INTRODUCING UBUNTU TO EDUCATION

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter exploits the contours that may be used to introduce Ubuntu in education. The focus will be on aspects such as philosophical framework; imbizo, collective representation, involvement of all stakeholders, respect, relevance to the needs of people, collective responsibility, collaboration, discipline, democratic leadership, special interest groups: technical knowledge, leadership ethics, shepherd leadership approach, consultation and celebration spirit renewal

Seepe (1997b:2) states that Ubuntu embraces the Sesotho idiom “motho ke motho ka batho” translated as “ I am because we are.” This way of thinking can help Africans resolve their disputes and pressing communal issues.

Mbigi & Maree (1995a:2-5) believes that Africa must dig into its past and seek for solutions for the present problems. Africa had its own institutions which performed well on certain well-tried principles and practices, but it is suggested that the African social experience and innovation must be harnessed and the successful management techniques from West and East be integrated into them.

The solution of the African educational problems cannot be imported, it is an African problem and therefore it needs an African solution. The African managers must take initiatives. They must apply a careful and strategic refinement of approaches. In adopting the foreign approaches they must trace their origin, “*nhorowondo*”, a Shona word, which means, to trace the historical

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<sup>1</sup> “Motho ke motho” literally means a person is a person through others.

roots of any technique in order to adapt it successfully (Mbigi & Maree, 1995a:75).

Louw (2000a:8) believe that Ubuntu has potential to provide guidelines for a new approach in practical fields. It can create a new perspective of promoting effectivity and productivity in education through exploiting its features.

## **5.2 Philosophical framework**

### **5.2.1 Imbizo: coming together to hear or discuss a common issue**

The traditional communities had their way of understanding of life based on the common values, norms, authority, symbols, tradition and culture. The people were expected to behave according to the value system emanating from these philosophical frameworks. People's humanity was measured according to their compliance to these value systems. This implied that an individual was supposed to associate himself/herself with the community's value system This involved participating and respecting its norms and values. (Mbiti,1990:2).

### **5.2.2 Collective representation**

The community would call an "Imbizo", for example when there was a need to address a common issue like, education of children, drought, culling of cattle and formulation of policies (Mandela, 1994: 20).

The meeting was not rigid and policies were not cold, tense and formal. The "Imbizo" was informal: it was not scheduled, but it was called when there was a need. Everyone who wanted to speak was allowed to do so without interruptions. The right of minorities was respected and the notion of majority rule was unknown to these African communities.

The process was characterized by a high sense of equality and respect. Mandela (1994:20) explains that in the gathering the regent, prince of Tembuland, an area in Eastern Cape, despite being charged, was simply listening and not defending himself.

The key to understanding this process is that a high level of informality marked the meeting with people uttering praises, slogans, singing and dancing, rendering short speeches. The whole atmosphere was filled with emotions. The purpose of the meeting was to reach a consensus and thereafter it was binding to everybody.

In the modern education system the focus for the control of children's education is placed in the hands of only educators, parents of the children at that school, and the learners themselves. The expertise of the parent component of the whole community is not utilized to the maximum.

The lesson that the modern community can learn is that the principal is not there to influence the community to agree with him/her to achieve personal interests. The principal is faced with a task of observing and encouraging the process of policy formulation by the parents, educators and community.

Van der Westhuizen (1991:410) explains that the principal's task is to analyze and evaluate the common arguments for and against the policy. The assessment should be made to find out whether the policy relates to the goals and objectives of the school or not.

Van der Westhuizen's views carry weight, maybe because the principal has the professional know how, but this task is more than an individual task, it should not be reduced to work to be performed by a section of the community only, it must be done collectively by the broad based community representation.

### **5.2.3 Involvement of all stake-holders**

Broodryk (1998a:142) states in Shagaan; "*rintiho rinwe a ri nusi hove*", (which means, one finger cannot pick up a grain). This philosophy, serves to support the broad Ubuntu philosophy, "*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*", (in Zulu/Xhosa, which means, a person is a person through other people). This philosophy served to keep the traditional communities in a coherent way. The

involvement of all community members, experts, children, elderly people, and the disabled people was central in any task that was to be done by the community. No person was left behind because of his/her status. In the modern school parents are discouraged from taking an effective role because of the prevailing conditions at school. The conditions are not welcoming to the parents: most of the time school policies and rules are expressed in foreign language, and their aspirations and needs are not taken into consideration.

The communities should apply the regulatory principles of Ubuntu like respect and equality. These principles should be applied with regard to the Ubuntu thinking that a person is a person through other persons. The whole parental community should be involved in issues that concern their school. The successful community will be the one that applies flexible collective approaches to problem-solving, policy making or decision making and maintains constant two-way dialogue to discuss school issues.

Kruger (1996:7) confirms that a leader plays an prominent role in the school and his/her influence in creating policies that in turn impact on the school culture of teaching, and learning is decisive for the realization of effective meaningful education.

People must be warned of the role that Kruger says the principal should play, that they must influence the creation of policies, because in most cases the principal imposes her/his school policies upon the community. This results in many conflicts between the school and community. The community members will sometimes pray that the policy should fail. They can go to an extent of plotting for the failure of such a school policy. The learners also join in disrespecting the policy because their parents were not party to the drafting of the policy.

#### **5.2.4 Respect**

Mdluli (1987:67) states that in the traditional communities respect manifested itself between elders and young people, parents and children, leaders and the

followers, men and women. The people also showed respect to even strangers (cf. Chapter 2, Par.2.9.1).

Respect formed the basis of human interaction in those communities. The relationship was reciprocal. The person could show a high sense of caring, loving, empathy to other people, but if he/she lacked respect, the whole exercise was futile. He/she could not get the respect he/she deserved from the community.

Squelch & Lemmer (1993:1) point out that the will of most parents to become involved in their children's education is discouraged by lack of respect and support from the teachers. This increases the confrontation between the school and the home. This confrontation has a negative impact on the school's effectivity and productivity (cf. Chapter 4, Par. 4.5.3).

The philosophy of Ubuntu expects educators to show a high level of respect as the leaders in the community being co-operative, friendly, warm, welcoming, hospitable, sharing, loving and caring in creating conditions for the whole community's stakeholders to function effectively.

Samkange & Samkange (1980:78) states that in the traditional communities, education of the youth was managed by society for society. It was not placed in the hands of the school and the biological parents only. Every adult in the community was an educator.

The parting of education was not limited to a particular place. It could take place anywhere where an adult and the child met. The relationship of trust and love was the central point for the transmission of education (cf. Chapter 3, Par.3.2).

Due to the lack of respect which parents experience on the part of educators or the school in general and socio-economic conditions, most parents end up leaving education of their children in the hands of the school only.

### **5.2.5 Relevant to the needs of people**

Mbigi & Maree (1995a:137) states that the purpose of education, in the traditional communities, was to prepare children for life. The children were taught to venture into the unknown at an early age with courage, commitment, dedication and great motivation (cf. Chapter 3, Par. 2.2).

The modern school and the home are operating far apart from each other. The question is whether the school is preparing the child for and if, for which life? And is that life in line with what the parents are teaching the child at home?

In line with the Ubuntu thinking, Kilian & Viljoen (1990:169) state that there should be mutual relationships between educators, learners and the home in order to promote co-operation. According to them co-operation leads to a high teacher-learner morale. The teachers will enjoy teaching and learners will enjoy learning.

Grobler & Moller (1991:134) explain that the educand is a minor who requires assistance, advice, and guidance from the adult to enable him to achieve his vocation as a responsible person. This is not a new notion but only confirmation of idea that the whole society should take part in the education of the children in the village (cf. Chapter 3, Par.3.2).

Makgoba (1996:64) explains that there is a need for the adaptation of the Afro-centric approaches in managing schools in Africa. For the Western conventional management systems fail because they do not fit well in addressing the needs and aspirations of Africans. They were designed as replicas of their motherland. After all, these organizations are in Africa; for Africans, and need to adopt the management systems that reflect the aspirations and needs.

There is truth in Makgoba's utterances but the world has changed to a greater extent, people are living in multicultural societies, world nations are trying to reach out to each other with the purpose of reinventing common values and

norms. To bring about a complete move to Afro-centric approaches, will create further problems.

In this regard, Mbigi & Maree (1995a:5), sounds more realistic, when he says that people should remember that Africa was not a vacuum, but had its own institutions which functioned well on certain well-tried principles and practices. These institutions can be used as a framework to integrate certain successful techniques from other nations

In terms of the "motho ke motho" viewpoint, focus is on the importance of man irrespective of his/her skin colour, sex, status or age. This philosophy can help in restoring effectivity and productivity in education. The central point is that the schools do not exist because of man and therefore they must be seen to be serving learners and their communities, irrespective of the colour of skin (cf. Chapter 2, Par.2.2).

### **Collective responsibility**

Mbigi and Maree (1995b:1) express this notion as group solidarity that is essential for the survival of African communities and not individual self-reliance (cf. Chapter 4, Par.4.5.5). This implies that, in the traditional communities, people were expected to strive to discover the collective "we" before the "I".

This is supported by Teffo (1996:100) who explains that the African concept of man, is viewed in terms of a set of beliefs about man in the form of empirical generalizations. The African remains an integral part of the society and his destiny is bound together with those of his fellow human beings (cf. Chapter 2, Par.2.2).

Van der Westhuizen et al (1995:32) states that the management team provides direction to develop goals and establish expectations in school. This thinking is not in line with the Ubuntu approach. The philosophy of Ubuntu expects people to act collectively and not a section of the population only.

Van der Westhuizen's approach is not in line with the Ubuntu thinking. Khoza (1994b:1) believes that Ubuntu expects Africans to express the distinctive collective consciousness in their behaviour, expressions, and spiritual self-fulfilment, reflecting values such as, brotherhood for Africans, sharing, and treating and respecting other people as human beings.

This is supported by Teffo (1996:100) who explains the African conception of man, in terms of a set of beliefs about man in the form of empirical generalizations. The African remains an integral part of the society and his destiny is bound together with those of his fellow human beings.

Mbigi and Maree (1995a:6) advise that if Africa is to meet the challenges of development and competitiveness, it needs to discover its collective self-identity. This idea is expressed by the Zulu/Xhosa axiom, "umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu" which means "I am because we are".

The same sentiments can be uttered in terms of assistance that human beings need from fellow human beings for self-realization.

### **5.2.6 Collaboration**

Mbigi and Maree (1995b:1) mention that the traditional communities collaborated in performing certain tasks; ("jakwara", in Shona, which means, thrashing of grain collectively, "jangano", where two or more families came to work in the fields based on mutual trust) (cf. Chapter 3, Par. 3.6).

The school can also learn from social institutions that governed the traditional villages. Samkange & Samkange (1980:80) explains how the traditional Shona people sang, joked and danced as they worked. Everybody enjoyed what he or she was doing. Labour systems existed such as "zunde", in Shona, whereby, people came together for large construction works for the whole community. "*Nhimbe*", a Shona word for the individual attempts to ask for assistance from other villagers through brewing beer and preparing food and leadership for managing work was exchanged for the day (cf. Par 1,chapter1).

These traditional labour and relationship systems can serve to promote human relationships between educators and learners or pupil and educator interrelationships. People need to enjoy what they are doing. The management of the school should organize the teaching and learning activities in such a way that both educators and learners or pupils enjoy their work. In the context of Ubuntu, work is there to be enjoyed and not something that brings sadness to people (cf. Chapter 4. Par.4.5.2).

Fouche (1991:85) states that the principal's task is to create an effective communication line between school's operational functions and the home. The management thinking of the modern education system seems to focus more emphasis on the principal and his/her team. The schools should fulfil the central operating belief of Ubuntu that; " I am because we are" . The school needs to rediscover, reinvent, redefine its role for the purpose of fulfilling the aspirations and needs of the community it serves. The school or the principal cannot be a school without fulfilling the aspirations and needs of the community and the community cannot achieve its purpose without the school.

Despite the level of parents' expertise or education, there must be an intense collaboration between the school and the community.

### **5.2.7 Discipline**

The concept of human respect was linked to discipline and human dignity (cf. Chapter 2, Par, 2.9.4). Anybody, who respected people, was regarded as being disciplined and given the necessary dignity he/she deserved.

Mdluli (1987:67) describes respect as an important aspect of the Ubuntu worldview and it is related to discipline, law and order. Respect is known as "*ukuhlonipha*", in Zulu. It regulates relationships at different levels of society: it states the authority of elders over the younger people, parents over children,

leaders over followers, men over women and emphasizes respect even to strangers.

Ubuntu embraces different levels of society and can help to maintain discipline in school. People in general want to be regarded as being respected, in Zulu, "*hlonipha*". No one wants to be regarded as a social-outcast because of being disrespectful. This spirit can be inculcated within learners effectively, if parents are also involved in instilling discipline at school.

The school cannot maintain discipline alone. The school must act in concert with other role players. It is parents who understand their children better than the educators and they are sensitive when it comes to issues of discipline affecting their children. Involving parents in issues of discipline affecting children can win support for the school. The parents will feel that the school respects them.

The principle of "*ukuhlonipha*", with its potential to permeate different levels of societal aspects, can be taken as the point of departure in drafting the code of conduct for learners. The people of African descent are taught at an early stage to respect elderly people, seniors, chiefs, poor people, animals, nature and life itself (Makhudu, 1993:6).

Mbigi (1997:3) points out that in the black African cultural heritage great emphasis is placed on the concern for people. The pressure is placed on being good people (cf. Chapter 2, Par. 2.9.4). An opportunity should be created for every person to develop his/her potential through being allocated a task. A high level of informality punctuated the meeting; people should be allowed to raise their concern or opinion with regard to the tasks allocated to them. The spirit that prevails should encourage collective actions.

According to Kruger & Van Schalkwyk (1993:74) healthy discipline in a school is a necessity for the success of the school's curricular and extra-curricular

activities. Discipline is central to effective school and classroom management and it ensures good academic results.

The unfortunate situation about the modern schools is that discipline is not maintained collectively by the parents and the school. As a result there are always flaws within the system and the child has room to misbehave between the school and the home (cf. Chapter 2, Par. 2.5.4).

Additionally, Kruger (1996:40) mentions the fact that violence, abuse of drugs, alcohol, family disintegration and poverty have a negative impact on effectivity and productivity at school (cf. Chapter 4, Par.4.5.4).

The government and other stakeholders are trying their best to curb the situation, but this situation will continue to affect the effectivity and productivity at schools for years and years. The social problems such as the above need collective and united actions from the community but not only the school. The belief that the school and the principal are the major players in shaping the career of children should be redefined.

The school management can learn from the Ubuntu principles that emphasize the collective role of the whole community in all community projects. The old saying that the principal is the captain of the ship, needs to be revisited. The principal is still the leader, but need to do things with the members of his or her crew.

The community and the school learn to know each other better and work harmoniously. There are no leaders who can successfully co-ordinate the activities that take place in the home and school in the environment of disorder. This situation will impact negatively on the education of children in the school.

The "*motho ke motho*" contours expects of the principal and people who are in charge of managing education in schools, to operate in terms of being

sensitive to the needs and aspirations of the whole community in which the school operates (cf. Chapter 4, Par.4.5.4).

### **5.2.9 Democratic leadership role**

According to Sindane (1994b:9), traditional African communities have been practising democracy. Elders sit in the shade of a tree and talk until they agree and they will then go out to work with the intention of fulfilling their commitments (cf. Chapter 3, Par.3.8.1). The central point was to reach the consensus and respect the minority rights in decision-making processes. The majority rule idea was unknown to them. The king or chief spoke at the end of the meeting. His task was to sum up what had been said and form some consensus among diverse opinions. Praises, dances and the singing of cultural songs to keep the spirit of people together characterized the end of the meeting.

The idea was to promote democratic inclusive participation in the communities. This notion of democratic participation, as promulgated by Vos (1997:21) describes the function of the school management team as that of involving the parents in the formal schooling of their children. This idea sounds like a new phenomenon, but in reality, it has been practised by the traditional African communities long before.

The school that fails to take the parents on board, loses essential source of support in terms of finance, information, discipline and so forth. The parents generally regard their children's education as important. They want to know how their children are performing, even though they don't know how they can be involved in the education of their children.

Mbigi & Maree (1995b:37-38) indicate that traditional African villages were led by social institutions that were characterized by participatory democracy and consensus in reaching decisions. Further more, there were committees that operated without any disturbance and they were informed about the needs and aspirations of the community. The seating of these committees, was

characterized by the singing of traditional songs, poems and praises that promoted the organizations vision (cf. Chapter 3, Par. 3.8).

This way of managing, through democratic institutions, improved productivity of the organization and reduced conflicts that usually hamper progress. The school's management teams should learn from the above example African managers should take into consideration the African aspirations and needs, if possible integrate them.

### **5.3 Special interest group: technical knowledge**

Samkange & Samkange (1980:80) states that the African communities had systems such as; "*nhimbe*", in Shona, which means, an individual brewed beer and invited his neighbours to assist him/her in performing a particular task (cf. Chapter 3, Par. 3). The leadership role was shared among the people with specific skills. The people sung, joked and danced as they worked. To them, work was a symbol of collective enjoyment. They could also joke with superiors, like, the chief or the king during the occasions, it was really a moment of commitment and enjoyment.

This gives an indication that Ubuntu can help revive the ethic of work commitment in schools, resulting in the school achieving effectivity and productivity. The community should strive to revive these traditional institutions to make-work enjoyable and exciting for both the educators and learners.

The parents can be encouraged to bring to school any material that was left when they build their house or any material that they are not using at home, in a form of say, paint, bricks and other important building materials.

The purpose of bringing along such material will be for repairing or renovating the school. They (parents) can also start a project of building the school or library in the same way. The parents and learners should be asked to come with whatever building materials that are laying at home without being used.

The parents who have particular knowledge/expertise should take the lead in building or repairing the school. The singing, dancing, praises and folklores should characterize the work-party. People should enjoy themselves while working and learning to know each other's cultures well (cf. Chapter 4, Par. 4.4).

#### **5.4 Leadership ethics**

Koka (as cited in Broodryk, 1998c:6) points out that in the western context, the caring manager maybe a reference to the manager who is a serious, non-caring, always cold as an ice-cube gentleman or lady. The management team should reflect Ubuntu in the manner in which they relate with their subordinates: be relaxed, positive, informal and use good words in a non-stressed way, the way you smile, friendly, heartily and not in a cold grinding style; the way you handle others; elders, children; always respectful, the way you greet; friendly, in a three dimensional way; inquiring about well-being of others, relatives, friends and even cows or dogs! And the way you live; informal, caring, sharing, loving, and respecting (cf. Chapter 2, Par.2.9.3).

It will be difficult to enjoy work in a strange environment that is not conducive for effectivity and productivity in school. The educators and learners will end up feeling that work is not enjoyable. The management should apply Ubuntu principles, like, respect and greeting all educators and learners you come across, calling them by their names, make them to be very excited and motivated. They feel that they are respected and recognized in the school. The educators and learners will start performing their duties, seriously to catch the attention of the management and the school will benefit in terms of effectivity and productivity.

#### **5.5 Shepherds leadership approach**

Mandela (1994:21) describes as shepherd's leadership a system wherein the leader stays behind the flock, letting the most nimble go ahead, whereupon

the others follow, not realizing that all along they are being directed from behind (cf. Chapter 2, Par.2.7).

The subordinates hate a leader who makes them aware that he or she is following them behind or the one who likes, 'follow the leader', kind of approach. They like working as teams, doing things on their own without being followed from behind. The "motho ke motho" philosophy aims at empowering people for life, they must be kept informed of what is going on in the organization, but not using people as tools to achieve a particular aim.

To increase effectivity and productivity, the principal and his/her team, should apply the shepherd's leadership. Naturally, many people hate to be followed behind, they want to work freely. This leadership style can build trust between the subordinates and the management.

The old sayings that," unity is power", and "two heads are better than one", apply in this instance. The school should not operate as an island or either the principal or site manager working alone without the support of other stakeholders or the community.

He/she will be like a fish that jumps out of the water but is still expected to survive. The philosophy; "motho ke motho", encourages co-operation of people and team spirit in the context of promoting human dignity and social justice. A person remains a person, despite his colour, status, sex and age. Therefore, he/she must be given the respect he/she deserves.

Mbigi (1992:24 ) mentions Ubuntu as "*unhu*", (in Shona, which, literally translated, means "man is a man"). This formed the values of African tribal village communities that were based on Ubuntu. In accordance herewith, he/she is entitled to unconditional respect and human dignity. The values involved are morality, totality, interdependence and spirit of man (cf. Chapter 4, Par.4.5.4).

The management team is supposed to create a new spirit and culture that will make it possible to nurture and sustain new practices in the school. The principal should make a personal transformation, display a high level of commitment and be an example in terms of morality.

Van der Westhuizen et al (1991:186) expresses this idea in terms of his description pertaining to a sound principal-community relationship: it must be consistent, human, decisive and characterized by good discipline, recognition, personal interest, justice and strong leadership on the part of the principal.

Broodryk (1998a:6) points out that the manager should be predictable; people should know what is expected of them, he or she, should not be a person of many colours. The people should have confidence in the manager. The leader should work jointly with people in leading the organization. There must be consultation, democratic participation; where every person talks and his/her contribution is considered seriously.

Broodryk (1998c:1) states that the South African management of the past as typically oppressive and dehumanizing in nature. The operation was characterized by the top-down strategies that existed between the bosses and workers, principals and educators, educators and learners. The senior decides and the subordinates have no alternative but to follow instructions without questioning. The management system was based on the kind of "follow the leader" approach. This trend of managing marginalizes the community intentionally or unintentionally.

Bagin, Gallgher & Kindred (1994:129) indicate the advantage of community involvement as helping children to learn better. The school can win the trust and confidence of both parents and learners through parent involvement. Above all, children learn better when their parents are involved, and the school will avoid incidences where some parents sabotage the school because they were not consulted or involved when certain events were planned.

But this phenomenon of the parent community participation through democratic forums, has been tradition that was practised by the traditional communities long before in roads in Africa by foreign powers.

Hence, the thinking that, “umuntu ngumuntu ngabanye abantu”, (which means, a person is a person through other people, ‘n mens is a ‘n mens deur ander mense) which implies that the people were expected to work together, consult each other in whatever they did (cf. Chapter 4, Par.4.1).

## 5.5 Consultation

Mandela (1994:19) explains that the traditional chief was always surrounded by his trusted men who retained the knowledge of history and tribal customs in their heads. They served as the community judiciary and their opinion and word carried great weight. They were, nevertheless, assisted by other social institutions, like, the kgotla to control the community issues and people were expected to conform.

This parliament of the chief would call an imbizo for consultation by all the whole community members. Contrary to this Conradie (1990:137) states that the leadership or management team has the task of developing and sustaining the school's culture. This culture emanates from the communities and principal's own values, norms, as a result of vast teaching experience.

The powers that are invested in the principal in the modern system, due to their expertise, are the sources of the school community conflicts. The philosophy of Ubuntu, regards the task of educating the children as a corporate and collective act by the whole community and not by an individual (cf. Chapter 2, Par.3.2).

Mbiti (1990:3) states that the philosophy of Ubuntu expects children to internalize whatever religious ideas and practices are held or observed by their families and communities. These traditions were handed down from

generation to generation with modifications suitable to its own historical situation and needs (cf. Chapter 3, Par.3.4).

Mbiti (1990:88) further states that people achieved their humanity only through conformity to the community's philosophical framework and it involved taking part in the beliefs, ceremonies, rituals and festivals of that community (cf. Chapter 2, Par.2.8).

Mbigi & Maree (1995b:6) state that the traditional societies were expected to show a high level of conformity and loyalty on certain selected issues of survival, like the above cultural festivals. Loyalty and conformity were high prizes for members of the group. People were motivated to uphold social justice and not individual freedom.

These guidelines encourage people to work collectively for the benefit of the whole society. Olivier, Smith & Le Roux (1996:52) explain that in certain schools, children are often left without supervision, with no one to look after them or to check their attendance, assignments and homework.

Even if educators are present at school some are reluctant to do their work effectively. Ubuntu can help to instill love in educator towards their children. The educators feel tired and demoralized by the conditions under which they are working (cf. Chapter 4, Par.4.2.1.1).

Khoza (1994a) describes the Ubuntu world-view as African humanism driven by a high sense of caring. The idea of "caring", becomes the regulative concept of subordinate people's behaviour in Africa. The educators can derive motivation and a sense of caring from Ubuntu. The manager should care about the faith of his subjects. Human beings should not be treated as a means to an end. They (human beings) are not things which can be exploited or used to achieve the organizational goals at their expense.

## **5.7 Celebration: spirit renewal**

Mbigi and Maree (1995a:73) mention the fact the spiritual medium is necessary for the transformation and reality of any idea or situation. The philosophy of Ubuntu gives the community the opportunity to come together to review and celebrate their achievement. During the occasion people feel free to perform the acts that keep the community in a coherent way.

The school can also organize this event to celebrate the achievements of children. The people should be allowed to celebrate in their different cultures. This will be the opportunity to learn to know and understand each other's cultural background very well.

Squelch & Lemmer (1994:10) regard the basic responsibility of the site manager as the management of all aspects of the school as an organization to achieve effective teaching and learning by fostering a culture of teaching and learning.. The concept of the culture of child education has been an old idea and Ubuntu placed more emphasis on it, it is not a new idea, but Squelch & Lemmer are confirming what had been done by the traditional communities (cf. Chapter 3, Par.3.2).

The needs and aspirations of the learners need to be taken into consideration. For example, the common issues facing South Africans is to heal the nation, promote growth and development economically and socially, restore human dignity, fight crime and other social illnesses, like, abuse of children and women.

## **5.8 Conclusion**

In this chapter, an effort was made to draw possible contours within which Ubuntu can be introduced to education. The following conclusions can be made:

- ◆ Inclusivity is promoted because planning is done by all interested parties in a form of "*imbizo*". There are few management problems.

- ◆ The idea of collective ownership is promoted. The parents are encouraged to take part in all school activities. As a result, the whole community-parental body is taken on board.
- ◆ The school develops a culture of respect in all its activities. During “imbizo”, everybody’s viewpoint is respected.
- ◆ The learners are empowered in life skills, because the learning material is relevant to their cultural background and is derived from their own environment.
- ◆ The rate of child misbehaviour is limited due to the wide or broad network of parental community. The parents act jointly in disciplining children in the village.
- ◆ The community is kept in a coherent form because of the way of life that promotes sharing.
- ◆ The social institutions that prevail from the community help in promoting discipline among community members and children.
- ◆ Both the school and the home benefit because they participate jointly in an endeavour to educate the child.
- ◆ The school and the community make use of the expertise that prevails in the village to the maximum for the benefit of children.
- ◆ A conducive atmosphere is created at school for the transmission of effective meaningful education due to the Ubuntu ethics like respect for man.
- ◆ The teachers’ innovation and learners’ self-activity are improved through the shepherd leadership style that allows them to work without much interference from the authorities.
- ◆ The spirit of harmony and goodwill is inculcated within the educators and learners for execution of daily activities at school.

- ◆ The celebrations of achievements serve to motivate both the teachers and learners to perform excellently.

### **5.9 Close**

This chapter presented an effort on possible contours through which Ubuntu can be introduced to education. Chapter 6 will give an outline of the findings, conclusions and recommendations.

# CHAPTER 6

## FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6.1 Introduction

In this Chapter the research is being concluded by a presentation of the findings, the drawing of conclusions on the basis of these findings, and finally, making recommendations.

### 6.2 Findings

#### 6.2.1 Findings on the essential elements of the Ubuntu principle (Chapter 2)

- ◆ The children were encouraged at an early age to venture into the unknown world with courage, commitment, dedication and motivation. These efforts and attempts were aimed at educating the child for life. The success gained during expeditions would earn someone respect and status within the community (cf. Chapter 2, Par. 2.2).
- ◆ Man is a social being by nature. The traditional African communities displayed a distinctive collective consciousness in their behaviour, expression, and spiritual self-fulfilment; reflecting values like sharing, caring, loving, being sensitive to the plight of others (cf. Chapter 2, Par. 2.3).
- ◆ Positive attitude had an impact on successful learning and could be achieved through co-operation. Children by nature needed someone who could appreciate what they did. This sense of appreciation would lead to trust and development of confidence in someone (cf. Chapter 3, Par. 3.2).
- ◆ The traditional communities practised a high sense of belonging. There was no person without belonging. The people belonged to particular group formations. They were expected to comply with norms and values of the society, principles of the family, and other social institutions. There was a

strong belief that people were what they were because of the community they lived in (cf. Chapter 3, Par, 3.6).

- ◆ The communities placed more value on human beings than on politics or material values. In their daily interactions people served the interest of man first for example, the villagers could leave a cow to drown in order to save a human being (cf. Chapter 3, Par.3.5).
- ◆ The extended family played a prominent role in the development and growth of children, particularly, “vatete”, in Shona, which means, ‘aunt’. There were psychological and psychiatric systems that were embedded within Ubuntu which were necessary for educational and social development (cf. Chapter 1, Par. 1.1).
- ◆ A person is a self-defining person. Through his/her interactions with other members of the community, a person is talking directly with other members of the community through his/her conduct. The community is able to discover what type of a person you are through interactions with you. This way of living and understanding life emanates from the thinking that; “*I am because we are*” (cf. Chapter 3, Par. 3.8).
- ◆ A person deserved unconditional respect. The traditional communities regarded respect as the prerequisite for achieving human dignity. A person could achieve his/her humanity in concert with others. The respect he/she gave to others, in turn, made people to respect him/her. It was a reciprocal relationship (cf. Chapter 2, Par. 2.9.4).
- ◆ Language acted as vehicle through which values, norms and culture were revealed to children and community members. The community members educated children through storytelling (cf. Chapter 2, Par. 2.3).
- ◆ The learning content exposed to children was of vital importance and as a result parents, as the primary educators of the child, were to educate the

children according to the community value system. The child was regarded as an integral part of the community (cf. Chapter 2, Par.2.4).

- ◆ Education was a non-scheduled act, it was informal and not confined to a particular place. It took place anywhere an adult and the child met (cf. Chapter 2, Par. 2.5.3).
- Education of the children was a corporate responsibility of the whole village; every adult member of the society was a parent, educator and motivator of every child in the village and was to be exemplary (cf. Chapter 2, par.2. 5.4).
- ◆ As a result education was not the responsibility of biological parent only (cf. Chapter 4, Par. 2.5.1).
- ◆ The education received by children was related to their environment. The education mirrored the children's surroundings. Children were taught to use traditional fighting sticks and the necessity of looking after the cattle, goats for the survival of the community (cf. Chapter 3, Par. 3.6).
- ◆ The traditional communities in the context of their own environment practised democracy. People were allowed to talk in lengthy meetings for hours. The aim was to reach a consensus binding everybody (cf. Chapter 2, Par.2.7).
- ◆ Families and communities remain the reservoir of values and norms. The children were taught to respect each other and adults at an early stage. The children were educated through traditional folk stories. There was no community that could survive without its historical cultural background (cf. Chapter 2, Par.2.8).
- ◆ The principle of respect remained the basis of all human interactions particularly in education. No meaningful learning and teaching could take place without respect (cf. Chapter2, Par.2.9).
- ◆ It was discovered that man should be regarded a social being and by nature would need someone who was caring, loving, and sensitive to his/her social needs and aspirations. The parents and educators, as primary and secondary

educators of the child, needed to create a good and healthy atmosphere for the child to realize his/her potential (cf. Chapter 2, Par.2.9.2).

- ◆ The concept of sharing was of cardinal importance in communities practising Ubuntu, as a way of life. No man was self-sufficient. There is no super human being. Children were therefore, taught to share whatever goods available with the spirit of goodwill (cf. Chapter, Par.4.5.2).

### **6.2.2 Findings on education from an Ubuntu perspective (Chapter 3)**

- ◆ Every adult member of the society had a social responsibility to supervise every child in the village (cf. Chapter 3, Par, 3.2). Hence, the children in the traditional societies were brought up under strict laws and the control was tight.
- ◆ Children were subject to punishment by any adult member of the village and as a result children (cf. Chapter 3, Par. 3.2), committed less mischief.
- ◆ The children enjoyed playing with parents who are informal, open, warm and friendly in their approach (cf. Chapter3, Par. 3.3).
- ◆ This serves as a motivational force to them to learn positively.
- ◆ The relationship between discipline and respect in the context of Ubuntu is not clear, it is intertwined with effectivity and productivity. It was therefore, discovered that a school that operated without these twin concepts, would find it difficult to reach its objective, educative teaching (cf. Chapter 2, Par. 2.8.1).
- ◆ The communities, which practised Ubuntu, a way of life, were committed to their work because Ubuntu compelled everyone to be the best that one could be. As a result many traditional communities were committed to their work (cf. Chapter 3, Par.3.7).
- ◆ The principle of "*hukuma*", human relationship, is important for achieving productivity and effectivity in organization. This fulfils the idea of "I am because we are" (cf. Chapter 2, Par.3.8).

- ◆ There was no way the child could be educated meaningfully if the traditional institutions operated in compartmentalized entities. There was no difference between the adult and educator. The children were placed under tight supervision of adults (cf. Chapter3, Par. 3.9).

### **6.2.3 Findings on the role of Ubuntu in restoring effectivity and productivity in education (chapter 4)**

- ◆ The African children do not receive education relevant to their cultural background. Most of the education systems are models of former colonial powers. This result is that children are becoming alienated to their original environment (cf. Chapter 4, Par.4.1.1).
- ◆ The Ubuntu axiom "*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*", was used to promote human relationships in South Africa. This philosophy was appropriate to African communities (cf. Chapter 4, Par. 4.2).
- ◆ Every community member had a potential of being human, therefore, it meant that the traditional communities were imbued with the spirit of humanity (cf. Chapter 2, Par, 2.8.4). They treated each other as equals despite their status in the community.
- ◆ The idea of sharing is the most central element of Ubuntu. The children are taught to share at an early stage. People of African descent are encouraged to share even a locust's head (cf. Chapter4, Par. 4.5.4).
- ◆ The humanity of people determined their conduct and they were expected to respect each other by behaviour and self-expression. The children were expected to respect adults in order to become (cf. Chapter 3,Par.3.4).
- ◆ The traditional leaders respected the cultures of people. They understood their people and knew their strengths and weaknesses. They knew who their people were and what they could become or achieve in life (cf. Chapter3, Par.3.4).

- ◆ The people who practised Ubuntu had a way of life based on assisting each other. They endeavoured to be ideal men; people who felt for others, a real person, "*munhu chaiye*", in Shona (cf. Chapter 4, Par. 4.1.8).
- ◆ There were no destitute people in the traditional communities. They believed that no person should suffer in the presence of other human beings. Their way of thinking was patterned by the philosophy of; " *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*", which means, a person is a person through other persons and "*umuntu akahlwa*", a person is never thrown away like trash (cf. Chapter 4, Par.4.1.6).
- ◆ The traditional communities promoted the sense of "fellowship" or the spirit of "*nwana mai*", in Shona. They treated each other as brothers and sisters. The relationship was based on an intensive network of extended family (cf. Chapter 4, Par. 4.1.8).
- ◆ The education systems in Africa do not address the needs and aspirations of the African communities. The children are taught values, norms and attitudes that are not relevant to their cultural background (cf. Chapter 4, Par. 4.1.10).

#### **6.2.4 Findings on "motho ke motho" contours towards introducing Ubuntu in education (Chapter 5)**

- ◆ Imbizo helped in the utilization of all community human resources and promote the understanding and relationship among the major stakeholders in education. Every person present was allowed to speak and ideas were drawn from a wide-broader perspective (cf. Chapter5, Par.5.2).
- ◆ "Imbizo" promoted the idea of collective ownership. The community members took collective decisions and joint responsibility that benefited the whole community (cf. Chapter 5, Par. 5.2.1).
- ◆ Knowledge was exposed to children in a form of cultural activities and it was drawn from their own environment and children could easily identify with it.

The children became excited and learned more because of the trust that they got from their parents and other community members (cf. chapter5, Par.5.2).

- ◆ The parent acted collectively in disciplining their children and as a result, the rates of children misbehave, was limited. The children knew that every adult in the village, was a parent (cf. Chapter 5, Par. 5.7).
- ◆ The whole community is involved in community projects and this promotes the idea of collective ownership and these communal projects become sustainable (cf. Chapter 5, Par.5.2.3).
- ◆ Respect formed the foundation of human interaction in the traditional communities. The children were taught to respect elderly people from an early age (cf. Chapter 5, Par.5.2.4).
- ◆ The education that was transmitted to children was relevant to their way of life and the knowledge emanating from their own environment (cf. Chapter 5, Par.5.2.5).
- ◆ The traditional communities believed in working collectively for the sustenance of the whole community. The communities learned to work together in performing large construction in the community. Whenever, there was a project to be completed, they collaborated in good spirit to perform the task (cf. Chapter 5, Par. 5.2.1). This way of doing things kept the communities in a coherent way.
- ◆ Discipline regulated relationships in all community interactions. The elders taught children to respect and know that they can only achieve their humanity through respecting other people (cf. Chapter 2, Par.2.9.4).
- ◆ Chiefs have been applying democracy in Africa for years. Democracy is not a new concept in Africa. It is only the context under which it is applied which looks new (cf. Chapter 5, Par.5.2.9).
- ◆ Leadership was a role that was shared in Africa. The people were used to performing activities jointly and administering those activities jointly. For

example, during the working day, people shared the leadership role (cf. Chapter 5, Par.5.3).

- ◆ Leadership behaviour played a major role in the community. Through thinking in terms of “people”, the leader was expected to conduct himself/herself in a particular manner, according to communal values and norms (cf. Chapter 5, Par.5.4).
- ◆ Ubuntu leadership style expected a leader to lead from behind and work on consensus after contribution of the people. This kind of leadership was people oriented and people felt confident to venture into the unknown world for the benefit of the whole community (cf. Chapter 5, Par.5.5).
- ◆ Traditional people worked through a system of consultation. They would meet in gatherings for hours and hours. The aim was to reach a consensus in performing community projects (cf. Chapter 5, Par.5.6).
- ◆ The community celebrated harvests collectively and this gave them spirit to work jointly. This gave the people the opportunity to exploit potentials from broader context (cf. Chapter 5, Par.5.7).

### **6.3 Conclusions**

#### **6.3.1 Conclusions on the essential elements of the Ubuntu principle**

- ◆ The traditional communities kept the society in order through respect for Ubuntu values such as mutual respect.
- ◆ The traditional communities did not experience a high rate of child abuse because of the sincere love, respect and collective responsibility in child upbringing.
- ◆ The fact that education was not confined to a particular place, in the traditional communities, reduced the rate of child delinquency and molestation.

- ◆ The children learned the community's values and norms through exciting cultural activities, like storytelling and they attached more value to these stories and they remembered every implication for their life.
- ◆ The children became excited and easily remembered information that emanated from their environment.
- ◆ The children trusted educators who treated them with love and care and they learned better under their guidance.
- ◆ The children acquired knowledge through practical activities with ease.
- ◆ The human beings could earn their humanity through respecting the humanity of others.
- ◆ There can be no effective education without respect for values and norms.
- ◆ Customs, rituals and traditions can shape people's lives.
- ◆ The people who practise Ubuntu can be sensitive for the well being of others.
- ◆ Work can be a symbol of enjoyment in the society that practises Ubuntu as a way of life.
- ◆ There can be no person without care in communities that practise Ubuntu.
- ◆ Conformity can be an element of discipline. People who are disciplined conform very well to the values and norms of the group.
- ◆ The central value of decision making is that it can reach a consensus and secure the right of minority.
- ◆ Indaba can be organized in a form of democratic participation characterized by a high sense of caring and love.
- ◆ The community can organize themselves into large labour systems to construct large projects, like building a school.

- ◆ The community-parent body can be reservoirs of respect, discipline and morals.
- ◆ The philosophy of Ubuntu can contribute to training the majority of South Africans in terms of skills and knowledge.
- ◆ The South Africans can use Ubuntu to discover their collective identity for development and growth.
- ◆ Leaders can learn to see themselves through the eyes of the community they are serving.
- ◆ The learners can be taught not to keep everything for themselves while other people are suffering.
- ◆ The children's confidence can be reinforced through the application of Ubuntu principles, like collective actions and collective decision making.

### **6.3.2 Conclusions on education from an Ubuntu perspective**

- ◆ The children's confidence can be reinforced when they are under the guidance of someone they trust.
- ◆ Children can learn meaningfully when they learn in a situation that is informal, open, friendly and motivating.
- ◆ The rate of children's misbehaviour can be limited when there is a wide-network of parental supervision.
- ◆ The societal values and norms help to serve as mirrors, according to which children can shape their lives.
- ◆ Parents can shape children's characters through being exemplary to children at all times, portraying good morals to them.
- ◆ Discipline can be exercised with love, care, and sympathy and through joint responsibility of all the parental community.

- ◆ The children can be taught knowledge that is relevant to their environmental needs, and the ethics of work and commitment through traditional stories.
- ◆ Man was not born a super human being, therefore, his/her destiny is bound together with those of fellow human beings.

### **6.3.3 Conclusions on the role of Ubuntu in restoring effectivity and productivity in schools.**

- ◆ Knowledge can be transmitted in such a way that it reflects on the children's cultural values and aspirations and reflects a way of life from which they come.
- ◆ Education can promote a way of lifestyle that can suit the South African student population, for example, sharing of resources at school.
- ◆ The philosophy of Ubuntu can help in the maximum utilization of the few human resources through collective actions and collective decisions.
- ◆ Effectivity and productivity can be restored in schools through the integration of Ubuntu's essential elements in the school curriculum.

### **6.3.4 Conclusions on "Motho ke motho" contours towards introducing Ubuntu in education**

- ◆ Imbizo can be used to implement and promote community participation on a broader platform and generate ideas from a wide perspective.
- ◆ Imbizo has the potential to promote collective ownership through encouraging collective decisions and joint actions.
- ◆ The children can identify with knowledge drawn from their environment and this motivates them to learn with excitement.
- ◆ Large parenthood networks, discourage children from committing mischief and also promote children's respect for all community- parent bodies.

- ◆ The communities can organize themselves into labour forces that will perform certain important constructions in the community. The idea of looking at the government to do everything for them can be frustrating.
- ◆ Discipline can teach children and adults respect and earn them their human dignity. People earn human dignity through respecting the human dignity of others.
- ◆ Democracy can be practised successfully in Africa through contextualizing it to suite the people who practise it.
- ◆ Leadership roles can be shared among people in the school, company and so forth. The principle of joint responsibilities can be promoted among the community's members.
- ◆ The leaders' behaviour plays an important role in improving the community's values and norms. He/She takes into consideration, the cultural background of people who are under his/her supervision.
- ◆ The traditional people felt confident to venture into the unknown world under the Ubuntu leadership style, "shepherd leadership", wherein the leader led from behind and relied on reaching consensus through an intensive process of consultation as the basis of the operations.
- ◆ The notion of community collective celebration can promote the spirit of community joint responsibility. The communities learn to work together and tolerate each other well.

#### ◆ **6.4 Recommendations**

On account of the preceding findings and recommendations the following recommendations are being made:

- ◆ The philosophy of Ubuntu should be accepted as an alternative philosophy of education to satisfy the indigenous needs of South Africans.

- ◆ More written work should be promoted on Ubuntu as a way of life to expose it to more South African students.
- ◆ Teachers should be empowered in Ubuntu education because they are the most important people in implementing any changes in education effectively.
- ◆ Parents and other community members are to be encouraged to revive Ubuntu teaching in their families and other societal institutions.
- ◆ The government needs to encourage South Africans to revive the traditional institutions that are relevant to the modern education demands.
- ◆ The elderly people or experienced heroes with traditional oral history should be encouraged to come forward to schools and relate this history to students.
- ◆ Cultural days at schools should be given the necessary support from parents, educational authorities, the school and other bodies with interest in education.
- ◆ Ubuntu cultural activities should be organized in the community, wherein the parents, community and children take part to promote the spirit of togetherness.
- ◆ The education culture should epitomize the Ubuntu essences and promote collective decisions and joint responsibility for everybody in school despite the status.
- ◆ The Ubuntu leadership style, leading from behind, should be adopted in education to encourage and motivate both the educators and learners to work freely, independently and motivated by the fact that space is created for them to do things on their own without being threatened. This kind of freedom will result in effectivity and productivity.
- ◆ The Imbizo should be used to address very sensitive issues like discipline, finance and crime that are rife in education.
- ◆ The Ubuntu principles should be used in education to maintain order and discipline for the restoration of effectivity and productivity.

- ◆ The philosophy of Ubuntu should be employed in conflict resolutions in education, its inherent potential of forgiveness, loving and caring for others.
- ◆ Ubuntu should be the foundation of the provision of facilities in education. The communities can lend a helping hand to those communities that are suffering and children's education failing because of lack of facilities. The community can also be encouraged to use Ubuntu projects like "*letsema*", a social project wherein every community member comes to render communal service.

### **6.5 Recommendations for further research**

It is recommended that further research be done on the following topics:

- ◆ Research should be done on the possibility of integrating Ubuntu into the school curriculum.
- ◆ Recording the Ubuntu oral education for future preservation.
- ◆ The role of Ubuntu in the general upgrading of education.

### **6.6 Close**

The report is closed in this Chapter with the findings, conclusions and recommendations on the basis of the research that was done.

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