

## CHAPTER 4

### DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 3 I focused on the process of the empirical research. This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of data collected by means of interviews from the educators and School Management Team members in the Gert Sibande District.

The information on the profile of the participants and the results of the interviews with educators and School Management Team members are presented below:

#### 4.2 PSEUDONYMS FOR SCHOOLS AND PARTICIPANTS

It was necessary to include this section for practical implementation of confidentiality in the handling of data.

- ✓ **School A: Participant 1** – Chairperson of the Environment Committee (Female); **Participant 2** – Member of the SMT (Female) HOD; **Participant 3** – Member of the Health Advisory (HIV/Aids) Committee (Female); **Participant 4** – Life Orientation Teacher (Female); **Participant 5** – Chairperson of Sports Committee (Male); **Participant 21** – Member of Health Committee (Female).
- ✓ **School B: Participant 6** – Chairperson of the Health Committee (Female); **Participant 7** – Life Orientation Teacher (Female); **Participant 8** – Chairperson of the Nutrition Committee (Female); **Participant 9** – Member of the SMT (Female) HOD; **Participant 10** – Chairperson of the Soul Buddies Group (Female); **Participant 11** – Chairperson of the Environment Committee (Female).
- ✓ **School C: Participant 12** – Chairperson of the Sports Committee (Male); **Participant 13** – Life Orientation Teacher (Female); **Participant 14** – Chairperson of the Nutrition committee (Female); **Participant 15** – Member of

the SMT (Female) HOD; **Participant 16** – Chairperson of the Environment Committee (Female).

- ✓ **School D: Participant 17** – Chairperson of the Environment Committee (Male); **Participant 18** – Secretary of the Sports Committee (Female); **Participant 19** – Chairperson of the Nutrition committee (Female); **Participant 20** – Life Orientation Teacher (Female).

#### 4.3 RESULTS OF INTERVIEWS

The following results related to the research question on the legislation that guides the creation of healthy school environments.

Participating schools were at different levels regarding compliance to policy

**Question: Do you have any policy, guideline or even a constitution that you are using, to direct your activities?**

**Number of participants:** Thirteen participants responded to the question. Participants include one member of the SMT who is the Head of Department and twelve teachers, from the following committees: Environment (3), Nutrition (3), Health (2), LO (2), SMT (1), Soul Buddies (1) and Sports (1).

Participants indicated having policies that guide them in the creation of healthy school environments. This is what the participants said:

*“Yes, we have a policy that was developed in 2008” (participant 1A); “Yes we do have a policy, we sat down as committee and drafted it, we have it” (participant 11B); “We managed to draft our own guideline as a school and as a sport committee that at least each and every term we must see kids participating in sport” (participant 12C); “I’m guided by the departmental policy” (participant 7B); “We developed our policy, but in line with the national policy (participant 3A); “Yes, we do have a policy but at the present moment as I’ve said the principal*

*took all the policies for amendments, yes, but we still have guidance, we are using the old policy so that you know what to do” (participant 6B); “We have a national one (policy) that we are using” (participant 19D); “Yes, we do have a policy that mentions how many months the parents must work in school and also their duties” (participant 8B); “Yes (we have a policy), we also attend work-shops to give us guidance, the policy also includes the age restriction to say which age group we must select for the buddies and code of conduct for the buddies” (participant 10B).*

Three of the four schools alluded to the fact that they have policies that guide their activities. Some policies were developed at schools, whilst some are provincial and national policies or guidelines. Schools can make use of National policies if they have not developed their own policies. Literature supports the idea of having policies as it argues that developing a health policy sets the strategic direction for the school (National Healthy Schools Programme, 2007: 18) (*cf.* 2.4.1).

It is worrying that participants from one school indicated not having policy.

*“No, we don’t have a policy, we just do without a constitution; it was a committee that was just formed to address these issues, there is nothing” (participant 14C); “No we don’t have a policy, we don’t have a guideline, we don’t have a constitution” (participant 16C).*

Two committees from one school explicitly indicated that they didn’t have guidelines, policies or constitution to refer to and use as guide to direct their activities. Both participants who indicated that they do not have policies are chairpersons of committees (*cf.* 4.2). School C has three committees (*cf.* 4.2), it seems that only one of them has a policy. According to National Healthy School Programme (2007: 18) the development of policies provide philosophy and principles which underpin the way things are to be done (*cf.* 2.7). Policies are therefore relevant in giving guidelines and direction to be followed, without these guiding principles attainment of expected results may be unthinkable. Mostly in this case, it becomes a double challenge, firstly because things may be done

haphazardly, and secondly that it may be difficult for the SMT to monitor the progress of the committees as the duties and goals of the committees were not explicitly expounded. Literature also indicates that it remains the duty of the SMT (*cf.* 2.7) to ensure that the committees established for a particular purpose at school have relevant policies to be in a situation to effectively and efficiently fulfill their mandate. It can be deduced from the responses that the SMT in school C was failing in ensuring that policies are available.

One of the participants indicated that her school was encountering problems with the implementation of policies:

*“Like I’m saying the policy says we should go, but it is not applicable or practical even in the GET they are supposed to do the same” (participant 15C);*

The participant whose response is indicated above was a member of the SMT (*cf.* 4.2). By ‘applicable’ the participant could have meant that they were encountering difficulty in implementing the policy. The participant seemed to have identified the problem but it was not clear whether the SMT was doing something about it or not. According to literature, committees need the support of the SMT (*cf.* 2.7) in implementing policies, if the support is not rendered committees can fail in executing their duties. The SMT would be failing in its duties if after identification of a problem it does not give guidance on how to solve it.

***Question: What are your activities, what do you do as a committee?***

**Number of participants:** Eleven participants responded to the question. Participants included chairpersons of nine committees and one member, Chairpersons of Environment (4), Soul Buddies (1), Nutrition (3), Health (2) and 1 ordinary member (Health).

Participants in the Environment committees indicated playing roles in ensuring healthy environments. Three participants from three different schools said that they educate or give information to learners and two participants focused on cleaning:

*“We are teaching the learners that they should look after the environment, they should not destroy the environment” (participant 16C); “Our aim is to make children aware about the importance of the environment, clean environment” (participant 17D); “Aims to educate learners at different schools so that they become leaders, those leaders can identify problems that arise in the school, like those learners who don’t have birth certificates, they report back to the club” (participant 10B). “We see to it that the environment at school is clean” (participant 1A); “We check that the classes are clean and the material is sufficient, like toilet paper, polish and soap” (participant 11B);*

Two of the participants who indicated that they educate learners were in the environment committee (cf. 4.2). Both these schools were involved in the Green Cage Eco Programme (cf. 3.5.1) although school C dropped out after 3 years. Both schools received training on the importance of education in the creation of healthy environments. School D received accolades because of its clean environment. It is surprising that school A does not mention education as it was also part of the Eco programme. Although School B was not part of the programme, it is commendable that it acknowledges the importance of educating learners about health issues. According to literature, effective school health programmes teach learners about healthful and unhealthful behaviours (Lightfoot & Bines, 2000) (cf. 2.4.2).

The other two participants also in the environment Committees were concerned about cleanliness of the surroundings including classes, teaching learners about the importance of clean environment and raising awareness. It is commendable that there was a focus on the cleanliness of the surroundings but the participants did not mention the cleaning of toilets. Literature indicates that stakeholders’ awareness of roles and responsibilities will contribute to effectiveness in the implementation of programmes (Public Service Commission, 2008: 8) (cf. 2.4.4). The participants seem not to be aware

of all their duties regarding the environmental health. The picture below bears evidence to the focus of school D in the cleanliness of the surroundings:

**Figure 4.1:** Clean surroundings in school D



The photo taken from school D bears evidence to their efforts of ensuring a healthy learning environment. The school was tidy, not a single paper could be seen. There was a focus in this school on the flora thereby ensuring the right of learners to a clean environment. The photographs taken showed evidence of the neglect of the cleaning of toilets in school C. The photograph below shows a toilet that was not cleaned.

**Figure 4.2:** Unclean toilet in school C



The photo shows a toilet that does not have a lid, the toilet paper holder is broken and there is no cistern. The terrible state that this toilet is in is not acceptable, many learners make use of the toilet and this situation can lead to a rapid spread of diseases, it is a health hazard.

Two other participants indicated being concerned with nutrition:

*“In the morning we make sure that they have enough food for the learners to cook, everything like neatness of learners. We have the store room here at the office, in the morning I open, then take food for the day” (participant 3A); “Mostly my duty is to receive the deliveries and sign for them, I count whether the stock we received is in line with our orders, I also distribute every morning to the ladies who are cooking for the food that must be cooked for that day” (participant 19D);*

Participant in school C was a member of the Health Advisory Committee and the other a chairperson of the Nutrition Committee. School A did not have a nutrition committee and this would imply that this participant was playing two roles: that of a HAC member and being responsible for nutrition of learners. Both participants indicated being involved with administrative duties. It seems that these participants were coordinators of the nutrition programme. One participant mentioned supervising day-to-day activities and the other being responsible for receiving stock. However, there was no mention of the

recording of stock and keeping updated record of invoices, keeping the register of learners who were fed each day and attending all trainings and workshops as indicated in the guide on National School Nutrition Programme (2009: 5-6). The two participants responsible for nutrition seem to be ignorant of these other duties that are outlined in the policy.

One participant indicated being responsible for the first aid kit:

*“For an example with health we see to it that there is a first aid kit is available at school, it must be there and it must be filled up to the standard, because you see learners hurt each other with scissors or get cut by glass windows” (participant 6B); “In the morning we make sure that they have enough food for the learners to cook, everything like neatness of learners” (participant 3A).*

Participants in the health committee indicated their roles as to ensure that the first aid kit had resources and the other mentioned personal hygiene and nutrition. Both these participants were acting within their jurisdiction. Literature supports prevention of communicable diseases (*cf.* 2.4.7). There are however other duties that have not been mentioned by these participants such as health education and behaviour (Final Draft Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement, 2011) and advising the School Governing Body on matters pertaining to health including HIV/AIDS as indicated in the National Policy on HIV/AIDS (SA, 1996). It is not clear whether the participants were not aware of the importance of these duties or not. In order to carry out these duties effectively, literature emphasizes the importance of electing a chairperson who is knowledgeable within the field of health care (DoE, 1999: 26d) (*cf.* 2.6). These participants cannot be able to perform their duties if they are not aware of them. Literature further states that discussing and defining the roles and responsibilities of the whole school community is imperative so that everyone can be clear about the relevance of the policy area for them (National Healthy School Programme, 2007: 18) (*cf.* 2.4.1). It is the duty of school management to define these roles for smooth implementation of programmes.

Some participants were concerned with the cleanliness of the surroundings. Although other participants were aware of what was expected of them, there were however, participants who were ignorant of the policy:

*“We employ the helpers at school” (participant 8B); “So we deal with those learners we offer them something to eat just for the day” (participant 14C).*

The participant who thought it was her role to employ helpers might not be aware of the contents of this policy. The participants from different nutrition committees are at different levels regarding their roles. Both participants are chairpersons of the nutrition committee. According to a guide for secondary schools on National School Nutrition Programme (2009: 5-6), it is the responsibility of the School Governing Body to identify unemployed parents from the community, recruit them as volunteer food handlers (*cf.* 2.4.4). It is not the duty of educators to feed learners but that of food handlers. There is also an indication of a lack of compliance with policy in these participants’ responses. Role players are instrumental in the success of any programme within the school. Ignorance of the role to play may have negative impact in the management of these programme. There is therefore a need for a training and continued support from the SMT.

From the above analysis it can be deduced that participants don’t perform all the duties that they are expected to. It can also be said that the environmental committee was more effective in the implementation of their programme.

***Question: How is your committee structured and how frequent do you have meetings?***

**Number of participants:** Nine participants responded to the question, they belonged to the Sports committee (2), Health committee (2), SMT (1), Soul Buddies (1), Nutrition committee (3) and the Environment committee (2) verbalized their responses as shown below.

All four schools have committees with varying number of members:

*“We have three people, the chairperson, the secretary and the treasurer, so we are representing all codes.” (participant 18D); “In the committee we are having 8 members and we divided our selves according to our sporting codes that we are having in the school, at the moment we are having 6 sporting codes, there are relevant people who are specifically for each sporting code” (participant 12C); “Six (members)” (participant 3A); “We have the chairperson we have a secretary and we have a treasurer” (participant 6B); “It has three members and I’m the chairperson” (participant 19D); “The committee consist of 4 people we have the chairperson, the secretary and the member and also the principal” (participant 8B); “We have a chairperson, we have the secretary, we have a treasurer, because sometimes we have to raise some funds” (participant 10B).*

It seems that members of these committees were educators. It is commendable that most committees reported having chairpersons. The responsibility of the chairperson is to coordinate and oversee the programmes. These committees should be understood in the context of being sub committees of the School Governing Bodies. The committees according to literature do not have a legal standing, they operate under the command of the School Governing Bodies. Literature stipulates criteria for the involvement of educators in committees. The criteria includes willingness, interest, ability, credibility and willingness to devote time (Missouri Coordinated School Health Coalition, 2008: 6) (cf. 2.6).

The quotes below indicate strategies that are employed in dealing with problems:

*“Actually every year early January after reopening we sit down as the SMT committee, we check the committees that didn’t do well some of them we delete them, some of them we take them out, we just delete that committee” (participant 2A); “But there are some additional members in the committee because we cannot run the committee with only three” (participant 6B).*

There seems not to be a clear strategy to deal with dysfunctional committees as one of the participants in the SMT (cf. 4.2) indicated that they ‘delete’ or ‘take out’ the

committees that do not function well. This could mean disbanding committees. It seems that the only evaluation that is done is to check whether the committee is active or not and not its effectiveness or to identify areas where the committee needs support. Literature indicates that the aim of evaluation is to see if the committee achieved what it set out to achieve (Middlewood & Lumby, 1998: 164) (*cf.* 2.7.2). In cases where there are no policies or guidelines it becomes difficult to evaluate hence the criterion is just being active. It is not clear what the participant meant by 'active', it could mean being effective or existing and having meetings but not achieving any good results. The SMT is also not evaluating to bring about corrective measures; therefore it is failing in giving directions as to what is expected of committees.

A number of committees that relate to the creation of a healthy environment existed in all the schools I interviewed, and they were structured almost in the same way, having chairpersons, secretaries and treasurers. The participants indicated several factors regarding holding meetings:

*“(The committee meets) When it’s necessary” (participant 3A); “I don’t want to lie (the committee does not meet)” (participant 6B); “The committee itself does not sit down to have meetings” (participant 19D); “No, we never had a meeting with them” (participant 14C). “It’s a problem lately because the committee is not much functional as it used to be” (participant 16C).*

Four participants clearly said that they did not meet as a committee, and one said their committee was dysfunctional. The committees that do not meet were the Health Committee (*cf.* 4.2) in school B, the Nutrition committee (*cf.* 4.2) in school C, the Environment Committee (*cf.* 4.2) in school C and the Nutrition committee (*cf.* 4.2) in school D. The same committees that indicated not having policies above were also not meeting. The committees that do not meet are from two primary schools and one high school. It seems that there are no itineraries in these schools. In order for committees to make progress and achieve their goals they have to work as a team. Team work, clarity of objectives, evaluation and monitoring of activities, discussions on achievements and

challenges can be acted upon in these meetings. Committees meet to check progress in terms of their plan, checking for problems in the implementation and sharing responsibility. Failing to attend to such matters can lead to lack of focus in the planned activities. Literature emphasizes the importance of communication for efficient flow of information (Lazarus *et al.*, 2002) (*cf.* 2.7). There seems to be a communication breakdown if committees do not meet, channels of communication between committee members are closed.

*“We normally have meetings to address problems” (participant 1A).*

Only one participant indicated that they were meeting but only for addressing problems. It is good that this committee at least met but there are other reasons that committees can meet such as planning, monitoring and evaluating processes and deciding on other strategies where some strategies fail. It seems that in this school all the other objectives for meeting are neglected. It can also be deduced that this committee is reactive in its approach to the creation of healthy environments.

### **Question: How do you identify vulnerable learners?**

**Number of participants:** Six participants verbalized the theme. The questions were specifically directed to the members of the following committees: SMT (1), Health (2) and Nutrition (3). Some participants had to be repeated because they answered both sets of questions whilst others only answered one section of the question. The question was asked as follow up to the first question.

Participants highlighted the strategies they used to identify vulnerable learners, and this is what they said:

*“We identify from different classes more especially those who absent themselves regularly” (participant 2A); “We interview them even though the interview is not that formal, we just talk to them, educators identify them they give them to us, then we just talk to them to find out what is happening at home, then if we are convinced that this learner is really*

*needy we write them down” (participant 14C); “We go to their homes to get more information about the child. If the child does not have uniform or appears hungry in the morning that tells that there’s a problem” (participant 8B).*

Participants indicated using different strategies to identify needy learners to be included in the NSNP. There seems not to be a clear strategy or guidelines regarding the identification of learners who are to benefit from the nutrition programme. The absence of a clear strategy to identify needy learners could lead to the exclusion of many learners who qualify to benefit from the programme. According to literature, all primary and secondary school learners in Quintile, 1, 2 and 3 should be provided with daily meals (National School Nutrition Programme, SA, 2009: 4). Literature further states that the strategy of identification can be informed by the following crucial determinants: the most needy learners, learners who headed families and learners from families that have lost income and learners who walk long distances to get to school (Department of Education, 2010: 24e; Mokhobo, 2007: 21; Department of Education, 2010: 13) (*cf.* 2.4.4).

The following results related to the third research question on the effectiveness of the SMT in managing health programmes.

### Collaboration was hindered by lack of leadership

**Question: How does the local community help you as a school?**

**Number of participants:** Sixteen participants responded to the question. Sixteen participants responded to the question as indicated below. The involvement and the role of each structure differ from one to the other. The structures range from individual parents, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), government departments and big private companies. The committees and individuals that responded to this question are:

Environment (4), Sports (3), SMT (1), Nutrition (3), Health (2), Soul Buddies (1) and Life Orientation (2) educators.

The school is collaborating with the local community in the creation of a healthy school environment. The participants responded as follows:

*“When it’s time to plant the trees we go to the municipality and ask for trees, vegetable seeds and flowers to decorate our school” (participant 11B); “SASOL comes and takes some of the papers for recycling and at the end of the year they give us something for that, and we used the money last year to clean the toilets” (participant 16C); “Even newspapers, one time they came here it was Kasi News, they were here to give needy learners uniform” (participant 17D); “We also talked to the nurses who came here to do health promotion that we need to be trained then they promised to sent someone to train us” (participant 18D); “Initially it was the question of equipments, but we were fortunate I think because in 2007, whereby lotto (SA Lottery) supported us with a lot of equipment. So we got a lot of equipment for every code, cricket, everything” (participant 5A); “Last time we got the attire from DCSR (Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation), for netball, soccer and athletics, so at the moment we are still using these” (participant 12C); “There are people from outside that donate ties, shoes” (participation 2A); “Sometimes we also organize maybe a doctor or pastor to come address some issues, per grade” (participant 13C); “We also check their uniform, like in 2009 we had the privilege the SASSA (South African Security Agency) gave us the uniform, so we were able to distribute to them, so that is what we are dealing with, disadvantaged learners” (participant 14C); “During breaks we have this Manna for TEKS Area, is an organization from Secunda they provide us with bread, they give us 47 loaves for the whole week, and they give us butter and jam” (participant 14C); “There’s a group of parents who are responsible for the garden” (participant 19D); “The parents and also the*

*GA (General Assistant) from the school (man the garden)” (participant 8B); “Department of Agriculture and Land Affairs, but now they changed their name, we were busy with them, and there were some competitions they were running, we were dealing with them” (participant 1A).*

Participants mentioned multiple agencies that helped them in ensuring healthy school environments. There were community based companies, NGOs, individuals and government departments that played a crucial role in supporting the schools. The fact that they came from various sectors of the community pre-empt that their kind of support would not be the same. Community involvement is commendable and supported by literature where it indicates that schools can only be developed into health promoting schools if all stakeholders collaborate actively in the education of children (Mokhobo, 2007: 14) (*cf.* 2.4.3). The essence being that, the creation of healthy school environments requires the participation and contribution of every stakeholder.

Primary schools benefited from five Government Departments including the Department of Agriculture and Land Affairs, Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation, the Department of Social Development, the Department of Trade and Industry which manages the South African National Lottery, the Department of Health and the Department of National and local government (municipality). The main assistance from the governmental departments was in the form of resources, health promotion, involvement in programmes and uniform for learners. This means that they played a crucial role in assisting with the education of learners. Indeed, it takes a village to raise a child. It is commendable that the collaboration of government departments at National level is visible and benefiting community members at local level. It is however regrettable that these departments were not involved in the planning, delivery and evaluation of activities (*cf.* 2.4.3) as literature indicates. The involvement of people with expertise in assisting the schools would make a huge difference. It is worrying that in one primary school only one government department was mentioned as supportive. All schools need of support from the local community for their survival.

The community organizations that were involved in the participating schools included Non Governmental Organisation (Manna for TEKS area) and the National intervention programme such as Soul City which is conducted by a NGO, a private company, prominent members of the community and parents. Literature indicates that the different social structures have a different impact on education and they reflect diverse range of needs (MHP, 2010: 19) (*cf.* 2.4.3).

The role and contribution of community based organizations and structures have individual roles to play, a role peculiar to each structure, for instance, the main focus of the assistance from the local community was on learners where they were assisted with food, sport attire, equipment for sport, and uniform. One school helped with cleaning and beautifying the school surroundings in that they received trees, seeds and flowers and a private company helped with recycling.

Educators in two schools were assisted by the local community in tackling difficult health issues (health education). Only one of the three primary schools mentioned being helped with gardening by community members. Literature indicates that the role of stakeholders and the school community is vital in supporting the concept of healthy schools and the development of sustainable food and nutrition policy (Barknow *et al.*, 2006: 13) (*cf.* 2.4.3). It seems that community members that were willing to assist in these schools availed themselves but there was no leadership, according to literature to initiate advocacy strategies that is, to sell the idea of school health promotion to local communities (*cf.* 2.7).

It is only in one school that a participant indicated 'going out to ask' for resources. It seems that other schools wait for things to come to them, even news papers 'came' to the school. It is only in one school that community members are part of a committee. The National Policy on HIV/AIDS (SA, 1996b) recommends that schools should draw on expertise available to them within the education and health systems. It seems that schools A and C benefited most from the support received from the community. This is the kind of support that is needed to sustain healthy school environments. School D

benefited less from the support from community organizations. The focus of the assistance was on vulnerable learners by means of uniform.

Going out to access resources has been mentioned five times in the responses and organizations offering resources to schools have also been mentioned several times. It seems that the staff members are able to ask for help from their communities when the need arise and the organizations are able to come and offer help. It seems that these schools have either managed to establish firm social partnerships with local communities or that there is willingness among community members to engage in school activities. The development of positive working relationships with all school stakeholders such as learners, parents, school staff, administrators, and community partners is supported by literature, is fundamental to all healthy school's work and critical for success (MHP, 2010: 19) (*cf.* 2.4.3).

What is lacking in these relationships is the strategic leadership of the SMT to guide and direct these activities to the benefit of all stakeholders. Effective leadership would ensure that there was a clear direction on what is needed from the communities and to access a range of interests and expertise. Neglecting enhancing collaboration could lead failure and non sustainability in the implementation of health policies and programmes.

The results below pertain to the research question three which was about the effectiveness of the SMT in the management of programmes.

### The general management of programmes was not effective

**Question: Do you have a garden, how does it assist the nutrition scheme?**

**Number of participants:** Seven participants responded to the question. The committees and individuals that responded to this question include: Health (1), Environment (2), Nutrition (2), SMT (1) and a Life Orientation educator (1).

Participants from two schools indicated having school gardens:

*“We also have a garden down there for vegetables” (participant 1A); “We are having a garden that side” (participation 2A); “We do have a vegetable garden we assist the school with that” (participant 8B); “we have the garden” (participant 3A);*

It is praiseworthy that these schools at least had gardens, this could mean that these schools understand the importance of maintaining food gardens.

Two participants from one school indicated that the parents were running the garden project at their school:

*“Community members were running it on their own” (participant 17D); It (the garden) also assists, there’s a group of parents who are responsible for the garden, but for the previous year we did not get anything from the garden” (participant 19D);*

In school D gardening was a community project and therefore did not benefit the school. It is lamentable that in this school even when parents were involved the garden project did not benefit learners. This is against literature where it indicates that school gardens are for a source of food so as to supplement the diet of learners (Castle & Bialobrzaska, 2008: 8) (cf. 2.5.1.3). The photo below portrays a food garden at school D.

**Figure 4.3:** Community garden project at school D



This picture shows a food garden with vegetables in it. The garden was not far from the classrooms. There is still a lot of space where vegetables can be planted. It is lamentable that the whole area was used by community members only, instead of sharing the space with learners. It would motivate learners to have their small plots next to their parents'. Literature indicates that school gardens should be primarily for educational purposes (Food for Agriculture Organisation, 2010: 12) (cf. 2.5.1.3).

Two participants from the schools alluded to the fact that the produce from the garden project was not enough and sometimes they did not get anything from the garden. The participants highlighted some challenges they faced relating the garden project:

*“It’s not enough, but we have the garden. In the garden we have cabbage, spinach and the other stuff, its not enough but we are trying just a little bit” (participant 3A); “We don’t do gardening all year round, we only do it with seasons” (participant 4A)*

Participants indicated trying a little bit. This could mean that the effort they put was not enough for them to get enough produce from the garden. In school A they were

engaged in gardening seasonally, and therefore did not get a supply of produce all year round. Literature indicates that school gardens cannot single handedly raise the level of children' health or substitute for school meals but they can contribute to them (Food for Agriculture Organisation, 2010: 4) (*cf.* 2.5.1.3).

In school A there were vegetables in the garden as indicated in the picture below, but gardening was also done seasonally:

**Figure 4.4:** A food garden at school A



When this picture was taken, there were still vegetables in the garden. It is commendable that the school could maintain a garden but without the assistance of the communities these gardens cannot be sustainable.

It seems that there is no sustainable food supply from all three of these gardens and that there no accountability with regards to these school gardens. This finding is against what is indicated in the guide on National School Nutrition Programme (SA, 2009) which states that an educator, SMT and SGB members must be nominated and provided with training in food production. Literature indicates that schools can encourage communities

to prepare and serve meals and support school garden projects (Department of Education, 2010: 24) (cf. 2.4.4). The idea of having a garden project is to have a supply of vegetables to assist with the NSNP and to help the neediest learners. Having gardens that are not producing vegetables does not help learners. It seems that these schools are struggling to make this project a reality. Literature states that extra food from the gardens has meant that often there are leftovers from the daily meals (Department of Education, 2010: 24) (cf. 2.4.4). Lack of proper maintenance of the garden project means there will be no vegetables for the kitchen and no surplus for vulnerable learners. Once again the SMT fails to perform its leadership role to capacitate educators to ensure smooth running of the activities. There is also an indication of non compliance with policy.

**Question: Do you have vulnerable learners at your school?**

**Number of participants:** Ten participants who verbalized this theme were in the Nutrition committee (3), Health committee (2), Environment (2), SMT (2) and Sports committee (1).

Participants indicated having orphans, needy and sick learners, who came from disadvantaged backgrounds, and staying with grandparents:

*“We planted vegetables for learners who have problems at home, needy children” (participant 1A); “We do have those needy learners, so there are ladies who are responsible for that, so they identify” (participant 17D); “Our learners don’t have parents, most of our learners are orphans” (participant 18D); “We take care of sick learners... Some of them you find that they are orphans, their parents passes away because of this pandemic HIV/AIDS ” (participant 2A); “We have got few learners that we are helping out, it’s not like a big group” (participant 15C); “We’ve got a lot of orphans so they are struggling with the food” (participant 3A); “We live in squatter camps where most of the children are orphans they are staying with their grannies or their guardians, so you find that they come to school*

*not in good condition in terms of hygiene and are not in good condition to learn” (participant 6B); “We deal with learners from the disadvantaged background those needy learners, some of them they are heading the families, they don’t have parents, some they do have parents, but there’s no one who is working, so we deal with those learners” (participant 14C); “We look at the interest of the poor learners in class” (participant 8B). “Oh yes many of our parents are not working, and yes it means they don’t eat during holidays” (participant 19D).*

All four schools indicated having vulnerable learners. This is not surprising as all four of these schools were classified under quintile two. This means that they were non-fee paying schools. Two primary and a secondary school indicated having a lot of orphans and vulnerable learners in their schools. Only one primary school indicated having few learners. Unemployment is mentioned as another cause of vulnerability in one of the schools. Literature supports reasons for learners’ vulnerability such as little income, unemployment and other forms of economic burdens adding that scores of families cannot survive (Mokhobo, 2007: 21) (*cf.* 2.4.4). Literature further states that, in the event of death, because of HIV/AIDS, permanent loss of income may result, which in turn may result in child-headed families. These are under-arching causes of vulnerability in schools, some of which cannot be prevented hence there is a need to address the plight of these vulnerable learners who are the victims of such occurrences.

**Question: Do you assist vulnerable learners with food outside the school time?**

**Number of participants:** Six participants verbalized the theme. The questions were specifically directed to the members of the following committees: SMT (1), Health (2) and Nutrition (3).

Participants indicated being able to give learners food when they had a surplus:

*“Yes, we give them vegetables and beetroot, but there are those who get milk and rice, those are part of the nutrition program” (participant 2A);*

*“Sometimes at the end of the term we have surplus. Then we give those learners who are needy” (participant 3A); “We usually ask those who are doing grade 12, when it’s December time they are writing exams, we ask them that in January they should kindly donate their uniform they usually do it and we keep it if a teacher identifies a learner then we come and check a jersey or something, but for now it’s finished already” (participant 19D); “When there is little food remaining we give it to the families so that they can eat when the schools are closed. But we don’t have enough to cater for every one. They only eat at school” (participant 8B); “But we can only assist when we have to give out surplus at the end of the year, there is nothing much we can do” (participant 14C).*

All three primary schools give out food when they have surplus at the end of a term. The high school (school C) (cf. 4.2.2) only focused on uniform which they got from other learners. It seems that in order for vulnerable learners to get food depended on the availability of surplus and how much there was. This is not definite and not reliable. Literature indicates that with this surplus some needy learners are able to take meals home for other family members (Department of Education, 2010: 24) (cf. 2.4.4).

**Question: How many vulnerable learners do you have at your school?**

**Number of participants:** Six participants verbalized the theme. The question was again directed specifically to the Nutrition (3) and Health (2) committees. This question was asked as a follow up from the first one.

Participants indicated having vulnerable learners at their schools, although this seemed to be estimated, not exact numbers:

*“There are few learners, few orphans, they are very few, but those who are sick are less than ten” (participant 2A); “Six for now” (participant 3A); “I think maybe they are 10 because some of them now they are in senior and intermediate phase, some of them are still in foundation phase”*

*(participant 6B); “Round about 150” (participant 14C); “Oh yes many of our parents are not working” (participant 19D); “200 learners who are eating at school (participant 8B) maybe 9 or 10 (are HIV positive and on ARVs)” (participant 8B).*

Two schools (B & C) (*cf.* 4.2.2) had a large number of learners who were part of the NSNP; both these participants were in the Nutrition committees in their schools. A participant from the third primary school indicated that they had few vulnerable learners to feed. This was a contradiction because the participant earlier on said that they had a lot of orphans. Participants 2A and 3A were from the same school (*cf.* 4.2) one a member of the SMT and another one in the Health committee. These participants did not know how many vulnerable learners were in their school. Both were supposed to know as they dealt directly with needy learners. Schools who do not know how many vulnerable learners they have would not be able to plan effectively for extra assistance. Another participant in the Health committee from school B mentioned needy learners only in one phase, she also seems not to know how many vulnerable learners there were in her school. It is the duty of SMT to ensure that these activities are coordinated in a synergized manner to yield expected results. Vulnerable learners are from poverty stricken areas and if their plight is left unattended the situation can have a ripple effect on their education. It is the responsibility of the SMT to ensure that the wellbeing of all learners within the school is taken care of.

**Question: Do you have a first aid kit?**

**Number of participants:** Six participants responded to this question. Participants included three chairpersons, one secretary, one SMT member and one Life Orientation educator. This question was posed to two committees and individual educators. Six participants belonging to Sports committee (3), SMT (1), Health committee (1) and a Life Orientation educator (1), responded to this question as indicated below.

Participants indicated having first aid kits, but some kits were empty:

*“We have a first aid kit, we replace it on yearly basis” (participant 18D); “We also have that (first aid)” (participant 5A); “We have a first aid kit, I say it that the first aid is only filled if it’s the athletic season or when we are hosting another school” (participant 12C); “We do have a first aid kit but sometimes it’s empty (Laughing), but Walter is responsible for it. Sometimes is not working, we only refill it when we go for athletics, but most of the time it’s empty, basically it is not working, because even I don’t know whether he received a first aid training or not, our first aid kit is just rubbing stuff something like that, yes (Laughing)” (participant 15C); “Yes we do have (the first aid kit)” (participant 7B); “There is a first aid kit, is available at school” (participant 6B).*

Participants from all four schools indicated that they have First Aid Kits. This is commendable and it seems that these schools have responded to the call by the Department of Education that First Aid Kits should be available at all schools. Literature further states that, in South Africa, it is a legal requirement for all schools to keep a first aid kit (NEPA, 1996) (*cf.* 2.4.7). The rationale behind having First Aid Kits is for the prevention of transmission of communicable diseases. Having the first aid kit is a step in the right direction, but the management and handling of the kit is also crucial.

Participants indicated having empty kits, replacing the contents yearly or seasonally when it is time for sport. In the era of HIV/AIDS it becomes a risky venture to attend to injuries and handle blood without appropriate devices. This is against the National Policy on HIV/AIDS (SA, 1996b) which states that, a fully equipped first aid kit should be available at all school or institution events, outings and tours, and should be kept on vehicles for the transport of learners to such events. The policy further states that the kits should be checked each week against a contents list by a designated staff member. If the kits are empty or not replenished, this important requirement is not adhered to, and its effect will be detrimental in the event of injuries or accidents, or even in the transmission of communicable diseases. The SMT was failing to ensure that there were

resources to prevent communicable diseases and not monitoring the prevention of communicable diseases in these schools. The photo of the first aid kit below was taken from school C.

**Figure 4.5:** First aid box in school C



The first aid kit has very few items. The contents of the first aid kit are clearly stipulated in the National Policy for HIV/AIDS (SA, 1996b) (*cf.* 2.4.7). The school does not seem to be ready to deal with emergencies in its premises.

The photo below was taken in July 2011 during the time when this research was conducted. The participants from this school indicated that the first aid kit is replenished occasionally. The focus in this school was not on the prevention and management of injuries all the year round but on dealing with injuries during contact sport.



*“No, no one was trained.” (participant 18D); “Yes, does the same if all the teams will be involved then we all participate in making sure that the kit is fully equipped” (participant 5A); “No, no, no (no one was trained)” (participant 5A); “Usually is once a year, especially in January when we start with our athletic season (refill the kit)” (participant 21A); “Yes I was trained. It was in 2004, before I was appointed at the school; the training was done by the NGO” (participant 21A); “No, that’s why I say there is no specific person who is responsible for it” (participant 12C); “Yes (I was trained three years ago)” (participant 6B). “No we don’t use them if they expired we have to go to the nearest chemist and ask the pharmacist to fill the kit again” (participant 6B).*

Participants from three of the participating schools indicated not to have received training on the handling and use of the First Aid Kit. Two participants indicated receiving training a number of years back. It seems that most of these participants do not have knowledge on how to handle and to manage the first aid kit, and this state of affairs is against what is expected. Literature states that all schools and institutions should train learners, students, educators and staff in first aid (NEPA, 1996: 1-31) (*cf.* 2.4.7). Training of relevant people in handling and managing the first aid kit should be taken seriously and be addressed promptly.

Lack of first aid kit in schools, and lack of requisite training puts learners and teachers at risk of contracting communicable diseases, and the spread of HIV/AIDS. Relevant training and empowerment is needed in the handling and management of the first aid kit. Moreover, the schools that do not have trained educators who are knowledgeable on how to handle first-aid kits could not be effective in their prevention of communicable diseases. The National Policy on HIV/AIDS is not specific on who is responsible for the training of educators and learners regarding first aid training, but the responsibility and accountability relies with the SMT.

**Question: Which cases do you deal with, and how do you address serious injuries?**

**Number of participants:** Three participants verbalized this question as shown below. The committees involved are: Sports (2) and Health (1).

Participants indicated dealing with the following cases:

*“Then we deal with it (minor injuries), we bandage it, but we are not trained for that, we do it out of own knowledge.” (participant 18D); “Most of the cases we don’t treat them we just treat minor injuries then we send them home, then we give them a letter if we send them to the clinic.” (participant 18D); “Bruises, just getting rid of knocks that we can deal with, not serious injuries.” (participant 5A); “Cases like, when the learners have stabbed each other with scissors like it was after break I was addressing the needy the other one stabbed the other some push each other into windows and get cuts you see things like that.” (participant 6B); “Yes, to the clinic if the bleeding is heavily, and when you look at the wound you realize that it is serious, then I refer the case.” (participant 6B).*

Only minor injuries like cuts, bruises and knocks are dealt with at school. Literature indicates that, an employer shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that persons at work receive prompt first aid treatment in the case of injury or emergency (SA, 2005: 7) (cf. 2.4.7). Where first aid kits are not replenished it is likely that schools cannot even deal with these minor injuries. In the case of serious injuries learners are referred to the clinic. Literature further advises that it should be taken into account the type of injuries that are likely to occur, so that systems are put in place to respond to any eventuality (SA, 2005: 7) (cf. 2.4.7).

## **Question: What is your menu?**

**Number of participants:** Six participants belonging to the Health committee (1), Nutrition committee (3), SMT (1) and Environment committee (1) verbalized their responses as shown below.

## **Participants' responses**

Participants responded to the question as shown below:

*“Yes, but here the feeding scheme at least the feeding now they are providing vegetables, cabbage, pumpkin, beans at least, and samp” (participant 6B); “Just bread, butter and jam only” (participant 14C); “Now we have the vegetables, on Mondays they used to eat soya soup and porridge they will not eat, there’s currently vegetables added now, they now eat porridge and cabbage on Mondays, the queues started being very long meaning that they enjoyed the combination. Then on Tuesdays is samp and beans, if you can come to observe you will see that there is no line, then on Wednesday is fish and porridge or rice, the lines are very long, on Thursday again is samp and beans, no we don’t have any problem, on Friday (gravel) porridge and milk, then the line is very long, they all like that, then we even have to increase person power there for supervision” (participant 19D); “On Mondays they eat milk and porridge, on Tuesdays sump carrots and Soya, then on Wednesdays tin fish rice and cabbage, on Thursdays sump and beans and then on Fridays its milk and porridge again” (participant 8B); “We’ve got spinach, we’ve got cabbage, we’ve got beetroot, that’s all” (Participant 1A); “All of them now are eating because the menu changed, they are now eating fish and rice” (participant 2A).*

The menu from three (2 primary and one high school) schools include different types of vegetables, whilst at times it includes samp, soya beans, milk, rice and fish. The above

is put together to make a combination for the whole week. Learners from school D have a variety of meals the whole week; learners seem to enjoy the meals and are able to choose what they enjoy and what they don't as queues are longer on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Literature contends that, adequate nutrition is essential for the optimal growth and development of both children and youth (Valleau *et al*, 2004: 5) (*cf.* 2.4.4). Literature further says, a healthy diet during childhood and adolescence reduces the risk of immediate nutrition related health problems of primary concern to school children (Barnekow *et al*, 2006: 4) (*cf.* 2.4.4).

The school that is not benefiting from NSNP is a secondary school, this school runs its own nutrition programme supported by a Non-governmental Organisation (*cf.* 4.3.2.1), to feed learners.

Fruit has not been mentioned by any of the participants as part of the menu yet its inclusion can enhance the nutrition levels of the diet, and contribute in ensuring healthy life styles for learners. Literature indicates that, adequate nutrition is essential for the optimal growth and development of both children and youth, and for avoiding nutrient deficiencies (Valleau *et al.*, 2004: 5) (*cf.* 2.4.4).

**Question: Do you have a kitchen, and how do you ensure that the kitchen is kept clean at all times?**

**Number of participants:** Three chairpersons belonging to the Nutrition committee in different schools responded to this question as indicated below.

Participant indicated challenges in managing the kitchen:

*“We take other learners to the kitchen we teach them there, it’s a classroom at the same time it’s a kitchen, our kitchen is not clean at all” (participant 14C); “We buy them cleaning material separately from what we buy for the whole school, we buy soap, handy-andy, jik, and give to them we also ask them to keep their dish cloths very clean” (participant*

19D); *“The people who are working there they clean every day, wash the dishes” (participant 8B).*

Cleaning material is bought for the purpose of keeping the kitchen hygienic every day. Participants from two schools indicated that they ensure that the kitchen is cleaned, and it is the duty of the kitchen staff to ensure that their equipments are kept clean at all times including their dish cloths. It is worrying that in one of the school this important area is neglected because of making use of learners to clean and not having a venue for the kitchen. According to literature there are schools do not have infrastructure such as storage facilities for food supplied, refrigerators to store perishable food, kitchen and cooking equipment (Public Service Commission, 2008:8) (*cf.* 2.4.4). The kitchen should always be kept clean and tidy because that is where food is being prepared. It remains the duty of the SMT to ensure that relevant resources are budgeted for and supplied to the kitchen, if hygienic conditions should be maintained.

**Question: Which physical activities do you do, and how frequent do you go out for those activities, especially in Life Orientation?**

**Number of participants:** Eight participants responded to the question. Participants included four Life Orientation educators, two chairpersons, one secretary and one SMT member. This question was posed and responded to as follows: Life Orientation educators (4), Sports committee (3) and one SMT member.

Participants indicated that they have different sporting codes at schools.

*“We have athletics, athletics has cross country in it, and long distance and short distance, then we have netball, cricket, we have rugby, we have soccer, volleyball, that’s all” (participant 18D); “We have volleyball, soccer, netball, and athletics also, but seasonal, that one is seasonal” (participant 5A); “We have netball, we have soccer, we have athletics, we have rugby, we have cricket and we have volleyball” (participant 12C).*

Schools have different sporting codes that learners are involved in. The involvement in the types of sport mentioned was seasonal and learners were not involved all year round. Literature indicate that relevant games and activities that promote mass participation shall be identified, prioritized and implemented (DoE, 2011: 8e) (cf. 2.4.8).

Participants indicated reasons why they couldn't take learners out for physical education as frequent as is required:

*"It is suppose to be like that but because we have too much work, the syllabus that we are supposed to cover, so sometimes if we go for every week it won't be possible for us to cover the syllabus because we have a work schedule that we are following per term, and at the end of the term we have to write a common examinations, so now if we go every week it won't be possible for us to finish" (participant 15C); "I only go twice (per term)" (participant 4A); "There are times when I take certain periods and we go out with children, then we will exercise certain movements" (participant 4A); "I have never been that serious with physical education" (participant 4A); "It's once per term, physical education is once per term" (participant 7B); "They do none ball game according to the assessment program, we are being directed by the assessment program, if the assessment program says that it requires the non ball game then that's what we must do, so they will go there to do gymnastics, push ups and what ever" (participant 13C); "We have 4 periods so one of those periods we utilize one of them for physical educational training, we take them to the field sometimes" (participant 13C); "We are supposed to go out where we can do different things, like soccer, netball, and athletics" (participant 20D); "I do have it, I must give myself one period, if I teach them for three periods, the fourth one I'm supposed to go out for exercises" (participant 20D).*

In all three primary schools physical education is not done according to the requirement. Life Orientation is supposed to take learners outside the classroom to go and have

physical exercises at least once a week according to their policy, but this is not happening as it should. The learners were only taken out for exercises once a term, others twice a term, while others sometimes. The participant from the high school was aware of the requirement but also not comply with the policy. Literature indicates that learners should be exposed to physical education weekly (Department of Education, 2008: 6) (*cf.* 2.4.8). The implication of all this is that, learners are not accorded the requisite opportunity to do exercise, and this robs them of a chance to develop healthy life styles. Engaging all the learners from grade 1 to grade 12 in exercises, even if it is not in a particular sport per se, but exercise, is very crucial. Healthy mind in a healthy body, will improve performance. Literature also indicates that, physical activity improves academic performance (Gelbard, 2009: 2) (*cf.* 2.4.8). Literature further emphasizes that, one hour per week will be spent on physical education. The Life Orientation policy if implemented to the letter can play a major role in this regard, for all learners can have the opportunity to do physical education at least once a week (Department of Education, 2011: 7) (*cf.* 2.4.8).

Sports days were specifically on Wednesdays in most of the schools, whilst in others Monday to Friday were used. The main challenge is that, these sporting codes do not accommodate the whole school, but few learners. In this case the rest of the learners were not part of any physical activity at school. According to literature, primary school-aged boys from previously disadvantaged communities rarely have the opportunity to participate in structured physical activity and competitive sport (Heppell, 2005: 3) (*cf.* 2.4.8). Literature further indicates that, all learners shall participate in teams and competitions involving learners of similar developmental levels (Department of Education, 2011: 8). In these schools involvement of learners is done selectively.

**Question: Did you receive training as Life Orientation educators, on which exercises you can do, and in doing those exercises, how do you deal with physically challenged and sick learners?**

**Number of participants:** This question was asked specifically to Life Orientation educators. Four Life Orientation educators from different schools responded to this question as shown below. This question was asked as follow up to the first one.

Participants from two schools indicated that they were not trained.

*“No we were not trained” (participant 13C); “I was not trained” (participant 20D). “For those who are sick who claim to be sick and we are not convinced we ask them to bring the doctor’s note and the doctor must specify if the learner is not physically fit we exclude them from the activities, but going to participate somehow the learner must write a theory make a presentation in class or else if there is an activity that require time keeper whatever, he will do that, so that he has a role to play in the activity” (participant 13C); “Yes all learners are involved. I’m not sure (about the physically challenged learners)” (participant 7B); “We don’t have it as a period, but every Wednesdays it’s sports day we knock off at half past twelve then we go to the sports fields, all the codes” (participant 18D); “Wednesdays, but we also do sports after school, (participant 5A); “Yes, normally but in terms of training we train from Monday to Friday” (participant 12C).*

Participants from two schools indicated not having received training on exercises they were supposed to do with learners, therefore they did not have expertise. It seems that training would empower educators to address the issues of obesity, development of motor skills and behavior problems in learners.

Learners who were not fit were excluded in one of the schools, they were later given theory to write, or were given a different role to play. Learners who were sick were expected to submit a sick note to relevant educators. Literature says there is evidence that quality school-based physical education can contribute to the health of children and the adults (Marx *et al.*, 1998: 117) (*cf.* 2.4.8). Quality physical education can only take place when people who supervise it are relevantly equipped and empowered. Literature states that, schools are uniquely positioned in that they should have facilities and equipment as well as staff with the expertise to provide instruction and supervision

(Marx *et al*, 1998: 117) (*cf.* 2.4.8). The involvement of people with expertise in the physical education would help to address these problems and ensure that all learners take part in physical activity.

**Question: Do you report to do the SMT, and how frequent?**

**Number of participants:** Twelve participants responded to the question. Participants included three SMT members, eight chairpersons and one Life Orientation educator. The question was posed to five committees and Life Orientation educator. Twelve participants responded to this question as indicated below. The Environment committee (3), SMT (3), Sports committee (1), Life Orientation The question was posed to five committees and Life Orientation educator. Twelve participants responded to this question as indicated below. The Environment committee (3), SMT (3), Sports committee (1), Life Orientation educator (1), Nutrition committee (2), Health committee (1) and Soul Buddies committee (1), responded to this question.

Two participants from two different schools indicated having support from the SMT:

*“On the management side they are supportive, because our problems they take it to the educators and say to them what can we do, we are appealing to you to assist those people, to take part don’t withdraw your support” (participant 17D); “.....they are supportive” (participant 10B).*

Both these participants were chairpersons of committees. It is praiseworthy that the participants felt that the SMT were supported. It is worrying though that only one committee from each of these schools were supported. School A had four committees and school D three (*cf.* 4.4.2).

Participants from the same school reported having members of the SMT in their committees:

*“Honestly no, we don’t have such a program, the SMT depends on what the SMT member who belongs to the committee says, other than that we*

*don't have a program" (participant 9B); "I report because the SMT sits each and every Tuesday in the morning, so if there's a problem in nutrition I report because I'm also a member of the SMT" (participant 8B)".*

It is unfortunate that only one committee mentioned having an SMT member in its committee. Having an SMT member in the committee would ensure that committees get the assistance and support they need.

Two participants mentioned reporting to the SMT:

*"We report to the HOD, Life Orientation HOD" (participant 13C); "We meet with the SMT if there is a project, like this Phuza wise project, we have to go the SMT to request for time, and indicate that there are people who will be visiting our school, and as Soul Buddies club we will be running this campaign, they are supportive" (participant 10B).*

It is not clear what the Life Orientation reports to the HOD, this is the educator who earlier on mentioned that she took learners to the field "sometimes". The HOD is supposed to monitor the LO activities and not wait for feedback from an educator. The other participant indicated meeting the SMT when there was a project at hand. This does not seem to be appropriate, things are not done pro-actively. It also seems that there were no clear and explicit channels laid down for reporting, therefore reporting happened unsystematically.

**There is no synergy among educators, learners and SMT members regarding promotion of health**

**Question: What role do learners play in the creation of a healthy environment, how do you involve them?**

**Number of participants:** Seven participants responded to this question. Participants included six chairpersons and one secretary, the committees involved are as follows: Environment (4) and Sports (3)

The participants responded by highlighting that learners are involved mainly in cleaning campaigns.

*“Learners are involved because they participate” (participant 1A); “Sometimes we involve learners especially when we come to the issue of the cleaning campaign, that is when we involve the learners, and which means we involve the student council and then they involve the class reps which means all the learners will be involved” (participant 16C); “After school the learners will pick up papers” (participant 17D); “Every one is covered, most of them they do different sports, last year we also had soccer world cup tournament girls and boys, each and every class had a team, so they all played they knocked each other out until the last team” (participant 18D); “There are those who don’t want to do anything, who just want to focus on their books, but we don’t force them” (participant 18D); “Well, I will say from intermediate and senior phase, from grade four to six (they are involved)” (participant 5A); “I can say 30%, because I can start with athletics, and then netball all the divisions, and the 14, 16, 18 they are training, then soccer we have two teams, which is boys and then one team for females, then we can say at least 30% or more” (participant 12C); “The learners pick the papers in the morning and after break before they go to class” (participant 11B).*

Learner involvement ranged from being part of a cleaning campaign in the morning and after break. Literature contends that, the involvement of pupils in the development of health promoting schools is a key issue. The involvement of learners should be understood in context of schools being breeding grounds for adulthood, so that learners will be able to carry on with good health practices into the future and adulthood (Denman *et al.*, 2002: 58) (*cf.* 2.4.6).

It is worrying that learners were involved in only two of the determinants of healthy school environments such as the cleaning of the surroundings and physical activity. Participants did not mention learner involvement in other areas such as the gardening project, nutrition and the Eco Schools programme. Literature emphasizes that learners should be viewed not only as recipients of health promotion efforts, but as partners, with valid views and the ability to make and carry out decisions (Ministry of Health Promotion, 2010: 27) (cf. 2.4.6).

**Question: Do you have alien trees here at school and how do they affect your environment?**

**Number of participants:** Five participants responded to the question. Participants included four chairpersons of the Environment committee in different schools, and one member of the Health committee. The question was specifically posed to members of the Environment committee (4) and Health committee (1). Five participants verbalized their responses as shown below.

Participants indicated having alien trees at their schools, whilst others did not have.

*“Only to find that as time goes on, they (alien trees) pose danger, because their roots are now affecting our building, and stuff like that” (participant 1A); “No (we don’t have alien trees), because our trees are still small” (participant 11B); “Yes, we only have one (tree, there are no alien trees) around here but others are far from buildings” (participant 16C); “We had a problem with two trees she (a person from municipality) called them indigenous or foreign trees, then we removed the trees” (participant 17D); “You see outside there’s a big tree, so that tree is a foreign tree in fact, so that tree was killing those two trees, yes the other trees, they were dry to such extent that we were forced to remove them” (participant 3A).*

Participants from two schools mentioned having alien trees which posed environmental problems. Their roots were affecting the buildings and killing other trees. The photo below was taken from school A.

**Figure 4.7:** A remnant of an Alien tree in school A



The photo shows a picture of a stump that was not far away from a classroom. Both participants in school A mentioned having an alien tree. It is worrying that participants did not mention assistance with the felling of the trees from the Department of Environmental Affairs. People with expertise would have checked if the other remaining trees pose a threat or not to the environment in this school. It is commendable though that the school took the initiative to remove the tree to protect the building and the learners, but again the SMT failed to include other stakeholders in this important issue.

One participant indicated that they don't have alien trees because their trees were still small, this could mean that they were not sure whether the trees were alien or not. Involvement and collaboration with other stakeholders come to the fore in such matters.

The participants below indicated not getting support from the SMT:

*“No we don't (Meet with the SMT)” (participant 11B); “It does not happen a lot (reporting to SMT)” (participant 16C); “It doesn't help, because at the end the problem one raised is not attended to” (participant 12C); “No, it's not like that, and even the deputies sometimes they don't make follow ups on issues reported to them, it's only when the chairpersons have got hiccups that they go to the deputies or the principal, other than that there's no interaction” (participant 15C) Oh it's difficult (to report)” (participant 6B); They don't ask anything, they don't expect any report, nothing, we are just working, we are working for the Lord” (participant 14C); “Definitely yes, (SMT) not strict enough (participant 9B)*

Both school B and C indicated not meeting with the SMT for various reasons. The reasons included that meeting does not help, SMT members don't make follow ups and that they do not expect reports. All committees in school C and two committees in school B indicated having problems in reporting to the SMT. In two schools that participated in this research there was no team work. Committees were working in isolation, not knowing what the SMT expected and the SMT that was not interested in the activities of the committees. Literature states that the reasons why evaluation is needed is to check on progress and correct mistakes (Middlewood & Lumby, 1998: 165) (cf. 2.7). One of the measures to check on the progress of the committees would to get feedback from the committees. It seems that the evaluation of programmes in these schools is neglected. Communication should always be encouraged; this can help open reporting channels.

The challenges that are raised with the SMT were most of the time not addressed. This is a clear indication that there was no deliberate strategy in place to deal with

challenges, in the creation and management of healthy school environments. According to literature, without the strong commitment to school health on the part of school management teams and student families, successful implementation is unlikely (Marx *et al*, 1998: 53) (*cf.* 2.7).

**Questions: What is the role of educators; do they participate to ensure that committees work efficiently?**

**Number of participants:** Eight participants responded to the question. Participants included seven chairpersons of committees and one SMT member. The question was posed to four committees, totaling eight participants. Eight participants verbalized their responses as indicated below. This question was posed to the following committees: Environment (4), Nutrition (2), SMT (1) and Sports (1).

Participants indicated lack of commitment by members of staff and respective committee members:

*“We normally have lack of commitment from staff members, they get tired of being too much involved in classes and again taking care of the environment, sometimes we work hard in trying to bring them on board, and to conscientize them and it’s not easy, the commitment of staff, is sometimes not easy” (participant 1A); “Sometimes you will find out the members of the committee don’t want to be part of it anymore and there is only two members, who participate actively” (participant 11B); “As I’ve said we were about 3 but the other one pulled out are left with two, even the other one is also no more interested” (participant 16C); “Some even when it comes to cleaning in the garden project, some don’t adhere to the rules and regulations, some when they harvest they just leave all the rubbish scattered not attended to” (participant 17D); “One that is the biggest now is the support from my colleagues, people are withdrawing” (participant 12C); “There is no co-operation between educators and committees” (participant B9); “I think they are not interested, because they don’t come*

*forward to find out about the latest developments in the committee.” (participant 19D); “The educators are supporting because during breaks they come and see that everything is in order, like the lining of the children and keeping order they have a time table allocated to them” (participant 8B)*

Most committees experienced support deficiency, because of members withdrawing, not interested, lacking commitment, not wanting to participate, lack of cooperation and not adhering to rules. These are serious issues that hamper the operations of committees to play their role in the creation of a healthy school environment. Literature argues that individuals must understand the role they must play in protecting, maintaining, and promoting their health and the health of others (CDE, 2003: 2) (*cf.* 2.4.5). The degree of teacher involvement and commitment, however, is dependent on their knowledge and understanding of health promotion. Literature states that, one of the duties of the SMT is to explain what and why things could be done in a certain way, sharing information regarding health and facilitating networks (Mogonediswa, 2008:10) (*cf.* 2.7).

It should be a matter of serious concern if committees do not operate maximally, and this should not only be a personal problem of the chairperson or any other active member of the committee, but of the school as a whole. It should therefore be the responsibility of the school to locate these challenges and correctly address them. The role of the SMT in monitoring and developing reporting channels cannot be overemphasized. Literature says the role of teachers and school management is central both to the implementation and sustainability of health promotion (Denman *et al.*, 2002: 34) (*cf.* 2.4.5).

#### **4.4 CONCLUSION**

This chapter dealt mainly with data analysis and data interpretation. Data was collected and organized into four main themes which have been discussed extensively in this chapter. This chapter highlights the good practices and at the same time exposes

challenges in the schools' endeavours to promote healthy environments. This chapter is crucial in that it gives direction on which recommendations to make in the quest of creating healthy school environments.

The next chapter deals with findings and recommendations.