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EXPLORING UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE
EDUCATION POLICY AT FOUR LEVELS OF
THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of this chapter is to present the empirical data generated on the understanding of the NNSSF policy at each of the four levels of the education system plus the policy expert level on: *How was the new School Funding Policy implemented within and through the different levels of the education system?*

The empirical data was generated using the following data collection strategies with specific reference to how education policy was understood and implemented, semi-structured interview schedule (used with the tape recorder), profiling of the units of analysis i.e., the five case study schools, documents analysis including official records such as minutes of senior management meetings at four identified levels (national, provincial, regional and schools) and financial records of the department. Others include a scrutiny of the previous researches done on equity, especially the one on the Systemic Evaluation (SE) and Monitoring Learning Achievement (MLA) which were both commissioned by the DoE under the auspices of EFA as well as the Review Report on the Resourcing of Education (DoE, 2003:146) also commissioned by the National Minister of Education, Professor Kader Asmal.

In this chapter I have tried primarily to link the collected data with the question about how various education stakeholders understood the school finance policy. This presentation, which is mainly about the key research findings, is done according to the five identified levels of the education system (i.e., national, provincial, regional and stakeholders/policy experts and the five case study schools). In *section two* I paid a focused attention to the school level understanding where the key findings were presented and supported with evidence in the form of central themes, sub-themes, graphs, tables and figures. This was done with the main objective of giving force and effects to the claims made.

SECTION ONE

5.2 FINDINGS

5.2.1 NATIONAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENTAL LEVEL

As a result of a constant comparative analysis of the collected data through the face-to-face interview, document analysis and critical comments from the literature review, this section explored the policy understanding, which emerged, from the interpretation of the policy. In this regard, policy understanding has been explored from the following: *What is the understanding of the NNSSF policy (meaning), what was the policy responding to? What is the relationship between the NNSSF and PPM policy (integration question)? How was the policy implementation approached i.e., advocacy (policy coherence)?* These set of questions were meant to cancel out the divide between policy and practice or find the factors causing such divide or gaps between policy and practice.

The data referred to above gave rise to the following finding at the national level. *The National officials showed a fair, legalistic but traditional understanding of the NNSSF policy, but such understanding lacked holistic, coherent and integrated approach to equity. This claim is supported by evidence in the form of the interviewees' voices, emerged themes and documentary proof.*

For example, a senior national official gave his broad but legalistic understanding of the NNSSF policy through the following comment:

My understanding of the policy has two layers to it, (i) National Education Official (Bosman). Section 146 of the constitution provides the National Department to lay down norms for school funding. The legislative directives are applicable to all schools in South Africa. The Schools Act is flowing from the mandate of the minister to make legislation by law. It was stated that norms and standard for school funding must be determined and the provincial authorities when they give allocation must apply these norms when they distribute to the various schools. It is part of a legal framework which gives the provincial authorities the legal status to give funds to schools but within the framework. The funds allocated to various schools are meant to address the imbalances of the past government (Bosman, Nat.18/2002).

A closer look at the information given by the senior official at the national level does not only reflect the clear role of the ministry in laying down both the legal and constitutional imperatives for the policy, it also goes further by highlighting the obligation of the provinces in giving funds to schools but the definition is silent on the source of funding. Further interpretation of the given comments concerning the NNSSF policy draws attention to the different roles expected to be played by both the national and provincial education departments. From the perspective of this senior official it appeared clear that the national ministry is responsible for the legislation of the Acts and the setting up of guidelines for implementation by provinces. Perhaps this line of argument by a senior official at the national level can be ascribed to the normal “divide” between policy-makers and policy implementers. The point I am making here confined this kind of approach to the traditional way of making a clinical distinction between policy and implementation. In this regard, very recent studies and literature on policy implementation and development reject this divide (see section 2.2.1 and 2.4.1 in Chapter two).

At the same level of investigation, another senior official interviewed, saw the NNSSF policy as follows:

It is only intended to address the inequalities of the past governments through the equitable distribution of the financial resources from the state. These financial resources must come from the non-personnel budget of the provincial budget of the provincial education department (Dr Fish, /3/2003).

If one takes a serious look at both Dr Fish and Mr. Bosman’s statements above regarding the meaning of the NNSSF policy, It seems very clear that a lot of implementation issues of the policy were relegated (or delegated) to the provincial level. Perhaps this can be explained from the provisions and spirits of both the NNSSF policy and SASA 1996 as well as various pieces of legislation which all argue for the decentralization of powers and delegation of authority. Looked at from another perspective, perhaps the legalistic mindset of the national officials can also be located into the following legislative framework:

According to Section 8(1) of the National Education Policy Act of 1996, the Minister of education is mandated to direct standards of education provision, delivery, monitor and evaluate performance of the education system throughout the Republic of South Africa (DoE, 1996:26).

In response to the question “what was the NNSSF policy responding to? A numerical account of the themes that emerged from the total number of interviewees (2) at the national level stood at nine. The themes are: need to address the imbalances of the past apartheid government, resource distribution, resource provision, resourcing schools, resourcing equity, address quality education in previously disadvantaged schools, alleviation of poverty, school development, school improvement and disadvantaged schools. These central themes clearly captured the stimulus of the policy, thus determining the scope of what has to be done to realise the policy objectives. Whether this is achievable within the determined scope is another matter.

In addition to the central themes, which emerged from the key respondents, a senior national official further gave the following response as the broad response of the NNSSF policy and the relationship between the NNSSF and the PPM policies:

It is seeking to address the non-personnel costs in public schools within five quintiles, where the poorest quintile gets seven times the richest school equity and equality are implied: equal distribution of resources taking all factors into consideration. Equality means everyone getting the same amount. With equity, those who are rich must get lesser than those who are poor (Mr. Bosman, Nat /10/2002).

The same official further said:

It is the province that allocates money to schools. The national has no role in the provincial budget.

Another official responded in the same interview: “*what is the relationship between the NNSSF and post-provisioning model for educators?*” The response given was not only puzzling but also highlighted the *fragmented* approach by the national department to policy development and implementation. The following statement attests to lack of integration and coherence:

The post-provisioning which is intended to distribute educators across the school system is done by a different legislative framework. The principles involved differ but there is a link in the sense that there is a division of 80:15 between personnel and non-personnel (Dr. Fish, 16/02/2003).

Well, when the policy (i.e., NNSSF was drawn up four years ago (i.e., in 1998) there was no relationship between the two, even up to now there is none, but in the near

future it will be connected. They will use a slope of 1:7 and in that regard poorer schools will get more educators. In a sense there is some relationship (Dr Fish, /10/2002).

Given the fact that both the NNSSF and PPM²⁴ policies were aimed at the qualitative improvement of the schools in particular the historically disadvantaged ones, by ensuring the equitable distribution of both human and financial resources, I think a coherent and integrated approach should have informed the initial development and implementation of both policies. On the contrary, despite having almost the same objectives and goal and sanctioned by one department, the two policies were developed separately until recently. For example the post-provisioning policy which informed the rationalization and redeployment of teachers across the school system was developed by the ELRC in 1998 and became effective in 1999 (DoE, 2002:4). On the other hand, The NNSSF policy which completed the cycle of SASA²⁵ 1996 was developed in 1998 under the auspices of the division of Planning and Financial Management (DoE, 1998:4). The fact that the Department of Education is the one which has legal and constitutional competency of enacting the two policies, would have made integration and coherent implementation much easier.

Finally, informed by the fact that both policies (NNSSF and PPM) were aimed at achieving personnel to educator ratio of 80:15 by 2005 strengthened the argument for integration and coherence further. This is further influenced by the fact that the achievement of the equitable distribution of non-personnel costs, to a large extent, depends on the percentage of the personnel costs (see section 2.10.1 of Chapter two). Besides this point, as late as 2003, the personnel budget was increasing standing at 92% of the North West Education Department (NWED, 2004).

Lack of synergy and integrated approach to policy process, implementation in particular was clearly demonstrated by the views of the two senior officials interviewed on what is your general understanding of the implementation process of the NNSSF policy “i.e., (i) how was the understanding of the policy shared with the provinces?” How was it communicated in this connection? A senior official made the following comments:

²⁴ The PPM was reviewed in 2002 with the addition of the clause, curriculum redress. It is therefore puzzling to discover that as late as October 2002, very senior officials were not yet aware of the integration of the two policies.

²⁵ The first cycle was the type of schools i.e., Public and Independent schools, the second cycle was governance and management of schools and the third and last one was the financing of schools.

In that regard, if we talk about implementation, one must remember what the Constitution is saying. The province is responsible for the schooling system and the national head for higher education. In this case, there was a national guide for the provinces on how to implement the policy. The schools must just be trained on the policy according to the provisions (Dr Fish, 30/10/2002).

Another senior official at the same level commented as follows: There was communication between National and the Provinces, but it was only in the media. The main drive was through the HEDCOM Financial Committee which was facilitated by a consortium led by Education Foundation. Provinces brought their problems to this HEDCOM structures to be addressed (Mr Bosman, 30/10/2002).

A critical analysis of the national officials' attitude towards the implementation of the NNSSF policy provincially appeared not only bureaucratic but also disengaging. Disengaging because the national officials appeared unwilling to interact with the province on the implementation issues. The approach of national officials to the implementation tasks appeared to show all the hall-marks of the "big master" and obedient servants at the implementation level. And such an approach clearly demonstrates the traditional mindset between policy makers and implementations. This point is also strengthened by literature review on section 2.2 of Chapter two. The department's main investigation report (i.e., the review) on the financing, resourcing and costs of education in public schools also gave testimony to the approach to top-down, fragmented approach to the implementation of the NNSSF policy. For example, the following statement argued that "there is a need for the Department of Education to take a more proactive stand" to implementation of the NNSSF policy (DoE, 2003:27). By implication the National Department of Education took a reactive approach before. Furthermore, the fact that in the review report issues which were separately tackled in the past like the National Primary Feeding Scheme, teacher-redeployment, teachers' quality of teaching and efficient use of funding (NNSSF policy) are now being discussed in an integrated manner strengthen the wish to move away from a fragmented approach to a more integrated and coherent one.

Evaluation and monitoring as well as support are an integrated part of effective policy implementation. But data available suggests that the National Department was not going beyond its written directives (prescription) to the provincial education departments to make

sure that things are done according to the set-guidelines so as to realise the policy intentions. This means that beyond notices, and report back from the provinces, the national department has a hands off approach to the issue of equity. For example, on the issue of the appointment of key specialists i.e., financial analysts, education planners, statisticians and computer programmer at provincial level, Mr Bosman commented as follows:

I haven't come across any provinces with these specialists, but provinces must see to it that these people are appointed. The policy also requires that the funding should have been made available for such appointments by the provinces. Our role of the national effort is to verify the authenticity and accuracy of such reports from multiple sources States that: the HEDCOM has a sub-structure committee reporting on the norms and standards policy. If there is any difficulty it would be referred to CEM meeting ... further explains ... I think national is there to support implementation.

Subjecting the above statement to a critical assessment tends to unmask the real approach of the national officials to key essentials that have the potential to ensure the success or failure of policies, namely, structures and skillful people. It therefore becomes intriguing to notice the prescription of rules and personnel without ensuring that such structures exist. What was also interesting was the directive to provinces to appoint key specialists while the national department did not have such specialists and they designed a policy which is complicated to be implemented. In the light of this argument, I think that the DoE should have ensured the presence of such specialists at provincial level before the actual implementation of the policy.

Finally and most importantly, the National Department's recommendation (based on the review report) on the need to "translate inputs to outputs by looking at the current systems to monitor output (in addition to matric) such as Systemic Evaluation (SE), SACMEQ, Whole-School Evaluation (WSE) is sufficient proof that the initial and present approach to implementation was incoherent, reactive and legalistic.

5.2.2 PROVINCIAL LEVEL (OFFICIALS)

The understanding of the NNSSF policy varied among the provincial officials who were given the responsibility of overseeing the translation of policy at the school level via the regional offices. In brief, despite displaying a limited knowledge of the policy, provincial officials

demonstrated a bureaucratic or functionalist-oriented approach to the implementation of the NNSF policy putting a lot of emphasis on line functions and official communication channels. For instance a senior provincial official had this to say:

My understanding is that the policy is aimed at distributing the resources equitably among the schools especially addressing the question of redress, trying to place all the schools on some level that is in terms of resourcing them. But to achieve this systems i.e., by creating system such a financial system, monitoring systems must be put in place (Mr. Men.10/10/2002).

Besides the Chief Financial Officer (CFO), members of the Provincial Project Management committee were never trained by the consortium led by the Education Foundation. This means that they were never part of the groups trained in Rustenburg in 1998 where provincial officials were taken to the workshop (NWED, 1999:11) in preparation for the implementation of the policy.

The above-given explanation appears adequate. However, if one compares the explanation with the ones given by most of the respondents (interviewed) against the broad working definition of educational equity (see section 2.2 in Chapter two), it is easy to conclude that to most of the respondents equity is restricted to the financial inputs. In this regard, there is a trend that attempts to equate the school funding policy to equity as a broad constitutional principle. This trend is problematic since it tends to simplify and narrow the meaning of equity to financial input only. Equity is much broader than this and requires a holistic and integrated approach.

Perhaps the limited understanding of educational equity and its broader goal by senior officials can be ascribed to poor training, insufficient training and development or poor advocacy²⁶. This insertion finds support in the face-to-face interaction between a senior provincial official (at the deputy-director level, Mr. Men) on how was the implementation process actually followed? (i.e., what actually happened). Mr. Men responded as follows:

A lot of quick advocacy has happened at provincial level, but there were no follow-ups. Principals of schools, SGBs and regional officials were informed but implementation was not supported with sufficient training. There was nobody to make

²⁶ Indeed, according to the official records only two advocacy workshops were conducted for the NNSF policy. One was done on 30 November 1999 and the last one was done in March 2000.

follow-ups of the initial training given. In fact, the policy was not placed under a dedicated structure to implement²⁷. To me that is one of the things that made the policy not to function, it did not fall under any directorate. Furthermore, HEDCOM minutes indicated that “It was felt that generally speaking, there was an issue for the Norms and Standards committee. Mr. Patel (national official) gave a brief overview about how non-Section 21 schools were dealt with. Often we treat them as Section 21 schools. The MEC should have announced how budgets at school level should be appropriated, this has not been done.

A critical analysis of data collected including information from interviewees and official records pointed to the lack of ownership of the policy and the lack of the regulatory framework. To this end as late as February 2002, the NWED has not yet formulated the regulations for the management of finances at school level and the establishment of structures. The evidence is right here. In this regard Mr. Modi commented as follows:

... to me, now that the policy is there from national department, it should have been cascaded down to school level. From national up to school there should have been a structure that actually monitor the implementation process, to see whether it is being implemented thoroughly from national up to the school level, the monitoring is not so effective (Mr. Men, 10/10/2002).

In response to the interview question on “How does the PED allow schools to become Section 21 schools”, another senior official said:

The schools apply and applications are checked against the criteria for qualification. Because of lack of dedicated staff, the process of allocating Section 21 status is questionable and no guarantee exists that the schools given the status have the capacity to carry out the given functions. No support can be said to be given to the schools (Mod, 30/10/2002).

Indeed the issue of ownership and capacity were found to be dominant themes at provincial level. According to the official records, the NWED was the last province to determine Section 21 status to some schools by allocating five functions to be delegated to the school level (see section one in Chapter three). Despite this bold move the function for the acquisition of Learner Support Material (LSM) i.e., Section 117 of the NNSF policy places the responsibility of purchasing LSM at school level. However in direct violation of the provision

²⁷ The NWED did not have full time staff to co-ordinate and implement the policy until June 2002 when a director was appointed together with seven contracted clerks. Since November 1999, the Project Management committee had been responsible for the oversight of the policy but members of the committee had their normal activities.

of the policy document, the NWED (2002:14) decided to hold back the functions of the acquisition of the learner support material.

In direct response to whether there is any *relationship* between the NNSSF policy and the PPM (i.e., policy for the rationalization and redeployment of educators) all respondents interviewed at provincial level gave a confident and emphatic response. For example, one senior official (at deputy director level) responded as follows:

There is much relationship in that regard, i.e., between the two policies, because post-provisioning model for educators address the learner-teacher-ratio by aiming at equitable provision and optimal use of the available human resources. On the one hand, the National Norms and Standards for School Funding Policy attempts to address poverty or usage of material resources at school level by aiming at the equitable distribution of financial resources. The two policies relate because both of them seek to maximise the state resources by addressing the legacy of the apartheid education where white schools e.g., model c schools enjoy abundance of both finance and staff. That is why such schools had (even now) clerks, administrative personnel and gardeners compared to the African schools which are still struggling to survive (Mr Men).

Despite the observation of the sense of confidence in the relationship between NNSSF and PPM policies from the interviewee, maybe the informed position of Mr. Men can be attributed to the fact that he dealt with the two policies at both school and departmental level. I also picked up the feeling of anger/injustice (... Model C schools enjoyed abundance of both finance and staff ... that is why such schools had/even now, clerks, ...) from the respondents. Perhaps the anger is understandable from this male African official who had worked in both the old system and the new one. Probably the feeling of injustice as a sub-theme can be ascribed to his personal experience, the delay or inability of the NWED to allocate administrative/support staff to historically black schools or the observation that the NNSSF policy has not changed anything fundamentally in the disadvantaged school.

What emerged as major themes from the question that dealt with relationship, integration or policy coherence at provincial levels were maximization of state resources, optimal usage, material and human resources. This was a major contrast with the national levels since the national officials did not see direct link between the NNSSF and the PPM policies. Lack of direct relationship ascribed by the national officials was puzzling because the two policies and

many other policies were initiated and developed by the national department. In this connection, the fragmented approach by national officials and a clinical divide between policy and practice can be cited as some of the factors. This is informed, as stated earlier, by the clear cut between the role of policy-maker and policy implementers adopted by the national officials (sometimes using both the Constitution and the organizational structures of the national education system). This approach cannot only be regarded as problematic but also lacks currency of very recent approaches and insight in policy processes, in particular policy implementation (see section 2.2.1).

Even if the provincial officials demonstrated a fair understanding of the policy, in this case the relationship between the NNSSF and PPM policies there was no evidence of integration and coherence in practice beyond the establishment of the co-ordination structures called the Project Management Committee made up of officials from various divisions of the department. In the quest for integration and coherence, at a more practical level one would have thought that the following policies NNSSF, WSE, PPM and Education Management Development as well as the Public Finance Management would be pulled together so as to create synergy and inter-connectedness among them. This argument is informed by the following factors: all these policies are meant for the qualitative improvement of the school system, the aspects of which presuppose related sub-themes such vision, mission, strategic goals and indicators of performance is a cross cutting theme among and between these policies identified.

On the contrary, the implementation of the NNSSF policy within the NWED was not only approached in a fragmented manner by the few individuals but also appeared to ignore what existed before. For instance; according to the NWED organizational structures both the Education Management Development and Governance Unit were responsible for school management, the empowerment of the SGB and the efficient management of school as a whole (NWED, 1996:14). However closer assessment of the role of these structures revealed that they were not centrally involved in the implementation of the NNSSF policy in the school system. This appeared to have happened despite the fact that since 1995 the said divisions had been in charge of the co-ordination and management of the educational districts.

Another point worth mentioning here was the reasons advanced for not putting up dedicated permanent structures for the implementation of the NNSSF policy. In this continued “restructuring and financial constraints” were cited as main reasons. To this end records of management meeting reflected the following statement:

Due to the process of restructuring (often called transformation) new appointments cannot be made. Officials are therefore requested to continue with additional responsibility until the situation becomes manageable (NWED, 2001:14).

Whether the reason advanced are true begs the question, because four years down the line i.e., after the restructuring process, NNSSF policy does not yet have dedicated and permanent structures besides a Director who was only appointed in June 2002. Given the centrality of the NNSSF policy as a constitutional imperative and the importance of addressing the educational needs of the historically disadvantaged schools it becomes morally problematic to accept the position of not putting up structures for the NNSSF policy. In this regard North West Education is regarded as one of the poorest provinces unlikely to improve its position unless enough is done to address both the personnel costs and the declining budget. According to the Third Year Report of Education 2000 plus which is a longitudinal study that monitors education policy implementation and change in South Africa. the Eastern Cape has the largest number of the country’s poor children, followed by Kwazulu Natal, Limpopo and North West (Centre for Education Policy, Development, Evaluation and Management, 2000:94). It is further stated that the three provinces together account for as much as 70% of poor children in the country (*Mail & Guardian*, 26 January 2001).

5.2.3 REGIONAL LEVEL (OFFICIALS)

Officials at the Central Region demonstrated a limited functional understanding (knowledge) of the NNSSF policy, and thus dominated by a disengaging approach and a sense of despair on how the implementation unfolded. In this connection the three officials interviewed gave almost the same responses, which captured the gist of the policy implementation. For instance, one official at the Central Region shared his understanding of the policy as follows:

It is a policy that is trying to assist the schools financially in such a way that the most needy schools should be advantaged and their learners having access to education.

(CEN.CM.2.)²⁸ Another official at the same level said “my understanding is that it is a policy that is intended to correct the injustices of the past. It is trying to put in place the aspects of equity and redress (CEN.CM².1)

Despite this fair but limited understanding of the policy, when probed further on their involvement on the actual development of the policy, all the regional officials claimed that they were never involved in the initial formulation of the policy. One regional official made the following comment:

When the implementation of the policy started, the following did not happen. Structures of delivery were not in place to reach schools. There was no budget provided for the implementation of the policy; paper work was not done. Delivery was done in a poor manner where there was no accountability on the part of officials dealing with the orders.

There was a plan in place but it was not maintained and sustained. Centre like warehouses, were not decentralized and properly staffed. We had some workshops where we were expected to train school principals, but no clear advocacy campaigns were mounted by the officials at Head office level. The whole thing was just rushed. And this created a lot of confusion at school level (CEN.CM³.3).

The issues of absence of dedicated structures for effective implementation of the NNSSF policy seemed to be a matter of great concern especially to the regional officials. Perhaps this concern emanated from the fact that regional officials were directly placed in charge of the policy at school level. They are the ones to guide and motivate the school leadership on how best to approach the implementation.

Giving further weight to the perceived poor advocacy of the policy, another official vividly commented as follows:

There should have been proper advocacy campaigns, putting of provincial and national structures in place and allocation of human and financial resources.

I would say that in the North West we experienced a number of problems. There was not a clear official or dedicated unit to deal with norms and standards policy.

I would say there was no clear plan. There was no financial plan given to districts. This was done at a later stage. And this is poor monitoring and support of the policy

²⁸ CEN.CM.2 Refers to the Circuit Managers at Central Regional Office.

In response to the relationship between NNSSF and PPM policies, regional officials almost gave the same response to the ones given by the provincial official. For example, one regional official commented as follows:

There is a relationship because both policies are aiming at redress as some schools in the past had more educators and others were understaffed, so the way redistribution of human resource is done is similar to funding of schools, which is done equitably (Centre.CM² 31/10/2002).

In addition to the above statement, closer analysis of the responses from the three regional officials to how the policy was implemented interviewed gave rise to the following themes:

Concerning how the policy was shared with the regional officials, most of the officials interviewed demonstrated a sense of lack of confidence in the way provincial officials cascaded policy information to them. For instance one key official commented as follows:

“Head office has the habit of passing many policies to us without sufficient training and additional personnel” (Centra.CM².4)²⁹. Statement like this one appear not only emotional but also contextual because one gets to know how previous and present policies were approached by the same department. In this instance it is clear that despite taking up a new policy (NNSSF) the provincial office did not review the present structures nor put in place new areas. Such practices seemed to be against very recent thinking and development within the area of policy implementation.

Poor planning, financial constraints, poor advocacy plan, insufficient training, absence of implementation structure and poor feedback. On the basis of these themes, which emerged from the voices of the respondents, an indication is made on how poorly the implementation of the NNSSF policy was handled. Tackling such large-scale reforms like the NNSSF policy without proper implementation structures, funding and relevant training can be viewed as neglect of duties. Provincial education departments who appear to have registered progress in this regard adopted a different route. According to HEDCOM minutes, the following provinces, the Western Cape, Kwa-Zulu Natal and the Northern Cape have managed to put

²⁹ Centra.CM³.2 refers to the Central region while CM² refers to Circuit Manager number three.

appropriate structures for implementation (DoE, 2002:16) of the NNSSF policy in place. Indeed both confirmed and unconfirmed response placed the Northern Cape Education department in the lead of implementing the policy

SECTION TWO

5.2.4 SCHOOL LEVEL: WHERE POLICY HITS THE GROUND²⁹

5.2.4.1 Tshwene Primary School : Case Study #1

This section of chapter five presents data generated through the semi-structured Interview with the Principals, Deputy Principals, Departmental Heads and Educator Treasurers and the Whole Staff through the Questionnaire at Tshwene Primary School.

◆ Understanding of the Policy

Understanding of the policy at school level varied among teachers in different ranks and responsibilities. In brief there was a slight difference among the school staff interviewed who demonstrated a limited understanding of the NNSSF policy compared to both the provincial and regional officials. To this end the principal of Tshwene Primary School sheds his understanding of the policy as follows:

The National Norms and Standards for the school funding is meant to assist the schools to run themselves effectively, so as to balance the previous imbalance of the old government. To me this refers to the better financial resourcing of our rural schools. So that we can find ourselves in the same position like former Model C schools (Tsh.Pri.1).³⁰

In the same interview and in response to the question, “Is there any relationship between the NNSSF and Post-Provisioning policy for the distribution of resources?” He responded as follows:

³⁰ Quoted from Wolf, Lung, Monit & Van Bell-Prouty (1999:1) a policy implementation book processes in Malawi and Namibia.

Yes, they relate. According to my understanding, they both balance the imbalances of the past governments. In the past, some schools did not have enough staff so the post-provisioning policy tries to balance the teachers. The Norms and Standard policy also tries to do this so as to improve the standard of the school (TSH.PRI.1).³¹

In eliciting the understanding of the NNSSF policy from the deputy-principal in a face-to-face interview, the response obtained was as follows:

My understanding is that it is the provision made by the government to allocate money to schools so that they can improve from their present position of poor quality (TSH.D.Pri.1.2).

Furthermore the interview I conducted with the following SMT members at the first case study school, regarding “what was the policy responding to”, gave rise to the following Central themes: poverty alleviation, Inequalities, redress, school development and quality education and school effectiveness.

Furthermore it is interesting to report that teachers at the same school demonstrated a limited understanding of the NNSSF policy even when they had responded positively to Question one. They still saw equity as equal to financial resources of the school. For example when the principal was asked to explain “what is educational equity?” He responded as follows: My little understanding of educational equity is the provision of equal education through equal allocation of money”. A further probe on how many training workshops on the NNSSF policy he had attended since the implementation of the Intervention programme he responded as follows:

We as school principals, have just been called once to a meeting by the district officials who told us about this funding policy. The meeting was over two days. But ever since becoming Section 21, we did not receive any additional training. The only assistance we received for the past two/three years was the format for the budget³² (Tsh. Pri 9).

As far as the understanding of the NNSSF policy at Tshwene Primary School is concerned and how the teachers first came to know about the new school policy, the table below i.e., Table

³¹ Tsh refers to Tshwene Primary Pri' to the principal of the school in case study two.

³² FORMAT: despite what the principal said regarding the format or guidelines for the budget, in 2002, written records revealed the absence of a format nor financial regulations for the effective management of the school budget. The only thing that was made available to each school is the departmental circular no. 64 on the Control of Funds (NWED, 2000:10).

5.1(a) shows how teachers came to know about the policy for the first time. The table was constructed on the basis of the results of the quantitative survey (i.e., the questionnaire) administered to the whole staff. The table also shows the level of understanding of the policy.

TABLE 5.1(a): THE RESPONSES OF TEACHERS ON WHAT STIMULATED THE NNSSF POLICY

Total No. of teachers	No. of respondents	% of respondents	% of incorrect response
23	19	82,6%	4=17%

Table 5.1(a) shows the level of understanding of the policy i.e., how many teachers understood the policy.

The content of Table 5.1(a) concerning how teachers first became aware of the NNSSF policy at school level, makes interesting reading. Out of 23 members who responded to the questionnaire 82,6% (i.e., 19) claimed to have read the policy and majority of them are post level³³ one teachers (14). This means that out of the 19 respondents, 14 are teachers at post level one rank. This means that 73,6% of the respondents who claimed to have read the policy are teachers. But reading a policy document does not automatically mean that one has understood the said document in full. In addition, only two teachers said that they were told about the policy by the principal of the school and such teachers were operating as ordinary teachers. It is therefore probable that majority of the teachers have actually read the policy. Perhaps without understanding.

5.2.4.2 Siege Primary School: Case Study #2

In this historical former white school, besides the principal, most of the senior management team members interviewed and the educators surveyed through the questionnaire *displayed a*

³³ According to the Public Administration measure, post-level teacher refers to an ordinary teacher still at level one ranking.

very limited understanding of the policy. In response to the question on the meaning of the NNSSF policy, the principal (Sie.Pri³.2)³⁴ commented as follows:

According to the NNSSF policy state funding must be obtained from public revenue to provide a good education system for all schools in the RSA and to redress past inequalities by providing an education system which contains transparency, fairness and equality for all. But the National Ministry does not decide on the amounts to be allocated to the provincial education departments.

A face value look at the principals' response reflects a deep understanding of the policy. However, critical analysis and interpretation of it reveals some shortcomings in the actual internalization of the policy as a whole. However, it was not easy to detect this until the turn for the senior management team came. In this regard the principal showed some uneasiness on the move to interview SMT members. The uneasiness displayed or lack of confidence can perhaps be explained from two angles. Probably the uneasiness was caused by the fact that the researcher was the SMT member from head office or the said principal had not shared the information with teachers. At any rate the interview was ultimately done. At that level of the interview with the head of department (Sieg.H.O.D.¹.2) the following comment was obtained:

Honestly speaking I do not know much about this policy since I am not involved in it. It is the principal and the School Governing Body members especially the chairperson who are knowledgeable about the policy. What I know is that since becoming Section 21 school there is money coming from the department to the school (Sie.H.O.D.2).

A comparison between what a member of the senior management team said and what the principal espoused made interesting development as far as consistency was concerned. The members of the staff were never workshopped or trained on the policy. There was clear line of operation between the role of the principal and other members of the staff (this implies that the issue of financial management was restricted to both the principal and the school governing body), the school as a former Model C had a track record of good financial management. For instance, in the year 2001, both the school management and the school governing body, in conjunction with the parents managed to raise a significant amount of money through fundraising projects. On the basis of this information the management style of the principal and the school culture became apparent. This implies that, given the culture of

³⁴ SIE.Pri³.2 Refers to the principal of Siege Primary School i.e., case study no.3 while 2 the last digit stands for question number two.

the school and the perceived authoritarian approach of the principal, the fear of the staff to approach the principal cannot be ruled out. On the one hand talk of transparency on the part of the principal might be a factor.

In response to a question on policy integration/coherence i.e., what was the relationship between the NNSSF and PPM (post-provisioning model) policies, the principal of Siege (Sie.PRI³.2) commented as follows:

There is a direct link between NNSSF policy and PPM for distribution of educators. The Ministry of Education's personnel policy for schools is threefold, i.e., schools must have an adequate number of educators; that these educators must be equitably distributed according to the teaching needs of the schools by the MEC of the province and that the cost of these post establishments must be carried by the provincial budget.

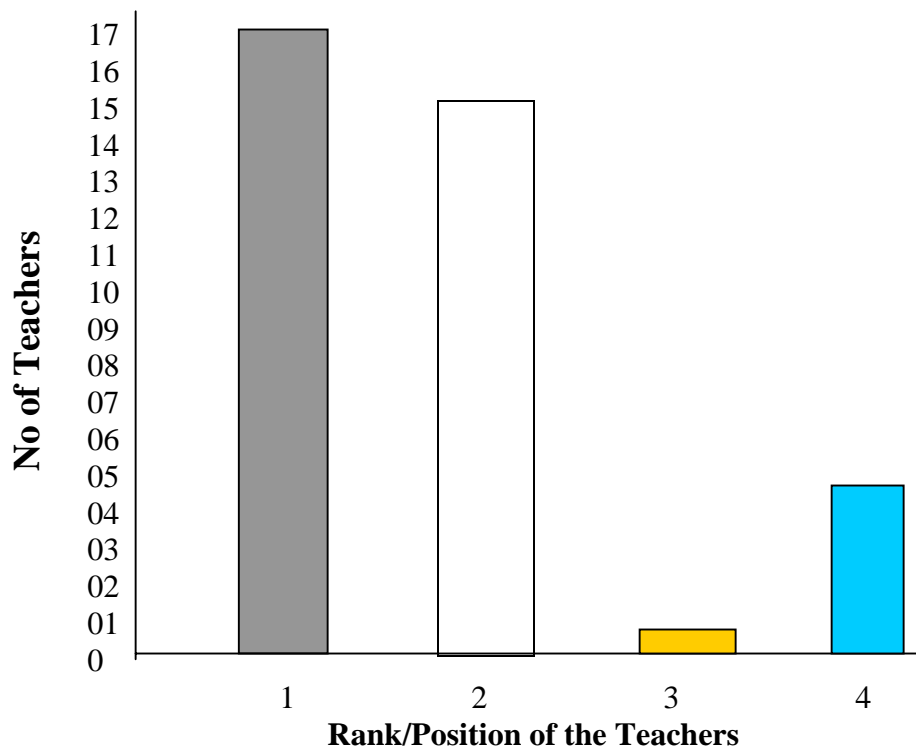
The response given by the principal of Siege, without doubt, delineated clear relationship between the two policies. Such a response appeared to demonstrate an insight into the two policies and can be explained from different perspectives. For instance, the fact that the principal dealt with the implementation of the two policies can be cited as a contributory factor to this fair understanding. This seemed to be the case given the fact that former Model C Schools often employed privately paid teachers from the SGB funds. Implicit in this statement is that the question of dealing with privately employed personnel can enhance somebody's understanding of the policy implications. For example, the state affordability of maintaining personnel costs is often at the heart of the number of educators to be employed. In simple terms if the state can afford an unlimited numbers of teachers at school level, the question of employing additional teachers from the pay roll of the SGB may not arise. The point I am developing here is that the actual task of dealing with these policies at the implementation level can enhance somebody's grasp of the policy.

On other aspects of the NNSSF policy, the principal commented as follows:

The educators and SGB members were informed of the most important stipulations of the policy. Copies of the policy were distributed to all SGB members and members of the staff (Siege.Pri³.2).

However, upon a comparison with the SMT members it turned out that such copies were never distributed to the teaching staff. In fact in one instance I had to postpone the scheduled interview appointment because the acting principal (H.O.D.)³⁵ did not have such a policy document. In order to establish the real situation at this case study school, the reason for the inclusion of the whole staff became imperative. In this connection the results of the administered questionnaire to all teachers including the acting principal on how they first became aware of the policy are reflected below: The bar graph SA shows teachers' response to how they first became aware of the policy.

GRAPH #5: HOW TEACHERS BECAME AWARE OF THE POLICY



Graph SA: Bar Chart showing the response of teachers according to rank

According to the bar graph above which was constructed from the teachers responses to the questionnaire question item that sought to determine how the teachers at Siege Primary School

³⁵ H.O.D at the beginning of the year 2002 the principal was promoted to Head Office and the H.O.D. had to act as a principal.

first became aware of the policy, 17 teachers took part. This number included the acting principal, two heads of department and 14 teachers.

The results obtained from the questionnaire were as follows:

Out of 14 ordinary teachers (post-level ones), 12 (70,5%) said they read the NNSSF policy after it was distributed by the principal, two departmental heads said they read the policy, the acting principal also said she read the policy and two teachers did not respond to the question at all. This means that 70,5% of ordinary teachers first got to know about the policy through reading the available documents. Whether the reading was done with thorough understanding is another matter.

Finally, at the level of this case study school i.e., Siege Primary School (Case Study School #3) the following central themes concerning how the policy was communicated or shared with both the school community and parents dominated the implementation: parents meetings; letters to parents; notices to issued parents.

In fact in one parents' meeting I attended in October 2002, a proposal to increase the school fees in order to employ more privately paid teachers was accepted by the attendees. The reason advanced for the occurrence of this was based on the information that alleged that the NWED is not providing the full complement of the teaching staff to the school due to the policy of rationalization and redeployment. However, evidence at my disposal appeared to destroy such information. According to NWED (2002:46)(d) some former model C schools were reluctant to accept redeployees (i.e., excess teachers) from the excess list, because they preferred to make their own appointments from the SGB funds. This implies that parents are being double taxed.

Firstly for paying income tax to the State so as to the contribute to national revenue. And *secondly* directly to the school in the form of school fees which was used to employ additional teachers and maintain buildings.

5.2.4.3 Banogeng Primary School: Case Study #3

All educators interviewed at the school level i.e., principal, deputy-principal, three departmental heads and educator-treasurer showed a varied but very limited understanding of the NNSSF policy. For instance, the principal commented as follows:

*Norms are about the improvement of school facilities with the intention of providing quality education in school (Ban.Pri³:1).*³⁶

Despite the limited understanding of the policy displayed by the teaching staff at case study No. 3, the following central themes emerged (with specific reference to policy understanding): school development, school improvement, school infrastructure, school effectiveness, and quality education as well as school size. The themes demonstrate an insight on what is the policy about.

The lack of understanding of the policy can be attributed to many factors. But what seemed obvious was how both the national and provincial education approached the matter of capacity-building for policy implementers and the institutionalization of the NNSSF policy. In this regard the issue of outsourcing both the training and system development to a consortium of consultants led by Education-Foundation can be viewed as an error of judgement on the part of the DoE. This practice was seriously challenged by the policy experts both from IDASA and WITS School of Education, as well as some educator unions like NAPTOSA. For instance Dr C.M. expressed his concern as follows:

*I have a serious problem with the fact that the National Department of Education has decided to outsource the capacity building programme to a team of consortium. Such an approach cannot be sustained nor properly monitored (Dr CM. 10/10/2002).*³⁷

The outsourcing of the capacity-building programme for both the provincial and regional officials on a cascading model by national officials can be interpreted as either lack of competence or confidence in the departmental employees or a limited understanding of the complexity of training and development. Outsourcing can also be interpreted as the abdication

³⁶ Ban. Stands for Banogeng, Pri³ refers to the principal of the school in case study school no.2 and :1 refers to question one of the interview schedule.

³⁷ Dr CM from WITS School of Education was involved in the research report on the Resourcing and Cost of Education i.e., the 2003 Review Report.

of responsibility by the national officials. If training is not embedded or integrated into other departmental units, how would the department account for the success or failures of such training? In this connection, the absence of internal training teams nationally and provincially easily became one of the contributory factors to the perceived poor training across the system. For example, a principal of Banogeng commented as follows (on how the understanding of policy was shared with the school):

The department is supposed to have come to the people to come and explain the policy in detail. Principals need to be taught how to implement the norms and standard policy at school level. Truly speaking, I can't say whether there was an implementation plan or not, more-so we as principals are not knowledgeable enough about the norms and standard policy. The training given to us was short and inadequate for such a complicated policy like the norms policy (Ban.Pri³.6).

It can be inferred from the above that training for the implementation of the NNSSF policy fell short of the goal of empowering policy implementers with the necessary knowledge and skills. In giving force and effect to the principals' argument, a senior official at the regional level supported the principal with the following remarks:

Workshops were held for school managers and the school treasurers as well as SGB chairpersons. They were not effective at all and no follow up workshops were held. The workshops did not seek to bring clarity to crucial policy issues. When we trained the school some of us were not well informed and well trained. The two advocacy workshops we attended and conducted by the provincial officials were also short and congested (Cent. CM².6).³⁸

In response to the question “what was the National Norms and Standards for School Funding Policy responding to (i.e., broadly speaking)?” The principal in case study #3 commented as follows:

The policy was aimed at ensuring the equal distribution of resources, especially in historically disadvantaged schools (Ban. Pri².6/03/2003).

On the other hand, the deputy-principal at the same school said:

It is trying to equalize schools, to lift the standard of the formerly poorer schools.

³⁸ Cent. CM².6 refers to the Circuit Manager interviewed at the Central Regional Office.

A deeper meaning of both the principal and the deputy-principal pointed out to either misinterpretation or confusion in the usage of the terms “equality” and “equitable”. At school level and in this case study school in particular, respondents appeared to take equality and equity as having the same meaning. Perhaps this confusion in the usage of the terms can be attributed to the lack of proper training and support to schools.

Another key issue which emerged from the data collected concerning the relationship between the NNSSF and PPM policies at school level teachers revealed a fair understanding of the relationship of both policies. For instance a departmental Head at Banogeng Primary School commented as follows:

In my view I think that even if the two policies are different; there is a common relationship since both of them are aiming at erasing the ‘imbalances’ of the apartheid education. For instance under Bantu Education, African children were not given education of quality compared to white children. But now this finance policy tries to do away with all of this (Ban.H.O.D.².2).

A critical reflection of the above remarks made by a senior teacher goes further than depicting the relationship between the two policies. The history of education provision in South African is implied in very vivid terms. This is done by highlighting the context within which both black and white education were provided in the past. Besides showing a limited understanding of the policy *per se*, there is clear indication that educators at this level understood both policies. Perhaps such an understanding of the two policies can be ascribed to the personal involvement of educators in the two policies. For example, according to both the ELRC policy on rationalization and redeployment of classroom based educators and Departmental Circular No. 36 of 1998 (DoE; 1998:16; NWED, 1998:36) educators at school level were involved in the process of identifying teachers in excess so that they can be redeployed where there is a shortage. In this sense the task of identifying fellow colleagues can neither be a forgetful experience nor an easy challenge. Similarly from the year 2000 i.e., upon the implementation of the NNSSF policy, provisions were made for the involvement of school-based teachers in the actual implementation of the NNSSF policy through structures such as the school finance committee, school developmental plan and the strategic planning (NWED, 2002:11). In the light of these developments at school level it is easy to make inference, which suggests the acquisition of practical experience.

A clear understanding of the policy is not restricted only to how the policy was conceived and finally developed. It also includes issues of implementation and implementation strategies such as communication, training and monitoring. In response to the critical research question on how the understanding of the policy was shared with the different stakeholders, respondents at Banogeng Primary School gave varied and contradictory responses. For instance, the principal claimed to have workshopped everybody at school level, while the senior management teams interviewed said they were told in a staff meeting about the NNSSF policy. For the purpose of addressing this apparent contradiction, the results of the questionnaire administered to the whole staff (broad description) put the matter to rest as indicated below:

FIGURE 5.1: SHOWS HOW TEACHERS FIRST

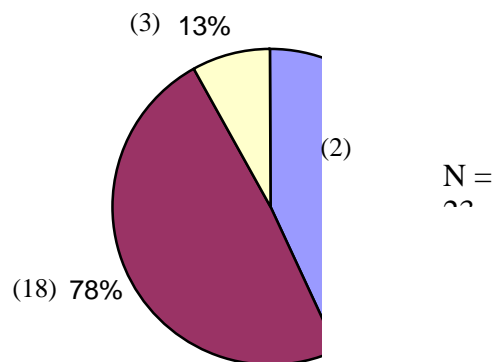


Figure 5.1 above shows the responses of how teachers first became aware of the NNSSF policy at Banogeng Primary School.

Finally, Figure 5.1 above shows the main reasons why the policy of NNSSF was introduced at school level. These quantitative results confirm the consistent pattern established by the results of the qualitative interview, (although some differences were picked up). In this regard 78% (18) of teachers said the principal told them about the policy while 13% (3) claimed to have read the policy document and 0,69% (2) mentioned the district officials. The tendency by principals of schools to tell teachers about a particular policy instead of conducting an intensive workshop can be explained from two angles. Firstly, either the principal was not

properly workshopped or did not fully grasp what was communicated. Secondly, the quality and success of the training done through the cascade model might be suspect.

5.2.4.4 Bogosing Secondary School: Case Study #4

As far as the understanding of the policy is concerned, besides the principal, members of the SMT interviewed showed a reasonable conceptualization and shared meaning of the policy. Of significant note to this investigation in particular is the realization that the principal of the school did not want to be interviewed alone. She preferred the company of one of her deputies who wanted to assist her in the course of the interview. Such reluctance can be regarded as lack of confidence or knowledge of the policy. In response to what the NNSSF policy was responding to, the principal of Bogosing Secondary School commented as follows:

This school finance policy is intended to assist parents from paying the school fees. This means that as a result of this new policy parents are no more expected to pay school fees. This in a way will assist in the increase access of poor children at school level. Presently many children dropout to become “street kids” because of high school fees (Bog.Pri4.1.2).³⁹

A further scrutiny of the principals’ comments revealed that the response is not directly answering the question on the understanding of the policy. But the latter part of the excerpt does make sense since it alluded to the issue of “increase access of the poor children”, and dropout or street kids. This kind of response seemed to respond directly to the question on “what was the policy responding to?” But the fact that the principal of the school was found not to be confident in her responses to the actual object of the policy is very worrying.

Notwithstanding the response to the latter part of the transcribed statement, the apparent lack of understanding of the policy by the executive officer (i.e., principal of the school) required some deeper examination. Perhaps the poor understanding of the policy can be attributed to insufficient training on the part of the regional staff. In another sense it can be ascribed to the lack of support for the policy practitioner by the regional staff or simply poor reading on the part of the staff.

³⁹ Bog.Pri41:2 Refers to Bogosing Secondary School while PRI stand for the school principal and 4 for case study number 4.

5.2.4.5 Mosima Secondary School: Case Study #5

At this deep rural secondary school called Mosima (loosely translated as “hole”) the senior management team interviewed showed a fair but varied understanding of the policy and its main response to educational needs. For instance, the principal, gave his insight of the policy as follows:

My understanding of the policy is that, it is about the equitable and fair allocation of the state financial resources to school especially needy ones. In the past rural schools like ours built by the local chief or communities were not financially assisted by government. Financial assistance was only given to township and city schools. This policy seeks to address this unfairness (Mos: Pri5.1).

A closer analysis and interpretation of the narrative data as generated from the principal of the school revealed an informed explanation. Without necessarily alluding to key words like redress, or disadvantaged, the explanation on its own appeared adequate enough. Such a level of understanding can be ascribed to many factors. For instance, the fact that the principal of the school is fairly qualified (MED degree) and very much involved in the progressive structure such as COSATU, SADTU and other community-based organisations where issues of democracy, equity and poverty featured promptly can be cited as one of the factors. Added to this was the exposure of the principal to two modes of governance i.e., homeland system and the democratic dispensation where he worked and is still working. Implicit in this statement is the view that having served under two different governments might have assisted him to have a better sense of judgment. This might be the case, given the fact that in former Bophuthatswana (Bop), rural schools were neglected since they were not financially assisted by government besides the payment of teachers’ salary.

Another senior official i.e., the deputy principal at Mosima Secondary School, in response to what was the policy responding to broadly speaking, commented as follows:

To bring that equity because people in rural areas are very poor and the parents cannot meet the needs of the schools. Schools in urban areas are generally better off. The policy is trying to achieve quality education by enabling them to have sufficient resources. Briefly it is aimed at helping parents who cannot afford school fees for exemption and to help private schools as well (Mos.D.Pri5.:2).

In the light of the above development it is interesting to note that the collective understanding of the whole SMT members interviewed (six of them) revealed a fair understanding of the policy. This common understanding was more or less dominated by themes such as improvement, financial assistance to schools, redress of the imbalances of the past, alleviation of poverty, school development and school developmental planning.

However, given the fair understanding of the policy by members of the senior management team it became imperative to determine the source of support or capacity building available at school level.

At this point the role of the department, and the regional office became the obvious point of further probing *from the views of the school respondents*. In pursuit of this point it became clear that the school had enjoyed little if not insignificant support and capacity building from the region. The following face to face dialogue (rhetoric) shared light on how far the school was supported by the regional staff.

When the policy reached your school, how did you go about implementing it?

Deputy Principal (D.Pri.³²) response. Let me first indicate that we were never workshopped on this policy by the department. The principal was the only one who attended the workshop.

How then did you become aware of the policy?

Response: The principal shared the information with us in a staff meeting and distributed the policy documents.

What else was done to better inform the staff about the Policy?

The policy documents were made available to us for reading before conducting meetings with the SMT and the whole staff to discuss it before a parents' meeting was conducted. Most importantly our knowledge of both financial management and school development planning assisted us a lot. The capacity building programme obtained from the Quality Learning Project (QLP) was of great assistance.

On the basis of the above information and the role of both QLP⁴⁰ and the regional office. It became easy to infer that schools enjoyed more support from QLP than the regional offices. This observation was further strengthened by the apparent success of the QLP programme mounted on the following areas:

- ◆ Teacher Development
- ◆ Education Management Development (EMD) with emphasis school developmental plan.
- ◆ Curriculum delivery with emphasis on learning outcomes.
- ◆ Monitoring and evaluation, which was integrated with Whole-School Evaluation and
- ◆ District Development with emphasis on educational leadership.

According to the QLP research report discussed at a Provincial Lekgotla held (NWED, 2003:41) on the ability of the secondary schools in drawing the school developmental planning and linking it to the finance was regarded as one of the achievement (NWED, 2003:46).

Perhaps differences in the state of development between the three primary school case studies and the two case secondary studies school can be attributed to the fact the primary schools in the NWED were only exposed to the EMD programme which included school developmental plans as late as the year 2002. On the other hand, both secondary schools and the circuit managers (now called the Institutional Support Co-ordinator) were introduced to the training programme ran and co-ordinated by Denmark (DANIDA) sponsored project from 1997 (NWED, 2000:6(f)).

In the light of the above exposition, the importance of the school development plan (SDP) cannot be over-emphasized. This is because the SDP is a strategic move which is very central to the enhancement of both vision and mission of the organisation as a learning organisation. In this regard SDP as a strategic tool has the potential of ensuring the realization of strategic

⁴⁰ The QLP was a sponsored project financed by the Business Initiative Trust but co-ordinated by Joint Education Trust (JET). The programme was implemented in all the secondary schools in the Central Region. JET was a five year project which started in the year 2000 and comes to an end by the end of 2004. JET contracted service provider such as MSTP, MCPT and Seth Mazibuko & Associates (SMA).

goal if well managed. (See section 2 of Chapter two). The point I am developing here is that a lot of capacity building and monitoring have to be done at all level of the education systems, school level in particular in order to ensure the success of any intervention strategies. This appeared not to have taken place at provincial level. According to one senior official every year the department involved itself in strategic planning⁴¹ which is never cascaded to the district and school level (DoE, 2002:4). Indeed boardroom planning without ensuring the actual translation of such into measurable activities can be regarded as a futile exercise. It is therefore of crucial importance for managers at all levels of the education system to have a deeper understanding of both strategic planning and the actual translation of such plans into action plans.

5.2.5 POLICY EXPERTS/EDUCATION STAKEHOLDERS

Policy experts/analysts I interviewed on the NNSSF policy process showed a deep and holistic understanding of what was expected to happen and what actually did happen and did not happen at successive levels of the education system.

Although a limited understanding of the day-to-day operations of the policy was noticeable, especially at school level (understandably so, since they were not directly involved) both the policy experts and education stakeholders' representatives showed a comprehensive and broad understanding of the NNSSF policy. This claim is supported by various evidence, which emerged from the data collection process. For example, a senior policy researcher attached to the Wits University School of Education shared his understanding and broad purpose of the policy as follows:

I have reservations of the government gazette itself. The government gazette of 1997 as it stands has stipulated three key areas: Full exemption and the setting of minimum norms and standards for the country. My understanding of the Policy is that the government has identified rituals to be practiced by the school and the provincial government to deal with non-personnel, new classroom constructions, acquisitions and land improvement. But I think the policy was implemented too early i.e., before the leveling of the playing field. Issues of the Infrastructure supposed to have been given sufficient attention (Dr More, C.M /20/10/2002).

⁴¹ My observation and experience as part of Senior Management Service points to the fact that the strategic planning done every year is never cascaded down to the lower levels in the NWED. In fact there are instances where only top-management is involved in planning.

On “how policy should have been implemented from the National Department to the school system”, Dr C.M from School of Education gave a comprehensive and detailed implementation story on what was supposed to have happened. He commented as follows:

What should have happened in my view first is that there should have been a budget secured for the implementation of the Norms by the National. That did not happen. The provinces were given a mandate to implement the policy without any backup money, as a result that led to different provinces implementing the Norms differently. In the Eastern Cape to a large extent the Norms were not implemented (Dr. C.M 20/10/2002).

The Norms policy is well documented in terms of outlining criteria that should be adhered to. For these criteria to be implemented, funding is required like accounting, data analysis, financial people to be funded by the provinces. Most of these structures are in place in the provinces but the development of modules was outsourced to the Education Foundation. And I have serious problem with that approach. The Department in my view was supposed to have owned the capacity building programme. (Dr. C.M 20/10/2002).

Dr. Bush from NAPTOSA also shared the same comment just like Dr. C.M. from the Wits School of Education. They both expressed serious reservations on the absence of funding for the implementation of the NNSSF.

The fact that policy experts/representatives of stakeholders were more informed than the custodian of the policy itself, is further strengthened by the following informed articulation from Education Foundation Senior Manager (Mr. P. /31/10/2002).

My understanding of the policy is that the policy seeks to address the huge inequalities in the schooling system created by the then apartheid government. It is looking at the issues of access, quality and most importantly equity. And as far as the implementation is concerned the following were put in place:

- ❑ *The Act was published a full year before implementation. A workshop was conducted to address the implementation in Rustenburg.*
- ❑ *Yes the Act itself contains instructions on implementation*
- ❑ *The legal section of the Department explained the contents of the Act.*

The finance director of DoE described the scenario. The Finance Directorate sourced funding from the European Union and engaged the services of a consortium consisting of:

- ❑ *The Education Foundation (Education)*
- ❑ *Gobodo (Financial Experts)*
- ❑ *Sacred Heart RND (Mr P.T 0/2003).*

A look at the implementation of the NNSSF policy in the light of the policy experts/stakeholders' insight shared some light on the apparent failures or shortcoming of the National Department. According to Dr C.M from WITS School of Education funding was not set aside for the effective implementation of the NNSSF policy. This point was further confirmed by both provincial and regional officials. Similarly, the NNSSF policy has some directives to the provinces on the following: employment of Education Planners, Computer Programmer, Statisticians and Financial Analyst (DoE, 1998:17). Of key interest to me was the complete silence on the part of the DoE on the source of funding for the appointment of these experts at provincial level.

Gearing oneself for the implementation of large-scale reform such as the NNSSF policy without earmarked funding, staffing and appropriate structures is a non-starter. The assumption that belief that Provincial Education Department would do everything to secure funding for the NNSSF policy was not only problematic but can also be regarded as short changing the basic aim of the policy and also lacking deep knowledge on the financial constraints experienced by poorer provinces like the Eastern Cape, Limpopo and the North West (Wildeman, 2001:6-46).

The monotonous argument that says DoE does not have the legal competence to meddle in the provincial financial allocation is not sustainable or justifiable, since separate funding can still be obtained and centralized. What informed the theme of my argument is how the same department approached policies differently. To me this is not only puzzling but also interesting as far as policy development and policy implementation is concerned. For instance if the National Department of Education was able to set funding aside from 1998 to 2004 for

the implementation of Quality Assurance policies such as WSE, S.E and related ones such as OBE and Financial Management under funding called Conditional Grant, why was the same thing not applied for the NNSSF policy.

As a policy implementers who interacted in the development and implementation of Whole-School Evaluation and Systemic Evaluation policies and also being the Provincial Quality Assurance Co-ordinator, I am able to state that the North West Education Department became (and remains to date) the national champion of these policies because of some of the following factors: As a result of direct funding from the National Department of Education, which came from the Conditional Grant, the Chief Directorate of Quality Assurance was able to do the following:

- (i) Secure the service of a service provider to recruit the best qualified persons.
- (ii) An intensive training which among other things involved project management, organizational management and computer training for the newly appointed supervisors.
- (iii) Contracted appointments of Clerks and Data Analysts for Systemic Evaluation were done.
- (iv) Acquisition of new and essential equipment such as computers, laptops, digital cameras were acquired.
- (v) Money for the advocacy, training and monitoring of the WSE programme from head office up to the classroom level was set aside and utilized.
- (vi) Regular Quality Assurance Colloquiums were conducted with stakeholders for the purpose of sharing key findings of the WSE and S.E. investigations reports with the affected education stakeholders.
- (vii) Initiate and install a database, which links together the Quality Assurance Office with the National Department of Education and regions.

All these activities were largely funded from the Conditional Grant and provincially the Conditional Grant was exempted from all the red tape and suspension of the budget. The noted successes of the Quality Assurance should be judged against the availability of the

budget from the Conditional Grant. In the light of this argument I think much was not done within the framework of the NNSSF policy as far as funding and training of key policy implementers.

5.3 CHAPTER SYNTHESIS

In this chapter the findings discovered about how stakeholders understood the policy are supported with generated data in the form of quotations, and major tables. The findings presented primarily emerged from the collected data. In presenting the appropriated findings careful attention was paid to how different stakeholders understood the NNSSF policy at various levels of the education system.

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