

**Collaborative tasks of the school governing bodies in managing  
school finances in Limpopo province**

by

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Date

## DEDICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This work is dedicated to my daughter, Kgotso Thakane Mphethi, who passed away on 30 December 2014.

My sincere thanks are due to the following people for their help with this work:

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My supervisor, Dr K. S. Adeyemo, for his fatherly inspiration, understanding, support, motivation and patience throughout my studies; he was always available when I need his support, both academically and emotionally; he guided me all the time. My sincerest thanks go to him.

I would like to give thanks to Almighty God for granting me this precious, healthy life; wisdom; for protecting me when I travelled long distances to attend support sessions; and for the strength and courage He gave me to commence and complete this work.

## ABSTRACT

This research was conducted in the Sekhukhune District in Limpopo Province with a particular focus on the Department of Education's Malokela circuit. The main purpose of this study was to probe how school governing body (SGB) stakeholders work collaboratively to manage school finances and implement finance policy effectively in the public schools of Limpopo Province.

The following research question was used to investigate the problem: *How collaboratively do school governing bodies (SGBs) govern the financial affairs of public primary schools in the Malokela Circuit of Limpopo Province?* It is in the interest of schools and their learners that SGB stakeholders work collaboratively to effectively manage school finances and properly implement finance policies. The identified problem was investigated by means of a qualitative research approach, using semi-structured interviews with a purposive sample from two selected public primary schools in the Malokela Circuit in Limpopo Province. The qualitative research approach was considered suitable because the study was intended to be an exploratory one aimed at gaining a better understanding of a phenomenon. The case study was used as a research design; it was assumed to be more appropriate for this research because it helped the researcher understand how people interact with, and relate to, one another.

The research findings revealed that governing bodies in public primary schools are faced with many problems which, among others, include levels of education of stakeholders, especially parents, and their lack of knowledge and the skills needed to execute their duties when they are required to perform their roles and carry out their responsibilities in managing school finances. In order for public schools to meet these challenges successfully, this research makes a number of recommendations based on conclusions reached from findings.

**Key Words:** Budget; Collaborative task; Finance policy; Management; Public school; School finances; School Governing Body.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DoE – Department of Education

HOD – Head of Department

RSA – Republic of South Africa

Schools Act – South African Schools Act of 1996

SGB – School Governing Body

SGBs – School Governing Bodies

SMTs – School Management Teams

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## CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTORY BACKGROUND, PROBLEM FORMULATION AND AIMS

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The funding of public education remains a global challenge in terms of balancing a call for compulsory and free education with a view to extending social justice; the management of limited resources; and fiscal resistant (Ahmed and Sayed, 2009: 216). Research conducted by Selesho and Mxuma (2012: 494) suggests that no information in schools is more important than financial information since all activities of schools and their ultimate performance rely on finances. According to Mestry (2013: 165), financial governance, as a crucial function of school governing bodies (educators; parents and principals), may be defined as the performance of financial governance actions of schools with the main aim being to achieve quality education. In his study Mestry (2010: 40) believes that the management of school finances is the performance of management action related to the financial aspects of the school; the main aim being to achieve quality education which is carried out by persons in positions of authority. Van Rooyen (2012: 48) maintains that financial management in education takes place within an international context-currently dominated by neo-liberalism; it is a business-oriented approach which is presently adopted and used in public organisations, such as schools. The planning of a public school finances involves a progression beginning with becoming aware of a need through to the goal formation of action plans (Joubert & Bray, 2007: 130).

However, school finances are managed differently in different countries. For instance, in the research conducted by Fitzgerald and Drake (2013) in England, the governance of school finances is the responsibility of a school governing body. Principals in England are expected to implement their governing bodies' strategic financial frameworks and they must provide them with relevant information concerning their assigned duties and responsibilities. Similarly, in South Africa, the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 (Schools Act, 1996) Section 16 (1) stipulates that the governance of public schools is entrusted to their school governing bodies while Section 16A (3) also requires principals to assist school governing bodies in performing their roles and responsibilities (RSA,

1996). Kenya allows head teachers and/or principals to manage school finances (Sigilai & Bett, 2013). Van Rooyen (2012: 66) is of opinion that financial management is a process and function associated with the management of organisation's, such as a school's resources to achieve its aims and goals and includes the acquisition of funds and assets. One of the main challenges for school governing bodies in South Africa is to maintain healthy relationships with all stakeholders and to understand boundaries set by decision-making authorities (Joubert & Prinsloo; 2008: 101).

Some small public schools in districts across the State of Texas in the United States (US) struggle financially (Abshier, Harris & Hopson, 2011). A major difference in terms of school finance policy globally seems to be 'political'. The argument, and most important question, is whether the policy of governance of school finances is managed as tasked or democratically: i.e., managed collaboratively to achieve effective public financial management. In South Africa, the Schools Act of 1996 gives guidelines concerning the duties and responsibilities of school governing bodies (RSA, 1996). The education system in South Africa has changed in recent years as more emphasis has been placed on the governance of schools and the responsibilities of SGBs. Part of the act's guidelines deals with how South African schools should administer their finances, including how they draft budgets and formulate and implement school finance policies (RSA, 1996). Under this provision, the responsibilities of SGBs are to effectively administer school finances because the assumption is that they know how to draw up schools budgets and implement their schools' finance policies. Section 38 (1) of the Schools Act 1996 insists that school governing bodies are obliged to prepare budgets each year (RSA, 1996). According to Joubert and Bray (2007: 128), it is important to note that members of school governing bodies are collectively responsible for the effective management of public school finances. Section 36 of the Schools Act of 1996 deals with the tasks of SGBs, specifically in relation to the governance of school finances –the main focus of this research. It differs in countries, like Sweden, where principals are responsible for drawing up the budgets of schools (Lindberg, 2012: 160).

The management of school finances involves maintaining liquidity in the face of ever-changing conditions, including supply, income, demand and expenditure (Selesho and Mxuma, 2012: 494). Xaba (2011) suggests that the majority of SGBs in township schools south of Johannesburg in Gauteng Province lack the capacity to govern school finances. Some SGBs rely on principals for financial information which is sometimes

incomplete and inaccurate. Most schools have problems regarding the budgeting process, the balancing of expenditure and the correct procedures in respect of finances (Xaba, 2011: 206). The findings indicate major limitations in the governance of school finances which this research aims to address. There is clear evidence that SGBs, in fulfilling tasks regarding the governance of finances in South African schools, are inadequately equipped as they have insufficient knowledge and skills which is matter of concern. The financial manager of an organisation must manage financial affairs by preserving assets and maintaining liquidity and solvency (Joubert and Bray, 2007: 137). Similarly, SGBs are in a position of trust in schools and, therefore, relationships of trust should exist between schools and SGBs. The main focus of this study was to explore how collaboratively SGBs govern the financial affairs of public primary schools in Department of Education's Malokela Circuit in Limpopo Province.

## **1.2 RATIONALE FOR THIS RESEARCH**

This study was based on the researcher's personal experience and anecdotal evidence regarding the governance of school finances. When I first became a teacher, I was elected the treasurer of the school's SGB. During my term in office as a treasurer, I experienced many mistakes assuming that processes should happen as they happened in the school. The budget was drafted and reviewed after about six or seven years; a copy of the budget - without a specific date- was just put in a cupboard or drawer to satisfy any official from the circuit office who asked for a copy of the budget. Quarterly or monthly returns were not submitted on time; if they were submitted, it was when the Department of Education needed them in order to deposit norms and standards into the school's account. Other stakeholders were not informed about the financial affairs of the school. The principal was the only stakeholder with complete information - even the treasurer just did what he/she was told what to do without being informed about the need for it to be done at that time.

Most SGB members lack of knowledge and experience of school governance which is a serious hindrance in terms of the effective financial functioning of the school (Quan-Baffour and Arko-Achemfour, 2014: 174). Bagaretee (2012: 104) maintains that some SGBs and principals still struggle to manage school finances because either they have little knowledge of the Schools Act or interpret the act incorrectly. The financial management of public schools differs from that of the private sector; schools are

service organisations providing education for children from a given community and although public schools are not profit-driven like private sector companies, SGBs must ensure that sufficient money is available to be spent wisely to ensure quality education (Joubert and Bray, 2007: 123). This research study was intended to obtain a better understanding of how collaboratively SGBs manage the financial affairs of public primary schools and to add to the existing knowledge about this phenomenon. The knowledge that emerges from the research should be of value in designing better SGB training programmes.

The intention was to contribute to the body of knowledge related to this field by documenting experiences and challenges faced by members of SGBs and how collaboratively SGBs worked in terms of school financial governance. Vithal and Jansen (2004), in Maree (2010: 28), maintain that the rationale serves as a statement on how researchers develop an interest in a particular topic and the reason why the research is worth conducting. Government, as a policy-maker, and SGBs, as policy implementers, may be interested in the research findings and results. SGBs were created as part of decentralising educational functions to improve the quality of teaching and learning. In terms of the Schools Act of 1996, the funding of schools should be a partnership between state, educators and parents and it was, therefore, important to set well-balanced norms and standards for the education of learners at schools and the governance and funding of schools throughout the Republic of South Africa. Most of the SGB parent members have problems in fulfilling their duties (Mestry, 2010: 43).

### **1.3 PURPOSE OF STUDY**

The purpose of the study was to explore how collaboratively SGBs govern the financial affairs of public primary schools in the Malokela Circuit of Department of Education in Limpopo Province.

### **1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION**

The primary research question was: *How collaboratively do school governing bodies (SGBs) govern the financial affairs of public primary schools in the Malokela Circuit of the Department of Education in Limpopo Province?*

In order for the researcher to properly answer the primary research question the following sub-questions needed to be answered:

- *How effectively are stakeholders of SGBs involved in the management of the finances of public primary schools?*
- *How do SGB members understand their roles and responsibilities in terms of policy related to school finances?*
- *What successes have SGBs had in managing the finances of public primary schools?*
- *What challenges do SGBs experience in managing the finances of public primary schools?*

## 1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the research study were the following:

- To explore how collaboratively school governing bodies manage the financial affairs of public primary schools in Department of Education's Malokela Circuit in Limpopo Province.
- To understand how effectively stakeholders of SGBs are involved in the management of public primary school finances.
- To determine how SGBs understand their roles and responsibilities in terms of schools' finance policies.
- To determine how successfully SGBs manage the finances of public primary schools.
- To identify the challenges that SGBs experience in managing school finances.

This study aimed at revealing new ideas on how school finances should be governed by school governing bodies.

## 1.6 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Key words used in research study are defined as follows:

- **Budget** is a quantitative expression of a plan for a defined period of time; it includes planned expenses, assets, liabilities and cash flows. It is a management tool used by finance committees to estimate, plan, utilise, coordinate, control and evaluate (Van Rooyen, 2012: 80).



- **Collaborative tasks**, according to Savini (2011:30), “are direct interactions between at least two co-equal parties voluntarily engaged in shared decision-making as they work toward a common goal.” Collaborative tasks are activities designed with a communicative purpose to reach specific set goals.
- **Finance policy** refers to the guidelines or rules which clearly set out regulations, procedures and practices necessary for the prevention of fraud (Van Rooyen, 2012: 106). It refers to a set of rules and regulations that are aimed at promoting the good financial management of schools.
- **Management** refers to a function that coordinates the efforts of people to accomplish goals and objectives by using available resources effectively. It includes planning, organising, staffing, leading, directing and controlling organisations to accomplish their goals. According to Van Rooyen (2013: 59), management refers to a more structured approach of working within the confines of rules, regulations and boundaries provided for schools.
- **Public school** is a type of primary school open to all citizens and financed by the state. According Schools Act of 1996, Section 12 (3) (a), a public school is defined as an ordinary public school for learners with special education needs or a public school that provides education with a specialised focus on talent, including sport and the performing or creative arts (RSA, 1996).
- **School finances** refer to all money received by schools that is controlled and monitored by school governing bodies as stipulated in Section 37 of the Schools Act. Section 37 (2) describes school funds as all money received by public schools, including school fees and voluntary contributions (RSA, 1996).
- **School Governing Body** refers to the body that is established in terms of the Schools’ Act in public schools to perform functions, like the governing of schools. Section 16 (1) of the Schools Act of 1996 stipulates that the governance of every public school is entrusted to its school governing body (RSA, 1996).

## **1.7 WORKING ASSUMPTIONS**

This research study was underpinned by the assumption that SGBs must work collaboratively in order to manage their schools' financial affairs efficiently and effectively. It was further assumed that the SGBs in the Malokela Circuit public primary schools lack knowledge, skills and training in how to manage school financial affairs effectively. Bagaretee (2012: 104) maintains that some SGBs lack knowledge and skills to perform their roles and responsibilities that are assigned by the Schools Act. It was also assumed that some SGBs at the Malokela public primary schools are not ready to accept their responsibilities in managing their schools' financial affairs. According to Mestry and Govindasamy (2013: 433), many schools where parent members of SGBs have limited skills, knowledge, experience and a low level of literacy, they struggle to assume their responsibilities of managing the financial resources of the schools.

## **1.8 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

The research study was qualitative as it involved semi-structured interviews with all stakeholders on the SGBs of the two selected public primary schools in the Malokela Circuit in Limpopo Province. The qualitative research approach was considered suitable because the study was an exploratory one which aimed at obtaining an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon. According to Chiromo (2006) and Pajares (2007), cited in Tichapondwa (2013: 167), a methodology should include information about participants, such as sample size, and the design should outline the research type, apparatus and tools to be used in research as well as the procedures to be adopted. Qualitative research attempts to collect rich descriptive data in respect of a particular phenomenon or context with the intention of developing an understanding of what is being observed or studied (Maree, 2010: 50). A qualitative research methodology was used, with semi-structured interviews, to provide an in-depth understanding of the social phenomenon being investigated. The case study as the research design was deemed to be suitable for this research as it helped the researcher understand how people interact with, and relate to, one another. It also helped the researcher understand how SGB stakeholders work collaboratively in governing the financial affairs of public schools.

Maree (2010: 55) suggests that qualitative researchers believe that the world is made up of people with their own assumptions, intentions, attitudes, beliefs, values and ways

of knowing reality and who explore the experiences of others regarding a specific phenomenon; they attempt to learn how others construct reality by asking about it. The researcher believes that the social reality that was studied involves SGB stakeholders with experiences of the governance of the financial affairs of public schools and, therefore, semi-structured interviews were used as a data collection strategy.

### **1.8.1 Qualitative Research Design**

According to Tichapondwa (2013: 108), qualitative research is a naturalistic inquiry; it uses non-interfering data collection strategies to discover the natural flow of events. It describes and analyses people's social actions, beliefs, thoughts, perspectives and data that has been collected by interacting with people.

The case study helped the researcher understand how people interact with, and relate to, one another. The case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used (Maree, 2010: 75). Creswell (2007: 73) defines the case study as a qualitative approach in which the researcher explores a bounded system (case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over a period of time by means of a detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information and reports on the case description and case-based themes. Merriam (2009: 40) agrees that a case study is an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system; it is descriptive which means that the end product is a rich, thick description of the phenomenon under study. Beer, Broodryk and Lombard (2013: 74) also define a case study as an explanation or in-depth analysis of a bounded system in terms of time and/or place and it may examine a single case or multiple cases.

More specifically, with regard to this study, the case study helped the researcher understand how SGBs relate to, and interact with, other stakeholders who include principals, educators, parents and learners when attending to school finances. The purpose of the case study is to understand the characteristics that define a particular bounded system and, perhaps, to describe an event occurring within that system (Vanderstoep and Johnston, 2009: 209). Using a case study as a basis of qualitative research design helped the researcher understand the meaning constructed by SGBs

with regard to the phenomenon being investigated, i.e., the governance of school finances, as it offers a multi-perceptive analysis in which not only the voices of one or two participants in the situation needed to be considered, but also those of other relevant stakeholders and the interaction between them.

### **1.8.2 Interpretive Paradigm**

A paradigm is a framework for identifying, explaining and solving problems and for understanding and interpreting the world. In this study an interpretivist paradigm was used. According to Sefotho (2015: 27), with interpretivism research begins to embrace multiple worldviews which hold realities for different researchers. Maree (2010: 59) suggests that an interpretivist perspective is based on the following assumptions:

- That people's experiences are subjective and that they construct a social world by sharing meanings and by how interact with each other.
- That the uniqueness of particular situation (context) is important to understand and interpret meanings that people construct.
- That by exploring the richness, depth and complexity of a phenomena, an understanding of meanings people give to a phenomena and its social context can be developed.
- That human behaviour is affected by knowledge of the social world.
- That the social world does not exist independently from human knowledge.

Research proceeds from particular perspectives; beliefs and assumptions that guide it which include ontological assumptions, epistemological assumptions and methodological assumptions. According to Tang (2011), cited in Sefotho (2015: 24), paradigms are generally perceived and understood through core ontological and epistemological assumptions from distinct worldviews. Sefotho (2015: 25) points out that a paradigm is informed by how researchers view the world. He adds that a paradigm is paramount to how people form belief systems and how others form belief systems about theories preceding meta-theories. He emphasises that when researchers choose to follow a particular paradigm they consciously aligning themselves to the precepts, principles and methodologies of that particular paradigm (Sefotho, 2015: 26). This study used an interpretive paradigm because the aim was to have an outlook perspective and to analyse the situation being studied by providing some insight into the ways a particular group of people make sense of the situation or

phenomenon being encountered (Maree, 2010: 60). An interpretive paradigm was used because the researcher wanted to explore how collaboratively SGBs worked in managing their schools' financial affairs.

### 1.8.3 Data Collection Strategies

Data was collected mainly by means of semi-structured interviews after purposive sampling had been applied to select participants from appropriate schools for the research. The research was purposefully conducted in two public primary schools of the Department of Education's Malokela Circuit in Limpopo Province. From the two public primary schools, all SGB stakeholders were used as research participants. Permission for access to the research sites was granted by both the Limpopo Department of Education and the principals of the two selected public primary schools (see Table 1 below).

**Table 1: Schools in the Malokela Circuit**

Type of school	Number of schools in the Circuit	Principals' gender	Selected schools
Primary	16 Primaries	Male = 07	Two primaries were selected from the 16 primary schools
		Female = 09	One primary with a male principal (School A) and the other with a female principal (School B)
Secondary	10 Secondaries	Male = 08	
		Female = 02	

The research was conducted using mainly semi-structured interviews where the researcher had an interview guide and participants were given a great deal of leeway in replying. According to Whiting (2008: 35), interviews are method of data collection in which the researcher asks participants questions and which is conducted face-to-face. A tape-recorder was used to record the interviews. Bogdan and Biken (1992), cited in Tichapondwa (2013: 130), state that researchers need to carefully explain the purpose of recording the interviews to participants and assure them of strict confidentiality; some might think that once their words are recorded on tape they may find themselves in trouble, especially if something illegal is revealed. Opdenakker (2006: 04) believes that the advantage of a using a tape-recorder makes a report interview more accurate than just taking notes. Opdenakker (2006: 04) is of the opinion that taking notes during interview is important in case the tape-recorder malfunctions. Tichapondwa (2013: 129) maintains that recording devices facilitate the flow of interview discussions as it is not

necessary to write down responses to one question before moving on to the next and, thereby, speeding up the interview process. Tichapondwa (2013: 129) adds that tape-recorded data can be played several times and be studied more thoroughly during the course of the research process than would be the case if data was only recorded manually. Convenient venues for interviews were determined by the participants.

#### **1.8.4 Data Analysis and Interpretation**

Data collected during this research study was analysed by means of content analysis which is termed conceptual or thematic analysis. Before beginning with the analysis, data was transcribed. Rangongo (2011: 76) suggests that before one can begin with analysis, data should be transcribed which means that information from the interviews need to be typed out as textual documents. Transcribing permits the repeated examination of participants' answers; it allows for a thorough scrutiny of what people said; and it helps to counter accusations that the analysis might have been influenced by researcher's values or bias. Content analysis allowed for data to be placed in broader categories and for relevant study issues to be highlighted. The content of information from the interview transcripts was examined to obtain an in-depth understanding on how collaboratively SGBs govern the financial affairs of the selected public primary schools.

Maree (2010: 101) defines content analysis as a process of looking at data from different angles with a view to identifying key elements in a text that help researchers understand and interpret the raw data. All the data collected by electronic or digital means, such as tape-recordings, should be transcribed and include some non-verbal cues in the transcript (Maree, 2010: 104). The data collected during the interviews was transcribed; grouped into categories; and patterns and themes in terms of the purpose of study were identified. In analysing the data open-coding was used which is a process of reading carefully through the transcribed data line-by-line and dividing the data into well organised units (Maree, 2010: 105).

The responses of the participants were organised and coded. After coding the transcribed data, related codes were sorted and grouped in terms of each research question and combined into themes or categories. Themes, ideas, concepts, behaviour, interaction, incidents and phrases facilitated organising the data into categories that

summarised responses and brought meaning to the text (Maree, 2010: 110). The researcher listened carefully and repeatedly to the recorded data in order to become more familiar with it.

Essentially, data was analysed using familiarisation, identification of a thematic framework, charting, mapping, interpreting and coding. Creswell (2007: 154) recommends that researchers should inductively analyse data to show relationships between various themes. According to Creswell (2007: 156-157), data analysis should adhere to the following best practices in case study methodology:

- Create and organize files for data.
- Read through texts, make margin notes and form initial codes.
- Describe the case and contextual background.
- Use categorical aggregation to establish themes or patterns.
- Use direct interpretation.
- Develop naturalistic generalizations.
- Present an in-depth picture of the case using narrative, tables and figures.
- Complete the data analysis and compile a report concerning the findings.

## 1.9 TRUSTWORTHINESS

Tichapondwa (2013: 206) suggests that because there are no rigorous tests in qualitative research, the emphasis should be on the trustworthiness of the findings rather than on validity and reliability which depend largely on absolute measures. According to Maxwell (1999), cited in Tichapondwa (2013: 206), the trustworthiness of qualitative research is reflected in the credibility of descriptions, conclusions, explanations, interpretation and other forms of account. In order to ensure that these findings were trustworthy and credible, the researcher focused on the following:

- **Credibility** - One of the best ways to establish the credibility of a research study is by engaging with the subject matter through member-checking; returning to participants to confirm that they recognise the findings of study. Credibility enhances findings by allowing participants and others who may have interest in the research to comment or assess the findings, the interpretation and the conclusions (Maree, 2010: 114). Tichapondwa (2013: 34) maintains that truth,

value and credibility refer to the accurate representation of information from the researcher's perspective and from substantiating evidence.

- **Trustworthiness** - Triangulation is an important way of improving the trustworthiness of qualitative research findings, after a data analysis has taken place, by using multiple data collection techniques, including semi-structured interviews. After applying the process of triangulation, sources pointed to the same conclusions and, therefore, the researcher is confident that the results are trustworthy.

### 1.10 LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

The study was limited to two selected public primary schools in the Malokela Circuit in Limpopo Province. A small sample size of all SGB stakeholders from the two public primary schools is a limitation because the source from where the sample was obtained may be incomplete and, thus, affect the generalisation of the findings in other circuits. The research was limited by time constraints, travel cost implications and the fact that research participants were pressed for time during interviews. The aim of the research study was not to generalise and, hence, it was limited to two public primary schools and did not include secondary schools. The participants in this research study were educators, principals and other SGB stakeholders from the two sampled schools in one school circuit in Limpopo Province.

A number of challenges limited the gathering of the most accurate information for this research. Meetings were arranged for the researcher to explain the purpose of the research to the participants; to reassure them of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses; and to allay their fears so that they openly provided relevant information. It was anticipated that participants may be unwilling and unable to offer information on school premises; therefore, the researcher asked them to suggest a place where they were free to share their thoughts and ideas - either in their homes or at any venue other where they felt safe. Participants were guaranteed confidentiality so that they would openly provide the researcher with relevant data. The participants were not always easily accessible on the pre-arranged dates, at the venues and at the scheduled times; the researcher then had to arrange other dates, places and times for meetings to conduct interviews with participants.



## **1.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF RESEARCH**

The principals and SGB chairpersons of the two selected public primary schools granted permission for research to be conducted at their schools. According to Maree (2010: 41), an essential principle for conducting research is the issue of the confidentiality of results, the findings of the study and the protection of participants' identities. Tichapondwa (2013: 167) is of the opinion that ethical issues cut across the entire research process, including planning, data collection, data analysis, report writing and spreading the research findings. The first thing the researcher did before conducting this research was to submit an ethics application to the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria to request permission to undertake the study.

Ndou (2012: 69) maintains that the main ethical debates concerning qualitative research focus around tensions between covert and overt research and between the public's right to know and participants' rights to privacy. Information obtained from the research participants will not be revealed to any organisation, person or any other source. According to McMillan and Schumacher (1997), cited in Tichapondwa (2013: 207), qualitative researchers need to be sensitive to ethical principles because of face-to-face interaction with participants and in respect of each other's rights. Participants were informed about confidentiality prior to the interview sessions in order to assure them that their privacy was guaranteed. They were not forced to participate in the research; participation was voluntary – a fact that was emphasised in the permission letters signed by the participants. Williams (2010: 50) believes that qualitative research requires interaction between the researcher and the participants. Interviews were tape-recorded and permission to do so was obtained from the participants.

### **1.11.1 Informed Consent**

Before starting with the data collection, the researcher ensured that informed consent had been obtained from the research participants or interviewees. It was important for the researcher to explain the possible consequences of the study thoroughly so that when participants gave their consent, it was from an informed position. The participants were requested to sign a form that confirmed their understanding of the research's aims; their free choice of participation in study; and freedom to withdraw from

participation at any time without prejudice. Participants were not forced to participate in research, they participated voluntarily.

### **1.11.2 Access and Acceptance**

A letter was written to the Limpopo Province Department of Education to ask for permission to carry out the research at public primary schools in its Malokela Circuit. Letters were also written to research participants making a formal request for them to be involved in the research; they also outlined the purpose of the interviews. Each participant was then personally contacted to make final arrangements concerning interview dates and times which were determined by the participants.

### **1.11.3 Anonymity and Confidentiality**

The researcher tried by all means possible to maintain the principle of anonymity and confidentiality throughout the research process. Meetings were arranged with participants to explain the purpose of the study and to assure them of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses to assuage their fears. Tichapondwa (2013: 68) is of the opinion that upholding individuals' rights to confidentiality and privacy is a central tenet of every researcher's work; ensuring that information received from participants is not disclosed to any other person; and that it remain confidential. Berg (2001: 57) points out that anonymity means that the participants remain nameless. Therefore, participants are anonymous and all the information collected during the research is treated as confidential. Berg (2001: 57) further states that confidentiality is an attempt to remove from the research records any elements that might indicate participants' identities. The researcher ensured their privacy and that they were always treated with respect and dignity. According to Whiting (2008: 39), confidentiality means protecting participants' identities and never publicly divulging them. Whiting (2008: 39) adds that, participants have right to privacy, anonymity and confidentiality but stresses that, anonymity exists only if participants' identities cannot be linked to the data and that, information participants share with researcher should not be passed on to others in any form, unless specific consent has been given.

### **1.11.4 Honesty**

The researcher has ensured that the findings of the research have been reported honestly, without misleading anyone; findings exactly reflect conclusions drawn from

the collected data. There was no subjective intention and bias in the interpretation of the data. The tape-recordings of the collection of data will be kept safe for anyone who interest on research study to confirm the data. Transcribed data will also be made available for anyone who needs to compare it with the tape-recordings in ensuring that the researcher has been honest with the findings of this study.

## **1.12 SETTING OF THIS RESEARCH**

This research was conducted in two public primary schools in the Malokela Circuit in Limpopo Province. All SGBs members from the two schools were interviewed using semi-structured interviews.

## **1.13 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY**

It is assumed that the research study will add to the existing knowledge of governance related to public primary school finances. It is also considered to be valuable in terms of designing better SGB training programmes for the governance of school finances as well as for monitoring the process. This study is deemed to be significant in that it reveals new perceptions in understanding how school finances should be dealt with by SGBs.

## **1.14 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY**

This report is organised in five chapters, as follows:

**Chapter 1** provides the rationale for conducting this research. The problem statement and questions arising from the statement as well as the purpose of this study and its limitations are discussed. Definitions of key words and a brief explanation of the research methodology used are given.

**Chapter 2** is an in-depth literature review of the theoretical background of the social phenomenon, the collaborative task of SGBs in managing school finances in Limpopo Province that was investigated.

**Chapter 3** sets out the research methodology. It focuses on qualitative research methods for collecting data, such as semi-structured interviews. Using this method to answer the research question, data was collected from all SGB stakeholders of the two

selected public primary schools in the Department of Education's Malokela Circuit of Limpopo Province.

**Chapter 4** presents the findings obtained from the interpreted data regarding how collaboratively SGBs govern the financial affairs of public primary schools.

**Chapter 5** is a summary of the findings, conclusion drawn and recommendations made related to how collaboratively SGBs govern the financial affairs of public primary schools in the Malokela Circuit in Limpopo Province.

## 1.15 CONCLUSION

Chapter 1 focused on background information to the topic; it included a statement of the problem, the research objectives, research questions, the limitations of the study, its rationale, a limited literature review, a brief description of the methodology, sampling and data collection methods and procedures; as well as a definition of concepts, working assumptions and the significance of study. An overview of the research into how collaboratively SGBs govern financial affairs of public primary schools in the Malokela Circuit of Limpopo Province was presented in terms of the researcher's motivation for conducting this research and assumptions of previous practices of SGBs related to collaboratively managing school finances in the Malokela Circuit of Limpopo Province. The selection of samples, collection techniques, tools and instruments for data capturing were discussed. The choice of the research design and methodology and reasons for such preferences were also highlighted as were the research methods used, such as content analysis and semi-structured interviews.

The next chapter, Chapter 2, reviews the relevant available literature related to the social phenomenon being investigated.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Reviewing the available relevant literature is a process of searching, systematically compiling, assessing and scholarly interrogating the existing literature in order to inform or demonstrate its relationship with any current research (Tichapondwa, 2013: 188). According to Knopf (2006), cited in Tichapondwa (2013: 188), a review of the related literature contains the following key elements: a concise summary of the findings that emerged from prior research on the subject; conclusions are drawn about how accurate the knowledge is; it presents the researcher's considered judgements; and it identifies gaps from what is missing in the existing literature. A literature review reflects what has already been done well which avoids wasting time on "reinventing the wheel"; it gives researchers new ideas for research; it helps determine problems in the relevant research; it enables researchers to develop conceptual or theoretical frameworks for their studies; it gives them a good idea of how to present and analyse data; and it helps them reach conclusions about how accurate and complete knowledge is (Tichapondwa, 2013: 189).

Chapter 2 is a review of available relevant literature related to the three themes that guided this research study. By reviewing the literature, the researcher examined how other scholars understand these themes; what they have written about them; and why they thought that there were some of problems that SGBs faced. Maree (2010: 26) suggests that a literature review will normally provide an overview of current and previous –but still sufficiently relevant -research relevant to the research topic and salient facets of it.

The role of members of SGBs as finance governors has been discussed by various researchers, like Xaba (2011), Mestry and Naidoo (2009), Rangongo (2011) and Van Rooyen (2013). They describe fairly extensively how school finances should be managed in schools. Generally, the literature reveals various views of different aspects of finance governance seen from different angles or perspectives by researchers. For example, Sigilai and Bett (2013: 208) in their study conducted in Kenya explore

principals' effectiveness in managing school finances, based on how they performed assigned roles in overseeing school finances - as required by Ministry of Education. In Lesotho principals are accountable for the distribution of schools funds with only a limited involvement of stakeholders in the budgetary processes (Motsamai; Jacobs and de Wet, 2011: 112). Otherwise, educators seem to play leading roles in matters pertaining school finances, the formulation of policies and ensuring a culture of teaching and learning (Mavuso, 2014: 432).

SGB members are collectively accountable for the effective management of public school finances (Joubert & Prinsloo; 2008: 99). Mokoena (2013: 27) maintains that a sensible use of available school funds for the benefit of learners results in a positive attitude towards schools among parents. Joubert and Prinsloo (2008: 93) suggest that financial management in public schools differs from that in the public sector because schools are service organisations providing education to the children of a particular community.

## **2.2 THEMES**

The following themes, which were identified in the literature review, are discussed in detail: SGB members' knowledge of, and skills and training in, financial management; poor finance policy implementation; and tasks performed during the management of school finances and the budgeting process.

### **2.2.1 SGB Members' Knowledge of, and Skills and Training in, Managing Finances**

It is deemed important to be trained before assuming any given task in order to perform it effectively and efficiently. In the literature review it was seen that Mestry and Hlongwane (2009) are of the opinion that members of SGBs are given full responsibility for school finances without proper training or induction and orientation. The training of school governing body members in rural schools enables elected governors to understand their roles; reduce the challenges they face in discharging their duties; and make rural schools more functional (Quan-Baffour & Arko-Achemfour, 2014: 171). According to Bagaretee (2012: 104), some SGBs lack knowledge and skills to perform the roles and functions assigned to them by the Schools Act of 1996. Section 19 (1) of the act stipulates that the Provincial Head of Department of Education must establish

programmes to provide introductory training for newly elected members of SGBs which will enable them to perform their roles effectively (RSA, 1996). Because of the complexity of financial management, it is necessary for newly elected SGBs to be trained before they accept responsibility for school finances as well as other finance-related tasks. Mestry and Govindasamy (2013: 447) suggest that most SGB members in Gauteng Province are unclear about their roles and functions; that they lack financial skills and knowledge; and that they require training. Research conducted by Msila (2012: 305) reveals that some research in South Africa has shown that parents are reticent when it comes to schools' governance because they maintain that teachers have the necessary skills to lead without their support. As newly elected SGB members are not knowledgeable about their duties and responsibilities, in most schools, principals are burdened with most of the financial functions assigned to their respective SGBs (Mestry, 2010: 47). Therefore, it is important that members of SGBs are trained and inducted on how to govern school finances.

Mestry and Hlongwane (2009: 330) support the notion that training in school financial management is fundamental for equipping SGBs and school management teams (SMTs) with financial skills and competencies, such as budgeting processes, policy-making and procurement. Financial skills are important not only for SGBs but for all school administrators in order to achieve specific school objectives in terms of financial matters. According to Bagerette (2012: 104), some SGBs and principals are simply not able to find practical solutions to their financial problems because they lack financial knowledge, skills and expertise. Sigilai and Bett (2013: 209) agree that government needs to train principals adequately in their roles of managing schools' finances to improve the quality of teaching and learning. This shows that principals need to be knowledgeable about financial management for them to assist their SGBs in the management of school finances. Based on the literature reviewed, it is clear that training is important in the effective and efficient management of schools' financial resources. For efficiency and effectiveness of school finance governance, Section 19(2) of Schools Act of 1996 stipulates that principals should render all necessary assistance to school governing bodies in the performance of their tasks (RSA, 1996). Mestry and Govindasamy (2013: 433) contend that at many schools parents struggle to assume responsibility for managing the financial resources of schools because they have limited skills, knowledge and experience as well as a low level of literacy. They maintain that members of SGBs who are involved in governance at schools need to be informed of

the contents and conditions of the Schools Act so that they understand what their respective roles and functions entail (Mestry and Govindasamy, 2013: 448). A lack of financial knowledge may result in SGBs' inability to establish finance committees or develop financial policy for their schools which, in turn, could lead to financial mismanagement (Bagarette, 2012: 104). The literature clearly identifies a lack of financial skills as a major problem faced by SGBs in schools that needs to be resolved by means of structured financial workshops immediately after their election and followed up with effective monitoring and evaluation.

### **2.2.2 Lack of Finance Policy Implementation**

Research by Mavuso and Duku (2014) confirms that it is the responsibility of SGBs to formulate and ensure the implementation of schools' finance policies. Guidelines have been formulated to address inequalities in education and to ensure that education is a vehicle for democracy in society (Msila, 2012: 303). Braun, Maguire and Ball (2010: 549) believe that policies do not normally stipulate what needs to be done, but create circumstances in which a range of options are made available and particular goals are set. It is important to have policies which help schools in how they manage their financial matters. Selesho and Mxuma (2012: 495) maintain that SGBs, through their finance sub-committees, should ensure the existence of finance policy and adherence to it. The inability of members of SGBs to read and write poses a challenge for them in the development of new policies and in the interpretation of the constitution and other education-related documents (Bagarette, 2012: 103). Joubert (2009: 252) is critical of situations where SGBs constantly receive policy documents from the DoE requiring enforcement and compliance from everyone under its authority without asking for their input to question the legality and correctness of the content. Mestry (2010: 42) suggests that for principals and SGBs to ensure the effective and efficient management of school finances, they must ensure the existence of a finance policy.

According to Joubert and Prinsloo (2008: 97), every public school should have a finance policy, drawn up by its finance committee and approved by the SGB after consultation with all the relevant stakeholders; an absence of a school finance policy is likely to make principals vulnerable to mismanaging school finances (Mncube & Makhasane, 2013: 360). It is clear that the finance policy should give clear direction on how schools should spend funds allocated to them by the state. Mestry and Hlongwane



(2009: 336) believe that elected SGB members of rural and township schools find it difficult to interpret policies, legislation, financial issues and other related governance matters because of their low levels of educational. From the literature reviewed, for effective and efficient management of school finances SGBs need to ensure that simple clear finance policies are developed and implemented in schools.

### **2.2.3 Tasks Performed in the Management of School Finances and Budgeting Processes**

The Schools Act of 1996, Section 38 (1), stipulates that SGBs must prepare budgets for each year in accordance with guidelines determined by Members of the Executive Council published in the Provincial Gazette (RSA, 1996). In a study conducted in Lesotho by Mncube and Makhasane (2013: 349) mention is made of an Education (Amendment) Act of 1996 which provides for legal frameworks pertaining to the management of school finances; this act places the main responsibility for managing school finances on principals. In South Africa, the Schools Act, Section 38(2), states that before a budget is approved by the school governing body, it must be presented for approval by a majority of parents at a general meeting of parents - convened after giving notice of 30 days. In terms of the financial management of schools, budgets occupy a central position; they are plans and visions of an organisation (school) expressed in financial terms. Maree (2010: 66) emphasises that SGBs, especially their finance committees, should conform and work according to legislation specifications, particularly with regard to budget control and expenditure. Joubert and Bray (2007: 131) suggest that when preparing budgets, many members of SGBs simply make a wish list of what they would spend money on in the next year.

Therefore, the responsibilities of SGBs include overseeing the financial governance of schools and drafting school budgets to ensure that school finances are well monitored and used according to the budgets. Van Rooyen (2012: 81) maintains that the budgeting process is a means of planning and tracking revenue and expenditure so that resources are used most effectively to meet institutional goals and to comply with contracts that limit the use of income. In Sweden, principals are responsible for drawing up budgets; they have the authority to create their own system of budgeting and financial control; and they are free to set up accounts that are deemed suitable to their needs (Lindberg, 2012).

According to Van Rooyen (2012: 81), budgets have important functions which include the following:

- They indicate needs.
- They suggest where funding can be sourced.
- They help to account for income and expenditure.
- They assist in deciding where, what and how much to spend.
- They control income and expenditure.

Xaba (2011) identifies problems experienced by SGBs in budgeting processes, balancing expenditure, implementing correct procedures regarding the use of finances and deviating from budgets. Van Rooyen (2013: 99) maintains that once school budgets have been adopted, SGBs take on an overseeing responsibility; they monitor expenditure to ensure that the money is used for the goals specified and that the expenditure is in the spirit and intent of the authorisation. Rangongo (2011: 142) shows that budgeting processes in a minority of the schools in the Bahlaloga Circuit of Limpopo Province are done unilaterally by the principals who also lack knowledge, skills and expertise to draft budgets and to prioritise and identify short and long term expenditure; knowledgeable stakeholders are not involved.

A study by Mavuso (2014: 431) indicates that the process of budgeting is, apparently, not handled by SGB finance committees. According to the Schools Act of 1996, in ensuring the effective implementation of school budgets, principals, teachers and parent members of SGBs should be consulted when school budget is drawn up (RSA, 1996). Van Rooyen (2012: 103) agrees by recommending that financial management should be an inclusive and transparent process that should involve all stakeholders and not only school principals.

Similarly, Serfontein (2010: 97) is of the opinion that cooperative governance is an interactive approach in which all role players are represented and take co-responsibility for the efficient operation of schools. This is supported by Thenga (2012: 37) who suggests that the purpose of consulting all stakeholders is to ensure that finance committees of SGBs properly control resources allocated to schools. James, Brammer, Connolly, Spicer, James and Jones (2013: 88), in their study conducted in England, maintain that having a wide range of stakeholders on school governing bodies is important and beneficial, particularly in culturally diverse settings, to ensure that

different groups are represented. However, school governing bodies also need skills and capabilities, a statement which Serfontein (2010: 99) supports when he adds that a key principle of school governance is that decisions should be based on consultation, collaboration, mutual trust and the participation of all affected parties. It is clear that budgeting in schools is a collaborative process as it involves different stakeholders on SGBs to ensure the effective and efficient application of tools for financial management. Van Rooyen (2012: 86) believes that school budgets have various purposes which must be taken into consideration when dealing with financial processes; they include the following:

- They provide a foundation for planning and implementing the financial strategies of schools.
- They provide operational cost/time frameworks for implementing school programmes.
- They indicate the relationship between expenditure and income.
- They measure performance against budget plans.
- They provide a basis for delegation.
- They set standards of performance.

For schools to manage their finances efficiently and effectively there is need for well drafted budgets which are used as tools to guide the management of finances. The budgeting process has numerous benefits for institutions—if followed effectively by those who are responsible for drafting budgets when there is a need to do so. Budgeting for public primary schools needs should go through many processes before moving to the budget execution phase as the entire process involves the collaboration of different stakeholders throughout process. Collaboration is necessary not only for budgeting, negotiation and approval processes but also for expenditure after the approval of budgets. The numerous advantages of budgeting for schools are specified by Van Rooyen (2012: 82) - if is carried out conscientiously and effectively; the benefits include the following: acting as a planning tool; performing a coordinating role; creating a framework; offering an incentive; and being a controlling facility.

## 2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The research was based on the theory of collaboration in the governance of financial affairs of public primary schools. The theory of collaboration in the governance of financial affairs is about how SGB stakeholders are engaged with one another when governing the financial affairs of public primary schools. It influences how collaboratively SGBs work in managing the financial affairs of public primary schools. Vygotsky (1978), a Russian psychologist, proposes that man learns through social engagement with others and that the construction of knowledge is a socially, cooperative venture (Montiel-Overall, 2005: 03). Montiel-Overall (2005: 03) adds that according to Vygotsky (1978), collaboration is a social process in which meaning is constructed from discussion among group members. Collaboration is defined as a common effort between or among multiple entities to accomplish a task or project (Chaffee, 2016: 1754). Through a shared vision and shared objectives, the management of the financial resources of public primary schools is deemed more effective in improving quality of teaching and learning. Mestry and Govindasamy (2013: 434) are of the opinion that collaboration emphasises the fact that power and decision-making should be shared among some or all members of the organisation. The governance of schools' financial affairs involves different stakeholders who include, among others, parents, teachers and principals (RSA, 1996). Decisions taken on how school finances should be governed in a school need to include all the stakeholders. Blanford (1997: 75), in Mestry and Govindasamy (2013: 435), suggests that participation in the decision-making process in schools is dependent on the relationship between stakeholders and, therefore, proposes that structures may need to be put in place to provide a framework for collaboration. There is a need for stakeholders in schools to work together in order to govern financial affairs of schools effectively and efficiently.

Collaboration, as a theory for this study, helped the researcher understand how different stakeholders are involved in the governance of finances in public primary schools of the Department of Education's Malokela Circuit in Limpopo Province. Gajda (2004: 67) believes that by working together individuals are able to pool scarce resources that would not otherwise be possible if they worked independently. This is supported by Montiel-Overall (2005: 4) who suggests that collaboration is a process of shared creation where two or more individuals with complementing skills interact to create a shared understanding that none of them could have achieved individually.

According to Mullins, Rummel and Spada's (2011: 438) analysis of collaboration, they confirm the structural material used to stimulate mutual elaboration and provide explanations and understanding. They believe that collaboration support can promote procedural knowledge acquisition - if it is successful in promoting the right type of interact among stakeholders. Schneider and Pea (2013: 378) point out that, group members need to sustain a mutual understanding; manage the smooth flow of communication; gather as much information as possible; reach consensus; divide tasks equally and ensure their completion within a time limit; and actively engage in finding relevant solutions to problems. Collaboration has its own elements which involve amongst others –the following:

- **A trusting working relationship** -When SGB stakeholders work together in managing finances and trust each other, their trust will lead to cooperative behaviour among them.
- **Shared vision and shared objectives** – According to Montiel-Overall (2005: 07), a shared vision brings individuals together to work on the same idea. Therefore, all the SGB stakeholders should jointly share objectives which involve a common plan for the effective management of school finances.
- **Coordination** – This is a common practice of bringing groups and individuals together to exchange information, alternative activities and help one another to make their work more efficient (Monteil-Overall, 2005: 10).
- **Shared thinking or joint participation in thinking** – This process takes place when individuals come together to share their expertise and ideas; they construct innovative ways of doing something; and demonstrate characteristics of fully developed collaboration (Monteil-Overall, 2005: 05).

## 2.4 CONCLUSION

The literature dealing with managing finances in schools shows that in some schools SGB structures are in place, but they seem to be dysfunctional. Guided by the literature, it appears that SGBs in the two selected public primary schools experience problems in the governance of school finances. Apparently, SGBs from the two public primary schools need to acquire knowledge and skills to govern school finances responsibly and correctly - as required by the Schools Act of 1996; the governors of school finances who are members of SGBs, namely, the chairperson, treasurer, secretary and all other members, experience challenges in their school finances

governance. The participation of most SGB members in school activities in rural areas are restricted by a lack of capacity and a limited level of knowledge in managing finances. However, not only are SGBs affected by limited training, the schools, themselves are also hampered in their organisation, management and governance activities. The literature review assisted the researcher to gain a clear understanding of the themes that were investigated. This study has, more specifically, explored the collaborative governance of school finances by the SGBs of public primary schools in the Malokela Circuit in Limpopo Province. The next chapter, Chapter 3, describes the research design and methodology used for the research.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The research was qualitative, involving semi-structured interviews with all stakeholders on the SGBs of the two selected public primary schools in Department of Education's Malokela Circuit of Limpopo Province. A qualitative research approach was deemed suitable because the research study was an exploratory one, aiming at gaining a better in-depth understanding of the phenomenon being examined.

Chapter 3 sets out the theoretical framework of the study; paradigmatic assumptions, the research aims, the qualitative research approach, the research design, the sampling and data collection techniques, data analysis, the trustworthiness of the research, its limitations and the reasons for choosing the methodology and research design are all given and discussed. According to Chiromo (2006) and Pajares (2007), cited in Tichapondwa (2013: 167), methodology should include details of the participants in terms of sample size; a design section which shows the research type; the apparatus or tools used in the research; and procedures that were adopted. A qualitative research methodology was adopted, using semi-structured interviews that provided an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon being investigated. The case study was used as the design deemed to be appropriate for this research as it helped researcher to understand how people interact and relate to one another.

Qualitative research attempts to collect rich descriptive data in respect of a particular phenomenon with the intention of developing an understanding of what is being studied (Maree, 2010: 50). The researcher believes that the social reality studied is made up of SGB stakeholders with experience of the governance of the financial affairs of public schools; semi-structured interviews were, therefore, used as data collection strategies. Maree (2010: 55) suggests that qualitative researchers are of the opinion that the world consists of people with assumptions, intentions, attitudes, beliefs and values and a way of knowing reality is by exploring the experiences of others regarding a specific phenomenon – attempting to see how others constructed reality by asking them about it. Tichapondwa (2013: 108) maintains that qualitative research uses non-interfering

data collection strategies to discover the natural flow of events and that it analyses people's actions, beliefs, thoughts and perspectives.

### 3.2 PARADIGM ASSUMPTIONS

A paradigm is a framework for identifying, explaining, solving problems, understanding and interpreting the world. In this study an interpretive paradigm was used, underpinned by the assumption that SGBs work collaboratively in order to manage school financial affairs efficiently and effectively. It was assumed that the SGBs in the Malokela Circuit public primary school SGBs lack knowledge, skills and training on how to manage school financial affairs effectively. Cohen *et al.* (2001), cited in Maree (2010: 31), believe that research is about understanding the world which is informed by how people view it. According to Tichapondwa (2013: 184), assumptions are situations and contingencies which researchers take for granted and, therefore, do not attempt to control; they are often said to show that expected limitations/constraints do not come into operation or are unlikely to significantly affect the results of a study.

This research proceeded from a particular perspective and there are beliefs and assumptions guiding it which include ontological assumptions epistemological assumptions and methodological assumption. Table 2, below, summarises the research premises by delineating paradigm assumptions and perspectives (Maree, 2010: 33).

**Table2: Research Premises: Delineating Paradigm Assumptions and Perspectives**

<b>Ontological dimensions</b>	<b>Epistemological dimensions; paradigm/perspective</b>	<b>Nature of the relationship between researcher and what is being studied</b>
Realistic stance; external reality is stable; general laws govern universe.	Positivist (modern)	Researcher is an objective, detached observer.
Nominalist stance; respondents internal and subjective experiences are important.	Interpretive (postmodern)	Researcher is empathetically and (inter-) subjectively immersed in the research.
Reality is constructed by persons; researchers need to analyse the respondents' discourses.	Constructivist (postmodern)	Researcher is suspicious of object of study; political undertones can be identified; constructs own version of events.



### **3.2.1 Ontological Assumptions**

In terms of the researcher's understanding there are multiple realities; people view reality or social phenomena from different perspectives. According to Sefotho (2015: 30), ontology is the study of conceptions, reality or phenomenon of a present research problem. What is good according to one person's perspective may be not good in another's. The researcher assumed that members of SGBs manage school financial affairs differently, depending on how collaboratively they are involved. Therefore, it was deemed suitable for the study to follow a qualitative research methodology and interpretive paradigm.

### **3.2.2 Epistemological Assumptions**

Epistemology is the nature of knowledge. According to Soiniet *al.* (2011), cited in Sefotho (2015: 31), the objectives of epistemology are the production of knowledge, reflection and how and what can we know of different knowledge claims about a phenomena. The researcher's epistemological assumption was that knowledge can be acquired through sharing experiences and interaction between individuals. Sefotho (2015: 31) states that epistemological assumptions are concerned with how knowledge can be created, acquired and communicated.

### **3.2.3 Methodological Assumptions**

A qualitative research methodology was more relevant and also more applicable to the phenomenon that was to be investigated. It was possible to gather information (data) that is trustworthy through a qualitative research approach and design (case study) as the research participants were to be studied in their natural settings. The research study was underpinned by the assumption that SGBs must work collaboratively in order to manage school financial affairs efficiently and effectively. The researcher believes that the social reality to be studied consisted of SGB members with experience in managing school financial affairs; therefore, semi-structured interviews were used as a data collection strategy.

## **3.3 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH APPROACH**

An interpretivist approach was used in this research. A qualitative research methodology, research techniques for data collection and schedule questions were

used to garner relevant data to fill the gap discerned in previous research studies conducted by both nationally and internationally on the topic of school financial management. Essentially, the aims of interpretivists are to establish a constructed nature of reality and to stress the value-laden nature of the inquiry without resorting to a rigorous examination or measurement of quantity (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005, cited in Tichapondwa, 2013: 205). Creswell (2003), cited in Tichapondwa (2013: 108), defines qualitative research as an inquiry process of understanding a social problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture with words and reporting the detailed views of participants after conducting the study. The qualitative research approach was considered suitable because the study was exploratory in nature and aimed at gaining better in-depth understanding of a phenomenon. According to Vanderstoep and Johnston (2009: 167), qualitative research is more descriptive than predictive and its goal is to obtain an in-depth understanding of the research participants' points of view.

A qualitative research approach -according to Tichapondwa (2013: 109) - has the following strengths:

- Issues can be examined in detail and in depth.
- The researcher is not restricted to specific questions or lists. Interviews are in-depth discussions guided by the researcher to yield relevant information.
- The research framework and direction may be revised as new information emerges.
- Methods are adaptable for use with a wide range of subjects.
- The data collection is informal, relaxed and fun which encourages participants to participate in research.
- Research can be done with an analytical mind along with pen and paper.

### **3.3.1 Interpretivist Qualitative Research Approach**

Interpretivists are concerned with understanding social and cultural contexts which underpin various behavioural patterns (Maree, 2010: 51). This approach makes it possible for the researcher to interact with participants in real settings where they are afforded an opportunity to express their views, perceptions and beliefs. Williams (2010: 46) feels that it is necessary for researchers to know and understand their entanglement in a phenomenon.

Maree (2010: 21) explains interpretivism as having the following characteristics:

- It foregrounds meaning that individuals assign to their experiences.
- Intersubjective meanings are crucial to achieve understanding and meaning.
- Since behaviour is constituted by social conventions, interpretation is required as facts do not speak for themselves.
- No distinction is made between the researcher and the event being studied.
- Social context, conventions, norms and standards of a particular person are crucial elements in assessing and understanding human behaviour.

In qualitative research people are studied by interacting with them and by focusing on their meanings and interpretations. According to Maree (2010: 55), qualitative research acknowledges interactive relationships between the researcher and the participants and how participants' construct reality - based on their experiences. Williams (2010: 40) is of the opinion that qualitative research begins with the belief that each social setting and its inhabitants is unique. Creswell (2007: 11) maintains that it is a legitimate mode of social and human science exploration which is appropriate for this study. Creswell (2007: 37) believes that qualitative research begins with assumptions, worldviews, possible uses of a theoretical lens and the study of research problems inquiring into meanings that individuals or groups ascribe to social or human problems. Creswell (2007:38) suggests the following characteristics of qualitative research:

- It uses a natural setting as a source of close interaction for data collection.
- The researcher is the key instrument in the collection of data.
- It considers multiple sources of data.
- Data is inductively, recursively and interactively analysed.
- The focus is on participants' perspectives, meanings and their subjective views.
- Participants' behaviour and beliefs are framed within an historical context.
- It has an emergent, rather than a tightly prefigured design.
- Fundamentally, it is an interpretive inquiry whereby researchers reflect on their roles and the roles of the participants.
- It takes a holistic view of a social phenomenon.

Qualitative research relies on naturalistic methods of interviewing and analysing existing texts. According to Sefotho (2015: 31), an interpretive position assumes that the world is constantly reconstructed through the interaction, reality and understood

perspectives of social actors enmeshed in meaning-making activities. The researcher is of the opinion that knowledge emerges out of local context and should privilege the voice of insiders, taking into account what people say, do and feel and how they make meaning of the phenomenon under investigation.

Tichapondwa (2013: 106) states that interpretivists argue that if we want to understand social action, we need to delve into the reasons and meanings that actions have for people. Furthermore, Tichapondwa (2013: 106) suggests typical characteristics of interpretivist research which include the following:

- The researcher's entire being is used as a primary instrument of research.
- The study is an inter-subjective process of sharing based on a researcher's subjectivity in making clear his/her theoretical, methodological and personal preferences and bias.
- Interpretivist research is holistic and conveys a well-rounded view from the inside.
- Interpretivism is designed to study cultures, societies and institutions as wholes.
- Field-based ethnographic techniques have been developed to obtain humanistic data about what some place is like from an insider's point of view.
- As anthropological research, interpretivism uses natural history approaches, i.e., the facts observed are the actions of individuals which are then grouped according to similarities.
- The approach uses a continual cross-cultural frame of reference by interpreting each new way encountered in the light of what is already known from previous studies.

Therefore, the researcher did not decided on what counts as knowledge which emerged from the interaction between the participants and him. In using qualitative research probing was possible whereby the researcher asked additional questions to clarify misunderstandings and to saturate data. Qualitative research was used in this study because it is descriptive; the collected data takes the form of words; and it involves a holistic inquiry approach, carried out in natural settings.

### **3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN**

Yin (2014: 28) defines research design as a plan that guides the researcher in the process of collecting, analysing and interpreting data and it is a logical model of proof that allows the researcher to draw inferences concerning casual relationships among variables under investigation. Yin (2014: 29) explains that the purpose of a research design is to help avoid a situation where evidence does not address the initial research question. According to Maree (2007), cited in Tichapondwa (2013: 114), a research design is a plan which moves from underlying philosophical assumptions to specifying the selection of participants and data gathering techniques to be used as well as how the data analysis is to be done. Research designs are constructed plans and strategies that are developed to seek and discover answers to research questions (Taylor, 2000 cited in Tichapondwa, 2013: 114).

#### **3.4.1 Qualitative Research Design**

A qualitative research design, using a case study, was deemed suitable and relevant for this research. Maree (2007) and Neuman (1997), cited in Tichapondwa (2013: 118), state that in choosing a case study the researcher's reporting system will either be narration or the description of real events, based on note-taking and audio-tapes of what people said and from observing and documenting the behaviour of the participants. Yin (2008: 18), cited in Merriam (2009: 40), states that a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly evident. Yin (2014: 17) believes that the case study accommodates a situation in which there are many variables of interest and where the data relies on multiple sources of evidence. Case studies compare data by triangulation as results benefit from prior developments of theoretical propositions that guide the data collection and analysis.

Thenga (2012: 47) points out that the case study examines a case using multiple sources of data found in a particular setting while Ndou (2012: 14) believes that it is an intense analysis of participants' views, stressing developmental factors in relation to context. A case study was used as the design for this research as it would help the researcher understand how people interact with one another and, more specifically, how SGB stakeholders relate to, and interact with, one another -including principals, educators and parents - when governing school finances. Vanderstoep and Johnston

(2009: 209) state that “the purpose of the case study is to understand characteristics that define a particular bounded system and, perhaps, to describe an event or process occurring within that system.” Maree (2010: 76) adds that the main strengths of the case study are the use of multiple sources and techniques in the data gathering process and that the researcher determines, in advance, what evidence to gather and what analysis techniques to use to answer research question. It also helped the researcher understand meanings that were constructed by SGB members regarding the phenomenon that was being investigated, i.e., the governance of school finances. In addition, by interacting with participants during interviews it helped the researcher understand how collaboratively SGBs in public primary schools manage the financial affairs of their schools.

According to Tichapondwa (2013: 117), a case study design has characteristics which include the following:

- It is a type of qualitative research in which the researcher explores a case within its real life context, bounded by time and activity.
- Information is collected by means of different data collection procedures within a certain period of time.
- The design is based on a naturalistic approach whereby the researcher develops a holistic view of the participants and conducts the study in its natural setting.
- It deals with contemporary events and is concerned with how and why things happen.
- It strives to provide a vicarious feeling of ‘being there’ within a real life context to the reader.
- Human activity is embedded in the real world which can be studied or understood.
- It is mainly qualitative in nature and it is a single entity, like a classroom, a programme, a course or an institution.
- It is confined to a specific period of time; it employs multiple data collection techniques; it calls for the researcher’s physical presence; and it seeks to explain a current phenomenon.

### **3.5 SAMPLING TECHNIQUE**

Research is, generally, based on purposive sampling (Maree, 2010: 79). In this study purposive sampling used because the participants who were SGB stakeholders that included principals, educators and parents were selected as the main sources of data needed for this study. They had access to the information on how collaboratively school financial affairs are governed as their roles and responsibilities include governance of the financial resources of schools.

According to Maree (2010: 97), purposive sampling means that participants are selected because of some defining characteristics which make them a source of data needed for the research study. Samples are chosen because they are knowledgeable about, and informed on, the phenomenon to be investigated. For this research the participants were selected for semi-structured interviews by means of a purposeful or purposive sampling technique. A purposive sample is selected on the basis of the knowledge of a population and the purpose of the research study (Tichapondwa, 2013: 124). Tichapondwa (2013: 124) believes that by using purposive sampling travelling costs, when collecting data from geographically spread respondents are reduced and it enables the researcher to obtain specific information from respondents who are crucial to the study, but who may be hard to locate. In this study no-fee paying public primary schools that fall under Section 21 were sampled and all the SGB stakeholders, i.e., parents, educators and principals, participated in the research. Two public primary schools were selected from the 16 public primary schools in the Malokela Circuit in Limpopo Province. From the two primary schools all SGB stakeholders from both schools participated and were interviewed.

### **3.6 DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES**

Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data in this research study. It may be argued that the exclusive reliance on one technique for collecting data may be biased or distort the picture of the particular reality under investigation. However, semi-structured interviews were conducted with all SGB stakeholders from two public primary schools in the Malokela Circuit in Limpopo Province. Qualitative researchers rely on four primary methods for collecting data, i.e., participating in natural settings; observing directly; interviewing in depth; analysing documents, materials and cultures with varying emphases (Marshall and Rossman, 2011: 137). This study relied on two primary

methods only: participating in a natural setting and interviewing in depth; it excluded observing directly and analysing documents, material and culture. A knowledge of data collection methods enables researchers to obtain standardised data from all the participants in the sample used for the study by administering the same instrument with all the participants (Tichapondwa, 2013: 126).

### **3.6.1 Semi-structured interviews**

This research was conducted using mainly semi-structured interviews with all members of the SGBs from the two identified public primary schools in the Malokela Circuit in Limpopo Province. Semi-structured interviews were used because they permitted the researcher to collect data by setting up a situation which allowed the participants time to talk about their views on a particular subject. According to Maree (2010: 87), semi-structured interviews are conducted over long periods of time and they usually involve asking participants a set of predetermined questions. Berg (2001:70) agrees that this type of interview requires a number of predetermined questions related to a specific topic.

Borg and Gall (1996) and Denscombe (2001), cited in Tichapondwa (2013: 127), believe that interviews are a means to collect data using direct contact between the researcher and the participants who are presumed to have had certain experiences that enhance an in-depth understanding of the problem under investigation. It is further suggested that when conducting semi-structured interviews, the researcher should begin by asking a series of structured questions and then delve more deeply by asking open-ended probing questions to obtain more complete data. The advantage of this data collection technique for this study was that it enabled the researcher to clarify questions that may have been confusing for the research participants. Semi-structured interviews provided opportunities for the researcher to explain what kind of information was needed as well as the reasons for collecting the information; it was possible for the research participants to express their views at length.

In-depth interviews were appropriate for collecting data from all the identified members of the SGBs of the two identified primary schools in the Malokela Circuit. During the interviews the researcher explained the purpose of the research so that the participants would share their ideas with him on any aspects of the study. This was followed up with



a letter that was issued to each participant outlining the purpose of the interviews. After issuing the letters, the researcher personally contacted each participant to make final arrangement concerning interview dates and times which were determined by the participants. This also enabled the researcher to inform participants about the methods to be used to record their responses and the reasons for using those methods. Using a tape-recorder has the advantage of accuracy in that interview transcripts are better than just relying on written notes. The interview period was approximately 2 months and each interview lasted for about 60 minutes. Tapes and note-taking were common methods of recording the interview data and the use of a tape-recorder was easy and effective.

### **3.6.2 Purpose of interviews**

The purpose of the interviews was to gather the required data from the participants to determine how collaboratively SGBs governed the financial affairs of public primary schools and to understand participants' points of view rather than making generalisations about their behaviour.

### **3.6.3 Advantages of semi-structured interviews**

The main advantages of this data collection strategy were that it enabled the researcher to inform participants about the type of method that would be used to record their responses and explain the reasons for using the method; it allowed the researcher to clarify questions that were confusing for participants; and research participants could express their views at length. It put participants at ease and motivated them to answer honestly. Semi-structured interviews are flexible and the researcher was able to probe further for greater clarity. Interviews were conducted at times specified by participants to avoid any disruption in their daily programmes. The duration of the interviews with all the SGBs stakeholders was approximately one hour and each interview was tape-recorded. During the semi-structured interviews, open-ended questions were posed by the researcher as well as some additional questions. The questions were asked when the researcher felt was appropriate to do so and the wording of the questions was not always same for all participants. The interaction between the researcher and the participants was positive; in the interaction there were clues that the end of the interviews was near in the shuffling of papers and the turning off of the tape-recorder (Opdenakker, 2006: 4).

Other advantages of using semi-structured interviews were that the researcher could clarify the questions and in the face-to-face interviews a great deal of extra information could be added to verbal answers of the participants by observing and taking note of their use of voice intonation and body language (Opdenakker, 2006: 3). Tichapondwa (2013: 127) summarises the advantages of using semi-structured interviews as a data collection strategy in research in the following:

- Semi-structured interviews are flexible and adaptable; they provide direct human interaction that enables a researcher to probe and clarify answers with participants.
- Researchers gather data systematically and are assured that no data is omitted.
- Face-to-face interaction enables the *verbatim* recording of responses that provides immediate feedback and allows room for probing and the clarification of issues; the researcher is immediately able to cross-check data for authenticity.
- Researchers can immediately validate data when sensing that participants are giving false information through their non-verbal communication, including facial expressions.
- Semi-structured interviews can be used to collect data from the young, the aged and illiterate people that cannot be successfully obtained by any other method.
- The use of a recording device, such as a dictaphone, enables the researcher to concentrate on listening, probing and responding to participants rather than writing down responses to one question before moving on to the next.

### **3.7 DATA PRESENTATION, CODING AND ANALYSIS**

Qualitative data analysis is an on-going process which implies that data collection, analysis and reporting are intertwined and not merely a number of successive steps (Maree, 2010: 99). Tichapondwa (2013: 206) suggests that analysis may begin with the transcribing of data recordings of the interviews and collating notes from the observation. Williams (2010: 56) sees analysis as transforming the data by searching for relationships and key factors that can be supported by evidence. Qualitative data may be analysed in phases, beginning with transcription and continuing through coding and interpretation to create coherent sets of concepts and a theory to explain the relationships between these concepts and how they relate to the research problem and specific themes (Tichapondwa, 2013: 232). The data collected for this research study was analysed by means of content analysis.

Content analysis is considered to be a conceptual or thematic analysis. Before starting with the analysis of the data, it was transcribed by typing the responses from the interviews as word-processing documents. Rangongo (2011: 76) agrees that before any analysis can begin, data should be transcribed; information from the interviews should be converted into word documents. Maree (2010: 101) maintains that content analysis is used when working with narratives, such as diaries, journals or analysing qualitative responses to open-ended questions from interviews. Transcribing permits the repeated examination of the participants' answers and allows for a more thorough examination of what people have said. Brown and Gibson (2009), in Tichapondwa (2013: 232), suggest that transcription is re-presenting data from the way it was given by participants into a form of text with which the researcher can work more easily. Tichapondwa (2013: 232) adds that transcription and transcripts serve two purposes: they provide a guide to a given set of data as it is difficult to work with oral data and its recordings and they provide the researcher with an analytic focus of a given set. Content analysis allows data to be placed in broad categories and highlights issues relevant to the research. In this study content texts from interview transcripts were examined to obtain an in-depth understanding of how collaboratively SGBs govern the financial affairs of public primary schools. Data collected during interviews, was grouped into categories and according to patterns and themes in terms of the purpose of this study.

Maree (2010: 101) defines content analysis as a process of looking at data from different angles with a view to identifying keys in the text that will help to understand and interpret the raw data. All the data collected by means of tape-recording were transcribed and non-verbal cues were included in the transcripts (Maree, 2010: 104). In analysing the data, open-coding was used. According to Babbie (2005: 395), open-coding is part of analysis that pertains specifically to the naming and categorizing of phenomena through close examination of data. During open-coding, data was broken down into discrete parts which were related; compared for similarities and differences; and questions were asked about the phenomenon. Open-coding also enables researchers to retrieve and collate texts and data they have associated with thematic idea. (Maree, 2010: 105). The data analysis was completed and a report about the findings was compiled.

Open-coding is a process of reading carefully through transcribed data line by line and dividing it into meaningful analytical units (Maree, 2010: 105). Uysal (2014: 62) explains

open-coding as determining utterances in data. The researcher listened carefully to the recorded data in order to familiarise himself with it. He read through all the responses to each question and highlighted important information. The responses of the participants were organised and coded; they were sorted and grouped under each research question and the coding list was finalised. After coding, the transcribed data was organised and related codes were combined into categories. Themes, ideas, concepts, interaction, incidents and terminology were identified that facilitated understanding (Maree, 2010: 110). After completing the data analysis process, a report on the findings was compiled.

### **3.8 CONCLUSION**

The purpose of Chapter 3 was to provide a clear overview of the research design and methodology used. The research was designed to reach all participants necessary for the study, namely, parents, educators and principals of the two selected public primary schools. The chapter outlined the research methodology and research design used to collect data from participants from the two selected public primary schools in Malokela Circuit of Limpopo Province. One main data collection strategy, i.e., semi-structured interviews, were employed to gain a clear understanding of how collaboratively SGBs manage the financial affairs of public primary schools. This chapter also described the following: theoretical framework, purposive sampling, trustworthiness of the research findings, data analysis strategy and ethical considerations. The findings of the research are presented in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the study was to explore how collaboratively SGBs govern financial affairs in public primary schools. This chapter concentrates on presenting and discussing the findings of the research. The previous chapter explained why a qualitative research methodology and research design was selected. The findings of the research study are based on the procedures outlined in Chapter 3 related to a qualitative research methodology. This chapter discusses data collected by means of semi-structured interviews with 13 participants from two public primary schools; it presents the findings obtained from the collected data regarding the collaborative tasks of SGBs in managing school finances as well as an analysis and interpretation of the data. The method of collecting data that was primarily used in the research study was semi-structured interviews.

#### 4.2 ANALYSIS

The researcher went through various analytical stages when analysing the data. The analysis of the data was determined in Chapter 3.

#### 4.3 SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS

Significant findings emerged from the semi-structured interviews in terms of identified themes related to the research questions.

##### 4.3.1 Semi-structured Interview Findings

Semi-structured interviews were deemed to be the most appropriate strategy to accommodate all SGB stakeholders at the two selected public primary schools. A tape-recorder was used to record the interviews; the recordings were later transcribed and translated. An interview schedule was used and the nature of the semi-structured interviews made it possible to adjust questions for those who did not understand English and, consequently, interview them using their own language.

This section provides a brief overview of the interviews that were conducted at the two selected public primary schools in the Malokela Circuit of Limpopo Province. Initially, there were 18 research participants; 9 participants at each research site. All the SGB members were interviewed as well as a male principal with 32 years' experience as a principal at one of the two schools (School A) and a female principal with 3 years' experience at the other (School B). School A's SGB consisted of 7 members, i.e., 2 educators; 4 parents and the principal - not 9 members as initially thought because of the size of the school. It is a small school with low learner enrolment which qualifies for 7 members of the SGB only. School B's SGB has 6 members, i.e., 2 educators, 3 parents and the principal - not 9 members as originally thought because the school is too small and qualifies for only 6 members on its SGB.

Thirteen participants from both public primary schools took part in this research study. The participants were categorised in 3 groups: principals, educators and parents. The two principals were 15,4% of the total number of participants. The four educators comprised 30,8% of the total number and the seven parents formed 53,8%. The parent component was the major one in both SGBs of the two public primary schools. The following table, given below, includes the number of participants in research study:

**Table 3: Percentage and Number of Participants in the Research Study**

Category	Number	Percentage
Principals	2	15, 4%
Educators	4	30, 8%
Parents	7	53, 8%

#### **4.3.1.1 Democratic Characteristics of the SGBs**

The focus was on the experience of the participants in terms of SGB matters and whether or not they had attended any training or induction when they assumed their SGB duties and responsibilities. It was clear that all educators and the principals from both primary schools had more experience on SGBs than parents - most of whom were inexperienced in terms of SGB matters. The table, given below, contains details of the democratic characteristics of the SGB members from the two public primary schools.

**Table 4: Demographic Characteristics of SGBs**

School Name	Participants	Gender	Experience on SGB	Position	Training received	Any help	Reporting Financial Matters
School A	Principal	Male	32 years	Principal ( <i>Ex-officio</i> )	Yes	Yes	Treasurer
	Educator 1	Male	06 years	Finance Officer	Yes	Yes	Treasurer
	Educator 2	Female	03 years	Treasurer	Yes	Yes	Treasurer and Finance Officer
	Parent 1	Female	10 years	Vice-Chairperson	Yes	Yes	Treasurer
	Parent 2	Male	06 months	Chairperson	No	No	Treasurer
	Parent 3	Female	06 months	Secretary	No	No	Not sure
	Parent 4	Male	06 months	Vice-Secretary	No	No	Secretary; Treasurer and Vice-Chairperson
School B	Principal	Female	03 years	Principal ( <i>Ex-officio</i> )	Yes	Yes	Treasurer
	Educator 1	Female	04 years	Treasurer	Yes	Yes	Treasurer
	Educator 2	Female	04 years	Vice-secretary and Finance Officer	Yes	Yes	Treasurer
	Parent 1	Female	06 months	Deputy Chairperson	No	No	Treasurer
	Parent 2	Female	14 years	Secretary	Yes	Yes	Finance Officer
	Parent 3	Female	03 years	Chairperson	Yes	Yes	Treasurer

#### **4.3.1.2 Collaborative Governance of Financial Affairs by SGBs in Public Primary Schools in the Malokela Circuit**

The focus here was about obtaining the participants' views pertaining to collaborative functions in the financial management of their schools. Different views were proffered as participants freely expressed themselves on the topic. In terms of collaboration in the two public primary schools, all four educators from both schools agreed that there was collaboration in managing the school finances in their schools. Of the seven parents interviewed from both schools, Parent 1 of School A and Parents 2 and 3 of school B indicated that they worked collaboratively when it came to the financial management of their schools. Parent 1 of School B maintained that as an SGB they did not work together as decisions were taken by some members and other members were only informed afterwards without been involved in the process. Parents 2, 3 and 4 of School A agreed that at that time they were working together without any problems. According to the principal of School A, the financial affairs of the school were running smoothly,

but he expressed some serious concerns about collaboration. The principal of school B was more positive:

*We are working collaboratively when coming to school financial matters*  
(Principal B).

Collaboration is about communication between people who are working collaboratively; they need to communicate in order to achieve what they are attempting to do. With regard to the communication of financial information among SGB stakeholders, most of the participants from both schools indicated that there was communications between them on financial matters. At School B most of the parent component who were experienced in SGB affairs and the educators agreed that there was communication of financial information among them; they were always informed when there was a need to do so. The parents from School A reported that when they discussed money issues, they held a meeting to do it; they said that each year four meetings were called where they would talk about school finances. One parent who was new to the SGB of School B maintained that since being elected no communication on financial matters had taken place among SGB members; however, this was not supported by the two parents on the SBG of the same school who were experienced; they indicated that as SGB members they were invited to meetings where they were always informed about the financial position of their school. Both principals and four educators from the two public primary schools agreed that they had parent meetings where parents always participated fully when the SGB reported back to them.

Financial management decisions can be taken collaboratively. Once again the various responses from the participants revealed that the SGB members from the different schools were working differently. Educator 1 from School A, when asked how collaboratively the financial management decisions were taken by the SGB, was convinced that *because it has been taken in a joint venture, everybody had a chance to say what he/she thinks and everybody had to argue*. The other educator from the same school reported that they sat down together and the parents presented their views and the teachers expressed their views; generally, they agreed that they had to consider the priorities of the school first.



The educators, Parents 2 and 3 and the principal of School B agreed that at their AGM the SGB approved the budget where financial management decisions had been taken collaboratively. The educators, Parents 1, 2 and 4 as well as the principal of School A also agreed that they took financial decisions collaboratively at their school. However, Parent 3 from School A maintained that as an SGB they did not take financial decisions collaboratively; some members were new on the SGB and that only in future it would be possible for them to be fully involved in the process. It transpired from the responses of the participants that financial management decisions had been taken collaboratively by the previous SGB at School B but after the new SGB had been elected to start working no SGB meetings had been held to talk about school finances.

#### ***4.3.1.3 Involvement of SGB Members in Managing the Finances of Public Primary Schools in the Malokela Circuit***

The main aim here was to establish whether or not it was important for all SGB members and other stakeholders to be involved in the managing of school finances. Participants expressed various views but mainly that they believed and agreed that it was important for everyone to be involved. Seven parents and four educators from both primary schools were of the opinion that it would help them work collaboratively at all times. It is clear that all the participants were concerned about the involvement of SGB stakeholders in the management of school finances; one parent was adamant that it was very important because if they worked together they would be able to manage school finances effectively and they would be able to decide collaboratively what was needed to improve the teaching and learning at their school. The two principals also believed that it was important for all SGB members and other stakeholders be involved on management of school finances. According to the principal of school B:

*It is very important that they are involved in the management of school finances in order to ensure that there is a proper admin. of school finances*  
(Principal B).

As participants are involved in the management of school finances, they were asked a question to find out whether they have a clear understanding of their roles in drawing up their school's budget. When asked the question, Educator 1 of School A replied:

*The SGB puts some inputs when we draw budget. We draw a list of what we think must be featured in the budget and that goes into the committee;*

*the committee look into it; if they approve whether the items in the list can be included in the budget and this is how we participated in drawing the budget (Educator 1 of School A).*

Educator 2 of School B and Educator 2 of School A, supported by Parent 3 of School A, maintained that the role of SGB members was to set priorities and allocate money to different activities or items. In terms of the question Educator 1 of School B added:

*The SGB will have the opportunity to approve the budget after it has been presented to the parents (Educator 1 of School B).*

This is a clear indication that it is important to have a functional SGB that will ensure that school finances are always monitored and controlled according to the way they were planned. The opinions of the two parents from School A supported this notion when it was said that as they had a certain amount of money SGB members needed to know how to divide that money for several items to avoid spending it on just one item. One of the parents who were new on the SGB of School B had a different view but she was not sure of the SGB members' roles; she recommended that the SGB should meet with all the educators in the school, including the principal, to sit down together and agree on the content of the school budget. She believed that if they could co-operate everything would work out according to the way agreed upon. Parents 2 and 3 at the same school suggested that as members of the SGB they looked into the matter of school materials that were needed and ensured a budget which helped them control school funds. The parent components of both public primary schools were aware that it was important to have functional SGBs in their schools to ensure the effective and efficient management of their schools' finances.

In terms of the roles of SGB members in drawing up school budgets, the principal of School A approached it from different angle; he insisted that SGB members should participate and be fully involved because it was not only the principal's responsibility but that of other members as well. The principal of School B shared her view of the process:

*The SGB is the one who draws the budget according to the allocation of the money. They bring the budget to the finance committee and the finance committee check and analyse the budget and go back to the SGB.*

*If it is good the SGB will present the budget to the parents and the SGB approves the budget (Principal B).*

The question asked aimed at finding out whether participants were ever involved in drawing up school budgets. The participants' answers differed in terms of their previous experience on SGBs; those with experience tended to have been involved in drawing up school budgets previously but possibly not on a new SGB, while those who were new to the SGB seemed never had been involved in drawing up a school budget. All four educators, the two principals and Parent 1 of School A and Parents 2 and 3 of School B had been involved in drawing up school budgets while the other parents, Parents 2, 3 and 4 of School A and Parent 1 of School B had not been involved because they were new members of the SGBs.

Another question asked attempted to establish who was in charge of drawing up the budget at the two selected public primary schools. Again, different responses were elicited from the participants, dependent on their experiences on SGBs. Parent 3 from School A and Parent 1 from School B who were new to their SGBs knew nothing of who was in charge of drawing up the school budget; one parent thought it was the principal and all the SGB members. Those who had experience on SGBs mentioned various different people; it seemed that they were not sure despite previously being involved in drawing up school budgets. One Educator from School A suggested it was the secretary who was in charge while the other Educator from the same school thought it was the treasurer. Two educators from School B concurred in their views of who was involved in drawing up the school's budget and cited the SGB, parents and educators. Two parents who were experienced in SGB matters from School B named different people; one named the treasurer, finance officer, principal and other members of SGB while the other suggested that it was the principal, the chairperson and the treasurer. The two principals from the two schools also identified different people; one said it was the whole SGB and the other maintained that it was the chairperson of SGB, the finance officer, the treasurer, the principal and the vice chairperson of SGB. All participants cited the treasurers, vice-chairpersons and secretaries of SGBs as the signatories of their schools' bank accounts. It was clear that all the participants from both public primary schools were aware of who the signatories of their schools' account were.

All participants from two public primary schools were asked a question to obtain a clear understanding of who the stakeholders involved in the implementation of school finance policy and school budget were. Educator 1 from School A named the principal and the treasurer while Educator 2 from the same school suggested that was the parents, teachers and other stakeholders. Educator 1 from School B listed the SGB's treasurer, teachers and parents as well as HODs while Educator 2 from School B mentioned the SGB, teachers and parents. The parents had differing views when asked about who the stakeholders involved in the implementation of school finance policy were; Parent 1 of School A suggested the chairperson of the SGB, the principal and the finance officer while Parent 2 of same school maintained that it was the whole SGB. Parent 3 from School A believed that it was the SGB chairperson and all SGB members and Parent 4 of same school named the SGB's chairperson, treasurer and secretary. School B's parents also had varying ideas of who the stakeholders involved in implementation of school finance policy and school budget were; both Parents 1 and 2 mentioned the chairperson and the principal. Parent 3 was not sure as the principal had told them that SGB members should also be involved. Principals, too, had differing views; one pointed to the finance officer, the treasurer, the SGB chairperson, the secretary and the deputy chairperson while the other principal cited the chairperson of the SGB, the principal, the treasurer, the finance officer and other members of the finance committee.

Regarding the involvement of other SGB stakeholders in the implementation of school finances policies, all participants from both public primary schools clearly suggested that other stakeholders were involved to ensure the proper financial management at the school. Educator 1 from School A suggested that

*Although they are not directly involved, the office of the circuit manager ensured that they work with the policy in order to comply with the law*  
(Educator 1 from School A).

Another educator from the same school was of the opinion that the parent component of the SGB told parents and the teacher component told teachers and that sometimes they held a meeting where they reported back. Participants from School B gave a clear indication that other stakeholders were involved in the implementation of school finance policies; they agreed but expressed it in different ways. The two educators, Parents 1 and 2 and the principal from School B agreed that during meetings other stakeholders

were given a chance to speak. However, different ideas about this matter of the involvement of other stakeholders were held by participants from School A; Parent 3 was unsure about it as the principal had told them that other SGB members must be involved and Parent 1 reported on who assisted in how finances were managed and who witnessed when school finances were used. According to Parent 2 from School A,

*Educators are informed by the principal about what is happening and as for parents; the SGB called a meeting where they sat down and discuss everything (Parent 2 from School A).*

Parent 3 mentioned that all other educators had to be involved and Parent 4 concurred by suggesting that all other stakeholders were always informed about what was happening in their school. The principal of School A saw it in a different way; he reported that those who could help were invited to do so. Sometimes they were asked for donations and they were involved whenever there were things to be done at the school.

#### ***4.3.1.4 The Understanding of SGB Members of their Roles and Responsibilities Regarding Policy on School Finances***

A question, based on the findings concerning how participants came to know their roles and responsibilities on their SGBs, was asked. Those who were experienced in terms of SGB matters came to know their roles and responsibilities through training or induction sessions which they attended during their previous terms on the SGBs. Those who were newly appointed to the SGBs cited the principals as the ones who had helped them know their roles and responsibilities on their SGBs while the experienced participants that included the four educators from both schools, Parents 1 and 2 of School A and Parents 2 and 3 of School B and the principal of School B indicated that their knowledge had been obtained during training or induction sessions. Only the principal of School A, who was more experienced than the principal of School B, said that he came to learn his role on the SGB through an available booklet. Parents 3 and 4 of School A and Parent 1 of School B acknowledged the principal as the one who provided them with everything and helped them to know their roles and responsibilities on their SGBs. Parent 1 of School B said:

*The principal informed us about our positions and also explained to us about our roles and responsibilities on the SGB (Parent 1 of School B).*

Another question was more specifically about the roles and responsibilities of SGB members and whether they knew their roles and responsibilities on the SGB. In their responses it seemed that all participants were aware of their roles and responsibilities on the SGB but they expressed them differently; two educators who were the treasurers on the SGBs of the schools considered their roles to be signing cheques; to conduct, and take part in, financial meetings; and to keep the school funds' books/records. An educator who holds two positions on the SGB: treasurer and vice-secretary confirmed that *If the secretary is not in the meeting I have to write the minutes and taking a roll call.*

The two educators from both schools were the finance officers of both SGBs and mentioned that their roles were to oversee all the activities of the treasurer and the finance committee as a whole. The principal of School A confirmed that

*[his] role is just to be an overseer and [he] overlooks everything that is done; [he has] to approve things with the chairperson of the SGB (Principal A).*

The principal of School B indicated that

*[her] roles and responsibilities as a principal included being an accounting officer; implementing the decisions of the SGB; supervising and monitoring the work of the finance officer; ensuring that proper financial records were kept; and monitoring and controlling income and expenditure; and regularly checking the work of the finance committee and the treasurer (Principal B).*

Those who were new to the SGBs of both primary schools confirmed that they knew what their roles and responsibilities were as their principals had informed them about what they were going to do when they were appointed to their positions on the SGBs.

A question concerning knowledge and understanding of policies related to the roles of SGB members was asked to the participants. All four educators and the two principals maintained that they understand and have a knowledge of policy in terms of their roles on SGBs. Experienced parents were confident that they also have a knowledge and

understanding of policy related to their roles on SGBs, but those who were newly appointed to the SGBs admitted that they knew nothing about policies related to their roles. The new parents who admitted to their lack of knowledge and understanding were Parents 2, 3 and 4 of School A and Parent 3 of School B.

Another question was asked to find out whether the participants had ever participated in the formulation of finance policies at their schools. It appears that participants depended on the experience other SGB members; those who were experienced in terms of SGB matters had clearly participated in the development of their schools' finance policies while those who were new had never participated in the development of financial policy. The four educators and three parents who were experienced in SGB matters and the two principals from both public primary schools indicated that they had been members of a team that had developed school finance policies under the previous SGBs; newly appointed members of SGBs had not. The four new parents on the SGBs of the selected public primary schools maintained that they had never participated in the development of any school finance policies.

A further question asked was related to identifying the procedures that SGBs insisted on when they formulated school finance policies. It seems that all the participants from both primary schools were not sure about what happened when the SGBs formulated the schools' finance policies. Participants from the same school mentioned different procedures and most of the parents who were new to the SGBs responded negatively. When asked about the procedures followed by SGBs when drawing up school finance policies, Educator 1 from School A replied:

*Because I find it here, is not easy for me to say which processes they have followed but according to my previous knowledge is that we have to consider the legal status of the finances coming in and going out of the school and some related laws that are involved in the finances of the school (Educator 1 from School A).*

The other educator from the same school reported that the members held a meeting to attend to school finance policies. When asked about this matter, parts of the parent component who were new explained that they were not aware of school finance policies and that they knew nothing about what happened during the formulation of the policies. Parent 1 of School A and Parents 2 and 3 of School B who had some SGB experience

declared that school finance policies were formulated in meetings to which all SGB members were invited. Parents 2, 3 and 4 of School A and Parent 1 of School B who were new to SGBs found it difficult to say what happened during the formulation of school finance policies. The principal of School A presented different ideas to those of one of the educators when he maintained:

*The SGB were invite to the meeting to come and sat down and helped them on how the finance policy should be formulated (Principal A).*

The principal of School B concurred with the two educators from the same school who stated that they were guided by the national policy on how school finance policy should be formulated and who the members were who would formulate that policy.

Participants were asked whether they were aware of the importance of having a school finance policy for their SGBs. Different opinions were expressed by participants from both schools concerning how felt about it and whether it was available or not. All four educators from both schools were of the opinion that it was very important to have a finance policy for their schools as it served as a guideline that would help them manage planned school finances properly. The seven parents from both public primary schools more confidently expressed their thoughts about this matter; they mentioned how the school finance policy helped them manage finances effectively and efficiently according to set rules and regulations. Both principals also considered it to be very important to have a school finance policy because it governed their use of school funds and controlled the ways in which money was spent.

There was another question aimed at finding out who was in charge of ensuring the implementation of finance policy at the two selected public primary school. All participants from both the schools were asked this question and their responses differed. As though they were not from the same schools, participants mentioned various people who they thought were in charge of the implementation of school finance policies. Educator 1 from School A believed that *[it was] finance officer who is in charge* while Educator 2 from the same school maintained that:

*it [was] the principal and the chairperson of the SGB and the other members of the finance committee (Educator 2 from School A).*



Parents 1 and 3 of School A and Parent 2 from school B suggested that the principal was in charge of ensuring the implementation of school finance policy. For Parent 4 from School A, the chairperson of the SGB was only one in charge of ensuring the implementation of the school's finance policy. The principal of School A named the principal and chairperson while the principal of School B said:

*It is the treasurer, the principal, the finance officer and the SGB chairperson, the secretary and the vice chairperson (Principal B).*

Educator 1 and Parent 3 from School B were convinced that the treasurer was in charge of ensuring the implementation of school finance policy; Educator 2 from School B added that it was the treasurer and the finance officer. Another opinion given by Parent 1 of School B was that the whole SGB and the principal were responsible for implementation, Parent 2 of School B insisted that *It [was] the SGB chairperson, the vice chairperson and the principal.*

Although budgets are drawn up and approved by those in authority, they need to be monitored and controlled. Therefore, a question was asked to find out how this was done in the two selected public primary schools. The different ideas proffered by the participants of the two schools indicated that they were not sure about the monitoring and controlling processes. When asked the question, Educator 1 and Parent 1 of School A said that they monitored the budget by checking bank statements every month to ensure that they had not overspent for some or other reason. The other educator at the same school agreed with the two educators and Parent 2 of School B when she said that sometimes they used quarterly returns to monitor the school budget; after each term they met to write a quarterly report. In terms of the parent component of the SGBs, of the seven parents interviewed about this issue, Parents 2 and 3 of School A and Parent 1 of School B were not sure of what happened when school budgets were monitored and controlled because they were new to the SGBs. Parent 4 of School A said:

*We all sat down and plan on how we are going to monitor it because some of us are having knowledge about how the budget should be controlled (Parent 4 of School A).*

Parent 3 of School B added:

*Sometimes learners are wearing casual on Fridays and we do collect a can which is used as donation to help in monitoring and controlling of school budget (Parent 3 of School B).*

The principal of School A reported that during every meeting they asked the treasurer how much they had spent and the finance officer would tell them where they had deviated from the budget. The principal of School B was of the opinion that the accounting officer and the treasurer were responsible for monitoring and controlling income and expenditure and that they had to ensure that proper financial records were kept.

#### **4.3.1.5 Successes that SGBs Achieved in Managing Finances**

A question asked was aimed at finding out how successfully SGB members performed their roles and responsibilities in managing school finances in the two selected public primary schools. When asked about the successes, Educator 1 of School A replied:

*We cannot exactly say we are successful but the success will be visible if we adhere to the roles and that will be clear when we submit books for audit (Educator 1 of School A).*

The same question was posed to the participants from School B where two educators, three parents and the principal agreed that it was based on the successes they had previously achieved.

When asked about successes Parent 1 from School A expressed the opinion that, unfortunately, the new committee's successes were minimal as although government deposited certain amounts of money into their school account, they found themselves in more debt. However, Parents 2 and 4 of the same school were optimistic about tasks that had been successfully completed, such as when they went into the office and fixed a photocopier which was broken. Parent 3 from School A begged to differ by saying:

*So far as a new committee we don't have any success because we didn't make any change (Parent 3 from School A).*

#### **4.3.1.6 Challenges that SGBs Experienced in Managing Finances**

All the participants were asked about the challenges they faced when performing their duties and responsibilities in managing school finances. Varying answers were received from the different participants who shows that members of SGBs experience different challenges depending on what work they do at their schools. Parent 3 from School A, who is the secretary of the SGB, reported:

*Our challenge is when we are told to come to school and to sign a cheque while we don't understand why we have to make the payment (Parent 3 from School A).*

The principal of School A responded differently from most of the SGB members by saying:

*The challenges we meet are that every year or every after three years we select new SGB members who are not eligible to anything come in with the aim of saying the principal or whoever is in there is eating their money and they are just there for the sake of money, not for the sake of the progress of the school (Principal A).*

Parent 3, however, agreed with all the educators and the principal of School B when she indicated that they did not experience any challenges and that matters were going according to the way they had agreed upon. Most of the participants of School B, especially the two educators and the principal, indicated that they did not have any challenges; they differed from those at School A where most of the participants agreed that they did face challenges. Parent 2 of School B explained that they had some challenges which sometimes resulted in certain actions that they had not been involved in as the parent component of the SGB.

A subsequent question was asked to find out what challenges members of SGBs faced when they implement the finance policies of their schools. Different challenges were cited by the participants from the two public primary schools. Parent 3 and two educators from School A as well as Parent 3 from School B appeared to have no problems while Parents 1, 2 and 4, the two educators and the principal of school A and Parents 1 and 2 of School B referred to some problems that arose when implementing school finance policy. Educator 2 from School B disagreed:

*Up to so far there is no problem, I don't know about tomorrow but up to so far everything is in order (Educator 2 from School B).*

Educator 1 of School A added:

*The challenge is that some member of our parent component are unable to read so when we try to familiarise the policy with them is hard that sometimes we write this in English and we have to translate it into the vernacular that everybody can read and understand, although some of the parent members find it difficult to read their vernacular (Educator 1 of School A).*

The other educator from the same school was vociferous in speaking about challenges in terms of needs that the school had; they received little money from the department because the school was too small. Parents also experienced different challenges when working together on the same SGBs. Parent 2 of School A told of a major challenge:

*Our challenge is when educators are claiming that they have rendered some services without a proof and they want to be paid for that (Parent 2 of School A).*

According to the principal of school A, challenges always arose because some people did not know about budgeting in terms of what could and could not be done. Parent 1 from School B, who was new to the SGB, complained that since being elected the SGB had not met to discuss anything related to the school's finances and felt that it maybe because members were new or that was how the previous SGB functioned. Parent 2 from School B referred to the following instances:

*When parents are attempted to get involved into school matters where they want to have the overall control of school finances because they don't know their limits (Parent 2 from School B).*

#### **4.4 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM THE LITERATURE REVIEW**

This research study was undertaken to explore how collaboratively SGBs manage the financial matters of public primary schools in the Malokela Circuit in Limpopo Province. SGBs are responsible for ensuring the effective management of school finances. The researcher reviewed the available literature relevant to public school finances and drew conclusions. It was necessary to conduct a literature review to determine what was

already known about the phenomenon to be investigated because it is an integrated source of discussion of what is already known.

#### **4.4.1 SGB Knowledge, Skills and Training Related to Managing Finances**

The Department of Education and schools are responsible for training SGB members before they assume their roles and responsibilities. Section 16A (2) (h) of the Schools Act requires principals to assist members of SGBs in the management of school finances which must include giving advice to them on the implications of decisions taken relating to the financial affairs of schools (RSA, 1996). According to the Schools Act, Section 36 (1), if financial resources received by schools from the Department of Education are insufficient to run the schools effectively, they need to supplement the resources supplied by state (RSA, 1996). Principals play major roles in ensuring that elected SGB members are aware of their duties and responsibilities; they are required to inform them about what is expected of them when they assume office.

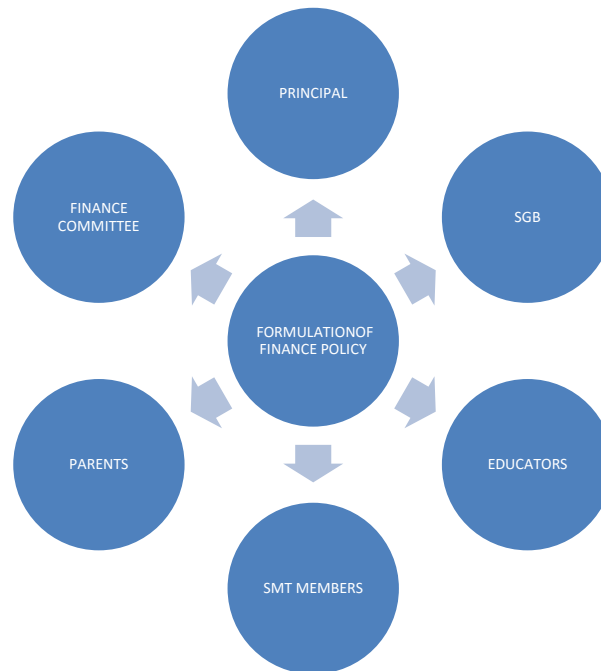
There appears to be a high level of illiteracy among parents who are unable to read even in the vernacular and they are, therefore, unable to understand policy related to their roles and responsibilities; the educators and principals must read and explain all written documents to them. In this study it was found that there are various challenges faced by the SGB stakeholders when they perform their roles and responsibilities which need to be overcome; therefore, it is necessary to ensure that all activities allocated to SGB stakeholders are performed effectively and efficiently, as planned.

#### **4.4.2 Lack of Finance Policy Implementation**

A review of the literature suggests that various researchers support the idea that all public schools should have a school finance policy to manage their finances effectively and efficiently. According to Mavuso and Duku (2014), the responsibilities of SGBs are to formulate and implement school finance policies. The literature reviewed for effective efficient management of school finances indicates that SGBs must ensure that simple and clear finance policies are formulated and implemented in schools. Mestry (2010: 420) points out that for school finances to be managed effectively and efficiently, principals and SGBs should establish sound, water tight financial policies and financial management procedures. It is clear that SGBs are responsible for the drawing up of

finance policies for schools which will guide them in how the school's finances are to be used.

Figure 1, given below, shows the various stakeholders in public schools concerned with the formulation of finance policy.



**Figure 1: Stakeholders Involved in Finance Policy Implementation**

It is apparent that all stakeholders must be consulted before, and when, finance policies are formulated and implemented. A lack of knowledge and skills and low levels of education of stakeholders leads to the poor implementation of school finance policies because they are unable to interpret what is written in the policies or, if they are able to read, they do not correctly interpret them. According to Bagarette (2012: 103), members' inability to read and write poses a challenge for SGBs in developing policies and interpreting the constitution and other education-related policies.

#### **4.4.3 Tasks Performed on Management of School Finances and Budgeting Process**

The responsibilities of SGBs include ensuring that their schools have budgets and that all stakeholders are consulted before budgets are approved. It is clear from the literature that budgeting is a process which should involve various SGB stakeholders. According to Thenga (2012: 37), the purpose of consulting all stakeholders is to ensure

that finance committees control allocated funds properly. It is also clear from the literature that budgeting, as a process in schools, is a collaborative one that involves different stakeholders on SGBs for the effective and efficient application of school budgets- a financial management tool. In terms of this study it may be concluded that, with regard to tasks performed by SGBs, stakeholders from the two public primary schools are not certain about what happens during the budgeting process and the implementation of the school budget. The participants cited various different challenges in implementing their budgets which suggests that they are not certain about what should be done in drawing up a budget and implementing it.

#### **4.4.4 Collaborative Tasks of SGBs in Managing School Finances**

Decisions taken on how school finances should be governed in schools need to include all stakeholders, i.e., parents, teachers and principals. According to Grubert (2011: 26), collaboration is voluntary and requires those involved to be equal and have equal decision-making powers. Individuals who collaborate must have at least one mutually agreed upon goal; there must be a commitment to a time-frame; and shared responsibility and participation in decision-making. All stakeholders on SGBs should work to govern the financial affairs of schools effectively and efficiently. Through a shared vision, the objectives of governing the financial affairs of public primary schools will be more effectively achieved and, thereby, improve the quality of teaching and learning. Some of the participants in schools consciously collaborated in the management of school finances and decisions taken while other participants were not sure of what collaboration was all about. Collaboration appears to take place between those who are more experience in SGB affairs as they use their experience from serving on previous SGBs. Those who are inexperienced in terms of SGB functions appear to know nothing about collaboration on SGBs.

#### **4.5 SYNTHESIS OF SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS**

Several findings have emerged related to how collaboratively SGBs manage school finances, the budgeting process and the implementation of finance policies and school budgets. This research will add to existing knowledge on the governance of school finances. The knowledge that has emerged will be of value in designing improved SGB training programmes and in monitoring the governance of school finances. The researcher believes that this study is significant in that it will bring new perceptions on

the understanding of how school finances should be governed and how finance policies and school budgets are implemented by SGBs.

#### **4.5.1 Semi-structured Interviews**

The researcher interviewed participants from the two selected public primary schools which included the principals, two educators from each school and four parents from School A as well as three parents from School B in order to explore how collaboratively the SGBs governed financial affairs in public primary schools. The participants were divided into two groups, namely, principals and other SGB members, including parents and educators. Semi-structured interviews made it possible for the researcher to adjust questions for parents who did not understand English; and, consequently, they were interviewed in their own language. Participants were asked the same questions, individually and in private. The reason for conducting these interviews privately and individually was that no participant would be influenced by anyone else and that is why the responses and viewpoints of participants in terms of the interview questions revealed both differences and similarities in perceptions. During the interviews, the participants felt at ease and they were able to express their feelings freely regarding the management of school finances.

#### **4.5.2 Findings**

The findings are given in terms of the questions posed to the participant and identified as the main themes.

##### ***4.5.2.1 Demographic Characteristics of the SGBs***

The research study revealed that the two principals and all four educators from both primary schools were more experienced in terms of the SGB matters when compared to the parent components. From School A four parents were interviewed; one parent with 10 years' experience while the other three were new, having only six months experience. It differed in School B where of the three parents interviewed, two were experienced in terms of SGB matters with 3 and 14 years' experience, respectively; the other one was new with only 6 months' experience.

It was also revealed that the treasurers of the SGBs of both public primary schools were educators. This was different to the position of secretary where at School A both



secretary and vice-secretary positions were held by parents while at School B the secretary was a parent and the vice-secretary was an educator. The chairpersons and vice-chairpersons at both public primary schools were parents. Parents who served in more prominent positions maintained that they were not nominated and elected to their positions; they were just told of their positions by the principal. It was further revealed that newly elected SGB members did not attend any training or induction sessions related to their roles and responsibilities after being elected to the SGBs.

It was further revealed that all educators, the two principals from both public primary schools and some of the parents who were experienced in terms of SGB matters cited the treasurer as the person who was responsible for reporting finances. It was said that those who were new to the SGBs were not sure of who reported on the financial matters of the schools; they mentioned different people who they thought were responsible. This was a clear indication that the newly elected members of the SGBs were not aware of who was responsible for reporting on school finances. The experienced SGB members used the knowledge they acquired from meetings on previous SGBs.

#### ***4.5.2.2 Collaborative Governance of Financial Affairs by SGBs in Public Primary Schools in the Malokela Circuit***

The research study findings affirmed collaboration among stakeholders in terms of financial management on SGBs. Some participants were of the opinion that working together without any problems was an indication that they were collaborating on their SGBs. It was clearly indicated by some participants that they worked well and collaborated when dealing with school finances. The principal of School A maintained that there was collaboration in school activities but the principal of School B said that at school she tended to work alone to ensure that the school's finances were managed effectively. She said:

*As a principal I am the one who make decisions and also accounting, as I usually make sure by myself that everything is okay at my school*  
(Principal B).

The research also revealed that there was communication of financial information among SGB stakeholders in the two public primary schools. Most of the parents indicated that at a general meeting they had all agreed that they needed to

communicate on school finances at SGB meetings. However, according to parents who were part of the SGBs, no financial meetings had been called to talk about school finances and, therefore, they knew nothing about them. All educators, parents and the principals from the two public primary schools were adamant that there was communication of financial information among SGB stakeholders.

The findings of this research further confirmed that collaboratively financial decisions were taken by the SGBs of the two selected public primary schools. It was also revealed that new members of the SGBs were not sure about what collaborative decision-making entailed; two new parents, one parent from School A and another from School B, reported that since they had been elected onto the new SGB they had not taken any financial decisions collaboratively; however, they were optimistic about taking decisions collaboratively in the future. It was also clear from participant responses that those who were experienced SGB members knew how to take financial decisions collaboratively compared to those who were new to SGB affairs and that although financial management decisions had been taken by the previous SGBs this had not yet happened with the new SGBs.

#### ***4.5.2.3 Involvement of SGBs Stakeholders on Managing the Finances of Public Primary Schools in the Malokela Circuit***

An important finding of this research study was that participants agreed that all SGB members and other stakeholders should be involved in the management of school finances. Different views were expressed by the participants but, mainly, they all believed and agreed that it was essential for all SGB members and other stakeholders to be involved in the management of school finances. Participants also suggested that everybody should be involved because it made it easier for members to understand how money was being used; to report on it; and to account for school finances. The participants believed that it was very important to work collaboratively for effective management of school finances to take place.

This research also indicated that participants were aware of the roles of SGBs in drawing up school budgets. They agreed on some issues concerning the roles of the SGBs; they acknowledged that the new SGBs first considered the needs of the schools and set priorities on how to divide available funds for different purchases. According to

Joubert and Bray (2007: 131), when preparing a budget many people simply make a wish list of what they would spend money on in the next year. It seems that the new SGBs draw up a list of what they think should feature in the budget and approve it after it has been presented to the parents.

The research study findings revealed that some of the participants with experience in SGB matters participated in the drawing up of their school's budget but others who were new, especially the parents, had not been involved. According to the findings, all educators and both principals from two public primary schools had been involved in drawing up their schools' budgets - having been part of their previous SGBs. Only three of seven parents interviewed from the two schools had participated in drawing up their schools' budgets; the other four parents, who were newly appointed to their SGBs, had not been involved.

It seemed that even if participants were aware of how their school's budget was drawn up, they were not sure of who was involved and in charge. According to Educator 2 of School A, *in most cases twice I helped them in drawing it; but I think the finance officer can be involved but in our case we use treasurer*. Parents who were experienced SGB members had varying views concerning this matter; some were aware of who was in charge of drawing school budget while others, who were new to SGBs, were not sure or aware of who was in charge. Both principals from the two schools agreed that all SGB members were involved and in charge of drawing up school budgets.

In terms of the findings, all the participants were aware of who the signatories to their schools' bank accounts were; they all cited the treasurer, the vice-chairperson of the SGB and the secretary. This was a clear indication that both schools were working according to their policies when it came to signatories of the school's bank account.

The research findings revealed that some participants from the two public primary schools were not clear about who was involved in the implementation of school finance policies and school budgets in their schools. It was also observed that all parents from School A, who were asked about stakeholders involved in the implementation of the school policy and school budget, mentioned the whole SGB. However, those from School B differed; one of the three parents was not sure but said that the principal had informed them that, besides herself, other SGB members had to be involved. Another

finding to this question was that, generally, participants from both schools had different views on the matter; evidence given by two educators from School A showed that one educator named the principal, the treasurer and the finance officer while another educator suggested the parent and teacher components of the SGB as well as other stakeholders. Two educators from School B agreed that the stakeholders were the SGB treasurer, teachers, parents and HODs. The principals from the two schools both cited the finance officer and the treasurer as being in charge of policy and budget implementation, assisted by the finance committee and the principals.

It was also suggested that other stakeholders were involved in the implementation of school finance policies in the two public primary schools; some participants agreed but expressed their opinions in different ways. It was also observed that those who were new to SGB matters were not sure about which members were involved except that the principal had told them that SGB members must be involved. This was because the SGBs had been elected in March which was well into 2015.

#### ***4.5.2.4 SGB Members' Understanding of Roles and Responsibilities regarding Policy on School Finances***

The research revealed that those who were newly appointed to the SGBs had not yet attended training or induction sessions; it seems that the principals were helping them in their roles and responsibilities on SGBs. Educators and parents who were experience in SGB functions clearly came to know their roles and responsibilities through training and induction that they had received in their previous terms of office on SGBs. According to Parent 1 from School A who is the vice-chairperson of the SGB and who had 10 years' experience on SGBs,

*I have attended workshops where they have explained my roles and responsibilities as the vice chairperson (Parent 1 from School A).*

The parents who were new to the SGBs mentioned that after they had been elected they were told of their positions and that the principal gave them documents which explained their duties; their roles were also thoroughly explained to them. Rangongo (2011: 139) points to the lack of knowledge of most members of SGBs and adds that parent members of the SGBs rely to a great extent on principals and the teachers for information regarding their roles and the interpretations of financial documents.

According to the findings of this study, all participants from both public primary schools were aware of what they were expected to do on SGBs in terms of their positions. It was further revealed that newly elected SGBs members knew their roles and responsibilities on SGBs as their principals had informed them about what they were expected to do. Therefore, it seems clear that principals play a most important role in ensuring that all SGB members are aware of their roles and responsibilities on SGBs.

The findings of this research study further suggested that some parents who were new to SGBs and even those who were experienced in SGB matters did not understand policy related to their roles on the SGBs. All educators and both principals understood policy related to their roles and responsibility as they were able to read what was written in the policy and the experienced parents on the SGBs were able to understand what the policy said about their roles and responsibilities. It seemed that there is a high level of illiteracy among parents of learners enrolled in the two public primary schools. This was emphasised by parents who were new to the SGBs; they maintained that they did not have any knowledge but that teachers sometimes helped them concerning how they should work on committees. This indicates that the parent components of the SGBs are not well informed about policy related to their roles and responsibilities; they work according to what they have been told by the educators and the principals.

The research revealed that some of the participants had participated in the development or formulation of their school's finance policy while those who were new and inexperienced in SGBs affairs had not. It was clear that from both public primary schools four of the seven parents interviewed were new and had never participated in the development of any school finance policy; the other three parents were experienced in terms of SGB matters and had participated in the development of school finance policy on their previous SGBs. All educators and principals from both public primary schools had participated in the development of school finance policies.

It was also revealed that participants from the same school were unable to cite common procedures or processes that their SGB followed when formulating the school finance policy. Those who were new on the SGBs maintained that they knew nothing about the procedures or processes that their SGB followed; they also denied knowing anything about the school finance policy. Even those who were experienced in terms of SGB matters were not sure of what happened when the school's finance policy had been formulated by the out-going SGB on which they had also served.

Educators and the principals were uncertain of the procedures or processes followed when the finance policy had been formulated by their previous SGBs; they cited different procedures or processes despite being from the same school. The researcher had expected similar responses from them as an indication that they had been involved in the process.

According to the findings, although the participants from both public primary schools were aware of the importance of having a school finance policy at their schools, they expressed themselves differently in terms of managing the finances efficiently and effectively. Mokoena (2013: 27) believes that schools need a finance policy to promote good administration and financial management practices; to help co-ordinate financial activities; and to provide clarity on procedures. Some of the participants suggested that it was important to have a finance policy in their schools because then no one would be able to use school funds without the approval of other stakeholders as they would all be responsible for the school's finances.

SGB members from both schools were not clear about who was in charge of ensuring the implementation of finance policy at their schools. When the parents were asked about who was in charge, they mentioned different people according to their understanding of the process. Even the educators and principals had different views on who was in charge of ensuring the implementation of school finance policy. One principal maintained that the principal and chairperson of the SGB were in charge while other principal cited the treasurer, principal, finance officer; SGB chairperson, vice-chairperson and secretary.

#### ***4.5.2.5 Successes that SGBs achieved in Managing Finances***

The research findings suggest that all participants who were experienced in terms of SGB matters were able to decide whether they were successful or not in terms of their previous experience on SGBs; however, those who were new to SGBs were not able to confirm whether they were successful or not. In addition, as the SGBs consisted of new members, the participants were unable to tell whether they were successful as they had not been working together as an SGB for long.

#### **4.5.2.6 Challenges that SGBs faced in Managing Finances**

This research revealed that the SGBs of the two public primary schools faced different challenges, cited by the participants, when implementing school finance policy. A major challenge for some parent members of the SGBs was their inability to read; when they attempted to familiarise themselves with the policy, they found it difficult because, mostly, the policy was in English and it had to be translated into the vernacular so that everybody could read and understand it and even then there were still members who found it difficult to read. Another identified challenge was that the schools had many needs that could not be met with the limited amount of money they received; members of the SGBs were, therefore, unable to perform some of their duties, like maintaining school buildings. Some parents also mentioned the challenge of verifying reimbursement to educators who claimed that they had rendered a service, such as tariff differences between public transport and an individual's car, without providing proof.

The research study also revealed that some of the participants faced challenges in performing their roles and responsibilities in managing school finances while others did not have any problems. Some of the challenges identified in this research study include the following:

- Parents were told to come to school and sign cheques when they did not understand why they had to make that payment.
- Because of the small amount of money the school received and there was little in the school account, SGB members were forced to use their own money to pay for transport if they were required to attend workshops.
- After three years new SGB members were selected who were inexperienced and not able to function efficiently; they needed to start learning from the beginning.
- Educators made certain suggestions and the parent component of the SGBs were excluded from decisions taken to implement the suggestions.

#### **4.6 CONCLUSION**

Chapter 4 concentrated on the findings and their discussion in terms of the research questions. The main purpose of this chapter was an exploration of the data from the interviews with participants regarding how collaboratively SGBs govern the financial affairs of the two selected public primary schools. To reach conclusions and determine findings, the data collection technique used was semi-structured interviews. The next

chapter, Chapter 5, provides an overview, considers the findings, draws conclusions and makes recommendations.



## CHAPTER 5

### OVERVIEW, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

Whereas the previous chapter, Chapter 4, reported on the findings of the study, this chapter contains a summary of the chapters of the report, conclusions drawn, recommendations made and the limitations of the research. The main focus of the research was to explore how collaboratively SGBs govern the financial affairs of two selected public primary schools in the Malokela Circuit of Limpopo Province. The research study was undertaken as a meaningful contribution to the debate regarding SGB collaboration in governing the financial matters of public primary schools. The researcher has presented the data obtained from semi-structured interviews with all SGB members from the two selected public primary schools in the Malokela Circuit of Limpopo Province. Recommendations for the collaborative working of SGB members in managing school finances are made, based on the findings given in Chapter 4 as well as recommendations for future study to improve SGB collaboration, the skills, knowledge and training needed in terms of financial management.

#### 5.2 OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS IN THIS REPORT

The report has been organised in the following five chapters:

**Chapter 1** provided the rationale for conducting this research. The problem statement and questions arising from statement, the purpose of the study and its limitations were discussed. Definitions of key words were given as well as brief explanation of research methodology used.

**Chapter 2** contained an in-depth literature review of the theoretical background of the social phenomenon that was investigated: the collaborative task of SGBs in managing school finances in Limpopo Province.

**Chapter 3** set out the research methodology. It focused on the qualitative research methods of collecting data, such as semi-structured interviews. Using this method to answer research question, data was collected from all stakeholders on the SGBs of two public primary schools in the Department of Education's Malokela Circuit of Limpopo Province.

**Chapter 4** presented the findings obtained from an analysis and interpretation of the collected data regarding how SGBs collaboratively govern the financial affairs of public primary schools.

**Chapter 5** is a summary of the findings; it draws conclusions from the findings and makes recommendations about how SGBs should collaboratively govern the financial affairs of the two selected public primary schools in Malokela Circuit of Limpopo Province.

### **5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

Recommendations are made in terms of the exploration of data obtained from semi-structured interviews that were held with all selected participants to determine answers to the research questions.

#### **5.3.1 Democratic Characteristics of SGBs**

Regarding experiences of SGB members, the research study revealed that all educators and principals in both public primary schools are experienced in terms of SGB matters as they were part of previous SGBs and some parents are experienced in SGB matters while others are new to the SGBs. It is, therefore, recommended that schools should ensure that experienced members of the SGBs instil confidence in the new members by advising and helping them. Principals should not be the only experienced members in terms of SGB matters and everything should not rest on their shoulders.

A major finding of the research was that newly elected SGB members do not attend any training or induction sessions related to their roles and responsibilities after being elected to be SGB members. Those who have experience in SGB matters use their experience to perform duties on SGB without refresher courses before assuming a new term of office. Training following SGB elections is deemed insufficient; newly elected SGB members need support from Department of Education. It is, therefore, recommended that schools should undertake the training or induction of all SGB stakeholders each and every term before assuming office. It is further recommended that if circuit governors are unable to conduct training or induction sessions, schools should train SGB members in clusters or individually or invite someone who is knowledgeable about SGB matters to come to the school to present a one day workshop on the roles of SGB members. Mestry and Govindasamy (2013: 448)

maintain that SGB members should be trained on the contents and conditions of the Schools Act so that they understand what their respective roles and responsibilities entail. School governing bodies need to receive proper training to perform their duties and responsibilities in effective and efficient ways. It is recommended that training should be undertaken on a quarterly basis to ensure that newly elected SGB members are able to perform their roles and responsibilities on SGBs.

SGB members who are experienced cited the treasurer as the one who is responsible for reporting school finances. It was further revealed that those who are new to SGBs are not sure of who reports on school finances; they mentioned different people who they thought were responsible for reporting on school finances. Therefore, it is recommended that schools should ensure that all SGB stakeholders on newly elected SGBs are well trained or inducted into each and everything that happens on SGBs before assuming office to avoid misunderstanding of who should report on school finances

### **5.3.2 Collaborative Governance of Financial Affairs by SGBs in Public Primary Schools in the Malokela Circuit**

The research revealed that there is collaboration among stakeholders concerning the financial management of SGBs. Some participants saw it as an issue of working together without problems which suggests that they are collaborating on their SGBs. According to Ortloff (2011), collaboration conveys an idea of sharing; it implies collective action oriented toward a common goal in a spirit of harmony; it is a relationship that cannot function without on-going and truthful discussions founded on the premise of trust and respect. Van Rooyen (2012: 103) maintains that, financial management should be an inclusive and transparent process that should involve all stakeholders not only the school principal. It is important for SGBs to involve all stakeholders when they are required to work with school finances. The principal of School B tends to work alone to ensure that school finances are managed effectively; she believes that, as the principal, she should make decisions and take responsibility for them. It is recommended that all SGB stakeholders should be trained quarterly or after six months on how to manage the school's finances.

From the research data it can be said that there is some communication of financial information among SGB stakeholders at both public primary schools. However, parents

who were new to SGBs complained that they did not know anything about school finances because no financial meetings had been called to talk about them. It is, therefore, recommended that schools should ensure that during every meeting of the SGB and of committees within the SGB, school finances are always tabled as an item. It is also important that SGB members network and collaborate with other schools to learn how they communicate on their SGBs in terms of finances.

As pointed out above, the study indicated that collaborative financial decision-making does take place on the SGBs of both public primary schools that participated in the research. Serfontien (2010: 99) is of the opinion that a key principle of school governance is that decisions should be based on consultation, collaboration, cooperation, mutual trust and the participation of all affected parties. According to Mestry and Govindasamy (2013: 434), collaboration suggests that power and decision-making should be shared among some or all members of an organisation. It is recommended that schools should introduce guidelines to be followed when financial decisions are taken by SGBs. It is further recommended that no financial decisions should be taken without input from the majority of SGBs members.

### **5.3.3. Involvement of Stakeholders of SGBs in Managing Finances of Public Primary Schools in the Malokela Circuit**

An important finding of this research study was that participants agreed that all SGB members and other stakeholders should be involved in managing school finances. It was also revealed that it was important for everybody be involved and work together on managing school finances as it facilitated members' understanding of how money is used which is, then, easy to report on, and to account for, funds. It is recommended that schools should ensure parent and other stakeholder involvement in managing school finances and that during all SGB or parent meetings there is an item which focuses on the financial matters of the school. According to Joubert and Bray (2007: 128), it is important to note that SGB members are collectively accountable for the effective management of public school finances. It is, therefore, recommended that all stakeholders should have access to a programme of planned events taking place at the school during the course of the year to have a clear understanding of what would be happening in terms of financial demands.

Participants were aware of the roles of SGB members in drawing up school budgets. The responsibilities of SGBs include ensuring the availability of schools' budgets to guide them on how school finances should be used and monitored - as stipulated in Section 38 (1) of the Schools Act of 1996. SGBs are also required to set priorities for allocating money to different activities and items. According to Joubert and Bray (2007: 131), when preparing a budget, many people simply make a wish list of what they would like to spend money on in the next year. It is, therefore, recommended that SGB members should ensure that there are budgets in their schools and that all stakeholders are involved in drawing them up.

This study showed that some participants have been involved in drawing up their schools' budgets, especially those experienced in the SGB matters; others who are new to SGB work, especially the parents, have not been involved. As a budget was available in both participant public primary schools, it is clear it was drafted in the previous year, 2014, which means that some of the new SGB members were not part of the SGB that drew up the school budgets. According to Van Rooyen (2012: 103), financial management should be an inclusive and transparent process that should involve all stakeholders and not only the school principal. If the SGB is elected towards the end of the year, it would be easy for new members of SGBs to participate in drafting the school's budget for the following year rather than being forced to use the budget drawn up by the previous SGB. It is recommended that the term of office of SGB members should terminate towards end of year to enable newly appointed SGB members to be part of school budget drafting process.

The research findings further revealed that even if participants are aware of how school's budgets are drawn up but they are not sure who should be involved and in charge; parents who are experienced in SGBs matters seem to have different views concerning this while those who are not are unsure of who is in charge. All stakeholders of SGBs should be involved in drawing up school's budgets. It is recommended that members should be informed of who is involved in, and in charge of, drawing up school budgets and that they should all be encouraged to participate fully in the process.

According to the findings of this research study, some of the participants of the two selected public primary schools are not clear on who is involved in the implementation of finance policies and budgets in their schools; participants from the two schools had

different views on the matter - even those from the same school. It is the responsibility of the SGB - through its finance committee - to implement a school's finance policy and budget. It is recommended that SGBs of schools should draft a plan of all activities to take place during the financial year. It is further recommended that the schools should assist their SGBs by inviting knowledgeable people to address them from time to time on how to implement finance policy as well as network with other schools to learn from them about how things are done.

#### **5.3.4. Understanding of SGB Members of their Roles and Responsibilities regarding School Finance Policy**

The principals are the ones who help newly elected SGB members to understand their roles and responsibilities on SGBs. Members who are experienced on SGB affairs have come to know their roles and responsibilities through the training and induction sessions they attended in their previous terms of office on their SGBs. Principals should ensure that SGB members understand their roles and responsibilities on SGBs. Whether members are newly appointed or are experienced in terms of SGB matters, it is recommended that schools should ensure that all the stakeholders, including educators and parents, receive some training or induction before they assume office; and whether or not they know their roles and responsibilities, these should be discussed, in detail, to avoid misinterpretation.

All participants from both public primary schools are aware of what they have to do on their SGB in terms of their positions. All schools should ensure that whether or not circuit governors have conducted training or induction sessions on the roles and responsibilities of elected SGB members, they should arrange their own workshops which all members are obliged to attend to discuss their roles and responsibilities and how to apply them in a practical manner. It is, therefore, recommended that if no training has been conducted by circuit governors, schools should ensure that each and every member of their SGBs attends a seminar where roles and responsibilities are explained.

It was further revealed that some parents who are new to, and even some who are experienced in, SGB matters do not understand policy related to their roles on SGBs. As there is a high level of illiteracy among the parents of learners enrolled in two public primary schools, it is recommended that stakeholders should be trained before

assuming their roles and responsibilities on SGBs; their roles and responsibilities should be explained, showing them where these appear in the policy; and they should be provided with copies of policies. It is also recommended that all educators and the principals should reinforce parents' understanding of what is required of them in the policy by constantly reminding them of what the policy says about their roles on SGBs.

According to the research findings, some participants have been involved in the development or formulation of school finance policies while others have not. Because SGBs were elected in March 2015, finance policy was already in place; new members who were not experienced in terms of SGB matters were not part of the committee that formulated the policy. The researcher recommends that schools should ensure that during the first meeting of a new SGB when finance committee is elected all members are informed about the availability of a school finance policy and how it was developed so they understand the development of school finance policies.

Even participants from the same school did not have a common understanding of the procedures or processes that SGBs should follow when formulating school finance policies, especially those who were new to SGBs as the policy had been formulated before they assumed office. It is, therefore, recommended that schools should ensure that after the establishment of a finance committee the school finance policy is readily available for new members to familiarise themselves with it as well as details of how it was formulated. Members should be constantly reminded of their responsibilities regarding the formulation and implementation of school finance policies.

Another finding of this research study has shown that all the participants from the two public primary schools were aware of the importance of having a finance policy in their schools. According to Mokoena (2013: 27), schools need a finance policy to promote good financial administration and management practices; to help co-ordinate financial activities; and to provide clarity on procedures. Some participants were of the opinion that it is very important to have a finance policy in schools because without it no one can access school funds without the approval of others in the organisation; they are all responsible for the school finances. It is recommended that schools should make sure that all SGB members are aware of the presence and availability of formulated finance policies in their schools. This is simple if the finance committee continuously arranges

meetings where members of SGBs are able to discuss and share ideas related to the successful implementation of finance policies.

It was also revealed that SGB members from both public primary schools were not clear about who was in charge of the implementation of finance policy at their schools; this became clear when participants from the same school named different people. The responsibilities of SGBs include ensuring that their finance committees function as agreed. It is, therefore, recommended that SGBs should have functional finance committees that meet once a month to promote the implementation of finance policies. In this way, SGB members should be aware of which stakeholders are responsible for the implementation of finance policies.

The research showed that participants were not sure of what happens in terms of monitoring and controlling school budgets; even those who were from the same school gave different explanations. The newly appointed members of the SGBs admitted that they knew nothing about monitoring and controlling school budgets. However, evidence points to the fact that the school budgets in the two selected public primary schools are monitored and controlled by checking bank statements every month and by submitting monthly and quarterly returns to the circuit office. SGBs are responsible for monitoring and controlling of schools' budgets. Maree (2010: 66) maintains that the governing body, especially its finance committee, has to conform and work according to the specifications given in the legislation, particularly with regard to budget control and expenditure. It is recommended that schools should submit financial reports to the circuit office at least once a month and that the circuit should support the schools in how the financial reports are prepared.

### **5.3.5 Achieved Successes of SGBs in Managing Finances**

This research has shown that all participants who are experienced in terms of SGB matters are able to indicate how successful they have been, specifically when compared to serving on previous SGBs; those who are new are unable to comment on whether they have been successful or not. If SGB members are elected towards the end of a year, they would be involved in formulating some policies, drawing up a school budget and performing other functions which would enable them to comment on their successes. It is, therefore, recommended that schools should elected new SGB



members towards the end of a year; provide them with training; and ensure that they start performing their functions immediately as they would then be in a position to comment on their success.

### **5.3.6. Challenges that SGBs Faced in Managing Finances**

A major finding of the research study is that there are many challenges that SGB members face when performing their roles and responsibilities in managing school finances; challenges that need to be addressed. The first challenge is that because schools receive only small amounts of money from the education department and there is little in their bank accounts, SGB members may be forced to use their own money to pay for transport if they are required to attend workshops. In terms of this challenge, therefore, it is recommended that the Department of Education should restructure its allocation of funds to schools as some received only small amounts of money because of their limited learner enrolment. Schools should ensure that the little they receive is budgeted to guide them in its most economic distribution; they should remain within their budget. According to Section 20 (2) of the Schools Act, the governing body may allow reasonable use of facilities of school for community, social and school fund-raising purposes, subject to such reasonable and equitable conditions as the school governing body may determine - which may include charging a fee or tariff that accrues to the school (RSA, 1996).

As SGB members are elected after every three years, it is recommended that this should be increased to five or six years to give members more experience in SGB matters and time to familiarised themselves with how school finances are managed. As the parent components of SGBs are often not involved in making decisions related to suggestions from the educators, schools should ensure that all recommendations should be discussed in planned SGB meetings so that members of SGBs are involved in the decision-making process. For parents to understanding why they need to make any payment or sign a cheque, it is recommended that principals should explain to them why the payment needs to be made and to provide proof of payment.

A third challenge includes the fact that many of the SGB parent component are unable to read; other members should try to remedy this by familiarising them with the policy. Mostly, the policy is in English and it should be translated into the vernacular so that

everybody is able to read and understand it; there are, however, some of members who find it difficult to read even the vernacular versions. It is, therefore, recommended that all schools should provide adult basic education so that all SGB members who are unable to read even the vernacular may attend to learn to read. Section 21 (1) (d) of the Schools Act stipulates that the school governing body may apply to the Head of the Department of Education in writing to be allocated funds to function as a centre for providing adult basic education and training classes (RSA, 1996). Another challenge is the dire needs of schools and the small amounts of money they receive. It seems that SGBs should ensure that they supplement all the money schools receive from the Department of Education. Educators maintain that when they have rendered services – even without proof - they want to be paid tariffs for the use of their individual cars when they work outside the schools. It is recommended that schools should pay stakeholders rendering extra services the tariffs set out in a document distributed by the department relating to payment *per kilo meter travelled* which is the same for all schools.

#### **5.4 CONCLUSION**

The study used a qualitative research approach in the collection of data from SGB members at two selected public primary schools. The qualitative research approach afforded the researcher opportunities to interact with participants by sharing different ideas and experiences concerning the management of school finances. The main aim of the study was to explore how collaboratively SGBs governed the financial affairs at public primary schools in the Malokela Circuit in Limpopo Province.

Participants were free to provide the researcher with full information concerning their experiences of how collaboratively SGBs dealt with the financial affairs of their schools. Certain members, especially those belonging to the parent components of the two SGBs, are not educated and seem not always to be involved in decisions taken; they do not appear to participate adequately in the activities of SGBs. Consequently, the principals and educators from the two schools are sometimes forced to determine the direction that the schools take which, possibly, leads to confusion amongst many parents who feel irrelevant. The research findings suggest that the principals believe that it is, mainly, their responsibility to manage and control school finances - not that of the whole SGB where many members are considered to be illiterate. According to one of the two principals, parents who are elected to SGBs distrust principals and are of the

opinion that they are only interested in filling their own pockets rather than developing; and promoting the quality of teaching and learning in their schools. However, the principals and educators of both schools maintain that members of the SGBs are always kept informed about, and involved in, the decision taken by SGBs concerning school finances; this suggests that despite various and differing views there is collaborative involvement on SGBs in managing school finances in Limpopo Province.

## **5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

Recommendations for further research studies include addressing the education of parents of learners at public primary schools in governance so that they are able to perform their roles and responsibilities effectively. Ways should be explored whereby the Department of Education is able to increase parental involvement/participation in school governance as well as in developing their skills. In addition, there is a need to improve the literacy levels of parents of learners in public primary schools. The budgeting processes in schools are also a major concern and further intensive research study is recommended in terms of the effective management of budgeting and the implementing of school finances processes at public primary schools.

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## ANNEXURES

### ANNEXUREA: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA  
Faculty of Education

#### RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

**CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE**

**CLEARANCE NUMBER:** EM 15/06/01

**DEGREE AND PROJECT**

MEd

Collaborative tasks of the school governing bodies in managing school finances in Limpopo province

**INVESTIGATORS**

Kgatabela Albert Mphethi

**DEPARTMENT**

Education Management and Policy Studies

**APPROVAL TO COMMENCE STUDY**

14 July 2015

**DATE OF CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE**

17 October 2016

Please note:

For Master's application, Ethics Clearance is valid for 2 years

For PhD application, Ethics Clearance is valid for 3 years

**CHAIRPERSON OF ETHICS COMMITTEE:**

Prof Liesel Ebersöhn

CC

Bronwynne Swarts  
Samuel Adeyemo

This Ethics Clearance Certificate if issued subject to the following conditions:

1. A signed personal declaration of responsibility
2. If the research question changes significantly so as to alter the nature of the study, a new application of ethical clearance must be submitted
3. It remains the student's responsibility to ensure that all the necessary forms for informed consent are kept for future queries

Please quote the clearance number in all enquiries

## ANNEXURE B: LETTERS OF PERMISSION TO AND FROM DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Enq: Mphethi K.A

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Cell: 082 486 4040

Email: [kgatabelamphethi@gmail.com](mailto:kgatabelamphethi@gmail.com)

The Head of Department  
Limpopo Department of Education  
POLOKWANE  
0700

Dear Sir/Madam

### RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I, **Kgatabela Albert Mphethi**, registered MEd (Educational Leadership) student at University of Pretoria (Student Number: 28598645), request your permission to conduct research in public primary schools in Malokela circuit of Limpopo province.

Research topic is: **Collaborative tasks of the school governing bodies in managing school finances in Limpopo province.**

To accomplish my objectives I require participants that will be interviewed. Target group for this research is all SGB members and principals of selected public primary schools in Malokela circuit of Limpopo province.

Anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained and participation is voluntary. You are welcome to contact my supervisor (Dr K.S Adeyemo at 012 420 4279 (office hours) or 071 273 9046) if more information is needed.

Hoping you will assist in this regard.

Yours Faithfully

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mphethi K.A (Student)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr K.S Adeyemo (Supervisor)



# LIMPOPO

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF  
**EDUCATION**  
SEKHUKHUNE DISTRICT

Enq: Thoka RP  
Tel: 015 633 7154  
Date: 26/10/2015

To: MPHETHI K.A Med (Educational Leadership  
University of Pretoria

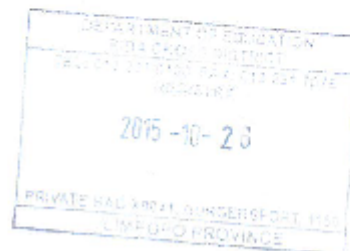
From: District Senior Manager  
Sekhukhune District

**SUBJECT: GRANTED PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

1. The above matter refers.
2. Kindly be informed that your research application to conduct research in the primary schools and secondary schools in sekhukhune district of the Limpopo Province, focusing on the title **Collaborative tasks of the School Governing Bodies (SGB) in managing school finance in Limpopo Province**, is approved.
3. Please note you should conduct your research in line with research ethics as prescribed by your institution and international norms and standards for research.
4. The district wishes you well in your research and awaits your findings with great interest.

**Nkadimeng T.G**  
**DISTRICT SENIOR MANAGER**

26.10.2015  
DATE





**LIMPOPO**  
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF  
**EDUCATION**

**SEKHUKHUNE DISTRICT  
MALOKELA CIRCUIT**

Enq: Madira MW  
Cell: 082 353 1664


30/07/2015

To: Mpheti KA  
Moila Secondary School  
Malokela Circuit

Approval for conducting research in Malokela Circuit Schools.

1. The above matter refers.
2. Kindly be informed that your request to conduct research in Malokela Circuit schools is granted.
3. You are to adhere to department of basic Education policy when conducting the research.

Hope you find this in order.

  
-----  
Circuit manager

30/07/2015

## ANNEXURE C: LETTERS OF PERMISSION TO SCHOOLS

Enq: Mphethi K.A

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Cell: 082 486 4040

Email: [kgatabelamphethi@gmail.com](mailto:kgatabelamphethi@gmail.com)

To:

The Principal/SGB Chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Dear Sir/Madam

### RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN YOUR SCHOOL

I, **Kgatabela Albert Mphethi**, registered MEd (Educational Leadership) student at University of Pretoria (Student Number: 28598645) request your permission to conduct research at your school.

Research topic is: **Collaborative tasks of the school governing bodies in managing school finances in Limpopo province.**

To accomplish my objectives I require permission to conduct research at your school, and interview will be conducted with participants.

Interview will be administered during months of July and August 2015.

Anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained; participation is voluntary and you can withdraw at any stage of research.

Hoping you will assist in this regard.

Yours Faithfully

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mphethi K.A (Student)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr K.S Adeyemo (Supervisor)

## ANNEXURE D: LETTER OF REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE AS PARTICIPANT

Enq: Mphethi K.A

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Cell: 082 486 4040

Email: [kgatabelamphethi@gmail.com](mailto:kgatabelamphethi@gmail.com)

To:

The Principal/SGB Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Dear Sir/Madam

### RE: REQUEST FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE AS PARTICIPANT IN RESEARCH

I, **Kgatabela Albert Mphethi**, registered MEd (Educational Leadership) student at University of Pretoria (Student Number: 28598645) request your assistance as participant in research.

Research topic is: **Collaborative tasks of the school governing bodies in managing school finances in Limpopo province.**

To accomplish my objectives I require your assistance as a participant that will be interviewed.

The research procedure to be followed:

#### **During interviews**

- Interview will last for 60 minutes;
- Interviews will be administered during the months of July and August 2015;
- Interviews will take place at your school or at place preferably suitable for you;
- Interviews will be conducted at time suitable for you-preferably during/after office hours;

- Interview schedule will be used when conducting interview with you;
- Your perspective, experience with regard to management of school finances will be nurtured by this interview;
- There are opportunities that exist for you to improve management of school finances;
- All interviews will be recorded in full, audio taped.

Anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained; and participation is voluntary and you can withdraw at any stage of research.

Hoping you will assist in this regard.

Yours Faithfully

---

Mphethi K.A (Student)

---

Dr K.S Adeyemo (Supervisor)

## ANNEXURE E: LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT

Enq: Mphethi K.A

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell: 082 486 4040

Email: [kgatabelamphethi@gmail.com](mailto:kgatabelamphethi@gmail.com)

### INFORMED CONSENT

I (Surname and full names) \_\_\_\_\_

give consent to participate in research. I agree/decline to participate in research provided that information I will provide to researcher is kept confidential; anonymous and is not revealed to public. I can detach from research at any time without any victimisation.

I hereby declare that I fully understand the research topic, purpose of the research and the benefit that I will desire from the research.

Signature of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of researcher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## ANNEXURE F: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

### Themes:

- SGB knowledge, skills and training of financial management;
- Lack of finance policy implementation;
- Tasks performed during the management of school finances and budgeting process; and
- Collaborative tasks of school governing bodies on managing school finances.

Good morning/afternoon Sir/Madam;

Thank you for accepting to be part of this interview;

I am Mphethi Kgatabela Albert; student at University of Pretoria, doing Master's Degree;

Main aim to be here is to undertake research project;

Topic of research is: Collaborative tasks of school governing bodies on managing school finances in Limpopo province;

Purpose of research is to have clear understanding on how collaboratively school governing bodies managing school finances in public primary schools, specifically in Malokela circuit of Limpopo province;

I assure you today that, I will stick to all ethical codes of conduct with regard to conducting research as stated in my application;

Interview will take about 60 minutes, i.e. 60 minutes or less than 60 minutes not more than that;

So, please feel free maybe to use the language you could understand better and do not hesitate to ask for clarity in case there is a need;

The participation in this interview/research is voluntary; no one is forced to participate in this interview. So that you can withdraw at any stage of this research without any intimidation;

I would like to assure that no name will be mentioned in this interview or in my report after this interview. It means that your name or name of your school will remain anonymous and confidential and all the information taken today will remain confidential;

This interview is recorded for the quality of data collection and interpretation;

May we start with our interview now?

Thank you!

## Questions:

### **SGB knowledge, skills and training of financial management**

- a) How long have you being the principal of this school?
- b) Have you ever attended any training sessions or induction on school finance management when you assumed your duties and responsibilities as an SGB member or as a principal?
- c) Have the training or induction sessions helped you in your school finance governance?
- d) Who is accountable for reporting of financial management at your school?
- e) How did you know your roles and responsibilities in SGB?
- f) What are your roles and responsibilities in school governing body as principal?
- g) What is your knowledge and understanding of policy related to your roles as the SGB member?
- h) Which challenges are you facing when performing your duties and responsibilities in managing school finances?
- i) Why do you think that all the SGB members and other stakeholders should be involved in the management of school finances?
- j) How successful are you in performing your roles and responsibilities of managing school finances?

### **Finance policy implementation**

- a) Is there a finance committee at your school?
- b) Who are members of finance committee?
- c) How are they selected?
- d) Does the SGB have a school finance policy?
- e) Did you ever participate in the development of your school finance policy?
- f) Which procedures/processes did the SGB followed when formulated the school finance policy?
- g) What is the importance of having a finance policy in your school?
- h) Who is in charge of ensuring the implementation of finance policy?
- i) Which challenges do you facing regarding implementation of finance policy of your school?

## **Tasks performed during the management of school finances and budgeting process**

- a) Does your school have budget?
- b) What is the role of SGB on drawing up school's budget?
- c) Have you ever been involved in drawing up school's budget?
- d) Describe how school budget is drawn up.
- e) Who was involved or in charge of drawing a school budget?
- f) How is your school budget monitored and controlled?
- g) Who are signatories of school's bank account?

## **Collaborative tasks of the school governing bodies in managing school finances**

- a) Who are SGB stakeholders involved in implementation of school finance policy and school's budget?
- b) How are other SGB stakeholders involved in implementation of school finance policy?
- c) What are your views pertaining to the collaborative functions in terms of financial management of your school?
- d) How are financial information communicated among the SGB stakeholders of your school?
- e) How collaboratively does the financial management decision taken in the SGB of your school?

## ANNEXURE G: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR SGB MEMBERS

### Themes:

- SGB knowledge, skills and training of financial management;
- Lack of finance policy implementation;
- Tasks performed during management of school finances and budgeting process;  
and
- Collaborative tasks of school governing bodies on managing school finances.

Good morning/afternoon Sir/Madam;

Thank you for accepting to be part of interview;

I am Mphethi Kgatabela Albert; student at University of Pretoria, doing Master's Degree;

My main aim here is to undertake research project;

Topic of research is: Collaborative tasks of school governing bodies on managing school finances in Limpopo province;

Purpose of research is to have clear understanding on how collaboratively school governing bodies managing school finances in public primary schools, specifically in Malokela circuit of Limpopo province;

I assure you today that, I will stick to all ethical codes of conduct regarding conducting of research as stated in my application;

This interview will take about 60 minutes, i.e. 60 minutes or less than 60 minutes not more than that;

So, please feel free maybe to use the language you could understand better and do not hesitate to ask for clarity in case there is a need;

The participation in this interview/research is voluntary; no one is forced to participate in this interview. So that you can withdraw at any stage of this research without any intimidation;

I would like to assure that no name will be used in this interview or in my report after this interview. It means will remain anonymous and confidential; and all information taken today will remain confidential;

This interview is recorded for the quality of data collection and interpretation;

May we start with our interview now?

Thank you!

## Questions:

### **SGB knowledge, skills and training of financial management**

- a) How long have you serve in school governing body?
- b) What is your position in the present SGB of your school?
- c) Did you ever attended any training or induction sessions on school finance management when you assumed your duties and responsibilities as an SGB member or as a principal?
- d) Have the training or induction sessions helped you in your school finance governance?
- e) Who is accountable for reporting of financial management at your school?
- f) How did you know your roles and responsibilities in SGB?
- g) What are your roles and responsibilities in school governing body?
- h) What is your knowledge and understanding of policy related to your roles as the SGB member?
- i) Which challenges are you facing when performing your duties and responsibilities in managing school finances?
- j) Why do you think that all the SGB members and other stakeholders should be involved in the management of school finances?
- k) How successful are you in performing your roles and responsibilities of managing school finances?

### **Lack of finance policy implementation**

- a) Is there a finance committee in your school?
- b) Who are members of finance committee?
- c) How are they selected?
- d) Does the SGB have a school finance policy?
- e) Have you ever participate in the development of your school finance policy?
- f) Which procedures/processes did the SGB followed when formulated the school finance policy?
- g) What is the importance of having a finance policy in your school?
- h) Who is in charge of ensuring the implementation of finance policy?
- j) Which challenges are you facing regarding implementation of finance policy?

## **Tasks performed during the management of school finances and budgeting process**

- a) Does your school have budget?
- b) What is the role of SGB in drawing up school's budget?
- c) Have you ever been involved in drawing up school's budget?
- d) Describe how school budget is drawn up.
- e) Who was involved or in charge of drawing a school budget?
- f) How is your school budget monitored and controlled?
- g) Who are signatories of school's bank account?

## **Collaborative tasks of school governing bodies in managing school finances**

- a) Who are SGB stakeholders involved in implementation of school finance policy and school's budget?
- b) How do other SGB stakeholders involved in implementation of school finance policy?
- c) What are your views pertaining to the collaborative functions in terms of financial management of your school?
- d) How are financial information communicated among the SGB stakeholders of your school?
- e) How collaboratively are the financial management decisions taken on the SGB of your school?

## ANNEXURE H: DECLARATION OF LANGUAGE EDITING

### DECLARATION OF LANGUAGE EDITING

23 November 2016

#### TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to confirm that I have language edited and proof-read the dissertation by Kgatabela Albert Mphethi entitled:

#### **COLLABORATIVE TASKS OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES IN MANAGING SCHOOL FINANCES IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

The language editing/proof-reading process included the checking of spelling, punctuation, syntax and expression. An attempt was made to simplify complex sentences and, where necessary, combine short sentences to clarify meaning. Attention was given to the use of various language elements, such as prepositions, consistency in language usage and formatting as well as tenses and capital letters.



Prof. Walter Greyvenstein (D Litt et Phil; TTHD; LTCL)

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Johannesburg  
2195

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E-mail: wgreyven@fantic.net