

Compendium for First National Conference on Community Colleges

**Eskom Conference Centre
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FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN SOUTH AFRICA – REFLECTIONS ON OBSTACLES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

Prof Jairam Reddy

Education has an extraordinary potential for generating development, creating sustainable capacity and democratising knowledge. The distribution of knowledge is even more distorted than is the distribution of income, wealth and power. "The main determinant of poverty today is neither lack of natural resources nor geographical marginality, but rather the lack of appropriate human capital to produce added value, make use of technology and attract investments" (Gorostiaga, 1999).

A glaring structural feature of the South African post-secondary system is captured by the term 'inverted pyramid'. The system comprises a substantial university/technikon/college sector of some 700 000 students but a technical college sector of less than 200 000 students. This is the reverse of that which obtains in many countries eg in Australia the university sector enrolls 600 000 students while the Technical and Further Education Sector enrolls some 1.5 million students. The cost per qualifier in South Africa shows great variation for these various sectors with the FET sector proving to be the most cost effective by far : R95 000 for universities, R68 000 for technikons, R50 000 for colleges of education and R10 000 for technical colleges. There is also a mismatch between what the institutions train and what commerce and industry require for the workplace, not to mention the needs of the new democratic South Africa from housing, health and welfare to poverty eradication.

The South African educational system is still hampered by the ravages of 'Bantu Education' and it will be some considerable time before these can be overcome. Thus we still have large numbers of dropouts from secondary schools and from universities and technikons. Some 35% of the country's population remain unemployed. Despite modest growth of the country's economy, it has shed some 500 000 jobs during the last five years. Substantial numbers of the working population are underskilled or unskilled. Roughly a third of the country's adult population is functionally illiterate. It is under these circumstances that one can place rising crime rate that is further damaging the economy. All of this, moreover unfolds in a globalised world which is knowledge and information driven. Clearly if South Africa is to be part of the contemporary world and wishes to compete effectively in its economy, the education and training of the broad mass of its citizens is indispensable.

This paper argues that the Further Education and Training Sector (FET) offers immense opportunities for the education and training of the broad mass of South African citizens not only to compete effectively in the globalised economy but to alleviate poverty and improve the quality of life. The FET Sector caters for those

large numbers of students between secondary school and university or technikon or as it is sometimes put 'those working in the middle'.

THE STATE'S INITIATIVES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FET SECTOR

The advent of the democratic government in 1994 has provided an appropriate legislative framework for FET development. FET is conceptualised as the heart of the integration of the education and training system in the White Paper on Education and Training (1995). The purpose of the FET Sector is to respond to the human resource needs of the country for personal, social, civic and economic development (FET White Paper, 1998). At present over 2 million of the 3 million FET learners are to be found in the secondary school system. A further 2 million 16-27 year old adults who have completed nine or more years of schooling, lack employment opportunities to improve their knowledge, skills and qualifications. Many of them are at risk of being permanently unemployed and living in the margins of society. The FET system therefore has to address these problems of youth in addition to those in the secondary schools, technical and community colleges.

The two sectors of FET are those in secondary schools comprising 2 million learners and those outside these schools whose numbers are uncertain but are at least the size of the school sector if not larger. The former is governed by the South African Schools Act and the latter by the FET Act of 1998. A degree of confusion has arisen because of two Acts governing a single sector eg it has been found due to practical and other management problems, that the schools at this time could not be funded through the mechanism of programme based funding as recommended by the new FET funding strategy. Furthermore, many young people would prefer the opportunity to pursue the post-secondary education in a college outside the school system. These colleges serve a population that is more diverse in terms of age, occupation and field of study with linkages to industry and employees. There are also important differences between schools and colleges in institutional culture and ethos, in governance and management, staffing, programmes and curricula.

Whilst the importance of the secondary school sector cannot not be underestimated, a major thrust of FET development should be the technical and community colleges.

In terms of the Constitution, FET is a concurrent national and provincial responsibility. It is imperative that a clear understanding be reached about national and provincial responsibilities in determining national goals, policies, norms and standards so that a coherent and synergistic approach for the development of the FET Sector emerges. Similarly FET institutions offering higher education programmes should develop a coherent approach with the higher education sector.

With the establishment of SAQA, a progressive and ideal legislative framework has been established for registering FET qualifications on the NQF, allowing for multiple points of entry and exit, the portability of credits and the recognition of prior learning. In early 1999, the Ministry of National Education by issuing its National Strategy for FET entitled "Preparing for the Twenty-First Century Through Education, Training and Work" has taken another forward step.

Despite this progress there has been little in the way of concrete achievements in the provinces in FET development during the last few years. The Ministry has yet to establish a dedicated unit for its development with an appropriate high profile officer such as a Deputy Director General at its head. Its counterpart in terms of a FET Directorate at the provincial levels is also not in place. The early establishment of these units would be a key catalyst for FET development

SOUTH AFRICA'S ATTEMPTS TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEMS OF THE YOUTH

HSRC Study of Community College Pilots (1999) –

This recent investigation of nine sites where community college pilots are being established revealed a new spirit of mobilisation and sense of identity which represent powerful nodes of community development. They appear committed to the mission of access to disadvantaged students, community responsiveness and community empowerment. In some sites they have also taken seriously the challenge of building partnerships with the local, community, with business and with other colleges. Particularly encouraging is that in some colleges as many as 50% of learners are turned away each year. If these colleges in a severe state of under resourcing can attract these numbers of students their potential for growth to provide opportunities for the educational development of youth is self-evident

The initial budgets provided through RDP funding and donor agencies are being exhausted. It is at this juncture that national and provincial governments in partnership with the communities and donor agencies must forge the necessary strategies and mobilise the necessary funding to address the critical human resource needs of the provinces as well as the country as a whole through transformation of the FET Sector.

Technical Colleges in KwaZulu-Natal –Kraak and Hill, 1999

The 25 public technical colleges in KZN, many of which are located on the Durban/Pietermaritzburg industrial axis are well positioned for development in partnership with business and industry. However there is considerable duplication in course offerings between colleges situated close to each other. This fact together with their relatively small size calls for a programme of rationalisation and mergers to make them more cost effective with a critical mass

of staff, students and course offerings. Key programme offerings of local relevance such as tourism and catering are not attracting the students that they should. Community development, informal sector development through small, medium and micro-enterprises (SMME), job creation and self-employment are not part of the mission of the technical colleges. Nor is there any formal career guidance or student counselling services available. The 1999-2001 National Strategy for FET will face formidable challenges in transforming these colleges. These findings which complement the HSRC study are indicative of national trends of the emerging technical/community colleges across the country.

The National Business Initiative-

The Business Trust through the NBI has identified Further Education and Training (FET) as a critical element in the country's achievement of competitiveness in the globalised economy. It has therefore established the Colleges Collaborative Fund (CCF) as a unique Private Public Partnership (PPP) in the field of vocational education and training. It wishes to engage constructively with the South African Government to deliver skills development and job creation. The CCF is a R120 million five year programme of targeted business intervention in the FET sector to assist the government in achieving the specific aims as articulated in the FET Act of 1998 and in the Skills Development Act of 1998. The CCF is being delivered in ten integrated programmes aimed at the creation of strong, dynamic FET institutions, responsive to the needs of learners, employers and the community. The formation of strategic partnerships is thought to be a factor critical to the success of the project. While this initiative has to be commended, its narrow focus driven by business and industry is of some concern. The broader thrust of FET education and training should be borne in mind. Firstly of providing opportunities to the unemployed, the school and university dropouts, those in the SMME Sector, the disabled and rural women. Second, of grounding FET in a sound general education, of providing mobility into the HES, of opportunities for community and rural development which as core features of FET ought not to be neglected.

NON-GOVERNMENTAL INITIATIVES IN KWAZULU/NATAL

KZN Midlands Project

This area which has been ravaged by civil strife in the 1980s and early 1990s has an unemployment of 40% of its population amounting to over 1 million people. Some 50% of adults over the age of 18 have less than standard five education; this is complemented by high levels of illiteracy in the region. In 1998, 3000 jobs were lost in the region. With 5000 informal traders, the only possibility for development is micro-enterprise. It is in this context that the iNdlovu Partnership for Lifelong Learning, a consortium of 30 member organisations/institutions have committed themselves to the transformation of society in that area through the empowerment of learners in the lifelong development of knowledge, skills and

wisdom. The consortium aims to provide education and training opportunities for all people, to build human resource capacity and to contribute to overall economic development. The stumbling block is the shortage of funds. The estimated budget for the triennium 2000-2002 is R5 million. This initiative provides a range of development opportunities in the FET area – for partnerships with the public technical colleges, for assistance from donor agencies, for research organisations to undertake a needs assessment of the region, develop capacity at various levels etc.

The Empangeni / Zululand Developmental Node –

Esikahwani College, a Teacher Education College in the Empangeni area on the north coast of KZN is about to be incorporated into the University of Zululand. As a consequence some 30 experienced teachers will be made redundant. In addition, a substantial building which is structurally sound will no longer be used. The site offers excellent opportunities for FET development. The Spatial Development of the Lemombo Corridor, the Local Economic Development Initiative, the Richards Bay Spatial Development Initiative, various government departments such as welfare, trade and industry, small, medium and micro-enterprises are all potential sources of FET learners as well as the potential for contributing to its development. Designated groups such as the unemployed youth, women and the disabled could benefit enormously from education and training offered at a FET institution. It is to the credit of the College that FET programmes have made a modest beginning by the offering of courses in computer literacy, tourism, entrepreneurship, technology and agriculture. The Science Edupark established a short distance away in Empangeni by Richards Bay Minerals could be an important partner in this development. Staff retraining, the provision of infrastructure and recurrent funding are essential for further progress.

INNOVATIVE FORMS OF FET INSTITUTIONS

The National Access Consortium of the Western Cape (NACWC), an innovative form of institution attempts to deal creatively with the challenges provided by the FET Sector. The FET White Paper and the FET Act of 1998 proposed that the new system should be based on the principles of cooperation and partnerships, coordination and planning, flexibility and responsiveness, diversity and quality. NACWC was created as a Reconstruction and Development Programme Youth / Community College pilot for the Western Cape in 1996 through an international partnership with the Danish Government. Its mission was to pilot a new institutional form for the FET band as envisaged in the White Paper on Education and Training (1998). The consortium comprises a merger of three partners to form the core of NACWC with the identification of other partners. The new institutional form was to address issues of fragmentation, articulation with Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET), Higher Education (HE) and the world of work through a system of partnerships. This was to target the needs of the vast

Some 482 000 people in the province are employed in the formal sector. The Development Bank of South Africa recently estimated that over 36% of the population is unemployed. Ironically the highest percentage of unemployed is among those with secondary school education. *Mpumalanga is one of the two provinces in the country that does not have a higher education institution while its FET Sector is poorly developed.*

Mpumalanga - one of country's nine provinces is situated in the north-eastern part of South Africa adjacent to Mozambique and includes the world renowned and popular Kruger National Park. Its population of 2.5 million is larger than many of its neighbours - Lesotho : 1.9 million, Botswana : 1.4 million, Namibia 1.6 million and Mauritius 1.1 million. Its annual geographic growth product of \$8850 is also significantly higher than many of its neighbours. It is an area with considerable potential for development in agriculture, manufacturing, construction, electricity, services especially tourism and transport. In particular, the economic activity resulting from the Maputo Development Corridor which will link the landlocked northern provinces of South Africa with the harbour in Maputo will give rise to industries processing raw materials such as minerals, agricultural products and small, medium and micro enterprises. The province produces 8.2% of the country's gross national product; it had a growth rate of 3.5% in 1994 compared to the national average of 1.1%.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR DEVELOPING INTEGRATED FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEMS

International donor support has been critical to the sustainability of the project. However these funds provided by the Danish Government are now coming to an end. As a consequence they had to retrench about half of their staff. In addition the RDP funds are also being exhausted. It is difficult to raise further donor money because the Western Cape is regarded as a favoured province. There is some hope that the National Skills Levy (1998) could be a source of funding for the support of the FET Sector.

NACWC assists in administration and developing infrastructure and offers services to a range of 31 partners in the Consortium; 4000 learners are serviced in these 31 sites. It assists in developing new programmes, plays a role in delivery and monitoring, has developed quality management processes, provides financial management services, student counselling and support. Articulation agreements have been established with the Universities of Cape Town and Western Cape, Peninsula and the Cape Technikon.

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The fact that there is little higher education provision in Mpumalanga and a very under-developed college sector provides a unique window of opportunity for the creation of a model post-secondary system that would not only fulfill the traditional roles of the university but would have the potential of making a significant contribution to the socio-economic development of the region. This must of necessity mean the reinterpetation of the definition of higher education and transcending the traditional higher / further education divide.

Some useful ground work has already been laid in Mpumalanga through a research project commissioned by the UTEC (University Technikon Education Committee) Steering Committee in the Premiers Office in Mpumalanga. Mpumalanga's educational outputs are poor in comparison to other provinces with a the shrinking number of school pupils in the higher grades. Ten South African public higher education institutions are involved in the provision of higher education in Mpumalanga through contact full time and part time and distance education programmes with 16 500 students. However the UTEC research has shown that the supply of higher education in the province is unregulated, inefficient and growing in an unplanned way. The model proposed by this research favours "a single well articulated band cutting across both FET and HET from the current Grade 10 training and short courses in SMMME management to the post-graduate courses characteristic of HET". A Mpumalanga Regional Council on Higher education is proposed to carry this project forward.

Since this research was completed in June of 1999, at the time of the second South African general election there does not seem to have been much movement. A strategy and a research project to advance the development of the proposed model is urgently needed.

The Northern Cape - is the second Province in South Africa that does not have a Higher Education Institution but with a weak fragmented FET Sector. Two former Technical Colleges of the House of Representatives and the Department of Education and Training have recently been merged into the Northern Cape Technical College. There are now six Technical Colleges in the NC - NC Technical College, in Springbok, Uppington, Kathu, De Aar and Kimberley. The colleges offer both HE and FET courses.

In terms of the Higher Education Act of 1997, the College of Education in Kimberley became a HEI. In response to the visit of the Minister National Education to the NC in May 1998, a proposal was forwarded for establishing a comprehensive higher education institution. The Teacher Education College was to be the nucleus of a HEI and in time it would add other faculties. A new proposal formulated by consultants from the Western Cape was recently sent to the Ministry of Education. The Finnish Government which is involved in the Scope Project - is keen to provide support for a HEI in the NC once the Ministry of Education has given its authorisation. The MECs vision is that the College of

Education which has 400 students should form the nucleus of the HEI for the NC. In order to advance this vision the Department is focussing on capacity building, human resource development, education management development and the addition of other faculties.

The FET Sector has been underfunded with no funds for development; there are about 3 500 students in the FET Sector and their budget is R18 million per year. Additional funds and skills development are the key to the success of the FET Sector. The Northern Cape Education Department has developed a strategic plan for the development of the FET sector with a budget

In addition to Nursing and Teacher Education, mining, agriculture and tourism in the NC provide vast opportunities for economic and social rejuvenation for one of the poorest provinces of the country. Anglo American is making a billion rand investment in zinc mining in the NC. This will not only generate jobs but will require skills training in a range of fields. In the north-west corner of the province is a fertile agricultural area with a fine vine growing district amongst other crops. There are many tourist attractions in the NC. These economic nodes will in part be determinants of the knowledge base and skills requirement for the future FET and HES in the NC.

Another unique window of opportunity exists for the development of an integrated well articulated FET and HES institutions that will be predicated on the needs of the NC.

LESSONS OF INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE FOR THE FET SYSTEM

The Role of Information Technology

The University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI), Scotland is a decentralised federation of thirteen colleges and research institutions distributed across a region which comprises one fifth of the land mass of the United Kingdom and include 93 islands with a strong mandate to promote regional economic and social development. Its population of 500 000 inhabitants is spatially dispersed and predominantly rural. Its economy is narrowly based and very dependent on small and medium sized enterprises. There is a strong demand for higher education, in particular for qualitative skills development and life long learning. Courses of study at UHI are thematically oriented and strongly multi-disciplinary eg rural development, health care management and tourism. Completion of an academic year with 120 credits will result in the award of a certificate, diploma for year two and a degree for year three. A substantial investment in information and communication technologies links the various colleges and outreach centres with video conferencing, the most popular method of communication for both administration and academics. After six years of successful functioning it today enrolls 22 500 students (8 900 FTEs) of which only 4 546 students are involved in higher education programmes, the rest in FET programmes. The concept of

They are also experiencing difficulties in developing a Provincial FET Act which should guide the department in terms of policy implementation for FET. The officials of the Department have struggled to find out where in the National Act there is provision for provinces to develop their own Provincial Act. They are still trying to find out about this. They were also concerned that there may be contradictions between the National Act for FET and the provincial one. They saw the need for a Provincial Act because in "provincialising" the National Act they were making it 'suitable for the needs of the province in terms of the law' (interview with officials in the Sub-Directorate 9/05/2000). Further questions that needed clarification were: which advisory body are they referring to? Who would be the Registrar in the province? To whom will the private institutions apply for registrations as FET institutions? etc.

Once a Bill had been developed they had planned to workshop the Bill with stakeholders before being tabled at Cabinet for adoption. Unfortunately, this workshop, which was called a summit, had to be postponed because of "financial constraints".

The officials know that the Free State and Gauteng provinces have already developed their own Act, but they still are enquiring what led them to do this. They feel that the Northern Province is not falling behind in this, but in their need for clarification, some of the other provinces overtook them. They are being tentative in this development because they are afraid of doing "wrong things" that may adversely affect implementation.

With regard to the interpretation and the implementation of the requirements of the Act they mentioned the lack of capacity. One official said, 'the province does not have the capacity'. He went on to draw our attention to the fact that the White Paper and the Act (for FET) acknowledge that there is a need for capacity building for the provinces to be able to deliver FET. The Act also points out that this capacity may be needed at all levels, even for the MEC. The dissemination of information to all levels is seen as a crucial step in the development of this capacity.

4.3. Limitations within the Department: The Department has certain structural limitations which have adversely affected the process of change and created a situation of fear and low morale.

Probably the major weakness is that of a lack of communication between different units and top management and its sub-directorate. One official stated, 'we don't have direct link'. He pointed out that there are problems in communication not only between the sub-directorate for FET and top management, but also between top management and the finance and personnel units. Very often certain appointments or decisions were blocked by an official in one of these units because they had not received instructions from top management or the required documentation was not satisfactorily completed.

There is also a problem of continuity of personnel and therefore a discontinuity of policy and practice. Since 1994 there have been three MEC's and five directors of the Directorate for Colleges, some of them acting. This has led to a lack of stable leadership. Apparently the first Director left with his post of Director, and 'there is no post (position) now' (interview, former departmental official 29/05/2000). This official goes on to say, 'you would not find any representation with community college interests in senior management'. In the absence of a Chief Director, the Sub-Directorate, where the main enthusiasm for community college establishment resided, felt the gap between themselves and the Deputy Director General was too great for them to make any impact.

The status of the Sub-Directorate for colleges is precarious. All three persons in the sub-directorate are seconded to Head Office. All three have been declared "in excess" in R& R (redeployment and rationalisation) terms, and therefore they are unsure of their positions. They, therefore, don't feel confident to push issues because of their status. 'Seconded officials don't receive any regard or respect in the Department' (former Departmental official, 29/05/2000).

A Chief Director for FET was appointed from 1 April 2000 and there is optimism now that the situation will improve. An official identified the following two key issues as being crucial for N.P.C.C: (1) question of a lack of support (2) there is a

sense that there are 'hostile attitudes on the part of certain departmental units to the idea of community colleges'.

To support this view he cites the fact that all college posts have been advertised except those of community colleges. He concludes with the point that, 'until you have a permanently appointed principal you are going to experience major problems'.

The problems experienced by the Department were identified by a workshop held in November 1999 as follows (see Report of the FET Strategic Planning Workshop, Departmental document):

- Lack of provincial strategy for FET
- FET Act and policy is new and not operational at provincial levels
- The Provincial Advisory Board for FET is still not legislated for in the Northern Province
- No dedicated provincial structure for planning, co-ordination and implementation of FET in the Department resulting in planning, co-ordination and communication problems
- Poor vertical co-ordination across institutional, provincial and national levels
- Recognition of prior learning still on paper
- Lack of funds for FET development
- Under-staffing of the sub-directorate
- Poor orientation of staff for FET goals and challenges
- Lack of FET advocacy in communities
- Line functioning not clearly defined

One of the threats identified by the workshop was the "outflow of key personnel from the Department". This has indeed proved to be the case.

The potentially positive role being played by the National Business Initiative (NBI) is in jeopardy because of the lack of communication and the use of appropriate structures. One former official (interview 29/05/2000) analysed the situation as follows: 'NBI is linking with institutions without the participation of certain important department officials or structures'. As this indicated that they were working 'without the context of department policy', he believed the 'programme would collapse'. He also feared that once the programme was completed, there is a danger that it may not be sustained because of this "lack of context".

Finally the DDG (interview, 17/05/2000) observed, ' The structures of the Department need to be strengthened'. This statement is really at the heart of our findings. The strengthening should come through; enhanced expertise, effective systems and financial resources.

4.4. The Effect of the Department on the College: What effect has the department had on the change process at the college and what is the attitude of the college to the Department? This is an important question because the college is not an autonomous body and has been described by one official of the department as "our college". We will just mention a few points made by the college personnel to illustrate this:

- The department has not adjusted to the new structure and size of our institution, this has affected our budget adversely (Admin official 15/05/2000).
- Our relationship with the sub-directorate is good, they are helpful (Rector 16/05/2000).
- They [the department] don't know how to define us really (management, focus group 16/05/2000).
- The government did not know what to expect. They also need to be trained (management, ref.).
- Mr. Dikotla (former sub-directorate official) seemed to be working in isolation (management, ref.).
- If you have an issue, if you go to Head Office, you go from one [door or person] to another (lecturer 17/05/2000).
- Some officials still treat us as two colleges (management, ref.).
- When you come with a good idea someone in the department will not approve (management, ref.).
- Department does not take into account and plan for a larger institution (management, ref.).

Concluding remarks: The conclusion that we draw from this is one of indecision, lack of communication with (and within) the department and the college. We believe the indecisiveness of the department and lack of commitment to the transformation of the college has led to many of the problems experienced by the college and the lack of support it so badly needs. It is crucial that the department develops its structures and capacity so that it will be able to "develop and implement FET planning and monitoring procedures ... and implementing a managed process for institutional capacity building" (Landscape document pg 8).

5. Institutional Governance and Management:

5.1. General Situation: The phase 1 report (HSRC 1999: 37) reflected a reasonably positive view of the N.P.C.C. management. It was described as being 'democratic, consultative and inclusive'. However the report also mentioned that there was 'weak security of tenure, [which] led to anxiety and may be a factor contributing to various degrees of non-enthusiasm among some staff as to their future' (p.46).

The first phase of the research took place in 1999 when things 'were going reasonably well' (former departmental official, interview 29/05/2000). The events of the second half of 1999 which culminated in the removal of the whole of the top management structure, including the council, has had a traumatic effect on the staff, administration and students. The fears and anxiety mentioned in the report have since been exacerbated.

The new Rectorate finds itself in a difficult position. Both are appointed in acting positions. This situation of acting is not confined to the Rectorate, it affects most members of the Management Committee. In an attempt to emphasise the gravity of this situation the Rector posed this rhetorical question: 'how do you establish your authority if you are acting?' (interview 16/05/2000). One member of the management committee (focus group 16/05/2000) remarked that the members of staff often say, or their attitude indicates: 'don't forget you are acting'. Another member of this committee describes the scenario thus:

Sometimes you feel you are a manager, but you realise your arms are tied because you are acting or temporary...something or a voice inside will tell you that you are still acting...we can't take firm action.

With the new management, especially with the Rectorate having to find their feet and are moving from crisis to crisis, there has emerged 'an uncomfortable distance between management and the rest' (staff, focus group 16/05/2000).

Management and administration are handicapped in the work they do by only having eight support staff. At present they do not have typists, telephonists, secretaries and the required number of administration officers. The Chief Administrative Clerk (interview 15/05/2000) points out: 'we have fewer clerical

staff now than we had when we were a single college'.

One important thing the management has not been able to do is unite the staff of the two former colleges; an issue raised by the Chief Administrative Clerk:

The two sides fought over positions; and this caused tensions. People from Tseke Maboe especially feel apprehensive that people from Shikwane Matlala are dominating. Things are not 100%, we are not united and there is a feeling that we are not together...amalgamation is in name only.

There also exists suspicion between members of staff of the two former colleges. The rector is, however, aware of this situation and is already engaging in discussions with influential staff members from the two sides to encourage them to operate as one college.

5.2. Current Governance Mechanisms: The governance structure of the college is as follows:

- **Executive:** consists of Rector, Deputy Rectors, 2 Chief Administrative Officers, 4 Heads of Division
- **Management Team:** The above members, LRC, representation from workers union
- **Academic Board:** Rectorate, Management Team, Representatives from College Council, LRC. At present Rector is the chairperson.
- **College Council:** The former council was dismantled. The College is in the process of establishing a new one.
- **Learners Representative Council (LRC):** 12 members (at present all male)

There are sub-structures such as the Sport Committee, Public Relations Committee and Career Guidance Committee.

The Academic Board has held two meetings so far this year. One meeting was to introduce the new Rector. The other was held to deal with the admission crisis linked to the continuing admission of N5 and N6 courses as the college has a shortage of staff. Through an investigation by the Department it was found that some classes had only 2 students. The LRC is particularly concerned about the future of the N5 and N6 courses and are taking action to retain them.

The LRC seems to be experiencing tensions with the management and there is a perception among its members that there is a lack of support in terms of the building of their own capacity, leadership skills, management and finance. The LRC is concerned that they are being excluded from decision-making (LRC, focus group 15/05/2000). This may

be a real concern because we learnt that there is currently a process to exclude the LRC from top management because it is felt that they are sufficiently represented through the Academic Board. This exclusion would be contrary to FET which stipulates that students should be represented at all levels of decision-making.

The previous management initiated a process for the development of a vision and mission statement. As indicated in the Phase 1 Report (ref.), this was done through a democratic process and was being revised at that time of (phase 1 report) writing. Although the existing vision and mission statements are printed in the *College Policy Document* (undated, probably 1999), members of the management team (focus group 16/05/2000) stated that they regarded this as a draft only, that it had not been adopted, and that it did not form the basis of policy formulation. The mission statement reflects the broader goals of a democratic South African society but it does not particularly address certain crucial aspects contained in the FET Act such as redress, equity, access and gender issues. Nowhere, in either the mission or vision statements, is the idea of a community college or the implications of this for communities mentioned. Clearly there is need for revision. The *College Policy Document* itself also needs revision to reflect the community college philosophy and practice.

Strategic planning

The College is in the process of drawing up a strategic plan. A group under the Chair of the Vice-rector, Ms Mabusela meets every Tuesday to continue to reflect on and develop the institutional needs and strategic plan. This process is being funded National Business Initiative (NBI).

5.3. Awareness of National and Provincial Policy Frameworks: At management level, especially the Rectorate, there is a high awareness of the FET Act and the National Skills Act.

As far as staff and students are concerned there is a wide disparity in their understanding of FET policy. It is agreed that everyone at the college, management, staff and students, need to be educated in the new provisions. However, it was felt that the Department of Education was not supportive enough, and that communication, commitment and involvement need to be improved.

5.4. Management Style: It is difficult to determine what the style of the management will be in the present circumstances as the Rectorate is still “finding its feet”.

Because it is still involved in establishing structures and procedures some members of staff and students regard it aloof and authoritarian. There is a feeling amongst staff and students that there is not enough communication and information sharing. Students, especially the LRC, complain that they are being excluded from the decision-making processes.

The research team is of the opinion that this may be a temporary and necessary stage “to get the college working again”. We believe it is in the nature and personality of both the Rector and Vice-Rector to work democratically and as a management team. The openness we as the research team experienced and the willingness to share information does not however, point to an authoritarian disposition.

5.5 Collegiality: One of the most striking features of N.P.C.C. is the low level of collegiality. It was confirmed in almost every interview that staff from the two former colleges still operated as entities rather than an amalgamated institution.

The staff from the two former colleges do not feel committed to the amalgamated college and its new management. There are also unsettling attitudes to lecturers from the rationalised colleges of education who are seen as “academic” or “having degrees” or that “they don’t have technical background”.

5.6. Community : Partnerships, Linkages and Responsiveness

5.6.1. Interaction with Northern Province Education Department: Apart from the points already mentioned earlier, the college is concerned that the positive relationship they had with Mr. Dikotla (a former official in the Sub-Directorate) has been broken because he has left the employ of the Department. Apparently Mr. Dikotla had worked very closely for three months with the new Rectorate. They also felt that he was committed to the promotion of the development of the community college concept and had a thorough understanding of the FET sector.

The Northern Province Education Department is seen as unsupportive, especially with regard to the question of staffing and financial allocations. The chief Administrative Clerk (interview 15/05/2000) noted: "The department is always complaining that we are using a lot of money, and our budget is ignored".

There is disappointment at the college that the Department does not visit the college 'to see for themselves' (staff focus group, 16/05/2000). Consequently they (the Department) 'know nothing about the happenings at the college...they only attend when there are functions'.

5.6.2. Inter-Institutional Co-operation: The Rector is a member of the Committee of Principals of Technical Colleges (COPTEC), but there exists no co-operation with other institutions either locally, provincially or nationally.

5.6.3. Responsiveness to Business and Industry: There has been no conscious effort on the part of the college to undertake market research, either formally or informally, of business or industry needs. Management and staff, however, recognize the need to respond more proactively to these needs. Indeed, the students are being adversely affected by this lack of negotiation, in that business and organisations are most reluctant to take students for their practicals. A data-base of a network for practicals needs to be established very soon.

5.6.4. Responsiveness to Community: There is no strategy in place to respond to the needs of the community. Indeed there is a ready excuse ("no money, no facilities") why the college cannot respond more to community needs. There is, however, agreement that the college responds to the community in the following ways:

- The community does use facilities, especially the hall
- Students do practicals in the community for which the college receives payment. This goes into the "college pool".
- Women from the community have rented a class for a self-help project
- Vodacom has facilities on campus (members of the community have access to them).

An encouraging development is that the Skills Section has been approached by both the members of the Service Corps and the Department of Works for it to run certain skills programmes for their members.

Another example of how the college is responding to community needs is the establishment of satellite campuses at Mokgohle and at Makopo High School in Magatle village. Students from surrounding villages enrol for an N1 first semester course where they receive tuition in electrical, building and motor mechanics. The major problem is that there are no workshops to conduct practicals, therefore they concentrate on theory. The satellite campuses are not big enough to accommodate equipment for practicals.

This outreach step is an important development on the part of the college. It shows their recognition of the openness of FET policy in terms of accessibility especially now that FET can even be provided at some high schools.

5.6.5. Responsiveness to Potential Students: The college has a Public Relations (PR) committee to work on recruitment. However, the chairperson also serves as librarian and the members have commitments outside their PR function, so they cannot devote sufficient time to recruitment, and therefore this desk is not successful.

With regard to the assistance to students, the Rector(interview 16/05/2000) explained:

Many students come from rural disadvantaged communities and need to be assisted financially. Fees have been adjusted to enable the college to assist students. Consultation with stakeholders was carried out and a new fees structure was adopted in 1998.

Thus, the fees at N.P.C.C. are related to the ability of the student to pay. In cases where students are assessed unable to pay, various options could include fee revision and bursaries. The bursary option has not, as yet, been fully explored or developed.

5.6.6. Responsiveness to Graduates: There is still no tracer system in the college. Some lecturers and management indicated that such a system would be useful for strategic planning purposes in the future. (Also see students 10.1 and 10.2)

5.6.7. Responsiveness to Staff Needs: At present there is no staff development programme. All members of staff expressed a need for a well structured and relevant programme.

5.7. Financial Matters: The FET Act makes provision for colleges to become autonomous and thus attain legal personality status (*juristic person status*). This will enable the colleges to enter into contracts and partnerships with financial and other institutions or bodies that could have financial or monetary benefits for the college. It is this aspect of partnership and funding that is crucial for the sustenance of FET institutions. This therefore suggests greater potential capacity on the part of college governance on matters for financial control.

N.P.C.C. does not have at this stage this advanced capacity to deal with this. However, an encouraging point about N.P.C.C. is that they are able to control their finances satisfactorily. If there is to be an improvement on this situation in the near future, greater capacity both in personnel and skills will need to be developed. As the college is beginning to experience a student debt problem (Chief Administrative Clerk, 15/5/00), learners are required to pay the full amount at registration. The college however, has an arrangement with some parents to pay half the amount and to pay the rest in instalments. This is an example of the college being flexible to facilitate greater access for the more needy students.

As indicated in the Phase One Report (ref.), the college was in the process of having new workshops built. The contract is now complete. A sum of R38 million is budgeted for equipping these workshops.

Departments draw their own budgets and hand them to the Deputy Rector. Standard treasury controls are employed at N.P.C.C. The COLTECH system is not yet being employed in the college management system.

Concluding remarks: It is obvious that colleges, if they are to succeed, will require substantial financial resources. Their funding should come from government, the private sector and communities. N.P.C.C. does not at this stage access funding from the private sector or the community. The funding from government is totally

inadequate. The only income the college receives at present is from fees collected from students. The tuition fees vary from course to course. It is a matter of pride that the fees charged are very affordable, lower than other colleges in the area.

6. Physical Facilities

6.1. Appearance: The overall architectural design of the college is school-like, but three new buildings (administration block, two engineering blocks) do change the outlook into a more college-like one. A multi-purpose hall is currently used for all college functions, e.g. Student Christian Movement (SCM), etc. The property is generally not well maintained. Some of the buildings are in a poor condition and the gardens or college grounds are neglected with wild-growing grass. The LRC (focus group 15/05/2000) described the campus thus: 'we stay in a game reserve'. Litter is also a great problem. During our stay at the college, we saw broken windows in some of the classes, ceilings unimaginably damaged (and in some classes missing), and broken desks lying all over no one seemed to be bothered.

Supervision on campus is a matter that needs attention. Both workers and administration staff are dissatisfied. The workers (focus group 18/05/2000) complained that there was no direct supervision, they were accountable to a clerk who they said does not *actually* supervise them. An administrative officer (interview 19/05/2000) explained:

the problem is that we are always in the office, thus there is no direct supervision. They just come to the college to sign in and do nothing.

Cases of workers intimidating, assaulting and ignoring their seniors were reported. The Department has not been able to take any action in all cases. This frustrates the seniors; the situation was emphasised by an administrative officer (interview 19/05/2000):

There is no action taken against the workers who don't do their work. they are used to the fact that whatever I can say to them amounts to empty threats.

6.2. Specialised Facilities and Equipment: The workshops in the skills training

section include a brick-laying workshop, panel beating, motor mechanics, plumbing, carpentry, joinery and cabinet-making, auto-electrical, electrical (heavy current), and upholstery workshop. There are also laboratories which have been recently constructed. The buildings which have the IT apartment are new, spacious and well-ventilated. The welding workshop is well-equipped. According to the two lecturers responsible for this department, they have the equipment but it is outdated. Most students who were interviewed confirmed this. The welding workshop complies with NOSA requirements.

6.3. Staff Facilities: The staff facilities comprise an administration block with

amenities such as a photocopying room, a boardroom and five offices for senior management. There is a staff common room that has a kitchenette built into it. There is no staff housing on campus. Some staff members occupy apartments in the student residences, something the LRC and the boarding masters and matron (focus group 18/05/2000) are unhappy about.

6.4. Student facilities: There is a dining hall, but students do not use it because the chairs and tables, some of which are badly damaged and lay outside, 'were meant for smaller kids' (LRC member 16/05/2000). A bookshop is available in the administration block. The sport facilities include a soccer field, netball court, volleyball court; all needing revamping.

There are boarding facilities available for 900 students. Some of these buildings are old and unsuitable for an FET institution. Unfortunately, because the demand is so great, students are prepared to live in them. There are two new residential buildings, but they are already in a state of disrepair due to a lack of management and supervision. The ablution facilities at all the residences are in a shocking state and most should be condemned. We cannot understand why the education and health departments have allowed this situation to persist.

7. Students/Learners

7.1. Profile: The student enrolment at the time of writing (mid-May 2000) was expected to be slightly in excess of three thousand, (part-time students were still

being registered until the end of the following week). The student population comprises only Black youth, not specifically limited to the Seshego Township, which is the immediate community of the college, but also from other parts of the Northern Province, with a few from other provinces.

Approximately 97% of the population speak Sepedi (Northern Sotho) as their first language. Although English is said to be the language of communication and learning, Sepedi is practically the dominant language. It was observed that many students found it difficult to use English. Their age group, on average, ranges between 18 and 30 years. Most students, indeed over 95%, have passed Grade 12 even though the college prospectus indicates that for certain programmes students with a minimum standard 7 (Grade 9) pass can be admitted. The students are generally from poor rural backgrounds where breadwinners are mostly pensioners or mothers who are domestic workers or labourers. The monthly household income was found to range generally between R300 and R600 per month. Siblings, former teachers, husbands and grandparents assisted in the payment of students' fees.

The majority of the students are registered full-time, and there does not appear to be any emphasis or effort on the part of the college to encourage part-time registrations.

Only about 900 students are accommodated in the college residences. The college hostel fees are charged at R360 per semester, including meals. The rest of the student population is accommodated in rented structures in the township and informal settlements in and around Seshego, where they paid between R120 and R200 per month. Most of the rented structures do not have electricity and hot water. Many students have a walking distance of 20 to 45 minutes to the college. Some commute from surrounding villages like Moletji and Mmotong by buses. A few students complained of unbearable noise levels and general climate not conducive to study around their rented lodgings, for example shebeens and spaza shops in close proximity. (A spaza is a make-shift shop usually run from a home where they sell anything from bread to sweets).

Most students do not realise the difference between technical and community college (LRC member 15/05/2000). To them it did not matter whether it was a technical or community college. Their motivation for attending the college is a way of getting some

qualification. Other reasons included low fees, its geographical accessibility, that a desired course is offered and simply that they could be admitted. Some came to the college because it is not private, and thus a government institution which is registered, and they could therefore be sure that their qualifications are recognised and acceptable to future employers.

7.2. Student Support System:

During the research process we investigated whether the college had student support services and facilities in place. One of the pertinent aspects of FET policy is student support, especially in areas such as guidance, finance and academic support. This makes sense considering that objectives of FET institutions, particularly community colleges, is to address issues of poverty, development and joblessness. As the Chief Administrative Clerk (interview 15/05/2000) puts it:

The government said everybody from the street with skill but no papers or reading ability should be accommodated at community college. This is what they want us to do.

This indeed necessitates support in various ways including language support, counselling, financial assistance and job placement (ref. white paper on FET). The quality of students that access community college is also influenced by a generally held perception (as aptly articulated by one member of the college management in an interview on 16 May 2000):

The perception of communities is that community colleges are for academically weak students and associated with technical colleges which need only *bokgoni bja mesomo ya diatla* [ability to do handwork].

Our findings pointed to a lack of meaningful support systems at the N.P.C.C. However, section 4.3 (p. 4) of the college's booklet titled *College Policy Document* states the following:

All learners are entitled to the college support services such as counselling, career guidance, sports, arts and cultural activities.

It is part of the duties of the college to embark on a fund-raising campaign with the objective of financial assistance to deserving learners.

This ambivalence confirms the statement by a student (interview 15/05/2000) that 'what the prospectus says is not what is offered'.

- a) **Career Guidance and Orientation:** We found that these were set to be the responsibilities of a "career guidance committee" which was found to be dysfunctional. The committee was also expected to do other activities like "marketing" and "welcoming". Although the rector feels 'this committee is the backbone of the college' (interview 16/05/2000) it is not effective since only the Public Relations Officer (PRO - he is also the college librarian), is active while others are not motivated. He can't do much because he does his full-time duties as a librarian. Consequently, there is no student orientation and career guidance. One student put it thus (interview 18/05/2000):

We don't apply to come to this college, we just bring certificates... there is no guidance. We get information only in the prospectus. There is no orientation.

Another student said the following (18/05/2000):

Engineering seems to be popular with students. Many students do this because they are not guided. It's just because their brothers did it, and later they find that they don't cope. Many are boys.

The head of department in Art/Design and Tourism (16/05/2000) said the following:

The main problem with newly-admitted learners is that they have no idea about college programmes. They jump from one programme to another. There's lack of vocational guidance; orientation and guidance are very *ad hoc*.

He adds that the 'committee is not effective [and] a full-time post is needed for this'. Several members of the management are agreed that the marketing or PR section of the college needs to be developed (focus group 16/05/2000)

- b) **Language:** Although the prospectus does not indicate the official language of communication, all the correspondence and official documents (including the prospectus itself) are written in English. The staff and students "understand" that English is the language of communication, learning and teaching at the college. However, because of strong Pedi (Northern Sotho) dominance in terms of staff and student numbers (see Learners' and Staff profiles), and poor English language competence by some lecturers and many students, teaching and communication are facilitated by code-switching to Sepedi.

The LRC members (focus group 15/05/2000) think the problem lies with lecturers'

English language limitations, and point out that:

~~The medium of instruction is essentially Northern Sotho but we expected to be taught in English...~~lecturers don't qualify to teach here, they use Northern Sotho...

Although there could be a few lecturers with English language limitations, we observed that many of them (students) indeed found it difficult to communicate in English. Many students also raised the language issue as a serious problem and a concern of theirs and expressed their need for support in English Language. The following is an example of what they said:

Sometimes we struggle with English and teachers switch to Northern Sotho to help those who don't understand. We need an English course to develop our language (*I.T. student 18/05/2000*).

The lecturers also point to language as a serious problem affecting the teaching/learning process at the college. In the absence of structures that support learners in this regard, they code-switch to Sepedi. However, they do suggest ways in which this problem can be circumvented. The following are some of the views expressed by some members of staff:

The medium of instruction is an issue...students have problems with English. [for] those who haven't passed Std 10, [their] English is even worse...there is no remedial course in English...adults should be free to use whatever language they are comfortable with (*Food Service lecturer 16/05/2000*).

Although this points to multi-lingualism, a strong feature of the new Curriculum and OBE, we are sceptical of the college population being able to meet this challenge given its composition (see students' and staff profiles) and their attitude/stereotypes to language and education.

We suggest Communication, for example, Technical Communication for improvement of English and for understanding of tuition. This should also assist in the development of reading and writing skills (*Engineering lecturer 17/05/2000*).

According to Curriculum 2005 it is not wrong to code-switch to Sepedi in teaching. However, this might be problematic in situations or classes where Venda and Tsonga-speaking students are involved. Other problems may be far-reaching when one considers, for example, concerns by some students (informal interview 18/05/2000) like this one: 'This is a Sepedi college'.

7.3. Library Services: The library is inadequate and poorly resourced, especially when considering the size of the college. A student (18/05/2000) had this to say: 'The library is very small. We read in the community library'. This is a post-school institution where students are expected to do independent study, thus the library is crucial.

7.4. Academic Support: We found that many students do not have the necessary prior knowledge required for the various programmes for which they have enrolled. Despite this scenario, no academic support systems are in place to bridge the gap or assist students to cope with the demands of the programmes. This can be explained by the lack of financial support or teaching staff. The lack of career guidance in the schools from which the learners come often accounts for learners taking courses for which they are not suited. The following observations were made during the research:

- Many students don't have the appropriate prior knowledge as reflected by their grade 12 certificates. For example, a lack of Science/Maths support programmes result in situations where 'some students are turned away every quarter simply because they don't have Maths and Science' (LRC, focus group 15/05/2000).
- The Art/Design lecturer complains that he experiences problems with students who do not have the basics because 'students meet the programmes for the first time at college' (interview 17/05/2000).
- An Engineering lecturer says students experience problems with calculations. "Students in the Mechanical side have problems with interpreting drawings...the school system and curriculum is not in sync with the college provision. There is poor background in schools' (17/05/2000).
- The Chemistry teacher points that students have 'poor Maths foundation...the schools are obsessed with Matric results without considering career interests of learners. This is evident in subject at high schools which enable learners to simply pass Matric' (17/05/2000).

7.5. Counselling: There are no counselling services at the college. This results in students failing to take responsibility for their studies and general stay at the

institution. There is consensus from our interviews that this leads to 'high failure rate at this college'. For example, an administrative official (interview 15/05/2000) says:

I am ashamed of the students I'm producing today. Most of the time is not spent in classes, but in town doing personal things...there is no one to challenge them as there is a management crisis.

We recognise the impact of the 'management crisis' on the general running of the college programmes (this aspect is discussed elsewhere in this report). We nevertheless are of the view that it might not necessarily be a matter of 'challenging', but a question of self-discipline and self-introspection that can be instilled by student counselling services.

One of the I.T. students (interview 18/05/2000) put it thus:

Many of our colleagues do not cope with life here and don't do home works because they are away from parents. They lack responsibility, some don't even attend classes and have no respect.

7.6. Financial Assistance: As indicated in section 5.7 above, the college does recognise the need to give financial support to students. The *College Policy Document* (ref) articulates this aspect. In our research, however, we found that the college does nothing at present to assist students financially. This becomes extremely serious when one considers the background of the student population (see student profile).

The Chief Administrative Clerk (interview 15/05/2000) puts it thus:

There are no bursaries nor assistance for students. Since the establishment of N.P.C.C. we started experiencing student debt as we were always lectured in council meetings that students were from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The L.R.C (focus group 15/05/2000) suggested that students (especially in Skills section) do renovations for payment or reduction in fees. However, these were rejected and 'instead the Department and Management are calling in experts...'

7.7. Student Security and Health: There is a private security company at the college. Our observation during the research period has been that the security company is more focused on theft of college property than the safety of the students. For example every car entering and leaving the campus is searched and the driver identifies himself or herself by writing particulars in a logbook.

Movement of persons to and from the campus was continuous and the personal identification process was relaxed. According to the 1999/2000 college prospectus (on p.7) 'a student card grants a student access to the college premises'. Despite this statement, we observed that this was not practised. Visitors have access to the college by simply identifying themselves by producing their identity documents. This did not appear to be effective. Our interviews with students, boarding master and some members of staff confirmed this. The following is an example of their responses:

Rapes and assaults are common, and the boarding master and matron are not in control...we are battling to protect expensive equipment (*Business Studies Lecturer* 18/05/2000).

In as far as students' health is concerned the prospectus (ref.) articulates the following provisions under "medical care":

(a0 treatment for minor injuries and ailments is given free of charge at the college
(b0 students are responsible for hospitalisation and ambulance service costs

In our investigation we found that there is no health facility at the college, and in no way does the college offer 'treatment for [any] injuries and ailments'. The boarding masters and matron have no capacity and means to attend to health problems the students experience in the college residences. This was confirmed by the students and the boarding masters and matron. In our interview with the boarding masters and matron (focus group 18/05/2000) the following aspect emerged:

We have no first aid kit or medical equipment. The ambulances can only come when the casualties are bloody etc [and] we haven't had any workshop to develop ourselves. For example, the hospital or health department can teach us on first aid issues. During the night we are told doctors are only available for emergency cases

7.8. Student Leadership: This is another important aspect for the FET institutions.

Our view is that for the student leadership to be able to make contributions in the forums where FET policy issues are discussed and taken forward, they should have their capacities developed in various ways. They mentioned for instance leadership skills, understanding of the documents and the ability to explain in the context of FET.

The N.P.C.C. recognises the need for student leadership support as articulated in the *College Policy Document* ref. p.5):

1. As a means of empowering the LRC to perform their duties effectively and efficiently the management pledges to:
 - 1.1. Facilitate training of LRC in leadership skills.
 - 1.2. Organizing workshop on capacity building.

We have, nevertheless, observed that although the college “pledges” to do this, nothing in this regard has happened. The following comments by an LRC member and the boarding master support this:

The rectorate undermines the integrity of the SRC. We have never had any workshop on leadership, and capacity... (*LRC member 18/05/2000*).

The SRC needs orientation. They need to be engaged in relevant programmes to develop their leadership capacity (*Boarding master 18/05/2000*).

Concluding remarks: We thus conclude that for the proper learner support systems to be put in place (in the context of FET policy provision) there should be concrete support not only in principle, but also in terms of funds and other resources.

8. College Curriculum

Theoretically community college curricula should be multi-dimensional. Therefore the college should offer a broad spectrum of programmes within a single institutional framework, to a diverse range of students with varying abilities, levels of prior achievement and educational goals. How does the N.P.C.C. compare when measured against these criteria?

The general consensus is that the curriculum has not changed appreciably since the establishment of the new community college. A number of programmes are offered at present. We mention these and then make comments on the curriculum as a whole.

8.1. Present College Curriculum

The college offers the National Technical Certificate Training Courses, which are career oriented. Training is offered on six different levels, three pre-tertiary, i.e. N1, N2, N3 and the other three tertiary, i.e. N4, N5 and N6 (ref. prospectus).

Students may also sit for the external national examinations, and National Technical Certificates are issued by the Department of Education. In the Skills Training Department, students sit for the internal examination. It is envisaged that in the future successful students will be accredited with certificates issued by various industrial training boards. In Business Studies the National Diploma Certificate is offered.

The departments of the college are as follows:

- Technical Academic Department: Building and Civil Technology, Electrical, Mechanical, Chemical and Soft Trade (Tailoring, Clothing Production and Knitting) Divisions
- Business Studies department
- Skills Training Department
- Social Service Department (Food Service, Educare, Care for the Handicapped, Art, Interior Decoration and Tourism)
- Computer Studies and Information Technology Department

Although the prospectus makes the claim that the N.P.C.C. 'has established and introduced programmes and services which are directly relevant to local community needs', the evaluation by the Rector was, 'we are more of a technical college than a community college. Most of our programmes are technical'.

Some programmes were introduced by the lecturers from some rationalised colleges of education. Although they did not have a technical background, they introduced new courses in the Social Service Department. These courses, which were close to their areas of training, are Art, Educare, Care of the Handicapped, Food Service (Home Economics). These courses bring theory and practice together, which is a necessary development in the amalgamated college. Although these lecturers are academically qualified with degrees, the students feel 'they teach courses they are not trained in'. A further example of innovation is one from the I.T. Section. The lecturers had realised the programmes offered at the college were not market-related, so they negotiated with a company to provide a programme in Microsoft Office. This department has also entered into a partnership with a computer outreach institute. Part-time computer tuition is also offered in the afternoons. This however is an informal partnership.

The introduction of non-formal courses such as Basic Training in Food Service, which includes Cleaning, Cookery, Laundry, First Aid and Personal Hygiene, also shows

innovative thinking. The prospectus (p.33) states that it is intended 'to help those students who are unable to cope with the theoretical training in this specific field'. For this programme the prospectus lists under career opportunities, "street vendoring". It is unusual for formal educational institutions (e.g. technical colleges etc), to recognise this reality of our new economic situation.

An interesting reason given for the development of the Educare programme is the provision of a facility for the young ones of staff and students. The original idea was the setting up of a creche and pre-school in which the students would receive hands-on experience. Although the Educare course is being offered, the provision of the school has been put on hold due to lack of resources.

These developments show an awareness of the need to broaden the curriculum and to care for hitherto neglected members of the community, namely, early learners, the handicapped and those who may become informal traders.

An aspect, which is a legacy of the nature of the former two colleges (one college provided theory and the other the practical), is that there is still a divide between theory and practice in most programmes. An important development, however, is the attempt to bring in entrepreneurial skills into the various programmes. This is being done because there is the recognition that the students will need to become "more job-creators rather than job-seekers". This shows understanding of the present job market. The programme would include communication skills and basic bookkeeping.

8.2. Why has there been so little movement towards a community college curriculum?

- a) We believe there has been very little guidance and commitment to the idea by the management and the provincial Department of Education. The lecturers feel this attitude comes from the top, from the Department of Education itself.

'Even the Department frustrates us, they channel us to work according to a specific curriculum...the Department always forces the syllabus on us and doesn't want to bridge the gap between theory and practice' (*Business Studies lecturer 16/05/00*).

b) A strong motivating factor has been the preservation of the status quo and lecturers' jobs. This has come about because there has been little or no incentive or "push" to think innovatively and creatively. The point was made by a lecturer (16/05/2000) that 'if we came up with the suggestion for a new course or programme, we might work ourselves out of a job'. This point was also mentioned by a Departmental official in the Sub-Directorate for FET (interview 09/05/2000):

When community colleges were asked to come up with programmes, they suggested programmes that reflected their own qualifications rather than community needs.

This attitude on the part of the lecturers is understood, considering the nature and history of the college moving to a 'community college' mode and this being done during the process of redeployment and rationalisation (R&R).

c) Structural changes have not been effected by the Department to facilitate curriculum changes. A Head of Division (interview 17/05/2000) made this point:

We cannot introduce new programmes because we must keep to the student/lecturer ratio. Nothing has really changed in terms of curriculum. We are barely coping because of the ratio, availability of classrooms and lecturers. The time-table and number of hours are prescribed by the bible.

It appears that the Department has either not realised what the implications are of introducing new community-based programmes or do not have the resources to make these structural changes.

d) The perception that 'if you offer internal certificates they are not recognised' (Head of Department interview 17/05/2000), shows the lack of understanding of the new accreditation possibilities offered by the South African Qualification Authority (SAQA) and National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

e) Lecturers have been discouraged from introducing new programmes because they have always been told 'there is no money'. When the management did attempt to employ temporary lecturers over the established quota and pay them through student fees, they were told by the Department that this was not permissible. Furthermore, the

Department cannot agree to the employment of extra staff because of 'a moratorium on employment and the R & R (redeployment and rationalisation) which still has to be completed'.

f) New programmes require new equipment and facilities which all mean further expense. This needs to be budgeted for in advance. The present system is not flexible enough to facilitate this. Where lectures have tried to circumvent the system by using the college budget and then claim back from the Department, they found 'this takes forever'.

g) There seems to be a lack of a true understanding of what constitutes "relevance" in curriculum. Anything really can be justified in terms of "relevance" e.g:

Everybody needs to eat and therefore it is necessary for them to learn how to cook and through this we can bring in the necessity for hygiene
(*Lecturer, Food Service 16/05/2000*)

h. Then obviously there are those who have just resisted change. As a lecturer said, 'we did not ask to be a community college. It was forced on us from above'.

i. The absence of a properly structured and implemented needs analysis has meant there is no picture of what is needed. The college has never conducted such an investigation. Although a number of members of staff expressed the need for this, it has not happened. Once again we feel this is either through the lack of vision and leadership on the part of management or the lack of support from the Department in this regard. The management (focus group 16/05/2000) feel:

the change was too sudden, [we] should have been trained and know what is expected...even some of the programmes were never researched; they were just introduced and later [we] discovered that it would not lead us anywhere.

j. Finally, a point made by a former Departmental official (29/05/2000) is important here.

When talking about programme development he emphasised that a community college would need to have 'a strong wing of programme developers: people who are able to see a need'. The college at present does not have this expertise or capacity.

8.3. Accessibility: The admission criteria for most of the programmes and the selection procedure favour those who have passed Grade 12 (Std 10) rather than those who have not had the opportunity, although consideration is being given to those with a Std 7 pass and work experience. Relevant here is the implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) which the prospectus acknowledges in the "general admission requirements". However, no criteria for this have been developed or policy formulated. This exercise is very difficult but a number of institutions are grappling with this process and assistance could be sought from those. Students who are admitted through RPL criteria very often need support programmes such as reading, writing and study skills in order to succeed (see 7.2 above). N.P.C.C. does not have such programmes although the lecturers have expressed this need. Due to the nature of the former technical institutions, the programmes cater mostly for the youth rather than adults.

8.4. Development of a Community College Curriculum: There is no idea of what constitutes a theoretical basis for the development of a community college curriculum. We feel we cannot blame the college for this as this kind of debate is lacking throughout the country. We are not aware of any references they can consult to address questions such as:

- what should a community college curriculum achieve?
- How should it be structured?
- How do we bring the curriculum closer to the community?
- How do we involve students more closely with the community through the curriculum?
- How can we bridge the artificial divide between theory and practice?
- How can we ensure that a student who graduates from a community college has community experience and has sensitivity to community needs?
- How can the curriculum and its programmes enable a student to reflect on his/her own held values and attitudes with regard to poverty, illiteracy, community responsibility and development?
- How should the curriculum develop skills such as reading, writing, problem-posing, critical thinking, self-confidence and the will for action to change communities?
- How can the curriculum accommodate learners who do not have formal qualifications or where there may be "a skills deficit?"

These questions are crucial for a real transformation of the college curriculum that we feel is required for the true spirit of a community college to exist. The curriculum is a crucial vehicle for the achievement of the goals of a community college as espoused by the proponents for the establishment of community colleges. In the recommendations we will describe a way for transforming the curriculum. Another aspect affecting curriculum

development of N.P.C.C. is that lecturers do not know how to apply knowledge of OBE to curriculum. We did not see any attempt to plan lessons or schemes of work according to NQF stipulations. This is not surprising as the lecturers have not attended any OBE workshop. As a member of the management team (focus group 16/05/2000) remarked, 'The staff is still blank on OBE'. It was only in April this year that some members of the management attended a three-day OBE workshop (ref.).

8.5. Quality Assurance: An important aspect of the new policy for education and for the curriculum is the question of quality assurance. When asked the question about quality assurance lecturers and even management were unsure what was meant. Traditional ways of assessing quality were offered, namely class tests, class visits, spot checks, and comparison to national average. An obvious answer is that many of the Skills programmes are accredited by National Education. There is the stated intent to get accreditation from various Boards. The Skills Training programmes are assessed internally by lecturers.

The introduction of OBE is one way of addressing this. Once the college has made its programmes NQF compliant quality assurance will be built into the process. All this is at a systems level. There are, however, less formal ways of assessing. The research team also tried to assess quality of delivery and outcome through observation of workshops, lessons and by being shown the actual product the students produced. In terms of the workshops, demonstration and working side-by-side with the students seemed to be effective. Generally the lecturers seemed to know what they were demonstrating. The products were of varying standards something one would expect from a group of learners.

8.6. Language of Learning and Teaching (Medium of Instruction): A contentious aspect of the curriculum is the language of learning and teaching (medium of instruction).

According to the students, the major classroom usage is Sepedi: English 20%, Sepedi 80%. There seem to be many reasons for this situation. This issue has been detailed in 10.2 above.

8.7. The Teaching Staff: The deliverers of the curriculum are the lecturers. An analysis of the staff qualifications and suitability for holding appointments at the college seems

to bear out the assertion made by both management and students, that many staff members are not suitably qualified. There seems to be too many who have come straight from N6 to teach at the college without work experience.

The criticism by students of the teaching ability of staff seems to be justified if we accept that it is necessary for lecturers to have a teaching qualification in addition to the skill qualification. All lecturers with whom we had informal discussion seemed to have reasonably extensive relevant working experience. All but one said they enjoyed their work.

Students, as the immediate clients of the lecturing staff, assess the lecturers differently. Their views varied between very good and very helpful to not suitably qualified, unhelpful, unprepared and uninterested. They criticised some lecturers for not attending classes regularly and not being sufficiently prepared for lessons. The assessment of the students' attitude to studies is discussed in the section "student support system" (see 10.2 above).

Some programmes such as N5 and N6 may not be offered 'until further notice' (LRC 19/5/00). At the time of writing, the college was negotiating with the Department, and seeking clarity on policy from them.

8.8 Practical Experience

An issue which the college will have to address in the future is the one of "practicals" which students need to undertake in order to gain first-hand experience. It appears that many businesses and organisations in Pietersburg are not interested in allowing strangers (students) to do their "practicals" with them. Lecturers claim that they are battling with this issue. One (interview 18/05/2000) claimed, 'we are scared to take responsibility for students in the job situation'. It is not clear whether this situation is due to racism on the part of the mostly White business men/women or whether they have actually had bad experiences with ill-disciplined students.

Concluding remarks: The above analysis reveals that the curriculum is predominantly a technical college one that has come about through the historical development of the college. The community college curriculum is a complex area as the

college has to respond to as yet unclear policy issues such as RPL, accreditation and quality assurance, flexibility etc. If there is to be any meaningful change in the near future a number of actions need to be taken. Some of these are:

- the building of capacity in curriculum development
- a clearer understanding of the purpose and nature of a community college curriculum
- development of a theory for community college curriculum
- establishment of a (community college) curriculum development unit to promote development
- break down the divide, both physically and mentally, between theory and practice
- recruitment of suitably qualified and experienced staff
- suitable support (management, resources etc)

In terms of the criteria stated at the beginning of this section on curriculum, N.P.C.C. is moving to broadening its spectrum of programmes. Although it has not begun to attract a diverse range of students in terms of age range, there are signs of progress in the direction of catering for disabled learners as well as accommodating female learners in traditionally male domains such as electrical engineering.

9. General Conclusion and Recommendations:

9.1. General Conclusion

Our interpretation of the data reveals a classical example of a case where excellent policy is promulgated but little or no attention is paid to implementation. The implementation is to be carried out largely by provincial departments which themselves are not in a position to manage the implementation process. At present the department needs:

1. More personnel
2. Capacity building
3. Greater resources
4. Effective structures

Even if all this were to be in place, there is still the issue of motivation and attitude which needs to be addressed.

The college has undergone a traumatic and distressing period of re-organisation and reorientation. The fact that the transition has been traumatic is due in no small measure to the climate prevailing in education generally in the country, and in the Northern Province particularly. The Northern Province has probably had the most difficult task in restructuring and redeployment of staff, as it inherited such a large number of colleges. In this difficult situation an inexperienced department had to cope with the multifarious changes taking place in education in South Africa.

The Department had to deal not only with crises on all fronts but also with policy understanding and implementation. That the implementation of first the merger, and later the community college was mismanaged, almost seems inevitable. Against this background it becomes clear that it was not the idea and programme of community college which failed, but the process of implementation. Acknowledging this gives us hope that the notion that the establishment of community colleges is probably the most appropriate solution for the problems facing South Africa at the post-school level.

Coupled with this is the fact that the provincial department was almost forced to move towards implementing community colleges before there were policy guidelines, thus practice preceding policy. For any change to be successfully implemented a substantial period of time is needed to plan and prepare the different stakeholders, both mentally and professionally for this change. The Department did not have this luxury.

Colleges that are government-initiated and supported have a problem in asserting the kind of autonomy desired for them by the FET Act. The almost complete reliance of N.P.C.C. on the Department created unfortunate situations which did not aid the transformation process.

In analysing the data we have found the concept "ecology" practical for us to understand the dynamics of change at the college. Through the lens of this concept we arrived at the following over-arching factors that influenced the implementation and innovation process:

- Climate
- Continuity
- Communication
- Capacity
- Conceptualisation
- Commitment
- Resources
- Co-ordination

In line with the concept "ecology" all of the above are critical for the establishment of an enabling environment for change. As was seen in the discourse the above factors were not positively realised within the college itself, within the provincial department of education and between the college and the Department.

9.2.Recommendations

It is our considered opinion that all is not lost at N.P.C.C. Indeed there are a number of positive aspects which can be built on. In this positive spirit we recommend a few actions which will accelerate the development of N.P.C.C. into a viable community college:

- Implement orientation courses for Departmental officials, stakeholders and college staff which will lead to a total paradigm shift and change of mind sets are imperative. This paradigm shift can only come about when there is an in-depth understanding of the philosophy and practice underpinning FET and community education. These courses should be accompanied by practical advice on how to implement change.
- Rethink the purpose, structure and teaching methodology. Over and above experiential learning as a preferred methodology posited by the FET Act, we suggest that serious attention be given to the concept and practice of service learning. The attraction of service learning is that it brings curriculum and community together in planned and mutually beneficial ways.
- Establish a provincial curriculum unit for FET institutions, the role of which should include translation of curriculum policy, research and development of FET institutions on curriculum matters. Each college would establish its own curriculum committee which would work in close association with the provincial unit. This would enable the department to carry out the stipulation that it is "the responsibility of the provincial departments of education to provide the necessary support and capacity building" Landscape p.6.
- Employ a transformation agency like NICE. Institutions sometimes need non-partisan agents to cut through internal problems. These interventions need to be done in a sensitive and empowering way so that the college feels it is driving the process. This facilitation should lead to N.P.C.C. being in a position to register as an FET institution and thereby moving towards greater autonomy. As a short-term recommendation, the Sub-Directorate for FET should be strengthened and capacitated to play a creative and formative role in the various colleges. Furthermore, its role needs to be defined and recognised as a vital section in the FET delivery in the province.

- Resolve the situation of uncertainty in the college and the Department where so many people are in so-called acting or seconded positions.
- ~~Inspect immediately the living conditions of students on campus and take appropriate action to remedy the unacceptable situation.~~
- Put student support systems in place as an urgent need because the majority of students come from impoverished backgrounds
- Manage the following more flexibly if the college is to attract a wider range of learners in line with FET policy:
 - Time of delivery (not mornings only)
 - Nature and range of programmes
 - Positioning itself for ABET type programmes i.e. literacy and numeracy
 - Regulations for staff provisioning
 - Student support services
 - Marketing
 - Admission and selection policy (e.g. RPL policy etc)

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HSRC REPORT ON COMMUNITY COLLEGES

**REPORT ON COMMUNITY PILOT PROJECT
MPONDOZANKOMO TECHNICAL COLLEGE
FERROBANK
WITBANK
MPUMALANGA**

MAY 2000

**Prof N Gawe
Mrs V L M Tredoux**

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REPORT ON COMMUNITY PILOT PROJECT: MPONDOZANKOMO TECHNICAL COLLEGE, FERROBANK, WITBANK, MPUMALANGA

1. INTRODUCTION

The Mpondozankomo Technical College is situated in the Ferrobank Township of Witbank, Mpumalanga and is one of 5 sites selected by the National Co-ordinating Committee for Community Education (NCC) for possible participation in the FET policy development to ensure transformation and responsiveness of FET institutions. For the NCC, the infusion of community education programmes into the broader FET agenda is essential to achieving the new vision FET.

The objective was to investigate the sustainability of and opportunities for transformation of the Technical College and the programmes offered into a FET community college.

2. FET POLICY AND NATIONAL REPORTS

The *Further Education and Training Act* of 1998 outlines the FET sector as different from school and higher education. The Act allocates powers to the provincial MECs to establish, merge or close public FET institutions. Public education and training includes school grades 10-12, technical and community colleges under the department of education. In addition to government provision there are other providers, such as industry-based trainers and private education institutions and companies.

The positioning of FET as post-compulsory school and workplace education and training means that the Departments of Labour and Education share responsibility for FET. The national constitutional arrangements for co-operative governance and centralised economic planning mean that the responsibility for FET is weighted differently within the Departments of Labour and Education.

Kraak and Hall (1999) pinpoint three crucial issues in their study of technical colleges:-

- many institutions duplicate education and training that is provided by a neighbouring institution;
- education and training does not meet the needs of disadvantaged communities, and
- the relationships between colleges and industry are limited to declining apprenticeship models.

The validity of these statements will be tested in this study.

Although some colleges have responded by providing short courses for self-employment, these efforts have been inadequate and there is a need for greater community development.

The *Report of the National Committee on Further Education* (1997) recommends the introduction of a new FET institution referred to as a "community college" with the following distinct features:

- **Open door policy:** accommodates all learners beyond the age of compulsory schooling irrespective of whether they have completed the GET phase or not.
- **Curriculum comprehensiveness:** the college will be characterised by the multi-purpose dimensions of its curriculum. It would offer a mix of programmes to a mix of students with different abilities and past achievements, with a mix of educational goals within a single institutional framework.
- **Community-based governance:** the college would be governed by a council of members elected or nominated by stakeholder structures within the district or region where the college is located.
- **Single college multi-campus college district:** each college would have a clearly defined district with branch campuses and Community Learning centres located throughout the district or region.
- **Flexible delivery:** programmes would be delivered at the delivery site suitable for that purpose and the college will collaborate with other providers in the delivery of programmes.
- **Student support services:** each community college should have well established student support services which should include Learning Resource Centres, career guidance and counseling, student financial aid, as well as child care centres for adult learners.

Depending on local needs, a community college could offer programmes at all levels, including ABET, FET and even HET if collaborative arrangements can be worked out with suitable higher education institutions. In this study the applicability of these characteristics will be assessed.

The *Further Education and Training Act* of 1998 aims to make it possible for adults and out-of-school youth to learn throughout their lives, to maintain and develop skills, knowledge, attitudes and values necessary for the workplace and to play an active role as parents, community members, consumers and learners. Meeting their FET needs is a challenge that cannot be ignored. The *Skills Development Act No 97* of 1998 together with the *Skills Development Levies Act No. 9* of 1999 will go some way towards facilitating skills development and training the unemployed in South Africa. However, vocational training must be linked to local economic development strategies of particular areas to ensure that the skills learnt yield significant returns.

3. APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The information for this report was obtained by visiting the college, the relevant industry training centres and the immediate environment in order to assess the potential of the college as a FET institution. The methods used for data collection were observations and interviews.

Interviews were conducted with the representatives of the various stakeholders of the College, Industry, the community, Department of Education officials, the Principal and Deputy Principal, two HODs (Engineering & Business Studies), administration staff, academic staff, the SRC, learners and other relevant role players. On-site observation of classroom methodology and examination of resource utilisation was also conducted.

During the interviews the conceptual framework of an interview as devised by FC Marais and S M Holtzhausen was used as a broad guideline. (Addenda 10.1)

The staff of the College co-operated with the research team from the onset. The principal, Mr Pudi, arranged a management meeting with the research team on arrival and the purpose of the research and the expected outcomes to be achieved were clearly spelt out. All members expressed their willingness to co-operate and they were extremely helpful in arranging the required interviews. The scheduled visits and interviews were successfully completed. The co-operation of all stakeholders was encouraging despite the prevailing circumstances.

4. PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

4.1 LOCATION

The Technical College is situated in the Ferrobank Township outside Witbank in a vibrant industrial area. The township also has a secondary school and a second technical college is situated in Witbank. The Mpondozankomo T.C. draws learners mainly from the Northern Province and also from the surrounding areas. These learners found it difficult to obtain suitable accommodation in Ferrobank. The transient nature of the learners makes it difficult for them to keep their accommodation.

4.2 GOVERNANCE

The college resorts under the Witbank district of the Mpumalanga Department of Education. The District Manager of the district is Ms A Chetty.

The college council consisted of 6 members representing

- Ferrometal Industry (Mr Cloete)
 - Highveld Steel (Mr Van Wyk)
 - 3 Departmental representatives
 - 1 Business representative
-

Mr Pudi informed us that Mr Cloete (Ferrometal) and the business representative had resigned. He stated that the council was unconstitutional as it should consist of 12 members. Apparently people were not willing to serve on the council as the college could not afford to pay SNT to members.

Mr Sithole was the current chairperson, but he was not available to be interviewed. Whenever the principal referred to the council, he actually meant Mr Sithole with whom all decisions were made. This situation is not acceptable to the various stakeholders in the institution as they believed the principal was exploiting the situation to meet his needs. A credible college council is vital for effective administration and this is a crucial aspect of the governance of a future FET institution in such a vibrant industrial area.

The college management team consists of:

- Principal : Mr I Pudi
- Acting Deputy Principal: Ms J White
- HOD Engineering: Mr A van der Merwe
- HOD Bus. Studies: Mrs C M Bester
- Public Relations Officer: Ms Ndimande
- Assistant Director: Ms E Olivier
- LRC Liaison Officer: Ms Masilela

This team was responsible for the day to day management of the college.

The principal had also instituted a PRC (Personnel Representative Committee), but because of major disagreements, this committee was suspended indefinitely.

The college has an elected Learner Representative Council. (LRC)

A Broad Transformation Forum (BTF) had also been established representing the Principal, Staff, Learners and Administrative staff. One of the functions of this forum was to approve all cheque requisitions. This forum has also been disbanded and learners as well as senior staff members were demanding that the forum be re-established.

This report does not wish to dwell on the problems of governance, but wishes to refer to the document (Addendum 10.4) as these problems have already been investigated departmentally. It is evident from the interviews that these problems still remain and need to be addressed urgently. However, we need to state that most of the problems at the college revolve around the lack of sound governance. The community-based governance as proposed in the report of the NCFET is clearly not practiced at this college.

4.3 INFRA-STRUCTURE AND FACILITIES

Although situated in a vibrant industrial area with an established infrastructure, the youth still face unemployment due to the lack of relevant skills. The roads are all tarred and the college is served with a network of transport facilities e.g. taxi's and buses. The college has the necessary communication facilities: telephone, fax and computer facilities. Internet was also installed during our site visit.

The college is a well-constructed facebrick building consisting of adequate classrooms, 4 workshops, an administration block (offices for the principal, deputy principal, secretary & clerk, staffroom, staff kitchen and storerooms), HOD offices, a tuck shop, various storerooms and ablution blocks. The buildings have electricity and running water. The school grounds are fully fenced with a security guarded and controlled entrance gate.

The facilities are in a good condition. At the time of the interviews the college grounds and buildings were not clean as the general assistants were not doing their duties. This continued for all the days of the on site visits. There seems to be a reluctance from the management to confront the workers who seem to believe that they are protected by their Union.

The college has the necessary equipment for effective facilitation. Lecturers did complain that broken computers were not timeously repaired. The workshops are apparently not accredited by industry although they are currently being utilised by a private provider, ADVTECH. There are overhead projectors; a photocopier and other administrative facilities. The staff room is beautifully furnished and well maintained. The staff has covered parking facilities.

4.4 ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

The college is situated in the middle of the metal and mining industries as well as many other secondary industries. The Ferrobank township is a vibrant neatly developed area with local businesses as well as informal entrepreneurial activities. This suggested to us that with so many activities taking place in the area, the college is strategically placed to be responsive to the needs of the community.

The homes do have electricity and running water. Principal, staff and parents confirmed that there are many out-of-school youth in the area that could not obtain employment because of lack of suitable skills. This is supported by the fact that a large number of young people are coming to be registered at the guidance and placement centre of the college.

5. INTERVIEWS

5.1 PRINCIPAL: Mr T I Pudi

Mr Pudi's idea of a Community College is that it serves the needs of the community and such a college would have adaptable programmes and focus on skills training. He gave the example where his college offered a training programme for pre-primary educators to fulfil a need of the community. This course was not repeated as the demand had been met and there was no reason to offer it again. The OSY project (report later) is serving the community and industry needs. He wished to serve the community more. The community has no library, but the college library is not in operation and no new books had been purchased for the past two years. He had hoped to open an Internet Cafe, but lacked the facilities to do so. The Advtech project was also to the benefit of the community. This private provider is training members of the community using the college workshops. These projects go a long way towards complying with the open door policy essential in a community college within the FET framework.

He felt that the college did not achieve its vision and mission as learner discipline was a serious problem. This problem affected the relationships that did exist with industry. The Highfield Metal industry had a training programme with the college, but they withdrew their learners because of the riots during 1999. He stated that the learners were involved in many unrest campaigns, which affected the marketability of these learners and tainted the image of the college. He felt that political influences outside the college resulted in the learners being more active in politics than their training. As a result the learners of the other technical college were more sought after by the industries.

The principal said he had a three-year rolling plan for the college but that this was curtailed by the unrest in 1999. The college does not have an induction programme for LRC members. The principal believed that the LRC was taking instructions from political parties and he did not think they would accept a programme from him. Contrary to this view, the LRC believed the principal was refusing to have them fully inaugurated, but they did not know what his motivation for this could be. The general management plan for the staff is to work through the HODs and that each department had its own budget. However, these budgets have as yet not been approved as there is no council to do so.

Mr Pudi said he felt he was still inexperienced in administrative matters and seemed eager to set matters right. Although he is faced with a multitude of managerial problems, he expressed with enthusiasm the college's role in the OSY-project and the setting up of the Guidance and Placement Centre in conjunction with the Department of Labour. He also mentioned that Eskom had approached the college to do ABET training for the company.

He admitted that the staff morale was low and there was evidence of mistrust amongst the staff. He cited two examples: firstly that staff members did not

attend social functions and secondly that 24 inquiries into the bank statements had been made at the bank without his knowledge. He blamed the low morale of the administrative staff on the fact that they had not been assessed for promotion and did not receive any increases. He did say that the staff were never late for work and did attend to their classes, but they were not committed to go the extra mile. Mr Pudi spoke with great admiration of his Projects team and seemed to rely heavily on them to gain recognition and esteem for his college.

The interview with the principal showed his willingness to participate in the challenges offered by the FET system and he is acutely aware of the central role the college has in the development of the skills of the community. He shows concern and would like to be responsive to the needs of the community. He however faces an internal managerial problem for which it seems he does not have the capacity and skills to solve on his own. Yet he did not think an exercise in conflict resolution could solve his problems. His lack of experience creates obstacles for his staff and unless trust is restored, these problems could become insurmountable.

5.2 ACTING DEPUTY PRINCIPAL: Ms White

Ms. White was interviewed in order to verify information about the college that contradicted that of the principal. As deputy she would be in a position to interpret the policies of the college better than the lecturers who might be prejudiced against the management would. However, her first comment when asked to explain the vision and mission of the college, was that currently this institution did not have a clear mission seeing that the principal changed it at will. She did not have any clarity on what her job description was as the principal kept giving her duties to other lecturers without her knowledge:

"I'm just a scribe here. I write minutes and reports all the time," she said.

When asked what she thought her job description as Deputy Principal should entail, she named the following: curriculum development, registration of learners and community projects. She was not allowed to be involved in any of the mentioned activities. She did not know why the principal did not communicate with her seeing that she was second in command.

She recalled that the original mission of the college was to provide quality education for learners and strive to uplift the disadvantaged communities around the college. She stressed the fact that all current decisions and actions taken by the college worked against the realisation of these aspirations.

Ms. White had initiated two community projects: one on the counseling of HIV/Aids sufferers and the other for a support programme for old age people.

These are examples of services community colleges could render to the community they serve. The principal, however, disallowed these projects saying that he did not want outsiders on the campus. This behaviour is in direct contrast to call of national education for colleges to be responsive to community needs.

While she was officiating the registration of learners, she was replaced without reason. As Deputy Principal, she was not aware of the three year rolling plan mentioned by the principal as it was never discussed with the staff or at management meetings. The minutes of the college meetings which were inspected by the researchers, proved that only petty issues matters concerning lecturers giving lifts to learners, etc. were discussed.

She blamed the low morale of the lecturers and learners on poor leadership, lack of effective communication and especially the lack of TRUST between the principal and the rest of the college community.

We concur that the lack of mutual trust was clearly evident amongst the staff of this college. The principal is very authoritarian because he may be feeling threatened by an efficient and more experienced staff. His disregard of potential and vital initiatives in response to community needs, is disappointing. The principal's positive outlook during his interview, was not confirmed by the majority of role players who were interviewed later.

5.3 HODs: BUSINESS STUDIES AND ENGINEERING

5.3.1 Ms Bester

The HOD for Business Studies, Ms Bester, is one of the oldest members of the staff having taught there for 16 years. She had a clear understanding of how the college should function as she is guided by her past experience. She believes that a technical college should develop vocational skills and should incorporate a practical component in its programmes. "Otherwise, how different are we from a school?"

So far the college had no OBE training, but they regard themselves to be in a fortunate position as they were offering vocational education and training. It upset her that they could not offer skills training seeing that they were not accredited assessors.

Although Ms Bester had proposed the introduction of ABET as a way to meet the needs of the community, she received no support from the management. As she was also part of management, she requested explanations, but the matter was continuously shelved and never allowed on the agenda. She produced copies of the agendas of management meetings, which indicated that only petty matters were listed for discussion.

Ms Bester confirmed that the college had formulated a mission statement, but it was rejected by the principal. The mission statement included the intention of the college staff to be responsive to the needs of the community and the learners. Unfortunately, even members of the management team have not seen any strategic plan, which the principal claims to have developed. It supports the view that the principal disregards all structures at the college and operates alone.

On her own initiative, Ms. Bester had organised bursaries and placements for her learners. However, industries like Highveld Steel were reluctant to participate in the college ventures.

5.3.2 Mr A van der Merwe

Mr. Van der Merwe, HOD for Engineering, had a clear vision of an FET institution operating within a modular system based on Unit Standards (when these have been generated) registered with SAQA. He mentioned that he had contact with the Atteridgeville College near Pretoria where such new programmes were being initiated. He saw a Community College as a viable reality where the community should have input to the courses being offered in addition to formal courses. New innovative programmes at this college were stifled by the lack of leadership or he felt they were being outsourced to private providers using the college facilities and the staff was being denied the opportunity to participate.

He referred directly to the Advtech project. Initially the staff of the college were under the impression that they would run the project, but subsequently Advtech only utilise the workshops and the staff have no information regarding the conditions of the contract between the college and the private provider. Yet again information in management meetings was not forthcoming.

Mr. Van der Merwe felt that the DoE programmes for technical colleges were too theoretical and examination driven. It defeated the initial objectives of apprenticeships (now learnerships) with a strong component of experiential learning as well as flexible delivery as the NCFET proposes. The current outdated courses become irrelevant to industries that now train their learners themselves. He felt the college should strive to get the workshops accredited or to form partnerships with industry for the practical training components as is being done in the OSY project. He regretted the lack of co-operation from management for updating facilities. He wished to purchase a CAD system for the engineering courses for which he had budgeted within the funds available to his department. Unfortunately no budget requests have been approved and the council of the college is not operating as it should. At meetings, problems are discussed, but are never brought to finalisation with the result that no action is taken. Because of this situation, a Maths N6 and Science N6 courses had to be cancelled as funds could not be secured to pay the contract lecturer who offers the course.

Both HODs mentioned that staff had good ideas for community projects, but these were not supported by management. The fact that the college hall was closed to the learners, staff and community and that the college is locked by 14:30 suggested that community involvement is not encouraged. While on site, we found we could not schedule any interviews after 14:30 as no one was available to attend to our requests. The HODs cited poor communication and the ineffectiveness of line functions as reasons for hampering progress at the college. This college has experienced staff members with a variety of skills and to an innovative principal, these facilitators could form the nucleus to serve the aspirations of the youth and contribute to developing skilled workers for the economy of the this area. Good quality human resources is an asset to be nurtured for the benefit of the community.

5.4 ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: ADMINISTRATION: Ms. Olivier

Ms. Olivier is the longest serving member of the staff and administers the finances of the college. She explained that each of the six departments (Bus. Studies, Engineering, Projects, Management, Administration & General) propose budgets for the financial year. The budgets are then approved by the council. Up to now these have not been approved for the year 2000.

She feels that the correct procedures are no longer being followed. Personally, she never handles any cash. Learners pay their fees directly into the bank with their registration numbers. She receives the bank statements every month. She is aware that inquiries into the bank balance has been made. The BTF (Broad Transformation Forum) was formed to approve cheque requisitions, but this forum was later abandoned. The learners were demanding its reinstatement as they maintain the college has money and will not approve their budget. Money was spent irresponsibly, like R15 000-00 on a welcoming function, the hiring of 8 buses by students to transport students from other colleges, the LRC had already spent R31 000-00 of an allocated R50 000. They requested an amount of R112 000 for the year, but the principal reduced the amount without consultation.

As financial officer, she feels uneasy at the rate money is being spent without the necessary approval. The fact that the 1999 budget was finally approved at an end-of-year function (13/12/1999) was a major concern for Ms Olivier. It is obvious from the manner that the principal handles financial decisions that he lacks the appropriate experience and skills. Sound financial planning and budgeting by management is a vital contributory factor to the success of a multi-campus community college system.

5.5. STAFF

Two staff members, one from Engineering (Mr F. Coetzee) and one from Business Studies (Ms M Nguvela) were interviewed.

Ms Nguvela felt that lecturers had no input in the development of curriculum as these are prescribed by the Department. Departmental subject meetings were run by the examiners. They did not broaden the vision educators, but merely informed them about the examinations. She would like to receive training in Outcomes-based Education. The college needed to upgrade the computer facilities as programmes were becoming outdated. Although some of the business programmes offered were relevant to the market place, this did not seem to secure jobs for the learners. She felt learners were not challenged by the teaching methods used and needed to be taught to work independently. However, the library did not feature in their studies as it was not operational. Her estimate was that about 40% of the secretarial learners found jobs in the various industries.

Mr Coetzee was very excited about the possibilities and opportunities a Community College opens up for the development of skills. He had identified a great demand for welding and other semi-skilled workers in the area as a result of the steel industries. He said there is a shortage of a quality workforce, but feels the current technical college courses are far too theoretical and therefore the college does not fulfill its rightful role to develop the full potential of the learners.

He feels satisfied with the theoretical component of his programmes because he has the relevant materials and resources he needs. The negative aspect is the practical component. The finances needed to fund the material needed for practical projects is not available. The irony he says, is that these practical projects could generate funds for the college and the students. Most of the N2 and N3 courses were not practical enough. The existing machinery in the college was also not being used.

As far as professional skills development for the staff is concerned, he would like more information about assessor training and accreditation. He would relish an opportunity to attend such courses. The lack of information about curriculum changes leads to lack of commitment by the ordinary staff member. While 4 members of staff did attend OBE training, this training was not passed on or shared with other staff members.

He said that the learners had great potential and with the appropriate training, they would secure jobs in this industrial area. He would like to see cultural programmes in the college to give the community ownership and pride in a vibrant educational centre. Here was someone whose potential, which would benefit the learners, was curtailed by the lack of sound management and administration guidance.

5.6 LEARNER REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL AND LEARNERS

The members of the LRC and a sample of learners from both departments were interviewed.

The Learner Representative Council (LRC) members are generally seen as a group of learners whose aim it is to disrupt institutional programmes. However, it was encouraging to meet a young group who had clear goals to bring about a culture of learning and teaching to the college. They had requested to be part of the strategic planning for the college and to be given an induction workshop on their role as the LRC. These efforts were thwarted by the principal's hostility towards the LRC. When asked how many attempts they had made to resolve matters with the principal, the chairman said their efforts to resolve issues amicably were ignored. As a result they had resorted to forceful means. By this they meant that whenever they needed to see the principal, they no longer tried to make an appointment, but demanded to see him as soon as he arrived on campus. "That's the only language he understands," they said.

They realise that is not the way things should be done, but felt they had no other option. Their explanation as to why the principal behaves in this manner, was that he may be deliberately sabotaging them so that they may appear ineffective as leaders of the learners. Secondly, they believe that he does not have a clear vision for the college and was afraid that the learners were better organised and could see his weakness.

The LRC thought the college was dysfunctional and their assertion was based on the following facts:

- The equipment of the college was outdated. The software programmes taught on the computers are not used anywhere and are useless to the learners.
- The principal did not allow the N5 and N6 programmes to be offered.
- The programmes lacked practical components.
- There was poor communication at all levels, e.g. principal and staff; principal and learners; staff and learners. "How do you function when the only communication you receive are negative memos like this?" (Addendum 10.3). This attitude, they believe, leads to racism that is prevalent on campus.
- The programmes did not meet the needs of the community, e.g. marketing, entrepreneurial or skills development programmes are not being offered.
- There are no study rooms available. The library was closed to accommodate the OSY learners.
- The college was not serving the community.

The LRC had raised these matters with the principal to no avail. It was difficult to raise any issue to which the LRC was positive and which did not end with the lack of support from the side of the principal. This view was re-iterated by some of the staff members interviewed who sympathised with the LRC. Even the budget of the LRC which had initially been accepted, had been reduced without explanation or consultation.

The learners who were interviewed contributed the following:

- They felt Saturday programmes offered in the college would be beneficial to the community; e.g. computer courses. A similar programme offered by staff members had been stopped by the principal because he felt the staff involved were enriching themselves.
- Part-time evening programmes would give them opportunities to acquire more skills.
- All technical college programmes needed a balance between theoretical and practical components.
- Engineering workshops were inadequate. They would prefer industrial training as the learners of the OSY project were receiving.
- They needed study rooms and library facilities.
- Many learners were from the neighbouring towns and finding suitable accommodation was a problem.
- The hygienic standard of the college needs immediate improvement. Toilets are unusable and classrooms are dirty.
- Bursaries need to be made available for learners.
- The teaching methods of lecturers were not always suitable. Some read from the textbook, no time for discussions or groupwork and computers were not always repaired on time.
- Productivity after registration was low. Two weeks passed before programmes commenced.
- There was a lack of recreational facilities for the learners.

Again the same threads that seem to run through the sectors of the institution, were apparent from the interviews with the LRC and the learners, i.e. a total breakdown in communication and poor leadership that is driven by fear. None of the features of the NCFET report are operational at this college. Not only is the college in general ignoring the community at large, but it is also not addressing the needs of its present learners.

5.7 COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

Eight members of the community were invited to view the new guidance and placement centre of the college. They agreed to be interviewed as a panel and shared their points of view on community colleges.

The general view was that Mpondozankomo College was not well marketed in the community where it is located. They said that the college should exhibit their programmes at the careers fair. It was only now with the OSY project that the community was gradually beginning to learn about what is happening at the college because it was addressing a direct concern of the community, i.e. the unemployed youth. They would like to see the theoretical courses coupled with practical skills training and offered to the wider community.

It became apparent that they were not aware that the college had a council and that the community and business could be represented on it. They had never been involved in college programmes before as these had been prescribed by the Department of Education. The college had failed to recognise the needs of the community by not adopting flexible programmes. For this, they blamed the management of the college which had failed to market the institution well. Members of the staff and the principal concurred with this criticism.

6. CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

Observations were done in the N4 Introduction to Computers, the Accounting N3 and a N2 Communication lessons.

6.1 EDUCATOR'S PREPARATION

The standard preparation journals were kept and maintained as prescribed by the Department. As examinations were due to start soon, no original lesson had been prepared. The presentations were mainly for revision purposes.

6.2 FACILITATION OBSERVATION

The teaching methods were very traditional: learners in rows and educator explaining. Tasks given were question and answer type and not learner centred activities except in the computer lesson. The Communication class did the Telegram as they were expected to do one in the examination. The problem presented was not in context and totally irrelevant to the needs of present day communication. The educator treated the learners like imbeciles who were beyond help. He believed the learner-centred method would be futile with the present group: "You know some of these learners have not passed Std. 8." He even supplied the name and address of the person to whom the telegram was to be sent to in the classroom exercise.

The Accounting revision lesson was a monologue from start to finish with no checks to determine if the learners understood or not. Even the calculations were done by the educator on a calculator and the answers given to learner. Talk 'n Chalk was the order of the day.

The level of teaching and assessing at this college is disturbing. Educators have not kept up with the developments in education that are being discussed and implemented widely. This observation is in line with the points tabulated by Kraak and Hall (1999), especially the repetition of outdated course structures and assessment practices. These courses no longer meet the demands of industry.

Assessment practices have not changed as the educators have not received any OBE training. Learners were mostly silent. To facilitate learner-centred methodology the facilitators would have to attend workshops to acquire new skills.

7. SPECIAL PROJECTS

The principal has created a separate department for special projects with the following structure:

STAFF

- Ms J Burger : Project Co-ordinator
- Ms B Masango : Guidance and Placement Centre
- Ms T Ndimande : P.R.O.

PROJECTS

- ADVTECH PRACTICAL TRAINING
- GUIDANCE AND PLACEMENT CENTRE
- OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH (OSY) PROJECT – MPUMALANGA Department of Education and Department of Labour : Joint initiative

LEARNERS PER PROJECT

- ADVTECH : 84
- GUIDANCE & PLACEMENT: SERVICE TO COMMUNITY: about 4000 per year
- OSY : 120

7.1 ADVTECH PRACTICAL TRAINING

This project provides practical skills programmes to members of the community and is facilitated by ADVTECH as a private provider. The only college involvement is that they use the college workshops for the training.

Initially the Engineering Department was very excited about this project because they were under the impression that the lecturers would be facilitating the programmes. They were very disappointed to discover that they had no part to play in the endeavour. They are still concerned about the contract between the college and the private provider as they have been given no further information or details by the principal. 84 learners are enrolled and the courses offered are at this stage not accredited by the DoE.

The principal believed that the staff was feeling threatened by presence of Advtech, but he did nothing to allay their fears. On the hand the staff believed the college was missing worthwhile opportunities in which their learners could be involved in practical work. This kind of mistrust borders on schizophrenia.

7.2 GUIDANCE AND PLACEMENT CENTRE

Out of the OSY project, a computer-based system was developed with the aim to provide career assessment, guidance, counseling and placement to the out-of-school youth. An effective delivery system with cost effective outcomes has been developed. For details of the project known as "FUNDUKHOPHUKU" refer to ADDENDUM 10.2 – Special Projects.

The guidance and placement centre at Mpondozankomo Technical College represents one of the first of its kind in the country and marks the beginning of the vital co-operation between the DoE and DoL to deliver vocational education.

The guidance process is presented in flow-charts in the addenda 10.2 from registration of the unemployed youth to the possible placement in a job or identifying a training or skills programme for the individual. The centre at Mpondozankomo has been developed to handle 8000 learners per year. The centre has already registered about 600 unemployed youth in the first 5 months. The 120 unemployed youth of the OSY project were identified through this process.

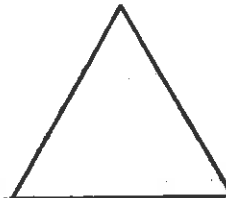
Two officials of the Department of Labour visit the centre twice a week to monitor the progress and provide counseling. This facility for the unemployed represents the essential support services the community colleges should provide for the community. During the research period, the community representatives were invited and informed about the service and the process was explained to them. Other technical colleges and surrounding schools also attended an information session. The staff members handling the centre are very efficient and enthusiastic about their work.

7.3 OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH PROJECT

Ms Chetty of the DoE informed us that this project was funded from the RDP funds. At the beginning of 1999 120 unemployed youth were selected through the Guidance and Placement centre's process, to participate in a pilot project in Boilermaking and Motor Mechanics. The theoretical courses follow the N1- and N2-courses of the DoE, while the DoL outsources and funds the practical training to a private provider (RTT). The private provider (RTT) establishes the networking and partnerships with industry for the practical training. This triad relationship is as follows:

DoL: Registration & Placement Functions

DoE: Register learners & supply theoretical courses



Private Provider (RTT):

***Practical modules**

***Networking & partnerships**

Industry: Ferrometal TC & CTC

***Practical training**

***Accredited workshops & trainers**

- **Curriculum transformation**

The current college curriculum is too theoretical and the practical components need to be addressed. By definition, a technical college needs to focus on vocational skills

- **Learner support services**

The Guidance and Placement Centre is already a valuable asset. Library Resources should be re-opened and improved. Staff capacity building and conflict management skills are essential. The college needs to be responsive to the needs of the community and involve them in determining relevant programmes.

- **Capacity Building**

The lack of OBE methodology is apparent in the delivery of knowledge in the college, which needs to be addressed. Links between the DoL and the DoE are beginning to emerge and need to be expanded. The capacity of colleges to establish links with industry needs to be addressed. Management and staff need training in a professional approach to forging links with industry and business. The experience at Mpondozankomo Technical College sends out vital signals to departmental institutions and learners that unless delivery by the college and performance by the learners is of a high standard, the private sector will withdraw their support. Private providers will flourish because of lack of capacity within departmental institutions. Professionalism and productivity are therefore of the utmost importance.

9. CONCLUSION

The infrastructure exists in the greater Ferrobank district and opportunities for further development abound. However, the system seems paralysed by the lack of communication and trust amongst the management and staff of the college. A division between staff has led to some staff members being called names. Finally, the lack of experience and credibility in the leadership is affecting the institution negatively.

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1. Background

The story of Tsholofelo is the story of how a community can work in order to offer education and training to their young and old alike. The following section gives a brief account of the history of Tsholofelo, a college for the Boitekong Community, in the magisterial district of Rustenburg, in the North West Province.

1.1 Tsholofelo: The Place of Hope

The history of Tsholofelo was told slightly differently from person to another by those associated with the College, but one thing remained constant in all the accounts - Tsholofelo had been developed from the expressed concerns and needs of the members of the Boitekong community.

Boitekong was a residential settlement for the people who had needed houses from the historically black townships of Rustenburg and was founded in 1991. These were sub-economic sites which had been serviced with water and toilet facilities and left for the owners to build the houses that they could afford. The majority of the people could only afford corrugated iron shacks, and the sites were very small.

According to one report, when the first residents arrived there were no schools in Boitekong. This meant that children had to walk long distances to schools in the neighbouring townships. Three youths who had finished school and had not found placement either in the job market or tertiary education offered their services to teach the children of Boitekong. They operated in a corrugated iron building and taught primary school children of different class levels. Some classes were taught inside the corrugated iron shack, and others outside the shack. This was a voluntary service. With the assistance of some concerned older members of the community a primary school was eventually built, and staffed with qualified teachers.

The three youths who had volunteered to teach were offered an honorarium of about R2 000- 00

each, and bursaries to go and study to become teachers, by the then Department of Education of the former Bophuthatswana government. The respondent, one of the young people who had followed through this offer, after teaching for a short while away from home, was persuaded by the Senior Manager to come and teach at the College. According to him what had started as a need for a school transformed into a drive to develop the community as a whole. More needs had been identified, for example, illiteracy, high school drop-outs, joblessness and the poverty that the community experienced. As a result, the new primary school was also used to provide the necessary skills for community members from these various categories. After-school classes were held for this purpose. According to this report, the initiative of the after-school classes was the forerunner of the Tsholofelo Community College, which was eventually built in 1996.

According to the Chairperson of the Governing Council or Board, around 1991 people who had no houses within the Rustenburg metropolitan area were allocated plots to build houses in the area which subsequently was named Boitekong. When the first residents of Boitekong arrived, around 1992, there were no schools in the area. In 1993 the Community formed an Education Forum with the purpose of finding out if they could start some education activities that would benefit the residents of Boitekong. The Educational Forum managed to solicit the assistance of Bro. Joseph (it would be futile to try to disguise his identity), who was attached to a Catholic mission based in Phokeng, and well-known for his involvement in community projects around the Rustenburg metropolitan area. Bro. Joseph became an important part of the whole development. The Education Forum looked at the needs of the community and felt that since the majority of the people who were living there were poor, academic education alone would not be much of help. At the beginning members of the Education Forum were not sure of what they wanted. They knew they needed some funds but how to go about securing the funds was not clear.

Bro. Joseph, the Senior Manager, did not just serve in the educational forum, he identified possible donors, drafted proposals and used his own personal contacts to raise the money to build the College. The Chairperson of the Governing Council pointed out that it was through the help of Bro. Joseph that the Education Forum managed to access some funds from the Netherlands, from the British High Commissioner, from Impala Platinum, and from the AMPLATS platinum mining company. He apparently forgot the Irish grant which, according to a later report by Bro.

Joseph, acted as a catalyst for positive reactions from the other donors.

The result of this aggressive fund-raising drive was the prominently identifiable buildings of the Tsholofelo College one found at the time of this research. These buildings stood apart from the Boitekong houses that were mostly built from sheets of corrugated iron, and were distinguishable by their face-brick walls. The place opened for classes in 1996, and was named Tsholofelo - the *Place of Hope*.

1.2 Stakeholders that were interviewed

An attempt was made to interview all the people who had vested interest in the existence of Tsholofelo. The Head of the full-time Sector had been given the task of facilitating the formal interviews we had requested, and he did this very effectively. As a result of his organisational expertise we were able to interview various stakeholders. Some stakeholders were represented by small groups of varying numbers per group, others were represented by individuals. These are presented in a tabular form in Appendix 1 of this report.

1.3 The people of Tsholofelo

Tsholofelo gave the impression of being a community within a community. It projected a particular culture in which people displayed an unusual dedication to the cause they served, from the Senior Manager (Principal), Sector Heads and their Deputies, tutors generally, Learner Representative Councils (LRCs), learners and ex-learners, including representatives of the Governing Council and regular donors. All of them spoke of Tsholofelo with some sense of ownership. Almost all of them referred to the meaning of the name the community gave to the College, namely, *hope*. Different people gave their own interpretation to the word. For learners the institution stood for the hope it gave them, that they would succeed in obtaining the skills they needed to live a better life. For the staff it meant that the College was there to realise the hope of the Community of Boitekong for a better life, and they seemed to have accepted it as their responsibility to make that promise come true.

Also noticeable was the fact that teachers or tutors, as they referred to themselves, were relatively young. These were not some pensioners giving the last of their days to a good cause for which they hoped to be remembered long after they were gone. Actually most of these people were allowing opportunities to find jobs that would have offered them housing subsidies, and ability to secure car loans from banks to pass them by. And without exception they all said this was now their home, they had no plans to move on. Even more intriguing was the fact that some of these people came from outside Boitekong, and among the latter, others came from outside the Rustenburg district.

2. Data presentation

The data that were collected have been presented under six categories, namely: the vision and mission of Tsholofelo ; the curriculum of Tsholofelo; outreach sites; the engine that drove Tsholofelo; the impact of Tsholofelo on the Boitekong Community, financial viability of Tsholofelo.

2.1 The vision and the mission of Tsholofelo

The vision and mission of Tsholofelo were stated clearly and displayed on the notice board in the Senior Manager's/Principal's office and other notice boards for all to read and identify with them. The vision was that of uplifting the standard of living of the people of Boitekong. The mission was stated elaborately to show how the College planned to make its vision a reality. Among others, it promised education to out-of-school youth and adults, providing skills training to promote entrepreneurship, provide basic education, and encouraged the revival of African values among learners. The mission statement ended with a declaration that the College was non-political, non-denominational and non-profit making organization, and that its priority would always be the most needy people (for the initial and the revised vision and mission statements see appendix 2).

2.2 The curriculum of Tsholofelo

The concept of curriculum is complex, and though it is usually equated to a list of course or

programme offerings of an institution, it refers to much more than this. In its broader and deeper sense, the concept of curriculum refers to the totality of influences and experiences which impact on learners in any given institution. From the narrower sense of the concept, the curriculum of Tsholofelo was extensive. Although it covered a limited number of academic courses, it had a wide range of non-formal educational programmes that targeted the adult clientele that required skills to make a living. It accommodated the needs of the community from the illiterate to the semi-literate and literate members of the community. Some of its programmes were directed to beneficiaries of small business grants from the Department of Labour to give them the business management skills they would need when they started their businesses. To the extent of the variety of courses and/or programmes offered by the College, and their relevance to the needs of its immediate community, there was no doubt that its designation as a community college was not a misnomer.

The courses the College offered were listed under five categories namely:

1. Full time studies which included courses directed to young learners who wanted to improve their educating towards the attainment of their senior certificate, technical education, and qualification in engineering;
2. Skills and Trades which included catering, fashion designing leather work etc;
3. Life Orientation which included training for working with young children in the creches, music, drama and others;
4. Part-time Studies e.g. ABET;
5. Computer education

(See Appendix 3 for Programmes and Prospectus respectively)

Each category or sector was headed by one Sector Head and his/her deputy.

From the broader sense of the concept, the Tsholofelo curriculum was also impressive. The atmosphere at the College was quiet but warm. Tutors/teachers/instructors appeared to be treating one another with respect, and were friendly towards one another. This warm relationship was not only confined to teachers, it permeated their interaction with learners too. It was actually

difficult to differentiate between teacher and learner during break time as they conversed easily among themselves. During the school breaks for tea and lunch you would see even the Principal standing outside chatting to learners. Ex-learners interacted with the College if and when they needed assistance in their projects, and were also assisted with marketing their products. Inside the workshops of the Skills and Trades Sector, you would find learners working in groups on their projects which they showed off enthusiastically to outsiders like us. There was a general spirit of goodwill which permeated the atmosphere of the College as a place of learning.

2.3 Outreach sites

Some of the programmes the College offered were presented at satellite campuses away from the main campus. Leatherwork, beadwork, sewing, and educare were among those. Learners displayed their products for sale, and could get income even as they were still in training, if their wares were sold. This meant that the opportunities to participate in the educational activities of Tsholofelo were taken to the door-step of the community of Boitekong, and its immediate neighbouring communities such as Meriting and Freedom park.

On one of the sites in Freedom Park health services were provided under the guidance of another dedicated community worker, Sister Georgina. On that same site children of school-beginners' age were tutored by young women on voluntary basis. This site was close to the residences of mine workers, and although the settlement it served was technically described as illegal, people like Sister Georgina were prepared to offer their services as long as the residents, mostly women and children, were still living there. Tsholofelo was planning to work closely with this site to promote literacy and development of skills that would help the people of this area to feed their families. Apparently the mining industry was offering some assistance for some of the programmes offered by Tsholofelo to be introduced at this site. (See Appendix 4 for the 2000-2001 plan)

2.4 The engine that drove Tsholofelo

Many organisations with much stronger financial backing than Tsholofelo do not make as much success stories as Tsholofelo did. This tempted us to come up with this metaphor to describe the

type of management which characterised the Tsholofelo College. Most obvious was the fact that the Senior Manager or Principal used a consultative style of management, and devolved power to the Sector Heads and their deputies as well as to the Learner Representative Councils (LRC). He also showed trust and respect for those he worked with, and though he never used the current jargon in our interviews with him, his management was transparent and inclusive (see Appendix 5 for management structure). He had an implicit trust for his team of staff. Hence he did not play policeman. By his own admission,

I don't want the tutors or the Sector Heads to think that it is my responsibility or even that I'm watching to see whatever is going on. I will expect a report regularly, on, well if there's any problem.

Brother Joseph, the Senior Manager, a Catholic priest and mathematics teacher by profession, was a passionate community developer before he joined the Boitekong community in its effort to work towards founding an education and training centre to uplift their lot. But at the time of this research it appeared that he had thrown all his weight to making Tsholofelo work for the Boitekong community, and communities around it. To help him realise this, he had a team of about forty equally dedicated men and women as tutors, Sector Heads and Deputy Sector Heads, administrative clerks. This team also had the full support of the community, judging by the way the Chairperson of Council appeared to be conversant with the functioning of the College, and counted himself as part of the College.

Bro. Joseph's work schedule included face-to-face meetings with Sector heads, with the LRCs and with the representatives of the School Governing Body (SGB) or the College Board/Council as it was also called. He balanced the College finances on a monthly basis, devoted most of his time drafting proposals asking for donations of funds from different organisations. His contacts in the Church were also used to the advantage of the College. The first solid buildings of the College were a result of his tireless writing of proposals and making follow-ups of those proposals. He made an effort to attend government workshops on the education policies that affected community colleges as part of the Further Education and Training (FET) band of the NQF, and was conversant with the government's funding policy for the piloting of community colleges. He kept his staff informed about the new developments that would impact on the

College, as shown in his statement during our interview, that,

~~Every Wednesday at half past ten we have a Sector Heads meeting, and I have~~
requested this week the Sector Heads to schedule a staff meeting with their tutors,
~~and to give me time during that staff meeting to talk to them about these~~
happenings I've been telling you, the latest developments. ... This is something I
don't normally do, it's only if I'm invited to them. But in this instance I have
invited myself so I can bring everybody up-to-date with these negotiations.

With the working schedule as full as he had detailed for us, it was surprising that he also found time to go to class and teach his favourite subject - mathematics.

The commitment of the Senior Manager to community development seemed to be contagious as all the staff expressed the fact that they placed the needs of the community first. They seemed not to be put off by the fact that their claims against the ABET budget of the Province did not always give them income every month like teachers/ educators in other schools/colleges. Most of them indicated that they had learnt to budget in accordance with the erratic payment system they had come to accept as normal. "It's as if we were born by the same mother" said one of the tutors. "The name of the College also helps us, the hope that let's keep on working, we hope we'll get the money".

We found the engine that drove Tsholofelo to be the co-operative working of its staff, from the Senior Manager to the most junior tutor and administrative clerk. Something seemed to bind them and make them to work as a team. The fact that the College worked on a clearly stipulated action plan meant that all members of staff knew what they were trying to achieve as a team (see Appendix 6 for Action Plan 2000). They shared some missionary zeal towards the upliftment of the life of the people of Boitekong, which, though understandable in Bro Joseph, because of his theological background and calling, remained an enigma where the rest of the staff were concerned. The fact that a substantial number of them were not even originally from the community to which they so dedicated their lives was itself baffling, to say the least.

It seemed that learners were also infected by this sense of oneness and working for the good of others. More importantly they reflected an admiration of their staff, and one learner went as far as to say she now believed that her academic record might have been excellent, had she studied

under the conditions she experienced at Tsholofelo all her schooling life..

2.5 The impact of Tsholofelo on the Boitekong Community

Most respondents mentioned the reduction of crime and violence in the area as one of the influences the College had had on the community. This was expressed mostly by the tutors and learners. The mining industry representatives also mentioned stability in the area, which they credited to the work of the College.

The fact that members of the community could acquire some skills and knowledge which would assist them to get jobs or produce items they could sell to make a living, did indicate that Tsholofelo had a positive impact on the community. One community member, an ex-learner at Tsholofelo had this to say about the College

To me it (Tsholofelo) represents great help. When I came here I was already able to paint, but my knowledge was limited. With the knowledge I learnt here I am now producing very beautiful paintings. Now I produce my own paintings, the College takes them and markets them for me while exhibiting the work produced by people who attended the Tsholofelo College. If my work gets sold at these exhibitions they pass the money to me. *(A translation from Zulu)*

Tsholofelo attracted learners outside Boitekong as well. It also served as an agency of empowerment for other training initiatives in the region. One of the respondents was already a trainer in welding when he came to Tsholofelo, and his story goes as follows:

When I came here I spoke to Bro Joseph and told him I was running a welding school in Meriting. I needed assistance for the people who needed this training but had no money to register for it. Bro Joseph told me to find twelve people who were interested in this. He thereafter assisted them to get the grant offered by the Department of Labour to people who need to learn a trade. The College gives them business skills before they go out to start their own small businesses. This has encouraged many people in my township (Meriting) to be interested in welding. *(A translation from Zulu)*

Tsholofelo's courses offered by the Skills and Trade Sector and the Life Orientation Sector appeared to have instant positive impact on the plight of unemployed women and the youth.

These were short courses leading to production of marketable articles. According to the Sector Head of the Skills and Trade Sector the success of Tsholofelo was there for all to see. She described it as follows:

I can say our successes we have seen them a lot. For example Jockim (the painter and ex-learner whose products the College helped to market). Jockim was one of our students, so here he is now. The others are in Mrs Letsholo's office. They are busy doing arts and craft. They are creating T-shirts. So they are some of our successes. Yesterday again I received a call from a man from the National Business Institute. He was there when we displayed our things at Bakhatla Game (Reserve). So now they were interested in our things. So yesterday he invited me with some other staff members to come to Mmabatho because now he is in the North West (Province). ... So now he told me that they had included us in their budget, so that we can get some funding for our courses here.

In addition to the above stated successes, she (Sector Head) was still awaiting some detailed feed-back from one of her staff members, who had taken some of their products for display at the International Conference Centre in Durban. The staff member concerned had so far only mentioned that she had brought back some orders for their products from the Durban exhibition. The Sector Head added that:

But again one of the successes I can mention is that there is another game reserve at Madikwe, and there too they want to start curio shops. So we contacted them. We were there and we met some of the curio shop people. But we should bring our things there for display and maybe some tourists are (will be) interested in them, so they (curio shop owners) can call us (and make orders).

Training young women in educare would lead to all pre-school going children being placed under the supervision of a trained child care giver. Passing through the township, even very close to the College campus, the number of children who were missing out on the Early Childhood Development (ECD) provided for in our system of education, indicated that there was still a great need for the service of well trained educare providers. This did not imply that the College had no impact on the community on this regard. There were some Educare Centres around, but either they were not enough, or parents needed to be educated about the need for children to be placed in educare centres. The fact that Tsholofelo provided training courses in this area gave one some

hope that eventually all children of Boitekong would receive educare.

Tsholofelo attracted full time learners in areas of technical education and commercial education far beyond the borders of Boitekong. It also gave tuition at the levels of the national senior certificate and a bridging course (Grade 11) for those who needed it before they could sit for the national examinations. Learners expressed satisfaction with their studies at Tsholofelo.

Some tutors indicated that some of their ex-learners had succeeded to obtain jobs as a result of the education and skills they got from the classes they took at the College. The College had a tracking system by which it tried to assess its impact on the community. But even chance meetings with ex-learners were cited by some tutors as indications that ex-learners did get jobs related to the skills they had obtained at Tsholofelo.

Perhaps the most significant comment, that showed the impact of Tsholofelo on the community it served, was that of the representative of the Impala Platinum Mining Company, who said:

I think the College has achieved tremendously. I think they play the vital role - a facilitating role between three, let's call it groupings. The one is between the private sector and the community; between public sector - the Department of Education and the Department of Labour, those people and that kind of role - and to play a role with service providers. There are many people that come here and say they can offer stuff.

He went further to say:

I think they (the College) translate the needs of the Boitekong people and bring it (out) in such a way that boards of the private sector can understand what they want. They give legitimacy that, you know, if we give money we give it to a legitimate institution, where the money is being audited. You know that you can see what was the outcome.

The positive comments of the Impala Platinum Mining Company were echoed by the representative of the AMPLATS Mining Company who stated that the company was actually considering forming a partnership with Tsholofelo whereby some of its training programmes could be out-sourced to Tsholofelo. Among other things, he pointed out that the impact Tsholofelo had

had was that of bringing stability to the community. He concluded that, "From the donor's point of view the Institution is doing very very well." He was however concerned that the College was not showing any substantial progress towards becoming self-sustainable financially, and hoped partnerships with businesses around Rustenberg could assist the institution in this regard.

The fact that the College had reached the stage of employing its own graduates could also be cited as another of its successes, and a positive impact on the community. One of these was the assistant clerk of whom the Senior Manager had this to say:

I have a very very excellent assistant clerk, that's Agnes, and I hope you'll get a chance to talk to her. She is a former student of this College, and we employed her as an assistant administrative clerk to Michael. But Agnes seems to have identified a job for herself. The job seems to be to look after me. So she keeps reminding me of appointments, she keeps control of letters and faxes, telephones, meetings, and all those things you would normally expect from a personal secretary. She is not my personal secretary, but she has identified that as a real need and she is doing that.

The Chairperson of the College Council described the impact Tsholofelo had had on the community of Boitekong in the following words:

I think the College is the only light that shines to the community in the sense that we had a whole lot of youth who could not be absorbed into the technical college that is in town (Rustenburg) primarily because the people here come from a background of some quite serious poverty. Now through the skills of entrepreneurship the College trains them in, people are able to go out on their own and form some small companies.

Apparently, because Tsholofelo's tuition fees were cheaper than those of the Rustenburg Technical College, the youth from poor homes could afford to continue with their education.

These comments from all connected with Tsholofelo - ex-learners, learners, tutors, and even donors - showed how much valuable the work of the College was to the community..

2.6 The financial viability of Tsholofelo

As already implied above, Tsholofelo depended on donations, mainly from the platinum mining companies in the Rustenberg metropolitan. Other donors, associated with the kick-start of the College were overseas organisations, mainly associated with the Church. All the donations were directed to capital costs and did not cover the running costs. Tutors for example depended on the claims they could make as ABET tutors for payment. The two assistant administrators were paid out of student fees. Even the Senior manager had to fill in ABET tutors' claim forms for his payment. Tutors who did not qualify to claim as ABET tutors worked as volunteers.

The Senior Manager described the financial situation of the College in following terms:

Theoretically we have a budget, ... But I explained to some of you yesterday that our budget is only a bird flying around in the sky because the only money which we really have is the money from students' fees. And we have a shortfall of about half-million rands a year. So we depend on Pierre Lourens (Impala) and Frans (AMPLATS) and people like that (donors) to keep us going.

The College had once received one grant from the Department of Education. They had hoped that they would receive financial assistance from the Department of Education over three years as it was stipulated for the Pilot Community Colleges (PCC) project of the national Department of Education. However there seemed to be some hitches in accessing national Department of Education's funding from the province's Department of Education. The Senior Manager described the situation as follows:

We have been allocated monies from the Department of Education - nationally - and that money is coming through Mmabatho. And that money is supposed to be for development of community colleges pilot sites. And over a three-year period it is supposed to be about sixty to seventy million rands allocated to the Province for the piloting of community colleges. Of that money we got a quarter of a million in the first year. We did not get any in the second year, but the money, according to what I'm told, is in Mmabatho since the end of March. But it has not come to us yet, ... I do not know how to access it.

The Senior Manager had made several enquiries about the funds referred above, and had received different explanations on why the money could not be released. One of those reasons was that the government could only release money if there was a code for the budget into which it was to be released. There was however no indication as to who was actually responsible for the formulation of such a code. "I don't know anything about these codes, and I don't know how they are devised", was the Senior Managers helpless remark.

This was indeed a very depressing scenario, especially for an institution that needed about two hundred thousand rand to replace computers in preparation for an examination in a few weeks' time. During the previous examination the computers had collapsed in the middle of the examinations, and alternative means had to be found for learners to complete the examination. They were literally moved to a Damelin centre in Rustenburg, and had to work in unfamiliar surroundings and with computers they were not accustomed to. The result had been disastrous as all the students had failed, giving a wrong impression that they had been poorly prepared for the examinations.

The College had no budget for teachers' or tutors' salaries. The only remuneration tutors could access from the Department of Education for the province were claims against the ABET tutors' budget. According to the Senior Manager, and the tutors themselves this was a tedious process that had to be engaged in every month. Processing these claim forms was apparently a lengthy exercise, judging by the fact that more often than not the claims were not paid on a regular monthly basis. At times tutors went without pay for a month or more. There had been times in the past when some of the tutors had to be helped out financially by the College just to be able to travel between their homes and the College, because for a long time they had received no payment. One of the tutors from the Computer Sector described this situation as follows:

A crisis fund was organised to help them (some of the tutors) to come to work and companies like AMPLATS, the mines, were consulted to come and in that kind of situation. On previous occasions also the Board of the College was consulted to give tutors loans so that when they got their money they could pay the money back.

The situation described in this excerpt explains the words of the Senior Manager in describing his

workload that, "... always there is a question of funding. There's always funding proposals that are in the process of being processed, or need to be drafted."

Despite the unusual situation of the Tsholofelo Community College, the management and the Governing Council/ Board did try to keep a defensible accounting for the little funds they had. According the Chairperson of the Governing Council, they had a Finance Committee constituting of the Senior Manager, a representative of the LRC, a representative of the College Council and Sector Heads, which met every Friday to look at the financial issues. All requisitions for money by the different sectors were discussed by this Committee. The Governing Council Chairperson explained the financial policy of the College thus:

The policy is that whoever is part of the school who wants some funds should make a submission during the week, substantiating what they need the funds for ... We make use of a cheque account. All transactions are made out in the form of a cheque. We do not use cash so that we are able to keep records of whatever transactions have been effected. We also have a company that we use for auditing. Our books are audited twice a year, half-yearly and at the beginning of the year.

The annual report for 1999 which reflected copies of auditors' financial report corroborated the statement of the Chairperson of Council.

Apparently capacity-building programmes, for both tutors and learners, as represented by members of the learner representative council (LRC), were conducted on an *ad hoc* basis, if and when the mining industry made some donations towards such programmes. For example the Impala Mining Company referred to some of these in the statement that, "... we had two strategic meetings with Bro. Joseph, and I actually sponsored a training programme for all these senior staff so that they can get the same vision, ..." The Senior Manager also referred to the financial aid the Impala Mining Company had given towards the training of the LRC members the previous year, and had promised to give again.

The student fees which formed the only constant source of funds was not much. As mentioned above the fees were lower than they were at a regular technical college. For example, according to the Chairperson of the Council, for a course which the Rustenburg College would charge about

R3 500-00, Tsholofelo charged about R1 600-00. The College therefore could not exist only on student fees, (see appendix 3 - Prospectus for 2000).

3. Analysis and interpretation of data

Looking at the data presented above some themes emerge as characteristics, which set Tsholofelo apart from mainstream community colleges, namely: a sense of ownership; responsiveness to community needs; the will to serve others; a consultative management style; devolution of power; unity and mutual respect. This section reflects more of what we, as researchers, thought of and felt, as we listened to what the respondents had to say about the College, and as we were observing as we went through the classrooms, workshops, and out-reach sites, having lunches that were generously prepared for us by the College, and literally experiencing the culture of Tsholofelo. What did all this say to us as outsiders; what did we take away with us from this experience? Following is the brief discussion of these themes.

3.1 A sense of ownership

The respondents reflected a sense of ownership towards the College. This was detectable from the way they described what Tsholofelo was to the community of Boitekong, its activities, its successes and the challenges which faced it. Their responses were characterised by words such as "we" "our" "us" as shown by the following excerpts:

Our aim in Tsholofelo Community College is to redress the imbalances of the past. (Tutor from the Skills and Trade Sector)

What we do for example if we think of introducing a programme or something, we do not do it on our own. We try to listen to "what does the community need or want?". If we do not have manpower we look for volunteers. (Sector Head - Computer Education)

We still have those computers which collapsed in the middle of an examination, and the money is in Mmabatho to replace those computers. We haven't got it and the examination is in two weeks' time. So that's the budget for us, that is we have that budget in our business plan. (Senior Manager)

I think the impact we have firstly is that we take the youth away from the streets and the frustration of unemployment. Secondly we directly create jobs for those who have got through the courses. (Chairperson of the Governing Council)

It was this sense of ownership for the College that kept the Tsholofelo people focussed on the vision they had stated for their college. All participants felt included in the successes, challenges and disappointments they encountered collectively as they journeyed towards the fulfilment of the vision they were set to realise. They were in this thing together.

3.2 Responsiveness to community needs

The Tsholofelo curriculum was flexible and accommodated the needs of the community. The Senior Manager was in fact a firm believer in community-driven community projects. As he was driving us around to the outreach sites he pointed out to a solitary building, with no sign of life around it, and said "That is an example of something that is done for a community without any involvement of that community". The building apparently was a community hall which was built far away from any of the neighbouring townships to be able to use. In fact all the respondents seemed to take the community as their point of departure for any programme that was to be introduced at the College. The statement by the Sector Head of the Computer Education above shows this clearly.

This responsiveness to the needs of the community could have been responsible for the cooperation the College had from the community as represented by the Chairperson of the Governing Council, who was also a member of the Local Government of Rustenburg. The cooperation and support of the community is crucial for any institution which claims to be representing the needs of the community. This would give such an institution the legitimacy referred to by the representative of the Impala Mining Company when he said,

I think they translate the needs of the Boitekong people and bring it (out) in such a way that boards of the private Sector can understand what they want. They give legitimacy that, you know, if we give money we give it to a legitimate institution.

The fact that the Boitekong community itself had initiated the founding of Tsholofelo could have been the reason the College remained a part of the community (see Appendix 6 - community declaration in an appeal for financial assistance and its pledge of support for the College).

3.3 The will to serve others

The staff of Tsholofelo displayed an unusual willingness to work for the good of others - members of the community. Although the community of Boitekong was mentioned often by the respondents as the community Tsholofelo was serving, there were some indication that the concept of community was not restricted to the geographically immediate settlement. The fact that both students and staff had, among themselves, people who came from outside Boitekong implied that the concept of community was used loosely to include all historically disadvantaged communities around and beyond Rustenberg. The surrounding mines gave the greater Rustenburg a potential of attracting families of the miners to Boitekong and other neighbouring settlements. Two young women who were teaching children in the outreach site of Freedom Park were from the Eastern Cape (Former Transkei) and were staying with relatives. They were not qualified to teach as they had just completed their Senior Certificate and had no money to continue with their education. There were many, especially in Freedom Park, who had come to the region as a result of the migratory labour system of the past.

When the tutors declared their dedication to the service of the community it was with full knowledge of the fact that the community of Boitekong was not the sole beneficiary of their dedicated service. Their service was directed to all the "others" out there who were from the poor communities of South Africa. This made their contribution towards the betterment of lives of others who were less fortunate than themselves, even more significant. In fact, it was humbling, to say the least.

3.4 Consultative management style

The Senior Manager and the Sector Heads formed the executive management committee of the College. But Sector Heads also had weekly meetings with tutors in their sectors. This ensured that

all staff members were made aware of what was planned and what was happening generally in the College.

This style of management was probably responsible for the cooperative spirit that seemed to permeate throughout the College. Learners also got involved through their representatives who were included in important committees such as the Finance Committee. As mentioned earlier in this report, the management style that operated here was consultative, transparent and inclusive. This generated a sense of trust between staff and senior management, and between management and learners.

3.5 Devolution of power and empowerment

This is similar to the point made in 3.4 above. Talking to the people of Tsholofelo made us think that power was not restricted to the Senior Manager, or the Executive Management as such. The Senior Manager devolved power to the different Sectors. Sector Heads assisted by their Deputies and tutors in their sectors were entrusted with solution of problems reported by learners in their sectors. They made decisions about the programmes they felt could be introduced in their Sectors. The Senior Manager also encouraged both learners and staff to first solve any problems they had within their sectors, before bringing them to him. He, however mentioned that he would not close his door to any of those who wanted to bring their cases to him. This management style was probably responsible for promoting unity and mutual respect among staff and management. This seemed to promote the same ethos between staff (including Senior Manager) and the learners as well.

3.6 A unified approach to challenges

The greatest challenge for the Tsholofelo Community College was the lack of funds. Normally when funds of an institution are so low that they threaten workers' salaries, the latter lose patience with those in management, whom they often blame for such a situation. Almost all tutor respondents referred to the lack of money that at times affected them directly. For example the long waiting for the processing of their claims to the ABET section of the provincial Department of Education. It was however mentioned as one of the things tutors had to endure, and to regard

as one of the sacrifices they were prepared to make in serving the community. No blame was apportioned to either the Governing Council or the Senior Manager.

4. The Further Education and Training (FET) Policy: Where does it place a community college like Tsholofelo?

The FET policy refers to a wide range of education providers within this band. The community college sector appears to be the Cinderella of the mainstream providers, some of which enjoy greater support from the government. Schools and technical colleges or the public FET colleges and public FET schools, as referred to by the FET document (National Strategy for Further Education and Training 1999-2000, pp 11 & 12), for example have their major costs (buildings, salaries, material resources) provided for by the government. Community Colleges on the other hand have been promised to be subsidised for a limited time, after which they are expected to be self-supporting. This in fact is the cause of the insecurities often expressed by educators in the colleges of education that have been earmarked for the community college status. The plight of these colleges is however much better than that of Tsholofelo which has never enjoyed a full financial support from the government.

The fact that community colleges are a provincial competence complicates their situation further, since grants from the national Department of Education have to go via the provincial Departments of Education. The experience of Tsholofelo regarding the Community Colleges Pilot Sites development fund shows clearly that this system lengthens the bureaucratic red-tape and impacts negatively on the already financially strapped colleges. For example if the money had been allocated successfully the previous year, what was stopping its payment on the following years?

Despite the financial uncertainties within which Tsholofelo conducted its business, it had managed to create a learning society to reckon with by any standards. Its course/programme offerings were flexible and accessible to a wide range of learners at varying levels of educability. It offered formal technical education to young learners, and a bridging course for learners who were not ready for the Senior Certificate examinations. It offered engineering courses at the technical education level. It offered computer education. Over and above it offered short courses in a variety of skills which older learners needed including educate, sewing, fashion designing, knitting, cooking and baking, welding, brick construction, painting, leatherwork and many others. And almost all its courses

were registered with relevant skills/professional/educational bodies for accreditation (see Appendix 7). It could be said that Tsholofelo did indeed answer to the call of the FET document for institutions to give serious attention "to the increasing number of young people aged between sixteen and thirty-five who need to be trained and educated for the future" (National Strategy for Further Education and Training 1999-2001, 1999:15). Actually Tsholofelo, as a community college went beyond this age limit.

As community college educators, some of the staff members of Tsholofelo queried the blanket requirement for the statement of entry and exit levels for every programme they proposed. They argued that their target group was the poor community among whom there were even illiterate people, and the task they had identified was that of giving these people some skills they could use to make a living, and were not preparing them for entry in higher education. If this argument were to be taken into account, community colleges would have to be allowed to provide formal learning requiring accreditation of courses towards entering higher education, and non-accredited streams directed at people who merely require functional skills by which to make a living, and be credited for both.

Tsholofelo struggled to get a telephone line, and the one they had did not always work. The Senior Manager depended mostly on his cellular phone. Actually this one cellular phone seemed to be collectively owned by all staff members. At times it was their only connection to the outside world. This situation makes the suggestion by the FET document that "FET institutions should invest in providing learners and educators with access to e-mail, the Internet and other technologies that facilitate off-site course delivery, learner performance, management and tracking" (National Strategy for Further Education and Training 1999-2001, 1999) unrealistic. To facilitate the work of community colleges the infra-structure of this nature should be provided by the government.

It is not clear what has happened to the proposition that community colleges should "obtain at least two-thirds of their funding from government" (Report of the National Committee on Further Education, 1997:111). If this were the case, Tsholofelo, and other community colleges like it would experience less financial constraints than they do presently.

5. Conclusion and recommendations

From the information gathered during this research the team that went to Tsholofelo is convinced that the College is doing good work, and that it has great support from the community and the mining industry around it. In particular it reflects the following characteristics, which the team believes all institutions of learning should display: responsiveness to the community; legitimacy and good financial management; transparency in all its activities; inclusive governance; excellent human relations (people-centeredness), and nurtures a good culture of teaching and learning.

The College however cannot develop to a self-sufficient financial level without an adequate boost of their initial finances. Because the College is new, and is not a college of education converted to a community college, it does not enjoy the prior infra-structural advantages of the other "community colleges" which still enjoy payment of teacher salaries and allowances by the government, as well as buildings that were built by the government. Tsholofelo had to raise funds on their own for the buildings they operated in. As one of the representatives of donors pointed out the industry did not take kindly to being expected to play Father Christmas every time the College needed money. Tsholofelo had been lucky that the mining industry had kept their doors opened to them up to the time of this research. But even with this good support from the industry, they still could not raise donations to buy new computers to avoid the disaster of the previous year when the computers collapsed during an examination. Their enrolments had exceeded their initial estimations by far. Already the distinctive face-brick buildings that had been built from initial donations were being supplemented with temporary caravan-type structures to accommodate some of their classes.

The Tsholofelo research team recommends that the Department of Education should consider pledging a continuous financial support to community colleges. It is true community colleges must involve communities in generating funds for their continued existence. The way to encourage them to do this could be the old method of a rand-for-rand system which was at some stage used by the previous government. It would encourage active colleges that are able to raise funds

through fund-raising drives such as applying for donations from the industry, and marketing the products of the programmes they offer, if for the money they raised they would receive an equal sum from the Department of Education to assist them to carry on with the business of educating the nation.

....

Community colleges which are run responsibly like Tsholofelo should be granted reasonable autonomy to conduct their business in the manner they, and the communities they serve, see fit. This would in fact make the government's vision of life-long learning a reality, as it would bring communities closer to the colleges, and make them to gradually become used to the idea that the community college is for all those who need education and skills to live a better life, irrespective of age. Community colleges are supposed to provide and facilitate easy and flexible access to learning opportunities by the community. The Tsholofelo College represented a good example of this.

Initiatives like that of Tsholofelo deserve visible and meaningful support from the government if the latter plans to realise its promise of life-long learning to the people of South Africa. They also deserve to be show-cased to serve as models for other prospective community college initiatives.

6 Reference

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HSRC REPORT ON COMMUNITY COLLEGES

**REPORT ON COMMUNITY PILOT PROJECT
JONGUHLANGA PUBLIC SCHOOL
NCERA DISTRICT
EAST LONDON
EASTERN CAPE**

MAY 2000

**Prof N Gawe
Mrs V L M Tredoux**

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REPORT ON COMMUNITY PILOT PROJECT RESEARCH: JONGUHLANGA PUBLIC SCHOOL, NCERA DISTRICT, EAST LONDON.

1. INTRODUCTION

During the first phase of the pilot project, the officials of the Eastern Cape Department of Education drew the attention of the Human Science Research Council (HSRC) research team to the existence of a high school whose principal had aspirations to become a Further Education and Training (FET) institution. He was motivated by the support the school received from the members of the community and he believed the school could play a significant role in bringing about development in this area. The school was selected for the second phase of the pilot as part of the research sample.

The Jonguhlanga Public School situated in the Ncera area, south of East London is one of 5 sites selected by the National Co-ordinating Committee for Community Education (NCC) for possible participation in the FET policy development to ensure transformation and responsiveness of FET institutions. For the NCC, the infusion of community education programmes into the broader FET agenda is essential to achieving the new vision FET.

Prof. N Gawe and Mrs. V L M Tredoux conducted the research. The objective was to investigate the feasibility and opportunities for transformation of this school and the programmes offered into a FET Institution/ Community college.

It is important to note that Jonguhlanga P. S. is the only high school selected which currently offers the traditional Department of Education and Training curriculum and no additional programmes or courses as in the case of the existing technical or community colleges.

2. FET POLICY

The *Further Education and Training Act* of 1998 outlines the FET sector as different from school and higher education. The Act allocates powers to provincial Minister of the Executive Council to establish, merge or close public FET institutions. Public education and training includes school grades 10-12, technical and community colleges under the department of education. In addition to government provision there are other providers, such as industry-based trainers and private education institutions and companies.

The positioning of FET as post-compulsory school and workplace education and training (but not higher education) means that the Departments of Labour and Education share responsibility for FET. The national constitutional arrangements for co-operative governance and centralised economic planning mean that the responsibility for FET is weighted differently within the Departments of Labour

and Education. Secondary schools located in the rural areas are often not connected to a viable local economy or an effective social development strategy. Thus communities do not have the skills that would enable them to create opportunities for self-employment or contribute to the upliftment of their communities. Adults and out of school youth who have had some or no education often feel uneasy about learning in traditional institutions. For them the skills of learning and studying need to be acquired or re-acquired. In rural areas, tradition often dictates male and female roles which in turn dictates the choice of skills programmes.

The *Further Education and Training Act* of 1998 aims to make it possible for adults and out-of-school youth to learn throughout their lives, to maintain and develop skills, knowledge, attitudes and values necessary for the workplace and to play an active role as parents, community members, consumers and learners. Meeting their FET needs is a challenge that cannot be ignored. The *Skills Development Act No 97* of 1998 together with the *Skills Development Levies Act No 9* of 1999 will go some way towards facilitating skills development and training the unemployed in South Africa. However, vocational training must be linked to local economic development strategies of particular areas to ensure that the skills learnt yield significant returns.

3. APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The information for this report was obtained by visiting the school and the immediate environment in order to assess the potential of the school as a FET institution. The methods used for data collection were observations and interviews.

During the interviews the conceptual framework of an interview as devised by F.C. Marais and S.M. Holtzhausen was used as a broad guideline.
(Addendum 9.1)

Interviews were conducted with the representatives of the various stakeholders of the school and the community, i.e. Chief DM Jongilanga and Mrs. Jongilanga, Department of Education officials, the principal and Head of Department (HOD), the staff, learners, parents from the community and other relevant role players. On-site observation of classroom methodology and examination of resource utilisation was also conducted.

To conduct the research, it was essential to make contact with the Department of Education (Provincial level) officials who are responsible for the administration of the school. Contact was made with Mr. N. Ntsiko (Curriculum Education Specialist (CES): Secondary Schools) and Mrs. S. Nongogo (CES: General Education and Training (GET) Schools). They were extremely helpful in facilitating the school visits and interviews. The purpose of the research and the expected outcomes to be achieved was explained to them.

Technical problems were encountered on Wednesday, 10 May, because of the national Cosatu strike. However all the scheduled visits and interviews were successfully completed. The co-operation of all stakeholders was encouraging and a sense of great expectation and enthusiasm was evident.

4 SCHOOL PROFILE

It was essential to present a school profile for Jonguhlanga Public School since it did not feature in the first phase of the pilot project.

4.1 LOCATION

The school is situated in the Ncera area of Kidds Beach; 41 km south west of East London and 45km from King Williams Town. It is the only secondary school serving 9 villages situated in a radius of 8km away from the school. The area falls under the chieftainship of D M. Jongilanga and was built in 1996. (Addendum 9.2)

4.2 SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

The school falls under the district of East London of the Department of Education. The District Manager of the school is Dr. Greef and the Education Development Officer (EDO) for the circuit is Mr. Caga. The school management consists of the principal, Mr. MV Mankonti and one HOD, Miss M.R. Kambi. The School Governing Body meets once a month. Five parents are represented on the School Governing Board of which Mr. B. D. Mkobeni is the chairperson. A meeting is held once a term for the general parent body.

The staff indicated that difficulties were encountered in dealings with parents because the most of them were illiterate. The parents rely on the school for guidance, since they view their illiteracy to be a limitation. However, during a group interview with some parents, it was evident that they had clear ideas and aspirations to develop, through the school, a thriving farming industry.

4.3 INFRA-STRUCTURE

A network of roads exist connecting the various villages to the school, but because of the poor conditions of these roads (tracks) and the lack of employment opportunities in the immediate surroundings, a regular transport system is non-existent. Learners walk up to 9km to school every day. The main feeder roads are in a fair condition, but the direct access road (track) to the school (3km) is in a poor condition. The educators travel on this road daily from King Williams Town. Taxis are only seen occasionally in the area.

The lack of transport is, however, not a deterrent for school attendance and the principal commented that the learners who lived the furthest from the school were never the latecomers. It may however influence networking and partnerships outside the immediate community.

The school has no telephone or fax facilities. They rely on the use of a cellphone belonging to Miss Kambi (HOD). Two pay telephones are within walking distance of the school. A postal box system is also operational near the school. The absence of telecommunication in the school proved to be a major disadvantage. It was difficult to contact the principal to make alternative arrangements on the day of the Cosatu strike.

A community hall is situated near the school and is occasionally used for school functions. The Congregational Church of SA has new church buildings near the school. The proximity of these facilities is regarded in a positive light as they could enhance the co-operation between the community and the school.

4.4 FACILITIES

The school is a well-constructed facebrick building consisting of 20 classrooms, 3 demonstration laboratories, 1 media centre, an administration block (offices for the principal, deputy principal, secretary & clerk, staffroom, sickbay, staff kitchen and storerooms), 3 HOD offices, a tuck shop, various storerooms and 2 ablution blocks (1 water-based system and one pit-latrine system). (Addendum 9.3)

Many classrooms, the water-based ablution block, the staff room, tuck shop and sick bay are not in use. The buildings have electricity and running water. There are also 3 water tanks for rainwater storage. The facilities are in an excellent condition, clean and well maintained. These buildings are an asset to the community, but they are greatly under-utilized.

The school grounds are fully fenced with two locked entrances. Despite having ample space and fairly level ground no sport fields or gardens have been developed. Presently no extra-mural activities are offered because of lack of equipment and properly laid out sport fields.

The school is poorly equipped and the equipment that there is, is not used. There are 2 overhead projectors, a photocopier and duplicating machine which are both out of order, a typewriter and a computer that is not working. The staff room has no furniture. Although there is a library and laboratories, these have very limited learner support materials. The educators do make use of what is available to them.

4.5 ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

The school is situated in the middle of the pineapple farming area. However the existing pineapple farms are no longer cultivated and the nearby pineapple-preserving factory has been closed down. The building is in a good condition and is been guarded under lock and key. This factory is about 4km from the school. The pineapple lands belong to the community. The parents interviewed believe this factory could be re-opened if farming was resuscitated.

A heavy reliance on the school to facilitate developments in farming, was noted. The local people saw themselves as farmers in the making and relied on the school for guidance.

The nearest industrial area is in East London which also hosts the motor industries and a harbour. A handicraft market is a few kilometers away and a possibility exists of the building of a cultural village (speculative at this stage).

Forestry is part of the agricultural landscape of the area. At Middledrift, 45 km from King Williams Town, is the Fort Cox College of Agriculture offering Diploma courses in Animal Husbandry, Crop Production, Farm Management and Community Forestry.

All the surrounding villages have electricity, but learners commented that the electricity does not work. There is a lack of electricians or expertise to serve the community regarded wiring and electrical repairs as this is a poor community and cannot afford to employ electricians from the surrounding towns.

Principal, staff and parents confirmed that there are many out-of-school youths in these villages that could not obtain employment because of lack of suitable skills. It was evident that latent opportunities exist and are there to be exploited, but the lack of capacity and skills are major constraints.

4.6 HUMAN RESOURCES AND PROGRAMMES

The school has a staff complement of 12 educators: 3 males and 9 females plus Mr Bolo who is the watchman. Due to the drop in the number of learners, 6 of these educators face redeployment and have as yet not been placed in any alternative schools. (Staff profiles: addendum 9.4)

The curriculum consists of the following subjects:

- Xhosa: Main language
- English: Second language
- Afrikaans: Second language
- Mathematics: **Standard Grade only** Biology: HG & SG
- Agriculture: HG & SG
- Geography: HG & SG
- History: HG & SG
- Physical Science: **Standard Grade only**
- Biblical Studies: HG & SG

The main resource for teaching is the textbooks. The school also receives the 'All Saints' learning material for Matriculants which consists of weekly lessons, tests and examination papers. (Addendum 9.5) The media centre has less than 100 books serving 273 learners. (Addendum 9.6)

The current curriculum supports the view that the learners are not adequately prepared for the job market and, to meet their aspirations, more practical vocational programmes should be introduced which would teach them a greater variety of skills. A review and modernisation of this school's curriculum can only benefit the community and the industry in the long term. It would necessitate a joint effort by the DoE and the DoL to initiate a FET institution in this community.

5. INTERVIEWS

5.1 CHIEF D M JONGILANGA

Previous school inspector; author of Xhosa novels and textbooks, Minister of Education in Ciskei Government. Mrs Nongogo and Mr Ntsiko initiated this meeting. The ailing chief and his wife were interviewed in their homestead near the school.

Mr D M Jongilanga requested an explanation of the new system of education. He was in favour of teaching the community skills such as building proper homes and farming skills. He referred to previous agricultural projects, but emphasised that his people were too reliant on taking orders from white farmers in the past and needed to be taught skills to exercise their own initiatives and take responsibility for their actions. He felt his people lacked planning and business skills.

He warned that certain role players South African National Civic Organization (SANCO) created problems for the community. He also felt co-operation was needed to create opportunities. His viewpoints highlighted the problems of transformation where traditional acceptance is challenged by democratic decision making.

He regarded transport as a major problem. They were happy with the school and felt that opportunities should be created for learners after Matriculation to study locally. Post-matriculation study opportunities were vital for the future of this community. Mrs Jongilanga stressed the need for programmes for women such as beadwork, sewing skills and secondary farming skills.

Chief Jongilanga and his people had been relocated to this particular area. It was apparent that the initial adjustment to resettlement had created problems.

5.2 DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION: PROVINCIAL & DISTRICT OFFICIALS

An interview was held jointly with Dr Greef (District Manager, East London, DoE) and Mr Caga (Education Development Officer [EDO], Ncera Circuit) in the District Offices in East London. The Jonguhlanga Public School resorts under their direct administration. Input was also received from the Provincial officials who escorted the research team to the school, namely Mr N Ntsiko and Ms Nongogo.

The district officials felt that because of the school was in an isolated area, it could serve both as a Community College and as a provider of skills programmes for adult learners. They did not quite appreciate the implications of the FET system as they spoke in terms of the existing Matriculation system.

Mr Ntsiko favoured a community college for the area, which could identify and address the needs and aspirations of the particular community. He sees a community college as a structured institution, which provides opportunities for people to gain skills, knowledge and understanding necessary for a productive workforce. He points out that the number of learners following the DoE curriculum are decreasing each year and those who have gone through the system are unemployed and loitering around the villages. A Community College serving these villages could be a great help. Jonguhlanga School is situated within a farming community which are no longer active in farming.

Ms Nongogo sees a community education as hands on activities and skills programmes. She mentioned the programmes offered at Zwelethemba Community College in King Williams Town which include Motor Mechanics, Housecraft, welding and construction. She stressed that there was a need for outreach programmes as this was a poor area and the parents cannot afford to send learners for further education and training as they do not have the necessary means. This resulted in a high crime and pregnancy rate. This also means that the HIV epidemic would escalate. She felt programmes should include Agriculture and Farming Automotive Mechanics.

The district officials were of the opinion that the school programme was too academic. The only strategic plan that was forthcoming was that Mathematics and Physical Science were offered only on STANDARD GRADE to improve the chances of the learners to pass Matric. It did not seem important that this decision taken on behalf of learners limited their future opportunities. The emphasis was on the improvement of the RESULTS of the examination and not on the future employability of the learners. Their vision was limited to the improvement of the Matric results.

The only significant co-operation was that of the ALL SAINTS teacher support material to assist learners to pass Matric.

Mr Ntsiko expressed the opinion that the Community, with the help of various stakeholders like the DoE, DoL, industry, etc., should initiate relevant programmes. These programmes should meet the demand and supply principle. Qualifications should be in line with the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) guidelines and based on unit standards registered with South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA).

Ms Nongogo hoped that principals would take the initiative after being informed about the possibilities. They should create partnerships with Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs), other service providers and the Education Development Officers (EDO) of the DoE. Having served as the previous EDO of this school, she mentioned that the Ncera area had a Forum where new programmes and initiatives could be tabled. Chief Jongilanga had convened this forum. The support of this Forum was vital for tabling any new programmes in the district. The last chairperson she knew of was Mr Tilianou.

The general feeling was the attitude of teachers was not positive in the light of redeployment and the fact that job satisfaction was not visible because of the uncertainty. Educators in isolated schools tended to upgrade their qualifications and seek promotion posts closer to the urban areas. Because of the poor infrastructure, especially the lack of transport, educators were not as committed to their tasks and very few extra-mural activities were evident. Resources such as photocopiers, were not always available or in a working condition which influenced the quality of the teaching. District officials suggested that practical programmes would be more suitable in the curriculum, e.g. Farming Mechanics, Woodwork, Handicrafts and Computer Literacy. However, little has been done to initiate any change.

The lack of vision by the district officials is in sharp contrast with the enthusiasm for transformation by the provincial officials, the staff and parents of the school. Although the initiatives were lacking, the officials did convey the fact that opportunities for partnerships with the Technical College existed. Mr Phillip Loots, rector of the East London Technical College, has recently been seconded to the Department of Education to co-ordinate the new developments in the FET phase at provincial level in the Eastern Cape. Mr Phillip Loots was contacted telephonically as he did not keep the appointment made to interview him personally. Questions were e-mailed to him to which he responded.

Having only recently been appointed, he was in the process of acquainting himself with the possibilities of the FET structures, networking and creating partnerships. The Jonguhlanga Public School is at this stage not featured in any specific development programme or networking, but according to Mr Loots, could be considered in the future. Mr Loots is an important link for future planning of any FET institution in this province. Mr Ntsiko also sees the Technical Colleges as playing a vital role in the assessment of the learners from the community colleges. Technical colleges can also be utilized to reskill the current educators.

5.3 PRINCIPAL: MR MANKONTI

Mr Mankonti's idea of a Community College is that it would focus on skills training after Matriculation. He was not aware of what the FET system entailed as they had not received any OBE training at this stage. This happens to be status

quo throughout the country at this stage. He felt that the school was being under-

utilized and could offer skills training for the youth (18-23 years) who are no longer in school, but are "loitering" and have nothing to do. The principal felt that ex-learners who had failed Matric should return to the school to do skills courses if it became an FET institution. In 1999, 46 learners wrote Matric of which 24 passed. The school could also be accessible to adult learners for literacy programmes Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) in the context of a community college. One staff member is a trained Abet facilitator and the school is a suitable venue for a literacy project in line with Tirisano.

Educators according to the principal, were doing their best to achieve the schools vision and mission (See Addendum 9.7), but he is apparently not aware of the important role he has to play strategically to propose changes to the current curriculum. He felt that educators were willing to be retrained and that they have other skills, which are not utilised. They lacked a plan because they followed the Departmental curriculum to the letter and educators were appointed in specific posts. The current school programme is not relevant to the needs of the majority of learners and did not represent a challenge to them. The learners were aware of the fact that past Matriculants of the area who could not secure employment.

The principal was not sure how to initiate changes as the support from the DoE officials in this regard is not forthcoming. Departmental officials were working in the frame of the current Matriculation examination and not promoting transformation at this stage. The lack of "know-how" in forming meaningful partnerships and networking is the greatest problem at this stage.

He is in favour of introducing subjects like Accounting, Business Economics, Art, Computers, Welding and Spraypainting, Skills based Agricultural programmes as the pineapple farmlands are lying dormant while the pineapple canning factory exists. It is not operational, which presents an opportunity for the local community. An educator at the school initiated the introduction of Agriculture, but is subsequently finding that the subject is not taught in the context of the existing environment. The Agricultural Science is taught through the textbook and is content specific and examination driven. No practical work is undertaken.

He agreed with the district officials that as a result of uncertainty, the staff morale is low. He felt job satisfaction could be improved if the subjects taught ensured a future for the learners. The motivation of the learners would also be higher if a vocational curriculum was offered.

Support from the DoE at this stage was limited to the administrative duties of departmental officials. The last courses offered to educators was in 1994. The principal and staff were not aware of the FET system and its implications and the OBE courses for Grade 8 educators were only scheduled for later in the year. The principal felt that industry and business should assist in future programmes.

He expressed concern that very little funds were forthcoming from the Department of Education.

The principal is currently doing a Master's research study on the problem of school dropouts in the area. He felt the current curriculum is not serving the aspirations of the youth and is not contributing to skilled workers for the economy of the country. He felt that he had experienced staff members with a variety of skills and these educators could form the nucleus of a transformed curriculum.

The interview with the principal showed his willingness to improve the lot of his learners and the wider community. He shows concern and is responsive to the needs of the community. He is acutely aware of the potential and opportunities his school has e.g. human resources, location and possibilities for networking. However he seems to lack the "know-how" and capacity to enforce transformation or new initiatives e.g. ABET, Commerce subjects, etc. No obvious changes have taken place in subject choices for which his staff has qualifications. Although he has vision, his focus is not on skills development, but on introducing new academic subjects.

If FET institution options are considered, the principal and staff would benefit from Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) workshops emphasizing learner-centred methodology as well as knowledge, skills, values and attitudes.

5.4 HOD: MS KAMBI

Ms M R. Kambi has taught for 12 years and is currently doing a B.Comm. degree through UNISA. She assisted the research team and was very co-operative. Her cellphone is the only form of communication with the school.

She was in favour of a Community College, but was not certain how this would operate and what programmes it would be allowed to offer. The FET system was not clear at this stage. She felt that the current curriculum did not prepare learners for the job market.

The general consensus between the principal and the HOD was that educators would be willing to be retrained if a community college was established. As a commerce student, she would like to offer learners Accounting, Computers and Business Economics. It is unfortunate that she felt that staff had no part in determining the curriculum.

She indicated that the principal and staff had decided that Mathematics and Physical Science would be offered on Standard Grade with the aim of improving the pass rate of the school. Because the current curriculum is results driven and teacher-centred, the focus on results enhances the credibility of the educators and the school. This is contrary to the OBE principles which emphasise the importance of the acquisition of skills (competencies), are learner-centred and focus on formative assessment.

Ms. Kambi proved to be a very responsible and committed educator. She supported the principal and was dedicated to her duties as HOD. Her strong sense of duty make her an ideal candidate to drive change in this school. This is supported by the fact that she was the only educator at school on the day of the strike.

5.5 STAFF

Six staff members were interviewed in a panel discussion.

Their general concept of community education was that it trained locals in specific skills programmes, but they did not see it a part of the FET system. It became apparent they were not aware of the structure of the NQF and how skills programmes could feature within the FET system. They felt that a Community College should provide training opportunities after Grade 12.

The learners followed the Departmental curriculum and educators felt they had very little input into the nature of the programmes. The subjects were examination driven and taught through textbooks with the 'All Saints' support material being the only major resource material for the Matriculants. They felt that subjects like Accounting, Business Economics and Computers should be offered

On issues of the curriculum, they shared the sentiments of the principal and HOD and agreed that Mathematics and Physical Science should be offered on Standard Grade only to improve the pass rate of the school. They said learners needed more practical subjects, which are job related.

They felt co-operation with the parents was sometimes problematic as many parents were illiterate. Educators, however, do not always appreciate the fact that lack of co-operation from the parent was a sign of respect for the knowledge and literacy of the educator. The unemployment rate amongst parents in this area was very high.

The staff were generally happy with the school management. The support from the Departmental authorities was not encouraging, with very few workshops being conducted. The lack of finances from the Department for essential resources caused frustration.

Many staff members are improving their qualifications in the hope of securing promotion posts elsewhere. The administration work of the school is delegated amongst the staff members as the school numbers do not qualify for additional clerical staff. The staff did not use the staff room or kitchen, but remained mainly in their respective classrooms. This was in compliance with the wishes of the principal and to promote productivity.

Although the staff were not negative, there seemed to be a lack of ownership or belonging to the school and the community. A sense of pride or togetherness (team spirit) was lacking. Although they articulated the problems of the community and the learners, there was no sense of urgency to solve the problems. They singled out the fact that the standard of the learners' English was not high as they only practiced the language within the classroom situation.

The staff felt that the Department should initiate the curriculum changes. Many learners would fare better in practical subjects than the current offerings. The learners actually only focussed on obtaining a Matriculation certificate and hoped that would secure them a future. Very few learners had the means to pursue further studies as their parents could not afford to send them away.

5.6 LEARNERS

A sample of six learners was interviewed representing various grades: 4 male and 2 female learners.

Their general concept of community education was that it comprised of practical programmes for adults and not for learners of their age. They saw themselves as part of the traditional school system. The idea of their parents having literacy classes and courses at the school met with their approval. One learner suggested:

"It would be so nice for my father to come to school with me. He has many more ideas than I have."

Any idea of a college for the learners was to provide training opportunities after Grade 12. They felt the school site could be used for more functions. The learners followed the Departmental curriculum and they accepted the fact that Mathematics and Physical Science were offered on Standard Grade only. The implications thereof did not seem to concern them as they were studying to obtain a Matriculation certificate. Two learners expressed the wish to be doctors and one wanted to be a lawyer. Asked if anyone would be interested in working in the harbour, they replied no. They did not know what they would do there.

They did express concern that past Matriculants have not secured jobs and they did not understand why or appreciate the economic status of the country.

The school had no sport facilities and there were no adults to train them in the various sport codes. They enjoyed rugby and boxing and participated informally in the community hall and the community sport fields. All the learners walked to school, as there was no taxi system in this area. Some learners walk up to 9km to school each day. The distance was no problem to them. The staff was particularly strict with late comers – they were locked out after 8:00 and only

allowed in after the first break. This system was occasionally abused by learners who opted to miss the first lessons of a particular subject or educator.

The learners felt that some educators did not impart information clearly and they wanted to write more tests to prepare for the examination. They believed that if they wrote more tests, they would have a better chance to pass. The standard of the learners' English was not high as they only practiced the language within the classroom situation. Only Xhosa was spoken in the villages.

The male learners wished that Motor Mechanics and Electrical Engineering could be offered at the school. They said they had electricity at home, but it was not "working". Nobody in the district could do electrical repairs or wiring of houses.

They also stressed the need to learn about computers. They needed resources for the library, which did not meet their needs. Agriculture was enjoyed by the learners, but felt they needed to do some practical work as well.

They knew that work opportunities in the villages were non-existent and learners had no idea where they could find job placements on the completion of their schooling. The surrounding areas had no small businesses. Very few learners had the means to study further.

It was clear that the learners were not well informed about the "world of work". Guidance and future aspirations were not vibrant issues and their immediate goals and hopes were pinned on obtaining a Matriculation certificate. Those who had hopes of studying further, did not have the means to do so.

5.7 PARENTS

Three members of the parent community were interviewed:

Mr B D Mkobeni (Chairperson: School Governing Body) - parent

Mr R Gantsho - parent

Mr C T Jikwa - parent

The parents felt that the school could provide more training facilities for the community and suggested a teacher's training course, carpentry and/or agricultural skills. They were concerned about the out-of-school youth who had no jobs and were "loitering" in the villages.

They said the school was well run, but that the principal needed more support in the form of resources like photocopiers and computers.

Commenting on the fact that the educators do not live in the villages, they had no complaints because the educators did so for their safety and convenience. Educators' homes had been burgled by unemployed youths who were searching for food. As educators did not pursue criminal charges against these youngsters, the community accepted the situation that educators were safer living in the nearby towns.

Parents would appreciate programmes for electricians, tourism, sewing, baking and cooking skills for the ladies. It is interesting to note that the programmes proposed by the parents are needs-driven as against those of the educators that are of an academic nature. This suggests that although the principal and staff say the programmes should be responsive to the needs of the community, they however interpret the community needs in terms of academic subjects.

The community is not involved in programme development as the school follows the Departmental curriculum. Mr Jikwa suggested that skills programmes in agriculture be introduced. He explained that he was part of a pineapple-farming project in which he was given a 12-hectare farm and was taught the skills to farm the land. However all the farmers (about 20) in this project have stopped farming activities due to lack of funds. It was his opinion that they had spent the money unwisely after the first crop, because their initial training did not include Financial and Business Planning skills. "I gave money to my wife and family. I also bought some liquor," he said. They did not plan or budget for the transport of their crops and subsequently their farming enterprises failed. Future programmes should train the learners in all the aspects of farming and business.

Mr Jikwa strongly articulates what the FET programmes structure wishes to entrench, namely the need for Fundamental learning programmes that support the core and elective learning. It highlights the danger of skills programmes that are too narrowly defined and do not fulfill the educational need to develop learners holistically and give them additional skills to become effective performers in the work environment. This ties in with Chief Jongilanga's insight that traditionally people performed to given instructions only and never developed skills to take the initiative and responsibility for all their decisions. Training therefore goes hand in hand with Education.

Mr Mkobeni takes an active part in the affairs of the community. Representatives from the Wesbank, Needs Camp, Ncera and Chalumla districts were set to meet on the 12 May 2000 to elect a Central Committee to advise the Environmental Health Ministry on certain projects. At this stage the exact brief of this Committee was not clear, but Mr Mkobeni would represent the Ncera district. The possibility of establishing a Cultural Village for Tourism was a speculative reason for the above committee, which could have future training implications for a community college.

History has proved that initiatives with community involvement are usually sustainable because of the ownership in the project. The positive input from parents suggests that this community is ready to accept and sustain the development of a community college/ FET institution in the Ncera district. We believe a FET institution would thrive with this type of support.

6. CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

6.1 EDUCATOR'S PREPARATION

The standard lesson preparation and journals were expected of the educators. Lessons had been prepared adequately for the particular day. Lesson material was the normal textbook and the educator had prepared an additional worksheet. The matriculation preparation was mainly the lesson prepared by the 'All Saints' programme. The chalkboard was used for additional notes and information.

6.2 FACILITATION OBSERVATION

The teaching methods were very traditional: learners sitting rows and educator explaining. Tasks given were the question-and-answer type and not learner-centred activities. Assessment practices have not changed as the educators have not received any OBE training courses yet. Practical subjects were also done by the talk-&-chalk method. Learners were mostly silent and the learners who did speak had a poor command of English and were not very confident in expressing themselves in the second language. They discussed the material amongst themselves in their mother tongue.

The manner in which the lessons are presented, suggests that schooling is still removed from reality and not taught in context. No examples are drawn from nature or the immediate environment that would make learning meaningful to the learners. This suggests retraining for the educators especially with the introduction of vocational education.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

The research highlights that the five key strategies of the NCC are crucial:

■ NETWORKING AND PARTNERSHIPS

Although the various role players are identifiable, there are no initiatives of partnerships and networking with the Jonguhlanga Public School. This is because it is not a recognised Technical/Community College at this stage and falls under the DoE school system. Mr. P Loots has the tasks of co-ordinating FET strategies in the Eastern Province.

■ ADVOCACY

There is very little or no understanding of the FET system among community members and staff of the school. DoE officials are also not fully aware of the potential or implications of the FET system. An advocacy campaign would be vital in this community. However, it is interesting to note that people do know what their needs are.

▪ CURRICULUM TRANSFORMATION

The current school curriculum does not serve the needs of the community. Guidance and training would be a priority to develop relevant programmes for the needs of this district. The principal can add to the school curriculum by requesting additional subjects like Accounting and others for which his staff have the capacity. Schools have introduced subjects like Maritime Studies and Hotel and Tourism without objection from the DoE. This type of initiative is vital within the new FET curriculum especially where programmes funding can be linked to the relevant SETAs identified skills shortages.

▪ LEARNER SUPPORT SERVICES

The buildings exist, but an IT driven resource centre is vital. The school lacks budgetary support and current staff would need reskilling for this transformation. The present staff does have the innate capacity to be reskilled as suggested.

▪ CAPACITY BUILDING

The lack of knowledge of the FET system is the major drawback at this stage. Links should be established with DoL and the DoE to be part of the process and to build capacity within the staff and management.

8. CONCLUSIONS

The critical activities that will determine the foundation of FET policy in the arena of community education are:

▪ ORGANISATIONAL RESTRUCTURING

Who takes the decision to convert the school to a Community College/ FET institution? How will the governance be effected?

▪ COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN FET IMPLEMENTATION

The biggest challenge facing this community is the illiteracy of adult learners. An ABET programme would be a first priority (Tirisano). The community in the Ncera district is eager to participate and the FET implementation would benefit the out-of-school youth as well as the current learners.

▪ PROGRAMMES DEVELOPMENT

The staff would need the support workshops of a task team to assist them in developing programmes. They would need capacity building in this regard. The opportunities to train in a variety of skills programmes is

needed in this area. The school has the potential, but viable sustainable programmes need to be identified.

▪ **NETWORKING FOR LEARNER SUPPORT**

This school presents an ideal opportunity for DoE and DoL to serve a remote community to empower themselves by creating a common community education resource centre. The Colleges in East London and King Williams Town can contribute to this development by utilising their training capacity to retrain the staff of the school.

▪ **STAFF AND STAKEHOLDER DEVELOPMENT**

The staff already has the basic capacity as educators and their experience can be built on through proper advocacy of the FET system and the opportunities that exists. Other community stakeholders have been identified and need to be consulted.

▪ **INTRODUCTION OF MULTI-LEVEL MEDIUM TERM PLANNING**

Introducing new programmes should include all stakeholders and wide consultation with relevant role players. Planning should be systematic and carefully executed to avoid incorrect decisions being taken.
