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CAN SCHOOLS FUNCTION AS SITES FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES? A CASE STUDY OF TWO SCHOOLS IN THE EAST RAND

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, School of Social Sciences, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Masters of Arts in Development Studies.

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ABSTRACT

The South African Department of Education is working with multiple non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to transform schools into "caring schools" that emphasise: health promotion, safety, care for orphans and vulnerable children, quality education, community engagement and respect for rights and equality. Using a qualitative case study of a primary school and a secondary school in a Johannesburg township, as well as a review of caring school models currently operating in South Africa, this research explores the degree to which the caring school philosophy can be translated into practice. Findings suggest that educators accept the caring schools theory; however, most doubted that their schools could serve such a function at present. Educators named entrenched obstacles such as teacher burden, over-sized classes, inefficient governing bodies and support teams, and inadequate training and funding to deal with learners' psychosocial issues as the main shortcomings in their schools. This research illuminates the realities of transforming schools into sites for children's services, while contributing to the debate about the function of schools in social development programming.

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the Degree of Master of Arts in Development Studies at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.

_____

(Name of Candidate)

_____day of _____, 2010

To the learners at the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls

My passion for caring schools is directly related to the brilliance I see in each of you. My greatest wish is that each child in this world can also receive a quality education that allows them to unlock their deepest potential, hopes and dreams. I cannot wait to see the amazing things you will do with your education, talent and compassion. Thank you for welcoming me into your lives, and for supporting me and cheering me on as I completed this thesis.

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ACRONYMS

CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CFS	Child Friendly Schools
CI	Children's Institute
COS	Circles of Support
CSG	Child Support Grant
EFA	Education for All
EPU	Education Policy Unit – University of the Witwatersrand
HDA	Health and Development Africa
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
MiET	Media in Education Trust
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NMCF	Nelson Mandela Children's Fund
SASA	South African Schools Act of 1996
SBST	School-Based Support Team
SGB	School Governing Body
SNOC	Schools as Nodes of Caring
UNICEF	United Nation's Children Fund
UPE	Universal Primary Education

CHAPTER I:

INTRODUCTION

Does the school have a role to play in tackling the social issues present in the lives of children? Policy and practice across the globe over the past five to ten years have increasingly suggested that the answer to this is "yes." In southern Africa, the rise of HIV/AIDS has contributed to mounting concern for how traditional safety nets (family and community-based) can keep up with the demand for care for children. In light of this concern, schools are receiving greater attention as potential sites to remedy this perceived decline in family and community-based support. However, schools in rural and township areas face the dual burden of fewer resources and closer proximity to the country's social problems. They are expected to teach and develop learners capable of functioning in the world, while somehow managing the plethora of issues arising from township and rural life—issues that tend to include poverty, illiteracy, HIV/AIDS, unemployment, hunger and violence.

In South Africa, nearly 11 million children live in dire poverty, and many succumb to early pregnancy and violent crime each year: 35% of teenage girls have been pregnant or have given birth by age 19, and 3,000 children aged 15 or younger die each year from trauma or violence related causes (Caring Schools, 2007; Berry, 2003). Child Gauge's 2008 report announced that of the 18.2 million children in South Africa in 2006, 68% lived in households with a monthly income of less than R1200 per month (Proudlock *et al*, 2008, pg. 63). Children in households making less than this R1200 figure are eligible to receive the Child Support Grant (CSG), which 921,509 children received in 2007 in Gauteng Province alone (Proudlock *et al*, pg. 71). Social workers scramble to overcome the barriers families face while attempting to gain access to the CSG, most of which centre around administrative backlogs and difficulty securing the necessary documentation (Kola *et al*, 2000; Delaney *et*

al, 2008) . While access to the grant is improving, in 2006 the Children's Institute found that 12.3 million children were living in households run on less than R1200 per month, yet only 8 million were receiving the grant in April of 2007 (Lund, 2007, pg. 8-9).

The CSG is part of a larger offering of services meant to improve child welfare, many of which are school-related and depend on a functioning school in order to achieve optimal results. Services meant to support the CSG that are specifically related to schools include: "access to free basic health care for children under six years; school nutrition programmes; access to school fee exemptions; and, increasingly, no-fee schools" (Delany *et al*, 2008, pg. 3). Both the Caring Schools and Child Gauge cite numerous examples of children coming to school weak or passing out from lack of food, demonstrating the toll that hunger takes on children. The CSG has had a marked affect on schooling outcomes, as multiple researchers have found that children living in a household where another child is receiving a child support grant are more likely to enrol in school (Samson *et al*, 2004; Case *et al*, 2005 in Delany *et al*, 2008, pg. 14). As such, the school does have a role to play in the overall improvement in child welfare that the CSG is meant to encourage. Lack of improvement in each area of the service bouquet helps to ensure that children's problems follow them into the schools.

As such, many practitioners and policymakers have made great efforts to develop schools' unique capability to serve as hubs for children's services. Working with the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund's (NMCF) pilot program, the "Caring Schools Project," Mothomang Diaho noted that, "Education is the government service that has the most sustained contact with children over about 12 years of their lives. Schools are also a sustainable community institution that can be mobilised to provide care and support to orphans and vulnerable children" (Caring Schools, 2007). In 2003, South Africa had roughly 28,000 schools that served 11.5 million children (Giese, 2003, pg. 23). Education for All (EFA), a global

initiative to support the Millennium Development Goal of Universal Primary Education (UPE), has also helped to swell attendance rosters by pressuring governments to meet international targets.

Policymakers have also vocalised their opinion on the centrality of schools to service provision. In 1999, the South African Minister of Education said that, "The crisis in primary and secondary schools must be dealt with by ensuring that schools become the centres of community life" (Asmal, 1999). At the Southern African Ministers of Education conference in 2005, all of the attending ministers, South Africa's included, "committed themselves to taking the necessary measures to strengthen their educational systems through making schools viable as both centres of learning and channels through which essential services are provided for children" (UNICEF, 2005). UNICEF's education chief regards the outcome of that ministerial meeting as a "third wave" in the evolution of education in developing countries (UNICEF, 2005).

The policy-push has led to the development of various models for creating this particular type of service-oriented school. UNICEF advocates "child-friendly schools," while NMCF is funding "caring schools." The Children's Institute at the University of Cape Town promotes "schools as nodes of care and support" (Giese, 2003). However, these models are often concentrated around target sites that can be evaluated and monitored, as a great deal of funding, collaboration and coordination goes into their creation. Schools outside of the reach of these models are still grappling to teach children dealing with a wide array of social issues, but without the benefit of a clear model or funding structure. Many schools in South Africa that have been studied by the Children's Institute are coming up with their own ways of helping children, often out of personal funds and other unsustainable sources (Giese, 2003).

In addition to lack of resources, policies that make provisions for this role take a while to trickle down to stressed, overburdened township schools. A representative from the HIV/AIDS division of the Department of Social Welfare said:

> "…government has failed to communicate. I get a sense that at implementation level, schools are not aware. What is supposed to happen doesn't trickle down to improve the functioning; for example, the care of children is not the sole responsibility of the school – the school is just the host. We have other structures that have been there for a long time. A caring school doesn't replace existing structures" (Caring Schools Dialogue, 2007).

The "caring schools movement" (as it is called for the purpose of this thesis), comprises the multitude of school-based programmes and reforms that seek to either install, support or streamline a "caring function" within schools, particularly in poor rural and township areas. The models embrace similar goals for any school seeking to be a "caring school[1]," goals that emphasise the health, safety and psychosocial well-being of all learners. For most models, this means improving school security, remaining committed to child rights, increasing children's access to healthcare, and solidifying linkages with government and community resources. Organisations and schools go about fulfilling these goals through standard interventions like boosting the school feeding programme and helping children secure identity documents and social grants, and through more time-consuming practices such as bringing in community volunteers. Many of the model names (caring schools, circles of support) are being used widely by organisations and schools while discussing the general aims of the movement. The most prominent models existing within the movement will be discussed in greater detail in the conceptual framework section of Chapter 2.

Schools without the benefit of assistance from organisations promoting "caring schools," "child-friendly schools," or "nodes of care and support," must make do with the existing

[1] The term "caring schools" will be used interchangeably to describe the type of school that embraces a caring function. Use of the term, therefore, will not be limited to describing the Caring Schools Project, which is supported by Save the Children UK and the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund.

structures and the limited resources already available. Such schools are not operating inside of the pre-planned "models" available, and yet they are likely to face the same demands to become "caring centres." In the absence of a semi-controlled framework, how do under-resourced schools adapt to becoming "caring schools"?

Research question and objectives: Can schools function as sites for children's services?

As civil society, government and community elements place greater pressure on township schools to link vulnerable children to community resources (while also providing services of their own), much more examination into the ability of schools to manage this function is needed. For many township schools, fulfilling these expectations will expand their existing portfolios far beyond their current depth and breadth. This thesis attempts to understand how two township schools presently provide services, as well as how capable they are of adopting a fully caring function. Current levels of service provision will be determined through interview and survey data collected from teachers and administrators, as well as through observation conducted inside the school. The capability of the schools to adopt a caring function will be determined by examining their existing frameworks for providing services to children, openness to the concept on behalf of the educators and administrators, and the schools' track records with addressing and solving the noted problems facing their learners.

The following objectives guided the entire research process, and provided the lens through which data collected from the schools was evaluated:

1) To determine if and how the schools are performing as community institutions to increase children's social welfare and provide social services.

2) To understand the importance educators give to social service provision in light of the schools' ability to effectively provide an academic education.

3) To understand the links that the schools maintain with external organisations or structures to provide services.

4) To determine which way those linkages flow, if they exist (i.e., are outreach efforts initiated by the school or by community elements? If so, which elements?)

5) To understand who the agents of service delivery are within the school building, and if they serve this function in a formal or informal manner.

6) To discover if teachers and other non-social service staff are being overwhelmed with directives to deliver more than the curriculum.

7) To determine what pressures or circumstances promote or discourage educators to be actively involved in delivering or coordinating services for children.

8) To gauge if the school is equipped with the proper human and financial capital, as well as basic education delivery, to become an institution capable of serving as a community hub for social services.

Most of these objectives were met through spending time in the schools and through analysis of survey and interview data gathered from teachers and administrators. As the core mission of this research centred around the schools' responses to the needs of vulnerable children, data from school-based sources inform the crux of this report.

Conventional notions of poorly performing schools contend that township schools—particularly ones with limited capacity to serve the primary function of teaching—will obviously struggle to perform any other services whilst the main purpose of the school

remains unfulfilled. However, it is within precisely these types of schools that the caring schools models are hoping to make a difference. This report merely hopes to highlight the central challenges that such models will need to overcome in order to be successful in struggling schools.

A secondary objective of this report is to examine the existing models and frameworks for introducing caring schools models into township schools, while problematising the notion that schools should naturally serve this function. There is much debate about the function of a school, and it can be argued that schools such as the two schools researched in this report should not be given such a large responsibility. The contextual framework section situates this debate within the professional and academic literature on the subject, while data from teachers and principals regarding their school's capacity to achieve this function were used to inform the more practitioner-oriented side of the debate.

Aim and rationale

The general aim of this thesis is to enhance understanding of how schools manage their relationship with children's problems in the school setting. Specifically, the research focused on how these schools function as sites for social services, using what means and under what frameworks. This required understanding how educators within the school building conceptualise their (and their schools') ability to provide services for children, while also taking stock of the needs of the children and what avenues exist in their social world to help meet these needs.

As stated earlier, schools are being pressurised by an influx of models, ideas and frameworks for promoting the idea of the school as a central location for correcting the negative impact of today's societal problems on children. However, the schools I am studying are grappling with these issues without the benefit of large funding base or a link to these models. The pressure

to cope is enormous, as children's problems and struggles follow them into the school, regardless of the school's capacity to handle these issues.

This thesis will discuss the national and international aspects of the caring schools movement, while considering how such reforms can coexist in schools that are already overburdened. The case study will shed light on the implementation challenges facing the movement. Learning how schools are/are not serving as sites for social services can help to assess the potential of poor, urban schools to function as institutions capable of forming a crucial part of children's safety nets in their communities. It can also begin to touch on how capable township schools are to handle these problems under a more formal framework of community-school collaboration in the future.

Background to research site

Katlehong is a township of Germiston, an industrial powerhouse located in Johannesburg's East Rand. It is situated near two other large townships, Thokoza and Vosloorus, which together form the area known as Kathorus. Modern-day Katlehong began as an apartheid-era township and site of forced relocations from the area formerly known as Dukathole. Originally a squatter settlement, Dukathole was known for its rows and rows of shacks occupied by poor sub-tenants (Bonner, 2000, pg. 186). The government began moving Dukathole residents and squatters into Katlehong in the 1950s (Bonner, 2000, pg. 193).

The Kathorus area became heavily populated during the mid-20th century by workers from Germiston's booming manufacturing industry (Barolsky, 2005, pg. 20). The East Rand was known for its productivity and high concentration of manufacturing jobs, so labourers flooded into the area to find work and cheap housing in hostels, barracks and shacks. Population density in the Kathorus area was further compacted by the slow relaxation of influx laws during the 1980s. As more and more migrants moved into the industrial areas and

sought accommodation in the townships, "the influx of residents combined with the failure of the state to provide adequate resources to meet the needs of the growing urban population led to severe congestion, deteriorating social conditions and inevitably increased social tensions" (Barolsky, 2005, pg. 22).

The pattern of migration into Kathorus continued well into the late 20th century; as late as the 1990s, Katlehong and Thokoza had population densities exceeding 20 people per stand (Barolsky, 2005, pg. 21). According to the Katlehong Resource Centre's website, today Katlehong has about 1.2 million residents, and is divided into approximately 33 sections (Katlehong Resource Centre). There are six informal settlements around Katlehong, one of which is the home of the primary school studied in this report. These settlements grew out of the need to house "excess" migrants who were overcrowding the official, established townships (Barolsky, 2005, pg. 23). Today, the townships of Kathorus are part of the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality, which produces 23% of Gauteng's GDP and is home to over 3.5 million people—with over 1 million people living in informal settlements (Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Police Department in Barolsky, 2005, pg. 24). The unemployment rate in Ekurhuleni hovers around 40%.

In addition to overcrowding woes, the East Rand was also home to some of the worst violence in the country during apartheid. During the period of extreme violence spanning from 1990 through 1994, the eruptions in the East Rand accounted for "36.3% of total deaths and 67.6% of total injuries" (Bonner and Ndima, 1999 in Mokwena, 2008). During an interview conducted by the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, one respondent (who worked for a Safe Schools violence prevention project in the area) commented on the lasting effect of those years of violence, saying:

> There is not one young person who has not been affected by the past violence, no one who is not feeling the impact…the impact of the violence of the 90s. This was never

> sorted out and, come '94, when we were speaking of the rainbow nation, people forgot their pain. But, this is still acted out, in a mad kind of way. This is seen today, when CSVR holds workshops with teenagers to 26 year olds – their accounts: they saw people being burnt alive, levels of inhumanity. There is a need for intensive, bigger services to address the trauma. In the schools, there is a lot of odd behaviour and this is a result of the 1990s" (Barolsky, 2005, pg. 114).

Given its history of overcrowding, poor service delivery and violence, it is no surprise that service delivery in Katlehong today remains substandard. According to a 2003 survey conducted in the Ekurhuleni Municipality:

> In the formal townships of Katlehong and Thokoza, 1% of households lack piped water, 5.3% of household lack electricity, 10.7% of households reported a lack of sanitation and 5.3% lacked solid waste removal services. The situation in the informal settlement of Daveyton/Chris Hani, is considerably more severe with 25.7% of households reporting a lack of piped water, 48.6% without electricity, 48.6% without sanitation and 25.7% without solid waste removal (Barolsky, 2005, pg. 26).

The informal settlement where Khayalethu Primary School[2] is located is reflective of this data. Schools in Katlehong tend to mirror the challenging history of violence and poor service delivery, and both Khayalethu Primary School and Mandela Secondary School (the high school studied for this thesis) are no different. Khayalethu is a Quintile 1 school, which means that it is classified as being one of the poorest schools in the country, while Mandela is a Quintile 2 school. The Quintile system ranks schools from Quintile 1 (Q1) to Quintile 5 (Q5), with Q1 being the poorest and Q5 being the least poor (Kunjee and Chudgar, 2009). In 2008, more than 50% of enrolled children came from economically disadvantaged homes in 80.6% of Quintile 1 schools and in 86.9% of Quintile 2 schools (Kunjee and Chudgar, 2009).

Because of their Q1 and Q2 status, both schools are no-fee paying schools. Under the original provisions of the South African Schools Act of 1996 (SASA), school governing bodies were to be introduced in all schools, and these bodies had the right to decide upon and enforce the

[2] The names of the school and the specific informal settlement in Katlehong have been changed in line with the ethics agreement signed by participants.

payment of a set school fee (Sayed and Motala, 2009, pg. 2). Under SASA, families that could not pay the fee were able to apply for an exemption. However, the Norms and Standards document of 2006 amended this provision, making all Q1 and Q2 schools eligible to apply to be no-fee paying schools. The criteria for being declared a no-fee school are established at the provincial level by the Department of Education. Each school is assigned a "poverty score," which is created by assessing "income, unemployment rates and the level of education of the community, which are weighted to assign a poverty score for the community and the school" (Sayed and Motala, 2009, pg. 3). This score defines the school's Quintile ranking. The poverty of the school and the community contributes to the need to make schools in Katlehong caring schools, but also to the potential limitations of successfully installing caring programmes.

Ethics

The proposal for this research successfully underwent a full ethics review by the University of the Witwatersrand, and was approved by the Gauteng Department of Education. An interview consent form was signed by all participants who sat for in-depth interviews, and letters of consent were distributed and signed by the heads of the both schools studied. I stipulated that I would not use the real name of the schools, organisations or area (in this case, the name of the informal settlement has been changed) in my final report, and I used aliases for all informants whose words or actions are directly relayed in this report. Everyone who participated in either a questionnaire or interview was told of the rights they have both during and after the interview period.

I took a strong stance on protecting the privacy of children, given that my research was a case study of the *administrative* reaction to children's problems, and not a case study of the children and the nature of their problems. Therefore, any information gained about children

through observation or other engagement with the children was used strictly in reference to institutional responses to children's issues.

Conclusion

The remainder of this report will address how two schools in a resource-strapped township provide for learners, conceptualise their role in providing services for learners, and struggle to create a school environment that could support a caring schools model or framework. The contextual framework section will review the development of the caring schools movement, tracing governmental involvement in pushing schools toward adopting a caring function, as well as reviewing the most researched and replicated models in South Africa. The literature review will situate the study of caring schools in the context of the central role of schools, and will also delve into the arguments for and against increasing the duties of teachers and school personnel. It will also examine the difference between the caring schools model and typical school-community collaborations.

The methodology section will discuss the process of site selection, as well as my affiliation with the Education Policy Unit at the University of the Witwatersrand. It will also touch on limitations and biases that emerged during the course of the research.

The findings section will discuss the main findings of the interview and survey data. First, data suggesting the main obstacles to implementing a caring schools programme in the two study schools will be addressed. Next, survey data will be utilised to examine the extent of teacher participation in social service provision, as well as their perspectives on requiring their schools to serve that function.

The discussion section will address the main objectives that were achieved during the course of the research, as well as reflect on the policy implications of this research.

CHAPTER II:

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

While there are plenty of models and papers promoting new ways to integrate children's services into the function of the school, there is a general lack of theoretical information concerning the role of schools in safety nets for children in Africa. Many authors conclude that schools must function as social service providers, yet this is not deeply rooted in the literature. Others advocate a renewed academic debate about the function of schools, given the potential implications for this departure from traditional schooling towards a more social service-friendly school (Kendall, 2007, UNICEF, 2005). This chapter will start by examining the context in which the caring schools movement took off. Then, we will explore research on the purpose of education, as well as examples of how the caring function is expected to be undertaken in schools, the traditional organisation of the caring function in African societies, and other forms of school-community collaboration.

Safety nets for children in South Africa: Why has the school become a pivotal component?

There is no shortage of legislation, policies, papers and programmes that support and mandate the creation of schools as sites for children's services. In South Africa, efforts to create linked and inter-sectoral support structures for children have been underway since the mid-1990s. One of the earliest government edicts concerning service provision in schools was the Tirisano Plan (Tirisano meaning "working together"), delivered in 1999 by then Minister of Education Kader Asmal. In that document, Asmal addressed the key shortcomings of the South African education system (rampant inequality, low teacher morale and failures of government and management) and the way forward to improve education for

all children. Relevant to this thesis is the third priority of the Tirisano plan, which instructed schools to "become centres of community life" (Asmal, 1999). While the plan enforced the notion that schools in South Africa would have to serve as caring schools, others pointed out that the Tirisano Plan faced a crisis of implementation. Ursula Hoadley of the Human Sciences Research Council wrote that the plan suffered due to "national and provincial departments' lack of access to the expertise of such people as planners, demographers, economists, sociologists, anthropologists and care workers" (Hoadley, 2008, pg. 139). Lack of resources at the provincial level in particular continues to be noted as a significant barrier to improving the social functioning of schools (Sayed and Motala, 2009).

The Children's Bill of 2002 called for the Minister of Social Development to create a national framework that would bind all government organs (as well as all organisations working with governmental assistance) to an intersectoral plan of action for child protection and welfare (Matthias, 2005, pp. 755-56). Particular emphasis was placed on improving services aimed at prevention and early detection, as opposed to triage later in a child's life. Therefore, a range of social service professionals would need to be utilised in a cohesive, unified manner in order to reach as many children as possible. However, the need in South Africa is so great that the current number of social workers cannot handle the burden alone. Therefore, "child and youth-care workers, community development workers, primary health-care workers and teachers all need to be legally empowered to provide proactive services and to work in a mutually supportive manner" (Matthias, 2005, pg. 757). As a central site, schools can serve as a meeting point for the wide range of services that exist for vulnerable children, reducing fragmentation and increasing the number of children who receive help. Schools may also be called upon to serve this function due to the increased role of local municipalities in tracking, monitoring and assisting children in their areas (Matthias, 2005, pg. 759-60).

Another document adding credence to the caring function of schools was *Education White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System.* This document provided a full statement on special needs education, which had been missing from the original Tirisano plan. The White Paper brought services for vulnerable children into focus by listing psychosocial disturbances and socioeconomic deprivation amongst its catalogue of "different learning needs" (Hoadley, 2008, pg. 138). It became a crucial document for advocates of the caring schools movement because it mandated the creation of a School-Based Support Team (SBST) for every school. The creation of the SBST placed schools in charge of identifying and helping vulnerable learners in a way that they previously had not been tasked to do. According to the document,

> "… the Ministry recognises that it is essential that links be established between community-based clinics and other service providers and the education and training system. Once learners have entered the formal education system, school-based support teams should be involved centrally in identifying 'at risk' learners and addressing barriers to learning. To achieve this important objective, the Ministry shall work closely with the Ministries of Social Development and Health, and the provincial departments of education" (DoE, 2001, pg. 33).

For learners from precarious home situations, the new SBST would be the first port of call in the school building. However, many SBSTs struggle to pull together a cogent response to the overwhelming number of needy children, and teachers find themselves trying to fashion ad-hoc solutions to the problems presented by their learners. This was evident at the two schools studied for this thesis.

The *Norms and Standards for Educators* document addresses the role of educators in caring for vulnerable children. This document specifically places social care in the hands of educators—a term that is used to loosely group teachers, principals and even education department managers and officials (Department of Education, 2000). One of the more problematic documents for individuals and organisations advocating reduced teacher

workload, the *Norms and Standards* can be construed as asking teachers to serve children in roles that are ideally filled by social workers, community practitioners and other specialists. Morrow (2007) said that the document "inflates the work of teachers beyond the capacity of all but the exceptionally talented and obsessively committed" (pg. 96). The document lists several roles and corresponding competencies that make up the ideal portrait of an educator, many of which require skill sets that overworked teachers simply do not have or possess little time to utilise. The "Community, Citizen and Pastoral" role lists several competencies that place the onus for caring on educators, including:

- Being able to respond to current social and educational problems with particular emphasis on the issues of violence, drug abuse, poverty, and child and women abuse.
- Accessing and working in partnership with professional services to deal with [HIV/AIDS and environmental degradation].
- Counselling and/or tutoring learners in need of assistance with social or learning problems.
- Knowing about available support services and how they may be utilised.
- Recognising and judging appropriate intervention strategies to cope with learning and other difficulties (DoE, 2000).

The Department of Social Development is a crucial partner in implementing these policies, as the Department's goals for the next several years demonstrate a firm emphasis on programming for vulnerable children. The Department's goals and indices do not explicitly state that schools will play a central role in service provision; however, many of the goals would seem best served by school involvement. This is left as an option by the inclusion of the term "relevant stakeholders" to describe the vast array of public and private services that

may be involved or enlisted to assist with meeting the Department's objectives (Department of Social Development, pg. 19).

The Caring Schools Movement

> *"[The movement] came about because there was really a realisation…from organisations working at the community level with vulnerable children that actually, one of your strongest institutions within a community is a school, and a school is an institution focused on children. So, if you're wanting to provide care, support and protection for children, it's stupid not to work with a school."*
> **Lynette Mudekunye, Save the Children UK**

The following segment provides a brief overview of the most researched caring schools models in place in southern Africa today. While the models are similar in their goals and desired outcomes, each approaches the provision of care in schools from varying perspectives, and with a range of different interventions and resources.

CASNET

The Caring Schools Network, or CASNET, is a grouping of over thirty like-minded NGOs that organise and advocate for caring schools. Save the Children UK co-ordinates and funds CASNET, and they also created the "flower" model that represents an ideal caring school. The "flower" model has seven "leaves" that stem from a base of child participation: relationships, good governance and leadership, human and child rights, inter-sectoral partnerships, effective and creative teaching and learning, wellness and safety, and infrastructure and services (CASNET, 2008). Lynette Mudekunye of Save the Children remarked that "virtually none of the organisations who were part of CASNET contribute to the full flower… CASNET is about together generating new ideas, new ways of doing things, sharing information and resources."

Caring Schools

The Caring Schools Project, launched in 25 schools in the Free State, encourages: a nice physical school building; social and emotional support; skills development; social service delivery; and linkages with community programs (Caring Schools Dialogue, 2007). This model is funded by NMCF and Save the Children UK, and is supported by local NGOs, CBOs, and the provincial and national Departments of Education and Social Development. The overall goal of the programme is to help the school "channel sustainable physical, social and emotional care to orphans and vulnerable children" (Caring Schools, 2007). Save the Children UK has identified hunger and psychosocial support as the most immediate needs schools must fill for children.

Hoadley (2007) remarked that the Caring Schools Project is well developed in comparison with many other projects that use youth facilitators in schools (pg. 2). Youth facilitators work with the school to build community partnerships, conduct home visits and create after-school programmes. According to Mudekunye, the youth facilitators also create opportunities for the children to have fun and engage in youthful and carefree activities.

UNICEF's Child-Friendly Schools

The child-friendly schools framework asserts that for the large number of children whose basic needs cannot be met at home, the role of education must evolve so that schools and other institutions can meet these needs and thus improve children's educational achievement (UNICEF, 2005). The approach emphasises collaborations and linkages to civil society organisations, as well as educator training to provide skills to facilitate this expanded role. A child-friendly school should "act in the best interests of the child…and [be] concerned about the 'whole' child and about what happens to children—in their families and communities—before they enter school and after they leave it" (UNICEF, 2008).

There are six characteristics that determine if a school is child-friendly. A school should be: inclusive, effective, safe and protective, equity and equality promoting, health promoting, and focused on building community linkages and partnerships (Mannathoko, pg. 4). According to an interview with Andries Viviers of UNICEF, South Africa, "any school can become a child-friendly school…any school that implements the government policies can say we are there, we are on the journey for that." However, Viviers said that there are things that "immediately disqualify" schools from being able to call themselves child-friendly, particularly "if there is corporal punishment, if there is sexual abuse of the learners by the educators… they will not even be considered." Above all, he said, the child-friendly schools framework "is an organising construct to bring together all government policies on children's rights issues in one framework that makes sense for implementation." The child-friendly school model is meant to utilise what is already in existence in the country, "rather than creating new systems or processes" (Mononela *et al*, 2008, pg.5).

In South Africa, the CFS framework targets the 585 lowest performing schools in the country. Through UNICEF, these schools are connected to the resources needed to implement the framework. According to Viviers, UNICEF "facilitates for the schools to make their own plans and develop themselves…We pay the service provider…and they go and they have to work with the school. They have to provide the training, the orientation, the mentoring and the systems to get the school where they are."

Soul City: Schools as Nodes of Caring

The Soul City Schools as Nodes of Caring (SNOC) model is a multi-year initiative joining the efforts of the National Association of School Governing Bodies, the South African Democratic Teachers Union, South African Non Governmental Organisation's Coalition and the Alliance for Children's Entitlement to Social Security (Soul City: IHDC, 2006, pg. 3).

The SNOC initiative focuses on "building the capacity of SGBs to provide leadership in creating a caring and supportive learning environment for learners rendered vulnerable by HIV and AIDS" (Bialobrzeska, 2007, pg. 18). Soul City commissioned a study of six schools to determine how schools successfully implement HIV/AIDS programming; they also created a guide for SGB members and conducted training for using the guide (Bialobrzeska, pg. 20).

Children's Institute: Caring School Communities and Nodes of Support

Originally conceived as a means to meet the needs of children dealing with HIV/AIDS, the Caring School Community is:

> "a group or groups of people who share a commitment to ensuring the health, safety and well-being of all children in that school and in the neighbouring community, including all government and non-government service providers responsible for that area" (Rudolph, 2008).

The Children's Institute defines a caring school as a site that works to include and assist the most vulnerable children in the community. The Institute held a roundtable discussion on how to build these communities, which culminated in the idea of schools as "nodes of care and support" (Giese, 2003). However, the report expressed several hesitations, including unwillingness to further burden educators, and uncertainty as to whether or not the Department of Education would endorse and sustain such an expansion of the role of schools. This shows that despite government support of the idea, widespread practice is limited.

According to Hoadley (2008), the Children's Institute approach is more realistic, and does not simply assume that schools can "hold promise as a 'social vaccine' for HIV/AIDS and as potential sites of a wide range of community interventions" (pg. 143). She continues to state that the Children's Institute actively seeks to protect the teaching role of schools, which "should not be undermined through introducing…expanded roles" (pg. 143).

Media in Education Trust: Schools as Centres of Care and Support

The Media in Education Trust (MiET) model targets a broad range of issues within schools, including HIV/AIDS, health and nutrition. This model is based on the hope that "by expanding the roles and functions of the principal, teachers, learners and parents, the impact of HIV and AIDS can be mitigated" (Bialobrzeska, 2007, pg. 22). The strength of this programme is the cluster system, in which several schools band together and work with community service providers to meet the needs of vulnerable children. The "Integrated Service Delivery Teams" that support the clusters consist of "health-care workers, a learning support worker, a community development worker and a councillor" (UNESCO, pg. 23). Additionally, the schools establish care teams of parents and teachers (Bialobrzeska, pg. 21).

Health and Development Africa: Circles of Support

The Circles of Support (COS) programme is a multi-sectoral, multi-country plan for schools. In South Africa, Health and Development Africa (HDA) worked in the Eastern Cape with the provincial department of education to implement the programme in 100 schools. The COS model created clusters of schools that implemented Health Advisory Committees to work with the SGB on bringing health related interventions into the school, and utilised school-based caregivers to make referrals and link children to services (Eastern Cape DoE, 2008). In Botswana, Namibia and Swaziland, HDA coordinated the initiative to bring in volunteer teachers and community members to "identify and support orphans and other vulnerable children" (SADC, pg. 6).

During an interview in 2008, Nirvana Pillay of HDA commented that their model is sustainable because it is based on the spirit of volunteerism. The community and teacher volunteers serve as "village agents" that form a circle of support around vulnerable children in the school. The model is not resource-intensive, since no money is involved in building the

circle of support around the child. She remarked that "circles of support" has now been implemented in the Free State, and that the term is commonly used to name initiatives that seek to use community resources to support vulnerable children.

Academic Role of Schools

The historical and core role of the school is as an institution of teaching and learning. This immediately problematises the notion of "caring schools," as much of the "caring" will have to be done by teachers who should arguably focus more on teaching than serving as ad hoc social workers. Much education literature today focuses heavily on the academic challenges facing modern schools. Blank and Berg observed that in the education environment today, "there is little question that the primary emphasis is on the cognitive domain. Efforts to address…the needs of the whole child…are diminished" (Blank and Berg, 2006). In a World Bank report on educational change in South Africa from 1994 through 2003, the authors devoted the report to the academic changes in the country, with little to no mention of social policy changes in education (Jansen, 2003). Even under the context of Education for All, targets for policymakers are usually related to academic benchmarks and not to community and social goals. Bjorn Nordveit lamented the failure to situate EFA benchmarks in the greater context of poverty alleviation (Nordviet, 2008). Nancy Kendall noted this inattention to school-community interactions in the literature, especially as the debate over quality vs. quantity (EFA targets increase enrolment, sometimes without increasing quality) figures so highly in the academic domain (Kendall, 2007). Other deficiencies in the literature include lack of exploration of school-based inputs in African schools and lack of understanding concerning the daily workings of schools (Kendall, 2007).

Where social services in schools do arise in academic literature, it is often in relation to the backlash and controversy surrounding the expanded roles of schools. Robert Heslep noted

that in the United States from the 19th through the mid-20th century, education focused heavily on "academic subjects, citizenship, and culture" (Heslep, 1995). This was followed first by an increase in non-academic instruction, which was then preceded by outright social service programming. Noel Epstein suggested that while policymakers focus heavily on academic indicators, the general population's concern with the societal problems that are particularly relevant to schools (teenage pregnancy, violence, HIV/AIDS) has pushed the social role of schools to the forefront (Epstein, 2004). Others have posed more divergent views, disagreeing with mainstream practitioners on the basic premise that schools are able to affect social problems. Rothstein (2002) argued that schools cannot be the "primary instrument of economic and social reform" that reformers would like to believe.

These positions may be less convincing in Africa. Cream Wright, the global chief for education at UNICEF, noted that "there is more to 'quality education' than curriculum content and pedagogy" (UNICEF, 2005). In developing countries, the issue of how schools should function is "more complex and challenging" as students flood in thanks to Universal Primary Education (UPE) and other measures (UNICEF, 2005). The magnitude of this problem will have to be explored further in African-specific research on potential solutions. However, it is critical to continuously question how much schools can be expected to do to correct societal failures while still providing a quality education for students.

Caring schools

The other side of the literature focuses on those practitioners and researchers who are convinced that schools as sites for social services are a necessity in poor communities (Maeroff, 1998). There are two main arguments addressing why schools must serve a caring function. The first is that schools have unparalleled access to children and are therefore natural places to reach vulnerable children; the other is that children cannot do well

academically while social issues such as hunger, abuse, abandonment or neglect press more heavily.

The first argument is the one most commonly relied upon by educators and NGO practitioners who champion the caring schools movement. In the 1990s, the UN picked up on the trajectory established by the Children on the Brink report that sought to identify changes in the social environment that could potentially help vulnerable children. They endorsed a strategy to "strengthen schools and ensure access to education," which led education experts to question the assumption that "schools could operate solely as centres of learning" (Hoadley, 2008, pg. 141). Coming out of this framework, which included a particular emphasis on HIV/AIDS, it became widely accepted that "schools held the key to the alleviation of the crisis that faces children who are orphaned by HIV/AIDS, are affected by the disease in other ways, or are vulnerable as a result of other causes" (Hoadley, 2008, pg. 142).

In South Africa, the scope and depth of the contact that education systems have with children's lives lends extra weight to the arguments of those who believe that schools are the ideal place to centre services for children, particularly in light of the scarcity of other resources. Lynette Mudekunye of Save the Children UK produced a map of school density in the Free State, where Save the Children works with the Caring Schools Project. The dots representing schools formed dense clusters, representing the hundreds of schools in a given district. And while schools are everywhere, government service points are considerably scarcer. Given examples such as this one, combined with a noted rise in the number of orphans and vulnerable children, this argument has become almost unassailable, and most literature takes it for granted.

The second point is that children cannot cope with chronic problems and still give full attention to their studies. As Hoadley asks, "Can a child learn if the child is hungry, sick, cold or abused? In all likelihood, no" (Hoadley, 2008, pg. 151). However, she does question how far the school should go in fulfilling that missing need, and at what costs. Others are more liberal with their support of school-based care, given the limitations hunger and other psychosocial issues place on learning. Giese *et al* observed:

> "The marked impact on children of active and appropriate identification and support mechanisms demonstrates how schools provide ideal vehicles through which the health and social needs of vulnerable children could be met. The extension of school-based feeding schemes and the provision of psychosocial support for example are ideally suited to the school environment, ensuring that support reaches children directly" (pg. 42).

M.A.J. Olivier noted that children from deprived and under-resourced backgrounds and communities are much more likely to be unmotivated to excel in further education (Olivier, 2006). Plus, children in schools with strong community partnerships, even low-income schools, show stronger results in literacy achievement (Sailors, Hoffman and Matthee, 2007).

Additionally, Sorhaindo and Feinstein (2006) compiled a substantial collection of studies proving how poor nutrition affects children. They related particularly compelling findings concerning memory function, which has been shown to be dependent upon proper nutrition in the morning. Studies conducted by Pollitt *et al* (1998) and Pollitt and Gorman (1994) looking at 11-year olds and fasting "found that an overnight and morning fast among schoolchildren had deleterious effects on memory and attention" (Sorhaindo and Feinstein, pg. 13). In another study, memory and intelligence tests of 180 university students showed that breakfast improved memory function, but did not make an impact on intelligence tests (Sorhaindo and Feinstein, 13). They concluded that retention of knowledge is compromised by inadequate morning nutrition.

However, the assumption that schools are best situated to coordinate services for vulnerable children (and therefore obligated to do so) is not without its limitations and detractions. A review of the literature shows that attempting to bring too many activities unrelated to teaching under the purview of the school—particularly if a school is already struggling with the functions of teaching and learning—can result in overburdening teachers, or placing interventions in a school with little capacity to implement them. Hoadley cites Kendall and O'Gara's (2007) assessment that the reality of schools is that they "struggle to serve an increasing number of children with decreasing per-pupil resources" (in Hoadley, 2008, pg. 146).

Firstly, some scholars approach with apprehension the potential compromise of the central role of schools. Hoadley aptly captures this concern by remarking that "while other agencies can offer children material, psychological and social care and support, no other can provide children with the crucial access to learning that the school offers. This epistemological access remains children's fundamental right, to be pursued especially if they are vulnerable" (Hoadley, 2008, pg. 153). This argument maintains that the historical and core role of the school is as an institution of teaching and learning.

Schools, even well-resourced ones, struggle to achieve a perfect balance between the core role and social service provision. In poor schools, educators face the challenge of being pressured to assist every vulnerable child, even though resources for the primary function of the school are scarce. Wally Morrow (2007) described the pressures of dealing with classes of 35 learners, saying, "Even to learn all their names was a major task—never mind being responsive to all their individual uniqueness" (pg. 92). Classes at Khayalethu can sometimes top sixty, and children with pressing material and psychosocial needs are often lost in the crowd. Hoyle *et al* (2007) noted that ''schools, by themselves, cannot—and should not be expected to—address the nation's most serious health and social problems'' (pg. 5). Instead,

schools can act as the "coalescing institution" that hosts other social services to support children (Hoyle *et al*, 2007, pg. 5). However, as will be discussed in further detail later, many township schools lack the capability to serve as the catalyst for this type of collaboration.

Further, failure to truly examine what teachers should be doing and what they are capable of doing increases societal expectations that teachers can serve what may be too many roles. Morrow (2007) commented on this issue by stating that:

> "Part of the reason for the heavy workload of teachers revolves around the functions of schools in our society. We can say that the constitutive functions of schools are, broadly, to provide both teaching and care giving for the young"; however, "we need to insist that, although there is a sense in which the two functions are related to each other, they are not the same" (pg. 103).

Additionally, teachers may face a unique crisis in identity related to the decrease in respect for the occupation, combined with the increase in psychosocial problems children carry with them into schools. Daniel Hammett conjectured that "changes in the political economy and in social attitudes have demoralised the profession in a rights-based culture perceived as having disempowered teachers and undermined their status" (pg. 344).

There is the additional problem that schools do not fulfil these expectations as universally as some proponents assert. In fact, despite the many programmes and policies in place to ensure that schools attempt to embed this function into their daily operation, the majority of schools remain mired in the same issues. Particularly in townships and rural areas, teachers are expected to pick up the fallout from crumbling social structures. However, according to Bhana *et al* (2006),

> "… The need for teachers to care for their learners is not simple. Poverty, violence, and orphan-hood, for example, mean that schools are sometimes the *only* places where children might expect and find any level of care. Yet lack of resources, an overloaded curriculum and multiple complex demands on teachers mean that such responsibilities are very difficult and may go unperformed" (Bhana *et al*, 8).

Hoadley suggests that the caring schools movement might "persist in being largely symbolic" given the number of arguments suggesting that not much is changing (2008, pg. 138). Peter Badcock-Walters (cited in UNESCO) noted that:

> "For a variety of reasons, there has been a general failure to make things happen. Lack of financial resources is often identified as the reason for this problem, coupled with lack of capacity, but it is time to stop this argument in its tracks. Money…is rolled over year after year or trapped in bilateral pipelines across the region" (UNESCO, 2008, pg. 11).

Safety nets and school-community issues

Existing literature on safety nets and school-community collaborations focuses on the needs of children in dire situations and the limits of the traditional African safety net, which consists of extended families that provide for children when the immediate family cannot (Foster, 2004; van Wyk, 2001; Kendall, 2007). Despite concern surrounding the increasing number of children orphaned due to AIDS, the fact remains that most children are still in the care of a family or family member(s). When a tragedy or disaster strikes a family, the community and the family most often respond with assistance. In relation to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, a Save the Children report found that "families and communities provide more than 90 per cent of the economic support currently received by AIDS-affected households" (D'Allesandro, 2006, pg. 11). However, this assistance is becoming more and more strained as the number of orphans rise and the number of caretakers falls. According to Foster, "… the extended family, which has proved so effective in the past, is becoming stressed as a result of both a dramatic increase in the number of maternal and double orphans and a reduction in the number of prime-age caregivers, such as aunts and uncles" (2004, pg. 69). As such, the formal sector is increasingly supplementing traditional arrangements, prompting the need to study this interplay in greater detail.

An increase in the number of people living in informal settlements has also contributed to the decline of traditional safety nets. Authors have noted that, "Informal settlements countrywide have increased from 1.049 million dwellings to 1.376 million, and 'slum' housing is projected to continue increasing to some 2.4 million by 2008" (Richards *et al*, 2007, pg. 375). Though many informal settlements are becoming permanent fixtures outside of townships, the fluid and often dangerous way of life leaves more children vulnerable than would be under more stable living conditions.

Parents and other family members are critical to any child's safety net, school-based or otherwise. However, schools face particular difficulties maintaining relationships with the parents of children from informal settlements or the outskirts of the townships. Motala *et al* (1999) state that "the notion that schools should become the focus of community life hinges on parental involvement, which the phenomenon of migration is reducing more and more" (pg. 603). Though Motala *et al* discussed migration in the context of parents placing their children in wealthy schools that are far from the townships, similar parallels can be drawn about parent-school relationships within the township setting. Many of the children at Khayalethu travel five to ten kilometres to get to school each day. The school is not an easily accessible place for their parents, which reduces their opportunities to participate in school governing bodies or other mechanisms for family and community participation. This contributes to an unbalanced representation in school governing bodies, where parents with access to transport are unequally represented. This also stratifies access to the school building and calls into question conventional definitions of "community" and "participation." As Motala *et al* warn, this type of uneven participation can have "the unintended effect of promoting privilege and exclusion, rather than democratisating the educational system" (1999, pg. 604).

Schools can provide a service to children and the community in a variety of ways. As pervasive social service points, schools can either refer children to resources or house resources themselves. Some research has shown that the entire community benefits when the school is open for community activities, hosts a community clinic, stays open late for children to have a safe place to play and do work, and has a robust family outreach programme (Maeroff, 1998). Chitiyo, Changara and Chitiyo (2008) discuss how, without a family, a combination of social supports from other sources are required to care for children. In fragmented communities, the school may serve this function best. However, their study, which examines how teachers assisted learners grieving the loss of a parent, implicitly accepts the problematic assumption that the teacher is ideally suited to provide that support.

On the other end of the spectrum, there have also been many studies conducted on parental and community outreach, mostly focusing on how linking families and community members to the school increases ownership and engagement with the school's functioning, while also raising the child's academic achievement. Blank and Berg found significant research to demonstrate how connections to the community gave youth "better academic and social outcomes," by linking them to extra-curricular learning and aspirations (Blank, 2006). Kendall notes that the bulk of programs and policies supporting parental and community involvement do so mainly because such involvement increases the number of stakeholders invested in school quality (Kendall, 2007).

Others found that schools could serve a greater community function by serving family members of the students, thus functioning as an agent of change in the greater realm of a child's social life. Van Wyk (2001) supports a framework whereby schools provide training and further education opportunities to parents, which has a spill over benefit for children (pg. 130). Lemmer and van Wyk also found that schools in South Africa are fairly good at reaching out to parents, though, "dealing with parents was seen as a delicate and time-

consuming task" (Lemmer and van Wyk, 2004). In the schools they studied, the main focus was on getting parents to care about governance and accountability within the school, and not necessarily on how the school can provide for children whose families were not readily able to do so. Ball also supported the community buy-in argument, given that the increased presence of social problems inside of schools logically extends towards making schools "full-service schools" that attend to community and familial issues as well (Ball, 1998).

Conclusion

School-based safety nets ideally consist of multiple bodies and agents working together to track, monitor and assist vulnerable children. However, as the findings section will relate, there are still many gaps to be filled in school-based service provision. By and large, the literature does not reflect a solid body of work discussing how schools can fill those gaps. The literature touches on some of the options available to schools seeking greater overall effectiveness, but does not address how acutely resource-strapped schools can successfully adopt a caring function. The research that does exists affirms that the school must be the catalyst to initiate community programmes, but there is little research on how time and resource intensive services (like those needed to care for the most vulnerable children) can be activated by actors within the school. The programmatic literature provides the best glimpse into the challenges under-resourced schools face when attempting to integrate a caring function into their operation. Reports issued by the Caring Schools Project and the Children's Institute highlight some of the barriers to successfully implementing a caring schools programme. However, there is little other research being done on what poor schools are *already* doing, or on how these schools could improve to facilitate the inclusion of a caring function. That is where this report seeks to have an impact.

CHAPTER III:

METHODOLOGY

Site selection

After visiting 6-7 schools in August 2008 with researchers from the Education Policy Unit at the University of the Witwatersrand, Khayalethu Primary School and Mandela Secondary School were selected by means of purposeful sampling. Of the schools visited with the EPU team, these schools had the most to offer in terms of conditions that could inform the research objectives, along with high levels of principal cooperation. They both had a high self-reported proportion of children affected by poverty, and were based in resource-scarce areas of Katlehong. Khayalethu is situated in an informal settlement by the same name on the far outskirts of Katlehong. It has both rural and urban elements to it; some children come in on taxis, while others walk—some for over ten kilometres, according to teachers—to school each day. Mandela is in the middle of Katlehong, and has a local reputation for being a "dustbin" school (a school that is so bad that parents are effectively "throwing" their children into the dustbin if they make them attend the school). Both schools can represent other Quintile 1 and Quintile 2 township schools that are buckling under the challenges posed by enrolling so many vulnerable children. Like so many other schools in similar locations, they also lack the proper internal resources to channel the school-, community- and government-based resources needed to fully implement a caring schools framework.

One secondary school and one primary school were chosen in order to compare the differences in social service provision once Universal Primary Education and the increased emphasis on early childhood education (encouraged by the Children's Amendment Act) are no longer factors. Given these frameworks, one would expect that more services are aimed at

younger children. I found this to be accurate; feeding schemes, uniform donations and greater awareness of social issues in the learners' homes were found to characterise the primary school, while the secondary school struggled to coherently address the social issues the learners were dealing with.

The study benefited greatly from an affiliation with the University of the Witwatersrand Education Policy Unit (EPU). Conducting research in schools that already had a relationship with the university was incredibly helpful for gaining access and trust. I interviewed officials from the CASNET organisations in conjunction with a researcher from the EPU, and made the preliminary site visits in 2008 with EPU researchers. This connection derives from an EPU research initiative in East Rand schools as part of a multi-country study of educational access. The project, coordinated by the CREATE Consortium, required researchers to collect a variety of school-level data, primarily concerning academic records. The broader research being conducted by the Consortium members utilised both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Guidelines regarding what those methods should be were loosely crafted, as great attention was paid to ensuring that members could adapt the research methods to their own unique situations. My empirical research was used to contribute to the social development component of access to education.

Research methods

Research at Khayalethu Primary School was conducted between August and November 2008. While preliminary research was conducted at Mandela Secondary School during the same period, the bulk of the interview data there was obtained in March 2009. The target population for interviewing and surveying was the teaching and senior administrative staff. Their perspective on the schools' readiness to provide services for vulnerable children is what the study sought to measure, and so their input was most heavily relied upon.

Additionally, I conducted a desktop review of the relevant programmatic literature on caring schools models in order to provide the background on the various models in existence and the ways in which township schools might utilise the key tenets of these models. To supplement this review, interviews were conducted with several NGO representatives from CASNET (the Caring Schools Network), including UNICEF, Save the Children UK, and Health and Development Africa, as well as the head social worker from the local customer service centre. These interviews provided perspective on how the caring schools model works from the viewpoint of practitioners, as well as a look at the implications of the movement for ordinary schools. This provided greater understanding of the national processes taking place that affect the schools in this case study.

As a variety of qualitative data was needed to uncover the interactions and dynamics of a school that is struggling to provide services for vulnerable children, participant observation, surveys, and semi-structured in-depth interviews were utilised for this research. The entire project was conducted with an exploratory research design, as this report sought to understand and categorise the schools' readiness, willingness and ability to serve as sites for children's services. The findings of this research seek to inform policy and make clearer the ground-level obstacles and opportunities to expanding the roles of schools.

Data Collection and Analysis

Participant observation methods included observing a school assembly, making classroom visits, and travelling to work with teachers via minibus taxis and carpools. Notes were taken during the participant-observation visits where appropriate, such as while sitting in a class or waiting in the school's lobby. During one fact-finding visit to the school, notes were taken during the tour and while conversing with key informants. However, since there were many instances where it would have been inappropriate to write notes during the visits, detailed

ethnographic reports were written in stream-of-consciousness form immediately following all visits. Over the course of two weeks, the ethnographies were revisited and new or improved reflections on the events were catalogued. Facts or vignettes captured during these visits were then coded against the general themes and recurring trends derived from the interview data, which will be discussed shortly.

A survey was distributed to all teachers in order to establish educators' perceptions of their roles as service providers in light of the belief that they should be held accountable only for classroom duties. Twelve open and closed-ended questions were listed on the survey, with six closed-ended, "yes or no" questions that asked for further explanation depending on the answer given. Where these explanations fit with the themes derived from the data analysis, they are cited as quotations throughout the findings section. The answers were sorted using Microsoft Excel to yield total percentages of "yes" and "no" answers to each question. Thirty-six out of 49 teachers returned surveys at the primary school, while only thirteen of the surveys at the secondary school were returned. The mishandling of surveys at the secondary school will be discussed in the limitations section.

At the primary school, fourteen teacher representatives from different grade levels and the school principal were interviewed using a semi-structured interview format. The teacher interviews were conducted for about an hour each in groups of four to five, while the principal interview was an individual, hour-long interview. At the secondary school, the three primary contacts were interviewed twice: an educator, a member of the School-Based Support Team (SBST), and the school principal. The original interviews lasted for an hour or more, and the second interviews ranged from 30 minutes to an hour. Three more teachers were interviewed individually and as a group, with those interviews lasting more than an hour. All interviews were administered so that the respondents could expound upon answers or remarks that they felt particularly passionate about; as such, some interviews gleaned data

on different topics than others. Interviews containing topics not mentioned by other respondents were still captured and the remarks were kept to measure against the survey and ethnographic data.

The interview responses were coded using thematic content analysis. They were transcribed and then analysed for recurrent themes, and were initially loosely categorised. After re-reading all of the interviews to become even more familiar with the data set, the responses were filed under 32 categories, with the most revealing categories being: abuse, community, cooperation/duplication, funding/payment, government, home life and parents, purpose of a school and education (why do social work in a school), school administration and corruption, service provision, social workers and psychologists, teachers' responsibilities and training. Additionally, feedback on the myriad of social issues educators noted as critically affecting the premise of this research was catalogued under the broad heading of "problems in schools." Final conclusions and key findings were drawn by reviewing and further cataloguing the consistent themes in each of the 32 categories.

Limitations and biases

I had anticipated finding more service professionals in the school, but quickly realised that none were present. The SBST was identified as the body responsible for ensuring that learners' social problems were documented and addressed, but as the thesis will show, dysfunction in the SBST created a less than functional support process in the schools. There were no social workers or counsellors in the schools; in fact, educators referred to these important providers as personnel only found in "white" schools.

In all, the principal at the primary school very helpful in facilitating data collection. She arranged for teachers to sit for hour-long interviews, requesting them to come in by grade level so that as many teachers as possible could be interviewed. She also implored her staff to

return the surveys promptly, ensuring that I had enough survey data to draw reliable conclusions.

At the secondary school, the principal also made an effort to assist me. However, the surveys given to the school were distributed haphazardly, and very few educators turned them in. They were distributed a second time, but of the few teachers who replied, many did not write in their names. Because of this, I was unable to determine which surveys had already been counted in the previous batch. In order to minimise the risk of counting the surveys twice and jeopardise the thesis's validity, I did not count the second batch of surveys. After a long gap between my visits, the third batch of surveys given to the school was mistakenly thrown away by my contact.

On dates when I would come to interview teachers (the head of the SBST had agreed to set up days when I would come and interview as many teachers as possible) little would be organised and I would end up interviewing one or two teachers who were pulled out of class. On more than one occasion, the teacher would tell me that he or she could not complete the interview because of class, but would then proceed to spend between 1-2 hours talking with me.

I believe that my status as a woman, particularly a black American woman, allowed me to spend more time with the teachers than I might have been able to spend had I been a male or South African. I draw this conclusion based on the increased attention I received in the school from both male and female teachers, even as compared to the attention received by the other researcher who accompanied me on my initial visits. Most teachers greeted me as they would a black South African, only to find out later that I was actually from the United States. This prompted many questions and gave me more latitude to move around the school. Many of the teachers wanted to get to know me better, and so we would talk between interviews or during

lunch periods. The teachers at the primary school once spent nearly two hours talking to me and asking questions about my experiences in South Africa and life in America. This allowed me to ask them questions of my own, learning about their perceptions of their school and education in South Africa outside of the more formal interviews. Teachers were also keen to let me interrupt their classes for extended periods of time, as their students were seemingly fascinated by the American visitor. I had the strong impression that most teachers welcomed the break from their daily routine—particularly during classroom visits—and so they allowed me to interact freely with the students and answer their questions. This increased access contributed positively to my collection of data from the schools.

My status as an American seemed to convey a sense of prestige that not only allowed me greater access to the schools, but placed an increased sense of responsibility and purpose around my visits. The teachers were incredibly candid about their discontent, given that they thought sharing with me would lead to immediate policy changes once my work was published. Particularly at the elementary school, all efforts were made to accommodate me and my research needs. However, this enthusiasm also carried over negatively in some instances. Twice, male teachers overstepped their bounds and made uncomfortable advances. This had a negative influence on research gathering, as I was much less willing to visit the schools by myself. This resulted in a lag between visits, which was costly in terms of continuity and progress.

Conclusion

Data for this report was gathered as accurately as possible. Careful attention was paid to duplication of the survey results, which would have led to false representation of the teachers' opinions on their schools' ability to serve a caring function. My non-South African status did not prove to be a hindrance, but instead allowed me greater access into the school.

Because I was treated as a novelty, most educators were willing to give up their time to help me to better understand the school's dynamics.

CHAPTER IV:

FINDINGS

Trouble training at Khayalethu Primary School

In October of 2008, I scheduled a visit to Khayalethu to travel with the teachers to a teen pregnancy conference in Thembisa. I met one of the teachers, Bohlale, at 06h00 at a taxi rank in downtown Johannesburg. The taxi ride out to the East Rand took about 45 minutes. Instead of taking the minibus all the way to the rank, we exited along the road towards the school. I was confused because Bohlale had not yet explained to me why we were stopping in the (seemingly) middle of nowhere. We waited outside in the chilly morning for about 25 minutes, until another teacher drove up to give us a lift to the school. I got picked up first, as Bohlale put me in a car with four other people. She waited behind to catch the next car full of teachers.

At the school, I sat down in the administrative building's foyer with the other teachers who were going to the conference. All of the teachers in the waiting area had dressed very nicely for the occasion. The principal came out and began teasing the teachers for dressing so nicely to go to a conference, when they apparently did not dress up to come to school each day. Laughs were had by all.

We waited in the foyer for nearly half an hour, with everyone still expecting the transport to come at any moment. As time ticked by, some would wander off and come back, looking for the bus. Eventually, the students started their morning assemblies, and I walked out to observe the younger kids' assembly first. They were singing in straight lines, packed into an area so small that it appeared as if I was observing a sea of children. One of the teachers, Lavender, came over and asked me to join her with the older kids.

I went back to the office after that and waited. It was already after nine by then, and the bus was supposed to come by 07h00. By around 10h00 or 10h30, I was asked to come into the other office and wait with the assistant principal and the clerk. They were looking out the window and standing, talking. The bus driver had given them several different reasons by now for being late, but according to one teacher, Giftie, they were all excuses. I sat and leafed through an English workbook. One page asked students to write about a particular topic; the options were: poverty, unemployment, AIDS, and other serious issues.

At around 11h00, Giftie came to get me and said that the bus wasn't going to come, and I might as well go to her classroom to wait. She was so disappointed. She said that not only was she disappointed, but the students were especially disappointed. They did not want to go back to class because their peers would make fun of them for saying that they were going somewhere and then going nowhere. The teachers also didn't want to go back to class. She kept saying how demoralising all of this was, and how they would never go to another district function because they do not value them. According to her, "They left the whole school behind."

Giftie's class had about forty learners. We sat together and chatted while she wrote vocabulary words on large pieces of paper so that she could decorate the walls. The kids on the whole were noisy and did not appear to be doing much work. Giftie would lift her head occasionally and silence them. Two of the male teachers came in at that time and started talking to me about what I liked to do on the weekends and such. The kids chattered and joked throughout the entire class period.

At the end of the day, I caught a ride back into town with a teacher. We never made it to Thembisa.

Missing mathematics at Mandela Secondary School

I walked with Bongane to his Grade 9 class. As this is a last minute arrangement, he seemed slightly nervous about me coming with him. I reiterated several times that I was not there to observe the teaching; I just wanted to see the learners, see how they acted in class, and learn a bit more about the school. We walked up to the door, and a boy with a striped undershirt sticking through his sleeves walked out. Bongane instructed him to turn around and go back inside. At this point, it was about 12h10. We were late.

I sat at the first desk in the room, close to the door. It was the only empty seat in the entire classroom. However, I couldn't see the kids without turning around, so I asked Bongane if I could move to the back of the classroom. He took me to the very last table where a girl and boy were sitting. The boy in the first seat got up after Bongane quietly told him something. The now-vacant blue seat had lots of writing on it, deep scars and was generally in bad condition. Though I paid it little notice, Bongane gave me the girl's orange chair instead. I felt bad about giving her the scarred chair when I couldn't have cared less. I asked the girl what her name was, and she told me it was Boipelo.

Trash littered the classroom's floor. The green blackboard up front had neatly written algebra problems on it. The walls were mostly white, with the bottom quarter coloured a dingy pink. The walls were discoloured, dirty and covered with scribbles. The fluorescent lights were not in use. There were black bars on every window, as we were on the ground floor. The back wall was covered with a wall-length cork board, though nothing was on it except for a few deep marks that looked like they were made with a pen. There were two children to each desk, some single sex and others mixed. I counted 24 desks, plus Boipelo, who was sitting with me. Forty-nine children in this classroom. The teacher had no desk or chair, so he stood the whole time. He was trying to get the children to guess how many

seconds were in one minute, then three minutes. One child guessed 55. I heard a few guess the right answer. Boipelo was busy gluing her graphs into her workbook. She also knew the answer to every question—I heard her whisper them out loud. He didn't call on her, though. Many children raised their hands to answer the questions—at least 1/3 of the class.

The bell that sounds like a prison siren rang loudly. The learners didn't get up immediately, but instead let Bongane finish. I saw that he was teaching them something they understood—a girl nodded her head emphatically as the class repeated an answer together. The period had flown by, given that we had arrived at 12h10-12h15 and left at 12h35. While walking out with Bongane, I asked him how many times a day he taught those learners. He replied that he sees them once a day. Noting that there were fifty kids in the class, I asked him if he knew all their names. He shook his head and said no, he can't know all their names. I think how much more impossible it would be for him to learn their social issues. He teaches that Grade 9 class, plus a Grade 8 class and a Grade 10 class.

Can the caring schools movement take root in Katlehong?

> *"Township schools are not treated in the same way as former Model C schools. They don't respect us and don't take it seriously. But when the child is at the so-called former Model C schools, they don't ask why they must come in—they just ask when. Hence, we always feel that they take these schools as dumping schools."*
>
> **Teacher, Mandela Secondary School**

How likely is it that severely resource-strapped township schools can manage a caring school programme? How willing are educators to play their role, and how surmountable are the seemingly entrenched obstacles to implementing such programmes? The survey and interview data from educators suggests that they accept the caring schools theory; however, most doubted that their schools could serve such a function without significant changes. Key obstacles highlighted included having an overworked and underpaid staff, having limited time with individual learners in large classes (45+), inadequate training to deal with learners'

psychosocial issues—particularly sexual abuse—and inadequate funding for social programs. In particular, the schools demonstrated an inability to feed every hungry child in the school, and low confidence in their ability to reach every child who needed an intervention or service.

For certain, becoming a caring school is not a one-step process; it comes as a result of implementing reforms that improve the climate and support available at the school. What a school is doing today is not always indicative of what it is capable of doing a year from now. However, attitudes and systemic barriers are a good predictor of how possible it is for a school to adopt a caring function, hence, educator attitudes and school-level barriers occupy the bulk of the findings of this report. When implementing the model, practitioners look for schools that have a good foundation to build upon, and a track record for addressing the deep-rooted issues that previously led to dysfunction in the school. Most often, it comes down to leadership and willingness to overcome the noted barriers to successful implementation of child-centred programmes. In an interview conducted in 2008, Lynette Mudekunye (Save the Children UK) said: "What we're looking for is schools where there is leadership that is committed to this process. So what we've done last year and this year is to give them an application form and say 'apply,' and we will then select together with the district which schools we bring into the programme." She admitted, though, that Caring Schools Project in the Free State could do much more to develop leadership in schools.

Many schools can handle the initial interventions, but sustaining the changes over longer periods of time is more difficult. According to an interview with Andries Viviers (UNICEF, 2008), "like you see of anything when an intervention is busy happening, you usually see in the short term quite rapid changes, which we are not sure will be sustained." Mudekunye and Viviers both emphasised that caring schools programs interlink closely with existing government policies on school safety and improvement. According to Viviers, the CFS

framework “is not there to replace anything, but to strengthen whatever is there—to bring harmony to all the components and policies that need to be implemented. If [government policies] are implemented in a harmonised manner, then you will have a child-friendly school.” Mudekunye noted that the best way to start a school down the caring schools path is “to start with someone who is actually doing something. And I actually believe that most of our schools are doing something.”

Obstacles to implementation

Establishing a caring school, even in under-resourced township schools, is not impossible. Mudekunye and Viviers were able to relate several success stories, and the national department of education produced a video recognising schools that have made great strides towards implementing a child-friendly and caring regime at the school (Delta Foundation, 2004). However, far too many schools that have successfully become effective, child-centred schools are regarded as exceptions to the norm, while the bulk of under-resourced schools struggle adopt the measures needed to earn the distinction of being child-friendly or caring. In this report, the most common obstacles to effectively implementing a caring schools programme are broken up into two broad categories: school-based and institutional. The school-based obstacles are those related to in-house problems that most township schools are grappling with: abuse, pregnancy, overcrowding, lack of resources and the lack of implementation around the SBST, the SGB and the feeding scheme. The institutional obstacles are those factors that can only be addressed by systemic changes related to social welfare, particularly the national shortage of social workers. Educators at both the primary school and the secondary school were acutely aware of the problems facing their institutions, and expressed differing levels of motivation for changing the status quo. This hesitation and

institutional dissatisfaction is one contributing factor to the lack of progress on establishing a caring programme within both schools.

Overcrowding and lack of resources

Nearly all teachers expressed displeasure with the high number of students they were expected to teach, know and care for. The average class size at the primary school seemed to hover around 45 or 50. The principal cited 40 as the average class size, but the six Grade 1 and Grade 3 teachers who were interviewed together listed their class sizes as 38, 46, 46, 46, 48, 49 and 56. At the secondary school, teachers reported class sizes of 30-59 (the 59 was in a Grade 10 class).

The primary school principal asserted that new mobile classrooms had helped to ease the burden, but they still lacked classroom space, labs and a library. When data was collected in 2008, the school was supposed to house only 1,200 learners. Instead, it hosted an unmanageable number close to 2,000. According a Grade 7 teacher, this creates multiple infrastructure problems, not least of all the fact that "the toilets can't work properly to accommodate the number of children, and that lack of sanitation contributes to illness." At the secondary school, as one teacher noted, "A poor arrangement in classes is how you'll find there is no furniture for kids to sit on, learners normally stand while they are supposed to be seated, listening, so then they can't pay attention. You can't even pay individual attention."

The overcrowding forces a situation where most teachers are teaching too many children to properly teach them all, much less learn each of their personal situations and stories. A Grade 1 teacher said, "If I had a smaller class, I would take an interest in each child." A secondary school teacher commented, "My classes are 59. You can't even differentiate between those who are naughty and those who really have problems." Another teacher said, "We have 65 in a Grade 8 class. It's very difficult even to identify [problems] because you cannot even move

in the class the way it is congested. Learning names, I don't think it's possible. You don't even have that time of learning names."

Indeed, all classes observed during the research period were filled to capacity, with barely any room to move around or walk while teaching. One Grade 4 teacher said, "There are too many kids to reach all of them, and sometimes, you can't even notice their problems until mid-year. How do you think it feels sitting from 8:00-2:30 with 50-60 hungry learners?" A secondary school teacher said, "You see ten learners sitting down and you can't stop to see what they need. We're supposed to be identifying a lot, but we can't sit down and identify them. The fact is 60% of our learners need assistance."

Abuse and violence

When asked about the greatest problems they were dealing with in their schools, teachers nearly universally named abuse before moving on to any other problems. The types of abuse were equally distinct; teachers named sexual abuse as the most prominent, followed by physical abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect. Instances of sexual abuse were widely reported at both schools, but the primary school teachers seemed particularly distressed about the high levels of incidence. A Grade 3 teacher lamented, "Seeing those kids abused on a daily basis...how do we deal with that?" Other stories citing incidents of sexual abuse flowed easily around the interview tables. A Grade 7 teacher related a story about a student who had been raped by her brother-in-law. When taken to the police, the brother-in-law was able to get away "scot-free." One Grade 7 teacher said that the families do not always help the child due to economic reasons: "The mothers deny it when these things happen. They tell the kids that if the father goes to jail, who will provide? The father is the only one working who can provide."

At the high school, worry about sexual abuse was masked by worry about pregnancy. One teacher, lamenting constitutional changes that affect schools, said that parliament allows "things that are evil [to be] authorised by the constitution, like abortion" while pregnant teens were allowed to attend school until they could no longer do so safely. Another teacher said, "We are not midwives here, we don't know how to make people give birth. There are cases where a child can give birth to a child because they've been hiding it for so long. The government won't even bother to help us, will say if a child is pregnant, we must let her continue in school."

However, the primary school teachers were no less likely to worry about pregnancy, and the role pregnant learners played in the classroom. A Grade 7 teacher remarked, "We see pregnancies in girls aged 12-14. They stay in school, but the teachers don't want to be nurses for pregnant women. They aren't trained for this, nor for how sleepy and moody the girls get." The principal expressed concern about the note of abuse present in some of the pregnancies, particularly in the very young girls. The girls were being co-opted into relationships with older boys, men and/or family members. In the girls in Grades 5-7, the teachers expressed sadness because the children then had to leave school early.

High school teachers were also more likely to voice the opposing argument, which was that children were taking too many liberties and were claiming "abuse" when they were in fact only receiving punishments. One teacher said,

> "They go and report you and say teacher so-and-so is bugging me… Tell them they're wrong and they call it abuse. Even our principals seem to be more pro-learners, where you find that a principal will listen to kids more than they'll listen to you…for example, learners do as they please in class, they can even slap you as a teacher because they see you're scared and dubious and you don't know what to do."

A duo of teachers expressed strong sentiments against the abolition of corporal punishment, which they felt was a mitigating factor for the lax attitude and lack of respect shown by learners. One of the teachers said, “Corporal punishment is abolished but they don’t give us any options...[it] wasn’t meant to punish a child, but to teach them what is right and wrong.”

Community elements

Additionally, educators at the school felt that the community environment significantly hindered their efforts to help the children, and was even the cause of certain cases of abuse. The Grade 7 teachers referred to Khayalethu as a “sick community.” For instance, most educators interviewed felt that growing up in a one-room shack exposed children to adult behaviours at an early age, leading to unhealthy attitudes about sex and sexual abuse. According to a Grade 7 teacher, “The informal settlement lifestyle usually consists of everyone living in one room. There is no privacy as everything is done in one room. The children see everything and don’t know if it’s right or wrong—to them these things are normal because they see their parents doing it.” Speaking about the multiple generations living in one room (mother/father, grandparents, children), the principal posed the question: “What happens at night? Where do [they] wash?”

A Grade 4 teacher said, “The children are exposed to whatever happens in the community, including physical, sexual and emotional abuse. Also, alcohol abuse by the parents affects the children; they see their father beating their mother.” The teachers organised a march around the community to raise awareness about abuse after a learner was raped en route to school. According to them, they have children as young as Grade 1 who have been raped or abused.

However, some educators in Khayalethu expressed mixed views about the role the community played in preventing or perpetrating abuse. While some thought that the community should be encouraged to use the school more for social and civic activities (such

as the church services that are held on the premises), others were more acutely concerned about the potentially negative influences. The teacher who called Khayalethu a "sick community" cited the area's poverty, illiteracy and unemployment as proof. Several other primary school teachers agreed, noting that the socioeconomic issues prevalent in the settlement prevented parents from getting overly involved in their children's work, while also creating a culture prone to allowing negative influences to thrive.

At the secondary school, teachers expressed concern about community influences related to violence and morality. One teacher cited this example: "…boys belong to groups over the weekend, so over the course of the week you will have strangers come in to take revenge." Violence is a major reality both in the community and in the school, and evidence of vandalism and theft was all too apparent at Mandela. During one of my initial observations, I counted 19 broken windows in just two classroom blocks. During a tour of the school, one of the main contacts pointed out all of the things that have been stolen or vandalised, including televisions, computers, and even the lights. Another teacher reported that even some doors and circuit breakers had been stolen, and the toilets had been repeatedly vandalised.

One teacher commented on the violent mentality present among many of the learners, saying: "There are learners who bring weapons to school. Learners, for example, they fight, they will even use ballpoint pens to stab each other. We are also here to be doctors or first aid givers every day." The main contact, a female, related fears of walking around the school alone because "boys could be in the classroom smoking dagga and you just don't know. They could rape you, steal your cell phone…We must lock the doors in the teachers' lounge." She also discussed learners' criminal activities, stating that many of the offenders are arrested, serve a month or two in jail, and then return to school with that experience having changed them. A male teacher, however, remarked that the school is "safe and secure," though he still lamented the high rates of crime in the community and the negative influence of popular

culture and music on the mentality of young people. It seemed that male teachers thought more about the lack of physical security at the school—vandalism and ease of getting into the school through holes in the gates—while female teachers had to worry about personal safety as well.

Feeding schemes underfunded

One of the most important (and most commonly cited) social services the schools can provide is the daily feeding scheme. In primary schools, feeding schemes are sponsored by the government, as many children receive their only full meal during school time hours. However, due to the large number of children attending Khayalethu, the feeding scheme only reaches each learner about twice a week, according to the teachers. A Grade 1 teacher said, "The scheme meets everyone, but not every day, maybe one or two times a week. They break it up by grade level." Many teachers feel called to help the children eat as much as they can, and several of the groups interviewed reported bringing extra lunches from home, or a whole loaf of bread to their classes.

Many teachers commented on the serious problems in their classrooms that are related to hunger. A Grade 4 teacher said that identifying the hungry children was easy, as they "have concentration lapses, quietness and are reserved. It turns them to thugs, though, they steal money for food." A Grade 7 teacher noted hunger as a prime problem in the school, saying "the children skip days of eating, don't eat on the weekends and come to school on Monday having not eaten all weekend." Another Grade 4 teacher longed for a feeding scheme that began in the morning so that the children could concentrate better during the day.

The primary school once benefited from a community-run feeding scheme, but that was cancelled due to corruption, according to the principal. She explained that the plan was to give parcels to needy children, but the parcels were found to be going to family members and

favourites of the committee. People could also procure a parcel through giving a bribe. She expressed pleasure that the scheme was now run out of the school, since the school "is neutral" and knows the children and their backgrounds.

The secondary school also has a feeding scheme, though at the time of research it was not officially in operation. A room filled with dried goods for the feeding scheme sat locked and out of use when I arrived at the school. It was explained that a problem with the volunteers (who wanted pay) and other technical difficulties had left the scheme inoperable. When the scheme was first installed, they were providing two meals a day, each day, according to the contact on the SBST. They provided pap, samp and beans, though they could not afford meat. They do not have a steady source of support for the scheme, and rely on donations from educators, Christian Ministries, and even learners (who contribute about R1 or R2). He said that they tried to provide sandwiches and juice, but sometimes can only provide the instant porridge Morvite. According to one of the SBST members, there are about 130 learners who are on the list to benefit from the feeding scheme, out of the 940 learners who were enrolled at the time research was conducted. They started by only including orphans and children whose parents were not working, and so she estimated that 300 kids would be on the plan if they took in all children who needed extra assistance.

One teacher discussed the shame some of the older children felt when asking for help. He said, "Although the kids need assistance, they are reluctant to come out and say 'we need help.' They're afraid to say 'I don't have food at home.' If someone says that you are poor, we were taught that they're going to laugh at you. So you pretend everything is okay."

SBST's and SGB's fail to make a difference

The SBST and the SGB are both government-mandated bodies that identify vulnerable children and link them to the proper resources. At Mandela, SBST referrals are meant to be

the main protocol through which all resources and outside referrals (to social workers or health clinics) are made. Children at Mandela who are referred to the SBST usually fall under a few general categories, including family and social problems, overage children, and immigrant children, according to an SBST member.

At Khayalethu, educators expressed doubts about the ability of the SGB or the SBST to handle the enormity of the learners' problems. Some teachers seemed unaware of any boards or policies that were responsible for vulnerable learners, like this Grade 7 teacher: "The school doesn't have a policy, so the teachers do most of the service provision. There's already so much to do in the classrooms to be doing something else. If a child comes in the morning and has a problem, you have to go on to class. You can't get back to him, but you are disturbed by the problem." Those who were aware of chain of command still voiced reservations about utilising the given structures. One Grade 1 teacher said: "When we can't help, we refer it to the HOD, who sends it to the principal, who sends it to the social worker, but the process is very slow and takes the whole year. We need experienced people to help learners in the school. They are called counsellors in the white schools."

Those "experienced people" are unlikely to come into the school building as long as their hiring is dependent upon funds from the SGB, or even funding from the Department of Education. According to Bhana *et al* (2006),

> "Currently, there is no provision made in the curriculum for counselling or ministering to the emotional needs of students…Under the new funding formula, no provision is made for the employment of school counsellors. Serious problems are referred to provincial departments where staff employed in 'Psychological Services' are on call. Since there are not many psychologists employed at the provincial level, this effectively leaves school teachers to handle counselling issues the best way that they can" (pg. 12).

At the time of research, the SBST at the primary school mostly handled cases on a case by case basis. The principal said that they were contemplating creating a formal policy, but that

for now it was basically a teachers' committee that handles cases, keeps records, gets some forms completed for learners and referrals, and provides uniforms. However, because the SBST at the primary school was not fully functional at the time research was conducted, many teachers were finding it difficult to manage the social issues they observed in their classes. They rarely have the time or proper training to fully follow-through on the issues they notice. One Grade 3 teacher provided this example about discovering child-headed households: "We find out about it by asking the child, seeing their performance or absence in class, tidiness, and we hear that 'Mom is staying with so and so.' There are kids slipping through, because we can't notice if the kids are coping, and can only see the problems that show."

The true functionality of the SBST is questionable, as many teachers were not aware of how to harness its resources. Even important information like HIV status and home situations were not always properly documented, and so educators missed out on crucial information about the learners they find in their classes each year. One primary school teacher attributed the problem to parents' not revealing their status or the status of their child, but also instances where the parents will "tell the child's Grade 1 teacher, but not the Grade 2 teacher." A fully-functional SBST would keep records of such information, thus negating the need for word-of-mouth relaying of critical information.

The secondary school also faced significant difficulties with their SBST. According to the acting principal, "The school is not able to do enough because of scarcity of resources. We have good intentions, but are not able to do all that we think we should be doing with the learners. The skills of the SBST may not be adequate to deal with what the learners are going through. The department gives crash courses, but it would be better if there were specialists."

Two of the teachers interviewed, however, had a less favourable view on the utility of the SBST. According to them,

> "In the past we did not have the SBST. Sometimes in the past we told them…using what we referred to as ubuntu, it would be easy to solve problems in such a manner. This one, the formal one with the pressure behind it, sometimes it becomes a bit much. We need to write down the list of learners that we got, there is some protocol that we have to follow. Sometimes they will come and want statistics and names, how far have you gotten, want a constitution for the committee. You need to do these, but at the same time, you have to go to class to teach."

It was difficult to ascertain how many children the SBSTs were seeing in both schools. An SBST member at the secondary school could not give a comprehensive number most times he was asked, though once he guessed the number was around 120. This number likely reflects the number of children who are eligible for the feeding scheme. Another SBST member said that while the SBST was established in 2008, they have seen fewer than ten children.

The SGB also has a large role to play in the provision of services for children, but the findings suggest that SGBs also struggle to define and clearly carry out their mandates. Jenni Karlsson (2002) wrote that democratic governing bodies were formed as a response to the People's Education discourse following the Soweto uprising in 1976 (pg. 328). Karlsson cites the South African Schools Act in naming the main function of the SGB, which is to "promote the best interests of the school and strive to ensure its development through the provision of quality education for all learners at the school" (Karlsson, pg. 330). The SGB can not only control the usage of school facilities, but they also set the school fees and school hours. They can also set the agenda for the caring function of the school, and were tasked with developing an implementation plan against HIV/AIDS under the National Policy on HIV/AIDS for Learners, Students and Educators (Bialobrzeska, 2007, pg. 12).

Very importantly, the SGB fundraises. Township schools are certainly at a disadvantage in this regard, as the SGBs generally do not have wealthy parents to fall back on, nor do they necessarily know about all of the resources available to them. Because Khayalethu and Mandela are Q1 and Q2 schools, funding for programming is very tight. Despite efforts by the Department of Education to assist poor schools through higher per pupil spending, "spending inequalities remain because of the high costs required to achieve fiscal parity in education" (Sayed and Motala, 2009, pg. 1). The Department attempts to offset this inequality by providing more funding to no-fee paying schools to compensate for the missing school fee income. In 2009, Q1 schools were eligible to receive R809 per learner, while Q5 schools received R134 (Sayed and Motala, 2009, pg. 3). The funding gap persists, however, and one teacher was adamant that the government's decision-making process as to which schools would be no-fee paying had set schools up for failure. He said, "The government pronounces in the media that there will be no learners denied the right to education because he doesn't have school fees or money. Even if they say it is free, how do they expect the school to work with no money?" In the absence of fees, the SGB was the primary target for the lack of income being generated on behalf of the school.

The local customer service centre social worker commented on the schools' financial management, saying, "They do get some funding, even from business, depending on how the school can market themselves, how they're able to fundraise. Some schools have more resources, more funding, and that's because of how they market themselves. Even the parents market themselves." A teacher at Mandela commented: "This school, it is very difficult to fundraise…parents are supposed to govern. SASA says parents are supposed to call a meeting and that is where school fees will be discussed. There is no representation, now, the parents aren't aware that they're supposed to be the ones who are running the school. SASA is there but it is not functioning."

Overall, educators at the secondary school expressed dissatisfaction with the functioning of their SGB. One teacher said, "The SGB is there but it is not working. They attend the meetings but you don't see the result of those meetings." Referring to the SGB's lack of initiative, another teacher said, "They are only there whenever there is something that strikes their interest. If, for example, a teacher has been bad-mouthed for not attending, then they will come. But when teachers have problems that need their interference, then they won't come. Say you need something addressed and SGB has to play their part, they won't come." Another said, "The SGB, they must do their job. That is an organisation that has the right to raise funds. In most schools, they don't know their roles, their functions. They need to know their rules and responsibilities.

The frustration with the SGB went beyond lack of resources or organisation. Teachers also commented that individual members of their SGB were unqualified to serve in the organisation. They mentioned specific officers and accused them of illiteracy and general lack of awareness. A teacher said, "Some people can't write their own name, but are expected to govern an educational institution." Another spoke of the difference between schools with functioning and non-functioning SGBs, saying, "The difference is that their governing bodies are doing their jobs. You will have 10-12 companies sponsoring one school because the SGB is working. They know their job descriptions and use people who are having skills."

Social worker shortage and lack of department support

> *"We have a Grade 3 child who is stealing a lot. He is referred to a social worker. He breaks into the shacks and sleeps there. He steals books, money—he comes through the window."*
> **Khayalethu Primary School principal**

There is no doubt that schools, particularly those in challenging township areas, need access to social workers and other forms of social service support. However, the country's social

development system has not been able to provide the resources necessary to handle the number of cases presented in schools and communities. One particularly troubling aspect of this crisis is the chronic shortage of social workers in all levels of operation. In order to provide all of the children's services allowed for in the Children's Amendment Act by 2010/11, the Department of Social Development and other non-governmental organisations would need 16,504 social workers to provide the most basic services, and 66,329 to implement the higher level services (Department of Social Development, 2008). However, in 2005, the Department and all NGOs only employed 5,063 social workers country-wide (Proudlock *et al*, 2008, pg. 19). Educators at Khayalethu demonstrated great awareness of the shortage and longed for better services; nearly every interview group proposed bringing a psychologist and a social worker into the school to manage the issues children bring forth on a daily basis, or at least having one social worker for the two primary schools in the area.

Lynette Mudekunye expressed doubt that the country's children could wait until the Department of Social Development filled all of the vacant posts. She gave the situation in Limpopo Province as an example, where there are 300 social workers for the thousands of schools in the province. "When you look at those numbers – 300 social workers for the whole province, 1000 schools in one district - you are never going to get there by saying we need social workers. You are never going to get them. We don't have them." The youth volunteers from the Caring Schools Project operated by Save the Children meet some of the need by visiting homes and following up with absentee or struggling children.

The national social worker shortage has had a profound effect on social service delivery in the East Rand. The head social worker at the local customer care centre said, "The norms say there should be one social worker for every 5,000 citizens, and here we have about 1 million. So, there's a big shortage." Additionally, she noted that the social workers are not able to attend to clients as often as they are required. Though social workers are meant to work at the

clinic three to four times a week, they end up only having time to service a clinic once a week. She lamented, "A person comes in with a chronic issue, but they can only see you the following week. So our service is really not satisfactory." They also see far more than their recommended caseload; she estimated that they served about 20 clients per day, when the norms, she asserted, suggested that they serve six.

Much of the work needed in schools revolves around getting important documents that facilitate access to support grants for children, such as birth certificates and IDs. This type of service provision is much more technical than counselling or providing food and clothes, and many schools are without this important service as a result of the shortage. At Khayalethu, the principal said, "The school has no social workers or counsellors." Another teacher said, "They can't have just one psychologist for the whole district. There are not enough social workers. They are all stationed in Germiston and only come on certain days, which leaves gap times."

The head social worker said that she is looking forward to the day when social work is done in the schools. She has been asking the Department of Social Development to have one social worker for every 3-5 schools, but they say they do not have the funds. She expressed frustration that the shortage leaves schools to deal with so many problems without the proper resources. She said, "The schools are dealing with problematic children and I don't think they can manage that alone. I'm praying for the department to see that they really need social workers. It will be much better." However, she also noted that children might be reluctant to see a social worker in the school for sensitive issues, though having one there would keep kids from spending half the day waiting at the customer service centre. At the school, "they could leave a class, see the social worker, and then go back. They could just be seen for 20 minutes, but prefer to come here because they are afraid of labelling."

She also commented that the schools themselves could do more, but choose not to. She said, "You have to follow up for them to roll out programmes. Otherwise, you send them and they're not interested to follow up. We need to sit down and find out what they've been trained on, see what they need to learn, run extra classes, etcetera." Additionally, she mentioned that the school does not seem to refer a lot of children, either, as most of the children come into the centre on their own.

The Caring Schools Project recognised this problem, and chose to place youth facilitators in their target schools to fill the vacancy caused by the unavailability of school-based support staff. Each school receives two facilitators, one male and one female, each of whom has finished matric at the minimum. The facilitators are paid a stipend of R500 a month and receive training through the Project, but are contracted through the school. The Project pays for two years of funding, but the schools are then responsible for paying the facilitators. Mudekunye believes that the stipend can easily be accommodated by schools given the departmental provisions made for Quintile 1 schools. Tensions between educators and the facilitators did arise in some schools due to lack of understanding of the role of the facilitators. Some educators thought that the facilitators were going to overtake their teaching responsibilities. Therefore, the Project determined that facilitators should not be in the classrooms, and only need to arrive at school during the break around 10h00. They are meant to help with homework and extracurricular activities, as well as serve a social worker function by helping kids get birth certificates and IDs for grants, taking them to the clinic and visiting the children's homes (interview with Mudekunye and Caring Schools Project, 2007).

Views on fulfilling the caring school function

The barriers to implementing a caring schools programme have been noted, and it is evident that most teachers are only too aware of their schools' limitations and challenges. The next

section addresses how teachers feel about standing in the gap between the children's needs and the insufficient structures that are meant to support them. The empirical data suggests that teachers have mixed feelings, and that those feelings vary according to the school level. Primary school teachers expressed a desire for the model to work and be implemented, but only under conditions of proper training and better pay. Secondary school teachers were much less likely to embrace the idea; they expressed a firmer conviction that their primary function was to teach. Given the large number of school-based and structural obstacles teachers face, one thing was made clear by nearly everyone who was interviewed or completed a survey: help, in some form or another, was desperately needed.

Teachers to the rescue?

> *"Very often, somebody in a leadership position really makes [implementing a caring schools model] happen, if it's the principal or deputy principal or one of the HoDs. But sometimes, it's just a teacher who cares."*
> **Lynette Mudekunye, Save the Children UK**

> *"The caring schools model could work if they reduced the number of learners in the school and in individual classes, and had social workers and psychologists based in the schools. But, I'll go berserk if I have to go that extra mile for 60 learners. Twenty is more manageable. And, the teachers must want to serve this function, or else no amount of money will help."*
> **Grade 7 teacher, Khayalethu Primary School**

> *"This is a public school. There is none of that here, just chalk and talk."*
> **SBST member, Mandela Secondary School, on pastoral care at the school**

Survey and interview data show that it is primarily teachers who are working to meet the needs of children who suffer from home and community deprivations. Because vulnerable children face so many hurdles to accessing these services, a gap is left to be filled by their teachers—the individuals who spend all day with them in school. But is this fair? And are they up to it?

Indeed, this research shows that structures for care and support are faulty, and individual educators' efforts sometimes make all the difference to a child. However, teachers showed a tenuous relationship between the need to help and the need to teach, as well as between the ability to help and the need for professional intervention. Many recognised that schools had the best access to children, thus requiring them to take responsibility for more than just education. The acting principal at the secondary school said, "School is the best place. We are expected to make the learner a future responsible citizen, who must be spiritually, emotionally and physically well. It's not just about maths, we are dealing with a human person in totality."

While most primary school teachers showed a greater desire to fulfil a caring function, some did express frustration with the enormous scale of the social problems they were expected to address while still being a full-time teacher. A Grade 7 teacher said, "Our core business is to teach. When there is one learner pregnant, the other 49 are affected if you focus on that one, which is unfair."

Remuneration was consistently raised as a point of dissatisfaction during interviews with the primary school educators. Many educators felt that teachers would perform outside roles, but only with an increase in pay and recognition. As the aforementioned Grade 7 teacher said, "If we do after school work, we should get paid for that because it's extra." A Grade 1 teacher said, "If we are asked to do more, we are looking for greener pastures. It is draining us financially." A Grade 4 teacher chimed in, saying, "Teachers become 'all of the above' and need a break. The pay is low and it is a profession of mothers. Mothers are not paid, by the way. We are paid peanuts and have our own children to look after."

Teachers had varying but mostly similar perspectives on the feasibility of making their school a caring school. A Grade 7 teacher said, "It's a good idea in theory. Ideally, the model would

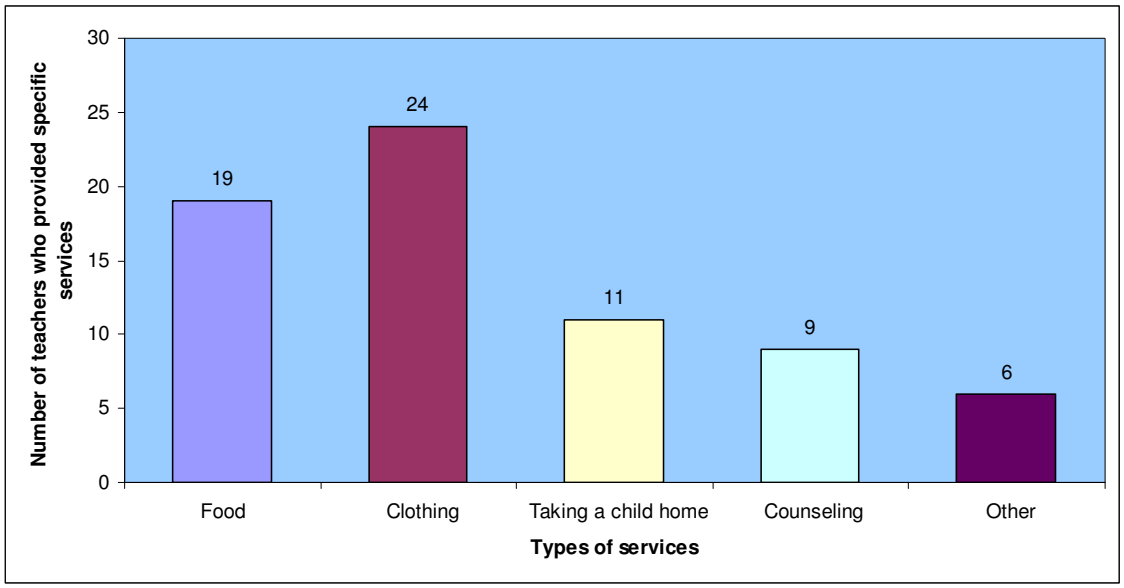
make sense, but it can't work now because we are under-resourced, underpaid and overcrowded. Any plan for this would have to make it worthwhile for the teachers, and then they would do it gladly." Another teacher said, "It's difficult to keep the learners safe since we can't do anything except report it. One must be trained to handle these things, but we are not." Another Grade 7 teacher, however, quickly interjected, "Even with training, it is not our role." A secondary school teacher said, "Training is needed, but if we had the training, teachers would do it. We do many things." However, she later contradicted herself by saying, "Having to do too many things disturbs us. We have to provide a quality education, paperwork in the new curriculum…we need one teacher to teach and one to do paperwork."

Khayalethu Primary School

Forty-two percent of educators at Khayalethu indicated that they had referred a child for any social service, with health-related referrals being the most common. Sending a social worker to the home was the second most common referral. However, when asked if they had ever directly provided a child with any social service care, 83% responded "yes." Most of these occasions arose from noticing a need in class. Teachers demonstrated a willingness to help out when a problem was presented to them clearly: one teacher decided to "save some of the learners food and clothes because they were needy," while another "accompanied [the child] to his mom's place because he had a blackout in class." Another teacher described the financial burden she took upon herself: "I am always giving parents and a learner money to go to hospital for check ups." Slightly more than half of the teachers responding to this question provided services for children within the last three months.

Teachers mostly provided basic needs fulfilment to needy learners. The following chart shows the distribution of services teachers reported providing:

Figure 1. Types of services provided by teachers at Khayalethu Primary School



Eighty-nine percent of educators considered providing care and/or referring learners as a part of their job. During her individual interview, the principal noted instances of teachers bringing two lunch boxes or a bag of bread with them to school. However, 43% of educators wrote that providing these services for children represented various types of stress or strain in their lives:

> "As a teacher, I consider myself as a mother, a pastor, a care giver and a lot more, and that leads to depression which costs money."
>
> "It causes me a lot of tension headaches. Most of our parents are unemployed; hence I am liable to help with finances."

Others spoke about the lack of structures in place to help the teachers help the learners:

> "It is part of my job but sometimes it stresses me mentally because of lack of training and resources."
>
> "It does have or represent financial strain because when you do extra work you do it out of your own pocket, no financial assistance is given for over time."

Next, teachers answered the question "do you believe that the school should serve as a site for children's services in addition to its academic pursuits?" This question was designed to ask educators if they believed that providing services was an official function that the school should perform. Eighty-nine percent responded yes. The eleven percent (four) who responded "no" did so for two reasons—insufficient resources and additional burden on teachers:

> "It will cause a lot of confusion and more paperwork for the teachers."
>
> "1. There are insufficient facilities 2. Not enough time 3. Lack of professionals to do the job in our school 4. Not enough space due to our increasing roll."

The "yes" answers were more varied, but they all revolved around the premise that the "teacher" and the "school" loom so large in the lives of children that schools are almost required to take care of children who are in need. Essential to this idea was the knowledge that learners in the community come from very under-resourced situations:

> "This school is situated within the informal settlement and the unemployed majority of parents and community. So, there are lots of socio-economic problems around here."
>
> "Because we are the people who spend most of the time with learners so we do see their everyday needs. Others come to school with an empty stomach, some do not have clothes or shoes."
>
> "Because in the community I am working with there are a lot of children who are orphans and some parents are not working. Learners come to school without food."
>
> "The school should serve as a site for children's services because there are no other places where they can be taught or gather them to give them the knowledge."
>
> "The teachers are in contact with the children all the time and can identify children who have problems and try to help them."

The next two questions show the diversion in thinking around the school's ability to fulfil this role adequately. Eighty-eight percent of respondents indicated that they thought that their school is currently serving as a site for children's services. However, one question later,

eighty-nine percent responded that the school does not have enough resources to serve this function. The distinction comes into focus when examining what it is that educators thought the school was already doing for needy learners. The school feeding scheme and uniform donations were the main reasons educators listed for believing that their school was providing adequate services:

> "Children are educated and also there is a feeding scheme. And the poor ones (orphans) are given free school uniform."
>
> "We cater for vulnerable learners. We provide them with food parcels and clothes."
>
> "… they can identify learners that need support, give them extra food, other educators bring clothes and food for the children, sometimes refer them to social workers, and take them to clinics when they are sick."

One teacher who replied with both yes and no said, "Sometimes children are given food parcels to go home with and those who are in need of school uniforms are also provided with, but that's not enough considering the large number of these needy children."

When it comes to extra services, however, teachers related a barrage of problems that are commonly regarded as entrenched in township schools (Christie, 1998):

> "Our school has limited resources, especially infrastructure. The number of learners exceeds the classroom and toilets are not enough for learners and educators=health hazard."
>
> "There is not enough food and clothes. We only receive clothes from other educators, our feeding scheme does not provide enough food."
>
> "Firstly, we need to be trained for such activities, secondly, the school itself must be user friendly for such activities."
>
> "We have no library, no playgrounds and the space is not enough for the learners and not enough learning materials."

Mandela Secondary School

Interviewed teachers confirmed that their school had a reputation for low academic achievement and was viewed negatively by the community. According to one of the main contacts there, "the community acts like you don't know what you're doing if you're from [here]. You come here if you've failed from other schools." She cited an unconfirmed statistic that the school is ranked 14th out of 15 local schools in terms of academic performance. More than one teacher blamed the types of children who end up at the school, saying that they received kids who are not motivated and have serious social problems, or are from other countries and do not understand the South African educational system. One teacher blamed their attitudes and actions, saying,

> "We are forced to take learners who have been naughty, problematic…those learners are brought to us and we are expected to turn those learners into good learners, which is not fair. Those learners aren't in the streets for no reason, they brought it on themselves. They are rascals, hooligans, and at the end of the day, [the district] expects us to produce the same results as the good schools with the learners from good backgrounds."

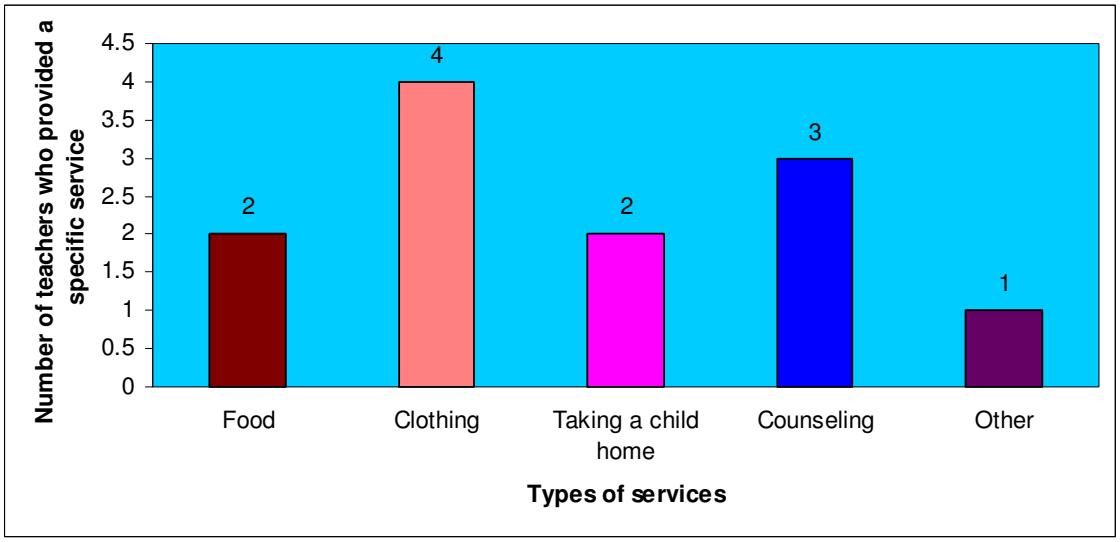
Additionally, another teacher commented on the short shelf life of administrators, saying that they usually only stay for two or three years.

At Mandela, individual teachers do not appear to take on as much of the burden of providing care for children as they do at the primary school. Most social problems are referred to the school's SBST, regardless of whether or not the SBST follows up. The mere act of referring often relieves the teachers of their duties.

From the thirteen surveys collected at Mandela, eight respondents confirmed that they had referred a child for social service. Of those referrals, most were for counselling, or to request that a social worker visit the home. Nine out of thirteen teachers had themselves provided a service for a child, with the most common service being to provide a learner with clothing.

However, the bulk of these instances occurred either between six months to a year before the time of the survey, or not within a year of the survey (5 out of 8 responses to the date of last service provision).

Figure 2. Types of services provided by teachers at Mandela Secondary School



When asked if they thought that providing services for learners was a part of their job, 54% said yes, 31% said no, and 15% did not reply. In defence of their "no" response, one teacher wrote: "I don't want to add any other burden because NCS [National Curriculum Statement] is already a burden with a lot of paper work and a lot of marking." Other teachers wrote that providing services for children causes financial strain, and is burdensome in light of the many responsibilities they already have in the school.

In response to the question "Do you believe the schools should serve as a site for children's services in addition to its academic pursuits?" 54% said yes and 46% said no. The teachers who said that the school should not serve this function mostly did so because of lack of resources, although a few teachers disagreed with the premise entirely. One teacher responded, "The school cannot serve as a [site for] children's services because this is only for

teaching and learning." Another teacher responded in agreement, saying that "it disturbs us from giving quality teaching to our learners." Another teacher suggested that "the government should employ professional or people qualified for this job to assist learners." Another commented that providing services would require soliciting help from outside of the school, which could be burdensome: "there is always no finances. These services would at times [require] one to go out for help from other centres."

The teachers who supported the caring schools premise suggested that taking the child's needs into consideration will show that the school does have a role to play. According to one respondent: "A school is a place for children, it's where they are more comfortable and where they spend most of their lives. Schools are also central places known to everyone. I think they should serve as a site for children's services." Another teacher said: "Beyond academic instruction, the school needs to take care of the emotional, spiritual, social and psychological development or dimensions of a child. This means that it should in addition to its traditional role in society, also be a site for children's services."

In response to the question "do you feel your school serves as a site for children's services?" 38% said yes, 47% said no and 15% said both yes and no. Those who replied "yes and no" did so largely due to the presence of a school feeding scheme. One respondent wrote: "For learners receiving food, yes, but for social and educational challenges, NO…there are a lot of learners who need attention socially and educationally, but they are not attended to." One respondent provided a unique interpretation of the term "disadvantaged," saying: "We are very disadvantaged in terms of management. We have had more than three principals in a period of five years."

The final question on the survey asked "do you feel that your school has enough resources to serve as a site for children's services?" Ninety-two percent said no, while 8% said yes.

Supporting their “yes and no” response, one teacher wrote: "Yes in terms of availability of classes, but no because there are not enough plates and relevant furniture and equipment necessary for some services." The teachers who responded “no” did so for a variety of reasons, including vandalism, lack of resources, and previous failures. One teacher said no "because they implemented a thing (feeding scheme) and it is not so effective." One teacher summed up the problem by saying "We need a serious injection of capital to initiate and sustain this [caring] function long term."

Conclusion

Schools are highly imperfect grounds for implementing national programs. In this chapter, we took a look into the perceptions that educators have of their schools’ abilities to implement a programme around caring. Their concerns speak volumes about the ingrained issues that are pervasive in schools riddled with problems such as overcrowding, violence, regional poverty, illiteracy, low morale and disorganisation. Speaking on the similar topic of using schools as sites for HIV/AIDS prevention, Bajaj argued that policymakers tend to forget that schools are not always well-functioning, safe spaces where any program can be carried out effectively; instead, policymakers “often fail to recognise that perceived neutral sites such as schools are often wrought with…inequities that undermine attempts at HIV prevention” (Bajaj, 2008, pg. 308).

This chapter shone a light on the daily issues teachers deal with, while also demonstrating how the basic function of the school has yet to be met by existing structures. This thesis set out to discover what schools were doing, how formally they were doing it, and if the school could be characterised as caring. The interview and survey data examined here would suggest that while both schools are attempting to run a feeding scheme and a SBST, real support for

children still comes on an ad-hoc basis, and institutional design to create space to assist children is still sorely lacking.

CHAPTER V:

DISCUSSION

The general aim of this study was to better understand how schools function as sites for children's services, using what means and under what frameworks. The following chapter will explore this aim by examining the fulfilment of the eight objectives set out in the introduction, and will culminate in a discussion of the significance of these findings.

The first objective, to determine if and how the schools are performing as community institutions to increase children's social welfare and provide social services, contains the entire research question, and was thus the most difficult to gauge. Firstly, the term "community institution" means different things to different people. At Khayalethu, community members were allowed and even encouraged to use the school on the weekends for church services. According to some models of school-community collaboration, that would be an example of a successful partnership. However, the reality is that many of the educators expressed such deep disdain for the grimmer aspects of community life that they focused on the property damage church-goers inflicted on the school, and related stories about the "sick" mentality in the community that propagated abuse, rape and neglect.

Another item of note is that the majority of the educators interviewed at both the primary and secondary school did not reside in Katlehong, but commuted to the school daily from other parts of Johannesburg. Many of the teachers expressed negative views of the community, particularly the informal settlement. The term "dust-bin school" was used by one of the educators who commuted to the informal settlement; as a mother, she said that she would not allow her own children to attend such a school.

At the Mandela, not only did many of the educators not live in the community, but they felt shunned and angry because of the reputation the school had for being a place for failures and children who were unwanted by all of the other schools. According to the head social worker at the local customer care centre, "Usually, we call [Mandela] a place where people go for leisure; we call it Sun City. We see learners going over the fence during school time, see them go over the fence instead of the main gate. It's a nice school, though, the buildings are very nice." This reputation is consistent with a local interpretation for the school's actual name, which implies a place where one goes to lose their way (Bonner, 2000, pg. 188).

The schools also struggled with parental involvement. Despite much research showing that parental involvement is strongly related to parental empowerment and support for the efforts being undertaken at the school (van Wyk, 2001, pg. 116), the teachers interviewed at both schools focused heavily on the demanding aspects of increasing parental participation. One teacher said that parents contribute to the financial difficulties of the school because they do not trust the teachers. He noted that "when we call meetings for the parents to come to try to make them understand why we're asking for donations, the parents don't see it as for the benefit of the children, they see it as teachers wanting to abuse this money for their own." The principal at Khayalethu was the only educator who voiced contentment with parental involvement; she said that parents do participate, and that they come to meetings when called. However, the teaching staff expressed a different opinion of the parents. One teacher contradicted the principal's assertion by saying, "While there are parents who are involved, others wouldn't come [to the school] to a meeting if one was called right now." Many commented that parental education levels were too low for them to assist their children. Another teacher at Mandela noted that parents neglect their children and fail to impart solid family values. He noted that this failure at home causes problems at school, saying: "Charity begins at home. If you have no values at home you will have no values at school." Their

commentary is consistent with observations in the literature that parental involvement strategies are often more about correcting the behaviour of errant parents than creating a community- and family-friendly school (van Wyk, 2001, pg. 121).

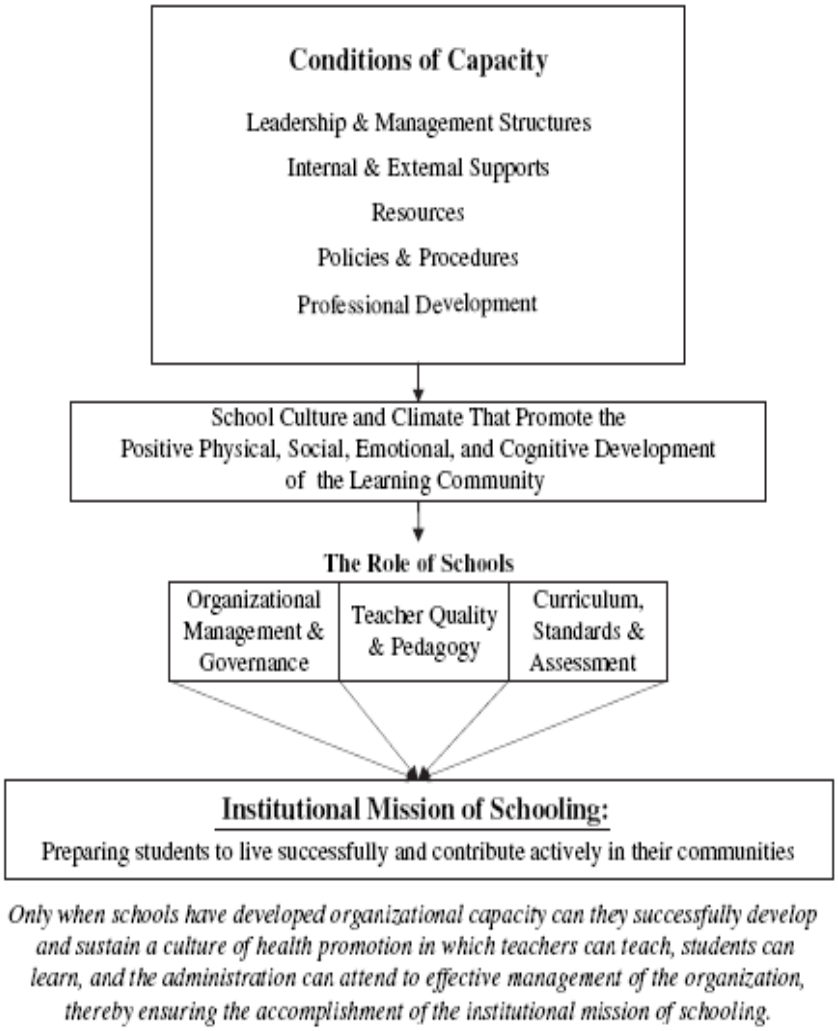
One of the limitations of this report is that it could not delve into the responsibilities that the public and the community have to improve schools as places of learning and sites for children's services. Because the report focuses on the school-based barriers, the equally important community-based obstacles are only referred to in passing. The main community organ for direct participation in school matters is the SGB, which educators believed was functioning below its full capacity. An interesting question to pursue through further research would be that of the SGB's perception of its ability to influence change at the school. Does the SGB perhaps doubt its own ability, or are the SGB members also bogged down by the weight of inadequate funding and deeply entrenched problems within the school? This question begs further research to fully understand each stakeholder in the caring schools movement.

One factor contributing to the SGB's lack of efficacy could be related to the very real attitudes that educators have towards the community. Particularly at Khayalethu, educators tended to look down upon community members for their poverty and purported illiteracy, and so they limited participation on that account. Even at Mandela, educators thought that parents were too busy worrying about food and shelter to think about helping their child with schoolwork. Therefore, community obligation was minimised in the minds of most of the teachers interviewed. One example of this was the usage of Khayalethu for weekend church services, where the educators largely felt as if the community members vandalised and robbed the school while they were there. This harsher perspective on the community could have been amplified by the fact that most of the teachers commuted from other areas of metro Johannesburg.

The second objective, to understand the importance educators give to social service provision in light of the schools' ability to effectively provide an academic education, reflects the need to understand if educators view social service provision as a function of the school. This varied, with the primary school educators feeling more favourable and the secondary school educators feeling less so. Educators were well aware of the shortcomings at their schools, and lamented the lack of classroom space, recreational space, labs, books, paper and chalk. Both schools lacked a functional library. Therefore, while they looked to the feeding scheme as an example of providing services, teachers at both schools doubted that the resources for intensive care would be made available anytime soon. This lack of resources included lack of funding for teacher pay, which was an incredible point of contention at the primary school. Teachers felt as if they would soon be required to do even more work outside of teaching (in addition to a purportedly heavy paperwork load), and consistently vocalised their discontent with that arrangement.

There was also a significant shortage of institutional capacity to provide social services. The following diagram shows where social and health support/promotion fits into the greater goal of successfully educating a child:

Figure 3. Building Capacity to Achieve the Institutional Mission of Schooling



(Hoyle TB, Samek BB, Valois RF. 2007. Building capacity for the continuous improvement of health-promoting schools. Journal of School Health; 78: 1-8.)

Both Khayalethu and Mandela were missing large chunks of the critical "conditions of capacity" box. Without stable leadership and management structures (Mandela teachers lamented the "revolving door" nature of their principals), internal and external supports, resources and good policies and procedures, the category of "school culture and climate that promote the positive physical, social, emotional and cognitive development of the learning community" cannot begin to be expanded in the school.

The third and fourth objectives, to understand the links that the schools maintain with external organisations or structures to provide services and to determine which way those linkages flow, were concerned with the schools' relationships with community collaborators. At both schools, the principals were hard-pressed to name community organisations that were contributing to their school, though they did mention that some organisations were assisting with the feeding scheme or donating uniforms. Formal linkages that could create the safety net vulnerable children are lacking simply were not present. This is consistent with observations made by Lynne Perry of the Johannesburg Child Welfare Society. On the topic of social workers and their interactions with the school and community, she noted that fewer social workers were achieving community buy-in due to failure to properly network and build relationships with and between community organisations (interview, May 2008). She also lamented the increasing loss of community mentality in the Johannesburg area. The teachers' responses also provided a glimpse of the problem with community outreach plans. At Khayalethu, teachers felt that because the school was based in an informal settlement, it would never be possible to "remedy the problem" of lack of community interest in caring for the children. It would be worthwhile to conduct further investigation into the merit of this assumption.

Though the school may struggle to maintain community linkages, nearly everyone interviewed at both schools expressed a strong desire to have greater access to social workers and other experts to treat the psychosocial issues their learners were grappling with. However, interviews with the head social worker at the local community service clinic revealed that the school rarely followed up with programs initiated by the centre, and that the centre itself received very few referrals from the schools. Most learners came in to see the social workers of their own volition. Perry also commented that they were receiving fewer and fewer referrals from the schools. This apparent disconnect could result from poor

organisation at the top level; without a consistent, firm policy on community relations, it is unlikely that schools such as Khayalethu and Mandela will readily tackle the large task of building a community outreach program. This challenge is also a reflection of the general fragmentation of the social service sector in South Africa.

The fifth objective, to understand who the agents of service delivery are within the school building, and if they serve this function in a formal or informal manner, was one of the most pivotal aims of this research: to understand where the motivation to serve a caring function came from within the school. The original hypothesis was that most interventions were being scheduled on an ad-hoc basis by teachers who happened to notice a particular child struggling. This was found to be correct; the SBSTs were unable to handle a full caseload, and social workers were not a consistent resource at either school. Educators related stories of giving the children and their families everything from food to money to time spent attending court cases. However, formal organisation of such assistance was lacking in general from both schools.

The sixth objective, to discover if teachers and other non-social service staff are being overwhelmed with directives to deliver more than the curriculum, was met through observing the discrepancies between interview data and survey data, and between the statements given by those in power versus those given by the teachers. The principals at both schools were eager for their staffs to teach the "whole learner," which required attention to the psychosocial component. However, a melee of factors prevented their eagerness from translating into a school culture driven by "child-friendly" guidelines. There was a considerable disconnect between the words spoken by the principals and the more cynical perspectives expressed by the staff. The poor staff morale—particularly at the secondary school—was indicative of their deep dissatisfaction with their working conditions. They felt overwhelmed by the amount of paperwork that Department of Education policies mandated,

and disstressed by the high class enrolments and lack of resources to teach so many children. Taking on extra roles outside of the classroom had not yet been made an enticing prospect.

The seventh objective, to determine what pressures or circumstances promote or discourage educators to be actively involved in delivering or coordinating services for children, was also met through interviews and informal observation. Many educators were helpful to children out of a real desire to protect and assist the children. Some, however, felt that the environment at schools (which consisted of copious amount of paperwork and unmanageable classrooms) created an adverse climate for helping children. Particularly at the secondary school, it seemed as if the teaching and learning aspect of the school was being lost to paperwork and performing services that should be done by professionals.

Teachers aren't without culpability in the problems facing South African schools, of course. Many of the teachers I observed led uninspiring lessons, and eagerly missed their classes in order to give their interviews. One member of the SBST at Mandela told me that he could not attend his interview that day because he had class for an hour. However, he still proceeded to sit with me for more than thirty minutes, during which his class went unattended. Another teacher at Mandela told me that he had to go attend to his class before he could sit for his interview, but then quickly returned after handing out a few papers, commenting that he had "done his job already." The primary task of teaching and learning, therefore, was attended to when it was convenient.

In general, the teachers at both schools expressed dedication to the craft of teaching and concern for the learners, but they were highly disgruntled and displayed a serious lack of motivation and grit. A Grade 4 teacher commented that "teachers have become 'all of the above' and we just need a break." Teachers at both school said that they would not encourage their learners or their own children to join the profession. Most of the teachers would be

resistant to increasing their responsibilities at the school in order to implement a caring function. Aside from being genuinely worn down by daily struggles that seem to never end, teachers also seem to have adopted mental fatigue and demonstrate latent unwillingness to initiate change within their schools.

The final objective, to determine how equipped schools are with the resources needed to fulfil the caring function, was met easily. No, the schools do not have the needed resources, nor can their current structures provide such capital without dramatic changes to their operating structure. The infrastructure of the schools alone would disqualify them from becoming caring schools; the vandalism and general disrepair at the secondary school make it far from the CFS and caring schools ideals of a pleasant, supportive school atmosphere. Combine the school level deficiencies with national and provincial shortages and disorganisation, and the chances of promoting a child-friendly model are even further reduced.

That township schools are struggling to meet the challenges inspired by such daunting realities is nothing new. Over ten years ago, Pam Christie described in detail the breakdown in township schools, while exhorting policymakers and educators to move beyond the practice of continuing to research the same social issues without examining the underlying cultures within township schools (Christie, 1998). The caring schools movement could be thought of as an acknowledgement of this conundrum, as the end goal of almost every caring school programme is to produce a fundamental change in the way the school engages with the child and his/her community. However, lack of caution when implementing could ignore these institutionalised issues in the haste to make tangible differences in service provision. It should be noted that schools that consistently struggle to operate at a high level should not be expected to implement complex programmes without assistance and support. Hoadley (2007) noted this particular dilemma in Caring Schools Project schools that hired youth facilitators,

remarking that “those schools with the most challenges were also the ones least likely to be able to manage the youth facilitators effectively” (pg. 12).

Looking at the difficulties schools face on a daily basis, while also noting the deficiencies in government and community services, it may be of more use to focus resources on strengthening the social services that children need in order to be healthy and learn while in school. Instead of making teachers social workers, resources could focus on closing the gap between the number of social workers needed and the current number that are registered. Programmes that allow individuals to enter the school for the sole purpose of identifying resources that children need (like the COS model) would also be a valuable next step, though managing volunteers and institutionalising care in that manner is difficult and time-consuming. It would be useful to increase training opportunities for teachers to recognise issues that require referrals.

However, do not expect teachers to create a perfect school where every child’s needs are catered to. It’s almost guaranteed that such a school will not be a place where every child can learn, as well, since teachers will be only further removed from their primary purpose. By not looking at teacher burden, programmes run the risk of lessening the quality of schools in response to a structural deficiency in social service provision. Especially in developing countries, where educational attainment and future economic advancement are unevenly provided, one must be particularly careful to not rob the future in order to meet a need today. Given the current state of school funding and service provision, straining schools to provide these services without an influx of resources will only see schools continuing to struggle to teach, as well as failing to create social worker- teachers. According to UNESCO,

> “Consensus seems to be emerging that schools will be stretched far past their capacity if expected to provide all HIV services themselves. However, what is far more realistic is for schools to tap into existing resources and to act as a link between

> service providers (or expertise in the community) and people who need those services" (UNESCO, 2008, pg. 12).

However, which individuals in the school will work on making those linkages? And at what point will the dysfunction within the government-mandated bodies be addressed?

This is not a call to give up on the caring schools movement. Viviers optimistically noted:

> "In one school, the deputy principal started to attend school, for example. Some schools start on time and finish on time. Some schools start to form partnerships to have computer labs and stuff like that in their schools. Some schools have cleaned their terrain. Which are simple, insignificant things, but things that have been there for the past ten years and haven't changed, but have changed now. And I think the reason for this because they start to understand what they need to do, and in terms of the Child-friendly model, also because there is an intervention happening."

The figures are real and in the South African context, a school building is an omnipresent and powerful symbol of the government's reach. However, schools should see the support structures surrounding them (health care, community development, family support and counselling) built up so that the school is not the last man standing, the final facility that can mount a response to the growing challenges facing the poor in South Africa. Any failure to improve social services across the board will only result in increasingly overburdened schools, burned out teachers and a continuance in social service failure that exacerbates the problem today.

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APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE

Survey for educators/non-counseling staff

Instructions: Please answer the questions as honestly as possible. For the (Y/N) questions, please circle "Y" for yes or "N" for no. Your name is collected for the sole purpose of conducting follow-up interviews later. Your name will *not* be used in the final report, and the results of this questionnaire will not be seen by *anyone* except for the researcher. You will not be penalized for your answers.

BASIC INFORMATION

1) **Name:**_____
2) **Occupation:**
    a) Teacher
    b) Principal
    c) Assistant Principal
    d) Classroom Assistant
    e) Other: _____
3) **(For teachers only) What subject(s) do you primarily teach?**
    a) Math
    b) English
    c) Language (which language[s]:_____)
    d) History/Geography
    e) Technology
    f) Science
    g) Other: _____
4) **For how long have you worked at this school?**
    a) Fewer than 12 months
    b) 1-3 years
    c) 4-7 years
    d) 8-10 years
    e) More than 10 years
5) **What did you do before you began working at this school?**
    _____
    _____

OCCUPATION RELATED QUESTIONS

6) **(For non-teachers) How much contact do you have with students on a daily basis?**
    a) Less than 30 minutes
    b) 30 minutes to an hour
    c) 1-2 hours
    d) 3 or more hours
7) **Have you ever referred a child for any social services? (Please circle Y/N) If yes, which services?**

a) Tutoring
b) Mentoring
c) Counseling
d) Health related (please explain: _____)
e) Trauma or abuse
f) Food delivery at home
g) Social worker to visit the home
h) Other:
_____
_____

8) A. Have you ever directly provided a child with any social service care? (Please circle Y/N). If so, what kind of care?

a) Food
b) Clothing
c) Taking a child home
d) Counseling
e) Other:
_____
_____

B. When?

f) Within the last week
g) Within the last month
h) Within the last three months
i) Within the last six months to a year
j) Not this year

9) Do you consider providing care/referring students to be a part of your job? (Please circle Y/N) If no, why not? If yes, does it represent any sort of mental, physical, or financial strain?

_____
_____
_____
_____

SCHOOL RELATED QUESTIONS

10) Do you believe that the school should serve as a site for children's services, in addition to academic pursuits? (Please circle Y/N) Please explain.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

11) Do you feel that your school serves as a site for children's services as well as an institution of learning? (Please circle Y/N) Please explain.

_____
_____
_____

12) **Do you feel that your school has enough resources to serve as a site for children's services? (Please circle Y/N) Please explain.**

_____
_____
_____

Would you be willing to meet with me to discuss your answers and experiences further? If yes, you will be contacted within two weeks for an in-depth, completely confidential interview. You will in no way be penalised for responding no. **YES / NO**

APPENDIX B: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Social Service Providers (in-school)

1. What services does your school provide for children? How many children do you think the school serves in this manner? How many are considered OVC?
2. What does your job entail on a daily basis?
3. How does your work fit into the way the school provides services?
4. What services do you find yourself providing/referring most often?
5. What rules govern how you allocate/provide services? Do you perform any acts under your own sense of duty, separate from what the school requires?
6. Do you feel as if your school is good at providing services for children? Is it a priority?
7. Do you believe that it is the school's role to provide these services for children?
8. Do you think that you have adequate resources to serve the number of children who need services? Please elaborate.
9. Which community elements do you see as supporting your work? Do you reach out to them, or do they normally reach out to the school?
10. What are the most difficult issues students in your school face? Does this translate into difficulty in finding the appropriate services for them?
11. Would you choose to make school social service provision more comprehensive? How would you make the school's efforts more effective and comprehensive?

Social Service Providers (community-based)

1. What services does your organisation provide? How many children do you think the organisation serves in this manner? How many are considered OVC?
2. What does your job entail on a daily basis?
3. How does your work contribute to the mission of the organisation?
4. What services do you find yourself providing/referring most often?
5. What rules govern how you allocate/provide services? Do you perform any acts under your own sense of duty, separate from what the school requires?
6. What role do you think your organisation plays in the lives of children? How crucial are your services to ensuring their stability, health and general well-being?
7. Do you believe that your organisation is as effective as it could be in providing services for children?
8. Do you reach out to local schools? How do you view your organisation's relationship to the schools that your children attend? Would you advocate for strengthening that relationship? If so, what are the benefits?
9. Do you believe that you have adequate resources to serve the number of children who need services? Please elaborate.
10. What are the most difficult issues children in your service area face? Does this translate into difficulty in finding the appropriate services for them?
11. What are your views on the role schools can/should play in social service delivery?

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

CASNET and other NGOs

Lynne Perrry (informational interview)	Johannesburg Child Welfare Society	CBD, Johannesburg	6 May 2008
Andries Viviers	UNICEF, South Africa	Pretoria	17 September 2008
Lynette Mudekunye	Save the Children, UK	Pretoria	17 September 2008
Nirvana Pillay	Health and Development Africa	Parktown, Johannesburg	23 September 2008

Community-based organisations

Chief social worker	Katlehong Customer Care Centre	Katlehong	19 March 2009

Khayalethu Primary School

Initial school visits			August 2008
Grade 1-3 educators			9 October 2008
Grade 4 educators			9 October 2008
Grade 7 educators			9 October 2008
School principal			9 October 2008
School visit /conference			10 October 2008

Mandela Secondary School

Initial school visits			August 2008
Acting principal			29 September 2008
Head of department / SBST member (1)			29 October 2008
Head of department / SBST member (2)			29 October 2008
School visit			10 February 2009
Acting principal			10 February 2009
Head of department / SBST member (1)			5 March 2009
Classroom visit			5 March 2009
Classroom visit			19 March 2009
Educators (3)			19 March 2009