Full Length Research

THE EVALUATION OF A COMMUNITY RESOURSE PROFILING PROCESS AT ONE SCHOOL IN KHAYELITSHA

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This paper is based on a study that was conducted in March 2002, aimed at helping teachers to identify and address learning barriers that interfere with the learning and teaching process through drawing on the support systems, both inside and outside the school.

The aim of the study is to document and evaluate the development of a community resource profiling process. Qualitative methodologies were employed to elicit information regarding the provision of education support services through community partnerships. A case study approach was utilized to conduct the study. Information was also obtained through questionnaires and documentary notes collected by the researcher during workshops conducted at school. The findings indicate that members were determined to address the learning barriers experienced at the school. It was found that they attempt to address the learning barriers through an intersectoral collaboration approach. Therefore it was recommended that previous approaches to addressing learning barriers should be reviewed and replaced by a comprehensive collaborative intersectoral approach.

Keywords: Education Support Services, Inter-sectoral Collaboration, Community profiling, Education support services, Learning barriers, community resources, Community-based support,School community partnerships, programme evaluation,Khayelitsha .

INTRODUCTION

This process entailed the "mapping or creation of a picture of the community resources that are available inside and outside the school, in order to address barriers to learning. These community resources included parents, teachers, support staff and learners in the school as well as non-governmental organizations (NGO's), community based cultural organizational and special schools in the surrounding community. Non-traditional support systems such as indigenous healers, grandparents, taxi operators and unemployed people, all of whom have a lot to contribute to the community and the schools in the community (Department of Education, 2002, draft).

The study intends to help teachers identify and address barriers that interfere with the teaching and learning process and then to identify and draw on the support systems, both inside and outside the school. This idea is congruent with the Education White Paper 6 on 'Building an Inclusive Education and Training System' (Department of Education, 2001:3).

Educators believed that their task was to impart skills and knowledge to enable young people to develop their potential and make a positive contribution to society, but it was evident that the needs and problems of learners directly influence their ability to learn. Many would agree that schools cannot be expected to attend to all students needs in isolation. Missions of schools can only be accomplished if they attend to their student's problems effectively (Green and Kreuter, 1991).

However, according to Stainback and Stainback, (1990) schools could and do run out of educators and they have to draw on an array of human resources. These resources could include teachers, parents, students, traditional healers, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), family based organization (FBOs). These resources are found both within and outside schools.

The responsibility of schools is then to utilize the human resources effectively to address barriers to learning. Donald (1991:7) observed that support services, including school health, social work, psychological, specialized education, and guidance and counseling services were historically lacking for black children as compared to white children. In South Africa, up until 1994, eighteen different departments controlled education. Only the rudiments of education support system were made sorely neglected and service deliveries only existed in name (Donald, 1991:71).

According to the Departments of Education (1997:105), those inadequacies resulted in support services which seemed insufficient and largely inappropriate for meeting the needs of students in the South African context. It also resulted in the exclusion of parents, peers and community workers. Consequently, this resulted in a lack of Intersectoral collaboration.

According to the Department of Education (1997), intersectoral collaboration refers to   strategies and process undertaken between different government and non-governmental organizations towards the meeting of common goals and the fulfilling of common responsibilities. Such interactions are most effective where one department is responsible for the overall management of the process and the tasks and the responsibilities of each partner are carefully defined. Intersectoral collaboration maintained a holistic approach to service planning and delivery. It encouraged the efficient use of human and material resources. Lomofsky and Lazarus (2001:307) observed that all learners have the "Opportunity to benefit from education systems. Support Services should be allocated to those most in need, with priority being given to marginalized youth, 'learners with special educational needs, those affected by violence and those to whom a quality education has been previously been denied".

In October 1996, the ministry of Education appointed the National Commission on Special Needs in

Educational Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee on Education Support Services (NCESS), to investigate and make recommendations on all aspects of special needs and support services in education and training in South Africa. A joint report on the findings of these bodies was presented to the minister of education in November 1997, and was made available for public comment and advice (Department of Education, 1997).

The findings of the report of the NCSNET/NCESS, (Department of Education, 1997), as quoted by the white paper 6 (2001:5) recommended that the "education and training should promote education for all and foster the development of Inclusion and supportive centre's of learning that would enable all learners to participate actively in the education processes so that they could develop and extend their potential and participate as equal members of society.

The policy further advocates that to achieve the key strategies of the vision, the following policies must be implemented by:

1.   Infusing special needs and support services throughout the system.
2.   Promoting the rights and responsibilities of parents, educators and learners.
3.   Fostering holistic and integrated support through intersectoral collaboration.
4.   developing a community-based support system which includes a preventative to support (White paper 6, Department of Education 2001:6)

The framework of this study is based on the National Commission on special Needs I Education and Training (NCSNET), the National Committee on Education Support Services (NCESS) Department of Education, 1997), and the white paper 6 on special Needs in Education Building on Inclusive Education and Training (Department of Education 2001).

This framework provides a perspective that could enable education support services and general and general education personnel to view problems and developmental needs, and to provide solutions in a comprehensive manner to ensure that problems and developmental issues are addressed at all levels. The framework emphasizes the re-organization of education support services in order to redress the inadequacies of the past by providing prevention and health programs. The interventions are aimed at teachers, students and the school as a whole. The main aim is to provide a comprehensive approach towards dealing with problems in education. The focus was then on the development of a community –based approach to support services.

According to the NCSNET/NCESS report (Department of Education, 1997),

Provision of appropriate support to meet learner

needs and system needs in any centre of learning should be facilitated through the utilization of skills and expertise available within the community. The identification of and access to community resources should be regarded as a primary responsibility of centre of learning based teams.

The concept of "community" concerns a particular set of social relationships based on issues that social relationships have in common, usually a sense of identity (Gordon, 1994). McMillan and Chavis (1986:60) explained community as the "felling of belonging, that belief that the influenced are influenced by the referent group: the belief that their needs are not met by collective capabilities of the group and a felling of emotional connectedness". According to the (Department of Education (2002:32) draft), "community-based support focuses on the development of capacity of institutional level, and emphasize partnerships between education and institutions. This requires valuing the skills and knowledge that already exist in our schools and other educational institutions".

UNESCO (1994:17) advocates that a community-based approach represents a complementary and mutually supportive approach to serving those with special needs. It focuses on principles of inclusion, integration and participation. The above mentioned approaches represent well-tested and cost-effective strategies because they promote "equality of access for those with special educational needs as part of a nationwide strategy aimed at achieving education for all".

Research Questions for the study

The main research questions were twofold; first for the study in general and those for the mapping workshops. For the study in general are:
1.   What process does the school develop to identify community resources in order to address barriers to education?
2.   According to the teachers, how effective has the resource identification been

Research Aims and Questions for the mapping workshops

The process of evaluation entails "Mapping" or creating a picture of the community resources which are available inside and outside the school, in order to address barriers to learning.

The main research question included:
1.   What process did the school develop to identify

community resources needed to address barriers to learning?
2.   How effective, according to the teachers, has the resources identification process been?
More specifically the study explored:
1.   Which needs and barrier to learning have been identified at the school?
2.   Which community resources according to the teachers, are available to support the school and what other community resources do they say could be useful to the school?
3.   How are these resources "mapped"?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study essentially adopted a qualitative paradigm although some quantitative analysis was computed qualitative research is holistic. And attempts to provide a contextual understanding of complex interrelationships between the causes and consequences that affect human behavior (Goetz and Le Compte, cited in Anderson, 1993).

Qualitative research methods were used in the study. Qualitative methodology enables the researcher to gain an understanding of a particular phenomenon (Johnson, 1997).

It allows the researcher to adequately explore the phenomena in question, emphasizing the process rather than the results. This methodology is appropriate for the aim of the study because it helps the researcher to elicit the relevant information about the project. It provides the researcher with an understanding of the phenomenon (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992).

In order to gather the information, required to achieve the research aims, a questionnaire was given to teachers to evaluate the usefulness and appropriateness of building a community resource profiling system for the school. Prior to the evaluation, the researcher documented the process. This included taking notes that captured newsprints and workshop notes. The data collection occurred over a period of four months, from August to November 2002.

Qualitative research method requires familiarity with the everyday life of the setting chosen for the study. This research is primarily descriptive, relies on peoples words as the primary data, it can also be used as an interactive process. (Marshall and Rossman, 1995).

According to Hitchcock and Hughes (1995), qualitative research methods offer school-based researcher's unique opportunities, that is individuals are given the best priority. The other advantage of using qualitative approach is that classroom process, teacher and pupils expectations shape the environment.

Denzin and Lincoln (2000), argue that the advantage of a qualitative research method is that it involves a natural

approach to the world, hence qualitative research study issues in their natural settings and attempt to make sense of them. Strauss and Corbin (1998), point out that qualitative researchers seem to ignore representative samplings; their cases are based on a single case or a few singe cases. Qualitative research is relevant to this study because it focuses on meaning, and is focused on understanding the culture of the participants studied. I therefore regard it as relevant to this study because it explores people's views and feelings. It helps the researcher to understand and interpret them in a realistic fashion.

Case Study

Gray, Miller and Noakes (1994) pointed out that a case study is an in-depth investigation of an individual, group or institution. Gomm, Hammersley and Foster (2000) have argued that the aim of a case study research is to capture the uniqueness of the research. Bell, (1989) indicates that in case studies "evidence is collected systematically". He regards case studies as an umbrella for research methods. In her view, case studies are concerned principally with interaction of factors and events. In case studies, Stake (1995) emphases that the researcher tries hard to understand how actors view things.

For this project the researcher used a case study approach because she/he was studying a unique situation in a school in a particular disadvantaged area. While schools in the area might have things in common, each school deals with the problems that it encounters in its unique way. The case study approach was appropriate for the study because it gave the researcher an opportunity to do an in-depth study within a limited time scale. Gomm et al (2000), has emphasizes that the main aim of case study is to capture the uniqueness of the situation.

Hamersley (1989), as cited in Hitchoch and Hughes (1995), observed that case studies refer to the collection and presentation of detailed relatively unstructured information, from a range of sources about a particular individual group or institution, usually including accounts of the subjects themselves. With case studies, generalization is not possible. In this study the researcher, who acted as an observer, shared the same experience of the subjects studied and understands their action.

In this study, I was concerned with observing and documenting the whole CRPP (community resources profiling process) as it unfolded. I watched the facilitator give instructions to participants. The first visit to the school was to negotiate the programme. The study was conducted in Khayelitsha, the largest African township in the Western Cape. This area was selected by the

Education Management Development Centres EMDC as a case study. This area is characterise by endemic unemployment, poverty, a high crime rate and unhealthy living conditions. Due to the above mentioned socio-economic conditions, schools around this area are faced with some of the worst barriers to learning and teaching in the Western Cape.

The process was conducted through workshops held at the school. The workshops were followed by a teacher questionnaire. The questionnaire evaluated the perceived usefulness and the appropriateness of this process for building a community based support system designed to assist the school to address learning and developmental barriers. This process identified people, groups and organizations inside and surrounding the school, who could help the school to understand and address learning and developmental barriers.

The process began with a needs analysis of one school in Khayelitsha. The Faculty of Education at the University of the Western Cape, in collaboration with members of East Metropole (EMDC), then set up a process to help teachers to identify community resources that are available inside and outside the school that could assist in addressing barriers to learning that were identified at the school.

Workshop One: Mapping Existing Resources

During the first workshop the purpose of "mapping existing resources was to discover which community resources" (people, groups, networks, and organizations) that were available in and around the school, could support the school in order to address both its needs and the barriers to learning encountered. During the workshop, participants were told to sit in twos, or in small groups to identify which organizations are already supporting the school and what they offer in this regard. The participants presented their findings in their respective groups, moreover, teachers were asked to then do more research to identify resources that could be used by the school.

Workshop Two: Expanding the Map

The second workshop focused on expanding the map of available resources in the local community, by identifying people, groupings, organizations, institutions, government and non-governmental services in that community that could help to address learning barriers to learning.

Teachers then presented their informal research results. Their work was to research and note down on paper who could be giving the school support and in what areas. Teachers were also asked to sit in twos and

interview one another on what each could offer the school in terms of addressing barriers to learning. They recorded their ideas on sheets of paper, noting their names and the areas/barriers that each one could assist with.

All the sheets were collected and combined into piles and then organized according to the category of community resources found in and around the school. A small group of teachers then decided to put the "sector piles" onto a big sheet of paper, this would then present the school's Community Resource Profile.

Workshop Three: How to make community partnerships work

The third workshop focused on how the school could work with the various community partners inside and surrounding the school to address barriers to learning. Teachers were then divided into different groups to discuss:
(a) The difficulties they experienced while working with their particular groups.
(b) "What works", that is what are some of the success experienced when working with these groups, and why is it successful?

Programme Evaluation

This study adopted a formative evaluation approach. Formative evaluation is mainly used for "improved and for the development of an ongoing activity" Stufflebean 1977 cited in Nevo, 1995:17). Programme evaluation is defined as "the process of determining to what extent educational objectives are actually being realized" (Taylor 1984:69 cited in Nevo 1995:10), Stufflebean (1969) and Alkin (1969, cited in Nevo, 1965:10) suggest that programme evaluation provides "information for decision- making and is a systematic examination of events occurring in and consequent upon a contemporary program" Nevo (1995:11) further points out that "the examination conducted assists in improving programmes which have the same general purpose". While conducting the evaluation system, we systematically collect information regarding the nature and quality of educational objects (Nevo, 1995).

The ultimate purpose of the evaluation in this study was to help teachers identify and address barriers that interfere with the teaching and learning process, and to draw on the support systems, both inside and outside of the school, in order to address these challenges. Hence the aim of the Community Resource Profiling Process was developed at a school in Khayelitsha. The principal and teachers were involved during the study.

Data collection methods

In this research approach two main measurement methods (i.e., observation and questionnaires), were developed and utilized to assess the CRPP (community resource profiling process) conducted at a school in Khayelitsha. During the observation activity, researchers observed and took notes as the facilitator of the project took the teachers through the three workshops. At the end of the observation process, a questionnaire was given to the principal and teachers to evaluate the process. The questionnaires were self- administered.

The study adopted a triangulation method to capture as much information as possible about the evaluation of a community resource profiling process at the school. Berg (2001) describes a triangulation approach as a means of refining, broadening and strengthening conceptual linkages. A triangulation approach is basically utilized by quantitative and qualitative research (Neuman, 2000).

Triangulation or combinations of methodologies strengthen the study design of the same phenomena (Patton, 1990.) Triangulation is often thought of as a way of guarding against researcher bias and checking out accounts from different information sources (Taylor and Bogdam, 1984).

Major characteristics of triangulation are that it "entails collecting material in as many different ways and as many from diverse sources as possible". This approach helps researchers to have a correct understanding of a phenomenon by approaching it from several angles (Terre-Blanche and Durrurheim, 1999:128).

Data was collected through questionnaires with open-ended questions. The process of the CRPP was documented through observational note-taking method which was utilized to gather data about the whole process as it unfolded.

Documentation of the process

The purpose of documenting the unfolding process was to obtain information on the Community Resource Profiling Process as it was developed. The documentation occurred throughout the three workshops at the school under study. According to Bell (1989:53), documenting has two categories: "primary and secondary resources". This study used primary sources, in other words, they come into existence during the period of study.

The Community Resource Profiling Process was conducted from August to October 2002. Table 1 will explain in detail the procedures of the workshops.

Questionnaire Evaluation

The questionnaire was developed to evaluate the

Table 1. Workshop Events, Purpose of Events and Procedures

Event	Purpose of Event	Procedure
Negotiation Process	The facilitator, together with relevant EMDC personnel and researchers, introduced the school to a process of identifying the 'natural community support system within the school itself and within the local community within which the school is situated.	Meetings were held with the school principal
Workshop One	To share ideas on how the school can work well with the various community partners to address barriers experienced by the school.	Phase one: Introduction to the workshop's aim and process. Phase Two: Previously mentioned learning barriers were presented. The facilitator introduced the importance of understanding and addressing barriers in each school context. Each Teacher was asked to note the barriers they experience in their school. Phase Three: Community human resources were then identified and organized into different headings and noted on a big sheet of paper. Phase Four: Each teacher was then asked to go and do informal research on other resources that they could utilize to address barriers to learning.
Workshop Two	To present informal research findings from teachers and to extend the schools 'community resource picture or map.	Phase one: Teachers shared their findings from the research conducted in the community. Phase Two: Teachers interviewed each other to find out what each of them could do to address learning barriers in the school. Phase Three: Organizing the support into sectors: The facilitator combined sheets of paper into sector piles, according to the category of community resource found in and around the school-these resources could help address learning barriers. Phase four :

Table 1. Continues

Workshop three	To share ideas on how the school can work well with the various community partners to address barriers experienced by the school.	<u>Bringing the picture/map together</u>. Six teachers volunteered to map the available resources in the school while other teachers observed the activity. a) Teachers in groups of six discussed the difficulties experienced while working with community groups. b) They discussed what works and what some of the succeses in school –community partnerships are.
Evaluation	To assess the success of the community Resource Profiling Process	Questionnaires were completed by all teachers at the school.

community Resource Profiling Process at the end of the project. The questionnaire included open-ended questions. According to Bless and Higson-smith (2000:18) open-ended questions "leave participants free to express their answers as they wish as detailed and complex, as long or short as they feel is appropriate". The advantage of open-ended questions is that they are not based on already-assumed answers. They do not restrict respondent to specific answers. Responses are received in the form of opinion and detailed explanations. (Hitchock and Hughes 1995) Nachmais et al, (1990) emphasize that open-ended questions are mainly concerned with exploring views.

Neumann, (2000) points out that the disadvantages of open-ended questions are often realized in the different response given by respondents. Again some of the questions may be too general and respondents lose direction making the coding of responses very difficult. In addition to the open-ended questions, the questionnaire included quantitative ratings using the likert type scale: most useful = 5, and least useful =1, yes\no questions were included. Questionnaires were distributed to the teachers at the school where the study was conducted. Questionnaires were self-administered.

Data Analysis

According to Hitchcock and Hughes (1995), data analysis may be described as an attempt to organize, account for and provide explanations of data that some kind of sense may be made of it. The data was analyzed using qualitative analysis methods. The notes were translated into something more easily readable and permanent since they were used regularly. Themes emerged, and this helped the researcher to scrutinize the information. (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995).

Open–ended questions were distributed to the teachers at the school under study. The questions and items to be rated primarily requested teachers to indicate their personal details such as their name, the name of their school, their gender, the position each teacher holds at the school, and the day they completed the questionnaire.

Presentation of research findings: Findings of the Evaluation Process: Bullet

In this study 31 teachers and the principal responded to the questionnaire. The research was analyzed and presented under the following questions:

What are the benefits of the Community Resource Profiling Process to the school?
• Most of the teachers found the workshops beneficial.
• Few teachers pointed out that they did not benefit from the CRPP.
What are the benefits of the community Resource Process to the other schools:
• Majority of teachers believe that the development of a CRPP (community resource profiling process) could be of benefit to other schools.
They pointed out that:
• The CRPP will help teachers from other schools

to identify and utilize community resources that are both within and around the school.

• Learners with barriers to learning will be identified and helped.
• The school under study will act as a resource centre for schools interested in developing a community resource profiling process.
• Teachers will understand the importance of teamwork, and as a result make use of the expertise within their environments. Only one teacher complained that researchers are only interested in the information rather than the improvement of their school.

The study helped to make teachers aware of the community resources found in and around the school. It was also agreed that the following research areas and questions could be pursued:

• A more in-depth analysis of the utilization of community resources in schools to address barriers to learning, and how these resources are helpful in addressing these barriers.
• The development of 'best practices' of school-community partnerships.
• The application of the community resource profiling process at other schools in Lesotho and in South Africa.

Findings from the school mapping workshops

The mapping workshops were used as another research method to discover which community resources (people, groups, networks organizations) were available in and around the school, and could support the school in order to address both its needs and the needs to learning encountered. After the completion of the mapping process, it was noted that the Teacher support Team, learners and other schools had been forgotten. However, after these activities, teachers realized that their school has a variety of community resources on which they currently relied. For instance, from the Government they received help from the EMDC members and the school clinic in Khayelitsha. Both, male and female teachers contributed towards the mapping activity. Some of the teachers volunteered to map the picture of resources, but as the mapping unfolded, male teachers dominated the process still working collaboratively with their female colleagues.

  Finally, two sectors emerged from the mapping exercise, those inside the school and those from the local community. A common understanding of the activity emerged from the teachers. When asked how they felt during the mapping, they said "it was difficult to do the mapping, as we did not know what was expected". One of the teachers said, "we needed a common

understanding of what we had to do, I volunteered because I wanted the experience of mapping community resources found in and around my school.

CONCLUSION

The research was concerned with helping teachers to identify and address barriers to learning that interfere with the learning and teaching process, through drawing on support systems, both outside and inside the school. The main purpose is to help teachers address barriers to learning. Teachers were made aware of the variety of community resources that are available both inside and surrounding their school.

The Community Resource Profiling Process documented and evaluated in this study serves as a model for building school-community partnerships to understand and address barriers to learning. The common goal was the commitment to the development of learners. (Walsh et al., 1999).

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